



Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan

2016-2036

Woolpit Parish Council

Pre-submission draft



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Picture credits: Chris Brooks, Elmswell Church p 50; John Guyler, p 14; Richard Mawhood, pp 27, 46, 48, 50 (not St Mary's Church and Elmswell Church); Alan Moul, front cover.

1 About the Neighbourhood Plan

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for a village area and proposes planning policies for the use and development of land. Once the Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted by Mid Suffolk District Council it will form part of the statutory planning framework for the area and the policies and proposals contained within it will be used as a basis for the determination of planning applications, alongside the District Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.

1.1.2 Why do we need a Neighbourhood plan?

Woolpit is a dynamic village with a unique character and has been designated as a Key Service Centre along the A14 corridor in the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy. While there is a consensus supporting new development and change, people are worried that inappropriate development or too rapid development could easily damage this heritage village. The Neighbourhood Plan is a means for the people of Woolpit to take more control of how their village will grow in a proportional way so that it maintains its character into the future. It will help us to ensure that sufficient village services and amenities are maintained and protect what our community values most about the parish.

1.1.3 What are the Key issues?

The main objective of the plan is the achievement of a better balanced community through sustainable development. Historically the trend towards an increasing ageing population has accelerated and continues to do so. It is considered desirable to increase the proportion of young people living within the village by ensuring that any future developments put the emphasis on affordable, smaller homes, capable of meeting well established local needs. This should also enable older residents, who wish to downsize, to stay in the village.

1.1.4 How was the Neighbourhood Plan developed?

The Draft Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework as well as guidance set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance. The policies in the Plan are in general conformity with the strategic policies in Mid Suffolk District's current Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to help to achieve sustainable development. It will run from 2017 until 2036, to coincide with the end date of the new Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan.

1.2 What the plan covers and how it is organised

1.2.1 Purpose

The Localism Act 2011¹ amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development in their community by preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan which can establish

¹ Which received Royal Assent on 15th November 2011

general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood. This document is a Neighbourhood Development Plan as defined in the Act.

1.2.2 Submitting Body

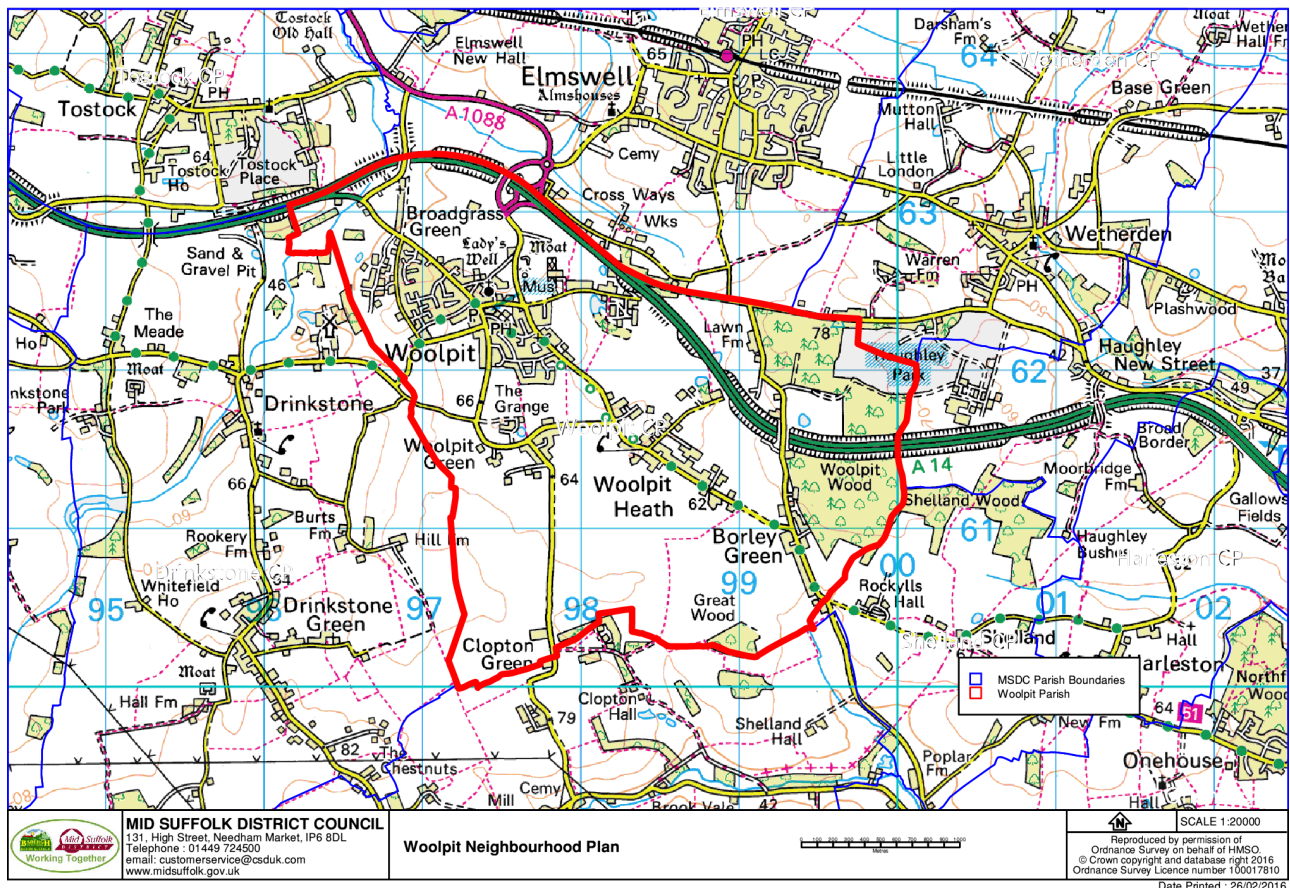
This Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) is submitted by Woolpit Parish Council, which is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011. The decision to proceed with the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan was taken at the Parish Council meeting on 1 February 2016, in response to strong support from the local community for the project.

1.3 Designated area

The Plan applies to the Parish of Woolpit in Mid Suffolk. In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC)², the local planning authority, publicised the application from Woolpit Parish Council and advertised a consultation period beginning on 4 April 2016 and ending on 3 May 2016. The application was approved on 4 May 2016 and the Woolpit Parish designated as the Neighbourhood Area³.

Woolpit Parish Council confirms that this Neighbourhood Development Plan relates only to the Parish of Woolpit and to no other Neighbourhood Areas and that it is the only Neighbourhood Development Plan in the designated area. No other Neighbourhood Development Plan exists nor is in development for part or all of the designated area.

Figure 1 Designated area map



² Appendix A contains a list of abbreviations used in this Plan

³ Woolpit Area Designation Notice, MSDC, 4 May 2016

1.4 Methodology

A high level of support was evident from public meetings held in January 2016. Woolpit Parish Council agreed to set up a Neighbourhood Plan for Woolpit, and volunteers came forward to form the steering group. Key issues in the parish were broadly identified through focus group meetings with local stakeholders. In May Mid Suffolk District Council designated the Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Between March and May 2016 the steering group decided the community engagement strategy and a series of informal events took place between May and July, using a pop-up stand. Local businesses were interviewed and invited to respond to a survey. The Plan’s vision for Woolpit was formulated in August. A presentation was held at the school and a public exhibition took place in November 2016⁴.

