

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Introduction: Purpose of Creating a Neighbourhood Development Plan](#)

[Part One: MAIN REPORT](#)

[Chapter 1: Approach, Vision and Objectives](#)

- [Policy 1 -- Principle of Sustainable Development](#)

[Chapter 2: Walberswick as a place – Village and Surrounding Countryside](#)

- [Policy 2: Overall Form and Pattern of Settlement](#)
- [Policy 3-- Countryside Zone](#)

[Chapter 3: Natural Environment](#)

[Landscape character](#)

[Designations – International, National, Regional](#)

[The lands in and around Walberswick](#)

[Key Views](#)

[Biodiversity](#)

- [Policy 4 -- Natural Capital & Ecosystem Services](#)
- [Policy 5-- Protected Sites. \(SSSI / SAC / SPAB etc\)](#)
- [Policy 6 -- National Landscape Quality](#)
- [Policy 7– Biodiversity Net Gain](#)

[Chapter 4: Built Environment](#)

[Character Areas](#)

[Walberswick Conservation Area and Article 4](#)

[Heritage Assets](#)

[Non-designated Heritage Assets](#)

[Views](#)

- [Policy 8: Street Scene, Character and Residential Environment](#)
- [Policy 9 -- Walberswick Conservation Area](#)
- [Policy 10 -- Heritage Assets](#)

[Chapter 5: Residential development](#)

[Providing Primary Residences](#)

[Affordable and Smaller Housing](#)

- [Policy 11 -- Principal Residences](#)
- [Policy 12-- New Homes](#)
- [Policy 13 -- Affordable Housing](#)
- [Policy 14-- Replacement Dwellings](#)
- [Policy 15 -- Annexes and Outbuildings](#)
- [Policy 16 – Extensions](#)

[Chapter 6: The Village Economy](#)

[Composition of the Village Economy](#)

[Business Areas](#)

[Visitor Sources](#)

- [Policy 17 -- Small Shop Units](#)
- [Policy 18 -- Advertising and Signage](#)
- [Policy 19 -- Touring and Permanent Holiday Accommodation.](#)

Chapter 7: Community Life

[Community Organisations and the Walberswick Common Lands Charity](#)

[Community Assets](#)

[Green Spaces and PRow](#)

[Shared Space](#)

- [Policy 20 -- Community Assets](#)
- [Policy 21 -- Local Green Spaces](#)
- [Policy 22-- Protecting and Maintaining Public Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside](#)
- [Policy 23 – Shared Space](#)

Chapter 8: 'Resilience'.

[Fluvial Flooding](#)

[Coastal Erosion](#)

[Surface Water](#)

[Climate Change](#)

[Threat of NSIPs](#)

- [Policy 24 -- Minimising the Impact of Flooding](#)
- [Policy 25 -- Water Resource Management](#)
- [Policy 26 -- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects](#)

PART 2: POLICIES

[Summary Table of NDP Policies matched to Objectives](#)

[Compilation of all NDP Policies](#)

PART 3: ATTACHMENTS AND APPENDICES

Attachment 1: PLACE Landscape Assessment

Attachment 2: PLACE Built environment report

Attachment 3: CAS Housing Needs Assessment (HSA)

Appendix 1, Chapter 3: List of the key views (

Appendix 2, Chapter 4: Detailed street-by-street analysis of Character Areas

Appendix 3, Chapter 4: List of Designated heritage assets in Walberswick

Appendix 4, Chapter 4: List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Appendix 5, Chapter 7: List of Identified Green Spaces

Appendix 6, Chapter 7: Shared Space Proposals and Plans

LIST OF MAPS INCLUDED IN THE MAIN REPORT

Map 1 Parish Boundaries

Map 2 Habitat Types

Map 3 Habitat Designations

Map 4 WCLC lands with habitats - pending

Map 5 Typology of development within Walberswick

Map 6 Character areas street by street

Map 7: Walberswick Conservation Area - pending

Map 8: Article 4 Area of Walberswick – pending

Map 9: Location of Community Assets – pending

MAP 10: Location of Green Spaces – pending

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR WALBERSWICK

This document represents the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Walberswick Parish (hereafter referred to as the NDP) for the 15-year period 2027 to 2042. The NDP contains a vision for the future of Walberswick and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.

Planning policies in the NDP will become part of the development plan for Walberswick parish and, along with the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2019 (Local Plan), will be used by the local planning authority (*TBD - East Suffolk Council*) in the determination of planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area.

The principal purpose of the NDP is to guide permitted development within the village and give guidance to anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development. The process of producing the NDP has sought to involve the community as widely as possible. The different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of importance to Walberswick residents, businesses and community groups.

The origins of the NDP can be traced back to the Walberswick Parish Plan published by the Parish Plan Steering Group in October 2012 which included considerable work on the built environment and character of the village and recommendations for planning and development control amongst others. The Walberswick Parish Council (WPC), recognising that the only means by which the local authority could be bound by the views of the Walberswick community was through the creation of an NDP, established an NDP working group in February 2020 that consisted of 3 Councillors, the Chair of the Planning Advisory Group (PAG) and the WPC Clerk. The group was subsequently expanded to include an experienced planner within the village who brought specific expertise in planning policy and NDPs.

East Suffolk Council (ESC), as the local planning authority, approved the Neighbourhood Area for Walberswick submitted to it by the WPC. As shown in Map (1), the boundaries are contiguous with the boundary of Walberswick Parish and aligned with the neighbouring parishes of Southwold and Reydon. The Working Group subsequently took responsibility for developing the NDP, consulting it widely within the community, and leading the preparation of this document. (See Annex 1 for names of the NDP WG and key steps in the NDP process).

Consultation. Between 2020 and 2024 (with some unavoidable hiatus during the Covid pandemic), the Working Group consulted widely with the community through drop-in events, public meetings, questionnaires, surveys, focus groups and interviews. Further work was interrupted when the shocking announcement by National Grid for Eurolink (subsequently renamed Lionlink) made it impossible for the Parish Council to have the time to deal with both NDP at the same time as the paperwork and consultations related to Lionlink. The NDP finally got back on track towards the end of 2025 and the fully developed first draft was shared with ESC and consulted again in the village during the summer 2026.

The Working Group had applied for and received grant financing in the first two years of development to pay for targeted assistance from professional organisations to provide Walberswick-focused analysis of housing needs, the built environment, character assessments, and green spaces. The Working Group also drew on the work of various village organisations including the Safe Space team, the Planning Advisory Group, the WCLC, the Church Committee and other professionals in the village that volunteered their time and expertise. The NDP also benefitted greatly from the experience and documents of our neighbouring parishes of Reydon and Southwold which completed their NDPs in 2021 and 2022 respectively, from the Holmes on the Sea NDP where we found many issues coincided closely with issues faced by Walberswick and from East Suffolk Council planning department.

Map 1. Parish Boundaries



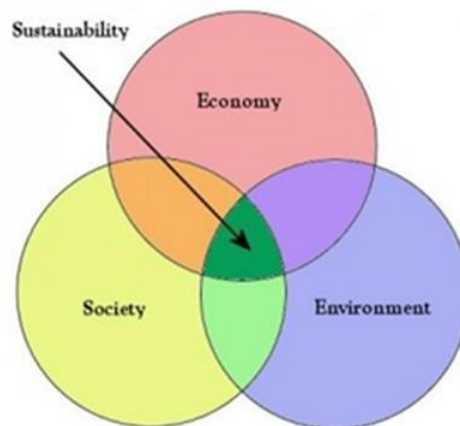
Part One of the NDP is the Main Report. It: (i) explains who and what makes up Walberswick; (ii) describes and explains the main elements of the natural and built environment and those aspects that most need to be enhanced and protected and (iii) sets out the policies within their relevant chapters that are best suited to support the desired objectives. **Part Two** provides a comprehensive collection of all the policies that make up the Plan (and appeared in the relevant chapters of Part I) along with a summary table linking the policies to the NDP's vision and objectives. **Part Three** is composed of Attachments and Appendices that provide, for the interested reader, source material and studies used in both development and support of the Plan.

PART ONE: MAIN REPORT

CHAPTER ONE: APPROACH, VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Sustainable development

Sustainable development, defined as " *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*"¹ is meant to underpin all Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs). In the context of the Walberswick NDP, 'Sustainable Development' not only looks to balance economic, social and environmental objectives but also aims to ensure that these objectives are met in a way that preserve the elements of the natural and built environments that are the essential characteristics of what makes Walberswick special.



Too often, the approach to development is unbalanced, driven by one particular objective without fully considering the wider or indirect impacts. The longer such unbalanced approaches are pursued, the more damaging and unsustainable the consequences are likely to become. This is highly relevant to the situation in Walberswick.

For the small community of Walberswick the word 'sustainable' currently carries connotations of an uncertain future, influenced by the changes and growing imbalance that we see all around. This includes what is perceived as unsustainable development impacting our built and natural environment as well as the threats from climate change and the impacts of highly controversial national level energy infrastructure projects.

The main driver for this NDP is the recognition amongst the community that we need to act now to address these issues through the development of a set of planning policies tailored to local conditions and designed to help restore the balance needed to deliver a more sustainable future.

¹ Our Common Future', Brundtland Commission, 1987
[Return to top of document](#) or press ctrl+Home

Approach

We have endeavoured to take a practical approach to the development of the NDP, particularly in determining the policies and gaining the support of stakeholders. Our approach is based on being:

- **Inclusive** - Planning for the benefit of the whole community which includes primary residents, second home-owners, holiday lets, businesses and visitors and liaising widely with key local organisations, community groups and stakeholders.
- **Comprehensive** – Taking into account that policies covering the built environment, the natural environment and the economy are all needed to form a coherent, sustainable NDP.
- **Learning from Others** – The Walberswick NDP benefits from the work done by other communities who have completed plans that address many of the issues faced in Walberswick. Learning from other completed plans provides confidence that the policies set out are deliverable, acceptable and conform to higher order planning requirements.
- **Precautionary** – Where possible, considering how possible longer-term risks can be mitigated through inclusion of policies that are written within the time-frame of the NDP.
- **Progressive** – Encouraging attitudes and behaviours towards the environment that will help create a lasting positive impact on the quality of life of the people of Walberswick.

Having worked with many of the Village's community groups and consulted widely amongst Parishioners, we set out below the vision for the future of the Parish and a set of objectives covering the 15-year period of the NDP (2027 to 2042).

Vision

Our vision for the future of Walberswick is grounded within a model of sustainable development that will allow the special characteristics of the Parish to be protected and enhanced. The vision is set out in three components:

- **V1: Environment** – The character of the natural and built environments will be conserved and improved to reflect the Parish's setting within an area of extensive nature conservation including National Landscape (formerly AONB), RAMSAR SPA, SAC, NNRs and SSSI, its special planning designations including its conservation areas and the key contribution that the natural and built environment make to the well-being of the inhabitants, visitors and the local economy.
- **V2: Society** – Our small but strong community will be sustained as a well-functioning and balanced society and avoid being "hollowed out" by ensuring that opportunities for principal home ownership and accommodation for people throughout their lives are not overwhelmed as a result of changes to the structure of the housing stock.

- **V3: Economy** – Our economy will be sustained by addressing both short and longer-term risks and by protecting and strengthening the elements of the natural and built environment that sustain the village’s ecotourism-based economy and lifestyle to ensure that Walberswick remains a “real” village with a vibrant and sustainable future.

Objectives

The long-term vision for the Parish gives rise to the specific objectives set out below. These objectives are considered achievable within the Plan period and provide the starting point for the Plan policies.

- **O1: Heritage:** To respect the past by identifying, conserving and where possible enhancing our heritage assets for the benefit of the local community, visitors and future generations.
- **O2: Community:** To maintain the vitality of the village by protecting and enhancing characteristics that support a balanced and active community, particularly by addressing issues related to the balance amongst residents, non-residents and visitors and maintains a community that can support residents from all age groups.
- **O3: Built environment:** To conserve and enhance the form and character of the settlement including with design guidance.
- **O4: New and replacement dwellings:** To ensure that the scale of both new and replacement dwellings respects the character of their surroundings, the needs of the community and is aligned with objectives related to the natural environment and landscape.
- **O5. Natural environment and biodiversity:** To conserve, enhance and protect our natural environment and promote biodiversity including habitats of ecological significance for protected and threatened species recognising that proposals for energy infrastructure on an industrial scale are creating unprecedented risks. This includes the many sites within the Parish with special environmental designations, the surrounding countryside and the associated biodiversity network.
- **O6: Landscape and Views:** To conserve and enhance the Parish’s landscape, green spaces and the wide and naturally dark skies for the peace, tranquility and well-being they bring to the community, and to conserve important local and far- reaching views valued by the community.
- **O7: Economy:** To ensure the sustainability of the Parish’s economy by conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, supporting the sustainable management of visitor pressures, encouraging low impact activities appropriate to the special environmental designations and biodiversity of the parish.
- **O8: Environmental change and resilience:** To recognise that areas of the landscape are at risk of loss or damage in the immediate term from through climate change and to consider how other areas within the parish may be capable of delivering similar levels of biodiversity and amenity.

Supporting Policies

The following policy addresses the principle of sustainable development discussed in this chapter.

Policy 1 -- Principle of Sustainable Development

Purpose: To clearly state the approach taken in the Neighbourhood Plan to 'development' and the balance that needs to be struck when considering proposals.

Policy: The Neighbourhood Plan will support a positive approach to sustainable development and development proposals where they show a balance amongst economic, social and environmental factors and where they accord with other policies in this plan. In particular development proposals should:

- Promote the social and economic well-being of the Parish's resident community keeping in mind the benefits brought through the eco-tourism visitor economy.
- Secure positive impacts on the local habitats and species (including the designated sites) and National Landscape. including having regard to the cumulative impacts including effects such as: vibration, dust, light, noise, odour, litter, damage to kerbs and verges
- Pay significant regard to heritage assets and cultural heritage of the village
- Enable positive adaptation to climate change, flood risk throughout the life of the development.

CHAPTER 2: WALBERSWICK AS A PLACE – THE VILLAGE AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE

Walberswick's identity is tied very tightly to its geography. In many ways, the village resembles an island and it is this physical characteristic that very much defines its sense of place. It is surrounded by the River Blyth and the North Sea and has no road adjacent to or parallel to the sea. It is an isolated settlement with sharply defined and constrained village boundaries at the end of a long road. There is only a single road (B1387) for vehicular access to the village that runs about 4 kilometres through farmland from the A12 before it reaches Walberswick and ends at the sea. The wide, open skies and sense of space with long distance vistas punctuated by church towers, water towers and mills and the masts and sails of boats create a strong sense of space. They contribute to the sense of remoteness of the semi-isolated landscape, with an absence of dense settlement and a strong sense of tranquility.

The Parish contains one main area of settlement, the village of Walberswick located to the north-east. There are a few isolated dwellings and farmsteads dotted in the surrounding countryside to the west and south of the parish. The remainder of the parish is predominately managed landscape such as arable farmland, managed heath and woodland, common land, and coastal marshes. The intensity and objective of management varies depending on environmental delegation, ownership and land use.

At the national level Walberswick Parish sits entirely within the Suffolk Heaths and Coastal Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This was designated in 1970 with the purpose of conserving and enhancing the habitats and biodiversity of the special heathlands, woodlands, estuaries and coast. The Minsmere to Walberswick Heath & Marsh Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Minsmere to Walberswick RAMSAR are deemed as having international importance for their role in conservation. These areas include the common, Tinkers marsh and covert, hoist covert, and the southern marsh area. Public access to these areas is possible for the majority of the year. Natural England are responsible for monitoring the condition of these areas. *(More detail is found in Chapter 3.)*

The area of land along Walberswick Harbour falls within the Southwold Parish. A main visitor car park is located within this land which is owned by the Walberswick Common Lands Charity. This important feature of the settlement is managed entirely from within the Village and is widely recognized as "Walberswick" although it officially falls outside the parish boundary.

Walberswick is almost unique in modern times as a place that is connected much more closely to its neighbouring settlements of Southwold and Dunwich by foot, cycle and ferry access than it is by road. Due to the Blyth river and estuary, the road distance between the two settlements is approximately 8 miles (17mins), whilst the "Bailey Foot Bridge" over the Blyth River with its connecting footpaths provide a relatively short and flat 3.5 km foot and cycle route to the services and businesses of the market town of Southwold to the north. In addition, a small privately operated rowing ferry makes the 2 minute trip across the river from Walberswick to Southwold Harbour.

