

# Welcome



## The story so far:

- The Parish Council has been preparing a Neighbourhood Plan since 2021.
- We have now reached a major milestone and are commencing consultation on the Draft Plan.
- Consultation lasts until **Friday 19 January**, a period of 8 weeks.
- This exhibition provides a brief summary of the Plan, illustrating the planning policies and proposed community actions that are contained in the Plan.

## What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

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

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

The Neighbourhood Plan sits alongside national and local planning policies when decisions are made on planning applications



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



**WE NEED YOUR VIEWS BY 19 JANUARY**

**Why not comment as you go round by accessing the comments form from your mobile phone using the QR code?**

# The process



## How the Plan is prepared

There are several stages that must be completed, as illustrated. These stages are governed by the regulations for preparing neighbourhood plans and so there is no short cut.



# Our Plan



## Plan Contents

The Plan itself runs to just over 50 pages and is necessarily quite complex in places. This is because it will be used by East Suffolk Council and Government Planning Inspectors to make decisions on planning applications.

Based on the issues identified by you during the initial stages of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, the following themes have been identified.

- Village Development Locations
- Landscape and Natural Environment
- Built Environment
- Services and Facilities
- Highways and Travel



## The Plan contains:

### Planning Policies

These will be used to supplement the Local Plan when decisions on planning applications are made.

Planning policies can only cover matters that would require planning permission, so they can't, for example, tackle speeding.

### Policies Maps

These illustrate areas of land or buildings where policies in the Plan apply.

### Community Actions

Local initiatives to address non-planning matters and concerns, primarily raised in the Residents' Survey.

Neighbourhood Plans cannot contradict the main government planning policies or the strategic policies in the Local Plan for the area.

For example, they cannot propose less development than is planned for in the adopted Local Plan.

# Aims and Objectives



## Neighbourhood Plan Aims

To preserve the rural feel of Westerfield; and  
To enhance the sense of community felt by residents

### **The Aims translate into the following Objectives that cover the five Plan themes**

1. Maintain Westerfield as a 'small village' (in planning terms) by creating a "green ring" to protect it from creeping developments both from outside and within the village.
2. Allocate an area (ideally near the Village Hall and Church) as the focal point that supports the development of further services for village residents.
3. Specify design and development criteria for future developments which maintain the rural character and prevent the "suburbanisation" of the village.
4. Ensure residents can safely walk and cycle in and around Westerfield to enjoy the village and surrounding countryside, as well as providing access to nearby essential services such as schools.
5. Ensure Westerfield supports all our futures by reducing our environmental impact and improving the Village environment for local wildlife (e.g., rewilding and green corridors through the village).

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



# Village Development Locations



## Context

- The Residents' Survey noted there is little in the way of support for further growth of the village.
- East Suffolk's Local Plan allocates a site for approximately 20 dwellings and public open space on land south of Lower Road. It is not clear when the site will be developed.
- In addition to the site at Lower Road, planning permission has been granted for up to 75 dwellings and 16 business units at the Old Station Works.
- The Local Plan identifies a Settlement Boundary for Westerfield, as illustrated below.
- The Local Plan states that:

*"New development within defined settlement boundaries will be acceptable in principle, subject to consideration of other relevant policies of the development plan.*

*New residential, employment and town centre development will not be permitted in the Countryside except where specific policies in this Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans indicate otherwise.*

*Proposals for new residential development outside of the Settlement Boundaries and outside of land which is allocated for development will be carefully managed in accordance with national planning policy guidance and the strategy for the Countryside."*