A Parish Profile commissioned from Community Action Suffolk in February 2017 supplemented published evidence and provided census data and a Conservation Area appraisal. The Plan developed more evidence: a community consultation report, a report on Woolpit businesses, a landscape character assessment and a community questionnaire in the summer. An independent Landscape Appraisal was commissioned from Alison Farmer & Associates.

After formulating aims and objectives, drafting policies began in autumn 2017; these were completed in March 2018. On advice from the MSDC adviser, the Plan sought technical support from AECOM in order to obtain independent, impartial and robust assessment of sites for housing allocations.

Meanwhile the Plan was drafted and ready for pre-submission consultation in March 2019.

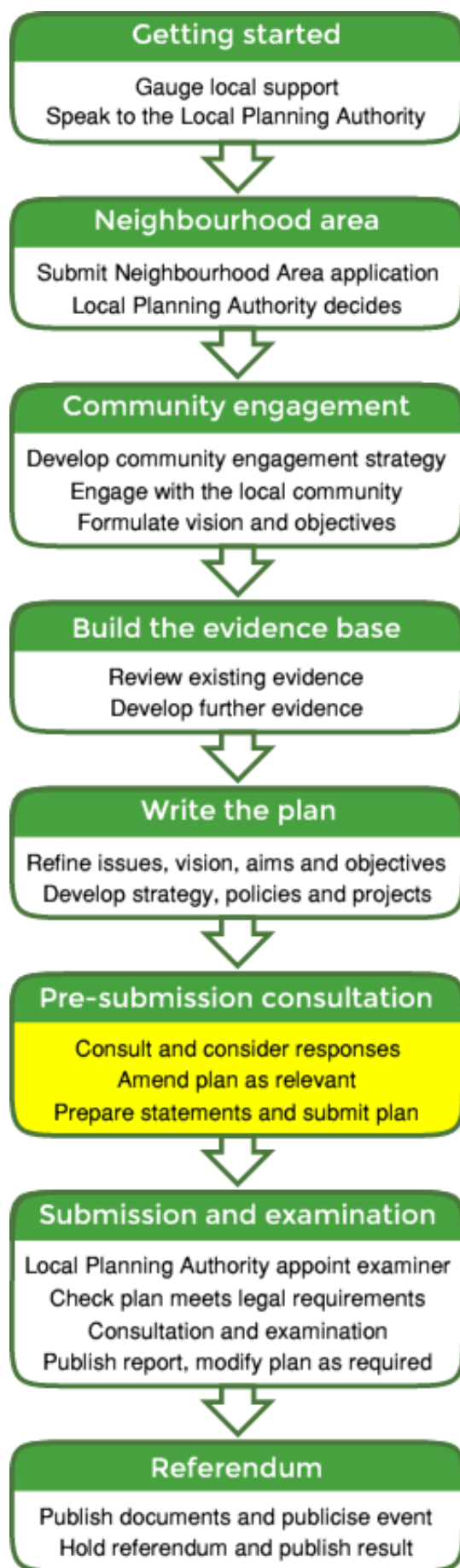
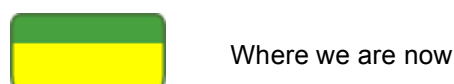


Figure 2 Neighbourhood planning: the process



⁴ The Consultation Document gives full details of community engagement and feedback.

1.5 Planning context

1.5.1 Constraints

Woolpit's Neighbourhood Plan is subject to the following requirements and constraints (the 'Basic Conditions'):

- It must comply with national planning policy, the purpose of which is 'to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' (National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 7).
- It must be in general conformity with strategic policies in the Local Plan. The local strategic context is set by Mid Suffolk District Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted in September 2008), and the Core Strategy Focused Review (adopted December 2012), by which some elements of the Core Strategy were superseded. It also needs to comply with Saved Policies from the 1998 Local Plan, at least until these are replaced by the new Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan, currently in preparation.
- It must be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

1.5.2 Mid Suffolk District Council Policy Context

Woolpit is identified as a Key Service Centre in the Core Strategy settlement hierarchy (the emerging Joint Local Plan proposes that it should be designated a Core Village), meaning that it is a large village with a good level of services, which may include:

- a primary and a secondary school within the settlement or easily accessible by public transport;
- primary health care facilities;
- a range of retail and service provision capable of meeting day-to-day needs, in particular for convenience shopping.
- local employment opportunities
- frequent public transport to higher order settlements.

In order to conform with MSDC planning policy, the Plan must have regard to:

- potential sites which could be suitable and sustainable locations for some of Mid Suffolk's future housing and employment growth requirements;
- clear development needs, such as affordable housing, business, or service provision;
- the potential for growth to sustain the existing services base.
- collective provision, taking into account neighbouring settlements which are related functionally, for any of these growth and development needs.

1.5.3 Housing Growth and Site Allocations

In relation to the first of these points, MSDC has identified by means of two calls for sites land availability for housing and employment growth in the district. Potential sites in Woolpit parish are listed in the draft SHELAA report (August 2017); there are 13 of these and at least one more has been registered (SS1048). There is a further site not listed (land south of Rags Lane) which is currently the subject of a planning application.

Woolpit's Plan adds value to the planning policy framework as it allows the community to shape and guide the location and form of any new development, taking into account locally important considerations and features which are not contained in the MSDC Local

Plan. In order to make the most of this opportunity, sites identified by MSDC have been subjected to a further analysis and appraisal by AECOM, an independent consultant commissioned by the Parish Council using grant funding. The opinions, concerns and aspirations of local residents expressed in feedback during consultation have informed this assessment, which is the basis for site allocations for housing in the Plan.

The allocation of sites is one of the most contentious aspects of planning, but the expectation of government and the local authority is that communities with Neighbourhood Plans will allocate sites for development. Doing so not only introduces a means of controlling unwelcome inappropriate development but also provides opportunities to locate development in places that are the most appropriate and least likely to impact the community adversely in terms of issues such as traffic congestion, the protection of historic and natural assets and sustainable growth in general ⁵.

Having an adopted Neighbourhood Plan also ensures increased funding for the parish through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Under these arrangements, 15% of the levy contributions is allocated to parishes without a Neighbourhood Plan but 25% to those where such a plan is already in place. The CIL monies can be used to fund local projects such as facilities for children and young people, leisure and recreational facilities, improvements to footpaths, parking and traffic control measures and other needs arising from a growing community.

1.6 Consultation process

- 1.6.1 Community and stakeholder engagement has been an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan. In January 2016, in response to community pressure Woolpit Parish Council held a public meeting to assess support for a Neighbourhood Plan. Advertised by a flyer to all households, the meeting was so well attended that it had to be repeated a week later; in all, about 170 residents demonstrated support, over half of whom signed up to receive information via an emailing list. The Parish Council decided to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan at the beginning of February.
- 1.6.2 The next day the neighbourhood planning process was explained at a meeting for volunteers, who contacted key partners and stakeholders (such as clubs and local businesses) during February, to gather their views on matters of concern in the community. These findings were reported to the first meeting of the Steering Group in March 2016.
- 1.6.3 In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan the Steering Group has endeavoured to keep residents and other stakeholders informed of the plan making process. In early February 2016, web pages with information about neighbourhood planning and news about the Plan appeared on the village website. Updated monthly, from March onwards the web pages also made available to the public agendas and minutes of Steering Group meetings as well as newsletters, documents and reports. Contact details for Steering Group members were included. Subscribers to the emailing list received the first newsletter that

⁵ MSDC has not yet decided which of its options for the distribution of housing growth is to be adopted. It is therefore not possible to say now how many houses need to be built in Woolpit over the lifetime of the Plan. During the period 1990-2015 housing growth in Woolpit averaged 12-13 per year. Given the existing housing demand, this rate of growth is likely to be at the bottom end of the estimated range.