Suffolk County Council rebuilt and strengthened the Bailey Bridge in 2022 in recognition of its immense importance to the people and economy of Walberswick and Southwold. Data suggests that a minimum of some 200,000 people cross the Bailey Bridge each year. Similarly, the small village of Dunwich to the south of Walberswick is reached by foot from Walberswick through protected marshes on footpaths – a route of some 3 miles compared to 8 miles of road travel. *(need to confirm distances)*. Since medieval times, the villages of Dunwich and Walberswick have been deeply intertwined. Most recently, the two villages have been brought closer together by the completion of a segment of the King Charles III coastal path which is heavily used by residents and visitors. It is a favourite route of students completing their ordnance survey reading skills for Duke of Edinburgh awards.

As detailed in later sections, the Parish's uniqueness also rests in the nature of its settlement found at the end of the long Walberswick road. Reaching the village, one is surprised to find an extraordinarily vibrant place tightly packed together with pubs and shops that belie its small size, an eclectic mix of homes, a Grade 1 listed church and a long, undeveloped beach. It has virtually only one road within the village that is shared by vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. The village is criss-crossed and surrounded by PRow that are heavily used to get around within the Parish and for leaving it. Its "island like" location, and absence of street lighting, means it has dark skies at night. Its large open skies, set against the sea and land, make for beautiful light beloved by residents, visitors and the many artists who have flocked to Walberswick for centuries.

History. Walberswick's history is a rich one and belies its current status of a rural village of less than 350 homes. In the Middle Ages, Walberswick was a very prosperous port. It specialised in ship building, salt and fish and reportedly traded widely within Britain and with Europe as far as Iceland. Little remains to remind one of that time beyond the magnificent ruins of the historic and important Grade 1 listed St Andrews Church.

Walberswick's long history includes periods that span from being an important port town that once built a thirty-gun frigate for Cromwell, to a thriving fishing hub, to an impoverished village suffering from severe depopulation. Its once grand 15th century cathedral now stands only as ruins hosting a small parish church albeit with its magnificent original tower still standing. What was a bustling tourist railway built in the 1800s is today a heavily used cycle and footpath that connects Walberswick to its neighbouring towns of Southwold and Reydon to the north.

Like other busy former ports of East Anglia, Walberswick suffered serious decline over the centuries and did not find its revival until Victorian times when it was rediscovered as an artistic haven of some renown that has continued through today. Towards the end of the 19th century, artists and architects came to the village drawn primarily by its natural and rustic beauty. Walberswick has attracted artists for nearly two centuries, with the vast influx occurring in the mid-1880s consisting of a 'new wave' of artists who rejected the formality of contemporary academy painting. They flocked to the Walberswick countryside to paint in the open air, with key themes among their work being the water, air, light and space of Walberswick. Among the most distinguished artists were Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Wilson Steer and Stanley Spencer among others. Many resided in Walberswick such as Parker Hagarty the watercolourist, named on the 1901 census. Post-war and into the 21st century the area has continued to attract artists right up to the present with today's Walberswick home to dozens of artists, writers, performers, and architects both acclaimed and lesser known who help support a vibrant cultural life unusual in a village of this size.

Walberswick has also benefitted from the boom in British seaside holidays begun in the late 19th century, but unlike many of the larger and better-known seaside resorts, it never lost its appeal. Overall, this left Walberswick, for the last few decades, as a popular seasonal resort for discriminating visitors, a welcoming place for retirees and with a diverse community highly involved in community activities (with some 20 active groups ranging from horticulture to the RNLI) and with a reputation for looking after one another that was further reinforced during the covid pandemic.

Supporting Policies:

Recognition of the centrality that Walberswick's "sense of place" is to its identity, its sustainability and its future viability, policies that protect the core characteristics of the village's geography are critical. The following policies are designed to fulfil this essential function:

Policy 2 -- Overall Form and Pattern of Settlement

Purpose: To acknowledge and offer protection to the features which define the geographical form and extent of the village.

Policy: New development will take the form of limited infill within the Village Development Boundary. It should follow the distinctive grain and pattern of settlement which is arranged with a predominantly linear pattern of buildings facing the roads. It should also maintain the features that contribute to the characteristic form of Walberswick including:

- a clearly defined boundary with the countryside,
- the open spaces in the central part of the village and
- the far-reaching views towards and from the margins.

Policy 3 -- Countryside Zone

Purpose: To ensure that the entirety of the Parish, particularly those outlying areas beyond the Village Development Boundary are treated consistently and contribute to the overall sense of place.

Policy: Development proposals outside of the Village Development Boundary should:

- demonstrate a need that is clearly related to a specific location that satisfies a particular need. (For example, an agricultural use, or relating to nature conservation)
- Respect the aims and purpose of the National Landscape
- Use high standards of design
- Be of an appropriate scale.
- Be consistent with other policies in the Plan

CHAPTER 3: THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

In addition to its unique geography explained in Chapter 2, Walberswick is also extraordinarily rich in its landscape character and in holding designations at the international, national and county levels. The objective of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the village's Landscape character and its significance (including existing formal designations) that the NDP seeks to protect and develop. This Chapter benefits from the work of PLACE consultant's Landscape Assessment (See Attachment 1) as well as documentation of the Walberswick Common Lands Charity and other local sources.

Landscape Character

(1) National Character

The 2014 National Character Area profile identifies the NDP study area as lying within Area 82 Suffolk Coast and Heaths. Key characteristics of this National Character Area found within Walberswick include:

- areas of low lying landscape, with sandy rolling 'uplands'
- sheltered estuary with salt marches and intertidal flats
- grazing marshes divided by drainage dykes
- areas of reedbeds meeting open heathland with some areas of woodland enclosure
- small, isolated villages and farmsteads in traditional vernacular materials and styles
- variety of agricultural land use based on geomorphology of the area
- overall sense of unspoilt tranquillity and wilderness.

(2) County Character

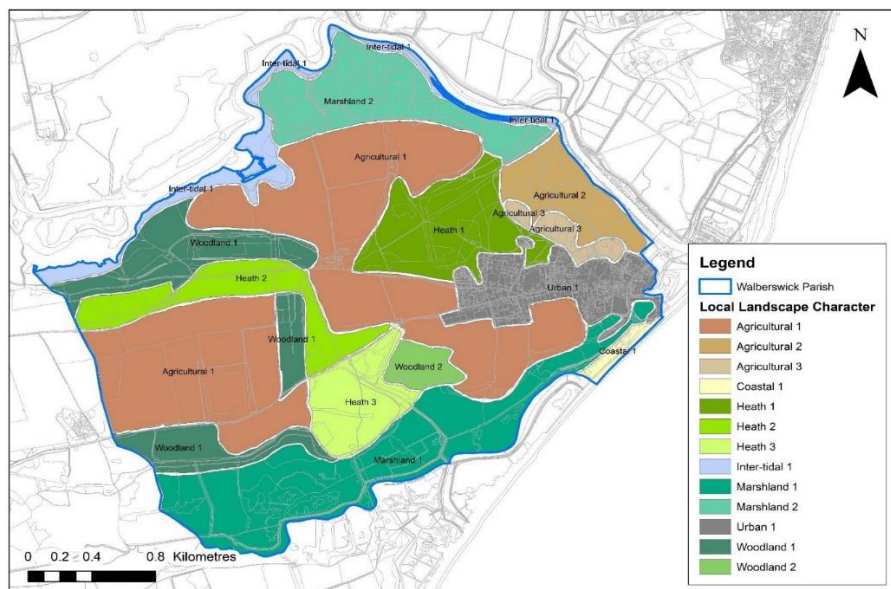
The Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment assessed the landscape at a county level and identifies five habitat types within the Parish of Walberswick: **Saltmarshes and inter-tidal flats** which lay to the northwest along the River Blyth, which are then replaced by **Coastal Levels** as the river nears the sea. On the narrow section of the study area which reaches the sea, the character area is identified as **Coastal Dunes and Shingle ridges**. A section of **Open Coastal Fen** lays along the southern edge, while the remainder, and the largest area, is identified as **Estate Sandlands**.

(3) District Character

The 2018 Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment is a finer grain assessment covering the whole of the Suffolk Coastal District. Walberswick parish is identified as sitting within 3 character areas: 1) Westwood & Dingle Marshes (D2), 2) Blyth Estuary (J3) and 3) Dunwich & Westleton Sandlands (K2).

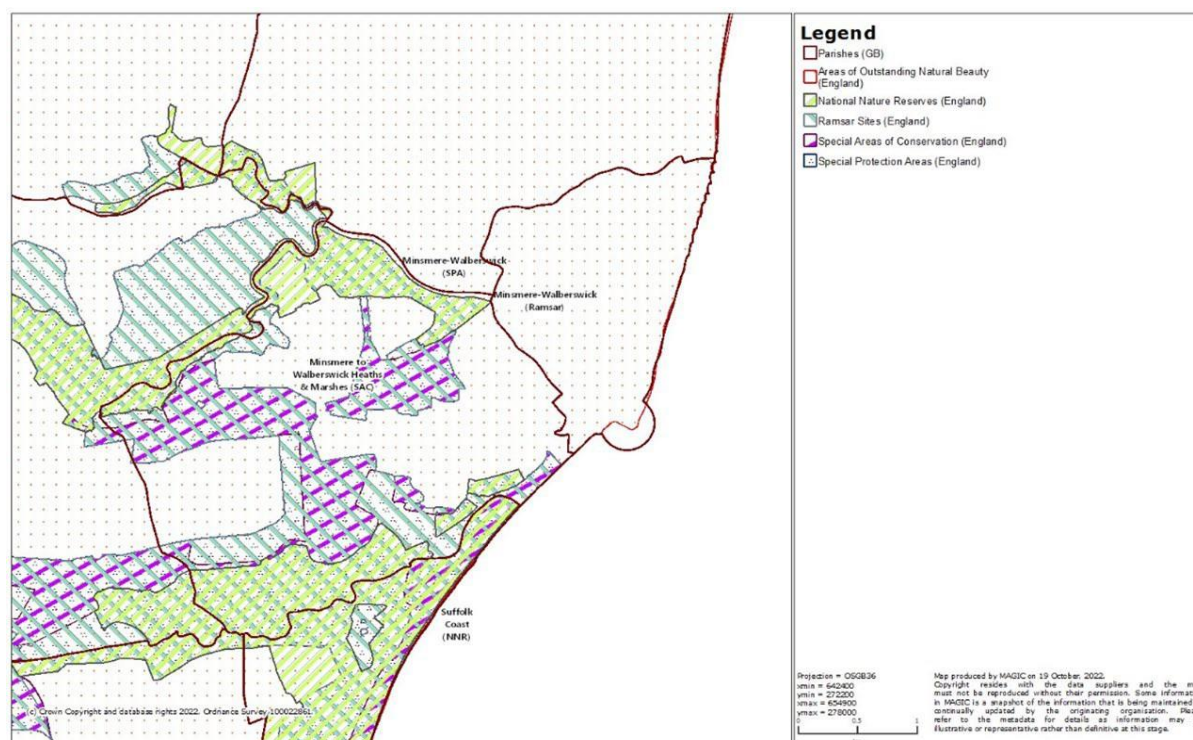
(4) Parish Landscape Character:

Lands within the Parish are colour-coded by habitat type on the map below:



Map 2: Habitat Type

International and National Designations in Walberswick



Map 3: Designations

International designations: Walberswick is a special area with 3 internationally significant designations: The Minsmere to Walberswick Heath & Marsh Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and SSSI, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Minsmere to Walberswick RAMSAR are deemed as having international importance for their role in conservation.

National designations: At the national level, Walberswick Parish sits entirely within the **Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape** with the purpose of conserving and enhancing the habitats and biodiversity of the special heathlands, woodlands, estuaries and coast. Further details can be found here: <https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/>

Walberswick National Nature Reserve (NE260) has features of interest which include wetland, marsh, and acid heaths that provide a variety of habitats which support species such as bog pimpernel, mossy stonecrop, bitterns and nightjars. Further details can be found here:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35020?category=23001>

Regional designations: A large proportion of the settlement is covered by Conservation Area status, which not only restricts development but also provides protection for the trees which contribute greatly to the character of the village.

The Lands in and Around Walberswick

The Walberswick Common Lands Charity (WCLC) owns about 66 hectares (164 acres) of land around Walberswick and much of the Charity's work is dedicated to the management and conservation of these lands. Other than commercial property in the centre of the Village, the Charity's land is Functional Permanent Endowment Land. This means that it must be retained for the purpose of the original endowment, which is referred to in the current 2009 Scheme, and goes back to the founding Scheme in 1901. These lands are shown below:

(Map 4 WCLC lands with habitats coloured coded – pending)

A key priority in the Charity's Scheme One is the fulfillment of one of the WCLC's core charitable purposes of ***the advancement of environmental protection or improvement***. Most of the WCLC lands are protected by a range of environmental designations and around 90% of WCLC land is designated a Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI).

To meet its environmental objectives, the WCLC has worked for well over 15 years in partnership with the RPA and Natural England under a Countryside Stewardship Agreement (CSA). This was most recently renewed from January 2024. The plan aspires to world class stewardship, with the support of the Village community and partners. The CSA categorises the different habitats into a range of different types and WCLC's primary objective is to maintain a 'mosaic' of these different habitats across its lands to promote biodiversity generally as well as some specific 'target' species of flora and fauna.

Key views

The setting of Walberswick makes a key contribution to the way the landscape is experienced. The wide, open skies and sense of space with long distance vistas punctuated by church towers, water towers and mills and the masts and sails of boats create a strong sense of space. They contribute to the sense of remoteness of the semi-isolated landscape, with an absence of dense or sprawling settlement and a strong sense of tranquility.

As part of the NDP process, key views have been supplied by the parishioners of Walberswick and reviewed through a desk-based assessment and field survey. Views have been categorised based on their type to reflect the variety within the built environment and landscape, and the relationship between the two.

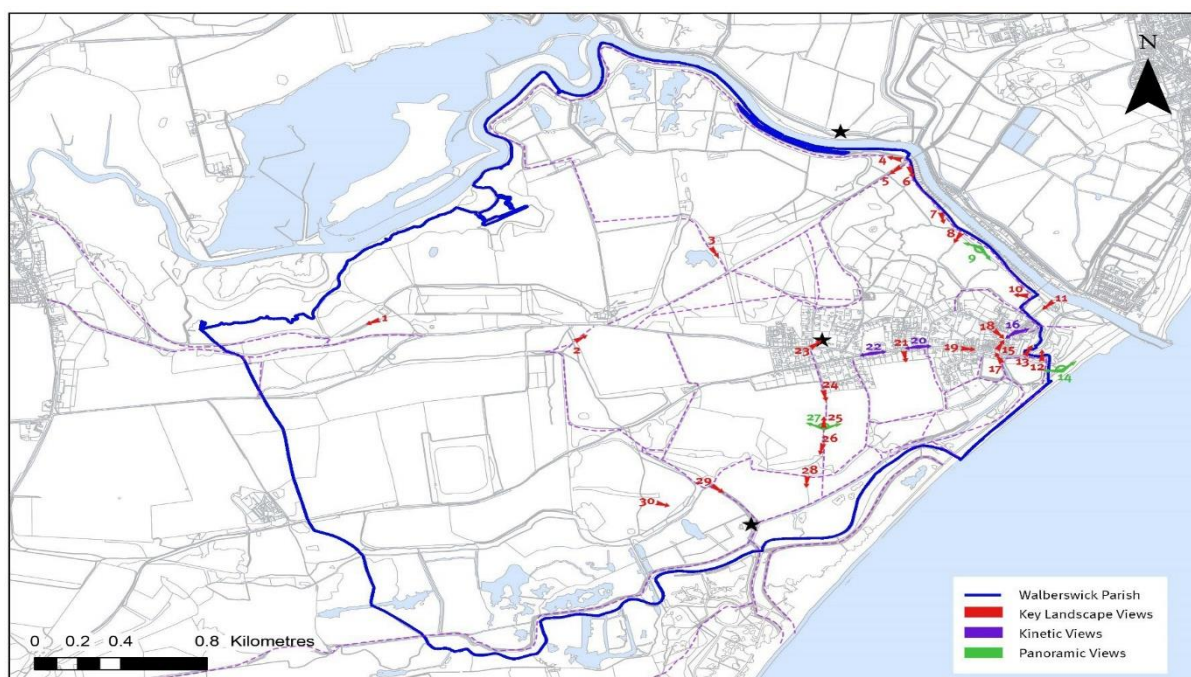
View types have been identified as:

Landscape views – key vantage points which take in the picturesque landscape and provide a place/point to appreciate the AONB and landscape surrounding the built environment of Walberswick. These are typically long-distance views.

Panoramic views – views within the landscape which contribute to our understanding and appreciation of the settlement and its setting.

Kinetic views – views which are appreciated whilst travelling along routes, that are dynamic and changing.