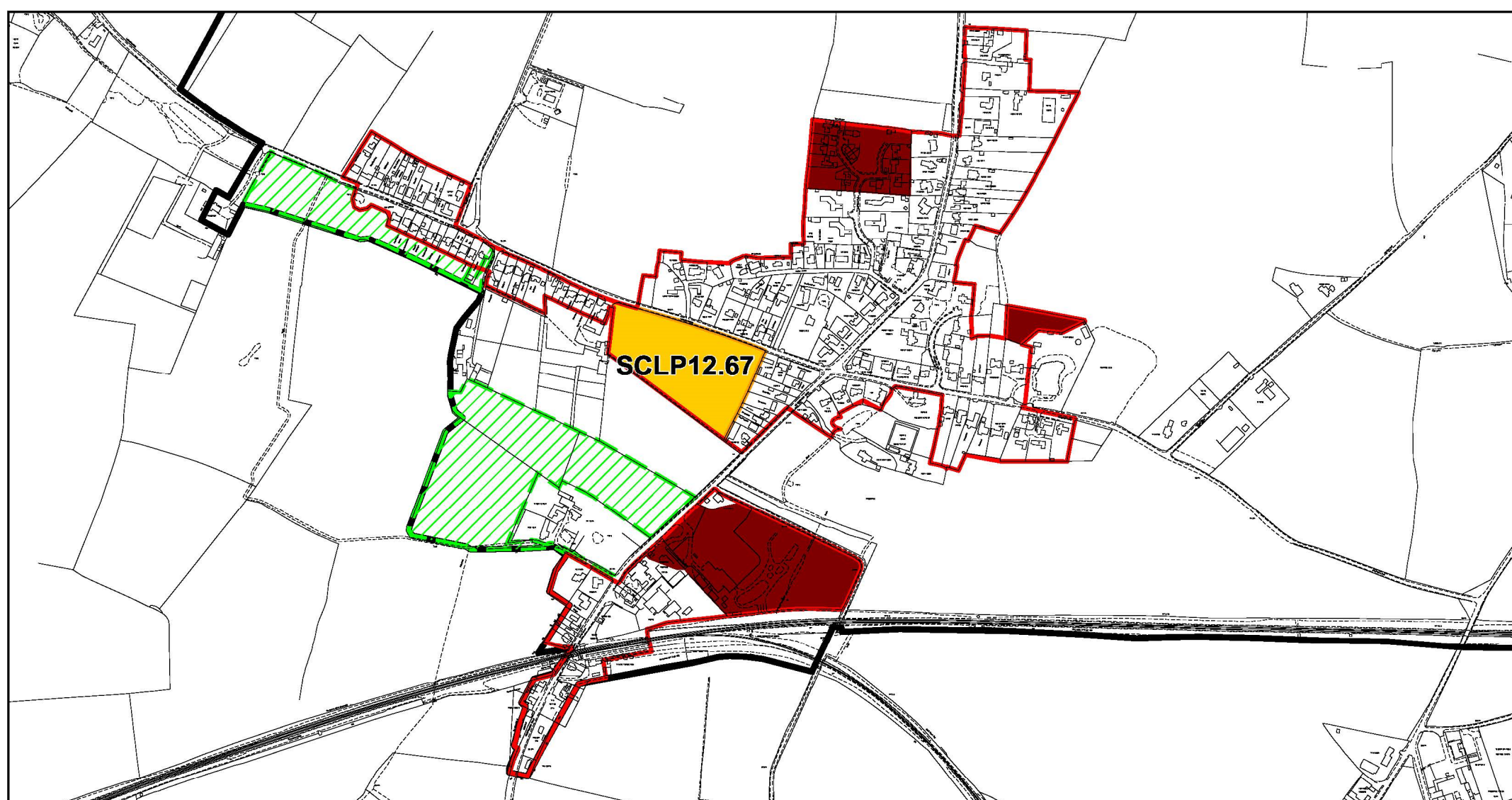
## Neighbourhood Plan Approach

*Given the Local Plan situation and the currently proposed development sites, the Neighbourhood Plan does not make any changes to the defined Settlement Boundary and does not propose additional sites for development.*

*In accordance with the Local Plan, new development will be focused within the Settlement Boundary and will only be allowed outside that area where the particular circumstances set out in the National Planning Policy Framework or the Local Plan are met.*

*This approach will ensure that the undeveloped rural countryside is preserved and remains largely undeveloped.*

Suffolk Coastal Local Plan | Adopted September 2020 | Policies Maps



- |  |                                    |                    |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Key</b>   | Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Area    | Housing Allocation |
| SCLP3.3 Settlement Boundaries                      | Housing Permissions as at 31/03/18 |                    |
| SCLP12.23 Land off Lower Road and Westerfield Road |                                    |                    |





# Landscape & Natural Environment



## Context

- The Parish Council commissioned a Parish wide Landscape Appraisal to inform the content of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The Appraisal included a number of recommendations
  - conserve the historic meadow system in the heart of the village
  - protect the stock of oak trees
  - protect the setting of Westerfield Hall and Swan's Nest
  - integrate new development edges
  - improve pedestrian access / connections to the footpath network
- National planning policy enables the designation and protection of land of particular importance to local communities as Local Green Spaces ('LGS') in neighbourhood plans.
- Such designations rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.