February. Later newsletters were also printed and made available at the Elm Tree Gallery gift shop and Tea Cups tea-room.

- 1.6.4 During April, a community engagement strategy was developed and this was activated following the official designation of the Plan by MSDC in early May. A series of consultations took place during the late spring, summer and autumn of 2016 at a range of venues in the parish, using our pop-up stall. Residents were informed about the neighbourhood planning strategy and sought input from the wider community on a range of issues. Feedback from these consultations was circulated to subscribers of the emailing list and published on the web site, with an interim report in August 2016, and the summary report in January 2017. A presentation was made to the children at Woolpit primary school in October 2016, followed by group activities. An exhibition was organised in November 2016, partly to provide feedback to the community but also to seek further opinion.
- 1.6.5 At the same time, we started discussions with local businesses, many of which responded to a survey. The findings were collated and published in a report in March 2017.
- 1.6.6 In 2017 community engagement and consultation continued with the Questionnaire. A launch event was held in May, which also included a survey about important views in the village. The Questionnaire was distributed to all households in June and collected three weeks later. It was also available to complete online until September. Distributed to some 900 households, 637 responses were received, including those completed online. When analysis was complete, an event was organised in February 2018, comprising an exhibition of the results and a pre-publication presentation about the Landscape Appraisal, delivered by the consultant commissioned to produce that report.
- 1.6.7 Feedback to the community has been supplemented by regular notices in the Woolpit Diary and by occasional articles in the local press. The Steering Group has also maintained regular contact with Mid Suffolk District Council.

1.7 Plan Period, Monitoring and Review

1.7.1 Plan Period

It is envisaged that the Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan will run concurrently with the new Joint Local Plan and will apply during the period to 2036. However, it is recognised that periodical review over the plan period will be necessary in order to respond to challenges and concerns that arise during that time and to meet the changing needs and aspirations of the local community.

1.7.2 Monitoring and Review

Woolpit Parish Council, as the Neighbourhood Plan authority, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery.

2 About Woolpit

2.1 Present

- 2.1.1 The A14 trunk road, which links the Midlands with the port of Felixstowe, originally passed through the centre of Woolpit. The village is now bypassed but its proximity to the A14 gives it good road access to Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich, Cambridge and beyond. It is seven miles east of the market town of Bury St Edmunds which is the main shopping centre for the area.
- 2.1.2 Woolpit is a thriving community which contains two pubs, tea room, estate agent, grocer with post office, hairdresser, petrol station with shop, fish and chip shop, bakery, gift shop, primary school, dentist and a health centre which also serve surrounding villages. There are two business parks which together with other businesses in the parish employ some 1,000 people. The village has numerous clubs and organisations including a flourishing cricket club which is often used to host minor county matches. The grade 1 listed parish church is noted for its double hammerbeam roof, and there is a chapel for the Christian Fellowship. Woolpit's buildings, facilities and attractive appearance bring a number of tourists to the village.
- 2.1.3 There are two buildings for general community use. The larger is a modern village hall with good stage facilities. A recreation field and children's play area adjoin the hall. The smaller is the 14th century Woolpit Institute which was originally a house and was given to the community in 1920. The Parish Council has an office in the Institute and a small village museum is also in the building.
- 2.1.4 The village is served by an hourly bus service on the Bury St Edmunds to Stowmarket route. The nearest train station is two miles away at Elmswell.
- 2.1.5 The parish comprises the main village together with the hamlets of Woolpit Green, Woolpit Heath and Borley Green. Its total area is 748 hectares and the population at the 2011 census was 1,995.
- 2.1.6 The community website which is run by the Parish Council is www.woolpit.org

2.2 Past

- 2.2.1 The village's name is thought to derive from the Old English *wulf-pytt*, meaning 'pit for trapping wolves'.
- 2.2.2 From the 17th century, Woolpit became an important manufacturing centre for *Suffolk White* bricks. Production ended in the 1940's and today only the pits remain as lakes, together with a few buildings which are used by modern businesses. A tramway once linked the brickworks to the railway at Elmswell. The production of woollen cloth contributed to Woolpit's prosperity in the middle ages.
- 2.2.3 The village is well known for the legend of The Green Children of Woolpit. The story, which concerns two children with green coloured skin who emerged from the ground in the 12th century, has become the basis for several books, plays and musicals.

- 2.2.4 A scheduled ancient monument known as Lady's Well lies in woodland some 300m from the church. First mentioned in a 16th century document, a moat is fed by a spring which was reputed to have healing properties and was once visited by pilgrims. The site has protected trees including a 500 year old beech.
- 2.2.5 Several Romano-British and medieval sites with archaeological remains have been identified. All were probably small farmsteads and there is no evidence to suggest the former existence of any substantial buildings. Some Roman coins have also been found, indicating that the Romans had a presence here.
- 2.2.6 Information from the Little Domesday Book indicates that the population in 1086 was about 270. By 1811 this had risen to 625. There was little change until after WW2 when by 1951 the population was 800. It had increased to 1,995 by the time of the 2011 census.

2.3 Character

- 2.3.1 The historic core of Woolpit is a conservation area, appraised and extended by MSDC in 2000. The Conservation Area Appraisal is designed to be used as a demonstration of 'quality of place'. This appraisal was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by MSDC in 2012 for briefing any plans for development in the area.
- 2.3.2 The historical importance of Woolpit has been well established and dates back to Palaeolithic times according to archaeological remains. A Roman road later to become the Peddar's Way runs south to Woolpit Green; the church was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 and other Medieval remains include the Scheduled Ancient Monument Lady's Well.
- 2.3.3 At the centre of the village is a triangular street area, which acts as the focal point of the village and is where markets were once held. Street parties are held here at times of national celebration. Three roads lead away from this triangle with side roads turning off two of these. Close to this central core the houses are close together and mostly set just off the road giving a tight urban feel. Many of the houses near to the centre are Grade II* and grade II listed buildings.

Figure 3 The Pump Garden in the central triangle



- 2.3.4 The village has 61 listed buildings, 40 of which are in the conservation area. Older buildings are generally in the Suffolk vernacular with examples of both timber and brick fronted, together with some weatherboarding and flintstone. Most of the listed buildings are timber framed but many had brick facades added in the Georgian period. Much of the old brickwork is white, but there is some in red, with bricks for both coming from Woolpit brickworks.
- 2.3.5 Since the 1950s several modern housing estates have been built on sites around the historic core, but mainly to the north-west and south-east, so that north and north-east behind the church, and to the south and south-west (along Rags Lane and Green Road) there is quick and easy access to open countryside. The business parks, one of which is in an old gravel pit and the other on the site of an old brickworks, lie well clear of the conservation area.
- 2.3.6 At the eastern edge of the parish there is the 80 hectares of the mediaeval Woolpit Wood. Apart from this, outside of the main village and the three hamlets the land is mainly used for arable farming.
- 2.3.7 Lying on rising ground above the valley of the river Black Bourn, the village and particularly the floodlit church are visible from afar and are especially familiar to travellers on the A14.