While key views have been identified and shown in the map below, it is important to note that due to Walberswick's location within an AONB, the scenic and perceptual qualities of the landscape mean that there are many wide, open views that can be appreciated throughout the parish. Notable views include those between and towards settlements, and along the coastline.



Map 4: Key Views

A full list of the key views can be seen in the Appendix 1 (pending)

Significant Landscape

Looking at Walberswick's remote location containing exceptional natural landscape features such as commons, marshes and woodlands, it is clear why it sits within the AONB.

The topographical position on a plateau between estuarine river and sea affords the village a distinctive feeling of remoteness. The settlement itself nestles down within the landscape, often described locally as being 'hunkered down'. The lack of large-scale development and organic growth of the village, following relocation of the church and village contributes to a sense of old-world charm.

Reciprocal visual connections along the northern edge of the Parish to Southwold and Reydon greatly contribute the character and sense of place. This landscape also contributes to the setting of both Walberswick and Southwold conservation areas. In terms of the wider landscape, views out to sea and along the coast to the south help to embed a sense of place.

Biodiversity

As might be expected from an area with such important landscapes and designations, Walberswick has a rich ecology. As noted above, to meet its environmental objectives the WCLC has worked for well over 15 years in partnership with Natural England under a Countryside Stewardship Agreement (CSA) under which WCLC lands are divided into a number of 'parcels' that vary in size. The WCLC's primary objective is to maintain a 'mosaic' of different habitats across all the parcels to promote biodiversity generally as well as some specific 'target' species of flora and fauna. The CSA categorises the different habitats into a range of different types explained below:

Wet Grassland - parcels 4929, 6619, 8505.

These parcels, commonly referred to as the Town Marshes run all along the western bank of the River Blyth and are categorised as wet grassland. Under the CSA they are mainly managed to provide a habitat that supports wintering wildfowl and waders. These include geese, swans, ducks, Widgeon, Redshank and Lapwing. The most important factor is to maintain the sward at the correct height. This is done primarily, by allowing cattle to graze on the grassland from the spring to the late autumn.

In 2024, the WCLC worked with the RSPB to secure funding to adapt these wetlands to encourage Redshank and Lapwing to breed there. This was achieved by digging several shallow footdrains across the grasslands. These are shallow drains which fill with water and have muddy edges in which a range of invertebrate species live. These form the main source of food for Redshank and Lapwing chicks.

There are several ditches that run along and across the grassland that allow the marshes to drain properly but also allow the foot drains to be kept wet. They form a habitat that supports a range of plants, birds and mammals and are an important element of the wet grassland. The WCLC is responsible under the CSA for clearing these ditches of vegetation on a rotational basis, allowing areas of open water, free of invasive species.

Lowland Heath - parcel 9510 (mainly the 'Common')

Most of what is called the Common, starting at its southern edge near Church Lane, is classified as lowland heath with areas of gorse, heather, bracken, acid grassland and some scattered trees, especially birch, pine and oak. Indicators of success include the presence of insects such as the Silver Studded butterfly, birds such as the Dartford warbler, Nightjar, Woodlark and Nightingale. Adders can also be seen here. Plant species should include Ling and Bell heather, Harebell, Heath Bedstraw, Heath Milkwort, Common Tormantil, Sheep's Sorrel and Wood Sage. To the north, on the other side of the old railway line (now a bridleway), the land slopes down and the dry lowland heathland transitions into wet heath, fen and reedbed. Typical flora in this habitat are Heath Milkwort and Common Tormantil.

Coastal Saltmarsh - parcels 7223, 0384, 0364, 1382

Unlike the Town marshes, which are freshwater marshes, these areas of marsh contain salt water, either because they lie along the estuaries of the Blyth and Dunwich rivers or because they run along behind the beach. They may be flooded with sea water from Aime to Aime. They form a perfect habitat for a range of wild birds especially waders like Redshank, Curlew, Oystercatchers and Avocets. They also support a unique range of flora including Sea Aster, Sea Purslane, Sea Plantain, Glaucous Sedge and Red Fescue.

Reedbeds - parcels 7486 and 0576

These reedbeds are located on either side of the River Dunwich adjacent to the disused windpump. Along with those on Westwood Marshes, these form some of the biggest areas of reedbeds in the UK. They are home to whole range of small birds such as Cei's Warbler, Bearded Tit, Reed Warbler, Marsh Bunting and Sedge Warbler but also larger birds most notably Bitterns. The characteristic booming call of the males can often be heard on these marshes in the spring. Marsh Harriers also fly low over the reedbeds hunting small mammals and birds.

Dry grassland - parcels 7223 and 9545

The main areas of dry grassland lie in Cliff Field (next to the Cliff Field car park) and the adjacent area to the west along the River Dunwich. This grassland is cut once or twice a year to limit the height of the grass and encourage rare species such as the Summer Marsh Orchid, as well as a range of insects.

In addition to the extensive work undertaken by WCLC and Natural England, as a result of National Grid Ventures attempt to create a landing site for an energy interconnector in the heart of Walberswick village and protected habitats, more information on Walberswick's rich biodiversity was gathered through professional independent surveys undertaken by a village-based NGO, Walberswick Against Lionlink (WALL). Whilst not comprehensive of all species, the work undertaken shows the ecological richness of Walberswick and the importance of its protection.

1. **Marsh harriers:** The SPA is an important nesting area for Marsh harriers and surrounding fields provide foraging for this qualifying species. It is also worth noting that Walberswick's SPA was identified by Government as a key mitigation area for the lost foraging grounds at the current SZC site.
2. **Nightjars:** WALL's professional surveys confirm the presence of nightjars, another SPA qualifying species.
3. **Red-throated divers:** Large numbers forage offshore in Walberswick in winter. This important population led Natural England to limit any off-shore works between November and March to avoid unacceptable impacts.
4. **Bats:** Ten bat species have been recorded—an assemblage of national importance.
5. **Reptiles:** East Suffolk is known for important reptile populations and Walberswick is no exception. These include (to be completed)
6. **Invertebrates:** Important invertebrates, including moth species sensitive to light, hydrology and water quality changes, use the marshes below Manor Field.

Supporting Policies

It is obvious importance of Walberswick's varied natural environment and rich biodiversity that policies to promote and protect these aspects of the village must be a key part of our NDP. The following set of policies are designed to: ensure that the Parish's stock of natural assets are maintained and enhanced where possible; that the settled area co-exists with these natural assets both by avoiding encroachment outside of the built environment boundaries and by ensuring that the landscape can continue to come into and be experienced within the settled areas and that Walberswick's rich biodiversity is protected and increased where possible.

Policy 4 -- Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

Purpose: This is a cross-cutting policy which aims to protect and enhance the parish's stock of natural assets (the natural capital of the parish, including the cultural and built forms) and in a sustainable way support the wide range of services (ecosystem services) which support the community and local businesses.

Of particular importance to the Parish in this respect are:

- (i) Sense of place
- (ii) Tranquillity
- (iii) Sense of history and cultural heritage
- (iv) Recreation (including health and well-being)
- (v) Biodiversity
- (vi) Regulating coastal erosion and flooding

Policy: Development proposals must have an overall positive impact on natural capital, natural beauty and scenic landscape and should contribute to the ability of the natural environment to provide those outcomes which contribute to the well-being of the community and Parish economy.

To ensure that the natural and built environment continues to support the community and local businesses, development proposals must demonstrate that all opportunities have been taken to ensure that positive contributions outweigh any negative effects.

They should demonstrate that they will:

- (i) Preserve and enhance the sense of tranquillity and wilderness, the wide-open spaces, dark skies and panoramic views of the National Landscape and internationally important seascapes
- (ii) Conserve, manage and increase understanding of Walberswick's rich archaeological, historical and cultural heritage
- (iii) Reduce the pressures associated with high visitor numbers to the village, beach, and other designated sites
- (iv) Maintain and enhance the role of the parish as a place for the promotion of health and well-being
- (v) Conserve and extend the parish's local, national and internationally important wildlife habitats and increase levels of biodiversity that they support
- (vi) Strengthen the corridors that support the movement of wildlife and improve connections between areas of high biodiversity to enhance the overall network of wildlife habitats
- (vii) Manage the risk of flooding whilst improving resilience to climate change and mitigation of the associated effects
- (viii) Control levels of air, water, light and noise pollution
- (ix) Encourage travel by sustainable modes and reduce demand for car travel and parking.

To meet the requirements of this policy, applications must be supported by a statement or checklist (in addition to any legally required such as HRA or Design and Access statements, but drawing from them) that sets out how proposed development will impact on the ecosystem services and objectives listed above. This should identify both positive and negative impacts.

Policy 5 -- Protected Sites

Purpose: To reinforce the immense value that the 'protected' natural assets have to the biodiversity of the country and internationally, and to the life of the village and the wider population enjoying it.

Policy: *(Note: TBD - this is in part from the ESC Local Plan SCLP 10.1 para 2 TBD)*

Proposals for development that will have a direct or indirect adverse impact (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on locally or internationally designated sites of biodiversity importance in and around Walberswick will not be supported.

If it can be demonstrated with comprehensive evidence (including Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) as appropriate) that the benefits of the proposal, in its particular location, outweighs the biodiversity loss or damage and that suitable and acceptable mitigation can be put in place or suitable and acceptable compensatory habitat can be found in the locality, then it may be supported with that caveat.

The designations referred to above will be taken to include the Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area for Conservation (SAC) or Ramsar site, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), County Wildlife Sites (CWS), priority habitats and species within or outside of the Plan area.

Policy 6 -- National Landscape Quality

Purpose: To protect and enhance the setting of the Village including views of the landscape and scenic beauty, cultural heritage, sense of remoteness, peace and tranquillity and dark skies as exemplified in the National Landscape designation.

Policy: Development proposals will be required to conserve and enhance the scenic beauty and special qualities of the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape

Proposals for new development must demonstrate that they will conserve and enhance the following aspects of the National Landscape as viewed towards and from Walberswick including from its network of footpaths, and other public places:

- visual integrity,
- identity,
- sense of remoteness
- scenic quality and
- cultural heritage

All development proposals should have regard for the following impacts:

- Direct impacts resulting from changes to the visual and aural environment in the setting of the development which may intrude, distract or disturb
- Indirect or secondary impacts caused beyond the site of the proposed development such as those associated with traffic and car parking and additional visitor numbers
- Cumulative impacts of incremental development

In order to protect the tranquillity, dark skies, sense of remoteness and wildlife and biodiversity interests within the National Landscape at Walberswick, proposals including external lighting in prominent locations likely to be visible from the surrounding landscape will not normally be supported.

Where internal lighting is likely to cause disturbance or risk to wildlife, including protected bird species, or impacts on dark skies and tranquillity, proposals will be required for mitigating pollution from those internal light sources.

In order to minimise light pollution, all planning consents will be subject to the following conditions in respect of external lighting:

- (i) Fully shielded (enclosed in full cut-off flat glass fittings)
- (ii) Directed downwards (mounted horizontally to the ground and not tilted upwards)
- (iii) No dusk to dawn lamps
- (iv) White light low-energy lamps (LED, metal halide or fluorescent) and not orange or pink sodium sources

Policy 7 – Biodiversity Net Gain

Purpose: To support Government mandates for a 10% increase in biodiversity across the nation. The significant designations around Walberswick for biodiversity gives further imperative to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in new development.

Policy: (To be added)

CHAPTER 4: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

It is important to understand the significance, designations, key characteristics / features and potential threats, and existing harm within Walberswick parish in order to develop policy approaches to the Built Environment. In this context, this Chapter considers: Character Areas, Conservation Area and Article 4 Directions, Heritage and Non-designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs) and Views.

In broad terms the built environment of the village can be divided into four groupings:

- **The Street:** linear development, small setbacks from the road, diverse/traditional architecture;
- **Lodge Road:** larger detached set back dwellings, infill development;
- **Ferry Road and the Village Green:** strong sense of traditional vernacular development set around the village green, range of house types and scale, enclosed
- **Areas accessed via The Street:** although each area is distinct in architectural character they are generally formed by more recent village expansion in the form of detached dwellings to the north and south of The Street. (Areas include Adams Lane, Palmers Lane, Manor Close, Leveretts Lane, Millfield Road)

An understanding and analysis of these issues is supported by Place Services study 'Walberswick Built Environment Assessment' July 2023 commissioned and financed as input into this NDP. (See Attachment 2.) Other sources include the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2013), and local research for the preparation of the NDP.

Critical input has also come from the Walberswick Planning Advisory Group (PAG) which was established in 2014 at the request of the Parish Council, following a recommendation of the Parish Plan. The Group comprises members with professional experience of planning and architecture. The group has been instrumental for more than 10 years in helping WPC respond to planning applications referred for consultation by East Suffolk Council. The expertise of the Group members has substantially contributed to the analysis below.

Character Areas

Character Areas record the special qualities of an area, including its sense of place and unique identity. They are useful in helping residents, planners and designers understand what is special about a particular area, including subtle qualities that may otherwise be overlooked.

The character of an area is formed by more than just the visual contribution of the buildings within it; factors such as historical development, immediate and wider landscape, spatial qualities and form, features and landmarks, views and vistas and streetscape are all important factors that contribute towards character.

Good design interprets, references and builds on historic character, and the character area assessment is intended to be used by developers, architects, designers and planners to ensure proposed changes within Walberswick reflect and compliment the qualities of the immediate area, is appropriately scaled and detailed, respects immediate and wider landscape and established views.

The identification of character, both positive and negative, ensures opportunities where local character might be reinforced and enhanced, and how this can be reflected in development.

Approach to Identifying Character Areas

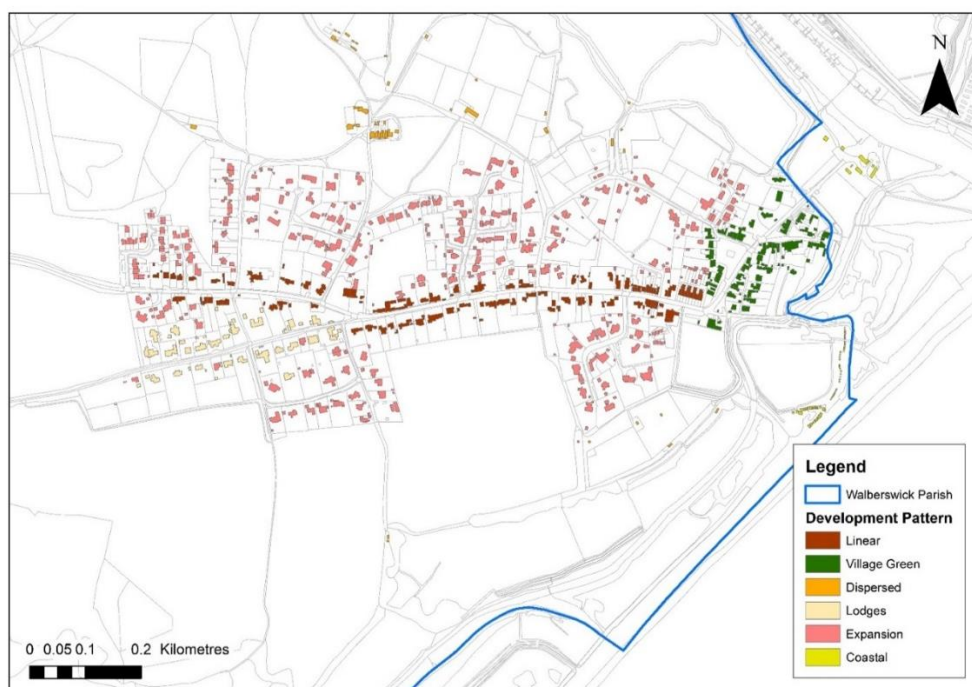
Fieldwork, which drew on the street-by-street assessment within the Conservation Area Appraisal (2013) and further informed by the Place Services study, identified discernible patterning of development within the settlement and this formed the basis of the 22 Character Areas.

Character areas have been identified on two levels. First is the broader identification of typologies (see Map 5). Second is a detailed Street-by-Street analysis (see Map 6) and discussed in some detail below.

