

Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2017-2036

Referendum Version, January 2018



Foreword

Those who live here will agree that the Parish of Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold is a very special place. It has a long tradition and heritage. The proximity to local towns and cities and setting within picturesque rolling countryside make it an attractive and popular



place in which to live and work. We all value the excellent quality of life here.

This Neighbourhood Plan will enable the local community to play a much stronger, more positive, role in shaping the future of the Parish. It covers the period through to 31 December 2036.

The Neighbourhood Planning Group has created the Plan on your behalf. Once formally adopted, our Neighbourhood Plan will sit alongside Melton Borough Council's Local Plan. Decisions on planning applications will be guided by the policies contained in both Plans. They have been designed to be compatible through on-going discussions.

This document presents a vision and objectives for the Parish. These ambitious goals are supported by local strategies and specific policies on the Built and Natural Environments, together with Community

Amenities and Employment. Supporting evidence can be found in the appendices at the end of the main document. This includes a profile of the current Parish, your consultation responses and the assessment methods used by the Group.

This Plan is the result of much hard work by the Neighbourhood Planning Group and the valued contributions of parishioners. The Group has carried out thorough research before making its proposals. It has consulted with parishioners and listened to your feedback. This document reflects the opinions and ideas you have kindly contributed. It has been created to be positive about future change whilst respecting the past. Most of all, it reflects the importance of retaining our heritage, culture, identity and sense of place.

We commend this referendum version to you all and hope that it meets with your approval and support.

Steve Ware
Chair, Neighbourhood Planning Group

Martin Lusty
Secretary, Neighbourhood Planning Group and Parish Councillor

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1 About this Neighbourhood Plan

Background

The Localism Act of 2011 introduced the concept of Neighbourhood Plans. These plans give local communities a much greater opportunity to influence future development in their areas. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the Government’s ‘bible’ on planning issues. It states that:

“Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community.”

Our Neighbourhood Plan will sit alongside, and must obviously be aligned with, Melton Borough’s emerging Local Plan. We can’t promote less development than in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies. Other than that, our Neighbourhood Plan is able to shape and direct sustainable development in the Parish. Once approved, the POLICIES it contains will take precedence over non-strategic policies in the Local Plan. This Neighbourhood Plan also identifies a number of COMMUNITY ACTIONS. These are not planning policies and are not subject to examination. They reflect future work activities that it is proposed to be undertaken within the Parish and involving a range of third parties to help improve the Parish in line with the outcome of community consultation.

Before being adopted, this Neighbourhood Plan must pass an independent examination to test against ‘Basic Conditions’:

- Compliance with national planning policy.
- General conformity with strategic policies in Melton’s Local Plan.
- Compatibility with EU and human rights requirements.

An independent examiner has checked that this Neighbourhood Plan meets these conditions. He proposed some detailed amendments to the text that are incorporated here. It is now going to a referendum of all parishioners.

In February 2014, Melton Borough Council (MBC) approved our application for designation as a Neighbourhood Plan area. The area to be covered by our Plan is defined by the Parish boundary (see Figure 1).

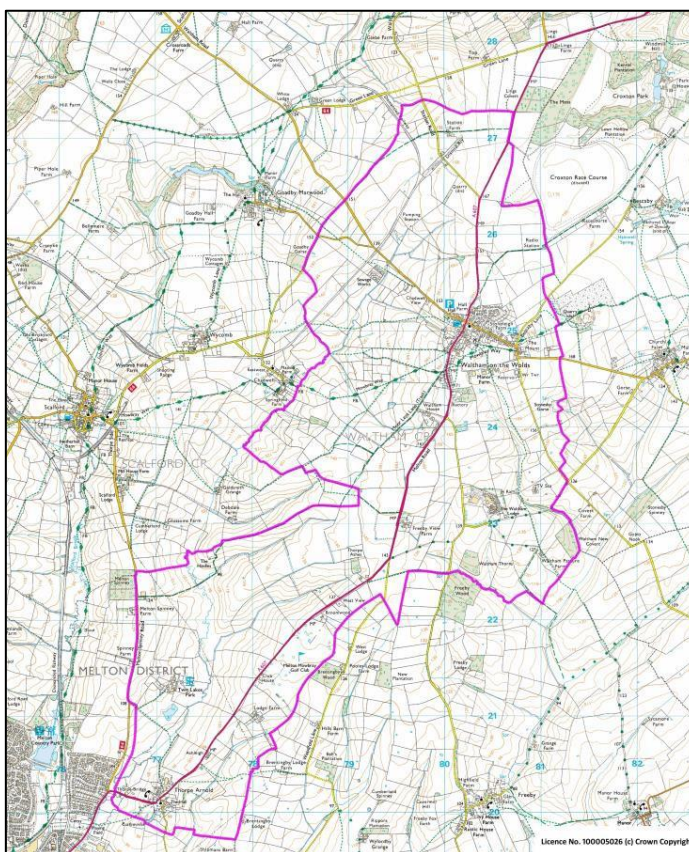


Figure 1: Parish Boundary & Neighbourhood Plan Area

Neighbourhood Planning Group

Following a period of delay, mainly due to illness, the Neighbourhood Planning Group (NPG) was fully established by the Parish Council in September 2015. This group comprises both Parish Councillors and other volunteers from the community. The people listed in the table below have all contributed to the creation of the Plan, either as part of the NPG or by providing much-appreciated assistance:

Claudine Baxter	Jayne Haynes	David Hill
James Houghton	Dr David Jefferson	David Lovegrove
Alan Luntley	Cllr Martin Lusty (Secretary)	Judith Maidment
Ron Marks	Cllr Malcolm Mills	Cllr Peter O'Connor
Rachel Quine	Glena Rowlands	Richard Snodin
Steve Ware (Chair)		

Jim Worley and James Beverley of Melton Borough Council plus Gary Kirk, Derek Doran and John Martin of YourLocale Ltd have all ably assisted the Group.

The Group has worked hard to drive the process forward, supported by YourLocale consultancy. The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan must conform to guidelines laid down by central Government and involve consultation with not only the local community, but also the Borough Council and local businesses and landowners. There is a prescribed procedure with appropriate checks and consultations, which we have observed. The Group's process is illustrated in Figure 2 on the next page.

Parish Profile

A profile of the Parish as it exists currently was drafted at an early stage of the process and updated as more evidence became available. The complete final version is in Appendix A.

Initial Public Consultation

The first round of Neighbourhood Planning drop-in consultation sessions was held in Thorpe Arnold and Waltham on the Wolds on 19 and 20 April 2016 respectively. In advance of these events, leaflet notifications were delivered to every home and email and Facebook notifications issued. Both sessions ran from 2pm to 8pm with manning by a rota of available Neighbourhood Planning Group members. 110 parishioners gave their time to learn about possible future developments in the Parish and contributed their thoughts and ideas. 25 people attended at Thorpe Arnold and 85 came to the Waltham session. In the following five categories, people were asked what they liked, what they disliked and what they would like to see in the future:

- Housing and Development.
- Environment and Green Space.
- Heritage and Conservation.
- Amenities and Services.
- Anything else!

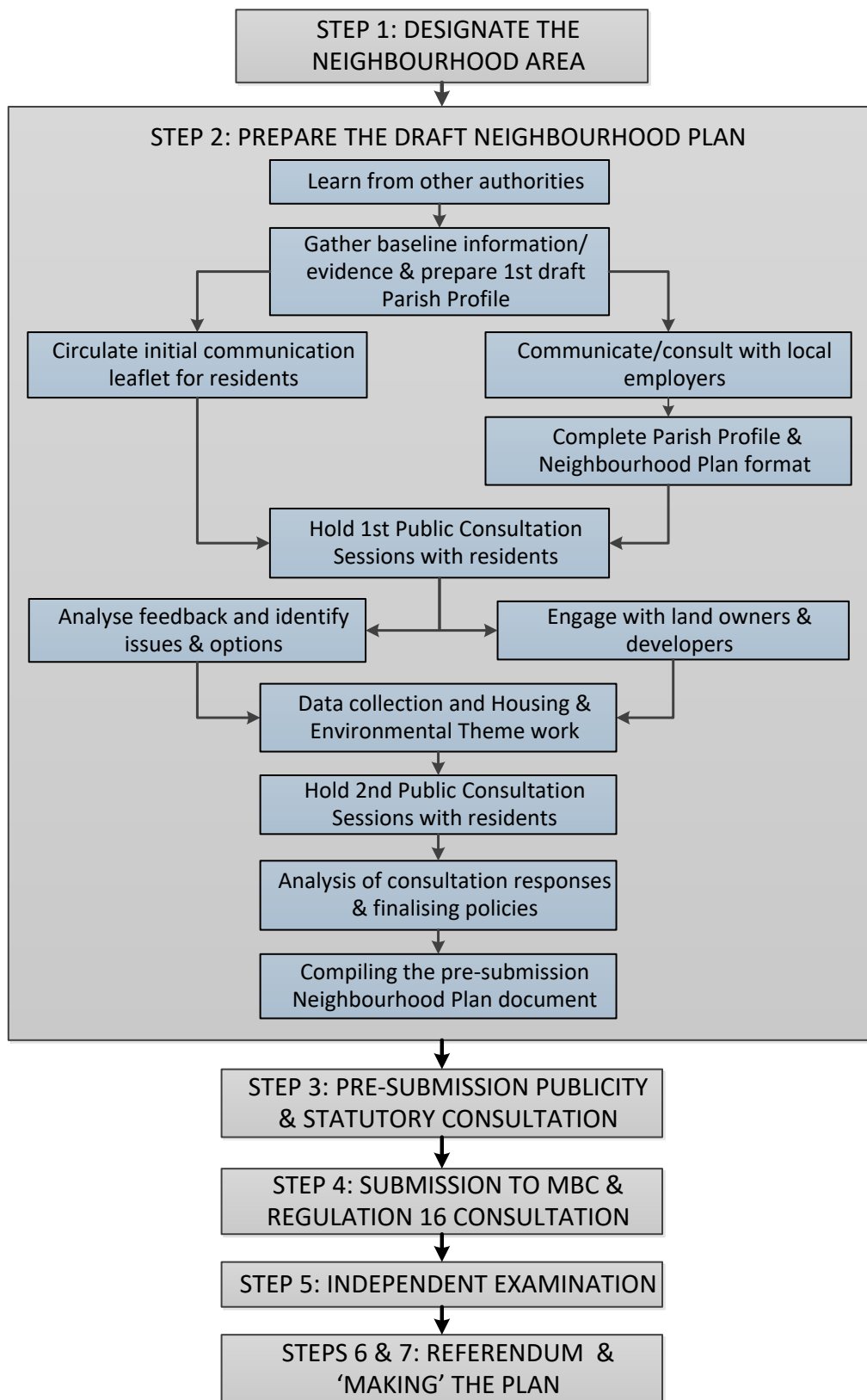


Figure 2: Neighbourhood Planning Process

All the responses were recorded at the sessions using Post-It™ notes. We collected no less than 784 individual comments that the Neighbourhood Planning Group has subsequently analysed to identify the key issues and opinions. When analysing the responses, it was apparent that a more meaningful categorisation could be achieved. The following modified headings were therefore used to group the individual responses:

- Housing and Development.
- Amenities and Services.
- Village Character.
- Housing Design.
- Environment and green space.
- Type of housing.
- Miscellaneous.

The data collected indicated a very clear picture of the main issues, priorities and ideas for the future. The priorities have been assessed based on the number of comments in that category. Interestingly, the priorities for Thorpe Arnold were significantly different from those received at Waltham, so the results for the two villages have been kept separate. The full report is recorded in Appendix B: Consultation Statement Part 1.

Primary School Consultation

Pupils at Waltham on the Wolds Church of England Primary School were consulted in July 2016. They were asked what they liked, what they disliked and what they would like to see in the future. Not surprisingly, their comments relate to Waltham rather than the Parish as a whole. A complete listing and summary of the pupils' responses are also included in Appendix B: Consultation Statement Part 1.

Second Public Consultation

The Neighbourhood Planning Group organised two further drop-in events on Neighbourhood Planning on 16 and 17 November 2016. YourLocale Ltd consultancy was commissioned to prepare the presentation boards and support the Group at the events. The sessions took place between 4pm and 8pm at the Village Halls in Thorpe Arnold (16 November) and Waltham on the Wolds (17 November).

The aim of the events was to share the emerging policies – particularly in relation to housing allocations and environmental designations – and to seek feedback on them plus further input in the development of the Plan. The drop-in events were promoted in a variety of ways:

- Leaflet to all households in the Parish.
- Posters displayed on the Parish noticeboards.
- Members of the Parish Council spoke to villagers to inform them of the event.
- Via the Facebook page of the Parish Council.

35 people attended the event at Thorpe Arnold and 78 at Waltham on the Wolds making a total of 108 people across the Parish over the two sessions.

Members of the Neighbourhood Planning Group welcomed attendees on arrival and asked them to complete a contact sheet to record attendance. The arrangements for the open event were explained. The first displays introduced Neighbourhood Planning and described the process that is being followed by the Parish Council. Copies of explanatory booklets and finalised Neighbourhood Plans from other parishes were available for people to read as they walked around the displays.

A series of display boards were located around the room that explained the Neighbourhood Planning Group's proposals. These focused on the main topics to be covered by the Plan:

- Housing Development – housing mix, location and design.
- Environment – Local Green Space criteria and protection of other land and environmental features.
- Employment, Transport and Community Facilities.

Respondents recorded their many valuable comments and ideas on Post-It™ notes. A full report is included in Appendix B: Consultation Statement Part 1.

In general, the responses were very supportive of our draft proposals and this has empowered the Group to progress to the final stage of writing the Pre-submission Plan.

Regulation 14 Statutory Consultation

A statutory consultation was conducted in accordance with the requirements of Part 5, Section 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. It took place over the 6-week period from 12 April to 23 May 2017. The Parish Council and Neighbourhood Planning Group consulted with the statutory consultees identified within Paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. They were informed of the consultation prior to the start date by email or letter. For their reference, the Pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan and appendices were posted on the Parish Council's website and hard copies were made available for those without Internet access.

Parishioners and other interested parties were informed by a variety of means:

- By leaflet drop to every house in the Parish.
- Via the Parish Council's website and Facebook page.
- Notices in the Parish Council's notice boards in Waltham and Thorpe Arnold.
- By email to parishioners who had previously signed up for Neighbourhood Planning updates.

All Regulation 14 representations and the corresponding responses and amendments are reported in Appendix C: Consultation Statement Part 2.

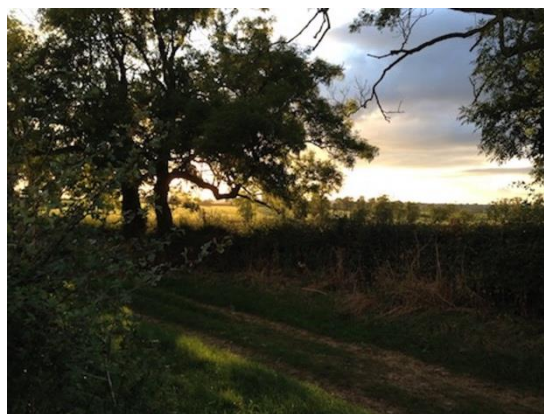
2 A Plan for Our Parish

Introduction

The policies of the Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold Neighbourhood Plan are set within the context of the plan-making framework for England. The scope and content of the Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold Neighbourhood Plan has been shaped by the priorities and aspirations of the Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold community, led by the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Planning Group. This Plan covers the period up to 31 December 2036. In drawing up this Plan, we have the following vision and aims in mind:

A Vision for 2036

Waltham and Thorpe Arnold will be thriving, vibrant communities with a strong sense of place and individuality. We will have grown to meet social needs whilst retaining a strong community spirit, fine historic buildings, and unspoilt rural surroundings.