2.4 Basic evidence

2.4.1 Population and age profile

Over the period 2001 to 2011, Mid Suffolk's population rose by over 12%, while that of Woolpit, with a few rises and falls in between, has remained roughly the same. The separation of the two trends started in 2003-2004, with a definite divergence after 2008. This phenomenon is perhaps explained more by a surge elsewhere in the district than by the slowing of growth in the parish.

According to census data, between 2001 and 2011, the total population of Woolpit increased by 1.4%, to 1,995. The balance of male and female remained broadly the same. However, the age profile changed markedly: under-16s fell by 5.3%, to 15.8% as a proportion of the total population; while those aged 65 and over rose by 5.5%, to 24% of the overall total. Consequently, the median age rose from 42 to 47 years old. There were almost 100 fewer minors in the village, and over 100 more over 65s. This suggests that relatively few families with young children had moved into or been created in the village during these ten years, while many households of working age had reached retirement age. The message is clear to read; Woolpit has an ageing population profile, and forward planning must take some account of the changing needs that will result.

2.4.2 Housing stock and occupancy

1981 to 2001 saw a sustained period of building in Woolpit, as the housing stock increased from 518 to 800 dwellings - an average of over 14 new homes a year. In the next ten years the pace of construction slackened, the total rising to 852 in 2011. Over the whole period 1981-2011 occupancy has declined, from 2.8 in 1981 to 2.3 in 2011, but the rate of decline accelerated in the last decade (in 2001 occupancy was 2.5).

This means that for every home built today, fewer people are added to the population of Woolpit than was the case in 1981. While the impact on infrastructure, services and amenities is therefore slightly less per dwelling, the pressure is greater per person on available land and the landscape setting of the village.

2.4.3 House size and tenure in 2011

A much higher proportion of the houses in Woolpit have four or more bedrooms, in comparison with Mid Suffolk, or England as a whole. Correspondingly, there are relatively fewer small properties with one or two bedrooms.

	Woolpit	Mid Suffolk	England
1 bedroom	3.8%*	6.1%*	12.0%*
2 bedrooms	21.2%	25.0%	27.9%
3 bedrooms	36.9%	40.4%	41.2%
4+ bedrooms	38.1%	28.5%	18.9%

* Includes 0.1% / 0.1% / 0.2% with 0 bedrooms

Most properties are owner-occupied; and while the proportion is broadly similar across the district, it is significantly higher than in Suffolk as a whole. In the rented sector, however, more than two-thirds of the homes in Woolpit are social rented rather than private rented, whereas in Mid Suffolk there is parity between these two forms of renting; and this is roughly the case in Suffolk as a whole.

	Woolpit	Mid Suffolk	Suffolk
Owned	78.4%	76.0%	67.9%
Social rented	13.9%	11.2%	14.8%
Private rented	6.0%	11.2%	15.6%
Living rent free	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%

Three-quarters of the residential property in the parish is therefore medium-sized or larger and slightly more than three quarters are owner-occupied homes. Combined with the demographic profile and the historic building pattern, this suggests a majority of older residents bought homes in Woolpit in the 1980s and 1990s before house prices accelerated. Many if not most of these owners will have paid off their mortgages, and a proportion of these, now aged 65 and over, are seeking to downsize to smaller properties, perhaps a bungalow. And while older owners have a considerable amount of equity at their disposal — the mean house price in Woolpit in September 2015 was £269,000, with detached properties almost £350,000 on average — this cost presents a challenge for younger people and families seeking to move into the village. Semi-detached and terraced homes are usually cheaper than detached houses, but Woolpit has just 35.6% of the former, compared with 46.3% in Mid Suffolk and 52.6% in the country as a whole. And whereas flats are becoming more common in the wider area, there are almost none of these in Woolpit.

After a long period of sustained growth, residential development in Woolpit entered a decade or more of relative stagnation at the opening of the 21st century. More recently, this seems to have been reversed, but for the sake of the village's continued prosperity

and for a sustainable local economy, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that more homes are needed. The proposed new estate off Old Stowmarket Road would put matters right for the time being. It is essential, though, that new building includes a good number of starter homes and social rented housing, in order to encourage younger families to settle in the village.

2.4.4 Economic activity

The working age population of Woolpit, as a proportion of the total, fell by 0.1% between 2001 and 2011 — an almost imperceptible change, but one against which the 3.8% increase in the number of working age residents in employment contrasts all the more strongly. Closer examination shows this to be almost entirely due to women taking paid work: an increase of 8.1% during this period. There were fewer people working very short or very long hours (less than 16 or more than 48 hours per week). Overall, part-time working increased. At the same time, there was a shift away from professional occupations towards skilled and semiskilled jobs. Taken together, these trends suggest a broadening, possibly even an equalisation, of incomes.

The number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) has until recently been zero, excluding very temporary periods. But since the summer of 2015 this figure has risen until by August 2016 it coincided with the rate for Suffolk (6% of those aged 16-18). This is not due to the lack of opportunities for work-based learning, as from 2013-2016 Woolpit's 16-18 year olds matched or exceeded the take-up of such training opportunities in Suffolk as a whole.

2.4.5 Travel to work

Car / van ownership rose from 1.55 per household in 2001 to 1.66 in 2011. This amounted to an extra 144 cars or vans owned by residents, an increase of 11.6%; but the proportion of people travelling to work in a privately-owned vehicle fell by 1.3%. The use of public transport increased, up 1.7%, but remains low, at only 5% of all travel to work options.

2.4.6 Deprivation

National rankings show that Woolpit is one of the least deprived neighbourhoods in the country, although on most criteria this position deteriorated between 2010 and 2015. Only with regard to Crime was there a slight improvement, while in Education Skills and Training the decline was dramatic and worrying. Mid Suffolk rankings tell the same story.

However, the census occupancy ratings show a decline. Although it is an oversimplification to say that this figure is equivalent to the number of spare bedrooms per household, the trend does suggest that there were fewer unoccupied bedrooms in 2011 than in 2001. The mean occupancy rating fell from 1.62 to 1.36.

Woolpit's Housing Needs Survey 2015 indicated 39 households (72 people) in need of affordable housing in the parish.

2.5 Evidence from the neighbourhood planning process

- 2.5.1 The **SWOT Analysis** (August 2016) carried out by the Steering Group focused on the six main issues which emerged from the interim Community Consultation Report (July 2016). It is summarised in the tables below.