## Policy WFD 3 – Local Green Spaces

The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on Map 6 [below]:

- The Paddock
- The Bowls Club
- Open area west of B1077 and south-west of Fairlands
- Open area east of B1077 between Ash House and The Lodge

Development proposals within the designated local green spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.

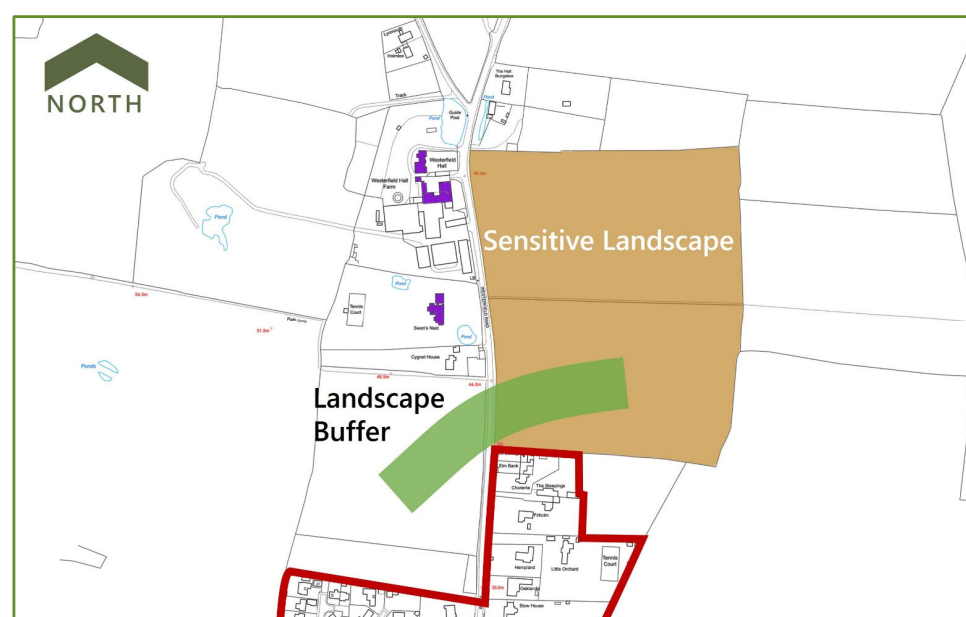


## Policy WFD 1 – Landscape Buffer

A Landscape Buffer is identified on Map 5 [below]. The open and undeveloped nature of these areas will be protected from development to prevent settlement coalescence and, as appropriate, minimise potential harm to designated heritage assets.

Development which is otherwise in conformity with Policy SCLP3.3 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan will only be permitted where:

- through the submission of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, it can demonstrate that it would not undermine the physical and visual separation provided by the landscape buffer; and
- it would not compromise the integrity of the landscape buffer, either individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development.



## Policy WFD 2 – Sensitive Landscape

A sensitive landscape area is identified on Map 5 [above] east of Westerfield Road and opposite the designated heritage assets at Swan's Nest and Westerfield Hall.

The open and undeveloped nature of this area will be protected in order to safeguard the setting of the designated heritage assets. Proposals located in this area, which are otherwise in conformity with Policy SCLP3.3 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, will only be permitted where, through a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and a Heritage Impact Assessment, it can be demonstrated that it would not cause significant harm to the landscape and setting of the heritage assets.

**DO YOU SUPPORT THESE POLICIES?**



# Landscape & Natural Environment



## Context

- Westerfield's landscape is such that there are opportunities for extensive views into and out of the built-up area of the village from publicly accessible points. The most significant are identified on the map and in the Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Appraisal.
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust were commissioned to prepare a Landscape and Biodiversity Evaluation of the parish.
- The report identified: "a range of protected and Priority species have been recorded including otter, hazel dormouse, hedgehog, great crested newt and several Priority bird species including skylark and yellowhammer. There is also a significant number of stag beetle records, which are a Priority invertebrate species. Species-rich hedgerows in the south and north of the parish form the backbone of the ecological network of the parish."