Our Aims

- **Preserve our rural character, with easy access to green spaces and open countryside.**
- **Support thriving village amenities for all ages and social groups.**
- **Attract new developments that enhance the look and feel of our surroundings and complement our culture and heritage.**
- **Mitigate the impact of development on our communities, traffic, flooding and infrastructure.**

Planning Context

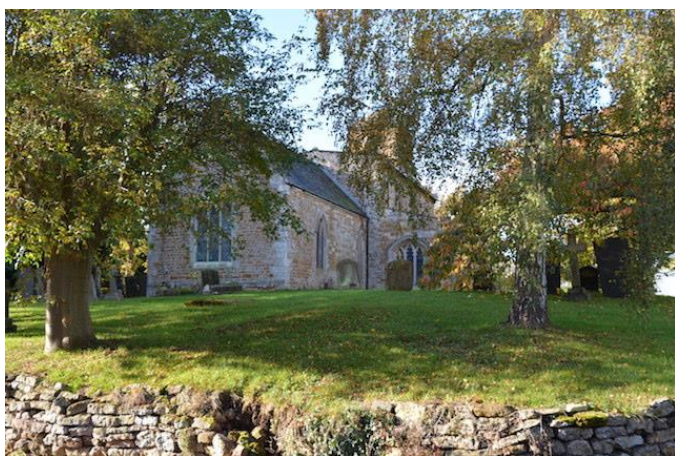
The procedure for the making of a Neighbourhood Plan is prescribed within the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Regulations have informed the preparation of policies for the Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold Neighbourhood Plan, in particular ensuring that the Neighbourhood Plan:

- **Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.**
- **Is in general conformity with the strategic policies of Melton Borough Council and has regard for the policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as well as meeting a range of EU obligations.**

Sustainable Development

A definition of sustainable development is provided within the NPPF. It describes three dimensions to sustainable development and that these dimensions give rise to the need for planning to perform a number of roles:

An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure. Whilst the community is primarily residential, there is a strong desire to safeguard its employment locations, including the farming community. We therefore wish to retain the current level of employment and develop it further where possible.



A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by promoting the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

Through the Neighbourhood Plan, we are seeking to ensure that any new housing delivers a mix of housing types so that we can meet the needs of present and future generations and ensure that we support the community's health as well as its social and cultural wellbeing. We are particularly looking to provide bungalows for older people as well as some smaller and more affordable homes. We are also seeking to support and enhance existing community facilities and to improve services for younger people.

An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including supporting the move to a low carbon economy. In order to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, we are seeking to ensure that:

- The special open spaces within our village are protected from development, to protect the village identity and retain the rural nature of its surroundings.
- Development preserves and contributes to the attractive local countryside including replacement of any hedging which needs to be maintained.
- Development recognises the need to protect and, where possible, improve biodiversity and important habitats and includes adding hedging to boundaries of new developments.

This document sets out local considerations for delivering sustainable development across Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold. Development proposals should meet the requirements of all relevant policies in this Neighbourhood Plan and be in line with Melton Borough and national policies.

3 Strategic Policies

At the heart of the Neighbourhood Plan for Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold is the principle of ensuring sustainable development, which means providing for the needs of the current generation while not making life worse for future generations. This principle is consistent with the purpose of the UK Planning System, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF), to “help achieve sustainable development”.

Through the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan, consideration has been given to the type and extent of new development required to meet the needs of the local community, where it should best be located in the Parish, and how it should be designed. The plan includes in its scope everything from small-scale development, such as a minor extension to a house, to small-scale housing developments and employment proposals.

The Plan is not intended to replace the policies contained in the Melton Local Plan and the NPPF. It sits alongside these to add additional, more detailed policies, that are specific to Waltham and Thorpe Arnold and which help achieve the community's vision. Where suitable policies already exist in the Melton Local Plan or NPPF they are not duplicated in this Plan.

When considering development proposals, the Plan will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where there are no policies in this Plan relevant to a planning application or development proposal, the provisions of relevant National and Borough-wide planning policies apply.

Limits to Development

The purpose of Limits to Development is to ensure that sufficient sites for new homes and economic activity are available in appropriate locations that will avoid impinging into the local countryside.

Melton Borough Council had previously drawn village envelopes for both villages as part of the 1999 adopted Local Plan. The village envelopes define the extent of the built-up area of each settlement. They distinguish between areas where, in planning terms, development is acceptable in principle and where it would not be acceptable, generally in the surrounding countryside. The relevant policy reference is OS2. Although this policy is very popular with parishioners, it has been successfully challenged on appeal and has not been upheld recently as a reason for rejecting planning applications for new housing on green-field sites. However, parishioners see development outside the village envelopes as detrimental to the community and the visual and leisure amenity of each settlement's surroundings.

The Neighbourhood Plan proposes to designate Limits to Development for the villages of Thorpe Arnold (see Figure 3) and Waltham on the Wolds (see Figure 4). These will update and supersede the existing Village Envelopes currently used by Melton Borough Council, taking into account recent planning approvals. These Limits will be more robust in controlling unsuitable development once this Plan is approved at referendum and passed into planning law.

Within the defined Limits to Development, an appropriate amount of suitably designed and located development will be acceptable in principle, although some sites within this area are protected from development and all development will be required to take into account the policies within this Plan.

The draft Local Plan highlights the development of the Melton Mowbray Eastern Distributor Road that is likely to be located within the Parish, although the precise location is not yet determined. The Limits to Development policy acknowledges this potential development and allows for the infrastructure requirements that will facilitate its construction.

Focusing development within the agreed Limits to Development will help to support existing services within the village centre and help to protect the countryside and the remainder of the Neighbourhood Plan area from inappropriate development. The updated Limits to Development have been determined using the following criteria:

- Preservation of green space in and around the village; maintaining the open feel and easy access to the countryside that people value so much.
- Preventing development at the village fringes in areas with high-to-medium sensitivity (i.e. preserving the views of the village as part of the landscape and maintaining the important panoramas outwards from the village).
- Avoiding sprawl i.e. keeping development within easy access by foot or bicycle to the village amenities.
- Following clearly defined physical features such as walls, fences, hedgerows and roads.
- Incorporating recent approvals and existing commitments by virtue of an extant planning permission for residential development on the fringes of the settlement.
- Providing scope to relax the boundary to allow for future expansion to meet the need for housing and business growth over the Plan period.

POLICY S1: Limits to Development

Development proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area will be supported on sites within the Limits to Development as identified in Figures 3 and 4 (overleaf) where they comply with the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan and subject to design and amenity considerations. Land outside the defined Limits to Development will be treated as open countryside, where development will be carefully controlled in line with local and national strategic planning policies. Exceptions will be development essential to the operational requirements of agriculture and forestry; small-scale development for employment, recreation and tourism; development of a site allocated by the Local Plan in accordance with Local Plan aspirations for that site, where reasonably required for the delivery of housing; and any infrastructure requirements in relation to the Melton Mowbray Eastern Distributor Road.

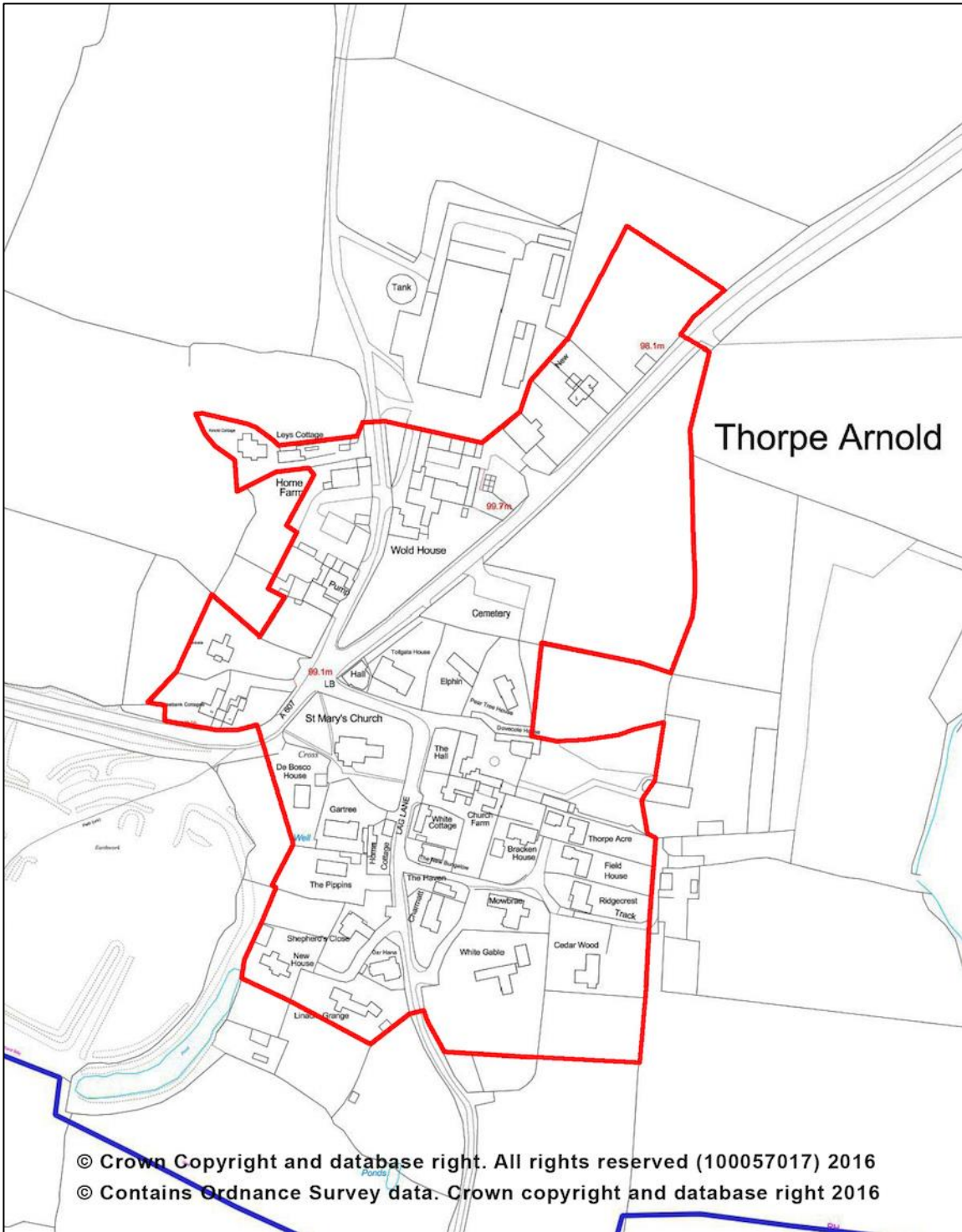


Figure 3: Limits to Development, Thorpe Arnold

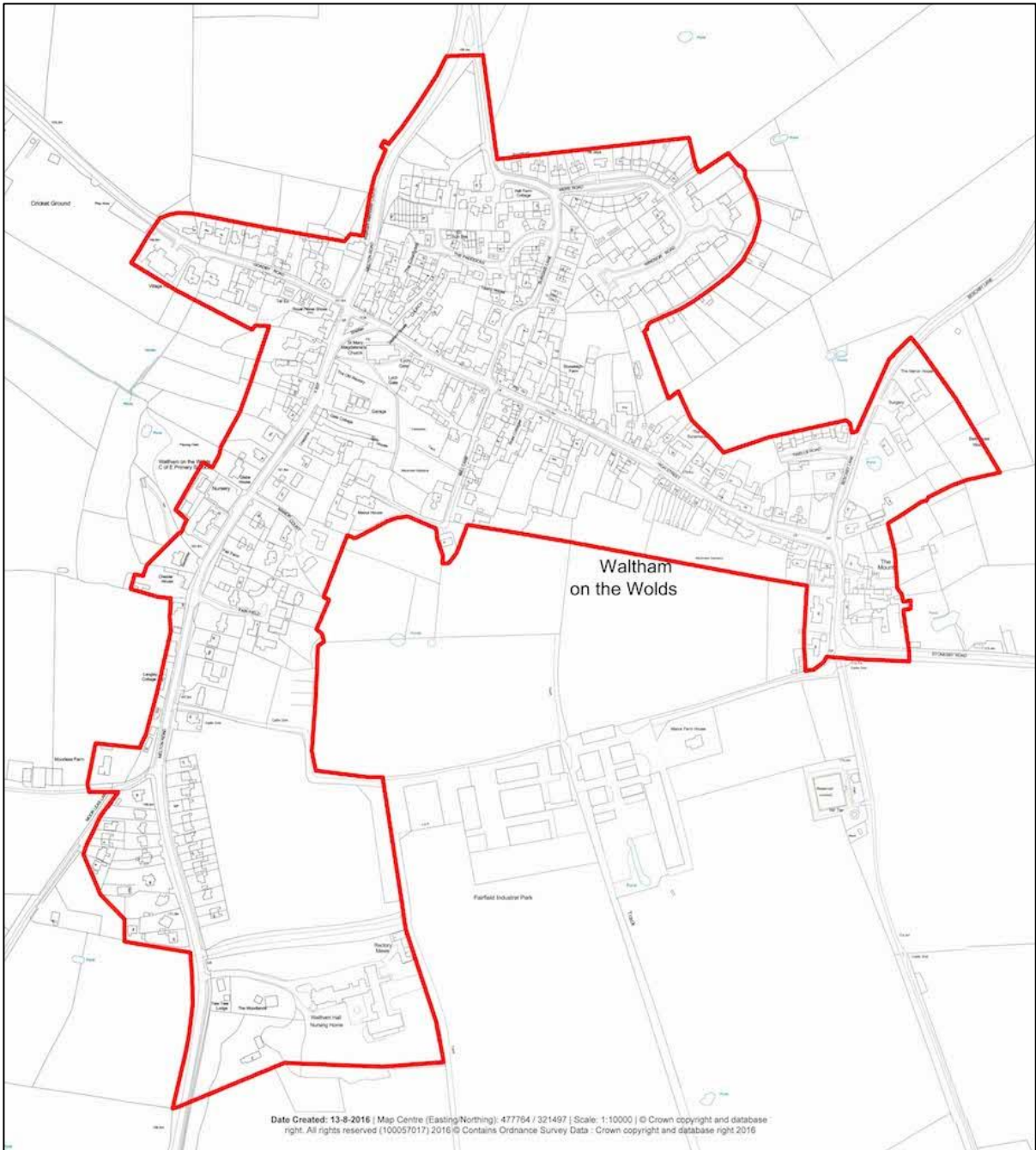


Figure 4: Limits to Development, Waltham on the Wolds

4 Policies for Housing and the Built Environment

Introduction

Waltham on the Wolds is situated in the northeast corner of Leicestershire, five miles from Melton Mowbray, eleven miles from Grantham and approximately twenty miles from Leicester, Nottingham, Newark and Stamford. It is positioned on the eastern edge of the Leicestershire Wolds at a height of 168m (560ft), making it the second highest village in the county. Geologically, Waltham stands on a mixture of clay and red marl with underlying strata of Jurassic limestone, which has been quarried locally and used in the building of many of the older houses in the village.

Thorpe Arnold stands on the top of a hill close to the town of Melton Mowbray, a small farming village with roots going back to before its first recorded mention in the Domesday Book of 1086.

Both villages have grown gradually over recent years with the addition of relatively small developments and windfall sites.

Housing Provision

It is recognised that the provision of new housing helps to support existing community facilities such as shops, school and the pub and helps to achieve the aim of supporting the balance and sustainability of the community.

Consultation has shown that residents are not opposed to development, but doubt that the local infrastructure can accommodate excessive development. They believe that house building should be proportionate, meet the identified needs of both of the villages and that, where it takes place, it must not have an adverse impact on the character of the Parish.

The draft Local Plan for Melton has updated the housing need across the Borough and the allocation of housing within it. It states that there is a requirement to provide for between 5,750 and 7,000 new dwellings between 2011 and 2036 across the Borough. Melton Borough Council has agreed a housing requirement of 245 dwellings per annum. Of this, nearly two thirds of the dwellings needed over the Neighbourhood Plan period will be built in the Melton Mowbray Main Urban Area, with the remainder spread across the villages of the Borough.

The draft Local Plan establishes a hierarchy of settlements to help to determine the most appropriate locations for the remaining development (35% of the total). On the basis of this hierarchy, Waltham on the Wolds (as well as 11 other settlements) is identified as a 'Service Centre'. These settlements are identified on the basis of the presence of all of the four essential criteria (primary school, access to employment; fast broadband and a community building) together with regular public transport.

Although the Local Plan is yet to be finalised, the draft residual requirement for Waltham on the Wolds is for the village to provide a minimum 76 residential dwellings through to 2036.

This is in addition to 33 dwellings on small sites that have been completed since 2011, are under construction or have extant planning permission.

Although Thorpe Arnold does not meet three of the four essential criteria listed above, it is classified as a 'Rural Hub' as it falls within 2.5km of Melton Mowbray Town Centre. As such, the settlement is required to take a minimum of 18 dwellings over the same period.

Development in Service Centres and Rural Hubs is determined on a proportionate basis.

The Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to influence where new housing can be provided. However, the allocations within the draft Submission Local Plan that are located within the Limits to Development meet the housing target for the Parish, coupled with recent planning approvals in Waltham (14/00777/FUL – 26 houses, 15/01011/OUT and 17/00391/REM – 45 houses and 16/00847/OUT – 60 houses). The Neighbourhood Plan does not therefore allocate any additional sites.