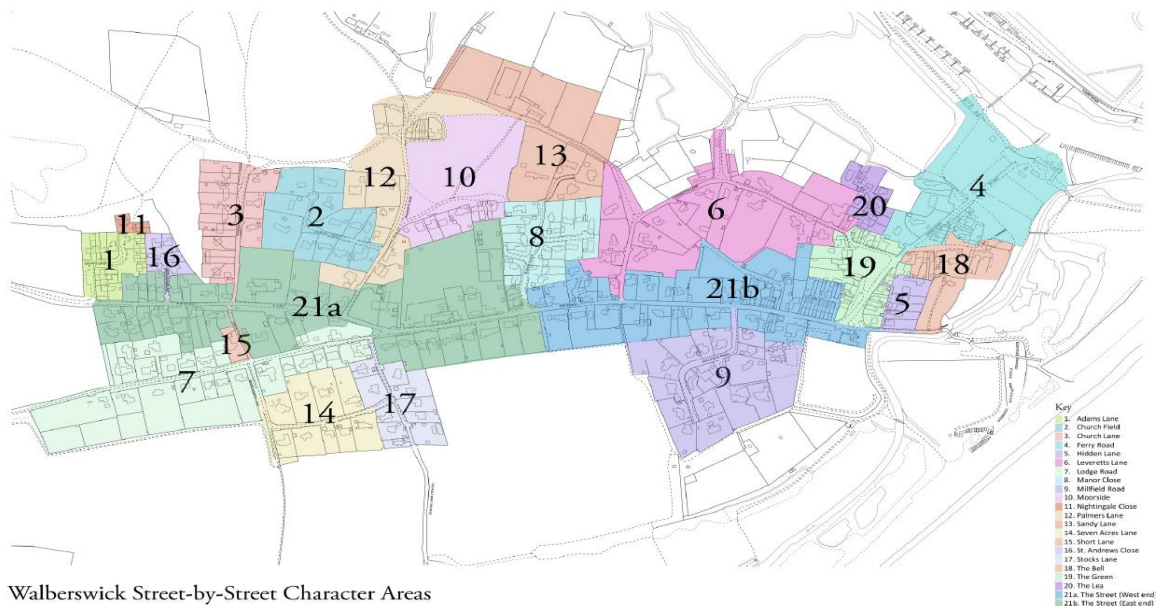
This macro / micro analysis and mapping has been undertaken to provide an accurate representation of the varied buildings within Walberswick which contribute to its unique and distinctive character. The variety of phases and building types are clear to see on the maps. Themes and groupings emerge which can help to provide a baseline understanding of the settlement pattern and character/appearance.

The structure of the characterisation are as follows:

- Level 1 identifies key characteristics and features of the built environment through the assessment of spatial qualities and identification of overarching typologies. These are shown in Map 5. The building types reveal patterns where groups can be identified.
- Level 2 identifies character areas through a more granular street-by-street analysis. Map 6 shows a breakdown of streets in the 22 Character areas. An even more detailed street-by-street character assessment can be found in Appendix 2. This includes information on materials, detailing, density, development dates, intrusion, and har



Map 5 showing development pattern / typology of development within Walberswick



Walberswick Street-by-Street Character Areas

Map 6: 22 Character Areas

Trees: Each of the character areas of Walberswick are defined, in part, by the presence of a large numbers of trees and hedges. Although these are mostly situated on private land in gardens, they are a significant influence on the character of many public spaces as viewed from the local highway network, including public footpaths. Because of the flat landscape and open skies, they are also important in more distant views towards the village from various locations including the Common, the beach and as far off as Southwold. Because of this, the removal of trees and hedges, or replacement by fences and walls simply to accommodate development, can generally have a negative impact on the character of the area.

Summary of Findings. Below is a summary of the key findings categorised into Merits and Concerns related to Walberswick’s built environment.

Merits

- Varied building stock, from 17th century to today, reflecting Walberswick’s unique development. The variety reinforces the unique interest of the village, with distinct groups and typologies.
- Quality of the majority of the building stock; reinforced by the majority reflecting phasing and resulting local vernacular materials. This helps establish unity and a local village aesthetic.
- Inter-relationship meeting and merging of buildings and their setting/landscape/green space
- Local architects/designers i.e. Frank Jennings/Ernst Freud influencing much of the 20th century development of the village, creating a strong arts and crafts / modern type.

Concerns

- The need to protect and enhance historic building styles and materials in the face of development
- Incremental changes and infill – in and outside of the Conservation Area (i.e. lack of Article 4).
- Lack of bespoke Suffolk Design Guide: Ensuring that all development is of high-quality design, and at an appropriate density that reflects the local character. Of particular concern are:
 - Window replacements
 - Dormer windows
 - Balconies
 - Extensions

- Appropriate levels of protection for historic buildings i.e. listing, NDHA and structures that contribute positively to the Conservation Area.
- The impact of replacement dwellings in terms of scale, footprint and infilling.
- Perimeter development that threatens the maintenance of the remote, isolated character as a critical element of the “sense of place”.

Walberswick Conservation Area

The Walberswick Conservation Area was first designated in 1973. The boundary was reappraised in 2013 and a list of structures that contribute positively to the area was created and the appraisal document and management plan was updated; since this date the Conservation Area has not been reviewed.

The Walberswick Conservation Area is primarily located along the main axial road through the village, commencing at the west end by St. Andrew’s Church, and continuing east towards the Ferry Road quay area. Within the Walberswick Conservation Area are side roads along which several houses of architectural distinction are located. The centre of the village is defined by the Village Green.

The building stock within the Conservation Area is extremely varied. Within Walberswick is an impressive and picturesque Grade I listed part ruinous church (of largely fifteenth century date) as well as a mix of Grade II listed former farmhouses, dwellings, and agricultural/commercial buildings. Unlisted structures are of great importance to the village, particularly in forming the streetscape along the main east/west arterial route, and comprise an eclectic mix of properties dating from the seventeenth century to the modern.

Map 7: Walberswick Conservation Area (To insert)

When the Southwold Conservation Area and separate Southwold Harbour Conservation Area were reappraised during 2023 it was determined that these two separate boundaries would be merged. The consequence for Walberswick was that an area within the Parish boundary (essentially the Walberswick quay area), that had formed part of the Southwold Harbour Conservation Area, was added to the Walberswick Conservation Area from January 2024.

The majority of the Southwold Harbour Conservation Area lay within the former Waveney District Council area and, as was the practice with all Conservation Areas within the former District, it had an Article 4 Direction on it (commercial premises within a Conservation Area have no permitted development rights irrespective of whether there is an Article 4 Direction or not).

Consequently, a situation arose where part of the Walberswick Conservation Area (ie the section of the village formerly within the Southwold Harbour Conservation Area) had the protection of an Article 4 Direction, whereas the rest of the village, which contains many significant and unlisted assets, did not. This anomaly was partially addressed when ESC proposed a partial extension of Article 4 beyond the quay. Although the Parish Council and a large number of other participants to the public consultation during July 2025 argued for extending the Article 4 Direction to the entire Conservation Area, in the end ESC determined that the Article 4 Direction would be extended to cover the majority (but not all) of the Walberswick Conservation Area.

Article 4 Directions

To help protect the character and appearance of some of the district’s conservation areas, East Suffolk Council, as a local planning authority, has increased planning controls through the

application of Article 4 Directions. The Article 4 direction area established in 2025 is shown in the map below:

Map 8: Article 4 Area of Walberswick (pending)

These directions make further restrictions on permitted development rights to change residential properties. Planning permission is consequently required to make any change of design or material to any part of the property facing what is called a 'relevant location' – that is, a public thoroughfare, defined as a highway, waterway or open space.

The types of changes controlled include replacing windows and doors; painting previously unpainted buildings or stripping paint from them; erection, alteration or demolition of part or all of a wall, fence, gate or other enclosure; or the construction of a porch. Also controlled is the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling, any alteration to its roof, the provision of a building, enclosure, swimming pool, hard surface, etc., within the grounds, or 'curtilage', of the building.

Elevations of properties not visible from a relevant location (other than roofs or chimneys) are not affected, and these will enjoy the usual permitted development rights for a conservation area. Article 4 Directions do not affect repairs or maintenance, or alterations which took place before the Direction was in place.

Heritage Assets

Heritage assets are defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as: *"a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest"*.

Heritage assets include those that are designated such as listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments; and those that are non-designated, that is ones identified by the local planning authority as having local interest.

Designated heritage assets. The NPPF defines these as World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Non-designated heritage assets (NDHA). The NPPF defines non-designated heritage assets as: *"locally designated buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which are not formally designated heritage assets"*.

Identification of Non-Designated Heritage Assets

East Suffolk Council has the following criteria for the identification of non-designated heritage assets (NDHA):

Archaeological interest

- **Recorded in the Suffolk County Historic Environment Record Architectural interest** - an above ground archaeological site or historic building recorded in the Suffolk County Council Historic Environment Record. Identification of archaeological interest will always have to be made in conjunction with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service. Subsurface archaeological interest is considered and advised on separately by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service.

Architectural interest

- **Aesthetic value** - the building or structure, through its intrinsic design value derived from local styles, materials, workmanship or any other distinctive local characteristic, will exhibit a positive external appearance in the streetscene, village or townscape or landscape.
- **Known architect** - the building or structure will be the work of an architect of local, regional or national noteworthiness.
- **Integrity** - the building or structure will retain a degree of intactness and lack of harmful external alteration and, if part of a group, will make a contribution to the surviving completeness of that group.
- **Landmark status** - the building or structure by virtue of its design, age, innovation, construction, position, use or communal associations contributes as a landmark within the local scene.
- **Group value** - the buildings or structures will have a coherent design or historic functional relationship as a group.

Artistic interest

- **Aesthetic value** - the building or structure, through its intrinsic design value derived from local styles, materials, workmanship or any other distinctive local characteristic, will exhibit a positive external appearance in the streetscene, village or townscape or landscape.
- **Known designer** - the building or structure will be the work of a designer of local, regional or national noteworthiness.

Historic interest

- **Association** - the building or structure will enjoy a significant historical association of local or national noteworthiness including links to important local figures or events.
- **Rarity** - the building or structure must represent a design, use or other quality that was always uncommon or has now become uncommon or exceptional to the locality, district or wider region.
- **Representativeness** - the building or structure will survive as a good quality representative of a particular historical or architectural trend or settlement pattern; or be part of the legacy of a particular individual, architect or designer, architectural or artistic movement, company or group in the past.
- **Social and communal value** - the building or structure will be perceived locally as a source of local identity (for example, commemorative or symbolic), distinctiveness, social interaction or contributing to the collective memory of a place.

Walberswick's rich history means that it has a large number of Heritage Assets. Its most famous Designated Heritage Asset is its Grade 1 Listed Church. In addition, there are 10 other Grade II listed properties. The full list of designated heritage assets in Walberswick can be found in Appendix 3.

The number of NDHA is considerably greater. The vast majority of these NDHA are within the conservation area though a number fall outside of the Article 4 Direction. In the past, changes have been made to NDHA properties that have greatly harmed their value and interest as defined by the NPPF. Protecting the archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interest of the village's NDHA must be an important element of future planning policy.

As part of the development of the NDP, a list of all the Non Designated Heritage Assets identified for Walberswick was developed and can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

Views

As discussed in Chapter 3, the extensive public footpath network around the village, and the highway network (including private and public streets) within the village afford multiple viewpoints of the built environment, and views from the built environment to the unbuilt environment beyond the village.

The village sits wholly within the National Landscape and all views to and from it are considered 'important'. The extensive Conservation Area and the NDHAs both within and beyond it are important in understanding the quality and significance of the built environment.

In Chapter 3, three types of views are set out – Landscape, Panoramic and Kinetic. Many of these views are classics of their type including:

- Specific buildings, e.g. the church
- Harbour views
- Sea views glimpsed between buildings
- Viewpoints into and from the wider countryside

In the context of the Built Environment, it is worth noting that glimpsed views and fortuitous views are also of importance and can be appreciated throughout the Parish. Views of the Church, for example, can be had from surrounding streets, and views towards the edge of the built settlement are dynamic and help one to appreciate the character of Walberswick. These are not all enumerated as they are changeable by their nature. Therefore, this Plan seeks a more non-specific locational approach making it a role of developers to analyse the immediate and more wide-ranging street and countryside scenes within the context of the policies including importantly Policy 8 (Street scene, character and Residential Environment). They should then give an appreciation of impact on views which will be considered when applications are decided.

Supporting Policies

As discussed throughout this chapter, the village's Character is an essential element of what defines Walberswick and makes the village so unique. This encompasses all parts of its built environment from heritage assets to the conservation area to the varied and special character areas which, taken as a whole, create the mosaic that is Walberswick. The following policies are designed to recognise this and ensure that planning decisions properly consider relevant character areas, the conservation area and heritage assets.

Policy 8 -- Street Scene, Character and Residential Environment

Policy Purpose: To outline the considerations which will be used to evaluate proposals for development in their local context of the streets and character areas:

Development proposals will be permitted where they:

- integrate with the layout, spacing and established character of neighbouring properties and the local area
- do not detract from the amenity that people derive from the external space that forms part of their home environment.

Proposals should also satisfy the following requirements:

- Demonstrate an informed appreciation of landscape context
- Have regard for the relationship between building size and plot size which should respect that of nearby properties
- Provide appropriate separation from boundaries so as to maintain gaps which respect neighbours' amenity, provide a positive contribution to the street scene and avoid a

cramped or urbanised appearance. Gaps should not rely on borrowed space from neighbouring gardens.

-
- Be consistent with established building set back and arrangement of front gardens and boundary treatments including hedges, trees, walls, fences and railings
- Have sufficient scope within the plot to provide garden space, landscaping, boundary treatments, external storage and car parking.
- Employ design which avoids massing. That is design that is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of height, roof form, materials, elevational and vernacular detailing.
- Is not overbearing or of a form which would have a dominating effect on the street scene or would be detrimental to the amenity of neighbours by virtue of overshadowing, shading and/or overlooking resulting in loss of light and / or privacy
- Does not contribute to light or noise pollution, particularly in relation to adjacent sites of nature conservation, ecology or biodiversity value.
- The palette of building materials and external finishes should be selected to complement and enhance locally distinctive character.
- Taking account of existing and proposed buildings, development proposals should not overdevelop the plot, including width of development, and total plot coverage with built forms (including hard standings, outbuildings and including swimming pools).
- Provide an analysis of the trees and hedgerows in the vicinity of the development to support any proposed losses.

Policy 9 -- Walberswick Conservation Area

Policy Purpose: The designation of the Conservation Area acknowledges the importance of the built environment within or affecting it. Consideration is given to the particular factors which will be referenced when considering proposals for development or others matters affecting the significance of the character of the area.

Proposals for development within the Conservation Area or within the setting of the Conservation Area must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and respect the particular features which contribute to its character and appearance, particularly those of local or national historic or architectural interest, as shown on the Conservation Area Map and List.

Particular regard must be given to the following:

- Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
- The effect of the proposal on the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage assets shown on the Neighbourhood Plan Heritage and Conservation Area Maps and List including both listed and unlisted heritage buildings
- The overall layout of the settlement and its relationship with the National Landscape and extent of the local, national and international nature conservation designations.
- The historic pattern of roads, footpaths, by-ways and open spaces that characterise the settlement and contribute to the established street scene
- The mix of building types, designs, scale, height and massing
- Roof lines and styles and any historic elevation features including windows, doors and balconies.
- The use of locally distinctive building materials, styles and techniques
- Significant landscape features including established trees and hedgerows, boundary treatments, ponds and open spaces
- Existing views and vistas including views of the skyline and views into and out of the Conservation Area.

All proposals should identify opportunities for enhancements to the Conservation Area and should be supported by sufficiently detailed information to allow an informed assessment of any impacts.

Outline planning applications for new buildings will not be acceptable in the Conservation Area, or on the boundaries of the village where there could be unacceptable impacts on the National Landscape.

Policy 10 -- Heritage Assets

Policy Purpose: To seek specific reference to the Heritage and Conservation Area Maps and List so that proposals for development properly assess the effects on these assets.

Development proposals should recognise, conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets and respect their setting. These assets are set out on the Neighbourhood Plan Heritage and Conservation Area Maps and List including both listed and unlisted heritage buildings. Where proposals alter, extend, or demolish designated or non-designated assets they should be accompanied by a Heritage Appraisal, Significance Statement and Impact Assessment.

CHAPTER 5: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

This Chapter looks at the village's population and its current and future needs for residential development. As these needs are most directly linked to planning policies, this chapter contains the greatest number of policies.

The following key facts and statistics come from an all Walberswick household survey and data analysis undertaken by Community Action Suffolk for the Housing Needs Assessment (HSA) undertaken as part of the NDP process (See Attachment 3), from the 2021 census, from ESC property/council tax information obtained through a Freedom of Information Request and the NDP Working Group's own research.