## Policy WFD 5 – Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and other Natural Features

Development proposals should avoid the loss of, or substantial harm to, distinctive trees, hedgerows and other natural features such as ponds and watercourses and shall not result in harm to the identified wildlife corridors. Where such losses or harm are unavoidable:

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

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

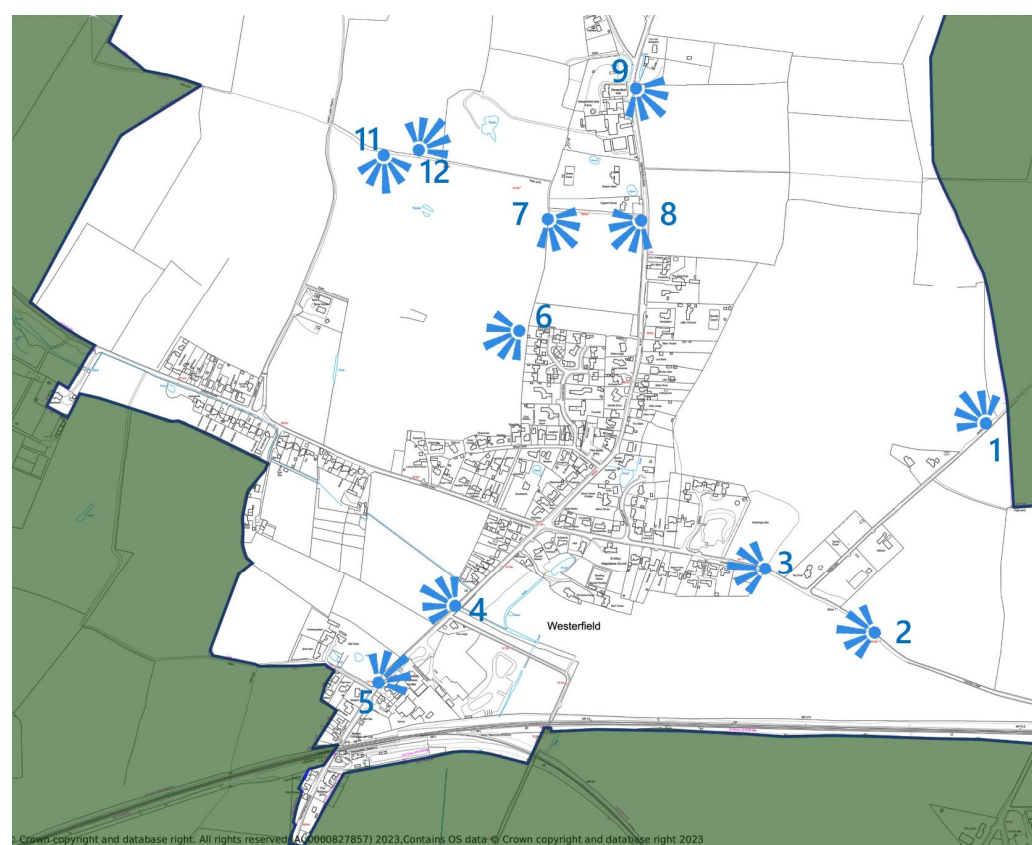
Otherwise acceptable development proposals will be supported where they provide a net gain in biodiversity through, for example:

- the creation of new natural habitats including ponds;
- the planting of additional native trees and hedgerows of local provenance (reflecting the character of Westerfield's traditional woodland and hedgerows), and;
- restoring and repairing fragmented biodiversity networks through, for example, including swift-boxes, bat boxes and holes in fences which allow access for hedgehogs.

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

## Policy WFD 4 - Protection of Important Views

Important views from public vantage points, either within the built-up area or into or out of the surrounding countryside, are identified on Map 7. Any proposed development should not have a detrimental visual impact on the key landscape and built development features of those views as identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Assessment of Important Views.