Issue	Strengths	Weaknesses
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good wider transport links • unrestricted parking in village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • narrow roads and lanes unsuitable for today's traffic flows and larger vehicles • road safety increasingly at risk • lack of separated cycle paths/lanes
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good quality housing • good stock of family homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recent slowdown in housebuilding • inadequate stock of smaller houses/flats • low turnover of housing • shortage of sheltered accommodation for the elderly
Facilities & services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good public facilities • good community venues • adequate range and size of shops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of pre-school capacity • primary school nearing capacity • health centre at capacity • lack of amenities for children and teenagers
Community & heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attractive well-preserved historic centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor arrangements for welcoming and integrating newcomers • historic centre in conservation area has limited possibilities for adapting to the demands of a larger community
Footpaths & cycleways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • narrow roads/lanes highly suitable for cyclists and pedestrians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing paths/pavements often narrow • overgrown verges and hedges • no safe walkway or cycle path to Elmswell
Wildlife & green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large attractive cricket field • some pleasant green spaces • many old hedgerows, thickets and ancient woodland • several ponds and one small lake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • insufficient playing field space • poor play facilities and fewer sports pitches than other villages of comparable size • inadequate green areas created in recent developments • lack of off-leash areas for dog walkers

Issue	Opportunities	Threats
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify congestion points, road safety hazards, parking shortfall • devise a coordinated policy to resolve all of these together • mitigate traffic difficulties by appropriate allocation of sites for housing and business development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shuffling of traffic problems through piecemeal response • inadequate and unsustainable adjustments to roads and junctions serving new developments • slow response of SCC Highways to need for changes
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a whole-neighbourhood housing strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inappropriate scale of development • unsuitable siting of new housing • unsuitable mix/style of housing • degradation of village character • unsustainable development over-stressing services, amenities and community coherence
Facilities & services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extend health centre • expand school premises • improve play facilities for children • create attractive spaces for young people to socialise • create a new shopping focus outside the historic centre • increase/improve stock of community venues to meet population growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unplanned piecemeal bolt-ons • lack of upkeep and management plans for the long term • decay and abuse of amenities through lack of investment and management
Community & heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • devise ongoing programme to welcome and integrate newcomers more effectively • protect central conservation area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fragmentation of community through failing to integrate • decline to a dormitory village • decay to a museum village for tourists and a winter population
Footpaths & cycleways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create pedestrian/cycle routes safe/separate from motor traffic • improve lighting • create safe road crossings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to connect up a pedestrian/cycle network throughout the village • inadequate investment to encourage use of footpaths and cycle paths • failure to consider needs of all users
Wildlife & green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect existing key green spaces • enhance recreation/play by provision of suitable green spaces in all new developments • protect wildlife habitats, transit routes and feeding areas • prevent encroachment towards Woolpit Green and The Heath 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ribbon development • decline of wildlife • loss of key green spaces • failure to ensure that new developments include adequate additional recreation/play space

- 2.5.2 Major areas of concern were identified in the **Community Consultation Summary Report** (January 2017) compiled from the result of exploratory contacts with various stakeholder groups over a period of eight months.

Issues

Traffic in and through the village came out as by far the most important concern for most Woolpit residents. **Road safety, Parking, and Congestion in the village centre** were identified as the most important of the traffic issues. There is a clearly perceived lack of parking in Woolpit, particularly in the village centre, and at the school and health centre. At the same time, people feel that the centre of the village is badly congested, especially at certain times of day.

The second area of concern was **Housing** and the three main issues in this category were the shortage of affordable/social housing, the need for retirement housing and the perceived threat or scale of housing development.

Under **Footpaths and cycleways** there was a clear demand for better footpath provision, including concerns about the lack of a footpath to Elmswell. Comments indicated that the village needed to create a better network of cycleways particularly as the National Cycle Route 51 passes right through the village centre and from west to east through the parish.

Many of the comments about **Facilities and services** highlight the need to provide more and better play facilities for young children, and appropriately-equipped recreational space for older children and teenagers. Although Woolpit's shops may be considered adequate for the present population, several comments identify a potential future need for a supermarket with better access, especially in terms of parking.

Other issues mentioned were **Wildlife and green spaces** and **Heritage and community**.

- 2.5.3 Before it was decided to commission an independent Landscape Appraisal (see below), the **Landscape Character Appraisal** (January 2017) was produced, identifying and analysing five main landscape areas (excluding Woolpit village itself), and recording the features and qualities of each one. This appraisal was supported by character assessments of most of the streets/residential estates in the main settlement and Woolpit Green.
- 2.5.4 The **Rural Parish Profile**, and **Rural Place Profile** (February 2017), commissioned from Community Action Suffolk, highlight the characteristics that a sustainable community needs in order to improve the quality of life of its residents. They are organised into a number of themes that draw on government data, derived mainly from the 2011 census, and on other national surveys and indicators.
- 2.5.5 The **Report on Woolpit Businesses** (March 2017) identifies the location (proximity to home, market and customers), access to the A14 and the wider road network, and the availability of premises as the main reasons for businesses to be established here. Although the majority have 25 or fewer employees, the largest employer has over 400 staff and expects to expand. Lack of availability of space for expansion is seen as the most likely barrier to growth, while improvements to roads, transport links and car parking come high on the list of desirable improvements. These include bus services and a cycle route to Elmswell station, while there is a concern about the capacity of the roads in the

parish to absorb higher levels of traffic. Remarks about housing show a real need for expansion in order to allow staff to live nearby, but also recognise the importance of careful planning and ensuring commensurate growth of infrastructure, services and amenities.

2.5.6 The **Key Views Survey Analysis** (June 2017) ranks twelve views into and out of Woolpit. Views selected for this survey were identified by earlier consultation as important views.

2.5.7 The household **Questionnaire** (analysis, December 2017), conducted during June to August 2017, surveyed opinion on all the key issues identified previously, with the aim of defining residents' concerns more precisely, and finding out which options for responding to these concerns were most strongly supported. The questionnaire was delivered to every household in Woolpit and an online version was available as well. There were 637 responses from a total of about 900 households.

With regard to **Housing**, the current pattern of tenure is supported while recognising a need for more social rented homes. The focus for new building should be on middle-sized family homes; the greatest need is for 2-3 bedroom properties. At the same time, protection of the village character, its rural setting and historic heritage, are of very high importance for residents.

Concerning **Traffic**, there is almost universal support for banning HGVs from the village centre, except for deliveries. Strong support for a 20 mph limit in Heath Road and the village centre, as well as for pedestrian crossings near the school and health centre, shows that road safety is a prime concern. Although more parking spaces near the centre are needed, there is no clear agreement on how to achieve this, as it may not be possible simply to enlarge existing car parks. There is clear recognition of the desire for a cycle/footpath between Woolpit and Elmswell.

Responses regarding **Facilities and services** show that Woolpit's community is well served in most respects, but that children's play facilities, and opportunities for teenagers and young people to socialise and engage in outdoor recreation, need to be improved.

Safeguarding the **Environment** was almost universally supported, with protection for farm land, woodland, hedgerows and wildlife a priority for most people. It was felt that more could be done with the Lady's Well site.

2.5.8 As the evidence grew that the rural nature of the parish and the landscape in which Woolpit is set were very important considerations for residents, a **Landscape Appraisal** (March 2018) was commissioned from Alison Farmer & Associates.