- There are approximately 320 residences within the parish boundary. These consist of primary residences, second homes, social housing and holiday lets. Very few are flats.
- There are within these households 346 permanent residents as of the 2021 census. This is down from 380 at the 2011 census. The age profile is heavily skewed towards older residents. The median age is 52 against 41 in East of England overall. 42% of permanent residents are over the age of 65. Some 11% are over the age of 80 which is more than double the percentage in the UK population as a whole.
- Given that there are no dedicated residential facilities for the elderly, these figures indicate that Walberswick's oldest residents are living lives more independently in their homes and in better health than the national average.
- Some 16% of residents (55 residents) are under the age of 18.
- Approximately 50% of the homes are primary residences. 109 of the residences are second homes. 42 are holiday lets.
- Exact comparisons are difficult to make, but it is estimated that 60% of homes were primary residences at the time of the 2011 census.
- Property in Walberswick is extraordinarily expensive with home prices at more than twice the average across Suffolk. House prices in Walberswick reached an overall average of £825,500 in 2025. 2025 data shows that Walberswick is the most expensive place in Suffolk to buy a home.
- The majority of properties sold in Walberswick during 2025 were detached properties, selling for an average price of £854,000. Semi-detached properties sold for an average of £740,000.
- Overall, the historical sold prices in Walberswick in 2025 were 11% up on the previous year and 33% down on the 2023 peak of £1,226,429. (Source Rightmove 2026).
- The Housing Needs Assessment indicated that 63% of the survey respondents were in favour of new smaller family homes with 2-3 bedrooms and 41% were in favour of homes for older people. Respondents indicated that such housing would increase the number of permanent residents and be supportive of older residents aging in place.
- Comments in the HNA also refer to the need for new properties to be restricted as Principal Residences.
- A surge in holiday lets erodes the village tax base as holiday lets registered as businesses do not pay the village precept, but make use of the village services that the precept finances. That means fewer households are left to absorb the costs of village services.
- In Walberswick, despite the WPC keeping the precept unchanged for the past 5 years, households have seen the amount they pay for their portion of the precept increase as more houses go for holiday lets and leave the Council tax rolls. On the other hand, well-

managed holiday lets bring in visitors who tend to be consistently high spenders in local businesses and hospitality. As Walberswick is a year-round destination, unlike many seaside communities, this visitor spend provides some advantage in supporting popular local shops and pubs which, in turn, make Walberswick a more desirable place to live for residents and for tourists to visit.

- Unlike holiday lets, second homes now provide greater tax revenue than full time homes with Council tax (including the portion that is precept) being double the primary residence rate as of 2025/26. The impact has already seen the amount of precept paid by full time residents go down. It is also important to note that Walberswick's second-home owners are among our highly involved members of the community, many with generational links to the Village. They are also a key source of new permanent residents with many second home owners eventually becoming full-time residents.
- A relatively new phenomenon of Walberswick's housing stock is the disproportionately large homes due to the emphasis on taking down modest cottages and homes and replacing them with houses with 5 or more bedrooms. If not completely demolished, smaller houses often have extensions added to them to produce very large houses. At the 2011 census, Walberswick had a lower percentage of one and 2-bedroom properties compared to the average in Suffolk and England. This situation has likely been further exacerbated. Approximately 30% of the council tax is in Band G and H. This compares to around 8% across East Suffolk.

Providing Primary Residences

The Housing Needs Assessment comments contained many references to the need for any new builds to be available only to individuals who intended them as their primary residence. New build properties are often not resident owner-occupied projects but often built speculatively by developers for second homes and/or holiday lets. *(include figures giving number of bedrooms in planning applications approved in the past 24 months)*. This trend obviously impacts negatively on those with average incomes looking to rent or buy in Walberswick. It also impacts older current residents who have indicated a desire to remain in the village, but with no place to downsize as modest sized homes are lost to developers.

Due to the impact upon the local housing market of unregulated growth of dwellings used as second or holiday homes or for holiday accommodation, and the detrimental impact that decreasing permanent residency has on the community, policies are necessary to safeguard the sustainability of the settlement and to ensure that the community is not irreparably eroded by an excessive number of properties not occupied by residents.

Visual / design / character implications of large new dwellings or greatly extended / altered existing stock

In addition to concerns about maintaining a resident population, the tendency to build new large houses (often replacing much more modest units) or greatly extending smaller existing properties, often has a detrimental impact on the street scene and character of the locality. The implications of this type of infill development in Walberswick village needs to be addressed at both the plot and village level.

(i) Plot considerations

- The immediate context and character of the plot should determine the appropriateness of any infill development. (See Spatial Qualities of the Built Environment section, and Key Views sections of this document). Given the large Conservation Area; the presence of a large number of non-designated heritage assets; and the structure of the village (i.e. often linear, with views to and from the boundaries and surrounding National Landscape) careful, thoughtful design is

paramount. This can often be compromised by designers seeking to maximise value from very expensive plots.

- The 'terracing' effect that infill may create is also a key consideration and can impact the streetscape by eroding gaps and green spaces between dwellings.
- Garden sizes should be appropriate to the scale of the proposed dwelling and those surrounding it, observing the established spatial patterning of an area. Parking should be provided on plot and be provided not to the detriment of the boundary and front garden space.
- Rear and side privacy and overlooking between dwellings is a key consideration when determining the appropriateness of an infill plot. The placement of ground and first floor windows, balconies, and dormer windows/rooflights will be important considerations.
- Appropriate back-to-back distances should be designed into the development, considering distances both to the boundary and to the dwelling beyond.

(ii) Village-level Considerations

- Along The Street viewpoints are limited to long linear and enclosed views following the line of the road. Only very occasionally (where there are breaks in the townscape and landscape) do views open to the countryside to the north and south of The Street.
- Along Lodge Road and many of the Lanes, the spacing and scale of development (detached dwellings with front, rear, and side gardens) allows for occasional longer/wider views out towards the countryside, including views of the Church tower.
- The setback building line combined with generous landscape boundaries and mature trees provide a strong character along the small roads, lanes and footpaths.
- Views into the open countryside provide a sense of place and context of the setting of the village and should be carefully assessed when considering infill development.

Affordable and smaller housing

The Housing Needs Assessment indicated that 63% of the survey respondents were in favour of new small family homes with 2-3 bedrooms and 41% were in favour of homes for older people. Write-in comments also contained many references to the need for any new builds to be affordable. This Plan is not specifically allocating land for affordable houses but the policies proposed in this chapter seek to influence the size and types of new or altered housing to better fit the needs of the population.

The issues raised in the above analysis can be broadly summarised as:

- Potential impacts on community cohesion of the lack of full-time residents / occupied properties
- Elderly resident profile
- Extreme property prices
- Degree of second homes / holiday lets
- Visual / design / character implications of large new dwellings or greatly extended / altered existing stock
- Lack of smaller and affordable housing and housing that supports older residents 'downsizing'.
- It is important to acknowledge that the isolated nature of the Walberswick settlement and the lack of any public transportation and public services are the most likely factors, outside

of the affordable housing stock, that limit more full-time, younger residents from settling in Walberswick. These issues are, obviously, outside the scope of the NDP.

Supporting Policies: In order to address the issues set out in this chapter in relation to prioritising homes for a resident community, the impact of very large new dwellings and preserving a housing stock best able to support the community, this Plan includes the following policies in respect of residential development.

Policy 11 -- Principal Residences

Purpose: To safeguard the sustainability of the settlement and to ensure that the community is not irreparably eroded through excessive number of properties that are not occupied on a permanent basis.

Proposals for (i) new market dwellings, (ii) any new replacement dwelling, and extensions over 40% of the original floor area (*% issue to be further considered*) will only be supported when it can be demonstrated that a planning condition and supporting Section 106 legal agreement will be imposed to guarantee that such dwellings will be the occupants' sole or main residence where the residents spend the majority of their time when not working away from home. This section 106 agreement will appear on the Register of Local Land Charges.

New build unrestricted second homes or holiday lets will **not** be supported at any time. When planning permission is required, proposals for the change of use of C3 (dwelling houses) of existing or new market dwellings (including any new dwellings on a site which have replaced a single property) to a furnished holiday let (Sui Generis) will **not** be supported.

Occupiers of homes with a Principal Residence condition or obligation will be required to maintain proof that they are meeting the condition / obligation, and will need to provide this proof as and when required by the Local Planning Authority. Proof of Principal Residence will be via verifiable evidence which could include for example (but not limited to):

- residents being registered for and attending local services (such as healthcare, schools etc),
- evidence of belonging to and attending local groups, utility bills, driving licence or other means of identity
- Registration on the local Register of Electors will **not** be sufficient for this purpose.

The Parish Council will cooperate with the Local Planning Authority to monitor compliance with the restriction and in gathering and assessing evidence of any breach that may lead to enforcement action.

(Within this policy 'Principal Residences' are defined as those occupied as the residents' sole or main residence, where the residents spend the majority of their time when not working away from home. The condition or obligation on new homes will require that they are occupied only as the principal residence of those persons entitled to occupy them).

Policy 12 -- New Homes – general considerations of size, character and occupancy

Purpose: In order to maintain the character of the village, the street scene, protect neighbouring amenity and support increasing the proportion of homes suitable for permanent residences.

Proposals for new dwellings will be permitted within the Village Development Boundary where they:

- are typically in the size range 80 -150m² gross internal floor area (*to be further considered*), comprising of three or fewer bedrooms

- constitute sensitive infilling of small gaps within an otherwise continuously built-up frontage facing the existing road network
- conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty and are appropriate to their location in the National Landscape
- are for Principal Residencies and
- are consistent with other policies in Plan

Policy 13 -- Affordable Housing

Purpose: To consider the requirements applicable to affordable housing schemes and locational factors, should proposals come forward for such a scheme.

Any development providing Affordable Housing must contain an acceptable mix of housing for:

- Social Rent
- Affordable Rent
- Shared Ownership and
- Standard ownership.

The exact proportion shall be agreed at the time of the planning application to reflect the current assessment of housing need. It may also be appropriate for the mix to include housing designed or suitable for people with disabilities or more elderly people.

Any affordable housing should be located within the Village Development Boundary.

The scale and design standard of the scheme must retain or enhance the character and setting of the village, and the natural beauty and special qualities of the National Landscape.

Policy 14 -- Replacement Dwellings

Purpose: To maintain the existing stock of smaller units to promote affordability generally, to support the ability of older residents to downsize and remain in the community rather than being forced to move away where smaller, more manageable homes might be found and to ensure house footprints and massing do not overwhelm the plot size.

Proposals for replacement dwellings will normally only be permitted if:

- They do not result in a significant / inappropriate increase in floor area, such that it would affect the character of the immediate area, including the integrity of the National Landscape, views into or out of the village or the amenities of neighbours.
- The style – massing, scale design, materials, of the new house is appropriate for the locality
- The original house was not contributing to the character of the village
- Size restriction if old unit was a smaller dwelling (TBD).

Policy 15 -- Annexes and Outbuildings

Purpose: To ensure that additions to existing dwellings are proportionate to the current structure and do not become units of accommodation separate from the main dwelling.

Where planning permission is required, proposals for:

- Annexes should demonstrate both functional and physical dependency on the host dwelling.
- Outbuildings should show that they are required for purposes that are incidental to the use of the host dwelling.

- In both cases the new development must remain in the same ownership as the host dwelling and must share its existing access, parking and garden.
- Conditions will be placed on consents for annexes and outbuildings preventing their use for holiday accommodation unless such use is an explicit part of the planning application.
- Where permission is granted, consideration will be given to the control of further extensions by reduction or removal of permitted development rights

Policy 16 -- Extensions

Purpose: To ensure that extensions to existing dwellings are not disproportionate in size to the current dwelling, and that the resultant dwelling does not have unacceptable effects on neighbours or the local character.

Where planning permission is required, proposals for extensions to existing properties will be considered against the following factors:

- impact on neighbouring properties and their occupants as well as the amenity of any future occupiers of the extended property
- impact on the local built and natural environment
- overlooking, overbearing, overshadowing
- potential for noise
- light pollution
- visual impact
- the scale, height, massing, materials and layout of a development should respond sensitively and sympathetically to the local setting
- impacts and acceptability of the spaces between buildings resulting from the extensions
- high quality design and use of materials.
- Extensions of more than 40% (TBD) of the size of the existing dwelling will be considered under the replacement dwelling policy

CHAPTER 6: VILLAGE ECONOMY AND BUSINESSES

This chapter sets out the main contributors to and characteristics of Walberswick's successful village economy, the threats faced, and those policies best able to sustain and enhance it.

Composition of the Village Economy

Walberswick is highly unusual amongst similar sized villages in the extent of its hospitality and retail businesses. These small and middle-size businesses are at the heart of Walberswick's economy and contribute strongly to the village's desirability for residents and to the visitor experience. Despite its relatively small size, Walberswick is able to maintain 2 pubs, 4 cafes/specialist food shops, and several family-owned shops. The recent addition of an independent locally owned food and grocery shop has been a very welcome addition for residents and visitors. Additionally, several residents run small services including bicycle repair, carpentry, plumbing, house cleaning, beauty, health and IT support. This unusual number and variety of amenities, supported by permanent residents, second home-owners and the large number of tourists who stay or visit the village, are highly prized and make Walberswick a very desirable rural village.

Visitor lodging is an essential part of the economy. According to ESC tax records, 42 homes are registered as self-catering businesses. Some second homes are also used as part-time holiday lets. Both pubs offer overnight accommodation. During the school holidays, a small tent camp ground operates next to the beach and a 12 unit caravan site operate from Easter until September. *(data in this para to be confirmed)*

It must be recognised that this unique economy is based on a very particular and delicate balance. Whilst visitors are undeniably necessary to support the village's pubs, cafes and shops, excessive proliferation of holiday lets and enormous second homes replacing formerly modest dwellings lead to a deficit of housing available to people who want to live, work and shop in the community. Moreover, it means there are decreasing numbers of village residents – fulltime and part-time -- who can support the community and provide the “authenticity” of village life which is a major draw for visitors seeking a “village experience”.

Day and overnight visitors are heavily drawn to Walberswick's beach and harbour, extensive network of footpaths through the surrounding AONB, as well as walking and cycling paths to neighbouring towns and villages including Southwold, Dunwich and Blythburgh. As explained in previous chapters, the value of the Walberswick economy is dependent on its landscape quality, tranquillity, accessibility and place reputation.

It is important to note, as well, that it is the beauty, authenticity and historic relevance of the built environment that also contributes to the draw of tens of thousands visitors each year who help support the village's economy. As set out in earlier chapters, attempts to maximise the number of visitors per home can be detrimental to the existing character of homes that help define the village's eclectic charm. Walberswick has witnessed the paving over of front and back gardens to accommodate larger numbers of cars, renovating modest homes into 5-6 bedroom properties, and increasing use of unsympathetic materials. Though these trends are not universal nor limited to holiday lets, the overall impact of these types of renovations can be harmful to the unique architectural character of Walberswick and therefore serve to degrade the very thing that makes the village appealing to its visitors and supportive of its economy. Such concerns related to managing over-development are familiar to many beauty spots across the UK and Europe.

Business Areas

The area around the Village Green is a particularly critical part of the Walberswick economy. Along the Green is a row of small village shops and cafes (including one that is Grade II listed) all of which are unique and family owned. Both village pubs are just a minute's walk from this shopping area nestled within the Conservation Area. These pubs also offer overnight accommodation throughout

the year. A very small, summer caravan park is an easy walk from the Green as is a small temporary tent and hut camping area open during the school summer holiday. These are quiet, unlit areas that need to be carefully managed and size-limited so as not to disturb the sensitive natural environment or overwhelm the visitor experience.

Two village run buildings for civic functions and/or private hire – the Village Hall and the Heritage Hut -- are also located at the Green. The Green itself serves as the focal point for the Village's Annual Fete and other celebrations, providing a small playground and green area that encourages day visitors not just to visit the beach, but to frequent Walberswick's shops and small cafes.

A second retail area is found in The Street approximately in the centre of the built settlement. This consists of The Tuck Shop that provides fresh local foods and essentials and acts as a gathering point for residents. By long tradition, this village shop fills a role beyond its commercial one. It is the place where tickets to events in the Village are sold, where information is provided on village events and services, where births and deaths are announced and where residents can check on the well-being of their neighbours. Nearby is a popular deli which, like the Tuck Shop, serves as another mid-village gathering place. Whilst benefitting from the trade of Walberswick's full and part-time residents, it is unlikely that either establishment could survive without the vibrant visitor economy.

Visitor Sources

Whilst exact numbers of day visitors are difficult to come by, the use of the Village's two large car parks provides useful data points. Walberswick has two beach side car parks for day visitors which are operated for the financial benefit of the Walberswick Common Lands Charity. The car parks also help reduce on street parking that is detrimental to the shared use of Walberswick's sole thoroughfare for cars, cyclists, pedestrians (and occasional horses). Charges at the car parks are in place year-round with rates set to be competitive with surrounding coastal towns. During summer holidays, an average of about 500-600 cars a day park at one of the two car parks. Assuming an average of 4 passengers per car, that would equate to a summer average of 2000 daily visitors. Similar numbers park during Christmas and half-term holidays depending on the weather. Even during the off-season, it is not unusual to have 100-200 visitor cars in a day. Overall, approximately 44,000 cars parked in Walberswick's car parks in 2025. In 2026, the Walberswick Car Parks covenanted just under £60,000 net profit to the WCLC.