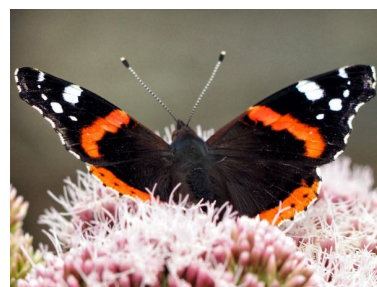


## Community Action 1 – Countryside Initiatives

The Parish Council will work alongside the relevant authorities to develop countryside on doorstep, hedgerows and mature trees, wildlife habitats, particularly wildlife corridors and endeavour to provide information and funding for wildlife projects. The Parish Council will seek to appoint a Tree / Hedge Warden for Westerfield.

## Community Action 2 – Environmental Group

Villagers will work to establish a new environmental group to work alongside any new and existing environmental groups, such as the Westerfield station adopters, and the church, to develop countryside on doorstep.



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



# Built Environment



## Context

- As part of the Government's neighbourhood planning support programme, Design Guidance and Codes for the Parish have been prepared.
- It provides guidance that seeks to inform the design of new development in order to retain and protect the character and distinctiveness of Westerfield.
- New development in Westerfield should achieve a high-quality design that enhances the unique characteristics of the village and ensures a better quality of life for residents.

## Flooding

- We know from recent experience that flooding from rivers and after heavy rainfall can be a problem in some areas.
- Proposals will be required, where appropriate, to make provision for the management of surface water run-off.
- The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be necessary on larger developments and supported on smaller schemes
- Local Plan Policy SCLP9.6: Sustainable Drainage Systems, provides a comprehensive framework for the implementation of measures to manage surface water run-off including requirements for Sustainable Drainage Systems.

## Light Pollution

- It is acknowledged that the lighting of development, while increasing a sense of security, can also impact upon residential amenity, the character and appearance of an area (particularly rural locations) and the environment.

### Policy WFD 7 – Artificial Lighting

While ensuring that new developments are secure in terms of occupier and vehicle safety, dark skies are to be preferred over streetlights. Any future outdoor lighting systems should have a minimum impact on the environment by being downward focussed and motion sensitive, not extend past the property boundary, and minimise light pollution and adverse effects on wildlife and subject to:

- i. highway safety,
- ii. the needs of particular individuals and groups, or
- iii. security

Schemes should reduce the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies, keeping the night-time skies dark and reducing glare.

### Community Action 4 – Reducing Light Pollution

*The Parish Council will aim to ensure, as far as possible, the dark skies, which are important to the village whilst balancing with sufficient lighting to keep the streets safe.*

### Policy WFD 6 – Design Considerations

Proposals for new development must reflect the local characteristics and circumstances in the Neighbourhood Plan Area as identified in the Westerfield Design Guidelines and Codes, and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.

In addition to having regard to the National Model Design Code, all planning applications should demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Development Design Checklist of the Design Guidelines and Codes, as appropriate to the proposal.

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

- a. the key features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area are maintained and enhanced;
- b. they do not involve the loss of gardens, important open, green or landscaped areas, which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the village;
- c. designs respect the character, scale and density of the locality;
- d. development faces on to existing roads wherever possible;
- e. developments are not situated in areas of any form of flooding and should not result in water run-off add-to or create surface water flooding, through the incorporation of above ground open Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) that are multifunctional and provide amenity and biodiversity, in accordance with the Suffolk Flood Risk SuDS Local Design Guide 2023 and the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Policy SCLP9.6 Sustainable Drainage Systems.”;
- f. adequate provision for the covered or screened storage of all wheelie bins and cycle storage is made, as appropriate and in accordance with adopted cycle parking standards and in a way which does not detract from the appearance of the development;
- g. suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband is included; and
- h. one electric vehicle charging point per new off-street residential parking place created is provided.