2.5.9 Mindful of the provision in the NPPF for the protection of local green spaces, and aware that local designations in the 1998 Local Plan may not survive into the emerging BMSDC Joint Local Plan, we produced a **Local Green Spaces Appraisal** (April 2018) covering 22 green spaces, almost all lying in or adjacent to Woolpit village. Seven more landscape areas (some currently designated Special Landscape Areas) have been identified as sensitive, and a local designation is intended to offer some protection.

2.5.10 Our **Vision Statement** (July 2016) 'Woolpit in 2036' sets out our vision '... of a modern village with a traditional feel where people want to live and work.' It is presented in full below.

3 Vision, Issues and Objectives

3.1 Vision

Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan's Vision Statement, adopted in August 2016:

Woolpit in 2036 is...

...an integrated community where people of all ages and from diverse backgrounds and cultures benefit from a wide range of facilities and employment opportunities.

The historic character of the village has been preserved and can be enjoyed by everyone, through a diverse range of footpaths, cycle ways and roads.

Congestion in the village centre has been dealt with by careful management and taking opportunities from new development.

Modern facilities and infrastructure have been supported by steady growth of housing and businesses at a rate that could be integrated into the community, supporting the existing shops and services. The village centre is a vibrant place, not only because of its range of essential shopping facilities, but because of the many suitable locations for local clubs and societies.

This has maintained Woolpit as a key hub in the network of nearby communities.

Investing in the village has kept us up to date with amenities demanded by residents, ranging from technology like high speed internet connections to sporting facilities for all.

Careful design of new buildings has ensured that not only does their character and density complement the village, but they integrate new residents with old and maintain a mixed community. It is a modern village with a traditional feel where people want to live and work.

3.2 Issues and Objectives

3.2.1 From discussions with residents and businesses, our original Vision Statement, our SWOT analysis and the Parish Profile document, we can organise the issues raised into more specific objectives under 3 headings:

- Social: traffic, parking, housing development, infrastructure and services, community integrity and demographic profile
- Business and economic: business development, community economy
- Environmental: rural landscape character, green spaces, historic village character, footpaths and cycleways, climate change

3.2.2 Social Objectives

SO1 To improve the parking especially near the school and health centre.

SO2 To maintain easy access to the village centre and reduce traffic congestion and the shortage of parking.

SO3 To enable the population to grow and become more balanced in terms of age profile.

SO4 To embrace the development of new homes but at steady rate so integration can keep pace for the benefit of the whole village.

SO5 To regulate housing development so that it responds to housing needs and provides a high quality built environment.

- SO6 To encourage investment in infrastructure and services in line with housing growth.
- SO7 To adopt a criteria based approach for evaluating proposed or potential sites for new housing.

3.2.3 **Business and Economic Objectives**

- BO1 To maintain and encourage the expansion of our existing services, particularly the health centre and school.
- BO2 To ensure land is made available for businesses start-up or expansion outside the historic centre while creating easy access to the village centre.
- BO3 To encourage the maintenance of a responsive and competitive business community.
- BO4 To become a sustainable, cohesive and thriving community supporting a high standard of living for its residents.

3.2.4 **Environmental Objectives**

- EO1 To maintain and enhance access to open countryside and ensure sustainable access to new housing developments by the creation of safe paths and cycle ways.
- EO2 To mitigate the impact of new development on climate change and encourage a low carbon economy.
- EO3 To maintain existing 'important' views.
- EO4 To keep as much of our agricultural land as possible for agriculture, while encouraging biodiversity.
- EO5 To maintain our green places and provide additional green spaces.
- EO6 To support new development which contributes positively to Woolpit's historic buildings, its rural village character and not becoming a town.

4 Housing Policies

4.1 Spatial Strategy

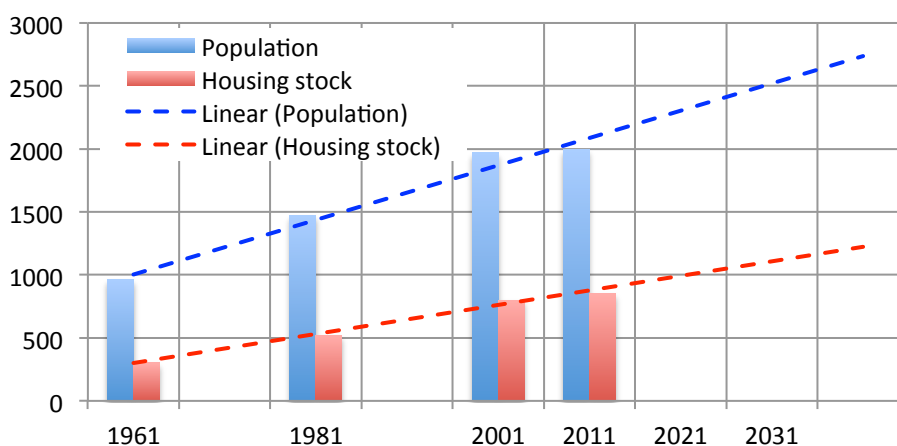
Objectives relating to Spatial Strategy

- SO4 To embrace the development of new homes but at steady rate so integration can keep pace for the benefit of the whole village.
- SO7 To adopt a criteria based approach for evaluating proposed or potential sites for new housing.

4.1.1 Woolpit's Vision Statement expects the village to remain a well-integrated, sustainable community that keeps up to date but respects and safeguards its historic character and village feel. *It is a modern village with a traditional feel where people want to live and work.*

4.1.2 The table in Figure 4 below shows a steady rate of population and housing growth since 1961. If those rates of growth were maintained, the population in 2021 would be about 2,250, with a housing stock of about 1,000, giving an occupancy rate of 2.25 persons per household. By 2031, the population would be about 2,500 and the housing stock 1,100, an occupancy rate of just over 2.25 persons per household. At current occupancy rates⁶, a village population of 2,500 could be served by 1,041 houses, an increase of 206 over the 2011 figure. Thus, depending on occupancy rates, maintaining the historic rates of population and housing stock growth would result in an extra 206-265 houses in the village by 2031 in any event. Subject to meeting the requirements of other policies in this Plan, this outcome should not be detrimental to the well-being of the village.

Figure 4 Woolpit population and housing stock 1961-2011



4.1.3 The national housing shortage and the resulting pressure on local authorities to make land available for residential development in this region have raised understandable fear of over-development. However, our analysis of projections in BMSDC's draft Joint Local Plan of August 2017 (based on an extreme interpretation of option MHD3, which concentrates 30% of building into the Core Villages with a focus on the transport corridors) suggests a maximum allocation for Woolpit of 252 houses, which is consistent with the projection of the existing growth rates shown in Figure 4 above.

⁶ In 2011 Woolpit had 1995 residents, in 835 households, an occupancy rate of approximately 2.4.

A target of approximately 250 new homes in Woolpit between 2016 and 2036 is sustainable provided there is a commensurate expansion of the necessary infrastructure. It represents a return to the rate of building experienced in the 1980s and 1990s. Planning permission has already been granted for 169 homes, leaving a balance of approximately 80 homes required to fulfil Woolpit's target for residential development up to 2036⁷.