Should there be a failure to deliver the commitments already identified, or if there is a change in housing need across the Borough, the policy below will be reviewed. Until this time, it will add a layer of protection against inappropriate development in the Plan area.

POLICY H1: Housing Provision

Housing development in the Parish other than on sites allocated in the Local Plan or benefitting from extant planning permission for housing development at the date of adoption of this Plan will be restricted to Windfall development in line with Policy H8 unless there is an increase in housing need across Melton Borough.

Housing Mix

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes is essential to support sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities. In Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold, this will underpin a well-balanced population that is vital to the on-going viability of local services and prosperity of the Parish, particularly in light of the community's increasingly ageing population. The Parish has a higher than average representation of older people (aged 65+) accounting for 21% of total residents which is above the district (18%), region (17%) and national (16%) rates. It should be noted, however, that at the time of the 2011 Census there was a communal care home providing accommodation for 44 residents which will contribute to the elderly population share. The median age of people living in the Parish is 47. This is higher than for the district (43), region (40) and England (39) rates.

The elderly population is increasing rapidly with the number of residents aged 60+ increasing by 23% (+53) between 2001 and 2011. Research shows the number of older people will grow significantly in the future and relative growth will be highest in older cohorts. Latest available population projections suggest that Melton's 65 plus age group is forecast to grow by around 60% between 2014 and 2034.

Home ownership levels are relatively high with around 80% of households owning their homes outright or with a mortgage or loan. This is somewhat higher than the district (72%), regional (67%) and national (63%) averages. Social rented properties account for just 6% of tenure which is below the district (11%), region (16%) and England (18%) rates. Around 11% of households live in privately-rented homes. This is significantly below the district (14%), regional (15%) and England (17%) rates.

Data from the 2011 Census shows that a large proportion (57%) of residential dwellings are detached. This is much higher than the district (41%), regional (32%) and national (22%)



share. Semi-detached housing accounts for 29% of residential housing stock compared with 36% for the district, 35% for the region and 31% for England as a whole. Terraced housing and flats provide 14% of accommodation spaces.

People living in the Parish are more likely to be living in dwellings with 4 or more bedrooms. Results from the 2011 Census show that 43% of households live in housing

with more than 4 bedrooms which is somewhat higher than the district rate (26%), regional (20%) and England (19%) averages. There is also an under-representation of housing for single people with less than 2% of dwellings having one bedroom against 6% for the district, 8% for the region and 12% for England as a whole. In Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold, domestic properties with Council Tax band E make up the largest group (approximately 19% of the total). The Parish has a larger proportion of properties with high value council tax bands with over 32% of dwellings having a Council Tax Band F or above against 11% for the district, 5% for the region and 9% for England as a whole.

There is evidence of widespread under-occupancy in the Parish (having more bedrooms than the notional number recommended by the bedroom standard). Analysis of the 2011 Census shows that more than half (55%) of all households in the Waltham Parish have two or more spare bedrooms and a third 33% have one spare bedroom. Under-occupancy is higher than district, regional and national rates.

The high level of under-occupancy suggests a need for smaller homes of one to two bedrooms that would be suitable for residents needing to downsize, small families and those entering the housing market. Providing suitable accommodation for elderly residents will enable them to remain in the local community and release under-occupied larger properties onto the market that would be suitable for growing families.

A detailed study of the housing needs across the Parish is provided as Appendix D.

Policy H2: Housing Mix

New housing development proposals should provide a mixture of housing types specifically to meet identified local needs in Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold. Dwellings of 3 bedrooms or fewer and single-storey accommodation suitable for older people are supported.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is defined in the NPPF (Annex 2) as “social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market”. The Housing and Planning Act (2016) adds Starter Homes to this definition. Planning Practice Guidance (2a-022) describes affordable housing need as being an estimate of “the number of households and projected households who lack their own housing or live in unsuitable housing and who cannot afford to meet their housing needs in the market.”

With average house prices too high for those on average incomes, housing affordability remains a key housing issue for the Parish and there is a clear case to meet local targets for affordable housing provision. The draft Local Plan contains a requirement to provide 32.4% affordable units on-site for all developments with 11 or more dwellings through provision for social rented through to part-rent/part owned properties.



Consultation has demonstrated broad support for affordable units to be provided for those individuals in housing need who have a local connection so that local need is prioritised. Similarly, the provision of Starter Homes or Shared Ownership Homes will be supported to help achieve a balanced community. The Neighbourhood Plan supports the provision of more affordable housing within the Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold Parish. It is also felt that development should make provision for the increasing numbers and demand of older members of the population.

Policy H3: Affordable Housing Provision

The provision of affordable homes for people with a local connection will be supported.

Developments should be 'tenure blind', where affordable housing is indistinguishable from market dwellings and is spread throughout the development.

Heritage

Much of the stone used in the village would have come from the Stonesby quarry (now the Bescaby Lane nature reserve and adjacent, now covered, landfill site). This would have been supplemented by ironstone from the Eastwell and other near-by quarries, giving us today's beauty of Waltham; with its many mellow creamy stone houses and cottages under their red and blue pantile, thatch or slate roofs. Open spaces and paddocks within and adjacent to the village contrast with the sense of enclosure within and serve to enrich the overall rural character of Waltham. It is this rich architectural heritage that makes Waltham on the Wolds the village it is today. Much of the architectural appeal is due to the vast majority of the buildings having been in the ownership of the Duke of Rutland's estate until 1920/1, which dictated design and build standards. Indeed much of the architecture of the older houses and cottages is typical of others in former Belvoir Estate villages, with its 'hooded' square topped corbelled drip courses above window and door arches, large over-sailing gabled eaves and statement chimneys.

Conservation Area

The Conservation Area for Waltham shown in available MBC mapping appears to date from a 2004 Conservation Area Appraisal of the whole local authority area. Re-appraisal for the Neighbourhood Plan has suggested that the boundary line is anomalous in several places: it appears there may have been some confusion, at the time of its delineation, between a Conservation Area (whose objective is protection of the historic cores of settlements of particular architectural and historical merit, including buildings, trees and open areas) and a Village Envelope (which defines limits to development in order to control the spread of a settlement and to protect the open countryside immediately surrounding it). The existing conservation area boundary does not accurately define the historic core and also fails to follow land parcel boundaries.

Designation of Conservation Areas is a matter for the Local Planning Authority, not a Neighbourhood Plan. The community aspiration to review and redefine the Conservation Area for Waltham is therefore dealt with in the following Community Action.

Community Action H4: Waltham Conservation Area

The Parish Council will actively pursue, in partnership with the community, Melton Borough Council and other stakeholders, re-designation of the Conservation Area in Waltham on the Wolds in order to more effectively protect the architectural and historical features of the village's historic settlement core.

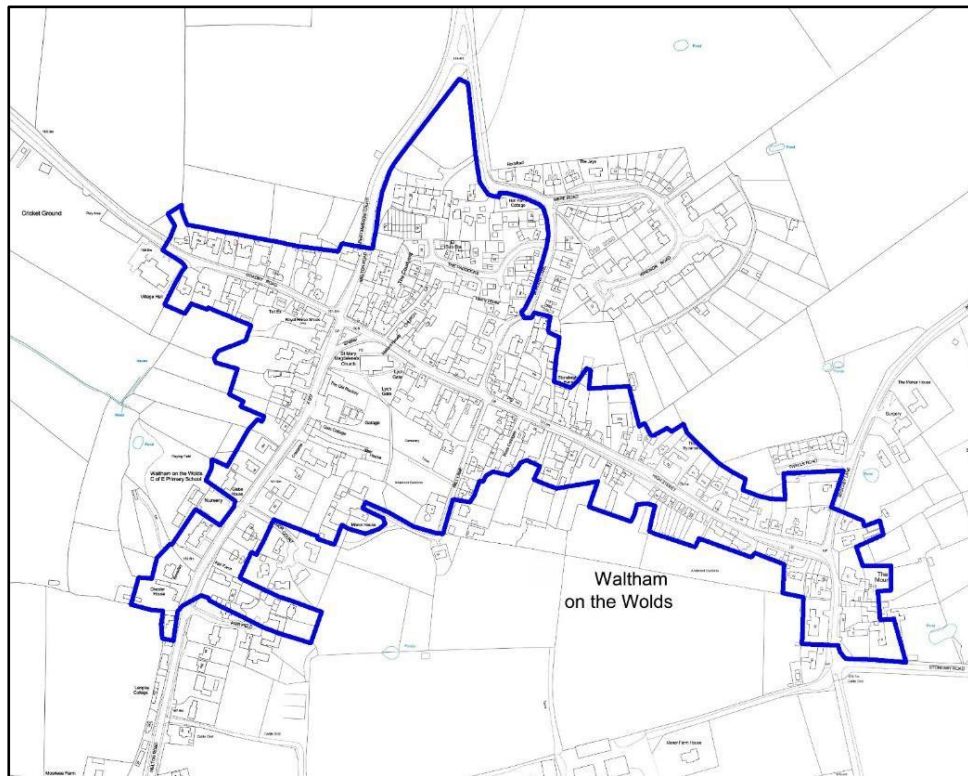


Figure 5: Existing Conservation Area, Waltham

Listed Buildings

There are also a number of built landmarks around the Parish that contribute to the overall character of the Parish. Many are identified as being of national importance, and legally protected through their Listed Building status. There are 34 such buildings and structures in the Parish. These are shown below:

Listed buildings in Waltham:

1. Church of St Mary Magdelene: Grade I.
2. Lychgate at East Entrance to Churchyard: Grade II.
3. Wall (Approximately 120 Metres Long) to Embanked Churchyard of Church of St Mary Magdelene: Grade II.
4. Gateway Cottage, High Street: Grade II.
5. Nos 2 and 3 Church Lane: Grade II.
6. Stoneleigh House, 17 High Street: Grade II.

7. Barn and Granary at Stoneleigh, High Street: Grade II.
8. Garden Wall and Gate Piers at Stoneleigh, High Street: Grade II.
9. Thatched Farm, High Street: Grade II.
10. Pump at Rear of Thatched Farm, High Street: Grade II.
11. The Old Mill, Mill Lane: Grade II.
12. The Royal Horseshoes Public House: Grade II.
13. The former Marquis Granby Public House: Grade II.
14. Hall Farmhouse & Stone Outbuilding adjoining Melton Road: Grade II.
15. Chester House Melton Road: Grade II.
16. Gale Cottage, Melton Road: Grade II.
17. Gale House, Melton Road: Grade II.
18. Church of England School and Schoolhouse: Grade II.
19. Approximately 40 metres of wall and gate piers along street boundary of school playground: Grade II.
20. Home Farmhouse, Melton Road: Grade II.
21. Moorlands Farmhouse, Melton Road: Grade II.
22. The Old Rectory, Melton Road: Grade II.
23. K6 telephone kiosk, High Street: Grade II.
24. Pump Shelter, High Street: Grade II.
25. Milepost at SK 77532 2060, A607: Grade II.
26. Milepost at SK 7852 2192, A607: Grade II.
27. Milepost at SK 7956 2311, Melton Road: Grade II.
28. Milepost at SK 8002 2456, Melton Road: Grade II.
29. Milepost at SK 8034 2609, A607: Grade II.

Listed buildings in Thorpe Arnold:

30. Church of St Mary the Virgin: Grade II*.
31. Base of Cross Approximately 2 metres southwest of tower of Church of Mary the Virgin: Grade II.
32. Row of 3 headstones approximately 4 metres southeast of southeast angle of south aisle of Church: Grade II.
33. The Hall, Lag Lane: Grade II.
34. Wold House: Grade II.

Their designation as Listed Buildings gives them statutory protection, and highlighting them in the Neighbourhood Plan helps to ensure that all interested parties are aware of their local importance and merit. More description of the heritage assets is included in the Parish Profile (see Appendix A).

Local Heritage Assets of Historical and Architectural Interest

Part of the character of the parish derives from the relationships between buildings and the spaces in which they sit in the villages. The *setting* of Listed Buildings and those recognised here as non-designated heritage assets, while being subtler than physical open space, is essential for the preservation of the villages' layouts and their ambience – the way people experience the villages. Developers will be required to take the settings of heritage assets

into consideration in their proposals, and the Planning Authorities should apply Historic England guidelines on *Local Heritage Listing* and *The Setting of Heritage Assets* when determining Planning Consent in respect of proposals in Waltham and Thorpe Arnold.

Non-designated Heritage Assets

A number of buildings and structures in the Parish are not formally designated as listed but are considered to be heritage assets that should be protected from any negative impact of development for the future.

Policy H5: Non-designated Heritage Assets of Historical and Architectural Interest

Development proposals that affect an identified building or structure (listed below) of local significance or its setting will be required to preserve or enhance the significance and setting of that building or structure. Any benefits arising from a development proposal, or a change of use requiring planning approval, will need to be balanced against the scale of harm or loss and their significance as heritage assets.

Waltham:

1. Pump Shelter, Melton Road.
2. Crespina House and pump, Melton Road.
3. Sawgate House, High Street.
4. The Mount, High Street.
5. Threshing Barn, High Street.
6. Numbers 3,5,7 and 9 Mill Lane.
7. Manor House, Mill Lane.
8. Waltham House, Melton Road.
9. Mud boundary wall, south side of Goadby Road.
10. Methodist Chapel, Melton Road.

Thorpe Arnold:

11. Victorian postbox, Village Hall.

Housing Design

Waltham on the Wolds is situated in the Borough of Melton in the north east corner of Leicestershire; five miles from Melton Mowbray, eleven miles from Grantham and approximately twenty miles from Leicester, Nottingham, Newark and Stamford. The village is on the eastern extremity of the Leicestershire Wolds, in an elevated position, approximately 168m (560ft) above sea level, making it the second highest village in the County.

Waltham has a tremendously rich history dating back to pre-Roman times. The Domesday Book's reference to Waltham shows the village belonging to Hugh of Granomesnil who, after the Norman Conquest, was the largest landowner in the County. In the 13th century, Waltham became an important centre for trade, becoming one of the five towns of Leicestershire. It was granted a Royal Charter by Henry III to hold a weekly market and an annual Fair.

In 1871, records describe Waltham as a considerable and well-built village occupying a bold eminence on the Grantham and Melton Mowbray road, with many neat houses and a stone built church St Mary Magdalene occupying a prominent position on a bold acclivity above the road, and is approached by a flight of steps. It is a fine ancient structure in the Early English style, consisting of a nave, chancel, aisles and transepts with a tower rising from the centre containing five bells and surmounted by a lofty spire, 127 ft. high.

Waltham soil is partly clay and partly red marl, with an underlying stratum of Jurassic limestone that has been quarried locally and used extensively throughout the village for building, providing Waltham with one of its most attractive features.

Design and Character

Thorpe Arnold and Waltham on the Wolds lie to the south and north of the Parish separated by open countryside. The two villages each have a separate and distinctive character and are unique in their own particular way. Both villages have a long and fascinating history, resulting in a wide array of heritage assets and attractive landscapes.

Key Components of the Village Character

Thorpe Arnold is a small rural community that lies in the southern corner of the Parish and the built environment in the settlement is undoubtedly unique. The existing settlement patterns have grown incrementally over time, the buildings date from many periods, providing a richness and variety of styles and materials. The historic stone church sits at the centre of this closely-knit community that lies on the south side of the A607. A few farms and a small number of properties are situated on the north side of this road.

The cottages and houses are built of red brick and sit tightly together. Roofing materials are varied and include natural slate and red and blue glazed pantiles. Most properties have domestic-size casement windows with glazing bars and double sash windows complementing the imposing Georgian residence. Most of the properties are two storeys with one three storey Georgian property on the southern edge of the hamlet. The soft landscaping of the village is also a key contributor to Thorpe Arnold's local distinctiveness. Vegetation from gardens and the remaining grass verge break up the built environment and this balances the variety of the hard and soft character of the village and leads to the varied experience of the village scene

Waltham itself sits on the edge of the ridge that overlooks the Vale of Belvoir, which is an expansive gentle rolling Vale landscape in the northeast of the Parish. Waltham has grown and developed as a linear village characterised by limestone roadside buildings with close

proximity at the rear to open countryside and paddocks (identified by MBC as part of the settlement appraisal).

Waltham is a village with a strong Conservation status. The majority of the village lies within a conservation area. The conservation area boundary encompasses the oldest part of the village and is centred on the 13th/14th Century church of St Mary Magdalene together with a wealth of eighteenth and nineteenth century rural properties clustered round the Green. Traditionally, the buildings are low and have a relatively large footprint but mainly the Waltham vernacular is about the use of local limestone for the front and side elevations of houses, outbuildings barns and garages. In the older part of the village, stone walls link the properties along the High Street that was the original route between Grantham and Melton.