### Community Action 3 – Broadband Speed

*The Parish Council will actively monitor, influence and lobby communication companies, to improve broadband speed.*

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



# Services and Facilities



## Context

- The village currently has very little in the way of services and facilities that meet the day-to-day needs of residents.
- Local Plan Policy SCLP8.1: Community Facilities and Assets provides an up-to-date policy framework for the consideration of planning applications that impact on existing facilities.
- The policy generally supports the provision of new community facilities if the proposal meets the needs of the local community.
- It also states that proposals which would result in the loss of a facility will only be permitted if:
  - “a) It can be demonstrated that there is no community need for the facility and the building or the site is not needed for an alternative community use;
  - b) It can be demonstrated that the current, or alternative community uses are not viable and marketing evidence is provided which demonstrates the premises have been marketed for a sustained period of 12 months in accordance with the Commercial Property Marketing Guidance; or
  - c) Development would involve the provision of an equivalent or better replacement community facility either on site or in an alternative location in the vicinity that is well integrated into the community and has equal or better accessibility than the existing facility which meets the needs of the local population.”

- Westerfield has a lovely community feel with friendly people and an atmosphere of togetherness in the village.
- To support and encourage this going forward, within a small rural village, there should be more opportunities to get to know everyone in the community.
- Communication within a rural community, such as Westerfield, is key, to ensure a good sense of community and all villagers will be kept up to date of villages activities, services, etc.

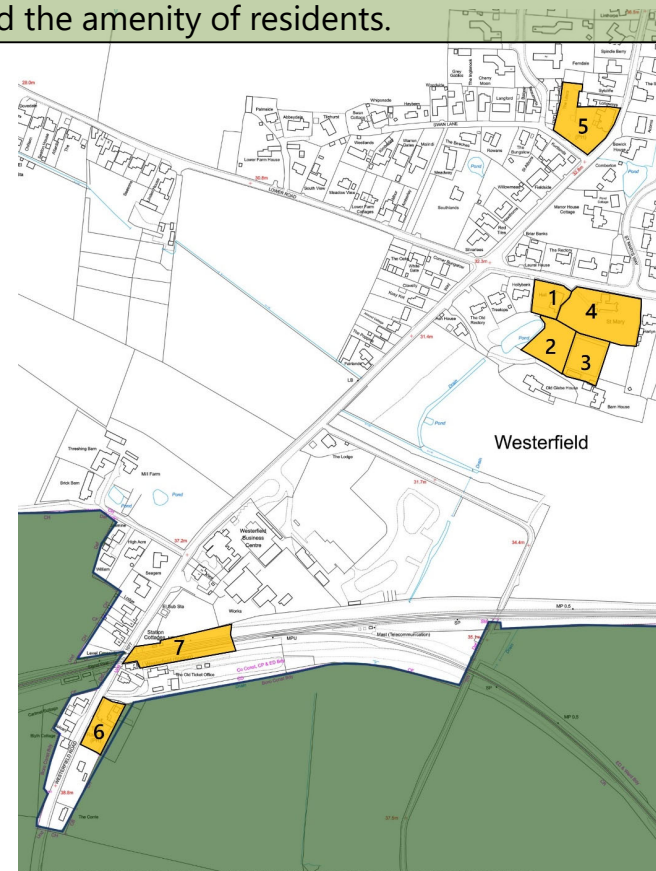


## Policy WFD 8 – Parish Services and Facilities

Proposals that would result in the loss of the following facilities, as identified on Map 9, will be determined in accordance with Policy SCLP8.1 and, as appropriate, Policy SCLP8.1 of the Local Plan:

1. The Village Hall
2. The paddock and pond rear of the Village Hall
3. The Bowls Club
4. The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene
5. The Swan Public House
6. The Railway Inn Public House
7. Westerfield Railway Station

Proposals for the enhancement of the existing services and facilities will generally be supported subject to there being no unacceptable impact on the natural and historic environment, infrastructure and the amenity of residents.



## Community Action 5 – Community Activities

*The villagers will work together to develop community activities, for example, fish & chip night, films in the village hall, book club, summer fete, coffee / drop-in, etc, creation of a Wednesday market, including local resident sales and ensure apposite publicising to Westerfield.*

*A new media group and a new events group will liaise on a regular basis, to identify a range of activities from young through to old and be relevant to age and interest of villagers.*

## Community Action 6 – Village Communication

*The new village media group will work together, with villagers, to improve communications within Westerfield, about community services, for example, state of litter and dog poo bins, and amenities, for example, bottle bank, library, both existing and new from developments.*

*This will utilise the existing communication links and also introduce new links. The new village media group will review communications within the village and for more links between village groups.*

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



# Highways and Travel



## Context

- Because most road improvements can take place within the highway, they do not require planning permission and, as such, the neighbourhood plan is limited in what it can deliver.
- Likewise, the provision of bus and train services is a decision made outside the planning system.
- Although the Parish Council cannot deliver highways and travel improvements, it does have a lobbying role in delivering such measures.