Many day visitors also come on foot or bicycle from Southwold and Dunwich and by bicycle via the B1387. Walberswick also boasts a small rowing/motor ferry that carries pedestrians back and forth from Southwold Harbour to Walberswick. This ferry, operated by the same family for generations, carries several hundred passengers on busy days in the season and during half-term and public holidays (depending on weather). This connectivity is an essential support for Walberswick's economy. The visitor experience for both Walberswick and Southwold is enhanced by the off-road connectivity of these neighbouring visitor hot spots. Using the pedestrian-only Bailey Bridge and/or the Ferry permits visitors to easily access both locations without the need to get into their cars. The charm and novelty of such connectivity supports businesses on both sides of the Blyth River.

Whilst it is not possible to filter out exactly where walkers come from, data collected on one of the main footpaths running from the harbour to the Bailey bridge shows that an excess of 110,000 people use the path on an annual basis. People counters installed on the centrally located Manor Field are showing some 150,000 foot journeys a year. The introduction of the King Charles III coastal footpath through Walberswick in 2025 can be expected to bring even more foot travellers. The Daily Mail recently put Walberswick Beach, based on its unspoiled nature and quiet charm, as number 4 in the country's top 10 beaches. A similar rating was bestowed on Walberswick by the Telegraph and other publications.

These statistics again serve as both a boon and a warning in terms of Walberswick's natural environment and sense of place. As covered in other chapters, the continuation and protection of Walberswick's green spaces, long views, dark night skies and reputation for tranquillity is not a

foregone conclusion. Preserving these vital assets requires that they be protected and enhanced by appropriate policies. This means balancing the visitor economy with ensuring that the natural assets that drive this economy are not over-burdened, degraded or lost.

Supporting Policies: In conjunction with the built and natural environment policies set out in earlier chapters, the following policies are intended to both enhance Walberswick's amenity and visitor driven economy and ensure that the characteristics that are essential for the village economy are preserved and protected.

Policy 17 -- Small Shop Units

Purpose: To preserve retail space that serves the community and is appropriate to the built environment of the village and/or that has regard to the role that some shops play in supporting the visitor economy.

Policy: Small shop units should be:

- protected from change of use to residential or holiday letting.
- proposals to increase the size of an existing retail unit must:
 - demonstrate that it is essential to ensure the continued effective trading of the existing operator.
 - appropriate to the size and massing of existing units and in a style appropriate to the location.
- subject to the other policies within the Plan

Policy 18 -- Advertising and Signage

Purpose: To acknowledge the considerations relating to the impact of signage on the character of the village and surroundings.

Policy: Proposals should minimise the impact of outdoor advertising and signage, with particular attention to lighting, on the character of the village, natural beauty and the tranquillity of the National Landscape or the setting of heritage assets and designations within the Parish.

Policy 19 -- Touring and Permanent Holiday Accommodation

Purpose: In order to protect the village and the surrounding sensitive environments from visually disruptive, prominent and potentially damaging visitor generating over-development.

Policy: Proposals for new holiday accommodation units or sites (such as lodges, caravan or campsites), or intensification or extension of existing uses incorporating static or semi-permanent or permanent structures, including associated facilities, will not be permitted.

The Parish Council will press the Local Planning Authority to prepare an Article 4 Direction to prevent temporary campsites.

Proposals for the adaptation of sites to mitigate flood risk will be supported if they are:

- consistent with the Shoreline Management Plan
- to the highest standards of design, and would not result in visually prominent structures
- respect the National Landscape setting and comply with designated sites requirements (HRA etc).

CHAPTER 7: COMMUNITY LIFE

This chapter describes and discusses the key aspects of Community Life in Walberswick and sets out policies designed to protect and enhance its best aspects.

Community Organisations and the WCLC

Village life in Walberswick is greatly enhanced by the engagement of full and part-time residents in both organising and participating in village activities, clubs, and charities. These include an elected Parish Council and a Village Hall Committee that runs and maintains a well-used Village Hall. There are also currently more than 20 village groups covering a wide range of interests and activities. Each of these organisations prepares an annual report presented to the Annual Parish Meeting (See Appendix 5 for list of village organisations from the 2026 AGM - **pending**) These organisations are the lifeblood of the community but also face the challenges associated with an aging population and the loss of housing that limits the number of full and part-time residents.

Walberswick Common Lands Charity (WCLC) is one of the most significant local groups with a volunteer Board of Directors that manages the Walberswick Common Lands and a second volunteer Board of Directors that runs the village car parks for the benefit of the WCLC. WCLC is an independent body with its origins dating back to the 1800s and has been a registered charity since 1901. It is the largest landowner in the immediate vicinity of the Village, responsible for custody of over 162 acres (65 hectares) of land in and around Walberswick.

WCLC land consists of the Common as well as the land used for the two beach car parks and the land on which are located, 5 fishing huts, 33 beach huts and 3 properties by the River Blyth (the 'Studio', 'Craft Room' and 'Savoy'). Nearly all of the land is functional permanent endowment land and as such is subject to additional restrictions under charity law. In addition, WCLC owns the following buildings: the Tea Shed and adjacent Print Room (near the Green), the Bird Hide and multiple-use Storage Shed (both in Bennett's Drift) and the Community Beach Hut.

The Charity uses the income from its land and properties to manage and conserve the environment and to provide charitable benefit to the Village. The Charity currently has over 100 property agreements. These include access and car parking licences, leases and annual agreements.

WCLC and the Parish Council work co-operatively on many projects that benefit the Village. The Heritage Hut, on the Green, is owned by the Parish Council but the WCLC provided the very significant funding needed to renovate it and turn it into a vibrant, IT-enabled meeting and exhibition space. The WCLC chairs a committee, including the Parish Council and the History Group, that manages the Heritage Hut. In an opposite type of arrangement, the Parish Council pays a peppercorn rent to WCLC for the Common Space that has playing fields and a playground filled with modern playground equipment paid for (including with generous donations by villagers) and maintained by the Parish Council. The Parish Council and the Charity have cooperated on many other initiatives including speed indicator signs and defibrators, among others.

WCLC has a vital role to play in terms of the stewardship of its land and has for many years worked in partnership with Natural England under a Countryside Stewardship Agreement, last renewed in 2024. This agreement ensures that the Charity is able to continue its environmental work, the vast majority of which is devoted to improving the diversity of habitat on the Village Common. The aim is to provide a mosaic of vegetation which allows all heathland features to flourish, including pioneer heath and bare ground which benefits rarer invertebrates, birds, reptiles and plants. In recent years successes have included the return of nightjars and nightingales to the Common. For over a century, the Charity has been a source of funds for 'relief in need' and for the general benefit of the inhabitants of the Village; some regularly and some on a 'one-off' basis.

Community projects and groups are also supported by WCLC. In 2025, the Charity made charitable grants of over £58,000. The main areas of funding are: (i) Benefits and Support to individuals, (ii) Grants to Organisations that provide charitable support to the community, and (ii) Educational Grants for Village inhabitants in full-time education.

Community Assets

Village life is enabled and supported by a range of Community Assets which both significantly enrich life in Walberswick for full and part-time residents and attract the large number of visitors that are required to support local businesses. The fabric of Walberswick is epitomised by these Community Assets and each of them contribute to making Walberswick the unique and desirable place that it is for living and visiting. The potential loss of any of these assets through sale or change of use, therefore, needs to be carefully managed and guarded against. These assets are scattered across village as can be seen on Map 9 below. A full list of these community assets is set out below in Policy 20.

Insert MAP 9: Community Assets - pending

Links with Southwold: As discussed in Chapter 2, Walberswick's character is highly intertwined with its neighbours and, in particular, to its proximity to Southwold and its Harbour. Whilst Walberswick lacks medical facilities, residents make heavy use of the highly rated Sole Bay Health Centre NHS in Southwold/Reydon. Southwold also has a fulltime post office (Walberswick lost its twice weekly post office services in 2024), part-time banking (Southwold's last bank branch was closed by Barclays in 2023), a library and sports facilities. Southwold's vibrant high street with dozens of shops, restaurants and cafes provide a level of amenity impossible in a small village. It is this proximity and connectivity to Southwold that helps draw both residents and visitors to Walberswick.

Green Spaces and PRowS

Because of Walberswick's compact settlement area, its Green Spaces play a critical role in creating a sense of community and of place. An initial overview of the most valued public green spaces within Walberswick parish was created through consultation with the parishioners of Walberswick and then reviewed through desk-based assessment and field survey, focusing on the contribution they make. This information is also partly covered within the Conservation Area Appraisal. Each space has been categorised into a type, to support in its future management.

Insert MAP 10: Location of Green Spaces – pending

A full list of the Green Spaces identified can be found in Appendix 6.

Public Rights of Way (PRow): Walberswick's network of PRow are central to village life and connect not only the various parts of the village but are key links to neighbouring Southwold and Dunwich. These PRow also provide local access to the nationally renowned King Charles III coastal path along with access to the beach, the marshes, and all routes to Dunwich. They are fundamental for foot access to Blythburgh, particularly as there are no roadside footpaths in Walberswick nor on the single road from Walberswick (B1387) that passes Blythburgh.

Recent professional footfall monitoring of just some of the footpaths in Walberswick clearly demonstrate the scale of use and the fact that the PRow are an essential recreational space for residents and visitors. Between May 2024 and December 2025, a total of 147,447 people used the monitored footpaths. Whilst there were some periods of heavier use (summer, school holidays, warmer weekends, Christmas/New Year, Easter holiday) there is never a time when these PRow are not well used. Because of the beauty of our PRow, their frequent views of the sea and marshes and the teeming bird life in and surrounding them, they are also used extensively by organised walking and running events. A large number of charity events and organised runs make use of our PRow every year.

Shared Space

As described earlier, one of the defining characteristics of Walberswick is its single road running past farmland for 4 km before entering the village and ending, literally at the sea. This “shared space” where pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles all make equal use of the common roadway gives Walberswick its coherence and identity. It is extraordinarily unusual and precious to have one main street where neighbours and friends inevitably bump into one another, where conversations are shared and where all modes of transport have to respect the other. The fact that Walberswick village was made a 20 mph zone as far back as 2017 demonstrates the recognition of its relative uniqueness in this aspect of its landscape.

At the same time, this “shared space” is under threat by the increasing volumes of traffic from more and bigger cars, vans delivering on-line shopping and high volumes of construction vehicles. Therefore, the concept of “shared space” needs to make way to the concept of “safe space” such that the village can provide safe and comfortable space for walking and cycling as well as controlling speeding issues and fly parking.

In 2019/2020, a small group of villagers --- representing the Parish Council, WCLC, Village Car Park, the Planning Advisory Group and those with expertise in planning – worked with traffic consultants to develop plans for transforming The Street into “Safe Space”. A short list of 4 locations in the village where road and landscape design could be used to create “Safe Space” were identified.

In 2021, to help mitigate for the multi-month closure of the Bailey Bridge, Suffolk Highways agreed to institute one of the “Safe Space” designs to slow traffic and control fly-parking that had led to a dangerous and “road rage” prone situation near the Church. The scheme provided strong proof of concept -- succeeding in slowing traffic coming into the village on an open stretch of the Street where speeding had been endemic, limited fly-parking that had blocked access to the historic church, and made it safer for entrance/egress from driveways on The Street and for cars, cycles and pedestrians exiting from Church Lane and Palmers Lane.

In addition to the scheme at the Church, the other areas identified are:

1. the entrance to the settlement area of Walberswick at Adams Lane
2. the “Tunnel” between Palmer’s Lane and the Y junction at Lodge Road
3. the Village Hall and the Green
4. In a later phase, a fifth location would be at the area where the Tuck Shop and the entrance to Manor Close is located.

As with the scheme introduced by the Church, the Parish Council would be the body that would champion the schemes, work with other organisations on financing (CIL financing could be one such source as would working with the WCLC, for example) and who would work together with Suffolk Highways to institute those schemes where it was felt the priority was greatest and financing available. By including them in the NDP, it allows the village to accept these schemes as something to work towards in the years ahead

More details on what Shared Safe Space can accomplish and the specific schemes are included in Appendix 7. (Because of the size of the documents, they can be best viewed on the online version of the NDP.)

Supporting Policies: The following set of policies are designed to promote, enhance and protect the key elements that support Community Life in Walberswick:

Policy 20 -- Community Assets

Purpose: To retain those features of Walberswick which contribute to the everyday enjoyment of the village by residents and visitors.

Policy: Proposals for the establishment of new community facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, which could include new or improved facilities at the recreation ground and village hall, will be supported where:

- The facilities enhance the quality of life of people in the village including children, people with disabilities and the elderly
- The proposal is appropriate in its location, scale and design and would not be detrimental to the character of the landscape of the National Landscape or the built environment of the village
- The amenities of neighbouring residents will not be adversely affected by the nature of the use, noise or traffic generated
- There will not be an unacceptable impact on the local road network in terms of highway safety or the free flow of traffic
- The proposal includes appropriate car parking facilities to ensure that the proposal does not result in an increase in on-street parking

Development proposals which would result in the loss of all or part of any of the facilities listed will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated by the applicant that:

- the operation of the facility is no longer viable or necessary or
- the use will be replaced by another use which is a valuable community facility: or
- a replacement facility of equal size, utility and quality will be provided in an accessible location.

The list of community assets is as follows:

- Village Hall
- Heritage Hut
- Black Dog deli
- Anchor Public House
- Bell Public House
- Tuck Shop
- Allotments
- Churchyard
- Playing Fields
- The Village Greens:
- Bell Green
- Jubilee Green
- Main Village Green
- Cliff Field Car Park
- Ferry Road Car Park
- Bus shelter (opposite the Church)
- Flagpole
- Play areas on the Main Village Green and adjacent to the Playing Field
- The Common
- Beach huts
- Village Signs

Policy 21 -- Local Green Spaces

Purpose: To acknowledge and bring to prominence the important green spaces in the village, and protect them from inappropriate development.

Policy: The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following locations as Local Green Spaces, as shown on the Village Inset Map.

(Note: Need to work out how best to reference the full list)

Proposals for any development on these Local Green Spaces will not be permitted other than where it is consistent with reason for the designation as a Local Green Space, for example, where it is essential to meet the needs of utility services infrastructure or a significant community facility and no feasible alternative site is available.

Policy 22 -- Protecting and Maintaining Public Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside

Purpose: To ensure that PRoWs and access to the countryside are not lost given their essential role in preserving the character and economy of Walberswick.

Policy: Development proposals should not encroach on, negatively impact or detrimentally affect views from Public Rights of Way footpaths and bridle ways, but positively protect and, where appropriate, take the opportunity to enhance them.

Policy 23 -- Shared Space

Purpose: Movement of residents and visitors is overwhelmingly by foot on the shared roadway which serves also to connect off-road foot and bridleways that criss-cross the village. Making this a shared space safe and enticing for all road users is essential for maintaining the fabric of the village.

Policy: Development proposals should respect the shared nature of the main route through the village (The Street) from the junction of Adams Lane through to the Harbour.

Proposals should:

- Take opportunities to enhance the safety of the shared surface.
- Make suitable provision for safe access and egress from development sites both during building works and when the development is in use
- Hedges and trees should be retained
- Surface treatments where an access joins the highway should be sympathetic to the locality
- New signage or road markings must respect the character of the village and be appropriate but unobtrusive

The proposals in Appendix 7 referenced above form a set of possible future enhancements that can be taken forward when appropriate funding is available.

CHAPTER 8: EXTERNAL THREATS AND RESILIENCE

This chapter outlines the principal external threats facing Walberswick and introduces policies, where possible, to help mitigate the risks that could arise from them in so far as they are impacted by developments within and around the village.

Walberswick's unique character is defined by its position between the River Blyth, the Dunwich River, the North Sea, and an extensive landscape of protected habitats and agricultural land. This setting is cherished by residents and visitors alike. Yet it also makes the village highly environmentally sensitive and hydrologically complex.

Fluvial Flooding

The River Blyth and Dunwich River respond rapidly to heavy rainfall, and during high tides the surrounding marshes have limited capacity to absorb excess water. Flooding can affect the marshes south of the village, access routes including the Bailey Bridge area, agricultural land, and grazing marshes that currently function as natural flood storage.