The vernacular architectural heritage is a key contributor to the village's local distinctiveness. This includes:

- The palette of materials used.
- All key buildings built in natural stone (limestone), some with side and rear elevations in soft red brick.
- The Waltham roofscape is one of the most attractive features of the village with many tall and ornate chimneystacks dominating the skyline. Many are still in use today.
- Roofing materials include thatch, grey slate and red and blue glazed pantiles that were made locally and are a particular feature of the Belvoir Vale.
- Windows are inextricably linked with architectural style and play a vital role in defining the character and period of a property. In Waltham, they are generally of domestic scale and predominately side-hung casement or double-hung sliding sash. Some earlier casements are set straight into stone Glazing bars subdivide the panes and many have limestone lintels and brick arches over. A number of the older properties have a stone drip mould detail over windows and doors that provide visual interest and are other characteristics of the established local vernacular.
- Many of the older cottages and some of the larger properties have double dormer windows set in the roof facing the street.
- Front doors are generally solid wood, panelled and painted.
- House Roof orientations are predominantly set parallel to the street whilst many of the smaller outbuildings sit at right angles to the street. Most have steeply pitched roofs.
- In the historic core of the village the majority of properties are built front elevation onto the highway boundary separated by footpaths from the street. The majority of the



houses overlook countryside to the rear that complements its rural heritage and attractiveness.

- Wide grass verges along one side of the High Street between the road and buildings gives a feeling of spaciousness.
- The scale and massing is predominantly two storey with some single storey houses built in close proximity to each other in the older part of the village with the houses on the Melton Road spaced further apart and set back from the footpath.

The two villages are separated by open countryside and to help them retain their separate character and identity, the countryside between and around both villages should be given special protection. Both villages are particularly attractive and care must be taken to safeguard the high value placed on them by our community. The biggest challenge facing the future of Thorpe Arnold and Waltham is to balance the desire to protect the character of both villages with the need for them to grow and evolve in a sensitive and proportionate manner in order to sustain the community and its facilities.

Design Guidelines

We want to protect the special character, quality, diversity and distinctiveness of the Parish without restricting acceptable sustainable development and economic activity that underpins the vitality of our Parish. New development proposals should have obvious character, be attractive and have a strong sense of place and pay particular attention to local landscaping traditions. They should be designed sensitively to ensure the high quality built environment of the Parish is maintained and enhanced, particularly where schemes are located within or in close proximity to the Conversation Areas.

Policy H6: Housing Design Guidelines

Development proposals should demonstrate high quality design, form and layout consistent with the special character of the Parish, and which are in accordance with the design guidelines below:

- The siting and layout of any development should be sympathetic to the character of the area in relation to street layout, appearance (in terms of urban form, architecture and hard and soft landscaping).
- Development proposals will be required to protect the setting of historic assets.
- Care should be taken to ensure that development does not disrupt the historic look of the street scene.
- New developments should demonstrate consideration of height, scale and massing to ensure they are in keeping with the settlement pattern.
- Developments should incorporate, where possible, detailing of fenestration, chimneys, doors and roofline pitch in keeping with the local vernacular. Conducive construction materials should also be used.
- Adequate off road parking should be provided as a minimum of two car parking spaces for dwellings of three bedrooms or less and three spaces for dwellings of four bedrooms or more, in line with Highway Authority requirements. There should be adequate parking areas for residents and visitors within each development.
- Developments should be enhanced by landscaping and planting with existing trees and hedges preserved wherever possible.
- Where appropriate, plots should be enclosed using native hedging, local stone or brick walls of rural design and scale or timber fencing.

Policy H7: Extensions or alterations to existing properties

Extensions or modifications to existing properties, to increase or alter their accommodation, should be designed to achieve the following objectives:

- All house extensions or conversions should follow or relate well to the style and vernacular of the original building, paying particular attention to details e.g. roof shapes and pitch angles, fenestration, brickwork and tile colour.
- The combined building (the original and extension) should not detrimentally change the form, bulk and general design of the original or harm its landscape character or setting.

Windfall Development (including Tandem Development)

Windfall sites are small infill or redevelopment sites that come forward unexpectedly and which have not been specifically identified for new housing in a planning document. These sites often comprise redundant or vacant buildings including barns, or a gap between existing properties in a built up area. Such sites have made a regular contribution towards the housing supply in the Parish at an average of 6 dwellings a year. As there remain opportunities for windfall development, there is strong evidence that this will continue to make a contribution to housing provision in the Parish over the lifetime of the Plan.

Regulation 14 consultation has highlighted a lack of support for ‘tandem’ or ‘backland development’, defined as the placing of one dwelling behind another within a single plot or the erection of a dwelling or dwellings on parts of large gardens attached to existing dwellings. The following Policy is therefore expanded to cover development of this type.

Policy H8: Windfall Development (including Tandem Development)

Small-scale development proposals for infill and redevelopment sites will be supported where:

- It is within the Limits to Developments of the villages of Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold.
- It helps to meet the identified housing requirement for the Parish.
- It respects the shape and form of each village in order to maintain its distinctive character and enhance it where possible.
- It provides for a safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the site.
- It does not adversely impact on the character of the area, or the amenity of neighbours and the occupiers of the dwelling.

5 Policies for the Natural Environment

Introduction

The Parish consists of two settlements and their territories that were only merged as an administrative unit in the 20th century. Waltham and Thorpe had been separate 'dark ages' estates, medieval manors, ecclesiastical parishes and 'townships' for at least 1200 years before this amalgamation in 1936. Their histories, and therefore the characteristic environments local people wish to protect as far as possible, are distinct. These differences, and the spaces between the villages (and especially between Thorpe Arnold and Melton Mowbray), are important.

Historical Environment

The area has been inhabited since prehistoric times; finds and earthworks demonstrate that people lived here from before the time of the Roman occupation. Although their locations may have been continuously occupied through the succeeding 'dark ages', the 'modern' villages, including their names, date from the 8th or 9th centuries AD.

Waltham on the Wolds: a high-forest village [on the wooded hills] from *wald* (Anglian) meaning forest; high forest land and *hām* (Old English) village, manor, estate, homestead.

Thorpe Arnold: an outlying settlement belonging to Arnold from *þorp* (Old Norse) meaning a secondary or dependent settlement and *Ernald* (Norman Anglo- French personal name. Ernald de Bosco (or Ernauld de Bois) held the village in 1156.

Germanic settlers established Waltham. Its name is Anglo-Saxon; it developed as a nucleated township at the junction of two ancient tracks. Its location meant that, after the Norman Conquest, it expanded and became a place of relative prosperity as a market and a centre for wool and, later, building stone. Waltham's open arable fields were Enclosed (and turned over to grazing land) in 1766, meaning that good areas of ridge and furrow earthworks (preserved medieval ploughland) survive here.

Thorpe Arnold was a Danish outlying settlement ('thorp') connected to (probably) Melton ('middle settlement) by the 12th century but based on a much older 'Celtic' (Romano-British) site and a 'dark ages' estate. The church was built on a mound – a possibly pre-Christian religious site; the nave (AD800) and font (AD850) are old and its medieval setting can still be experienced in the surrounding landscape. Thorpe Arnold is situated on a hillside above the water meadows of the Thorpe Brook* valley. The medieval settlement was much bigger than the modern village; earthworks mark the greatest extent of the houses and streets, while only 400 of the historic parish's 1740 acres were productive by c.1800. Enclosure of the medieval open fields took place piecemeal and early, compared with Waltham, so ridge and furrow is rare in Thorpe but large areas of other medieval earthworks survive.

* Note: the brook that flows southeast through the Parish is not named on OS maps. Other references refer to Thorpe Brook or Caldwell Brook.

Natural Environment

The long social and agricultural history of the Parish has long ago obliterated all trace of truly 'natural' habitat. Most of the Parish is either productive farmland or settlement and there is very little woodland and few species-rich hedges. At the same time, however, human activity has created pockets of new habitat for wildlife. These include water meadows beside the Thorpe Brook (that is itself of good quality and relatively biodiversity), abandoned limestone and ironstone quarries, disused railway lines, and permanent grazing fields with a rich grassland flora. The scarcity of wildlife sites in the parish (and the whole Borough) makes the surviving areas disproportionately significant, especially in the context of Waltham and Thorpe Arnold and therefore for this Plan.

The following are environmentally significant characteristics of the Parish:

- Locally important and distinctive histories of the two villages: landscapes, layouts, earthworks and extant buildings provide evidence.
- Expansive and valued views as recognised as important in the Local Plan.
- Medieval layout of Waltham village, including building plots, lanes and open spaces.
- Surviving early medieval landscape of Thorpe Arnold, including its hillside location and earthworks.
- Ridge and furrow earthworks around Waltham.
- Sites of local- and Borough-level biodiversity importance.
- Sites of industrial history significance including disused quarries and railway lines.

Environmental Inventory

An Environmental Inventory of the Plan Area was carried out during September-November 2016. The work comprised two elements:

- Review of all existing designations and available information.
- Fieldwork to identify sites and features of natural and historical environment significance in the context of the Plan Area.

The review compiled information from many sources, including:

- DEFRA.
- Natural England.
- Historic England.
- Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Records.
- Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Record Centre records (biodiversity and geology).
- Environment Agency.
- British Geological Survey.
- Leicestershire County Council Phase 1 Habitat Surveys.
- Melton Local Plan evidence base.
- Melton Biodiversity and Geodiversity Study, 2016.
- Old maps (Ordnance Survey, manuscript).

- British History Online.
- Local history and archaeology publications.
- Local knowledge.

The fieldwork to gather the necessary supporting evidence was conducted in September-October 2016. All sites with significant species, habitats, landscape characteristics, earthworks and other extant features were documented. These data, along with relevant site-specific data from the existing information review, were mapped and tabulated, and each site was scored and evaluated using the nine criteria for Local Green Space designation in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012. The full scored inventory and scoring system are recorded in Appendix E.

Local Green Space

Of the estimated 200 parcels of undeveloped land in Waltham and Thorpe Arnold, 34 were identified in the inventory as having notable environmental (natural, historical and/or cultural) features. These features have been recorded to provide the evidence base for the environment component of sustainable development in the Parish.

The 34 environmentally significant inventory sites have been scored against the nine criteria for Local Green Space eligibility in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (see above). Three sites scored 75% (24 out of 32) or more of the maximum possible and are eligible for designation as Local Green Spaces (map below). Their statutory protection will ensure that these most important places in Waltham and Thorpe Arnold's unique natural and human landscape are protected.

Policy ENV1: Local Green Space

Within the following areas of Local Green Space (see Figures 1 & 2 overleaf), development will not be permitted other than in very exceptional circumstances:

- Manor Close earthworks field, Thorpe Arnold (site 52)
- Thorpe Arnold Cricket Ground (site 57)
- St Mary Magdalene churchyard extension and allotments, Waltham (site 03)

Any development proposal bounding on, or affecting the setting of, a Local Green Space will be required to take account of all consequential adverse effects on the protected site and its features. This may include carrying out appropriate mitigation measures.

Important Open Space

A group of sites score highly in the Inventory under National Planning Policy Framework criteria for their outstanding community value. They have been identified in community consultations, in Parish records, in the MBC adopted evidence documents *Open Space Assessment Report 2014* and *Areas of Separation, Settlement Fringe Sensitivity and Local Green Space Study 2015*; some are mapped on the MBC website at <http://www.planvu.co.uk/mbc/mbc.php> as Protected Open Areas. Although not appropriate for Local Green Space designation, these sites are a vital part of the special character of the two villages and merit protection and enhancement. They fall into three sets:

1. Not recommended by MBC; to be recommended by this Plan for designation as Open Space, Sport & Recreation (OSSR) sites (Community Action ENV3).
2. Designated as Protected Open Areas (POAs); to be recommended (or confirmed) by this Plan as OSSR sites (Community Action ENV3).
3. Designated as POAs; to be protected by this Plan for their community and landscape value within the settlement layouts as Important Open Spaces (Policy ENV2).

In Waltham and Thorpe Arnold, these sites include **recreation grounds, play areas, informal open spaces** of recreational value, **paddocks** and other **spaces among buildings** whose open nature preserve the historic layouts of the settlements and provides village views. Their value as open space *within and close to the built-up areas* and/or their current, or potential, value, as community resources are recognised in this Community Action.

Policy ENV2: Protection of Other Important Open Space

The following open space in Thorpe Arnold is important for its role as an open, green area within the built environment. Development that changes its character and features will not be supported.

- Open land west side of A607 road, east of Wold House, Thorpe Arnold.

Community Action ENV3: Protection of Other Important Open Space

The Parish Council and the community will actively work with Melton Borough Council and other partners to protect the locations and features of the following sites (see Figures 8 and 9 below) as designated Open Space, Sport and Recreation (OSSR) sites:

- Waltham playing field, play area and community orchard (site 07).
- Parish Council allotments site, Waltham (site 11).
- Cemetery extension and car park, Thorpe Arnold (site 53).

Recognition and Protection of Other Sites of Natural and Historical Environmental Significance

A third group of inventory sites scores highly for 'wildlife' and/or 'history' but, because their community value scores are not high enough, they do not qualify for Local Green Space designation. Together, they are essential for biodiversity conservation in the Parish and for the preservation of Waltham and Thorpe Arnold's historical and cultural heritage.

Some specific environmental topics – ridge and furrow, deciduous woodland, trees and hedges, biodiversity in general and wildlife corridors – are identified and dealt with in specific policies elsewhere in the Plan. The features for which the identified sites have been selected and notified are listed in the environmental inventory.

Policy ENV4: Protection of Other Sites of Environmental (natural or historical) Significance

23 sites in the Parish (see map on Figure 10 and environment inventory in Appendix E) have been identified as being of local significance for wildlife (biodiversity) and/or history. They are important in their own right and are locally valued. The protection and enhancement of the identified significant features will be supported.

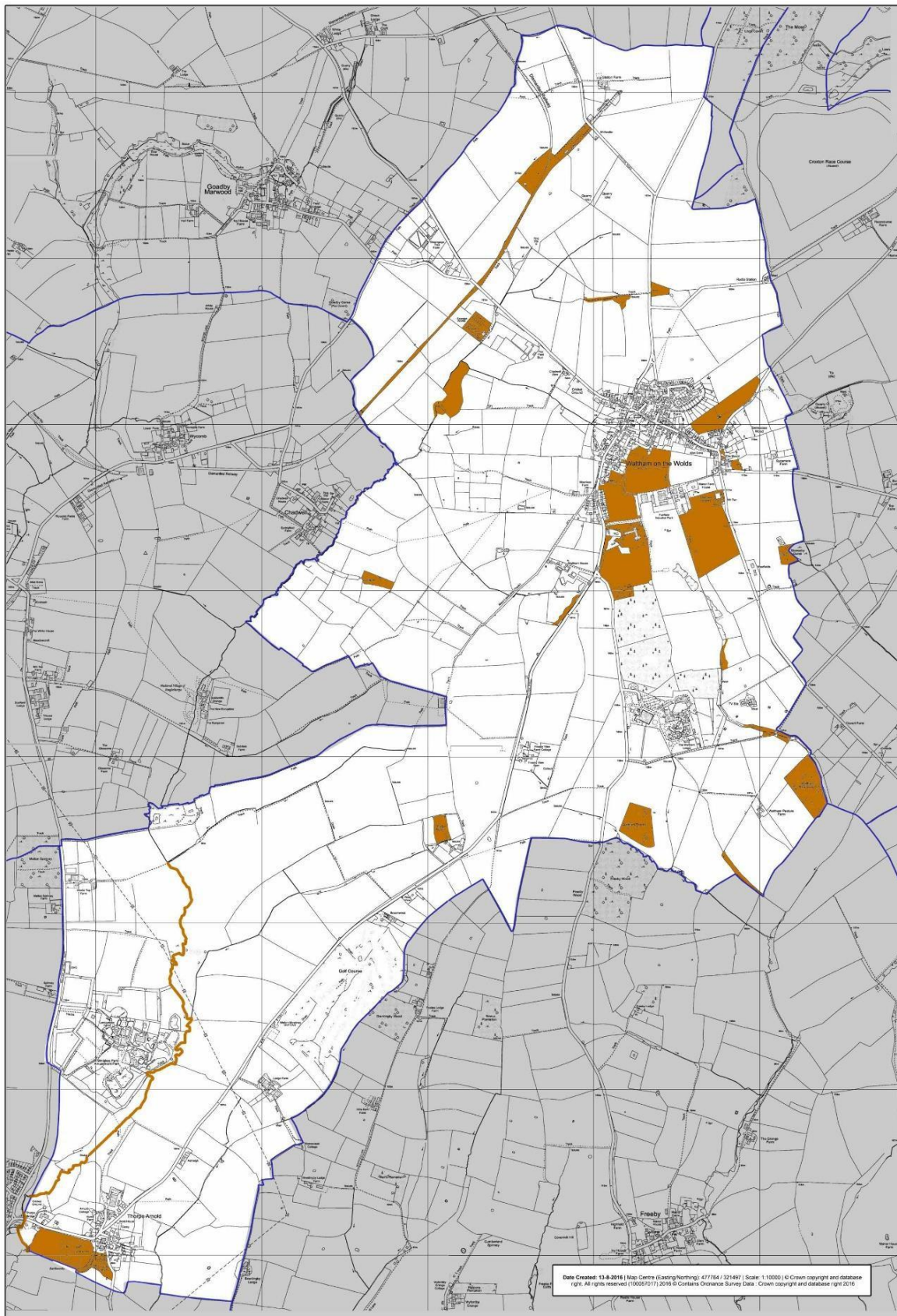


Figure 10: Other Sites of Environmental Significance

Area of Separation

Thorpe Arnold is a good example of a medieval village centred on a manor house. It was (probably) an 8th-century Danish settlement, a 'thorp' (outlying settlement) connected with Melton ('middle settlement'), but by 1156 it was a separate manor of some importance, held by Ernald de Bosco.