## Community Action 7 – Walking and Cycling Safety and Public Rights of Way

*The Parish Council, other relevant authorities and landowners will work together to provide safe walking and cycling routes in and around Westerfield, ideally away from main traffic routes:*

### Walking and Cycling:

1. *enforce existing planning conditions which will provide a link between Fullers Field and the fields to the north of the village\*, access to the Country Park from Lower Road and Westerfield Road, and a cycling link from Westerfield Road to Tuddenham Road via the Red House development.*
2. *seek opportunities in proposed new developments to create further safe walking routes. For example, extending the footpath along the old football field on Lower Road (ref SCLP12.67)\*, access from the Old Station Works development to the Red House path, extending the street lights from the station to meet up with existing lights on Westerfield Road, and creating a link path from the old football field to the Country Park\*.*
3. *seek to extend pavements within the village, and develop further safe routes, ideally connecting to the wider network of footpaths outside the immediate boundary of the village e.g. across to Tuddenham and the 'quiet lane' status of Westerfield Lane.*
4. *encourage residents to report overgrown hedgerows, damaged pavements or obstructive parking to ensure our routes remain free and easily accessible for all.*

*\* Delivery of these three actions will create a safe route away from the main road through the village all the way from Ipswich to Witnesham.*

### Public Rights of Way:

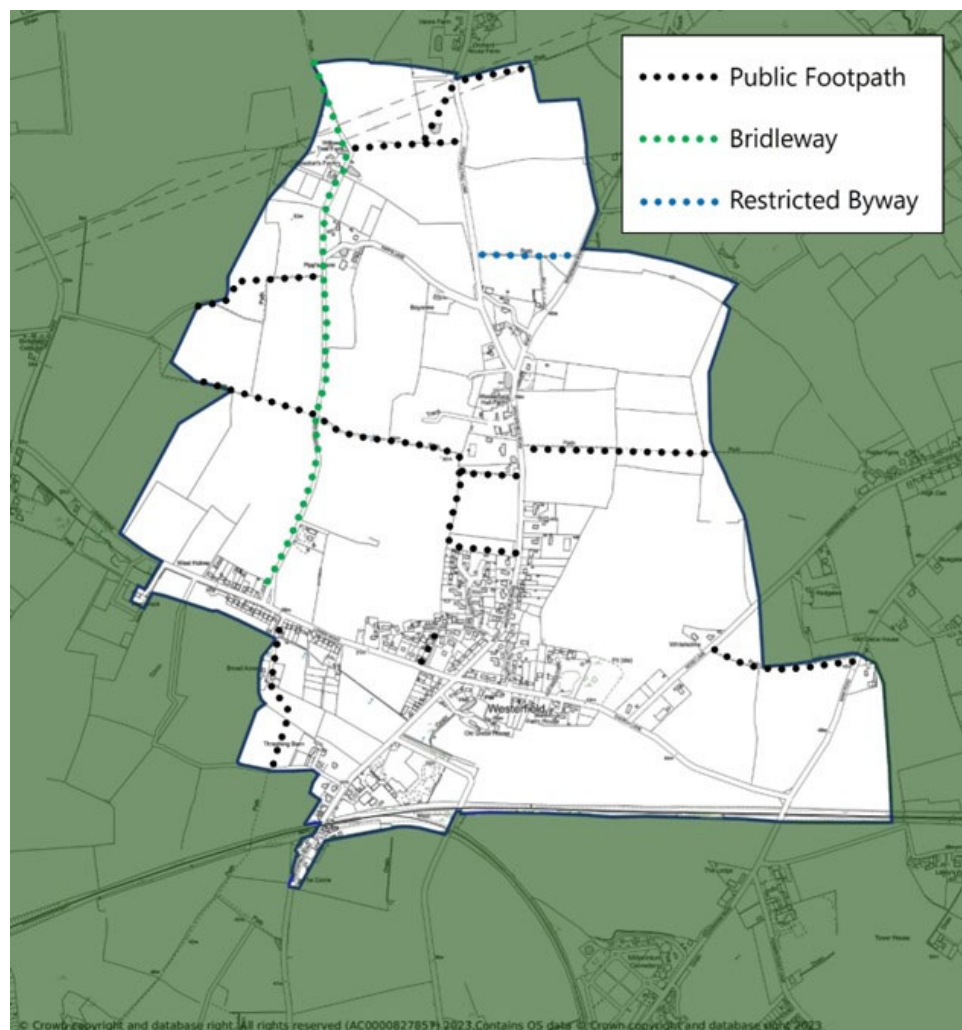
5. *create walking routes away from main roads - north fields to Country Park, as well as ensuring proposed links to Henley Gate and Tuddenham Road are delivered.*