The Environment Agency's long-standing position to "Hold the Line" along the Blyth Estuary means that critical flood defence interventions will have minimal maintenance and will not be replaced. Even this level of commitment is still constrained by public funding and does not extend to maintaining the clay walls along the River Blyth at their current height to reduce overtopping risk. In addition, the concrete arms of the harbour mouth and two further critical structures further along the estuary—now considered to be nearing end of life—will neither be maintained nor replaced. East Suffolk Council, through the Harbour Management Committee, is actively engaged in trying to identify solutions and funding to support the maintenance of Southwold Harbour including repairs of the south harbour walls.

The combined effect is an increased and growing likelihood of flooding during surge tides, accelerated deterioration of the clay walls, and ultimately the loss of the harbour structures. This would allow tidal waters to enter the estuary, flooding marshes, car parks, and lower-lying residential areas of the village.

Coastal Erosion

Walberswick sits on one of the most mobile and highly erodible stretches of the Suffolk coast. The shoreline here is shaped by strong North Sea wave energy, persistent longshore drift, and the continual reworking of soft, unconsolidated sediments. These processes have always driven coastal change, but the rate and scale of movement are increasing. More frequent storm events, higher water levels, and the cumulative effect of tidal surges are accelerating erosion and placing growing pressure on the village's low-lying marshes and estuary margins.

The Environment Agency's long-standing "Hold the Line" policy for Walberswick beach provides only minimal maintenance and no new investment in coastal defence infrastructure. In practice, this means that existing structures—whether natural features such as dunes and shingle banks or man-made elements like flood banks—are left to deteriorate. As breaches of these defences from the sea become more common, each failure weakens the remaining defences and reduces their capacity to protect the village from tidal flooding. The result is a gradual but measurable decline in the resilience of the Blyth estuary system.

The Walberswick Foreshore, extending from low tide to the first line of development, is small in area but of great ecological importance. Located within the Coasts & Heaths AONB and adjacent to nationally and internationally designated habitats, it supports a mosaic of dunes, shingle, saltmarsh, and transitional habitats that are home to species of conservation concern. These habitats rely on natural dynamism, but they are also highly sensitive to disturbance. Heavy seasonal visitor use—particularly trampling of the marram grass and dune structures, informal access routes—adds further strain to an already fragile environment.

Erosion of dunes, shingle ridges, and marsh edges are steadily reducing the natural buffers that protect the village. As these features retreat or narrow, the marshes lose both physical extent and flood-storage capacity. This diminishes their ability to absorb tidal energy and regulate water levels during tidal breaches. The cumulative effect is a weakening of the estuary's natural resilience and a greater exposure of the village to flooding and coastal change.

The implications extend beyond flood risk. Continued erosion threatens the integrity of designated habitats, disrupts ecological connectivity, and undermines the long-term stability of the coastal landscape. Public access routes, including well-used footpaths and beach approaches, are increasingly vulnerable to wash-out or collapse. The narrowing of the foreshore also increases the likelihood of conflict between conservation objectives and recreational use, particularly during peak visitor periods.

Surface Water Flooding

Surface water flooding is an increasing concern due to climate-driven rainfall intensity and local changes in land use. Walberswick's narrow roads, limited drainage infrastructure, and naturally high groundwater levels mean that heavy rainfall can quickly overwhelm the system, causing ponding and runoff across roads, paths, and low-lying areas.

Loss of gardens to infill development reduces permeable ground that would normally absorb rainfall. Subdivision of plots and increased building coverage diminish the landscape's natural drainage capacity. The paving of gardens—often for low-maintenance landscaping or additional parking—further increases impermeable surfaces, preventing infiltration and accelerating runoff into already constrained drainage routes, roads or other properties.

Cumulatively, these changes reduce the village's ability to absorb intense rainfall, increasing both the frequency and severity of surface water flooding. In a coastal settlement already affected by high groundwater and tidal influences, the cumulative impact is a more vulnerable and less resilient drainage system.

Climate Change

Climate change is intensifying all major flood and erosion processes across the country, including in Walberswick. Fluvial flooding and erosion are worsening as heavier, more intense rainfall drives higher river flows in the River Blyth and Dunwich River catchments. Faster flows erode riverbanks, destabilise marshes, and raise estuary water levels, especially when combined with high tides. When following periods of drought, the hard land is less able to absorb the intense rainfall.

Coastal erosion is accelerating as rising sea levels and more frequent storm surges increase wave energy on the shoreline. This speeds up the loss of dunes, shingle banks, and marsh edges, reducing natural coastal buffers.

Surface water flooding is becoming more common as intense rainfall overwhelms local drainage and saturates already high groundwater levels. With reduced marsh capacity and higher tides, excess water has fewer places to go.

These climate-driven pressures increase erosion, reduce natural flood storage, and heighten Walberswick's vulnerability to flooding from multiple sources. Development must therefore demonstrate that it proactively minimises the potential for all forms of flooding, including through reduced freshwater use and responsible wastewater disposal.

Measures that reduce flood risk across the village will be welcomed. Proposals must not rely on interventions that increase flood risk elsewhere, such as the loss or culverting of open watercourses.

New development will be expected to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) wherever feasible, following established best practice. SuDS features should ideally be at or near the surface, providing water-quality, biodiversity, and amenity benefits alongside flood-risk reduction. As most future development is anticipated on brownfield land, a key objective will be to minimise discharge rates—current best practice indicates reductions of at least 30%.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)

Walberswick's coastal location also exposes the village to one of its most significant external threats: the absence of coherent national-level planning for the transition to a greener energy system. Current proposals could result in around 60% of the nation's energy infrastructure being funnelled through a narrow five-mile stretch of the Suffolk coast, including Walberswick.

With Sizewell C less than ten miles south of the village already generating unprecedented offshore works in the North Sea, the rapid expansion of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects means private energy developers are seeking to site interconnectors, offshore wind cable landfalls, extensive cable corridors, and large substations across the Suffolk coast. This is leading to the disruption of the natural environment and biodiversity including the habitats of protected species, and to an industrialisation and transport disruption which could ruin the eco-tourism experience that fuels the economy and lifestyle of Walberswick and all the neighbouring towns and villages of Coastal Suffolk.

More recently, this threat has been magnified by private energy producers haphazardly and without regard to cumulative impact, looking to site interconnectors and offshore wind cable landing sites, long cable trenches, substations and converter stations into and through great swatches of the Suffolk coast. Walberswick, in particular, is being directly threatened by the proposed Lionlink development which would bring a cable from the Netherlands into the very heart of the village where the impact would not only devastate the natural environment, but would potentially produce air pollutants, light and noise pollution, and industrialisation during construction that would impact the entire Walberswick settlement.

While each scheme is individually promoted as essential to the national grid, collectively they risk imposing severe cumulative impacts on landscape, biodiversity, heritage, and community wellbeing. Without strategic planning and proper assessment of cumulative effects, the Suffolk coast—and villages like Walberswick—face disproportionate and potentially irreversible damage.

Supporting Policies:

Much of the threats identified in this chapter are beyond the control of a Neighbourhood Development Plan. However, the policies below are designed to help mitigate these risks within the confines of what is possible in an NDP.

Policy 24-- Minimising the Impact of Flooding

Purpose: To address street flooding caused by homes/businesses and minimise risks of flooding from erosion, climate change and other sources.

Policy: As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should:

- Include assessment of the potential impact on flooding
- Mitigate flooding from all sources (fluvial and pluvial)
- Provide appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which minimise discharge rates unless it can be shown to be inappropriate. SuDS should be well integrated into a development and provide multifunctional benefits, such as landscaping, open space and biodiversity gains; and
- Provide for rainwater harvesting.

Development proposals in flood attenuation areas, including the hard surfacing of gardens, driveways or other open spaces, which would reduce the ability of the area concerned to alleviate flooding, will be discouraged. Where planning permission is required, they will not be supported.

Policy 25 -- Water Resource Management

Purpose: To contribute to wider national objectives

Policy: Proposals for development should encourage a proactive approach to management of water resources that takes account of expected changes in water supply and demand and also ensures a responsible approach to wastewater treatment and disposal.

Such measures could include:

- Rainwater or grey water harvesting
- Acting in advance of changes to the Building Regulations

Policy 26 -- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

Purpose: NSIPS are determined at the national level leaving local authorities and the communities directly affected dominated by national policies and the interests of strong private and state-owned corporations which have shown scant regard for the greater knowledge of impact that the local community brings nor for the very high price these NSIPs have on the local ecology and people. Given the massive threat these projects are to Walberswick, the following sets out what we would like to see in how developers should present proposals including potential mitigation, monitoring, management plans and communication channels.

Policy: Potential developers will be expected to show (beyond normal project assessments) particular consideration of the following likely impacts:

- Short and long-term damage to the designated areas for nature and habitats and species and the ability to recover.
- Landscape and effects on the National Landscape
- Health and well-being considerations for the resident community, this should include:
 - Noise, dust, vibration from on-site works
 - Disruption to recreation, including footpath closures and diversions
 - Visual intrusion of the works
 - Anxiety for (especially older or vulnerable) residents
- Traffic and Highway issues such as road closures, damage to surfaces and verges, removal of verge side trees and hedges, highway safety
- Timing and length of the works and working periods.
- Cumulative effects with other NSIPs, and potential co-ordination

In addition to the normal requirements, developers will be expected to provide for and be open to discussion with the Parish Council the following details of project design early in the development process:

- Early receipt of detailed designs for highway works, haul road design, work access points, temporary and permanent
- Location of compounds and equipment and reasonable alternatives
- Expected noise, dust and vibration limits
- Identification / avoidance of veteran and aged trees and hedgerows
- Lighting
- Mitigation methods

PART TWO: POLICIES

TABLE OF POLICIES THAT MAKE UP THE WALBERSWICK NDP

NOTE: To be completed. This table will show how the policies contribute to the objectives set out in Chapter 1.

Policy No.	Policy Name	Chapter	OBJECTIVES							
			O1 Heritage	O2 Community	O3 Built Environment	O4 New & Replacement Dwellings	O5 Natural Environment & <u>Bio-diversity</u>	O6 <u>Landscape</u> & Views	O7 Economy	O8 Environmental change & Resilience

COMPILATION OF ALL NDP POLICIES 1-26

For ease of reference, all of the policies that appear in the Part I of the NDP are repeated here.

Policy 1 -- Principle of Sustainable Development

Purpose: To clearly state the approach taken in the Neighbourhood Plan to ‘development’ and the balance that needs to be struck when considering proposals.

Policy: The Neighbourhood Plan will support a positive approach to sustainable development and development proposals where they show a balance amongst economic, social and environmental factors and where they accord with other policies in this plan. In particular development proposals should:

- Promote the social and economic well-being of the Parish’s resident community keeping in mind the benefits brought through the eco-tourism visitor economy.
- Secure positive impacts on the local habitats and species (including the designated sites) and National Landscape. including having regard to the cumulative impacts including effects such as: vibration, dust, light, noise, odour, litter, damage to kerbs and verges
- Pay significant regard to heritage assets and cultural heritage of the village
- Enable positive adaptation to climate change, flood risk throughout the life of the development.

Policy 2 -- Overall Form and Pattern of Settlement

Purpose: To acknowledge and offer protection to the features which define the geographical form and extent of the village.

Policy: New development will take the form of limited infill within the Village Development Boundary. It should follow the distinctive grain and pattern of settlement which is arranged with a predominantly linear pattern of buildings facing the roads. It should also maintain the features that contribute to the characteristic form of Walberswick including:

- a clearly defined boundary with the countryside,
- the open spaces in the central part of the village and
- the far-reaching views towards and from the margins.

Policy 3 -- Countryside Zone

Purpose: To ensure that the entirety of the Parish, particularly those outlying areas beyond the Village Development Boundary are treated consistently and contribute to the overall sense of place.

Policy: Development proposals outside of the Village Development Boundary should:

- demonstrate a need that is clearly related to a specific location that satisfies a particular need. (For example, an agricultural use, or relating to nature conservation)
- Respect the aims and purpose of the National Landscape
- Use high standards of design
- Be of an appropriate scale.
- Be consistent with other policies in the Plan

Policy 4 -- Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

Purpose: This is a cross-cutting policy which aims to protect and enhance the parish's stock of natural assets (the natural capital of the parish, including the cultural and built forms) and in a sustainable way support the wide range of services (ecosystem services) which support the community and local businesses.

Of particular importance to the Parish in this respect are:

- (vii) Sense of place
- (viii) Tranquillity
- (ix) Sense of history and cultural heritage
- (x) Recreation (including health and well-being)
- (xi) Biodiversity
- (xii) Regulating coastal erosion and flooding

Policy: Development proposals must have an overall positive impact on natural capital, natural beauty and scenic landscape and should contribute to the ability of the natural environment to provide those outcomes which contribute to the well-being of the community and Parish economy.

To ensure that the natural and built environment continues to support the community and local businesses, development proposals must demonstrate that all opportunities have been taken to ensure that positive contributions outweigh any negative effects.

They should demonstrate that they will:

- (x) Preserve and enhance the sense of tranquillity and wilderness, the wide-open spaces, dark skies and panoramic views of the National Landscape and internationally important seascapes
- (xi) Conserve, manage and increase understanding of Walberswick's rich archaeological, historical and cultural heritage
- (xii) Reduce the pressures associated with high visitor numbers to the village, beach, and other designated sites
- (xiii) Maintain and enhance the role of the parish as a place for the promotion of health and well-being
- (xiv) Conserve and extend the parish's local, national and internationally important wildlife habitats and increase levels of biodiversity that they support
- (xv) Strengthen the corridors that support the movement of wildlife and improve connections between areas of high biodiversity to enhance the overall network of wildlife habitats

- (xvi) Manage the risk of flooding whilst improving resilience to climate change and mitigation of the associated effects
- (xvii) Control levels of air, water, light and noise pollution
- (xviii) Encourage travel by sustainable modes and reduce demand for car travel and parking.

To meet the requirements of this policy, applications must be supported by a statement or checklist (in addition to any legally required such as HRA or Design and Access statements, but drawing from them) that sets out how proposed development will impact on the ecosystem services and objectives listed above. This should identify both positive and negative impacts.

Policy 5 -- Protected Sites

Purpose: To reinforce the immense value that the 'protected' natural assets have to the biodiversity of the country and internationally, and to the life of the village and the wider population enjoying it.

Policy: *(Note: TBD - this is in part from the ESC Local Plan SCLP 10.1 para 2 TBD)*

Proposals for development that will have a direct or indirect adverse impact (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on locally or internationally designated sites of biodiversity importance in and around Walberswick will not be supported.

If it can be demonstrated with comprehensive evidence (including Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) as appropriate) that the benefits of the proposal, in its particular location, outweighs the biodiversity loss or damage and that suitable and acceptable mitigation can be put in place or suitable and acceptable compensatory habitat can be found in the locality, then it may be supported with that caveat.

The designations referred to above will be taken to include the Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area for Conservation (SAC) or Ramsar site, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), County Wildlife Sites (CWS), priority habitats and species within or outside of the Plan area.

Policy 6 -- National Landscape Quality

Purpose: To protect and enhance the setting of the Village including views of the landscape and scenic beauty, cultural heritage, sense of remoteness, peace and tranquillity and dark skies as exemplified in the National Landscape designation.

Policy: Development proposals will be required to conserve and enhance the scenic beauty and special qualities of the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape

Proposals for new development must demonstrate that they will conserve and enhance the following aspects of the National Landscape as viewed towards and from Walberswick including from its network of footpaths, and other public places:

- visual integrity,
- identity,
- sense of remoteness
- scenic quality and
- cultural heritage

All development proposals should have regard for the following impacts:

- Direct impacts resulting from changes to the visual and aural environment in the setting of the development which may intrude, distract or disturb

- Indirect or secondary impacts caused beyond the site of the proposed development such as those associated with traffic and car parking and additional visitor numbers
- Cumulative impacts of incremental development

In order to protect the tranquillity, dark skies, sense of remoteness and wildlife and biodiversity interests within the National Landscape at Walberswick, proposals including external lighting in prominent locations likely to be visible from the surrounding landscape will not normally be supported.

Where internal lighting is likely to cause disturbance or risk to wildlife, including protected bird species, or impacts on dark skies and tranquillity, proposals will be required for mitigating pollution from those internal light sources.

In order to minimise light pollution, all planning consents will be subject to the following conditions in respect of external lighting:

- (i) Fully shielded (enclosed in full cut-off flat glass fitments)
- (ii) Directed downwards (mounted horizontally to the ground and not tilted upwards)
- (iii) No dusk to dawn lamps
- (iv) White light low-energy lamps (LED, metal halide or fluorescent) and not orange or pink sodium sources

Policy 7 – Biodiversity Net Gain

Purpose: To support Government mandates for a 10% increase in biodiversity across the nation. The significant designations around Walberswick for biodiversity gives further imperative to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in new development.