The small area of open land between Thorpe Arnold and the greatly expanded Melton Mowbray is all that survives of the fields that separated the two settlements for over 1200 years, and it still (just) preserves the separate identity of Thorpe Arnold. Designation of the potential Area of Separation between the two, which was identified in the MBC Consultation document *Areas of Separation, Settlement Fringe Sensitivity and Local Green Space Study 2015*, is strongly supported by the community, with a minor amendment to include the Thorpe Brook floodplain west to the Plan Area boundary. This policy is also supported by Policy EN3 in the draft MBC Local Plan.

Policy ENV5: Area of Separation

To retain the geographical distinction and visual separation between Thorpe Arnold and Melton Mowbray, the open and largely undeveloped land (shown in Figure 11) between Thorpe Arnold and the parish boundary is designated as an Area of Separation. Development proposals in the delineated area will be controlled, and any permitted developments will be located and designed to maintain and, wherever possible, enhance the separation of Thorpe Arnold from Melton Mowbray.

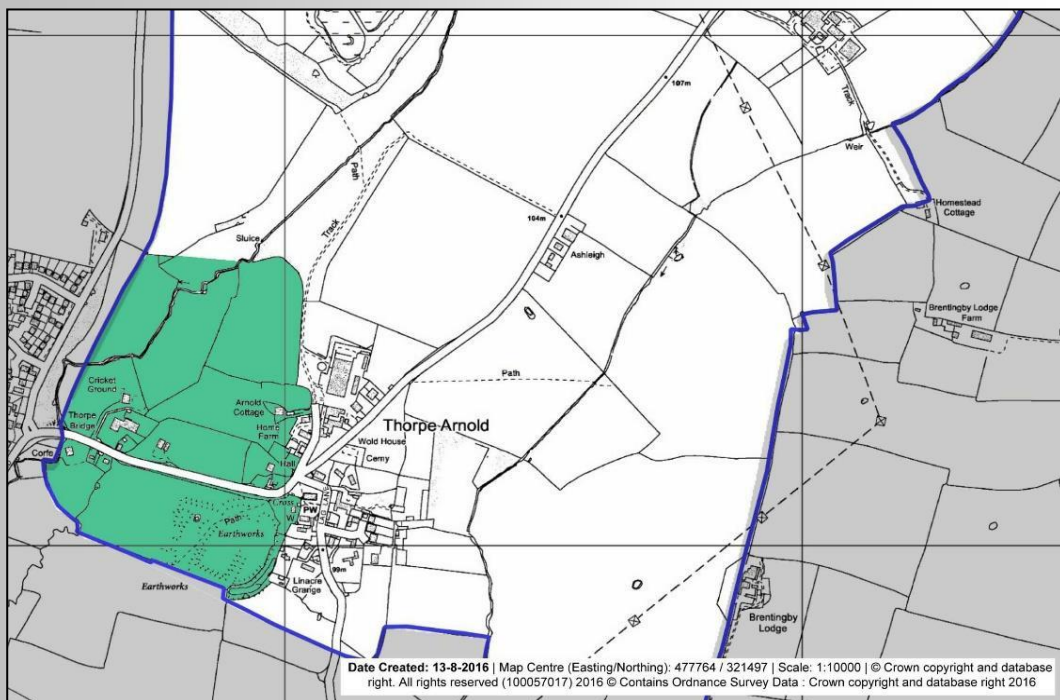


Figure 11: Area of Separation

Woodland, trees and hedges

Leicestershire is one of the least wooded counties in England, so the conservation of existing trees and woodland and planting of new is an important factor for protecting and enhancing the natural environment locally.

Hedgerows provide essential habitat and connective corridors for wildlife, as well as characterising the rural landscape. They hold intrinsic value: most of the hedgerows in the Parish are comprised of 80% native species and are considered Habitat of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) and Priority Habitat under the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). Protection of existing hedgerow resources and the creation of new hedgerows and the vital links they provide through the landscape is a key factor in local nature conservation. Mature trees and broadleaved woodland are also a Priority in the LBAP, but only eleven small areas of woodland in the Parish have been mapped by Natural England as Priority Habitat,



deciduous woodland, in the national register of habitats of conservation concern.

Important trees, individually or in groups within or close to the villages, include those in Waltham parish churchyard and its extension (yew, lime, copper beech, *Cupressus*, whitebeam, ash), in the grounds of Waltham Hall nursing home (previously the 19th century rectory) on the site of the first arboretum in Leicestershire (mature *Araucaria*, among the oldest in the County), Waltham primary school grounds, around Thorpe Arnold parish church and de Bosco House, and on the earthworks remains of the late medieval Thorpe Arnold manor house. Tree Preservation Orders are in force for some significant trees and groups in Waltham, while those in the present Conservation Area in Waltham have

equivalent protection. The community has expressed concern that there are a number of valued trees in the villages that are not currently protected under either of these measures.

The map in Figure 12 shows a) principal woodland in open country, b) hedges of biodiversity and landscape value, and c) trees of landscape and arboricultural value, as identified in the inventory work for this Plan. The map is indicative only: all woodland areas, individual trees and hedgerows, whether mapped here or not, fall within the scope of the following policy.

Policy ENV6: Important Woodland, Trees and Hedges

Development proposals that will affect trees, woodland and hedges of environmental (biodiversity, historical, arboricultural) significance, or of landscape or amenity value, will be resisted.

Proposals for new-build housing should be designed to retain such trees and hedges wherever possible. Where destruction cannot be avoided, developers will be required to plant replacement trees and/or hedges on site or to contribute to compensatory planting elsewhere in the Parish.

Hedgerows are to be retained and protected. Where minor loss is unavoidable, it must be minimised and loss compensated for with replacement planting of locally appropriate native species. Development providing a net gain in length and quality of hedgerows will be encouraged.

Community Action ENV7: Important Trees

The Parish Council will continue to identify trees and woodland of value, as above, for recommendation to the Planning Authority for Tree Preservation Orders.

Community Action ENV8: Habitat Creation

The Parish Council will seek to work with landowners, community groups and appropriate charities and other organisations to identify suitable sites for planting and subsequent management as community woodlands.

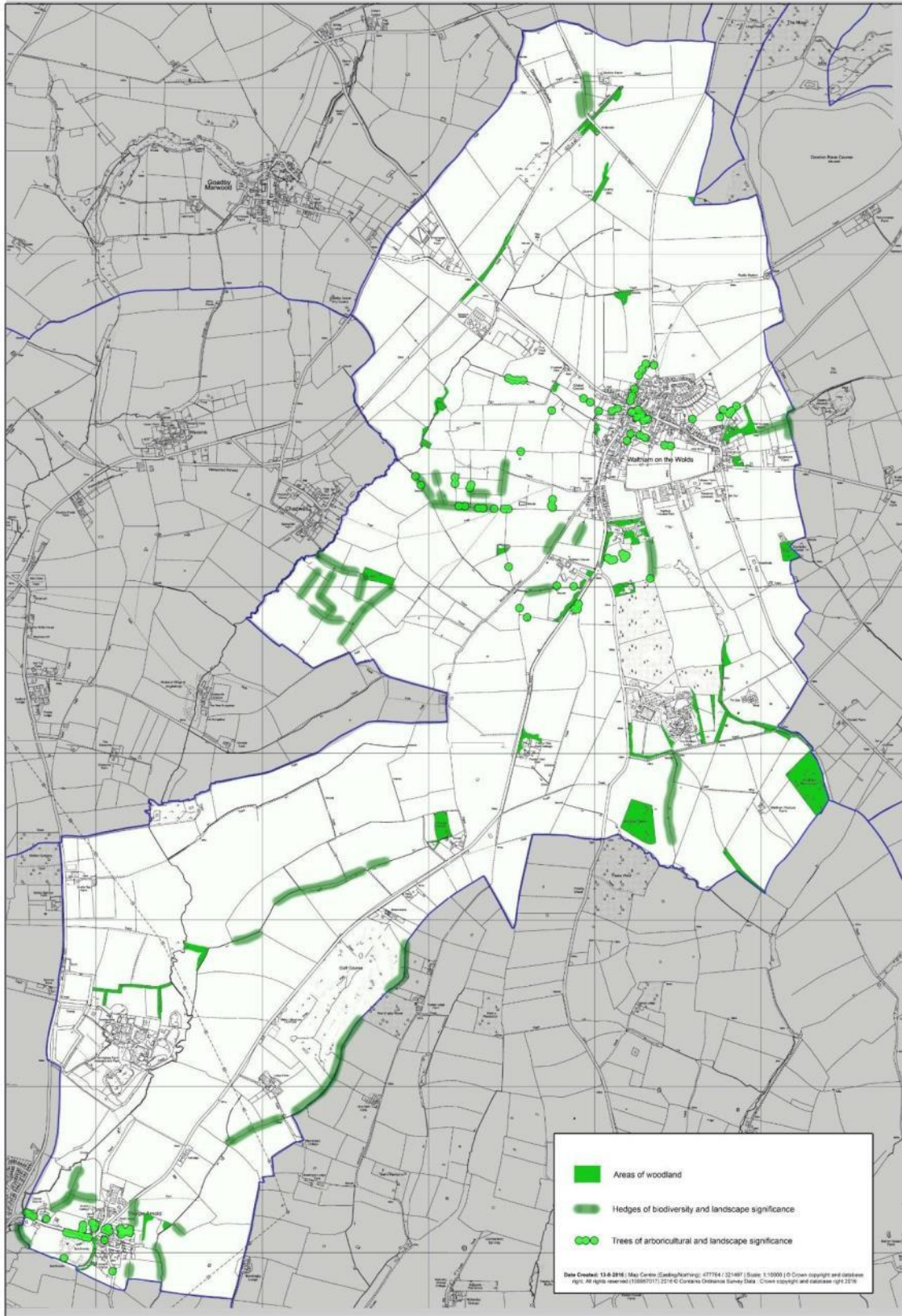


Figure 12: Important Woodland, Trees & Hedges

Biodiversity

Wildlife, both habitats and species, is of great importance intrinsically and for the essential role that biodiversity plays in everyone's lives and in the enjoyment of the local area, with pleasure taken from a thriving natural environment.

Key natural habitats and species that are essential considerations for conservation of biodiversity are often termed *Species or Habitats of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity* under the Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 or are listed as 'Priority' in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Leicestershire and Rutland. Many areas of particular significance are also designated nationally as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or locally as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) or potential and candidate Local Wildlife Sites (pLWS and cLWS). The protection of these sites, habitats and species is therefore also reflected in this document with policies serving to reinforce the protection



afforded elsewhere through the planning system.

Wildlife corridors are green links through the landscape that provide natural and safe routes for flora and fauna to disperse and connect areas of habitat and populations. Trees, hedgerows, watercourses and their margins, ponds, field margins and swathes of vegetation such as species-rich or rough, unmanaged grassland and scrub can all provide important links and

it is important that development both complements existing identified wildlife corridors and respects and expands other habitat and natural features that serve this connective function.

Biodiversity enhancement (species and habitats) is supported by the National Planning policy Framework, which is itself compliant with the European Habitats Directive 1992 (*Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora*) and the UK *Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations, 2010, Amended 2012*.

The Policy and Community Action here provide for three proactive measures: having up-to-date information about Parish wildlife; requiring developers to take biodiversity into account in their proposals; and mobilising the community to create new, and manage existing, habitats to enhance biodiversity.

Policy ENV9: Biodiversity

Development proposals should not damage or adversely affect:

- Sites designated for their nature conservation importance (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites).
- Habitats of Principal Importance.
- Species of Principal Importance, or their locations.
- Other legally protected species.
- The Wildlife corridors delineated in this Plan (see Figure 13).

Proposals that create, maintain and enhance local biodiversity will be encouraged.

Permitted development in Waltham and Thorpe Arnold will protect and enhance wildlife corridors and other potential habitat links and avoid creating barriers to the permeability of the landscape for wildlife in general or of fragmenting populations of particular species. Proposals should not only prevent biodiversity loss, but seek to provide a net gain in biodiversity, supporting and benefitting local species and habitats.

Community Action ENV10: Biodiversity

The Parish Council, in conjunction with other bodies, will prepare and keep updated an environmental inventory list of known sites of biodiversity importance. It will actively work with community groups other bodies to enhance the biodiversity of the designated wildlife corridors.

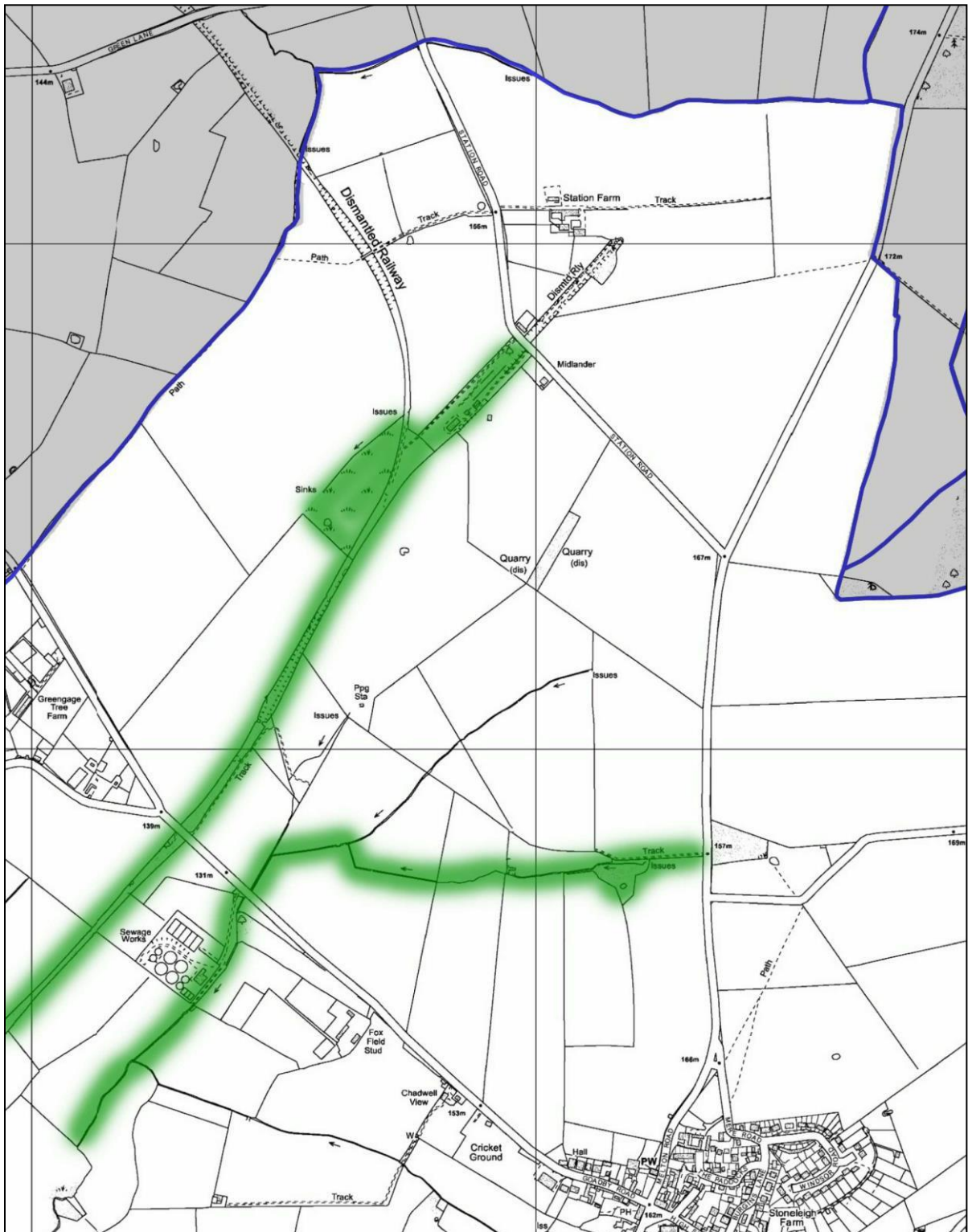


Figure 13: Wildlife Corridors

Ridge and furrow

Although much of the grassland in the parish has been converted to arable or improved grassland (for silage or intensive grazing), a characteristic feature of Waltham and Thorpe Arnold is the survival of a significant number of ridge and furrow fields. A survey in 2016 has confirmed the extant distribution of ridge and furrow by comparison with Google Earth photography dating from 2011. The map below (Figure 14) serves as an inventory of the current situation.