### General:

6. *provide a map for villagers, as new footpaths and pavements are created.*

## Public Rights of Way

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



## Policy WFD 9 – Public Rights of Way

Development proposals which improve and extend the existing network of public rights of way will be supported. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, such development proposals should take account of the existing value of the right of way concerned as a biodiversity corridor and where practicable incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity as part of the proposal.



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



# Highways and Travel



## Context

- Traffic speed through the village was raised as a significant concern in the Residents' Survey.
- A high proportion of residents supported a "20's plenty" initiative.
- The station provides an important amenity for residents but the associated level crossing can cause significant traffic hold-ups, especially when slow moving and long freight trains are passing through.
- The Parish Council will continue to support the station adopters and their work. The development of the Ipswich Garden Suburb is likely to bring additional demand for trains and associated risks and opportunities.

## Community Action 8 – Speeding and Traffic Calming

*The Parish Council will work with relevant agencies to address the issue of traffic speed and volume through Westerfield, by:*

1. *supporting the "20's plenty" campaign to reduce speed limits where people and car interact to 20 mph. This was supported by 64% of Westerfield residents in the survey (71% of Lower Road/Church Lane residents).*
2. *continuing to support Community Speed-watch, and the use of Police resources will be requested as appropriate.*
3. *working with Suffolk Highways to develop appropriate traffic calming measures which may include remodelling of the crossroads junction.*
4. *ensuring roads, markings and signs are well maintained and encourage villagers to report issues.*
5. *seeking to lower the speed of traffic entering the village, especially entering from the north from Fynn Valley [Note the speed limit to the south from Ipswich will be reduce to 30 mph as part of the Northern Fringe development].*
6. *seeking to ensure we minimise the traffic impact on Westerfield from the northern fringe development.*

*[Note the Lower Road /Henley Road junction is outside of the Parish Council boundary]*

## Community Action 9 – Westerfield Railway Station

*The Parish Council will work with relevant authorities and the East Suffolk Travel Association to:*

1. *secure more stopping services at Westerfield, principally the Lowestoft line which has only two services a day stopping at Westerfield.*
2. *consider the parking impact of additional commuter traffic. We will encourage Network Rail to invest in secure bike storage capacity, and turn the existing works area into a car park. This will help avoid traffic parking along Westerfield Road and blocking pavement access, or using the new Country Park car park as a de facto commuter car park.*
3. *ensure the s106 funding available for the station from the northern fringe development is spent appropriately on resources which will benefit the community.*
4. *seek to develop a direct route between the Fonnereau Way bridge (on the southern side) and the station to ensure commuters have a direct route to the station away from main roads, and provide a route between the main Ipswich platform and the village when the barriers are down for extended periods.*



**DO YOU SUPPORT THESE COMMUNITY ACTIONS?**



# What next.....



## **Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan ends on 19**

**January**

At the end of the consultation the Working Group will review all submitted comments before deciding if any amendments to the Plan are required.

At the same time a "Consultation Statement" and a document known as the "Basic Conditions Statement" will be prepared. The Final Draft Plan – known as the "Submission Plan" and the above documents will be put to the Parish Council for approval for submission to East Suffolk Council.

## **Further Consultation**

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

## **Examination**

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

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

## **Referendum**

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



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

**Why not complete a form today?**