Policy: (To be added)

Policy 8 -- Street Scene, Character and Residential Environment

Policy Purpose: To outline the considerations which will be used to evaluate proposals for development in their local context of the streets and character areas:

Development proposals will be permitted where they:

- integrate with the layout, spacing and established character of neighbouring properties and the local area
- do not detract from the amenity that people derive from the external space that forms part of their home environment.

Proposals should also satisfy the following requirements:

- Demonstrate an informed appreciation of landscape context
- Have regard for the relationship between building size and plot size which should respect that of nearby properties
- Provide appropriate separation from boundaries so as to maintain gaps which respect neighbours' amenity, provide a positive contribution to the street scene and avoid a cramped or urbanised appearance. Gaps should not rely on borrowed space from neighbouring gardens.
- Be consistent with established building set back and arrangement of front gardens and boundary treatments including hedges, trees, walls, fences and railings
- Have sufficient scope within the plot to provide garden space, landscaping, boundary treatments, external storage and car parking.

- Employ design which avoids massing. That is design that is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of height, roof form, materials, elevational and vernacular detailing.
- Is not overbearing or of a form which would have a dominating effect on the street scene or would be detrimental to the amenity of neighbours by virtue of overshadowing, shading and/or overlooking resulting in loss of light and / or privacy
- Does not contribute to light or noise pollution, particularly in relation to adjacent sites of nature conservation, ecology or biodiversity value.
- The palette of building materials and external finishes should be selected to complement and enhance locally distinctive character.
- Taking account of existing and proposed buildings, development proposals should not overdevelop the plot, including width of development, and total plot coverage with built forms (including hard standings, outbuildings and including swimming pools).
- Provide an analysis of the trees and hedgerows in the vicinity of the development to support any proposed losses.

Policy 9 -- Walberswick Conservation Area

Policy Purpose: The designation of the Conservation Area acknowledges the importance of the built environment within or affecting it. Consideration is given to the particular factors which will be referenced when considering proposals for development or others matters affecting the significance of the character of the area.

Proposals for development within the Conservation Area or within the setting of the Conservation Area must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and respect the particular features which contribute to its character and appearance, particularly those of local or national historic or architectural interest, as shown on the Conservation Area Map and List.

Particular regard must be given to the following:

- Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
- The effect of the proposal on the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage assets shown on the Neighbourhood Plan Heritage and Conservation Area Maps and List including both listed and unlisted heritage buildings
- The overall layout of the settlement and its relationship with the National Landscape and extent of the local, national and international nature conservation designations.
- The historic pattern of roads, footpaths, by-ways and open spaces that characterise the settlement and contribute to the established street scene
- The mix of building types, designs, scale, height and massing
- Roof lines and styles and any historic elevation features including windows, doors and balconies.
- The use of locally distinctive building materials, styles and techniques
- Significant landscape features including established trees and hedgerows, boundary treatments, ponds and open spaces
- Existing views and vistas including views of the skyline and views into and out of the Conservation Area.

All proposals should identify opportunities for enhancements to the Conservation Area and should be supported by sufficiently detailed information to allow an informed assessment of any impacts.

Outline planning applications for new buildings will not be acceptable in the Conservation Area, or on the boundaries of the village where there could be unacceptable impacts on the National Landscape.

Policy 10 -- Heritage Assets

Policy Purpose: To seek specific reference to the Heritage and Conservation Area Maps and List so that proposals for development properly assess the effects on these assets.

Development proposals should recognise, conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets and respect their setting. These assets are set out on the Neighbourhood Plan Heritage and Conservation Area Maps and List including both listed and unlisted heritage buildings.

Where proposals alter, extend, or demolish designated or non-designated assets they should be accompanied by a Heritage Appraisal, Significance Statement and Impact Assessment.

Policy 11 -- Principal Residences

Purpose: To safeguard the sustainability of the settlement and to ensure that the community is not irreparably eroded through excessive number of properties that are not occupied on a permanent basis.

Proposals for (i) new market dwellings, (ii) any new replacement dwelling, and extensions over 40% of the original floor area (**% issue to be further considered**) will only be supported when it can be demonstrated that a planning condition and supporting Section 106 legal agreement will be imposed to guarantee that such dwellings will be the occupants' sole or main residence where the residents spend the majority of their time when not working away from home. This section 106 agreement will appear on the Register of Local Land Charges.

New build unrestricted second homes or holiday lets will **not** be supported at any time. When planning permission is required, proposals for the change of use of C3 (dwelling houses) of existing or new market dwellings (including any new dwellings on a site which have replaced a single property) to a furnished holiday let (Sui Generis) will **not** be supported.

Occupiers of homes with a Principal Residence condition or obligation will be required to maintain proof that they are meeting the condition / obligation, and will need to provide this proof as and when required by the Local Planning Authority. Proof of Principal Residence will be via verifiable evidence which could include for example (but not limited to):

- residents being registered for and attending local services (such as healthcare, schools etc),
- evidence of belonging to and attending local groups, utility bills, driving licence or other means of identity
- Registration on the local Register of Electors will **not** be sufficient for this purpose.

The Parish Council will cooperate with the Local Planning Authority to monitor compliance with the restriction and in gathering and assessing evidence of any breach that may lead to enforcement action.

(Within this policy 'Principal Residences' are defined as those occupied as the residents' sole or main residence, where the residents spend the majority of their time when not working away from home. The condition or obligation on new homes will require that they are occupied only as the principal residence of those persons entitled to occupy them).

Policy 12 -- New Homes – general considerations of size, character and occupancy

Purpose: In order to maintain the character of the village, the street scene, protect neighbouring amenity and support increasing the proportion of homes suitable for permanent residences.

Proposals for new dwellings will be permitted within the Village Development Boundary where they:

- are typically in the size range 80 -150m² gross internal floor area *(to be further considered)*, comprising of three or fewer bedrooms
- constitute sensitive infilling of small gaps within an otherwise continuously built-up frontage facing the existing road network
- conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty and are appropriate to their location in the National Landscape
- are for Principal Residencies and
- are consistent with other policies in Plan

Policy 13 -- Affordable Housing

Purpose: To consider the requirements applicable to affordable housing schemes and locational factors, should proposals come forward for such a scheme.

Any development providing Affordable Housing must contain an acceptable mix of housing for:

- Social Rent
- Affordable Rent
- Shared Ownership and
- Standard ownership.

The exact proportion shall be agreed at the time of the planning application to reflect the current assessment of housing need. It may also be appropriate for the mix to include housing designed or suitable for people with disabilities or more elderly people.

Any affordable housing should be located within the Village Development Boundary.

The scale and design standard of the scheme must retain or enhance the character and setting of the village, and the natural beauty and special qualities of the National Landscape.

Policy 14 -- Replacement Dwellings

Purpose: To maintain the existing stock of smaller units to promote affordability generally, to support the ability of older residents to downsize and remain in the community rather than being forced to move away where smaller, more manageable homes might be found and to ensure house footprints and massing do not overwhelm the plot size.

Proposals for replacement dwellings will normally only be permitted if:

- They do not result in a significant / inappropriate increase in floor area, such that it would affect the character of the immediate area, including the integrity of the National Landscape, views into or out of the village or the amenities of neighbours.
- The style – massing, scale design, materials, of the new house is appropriate for the locality
- The original house was not contributing to the character of the village
- Size restriction if old unit was a smaller dwelling *(TBD)*.

Policy 15 -- Annexes and Outbuildings

Purpose: To ensure that additions to existing dwellings are proportionate to the current structure and do not become units of accommodation separate from the main dwelling.

Where planning permission is required, proposals for:

- Annexes should demonstrate both functional and physical dependency on the host dwelling.

- Outbuildings should show that they are required for purposes that are incidental to the use of the host dwelling.
- In both cases the new development must remain in the same ownership as the host dwelling and must share its existing access, parking and garden.
- Conditions will be placed on consents for annexes and outbuildings preventing their use for holiday accommodation unless such use is an explicit part of the planning application.
- Where permission is granted, consideration will be given to the control of further extensions by reduction or removal of permitted development rights

Policy 16 -- Extensions

Purpose: To ensure that extensions to existing dwellings are not disproportionate in size to the current dwelling, and that the resultant dwelling does not have unacceptable effects on neighbours or the local character.

Where planning permission is required, proposals for extensions to existing properties will be considered against the following factors:

- impact on neighbouring properties and their occupants as well as the amenity of any future occupiers of the extended property
- impact on the local built and natural environment
- overlooking, overbearing, overshadowing
- potential for noise
- light pollution
- visual impact
- the scale, height, massing, materials and layout of a development should respond sensitively and sympathetically to the local setting
- impacts and acceptability of the spaces between buildings resulting from the extensions
- high quality design and use of materials.
- Extensions of more than 40% (TBD) of the size of the existing dwelling will be considered under the replacement dwelling policy

Policy 17 -- Small Shop Units

Purpose: To preserve retail space that serves the community and is appropriate to the built environment of the village and/or that has regard to the role that some shops play in supporting the visitor economy.

Policy: Small shop units should be:

- protected from change of use to residential or holiday letting.
- proposals to increase the size of an existing retail unit must:
 - demonstrate that it is essential to ensure the continued effective trading of the existing operator.
 - appropriate to the size and massing of existing units and in a style appropriate to the location.
- subject to the other policies within the Plan

Policy 18 -- Advertising and Signage

Purpose: To acknowledge the considerations relating to the impact of signage on the character of the village and surroundings.

Policy: Proposals should minimise the impact of outdoor advertising and signage, with particular attention to lighting, on the character of the village, natural beauty and the tranquillity of the National Landscape or the setting of heritage assets and designations within the Parish.

Policy 19 -- Touring and Permanent Holiday Accommodation

Purpose: In order to protect the village and the surrounding sensitive environments from visually disruptive, prominent and potentially damaging visitor generating over-development.

Policy: Proposals for new holiday accommodation units or sites (such as lodges, caravan or campsites), or intensification or extension of existing uses incorporating static or semi-permanent or permanent structures, including associated facilities, will not be permitted.

The Parish Council will press the Local Planning Authority to prepare an Article 4 Direction to prevent temporary campsites.

Proposals for the adaptation of sites to mitigate flood risk will be supported if they are:

- consistent with the Shoreline Management Plan
- to the highest standards of design, and would not result in visually prominent structures
- respect the National Landscape setting and comply with designated sites requirements (HRA etc).

Policy 20 -- Community Assets

Purpose: To retain those features of Walberswick which contribute to the everyday enjoyment of the village by residents and visitors.

Policy: Proposals for the establishment of new community facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, which could include new or improved facilities at the recreation ground and village hall, will be supported where:

- The facilities enhance the quality of life of people in the village including children, people with disabilities and the elderly
- The proposal is appropriate in its location, scale and design and would not be detrimental to the character of the landscape of the National Landscape or the built environment of the village
- The amenities of neighbouring residents will not be adversely affected by the nature of the use, noise or traffic generated
- There will not be an unacceptable impact on the local road network in terms of highway safety or the free flow of traffic
- The proposal includes appropriate car parking facilities to ensure that the proposal does not result in an increase in on-street parking

Development proposals which would result in the loss of all or part of any of the facilities listed will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated by the applicant that:

- the operation of the facility is no longer viable or necessary or
- the use will be replaced by another use which is a valuable community facility: or
- a replacement facility of equal size, utility and quality will be provided in an accessible location.

The list of community assets is as follows:

- Village Hall
- Heritage Hut
- Black Dog deli
- Anchor Public House
- Bell Public House
- Tuck Shop
- Allotments

- Churchyard
- Playing Fields
- The Village Greens:
- Bell Green
- Jubilee Green
- Main Village Green
- Cliff Field Car Park
- Ferry Road Car Park
- Bus shelter (opposite the Church)
- Flagpole
- Play areas on the Main Village Green and adjacent to the Playing Field
- The Common
- Beach huts
- Village Signs

Policy 21 -- Local Green Spaces

Purpose: To acknowledge and bring to prominence the important green spaces in the village, and protect them from inappropriate development.

Policy: The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following locations as Local Green Spaces, as shown on the Village Inset Map.

(Note: Need to work out how best to reference the full list)

Proposals for any development on these Local Green Spaces will not be permitted other than where it is consistent with reason for the designation as a Local Green Space, for example, where it is essential to meet the needs of utility services infrastructure or a significant community facility and no feasible alternative site is available.

Policy 22 -- Protecting and Maintaining Public Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside

Purpose: To ensure that PROWs and access to the countryside are not lost given their essential role in preserving the character and economy of Walberswick.

Policy: Development proposals should not encroach on, negatively impact or detrimentally affect views from Public Rights of Way footpaths and bridle ways, but positively protect and, where appropriate, take the opportunity to enhance them.

Policy 23 -- Shared Space

Purpose: Movement of residents and visitors is overwhelmingly by foot on the shared roadway which serves also to connect off-road foot and bridleways that criss-cross the village. Making this a shared space safe and enticing for all road users is essential for maintaining the fabric of the village.

Policy: Development proposals should respect the shared nature of the main route through the village (The Street) from the junction of Adams Lane through to the Harbour.

Proposals should:

- Take opportunities to enhance the safety of the shared surface.
- Make suitable provision for safe access and egress from development sites both during building works and when the development is in use
- Hedges and trees should be retained
- Surface treatments where an access joins the highway should be sympathetic to the locality

- New signage or road markings must respect the character of the village and be appropriate but unobtrusive

The proposals in Appendix 7 referenced above form a set of possible future enhancements that can be taken forward when appropriate funding is available.

Policy 24-- Minimising the Impact of Flooding

Purpose: To address street flooding caused by homes/businesses and minimise risks of flooding from erosion, climate change and other sources.

Policy: As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should:

- Include assessment of the potential impact on flooding
- Mitigate flooding from all sources (fluvial and pluvial)
- Provide appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which minimise discharge rates unless it can be shown to be inappropriate. SuDS should be well integrated into a development and provide multifunctional benefits, such as landscaping, open space and biodiversity gains; and
- Provide for rainwater harvesting.

Development proposals in flood attenuation areas, including the hard surfacing of gardens, driveways or other open spaces, which would reduce the ability of the area concerned to alleviate flooding, will be discouraged. Where planning permission is required, they will not be supported.

Policy 25 -- Water Resource Management

Purpose: To contribute to wider national objectives

Policy: Proposals for development should encourage a proactive approach to management of water resources that takes account of expected changes in water supply and demand and also ensures a responsible approach to wastewater treatment and disposal.

Such measures could include:

- Rainwater or grey water harvesting
- Acting in advance of changes to the Building Regulations

Policy 26 -- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

Purpose: NSIPS are determined at the national level leaving local authorities and the communities directly affected dominated by national policies and the interests of strong private and state-owned corporations which have shown scant regard for the greater knowledge of impact that the local community brings nor for the very high price these NSIPs have on the local ecology and people. Given the massive threat these projects are to Walberswick, the following sets out what we would like to see in how developers should present proposals including potential mitigation, monitoring, management plans and communication channels.

Policy: Potential developers will be expected to show (beyond normal project assessments) particular consideration of the following likely impacts:

- Short and long-term damage to the designated areas for nature and habitats and species and the ability to recover.
- Landscape and effects on the National Landscape
- Health and well-being considerations for the resident community, this should include:
 - Noise, dust, vibration from on-site works
 - Disruption to recreation, including footpath closures and diversions
 - Visual intrusion of the works

- Anxiety for (especially older or vulnerable) residents
- Traffic and Highway issues such as road closures, damage to surfaces and verges, removal of verge side trees and hedges, highway safety
- Timing and length of the works and working periods.
- Cumulative effects with other NSIPs, and potential co-ordination

In addition to the normal requirements, developers will be expected to provide for and be open to discussion with the Parish Council the following details of project design early in the development process:

- Early receipt of detailed designs for highway works, haul road design, work access points, temporary and permanent
- Location of compounds and equipment and reasonable alternatives
- Expected noise, dust and vibration limits
- Identification / avoidance of veteran and aged trees and hedgerows
- Lighting
- Mitigation methods

PART THREE: APPENDICES AND ATTACHMENTS

Note: To be completed. The following will be included with NDP at final draft

Attachment 1: PLACE Landscape Assessment
Attachment 2: PLACE Built environment report
Attachment 3: CAS Housing Needs Assessment (HSA)

Appendix 1, Chapter 3: List of the key views (
Appendix 2, Chapter 4: Detailed street-by-street analysis of Character Areas
Appendix 3, Chapter 4: List of Designated heritage assets in Walberswick
Appendix 4, Chapter 4: List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets
Appendix 5, Chapter 7: List of Identified Green Spaces
Appendix 6, Chapter 7: Shared Space Proposals and Plans