Like almost all other rural settlements in the Midlands, the villages were surrounded by open fields, and farmed on a 3-field rotation, from before the Norman Conquest until the time of the Enclosures, mostly in the 18th century. After the Enclosure of Waltham (1766), when the old fields were subdivided and largely converted to grazing land, the ridges and furrows were ‘fossilised’, preserving the medieval pattern of plough lands beneath the new hedges and fields. However, a second agricultural revolution in the 20th century saw the conversion of many of the grazing fields back to arable, resulting in the final destruction of a significant proportion of the ridge and furrow earthworks. The national trend has been loss of between 85% and 100% per parish, mostly since 1940. Waltham and Thorpe Arnold have also seen a marked decline in ridge and furrow fields. Of the c.150 agricultural fields in the Plan Area, c.38 (25%) still retain traces of ridge and furrow (roughly 105 hectares of the c.2000 hectares of open land, 5.25% by area). Thorpe Arnold has also lost, probably, one-third of its ridge and furrow land beneath the 19th and 20th century expansion of Melton Mowbray.

In English legislation (except for the few that are also Scheduled Monuments) ridge and furrow fields are not statutorily protected, despite recognition that *“as the open field system was once commonplace in NW Europe, these [surviving] sites take on an international importance”* (English Heritage, 2012).

While individual fields in Waltham and Thorpe Arnold are not claimed to be of international importance, the well-preserved groups, especially those close to the settlements and therefore of community and educational value, are an important part of the distinctive character of the parish and provide a link to its historic past. The local community values them and any further, avoidable, loss would be irreversibly detrimental. This policy not only seeks to protect the best of remaining ridge and furrow fields from development, but highlights their importance to the community, especially bearing in mind that many of the threats to ridge and furrow fields often involve types of development, changes of land use and farming practices that do not require planning approval. Involvement with local farmers and agricultural landowners on a case-by-case basis will be necessary to achieve a sustainable balance between heritage and viable agriculture.

References:

Hall, D 2001. *Turning the Plough. Midland open fields: landscape character and proposals for management*. English Heritage and Northamptonshire County Council.

Cathchpole T and Priest R 2012. *Turning the Plough update assessment* English Heritage and Gloucestershire County Council.

Policy ENV11: Ridge and Furrow Fields

The areas of well-preserved ridge and furrow earthworks (see Figure 14) are non-designated heritage assets. Any harm to the assets arising from a development proposal, or a change of land use requiring planning approval, will need to be balanced against the benefits having regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the affected heritage assets.

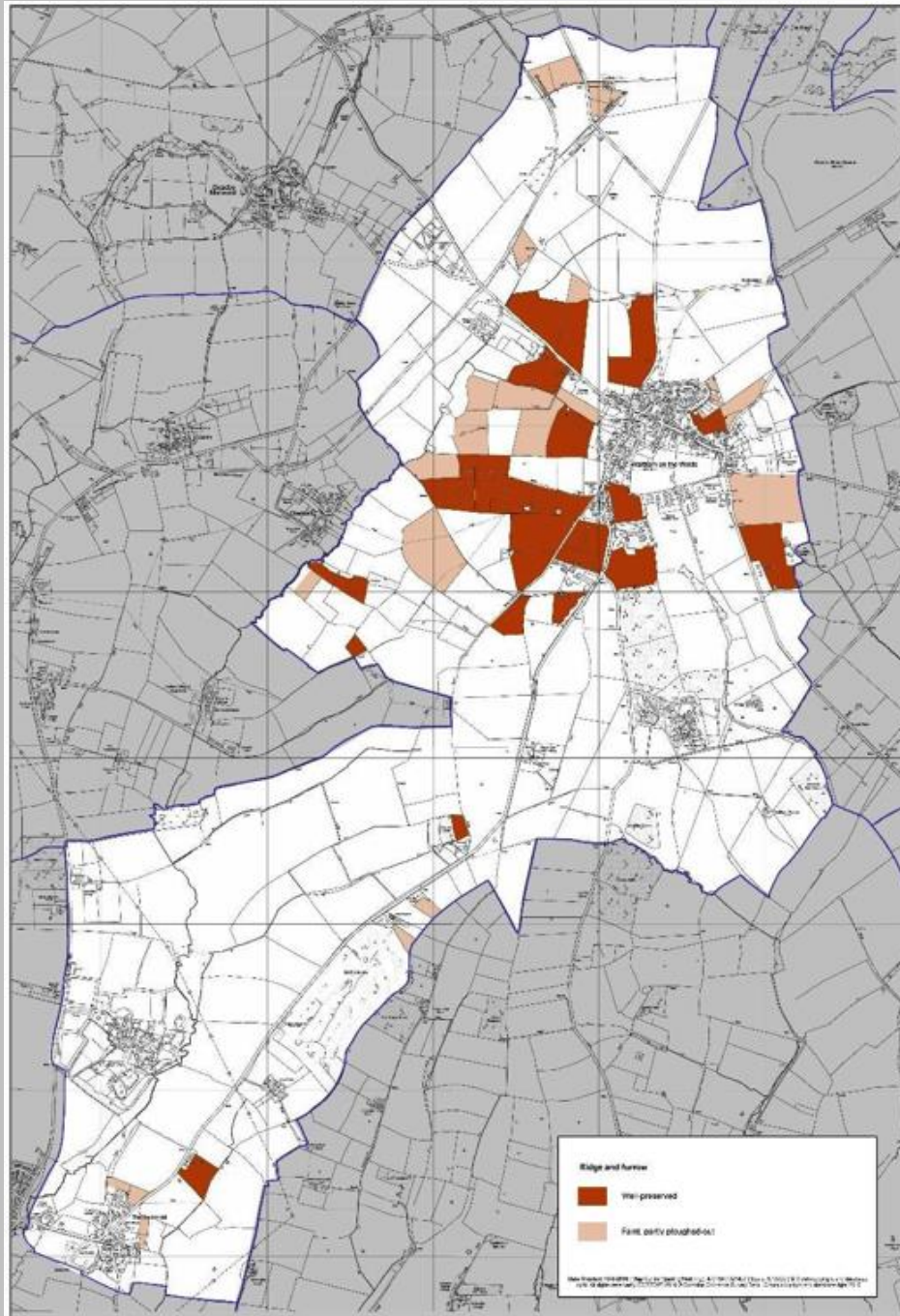


Figure 14: Ridge and Furrow Earthworks.

Views

Consultation during the Plan's preparation identified a widely-held wish to protect the rural settings of Waltham and, despite its proximity to Melton Mowbray, Thorpe Arnold. One of the ways in which residents expressed this wish was by identifying a number of important views within, away from and toward the villages. These consultation findings are supported by several Melton Borough Council documents, including the *Landscape Character Assessment, 2011 update* and the *Areas of Separation, Settlement Fringe Sensitivity and Local Green Space Study (INF_N0318, September 2015)* and by Policy EN1 (b.4) in the draft MBC Local Plan (2016). They have been confirmed by the environmental inventory, which, although principally concerned with identifying sites of environmental significance also mapped the sight-lines of these and other views.

These views help define the relationship of the villages with the surrounding farmland, the upper Thorpe Brook valley to the northeast, and the escarpment and hills of the high limestone plateau ('Leicestershire Wolds landscape character area'). The Plan Area includes several *secondary* landmarks, distant views of which should be protected.

Policy ENV12: Protection of Important Views

Development proposals should respect the open views and vistas identified below and in Figures 15 and 16:

Outwards from Waltham (Figure 15):

- a) Southwest from the area of Moor Leys Lane: long-distance views across open countryside.
- b) West from the Melton Road area: panoramic views across open countryside and the Thorpe Brook/Caldwell Brook valley towards Scalford and Goadby Marwood.
- c) South from public right of way beyond Manor Farm: a commanding view past the fishing lakes and TV transmitter towards Freeby and Garthorpe.

In towards Waltham:

- d) East across the valley: fine views of Waltham on the skyline with its limestone buildings and prominent Church spire. This is Landscape Zone LCZ1 described as having 'medium to high sensitivity to development' (see MBC's Settlement Fringe Sensitivity Study, 2015).
- e) Southwest from Bescaby Lane: a good view of the village with the characteristic Church steeple across pasture with fine ridge and furrow earthworks.
- f) South approaching on the A607 from Grantham; again, a good view of the village with the characteristic Church steeple.

Policy ENV12: Protection of Important Views (continued)

Outwards from Thorpe Arnold (Figure 16):

- a) Travelling south out of the village down Lag Lane: the road cutting opens out suddenly giving long-distance views across open countryside towards Melton Mowbray, Burton Lazars and in the distance the high point of Burrough Hill.



- b) Southwest from the top of the public footpath leading from the A607 into Melton Mowbray: a fine view looking down on the town.
- c) Northwest from the burial ground and Church car park: a rural view over the public footpath to open farmland and woods.

In towards Thorpe Arnold:

- d) From the A607 Thorpe Road on the edge of Melton Mowbray: a view looking up over Manor Close earthworks with De Bosco House prominent and the rest of the village shrouded by mature trees.
- e) Travelling southwest along the A607: a fine view of the hilltop village.

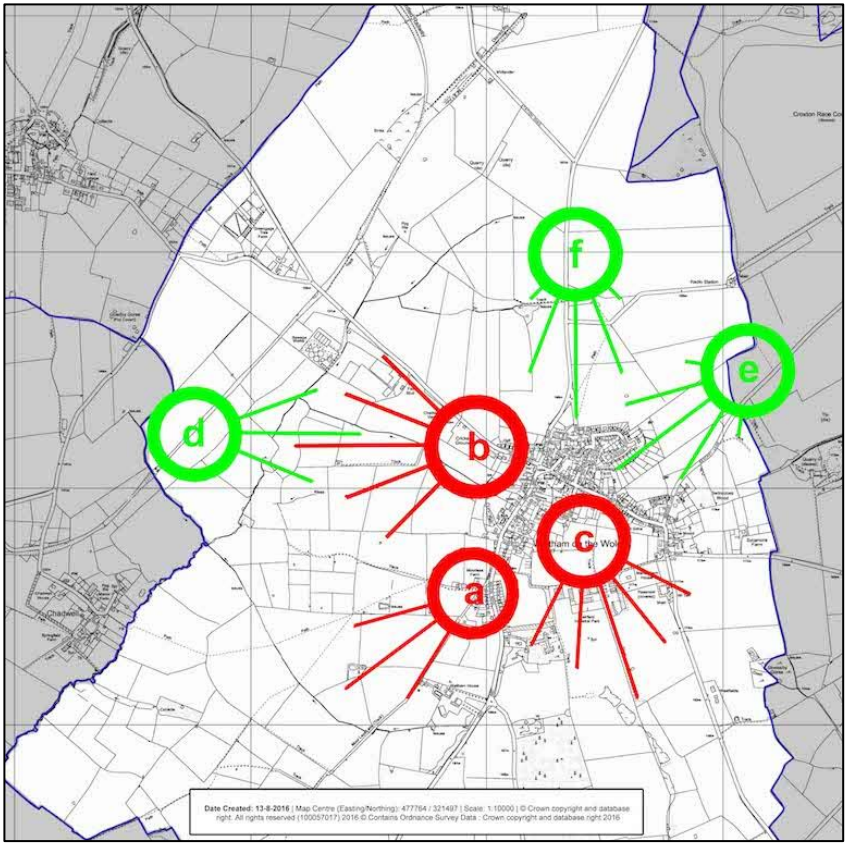


Figure 15: Important Views, Waltham on the Wolds

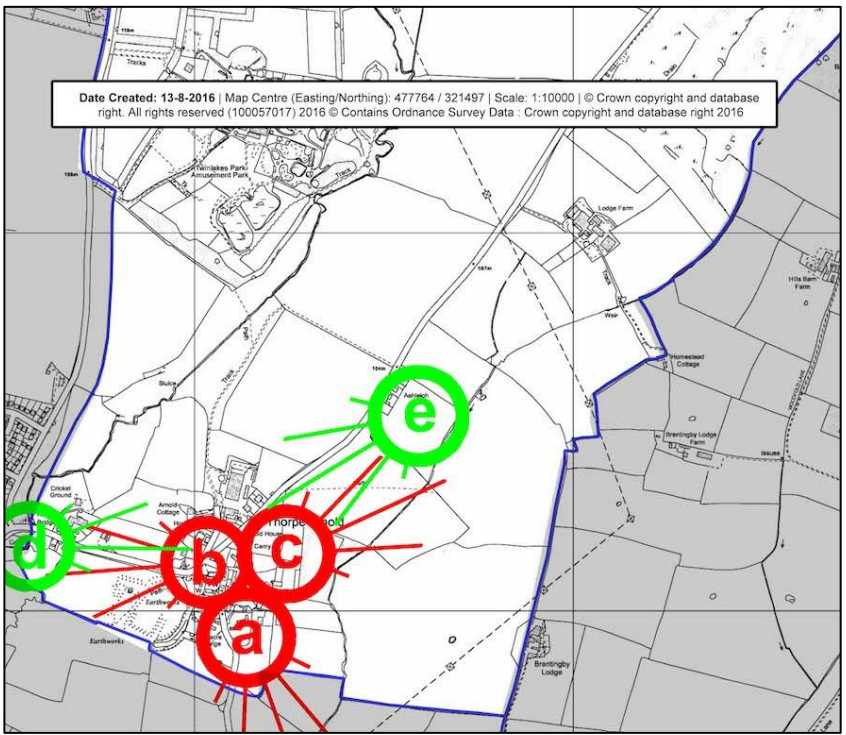


Figure 16: Important Views, Thorpe Arnold

Public Rights of Way

Several of the public rights of way in Waltham and Thorpe Arnold are ancient and historic ways that linked the Waltham and Thorpe Arnold to markets, neighbouring villages and to the open fields. Beyond the built-up areas, while footpaths are no longer used for trade and communication they have an important 21st century role for recreation and leisure; by local strollers, more serious walkers, families, and people exercising pets. They provide direct connection with the environment, local history, wildlife and landscape.

There are 17 footpaths, 4 bridleways, 3 other routes with public access and 1 National Cycle Route in the Parish. Most are well used by residents and ramblers. It is important that these public rights of way are maintained to provide safe and enjoyable access to all sections of the community.

Policy ENV13: Footpaths and Bridleways

Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the existing network of footpaths (see Figure 17) will not be supported without appropriate mitigation.

Community Action ENV14: Footpaths and Bridleways

The Parish Council will monitor the condition of the existing network of footpaths and bridleways, and work with the responsible Local Authority departments and with the community and landowners to ensure that the network is maintained in a safe, useable condition.

The Parish Council will actively seek to work with landowners, Leicestershire County Council and other bodies to create and maintain enhancements to the present network of walking routes in the Parish.