- 4.1.4 BMSDC's draft Joint Local Plan (August 2017) identifies 14 potential sites in Woolpit, 9 for residential development and 5 for employment (October 2017). All are considered deliverable within the period of the plan. In addition, the land behind the school is the subject of a proposal for expanding the school as well as building new homes.
- 4.1.5 The Site Assessment Report prepared by AECOM (see Supporting Documents) for Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan suggested three sites as appropriate for allocation and six more with minor constraints. Of the latter, AECOM considered that one – SS0670⁸ – had more significant constraints owing to its large scale. It also identified the potential for allocation in parts of four additional search areas.

Based on this independent expert analysis, the Neighbourhood Plan has allocated sites SS0547 and SS0093 as planning consent has already been granted for these⁹. Together with site SS0823, on land behind Woolpit Primary School, where proposals are already at an advanced stage, these sites have a potential yield of 205 new dwellings. Allowing for a reasonable expectation of infill building, this will be sufficient to meet the new housing development required by the Emerging Joint Local Plan during the Neighbourhood Plan period. If further development may be required in the future, sites SS0673 and SS0783 should be re-assessed as to their suitability to meet any new housing development need.

Policy WPT1 Spatial Strategy

The Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with the village's designation in the Local Plan. In the period 2017 to 2036 at least 250 additional homes will be built and new development will be focused within the defined Settlement Boundaries, through sites allocated in this Plan as identified on the Policies Map, or in the form of small-scale windfall developments.

Unless specifically identified elsewhere in the Plan, development outside the Settlement Boundaries will only be allowed for that which is essential for the operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other exceptional uses for which it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that it needs to be located there.

4.2 Location and Scale of New Housing

Objectives relating to Location and Scale of New Housing

- SO4 To embrace the development of new homes but at a steady rate so integration can keep pace for the benefit of the whole village.
- EO6 To support new development which contributes positively to Woolpit's historic buildings, its rural village character and not becoming a town.

⁷ Old Stowmarket Road – 120 dwellings; and Green Road – 49 dwellings.

⁸ See appendices for MSDC map from August 2017 SHELAA showing sites and site designations.

⁹ Planning consents with a decision date on or after 1 April 2018 are valid for inclusion.

- 4.2.1 New housing development should be on a scale that allows successful and sustainable integration with the existing settlement. It must not exceed the capacity of infrastructure, services and amenities to keep pace, and avoid forming isolated neighbourhoods, which would lead to the unity of the village being lost and a consequent loss of village character and ‘feel’.

In terms of scale, individual developments should provide housing of a density, design and layout that reflects existing village patterns and adjacent housing and does not create an urban ‘feel’.

In terms of location, access by road to new housing should not increase traffic through the historic core of the village, but it must be within reasonable walking distance of the village centre, with safe pedestrian and cycle routes to the centre and other key focal points.

4.2.2 Scale

Woolpit’s **Housing Needs Survey**, carried out in 2015, identified a need for 39 more households. 31 future households were needed by people already living in Woolpit and 8 more by people wishing to return. The scale of the need is small, so the recommendation for the provision of affordable homes to meet the need was 18-20 dwellings. In 2011 there were 116 households in social rented properties in Woolpit. Under Mid Suffolk’s requirement for 35% of new-builds to be affordable, the number of affordable homes anticipated from a total of 250 new houses more than meets evidenced community need and would make a substantial contribution to the wider need in the district.

The Neighbourhood Plan’s 2017 community **Questionnaire** asked two questions about housing need, focusing on the size and type of dwelling, and on tenure. There was a strong preference for smaller 2 and 3-bedroom houses, as well as for bungalows or ‘sheltered’ housing which reflects the village’s ageing population profile.

Perceived need for types of tenure

Owner occupation	Social renting	Private renting	Shared ownership
83%	71%	57%	65%

Currently 78.4% of households in Woolpit are owner-occupiers, with 13.9% in social rented homes. The only type of dwelling where more respondents thought there was no need rather than some need, however small, were large houses with more than 4 bedrooms (44% to 31%).

The size of house is significant for the scale of new housing developments because larger dwellings in general tend to be built at a lower density than small ones and so occupy a greater land area for a given number of homes. In Woolpit, density ranges from approximately 15 (Hay Barn Meadow) to 30 (Roman Fields) per hectare. To suit the character of the village and the existing pattern of housing, the target for new developments should be 20-25 per hectare.

Figure 5 Village optimum housing density
left Wrights Way (23.5), right Mitre Close (22)



The size of any one housing development is a factor but so too is the build-out rate; a slower rate reduces the impact of large estates, so making it easier for the village infrastructure to adapt and grow, and for the community to integrate new arrivals successfully.

4.2.3 Location

A comparison of the Ordnance Survey Six Inch map of 1950 with modern online mapping (see **Figure 6** & **Figure 7**) shows that during the last half-century new housing has been concentrated either to the west of the village centre or in the south-east quadrant. To the south-west, and to the north and north-east, very few houses have been built.

This comparison also reveals that important constraints exist about vehicular access. The Landscape Appraisal deals in depth with considerations regarding landscape and setting which also have to be taken into account. Furthermore, there are other constraints: the Conservation Area, the Scheduled Ancient Monument, Special Landscape Areas and Flood Zones, all of which restrict development in specific areas of the parish.

The Site Assessment Report by AECOM ranks potential housing development sites in accordance with nationally-recognised suitability. Proposals for sites with a high ranking would be more likely to be supported than for sites with a low ranking. The criteria-based ranking reflects the local authority's own strategy criteria (Suitability Assessment Criteria - Draft SHELAA August 2017).

This approach is consistent with the NPPF's principles that planning should 'be genuinely plan-led', empowering 'local people to shape their surroundings' (paragraph 15), take account of the different roles and character of different areas, 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside' (170 b), conserve 'heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance' (184), 'actively manage patterns of growth ... Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable' (103), and 'plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities ... and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments' (92 a).

Figure 6 Ordnance Survey Six Inch Map 1950



Suffolk XLV.SE (includes: Drinkstone; Elmwell; Tostock; Woolpit.)
 Revised: 1950
 Published: 1953