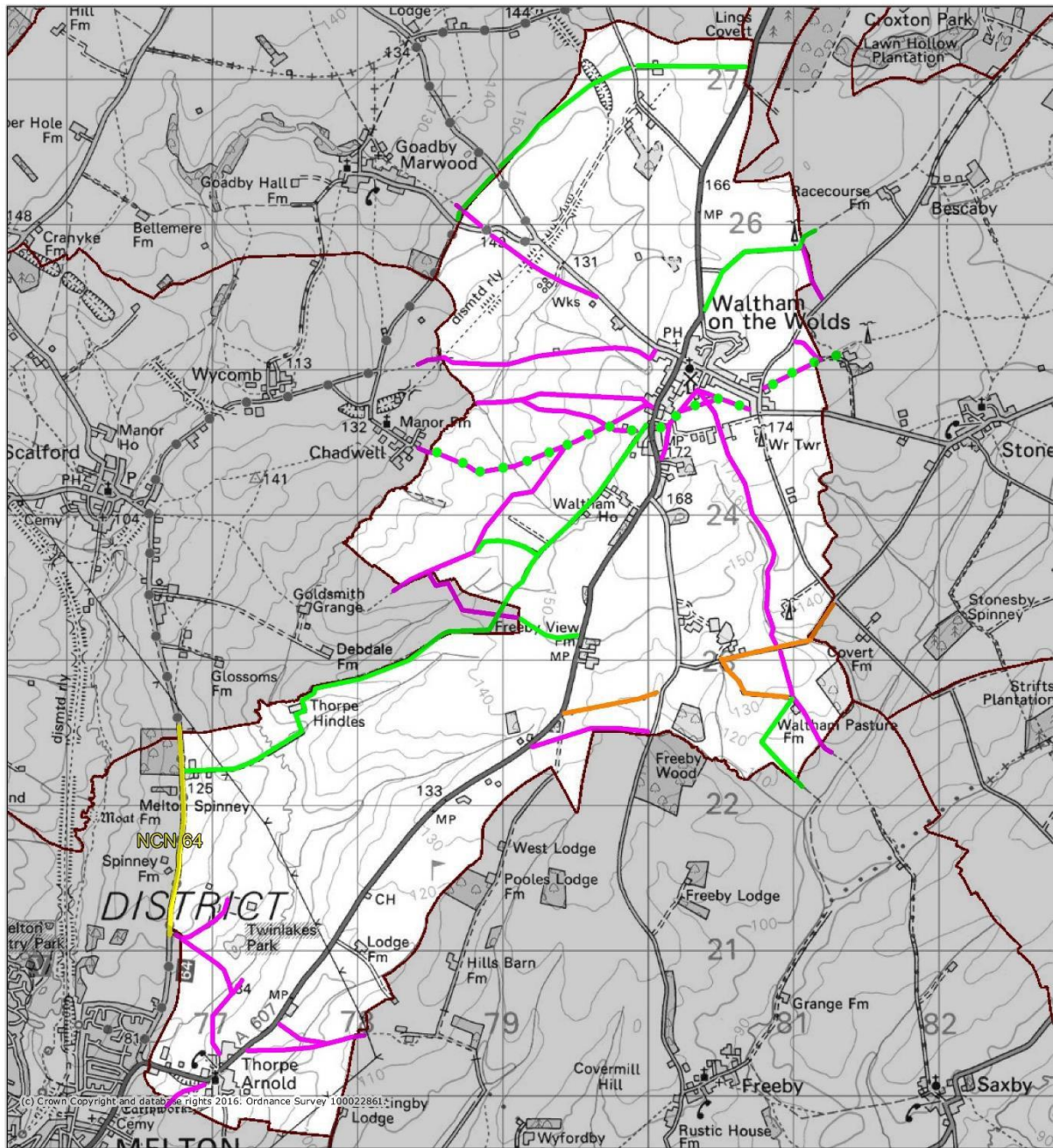


Figure 17: Public Rights of Way

Flooding & Drainage

The villages themselves are not at risk of **flooding from rivers** (see Figure 18), but the low area of the Thorpe Brook floodplain puts the A607 and surrounding properties in Flood Zone 3 (high risk). The main concern for many Leicestershire residents is flooding from surface water, whose frequency and effects on property have increased nationally over recent years; possible causes are increased rainfall overall, more intensive rainfall events, intensification of agriculture, and new development being permitted without recognition of its effects on local hydrology. Small-scale, local flooding by surface water may not be newsworthy but it is distressing for the people affected and, countrywide, is the most frequent and widespread type.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) does not prohibit development in areas of high flood risk (e.g. Environment Agency Flood Risk Zone 3); NPPF paragraphs 100-103 are advisory on Local Planning Authorities. Flooding from surface water was excluded from the Government *National Flood Resilience Review* (September 2016).

Surface water flood risk as mapped by the Environment Agency (see map in Figure 19) does not show an issue in the villages, but local experience is important while new development will increase the risk of flooding unless the mitigation measures listed are implemented. Reference is also made to the Melton SFRA 2015 and Melton SFRA Addendum 2016, which form the most up to date available evidence on this issue.

Policy ENV15: Rivers & Flooding

Policy deleted on recommendation from the examiner for reasons of imprecision and duplication of national policy requirements.

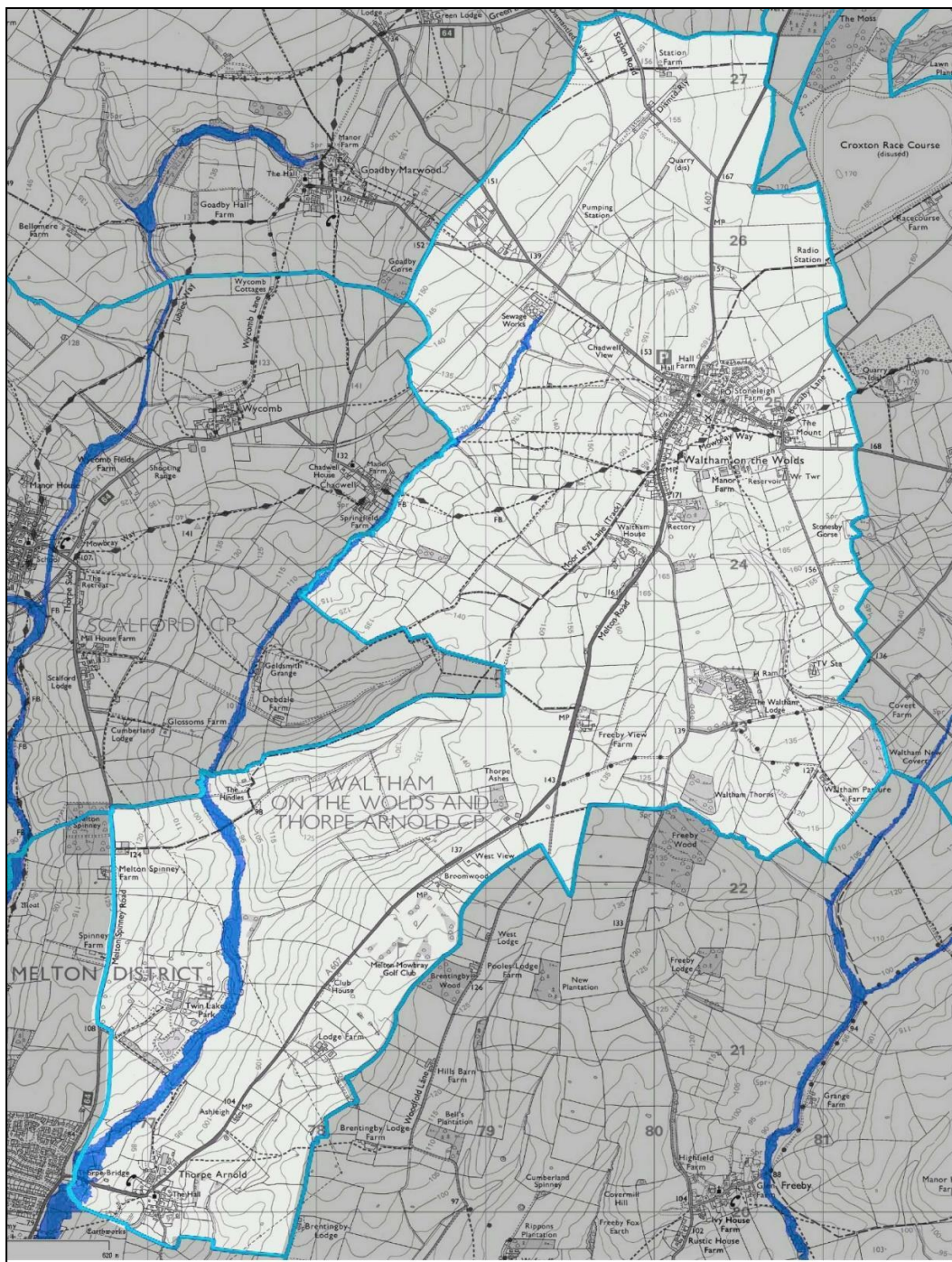


Figure 18: Flood Risk Map for Planning (Flood Risk Zone 3): Environment Agency

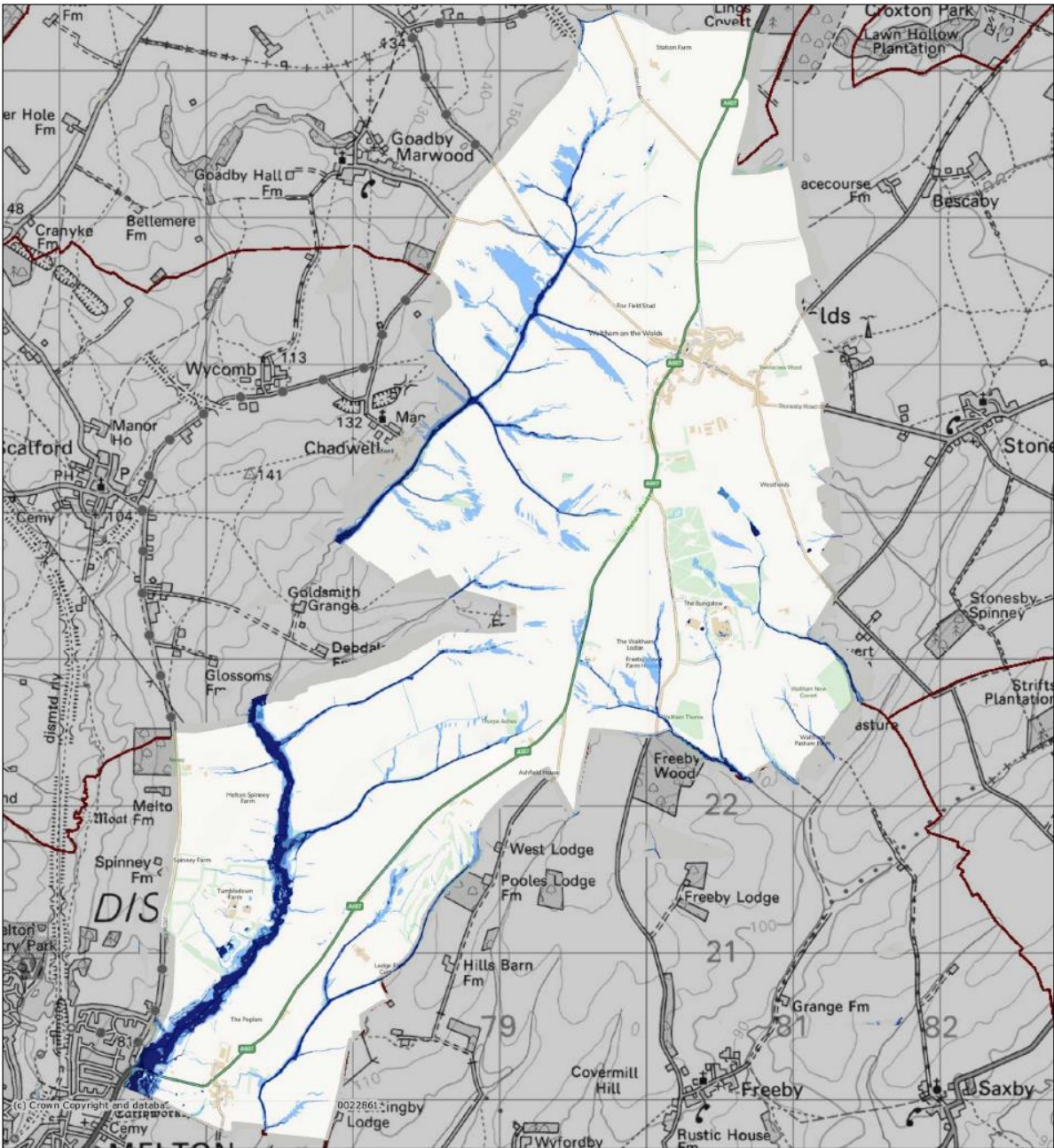


Figure 19: Flood Risk from Surface Water

Groundwater Flooding

There are particular geological and hydrological issues in Waltham with a 'raised aquifer' present under a large part of the village. This is formed by an extremely permeable Northampton Sand Formation (a well-jointed, ferruginous sandstone) that overlies an impermeable Whitby Mudstone Formation. In the past, before the extensive development of the village, the water in the aquifer would pass laterally along the top of the Whitby Mudstone Formation until it reached the outcrop of this formation where it would form springs that then allowed the water to drain away. Although the underground reservoir in the Northampton Sand Formation drains away at the edge of the outcrop from springs, the rate of flow is restricted by the rock through which it flows. As a result, the depth of water within the rock can be quite high. This has enabled generations of villagers and local farmers to drill wells, providing a continuous supply of water.

From time to time, the amount of water in the aquifer is reported to be so high that the water table rises to a level where, at various locations, it is above the ground surface resulting in flooding. A potential risk created by this rise in the water table is the raising of the water level in the wells to the point when they become artesian; the ground water being discharged from the collar of the well. This is reported to have happened recently at the south end of the village.

Rainfall will always have an effect on the quantity of water stored, the water table rising and falling in sympathy with variation in rainfall. Housing developments in the village have the potential to significantly alter the groundwater levels, through modification of the natural system by groundwork and foundations, and through from the use of impermeable materials and surfaces. It is therefore important that any proposed development is suitably appraised to help mitigate any future impacts on the community. Where development is proposed in areas where there are known to be springs or groundwater emergence, appropriate mitigation should be utilised such as ensuring that properties are out of the natural flow path and not built on top of known spring locations.

Reference is also made to the Melton SFRA 2015 and Melton SFRA Addendum 2016, which form the most up-to-date available evidence on this issue.

Policy ENV16: Groundwater Flooding

Development in the area of a Northampton Sand Formation raised aquifer and surrounding spring-lines, as shown in Figure 20, is potentially at risk of groundwater flooding. It must be subject to site-specific flood risk assessment, and will be supported only where adequate evidence demonstrates that it is appropriately resistant and resilient to groundwater flooding. A detailed assessment of the geological composition should be undertaken with monitoring of the water table and flow rate of the water over a period of at least two years.

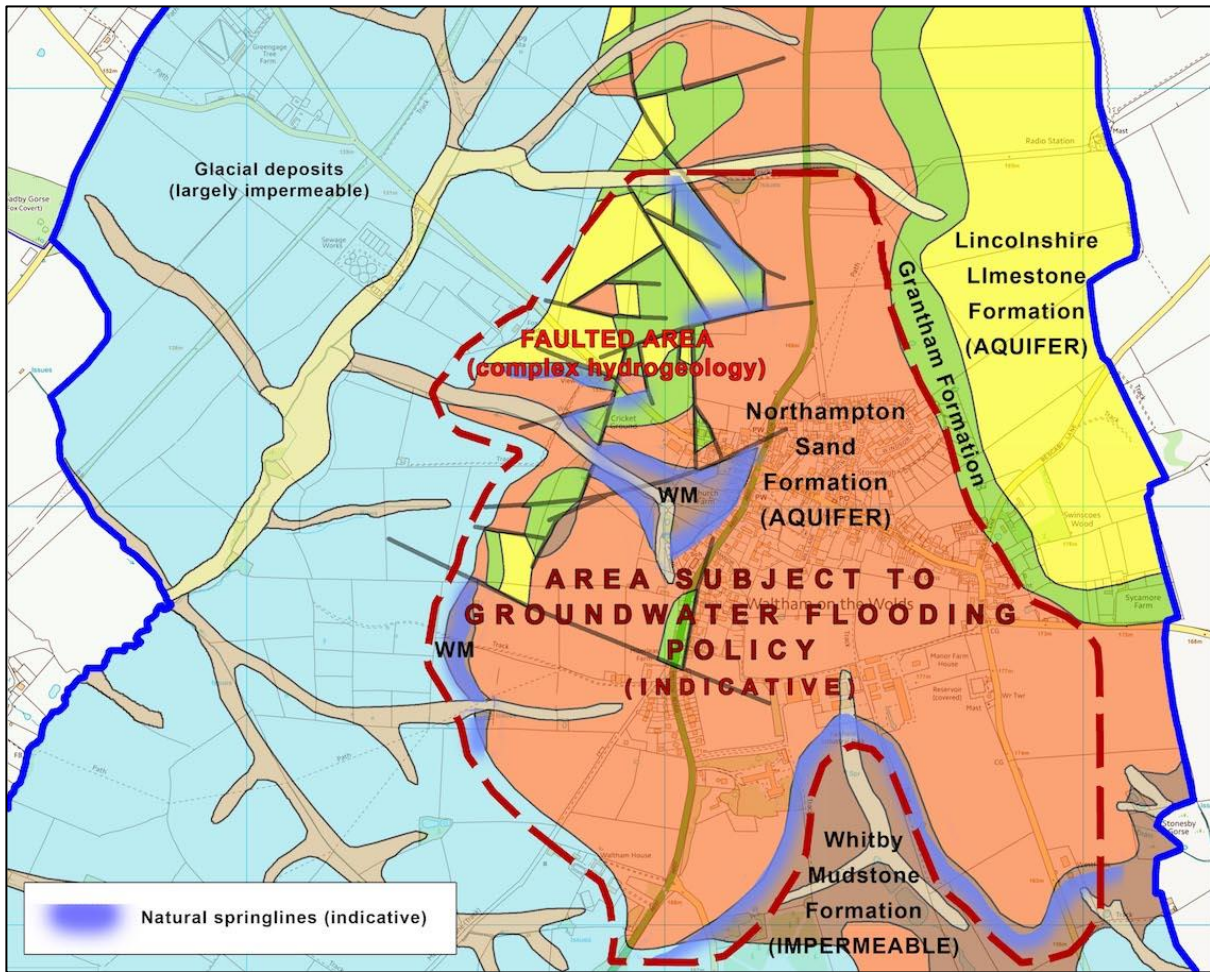


Figure 20: Area of Groundwater Flood Risk in Waltham on the Wolds within the red dotted line (based on British Geological Survey and Ordnance Survey mapping)

Community Action ENV17: Sustainable Drainage

The Parish Council will support proposals by landowners, appropriate agencies and organisations:

- a) To improve the current infrastructural measures in the Plan Area for managing and mitigating river, run-off and surface water flooding.
- b) To use low-tech strategies, including 're-wilding' of watercourses, natural dams and tree planting in catchment areas, to reduce rates of run-off and stream flow.

6 Policies on Community Facilities

The presence of community facilities and amenities make a significant contribution to the vitality and viability of Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold and has a positive impact on the sustainability of the Parish, enhancing the quality of life and often providing an important focal point for social interaction.

They provide local employment, reduce the need to travel and offer important services, particularly for those who do not have access to a car. The loss and threatened closure of facilities and services is, however, a common feature of village life and is likely to be tested further in the future as an increase in car ownership and frequent commuting to work and to access leisure activities call into question the viability of many rural services. The range of facilities and amenities in many villages the size of Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold is reducing as local residents increasingly travel to larger facilities elsewhere.



Protecting Existing Community Facilities

Waltham is well served for facilities including:

- Waltham Pre School for a maximum of 26 children aged 2-4 years. Ofsted rated 'outstanding'.
- Waltham Church of England Primary School for up to 100 children aged 4-11 years., Ofsted rated 'good'.
- The Royal Horseshoes Inn, with B&B accommodation.
- The Village Hall. This provides many activities (badminton, ballroom dancing, drawing group, Eat & Meet Club, karate, pilates, yoga, Scottish dancing, Women's Institute, etc.) and is a very popular wedding venue.
- The Youth Wing adjacent to the above. The Scouts, Explorer Scouts, Cubs, Brownies and Beavers currently use this and it is available for other youth groups.
- The playing field & pavilion, with football & cricket facilities.
- The children's play area.
- St. Mary Magdalene parish church and open cemetery.
- The village shop and post office.
- Waltham Deli delicatessen.
- Regent Services garage.
- Bryn Barn Bed & Breakfast.

- The Welby Medical Practice.
- Twells Road Affordable Housing.
- Allotments, High Street, Parish Council owned and run.
- Allotments, Mill Lane, Church owned and run.
- Community Orchard, Goadby Road, Parish Council owned.

Facilities in Thorpe Arnold include:

- St. Mary the Virgin church.
- The village hall and community centre.
- Thorpe Arnold Cricket Club and sports ground.

However, there are fewer shops than you would typically expect to find in a Parish of its size. This means that many people have to travel, overwhelmingly by car, to the nearby centres such as Melton and Leicester to meet their basic shopping needs.

The need to travel outside the Parish to access basic services is one of the main reasons for the high levels of car ownership in the Parish. It also creates challenges for those residents that do not have access to a car – compounded by the limited bus service.

Policy CF1: Community Facilities

Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect, on a community facility will not be supported, unless the building or facility is replaced by an equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in an equally suitable location or it can be clearly demonstrated that the service or facility is unviable or is no longer required by the community.

Promoting Additional Community Facilities

Community consultation confirmed the importance of enhancing the range of community facilities and amenities in the Parish, recognising their value to the local community. To promote the on-going prosperity of the Parish, it is essential that it not only retains and provides local services that will sustain the vitality of the community and encourage local spending, but that it supports additional facilities as the needs of the community change. The receipts received from developer contributions will be used to deliver new community infrastructure, and, where necessary, planning obligations will be used to address any negative impact of development proposals.

Given the level of housebuilding proposed for the Parish, it is likely that development activities will offer substantial opportunities to enhance existing infrastructure. Where such improvements are made as part of new development proposals, this will be viewed positively. Through consultation, residents have highlighted the need for additional play facilities for children and for more shops. Concern was also expressed amongst the

community about the impact of new housing on the capacity of the School and the GP Surgery, and the negative implications of additional traffic on parking and congestion.

Policy CF2: Provision of New Community Facilities

The diversification or enhancement of the range of community facilities, including play activities for young people, will be supported provided that the development:

- a) Will not result in unacceptable traffic movements, noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance to residential properties.
- b) Will not generate a need for parking that cannot be adequately catered for.
- c) Is of a scale appropriate to the needs of the locality and conveniently accessible for residents of the Parish wishing to walk or cycle.

7 Policies on Transport

The A607 is a busy trunk route that runs through the Parish and divides both villages. It carries a lot of large commercial vehicles, especially when the A1 has an emergency closure. Traffic speed is an on-going safety concern especially around the main junctions and Waltham school. Congestion can also be a problem at school start and finish times. In Waltham, High Street and Goadby Road form part of popular 'rat runs' to points east and west although there is restricted access for heavy commercial vehicles. Again, speeding traffic is a concern. Both roads suffer from congestion due to parked vehicles especially during the day when people stop to visit the shop, church or deli. Lag Lane in Thorpe Arnold is a 'rat run' to and from the east side of Melton, avoiding the heavy congestion in the town's centre. It is narrow, winding and quite unsuitable for frequent traffic, especially HGVs. Thorpe Arnold has a free car park for Church and village hall visitors but there is no public car park in Waltham.

Through community consultation, the primary concerns of most Waltham respondents are the traffic along High Street and traffic speeds on the A607 Melton Road. The consensus is that people already feel the High Street is too congested and dangerous as it is and it could not cope with additional traffic, parking and volume that is thought would be brought in by more housing developments. Respondents were also concerned about Bescaby Lane and the traffic that is mounting on that only remaining country lane. Two respondents commented on the poor public transport provision, and that it should run more often and later into Melton.

In Thorpe Arnold, the respondents' main concern is about safety issues relating to the A607, particularly at the Lag Lane junction including speeding, congestion, and parking.

Policy T1: Transport Requirements for New Developments

Development proposals, where appropriate, will be required to demonstrate that:

- a) The cumulative residual impact on traffic flows on the strategic and local highway network (taking account of proposed mitigation measures) will not be severe.
- b) Provision is to be made for accessible and efficient public transport routes within or otherwise serving the development.
- c) Pedestrian and cycle routes are incorporated or improved to serve the development, where necessary and appropriate, to provide safe, convenient and attractive routes to shops, employment, schools and community facilities; and which are integrated into wider networks.
- d) Existing rights of way are retained or acceptable modifications are provided.
- e) Adequate parking and manoeuvring space within the development is provided in accordance with the Highway Authority's standards.
- f) The development will not be occupied unless necessary measures (such as 'travel packs') are in place to encourage new residents to use bus services as an alternative to the private car.

8 Policies on Employment

The working population in the Parish was 512 in 2011. 41% of that working population fell into the managerial and professional categories compared to 27% for Melton Borough. 117 people (23% of the total working population) worked mainly at or from home. The remainder commuted to work and the majority probably commuted outside the Parish. The travel choice for most was to use a car or van (397 or 95% of the total commuting population) of which a small number (24) were passengers. A few brave souls (25) travelled by foot or on bicycle, probably locally. A tiny minority (13, equivalent to 3% of the commuting population) used public transport. Of those who commuted to work, 36% travelled less than 10 km (6 miles), 31% travelled between 10 and 30km (6 to 19 miles) and 22 % travelled over 30 km (19 miles).

Of the potential working population of 704 (i.e. aged 16 to 74) 183 were inactive i.e. in education, retired or in ill health.

The main employment sites in the Parish, employing over 10 people, are:

- Mars on Freeby Lane is approximately ½ mile from Waltham Village centre. The site is home to Mars Food UK, Mars Petcare and the Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition. It has some 500 employees, the majority of whom travel to work by car. Car sharing is promoted, as is a cycle-to-work scheme. Mars expects the business at Waltham to remain as is for the foreseeable future. It has been part of the community for over 50 years and feels it has a great relationship locally and is proud to have invested in the local environment and supported local events and schools.
- Twinlakes Park is an important tourist attraction that occupies 50 hectares on the southwest edge of the Parish. It employs up to 220 staff with a core staff of about 50 and the rest on flexible contracts. A small number of employees live in the Parish with the majority coming from Melton. Cars and cycle are used to travel to the site, as public transport links are poor. Currently there is no tourist accommodation on site although this is a future possibility. Security is, unfortunately, a major problem with frequent cases of theft, particularly of tools and equipment.
- Waltham Care Home employs 125 people on various shifts at Waltham Hall. Most of the people employed are from Melton and the surrounding villages and use either public transport or car to get to work. The Home has no plans currently for future growth.
- R&R Country Ltd offers a wide of range equestrian and country clothing, safety wear, footwear, saddlery, horse wear, feed, pet products and gifts. The store employs 14 members of staff, most of which are full time with 2 or 3 part time, all of whom live around the local area and either drive or walk to work.
- Waltham Church of England Primary School and Pre-school are employers of significant size in Waltham, employing 26 staff (6 full-time and 20 part-time).

Smaller employment sites are:

- Fairfield Industrial Estate.
- Farms in the area.
- The doctors' surgery.

- The Waltham Deli.
- The Royal Horseshoes pub.
- Melton Golf Club.
- Fox Field Stud, point-to-point trainers and livery, equestrian sales.
- Spur Farm (Boogie Machin), livery stables & hunter liveries, with a range of facilities.
- Mr Tim Tarratt, Waltham House, point-to-point trainer.
- Brooks & Sims joinery workshop.
- Hindle Top Farm Equestrian Centre.
- Regent Services garage.

Policy E1: Retention of Existing Employment Opportunities

Where planning permission is required there will be a strong presumption against the loss of commercial premises or land (B-class) that provides employment or future potential employment opportunities. Applications for a change of use to an activity that does not provide employment opportunities will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

- a) The commercial premises or land in question has not been in active use for at least 12 months and;
- b) The commercial premises or land in question has no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment generating uses and as demonstrated through the results both of a full valuation report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least six months.

Farm diversification

The conversion of former agricultural buildings has enabled farm diversification, led to the sustainable re-use of vacant buildings and provided opportunities for the establishment and development of small businesses that generate income and employment opportunities for local people. This is a trend, which the Parish Council would like to continue in the Plan area to maintain a balanced and vibrant community, subject to the proper consideration of residential amenity for nearby houses, visual impact on the countryside and highway safety issues.

There are a number of working farms remaining in the Parish. To help maintain the rural economy and protect the open countryside from inappropriate development, the Plan supports the sustainable growth and expansion of business and enterprise through the development and where appropriate conversion of existing farm buildings in the countryside. Specifically, this is intended to:

- Promote a viable and sustainable farming and rural economy in the Parish.
- Promote the diversification of rural businesses.

- Encourage new businesses to provide a wider range of local produce, services and leisure facilities, to provide local employment and attract visitors to the Parish.
- Maintain and enhance the local environment of rural and agricultural lands.

The change of use of some rural buildings to new uses is already permitted under the General Permitted Development Orders. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014 allows, under certain circumstances, the change of use of agricultural buildings to residential use and change of use of agricultural buildings to registered nurseries providing childcare or state-funded schools, under the prior approval system.

Support for new employment opportunities has been recognised through community consultation that has identified support for the retention of the local economy which provides local employment opportunities. However, employment proposals should only be seen as acceptable if they avoid harmful impacts on other matters agreed to be locally important such as retaining the character of the village and the picturesque and tranquil nature of life in the village. The potential for increased traffic flows and the need to manage parking and protect residential amenity are all-important aspects to be taken into account when business growth is being considered.

Policy E2: Re-use, Conversion and Adaption of Rural Buildings

The re-use, conversion and adaptation of rural buildings for small businesses, recreation, or tourism purposes will be supported where:

- a) The use proposed is appropriate to the rural location.
- b) The conversion/adaptation works respect the local character of the surrounding area.
- c) The development will not have an adverse impact on any archaeological, architectural, historic or environmental features.
- d) The local road system is capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed new use and adequate parking can be accommodated within the site.
- e) There is no significant adverse impact on neighbours through noise, light or other pollution, increased traffic levels or increased flood risk.

Broadband infrastructure

The modern economy is changing and increasingly requires a good communications infrastructure as a basic requirement to maximise technological advances. The Internet is driving business innovation and growth, helping people access services, and opening up new opportunities for learning. This is particularly important in small rural settings where better broadband enables improved access to an increasing number of on-line applications and services provided by the public and private sector and can help to reduce social exclusion.

High-speed broadband coverage in the Parish is currently patchy, ranging from good to poor. The need for further development of infrastructure to serve the Parish is therefore very important.

Policy E3: Broadband Infrastructure

Proposals to provide increased access to a super-fast broadband service (including future developments at present unforeseen) and improve the mobile telecommunication network that will serve businesses and other properties within the Parish will be supported. This may require above ground network installations, which must be sympathetically located and designed to integrate into the landscape and not be located in or near to open landscapes.

All new developments should have access to superfast broadband (currently of at least 30Mbps but subject to review as technological advancements require). Developers should take active steps to incorporate superfast broadband at the pre-planning phase and should engage with telecoms providers to ensure superfast broadband is available as soon as build on the development is complete.

Homeworking

In rural areas such as Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold with limited employment opportunities, the benefit of supporting home working is that it helps to promote employment activities whilst reducing the dependency of the car for long journeys to employment sites outside the Parish.

The intention of Policy E4 is to recognise that people may not have a suitable space within their home from which to run a business, or they may wish to distinctly and deliberately separate their work and living space. Policy E4 supports the construction of extensions, the conversion of outbuildings, and the development of new free-standing buildings in gardens from which businesses can operate. This is intended to maximise the opportunity for home run enterprises to be created and supported in the long term in Waltham and Thorpe Arnold. Policy E4 would apply where a material change of use occurs, such that planning permission is required. This reflects positive support for entrepreneurial activity in line with the NPPF and draft Melton Local Plan.

Policy E4: Working from Home

Proposals for the use of part of a dwelling for office and/or light industrial uses, and for small scale free standing buildings within its curtilage, extensions to the dwelling or conversion of outbuildings for those uses, will be supported where:

- a) Such development will not result in unacceptable traffic movements and that appropriate parking provision is made.
- b) No significant and adverse impact arises to nearby residents or other sensitive land uses from noise, fumes, light pollution, or other nuisance associated with the work activity.
- c) Any extension or free standing building shall be designed having regard to policies in this Plan and should not detract from the quality and character of the building to which they are subservient by reason of height, scale, massing, location or the facing materials used in their construction.

9 Monitoring and Review

The Neighbourhood Plan will last for a period of 19 years. During this time it is likely that circumstances will change.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be regularly monitored. This will be led by Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold Parish Council, in conjunction with Melton Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority, on at least an annual basis. The policies and measures contained in the Neighbourhood Plan will form the core of the monitoring activity, but other data collected and reported at the Parish level relevant to the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan will also be included.

The Parish Council proposes to formally review the Neighbourhood Plan on a five-year cycle commencing in 2022 or to coincide with the review of the Melton Local Plan if this cycle is different.