Keyword search

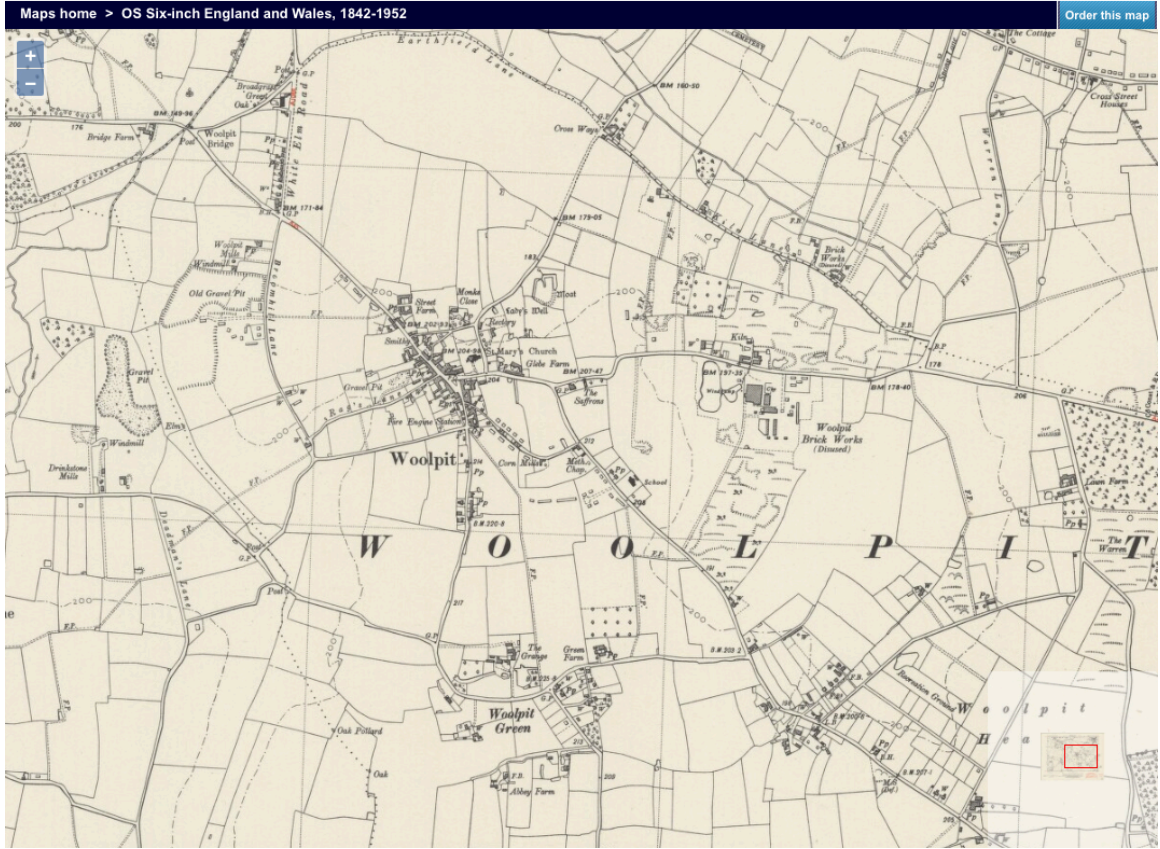
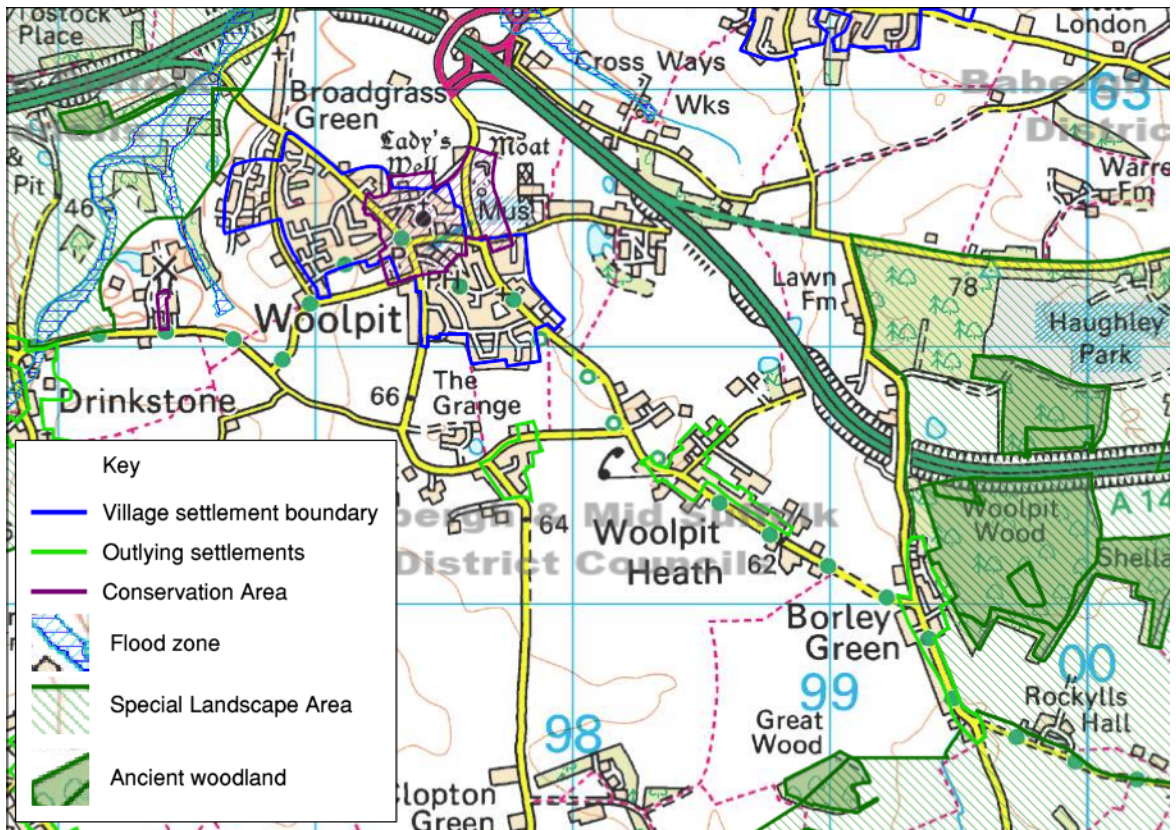


Figure 7 Constraints Map

Settlement boundaries, Conservation Area, flood zones, Special Landscape Areas, and ancient woodland (MSDC online mapping)



- 4.2.4 There are physical and qualitative constraints which mean that certain areas around the periphery of Woolpit village are more suitable than others for new housing. These are also reflected in the sites deemed suitable for growth by BMSDC and shown on page 320 of the draft Joint Local Plan (August 2017).

The criteria-based approach used by both BMSDC's Suitability Assessment and by the Neighbourhood Plan's Site Assessment Report is appropriate to assign a ranking to potential development sites. These two assessments complement one another; they are not in competition.

The size of any individual development proposal is not the most important consideration. Local housing needs may be met by a single development or by a number of separate sites.

Policy WPT2 Location and scale of new housing developments

Residential development proposals will be supported subject to conforming with Policy WPT1, and:

- being within the capacity of the existing infrastructure and road layout of the village, or providing the necessary additional capacity;
- not eliminating or encroaching on the gaps between the main village of Woolpit and one or more of the outlying settlements;
- being well related to the existing pattern of development;
- preserving or enhancing the Conservation Area.

All proposals should take into account any cumulative impact taken with other existing housing commitments in the village. They should also demonstrate that:

- the scale and character of the proposal respects the landscape, landscape features, streetscape, heritage assets and important spaces and key views into and out of the village;
- the proposal will make a positive contribution to the local character, shape and scale of the area;
- the development (for example through its scale) will preserve or enhance the existing focal points provided by the village centre and its Conservation Area;
- the proposed housing density is consistent with the village character and adjacent housing.

Woolpit should remain a village, and to preserve its village character, larger schemes must be appropriately subdivided and landscaped in order to meet this objective.

A landscape and visual impact appraisal will be required for all development proposals outside the existing settlement boundary unless they are located in an area of low landscape and visual sensitivity as shown in the Landscape Appraisal. In all areas outside the settlement, development proposals would have to demonstrate due regard to the particular sensitivities identified in the Landscape Appraisal and seek ways to mitigate effectively against potential harmful impacts, particularly in areas with higher sensitivity.

4.3 Allocation of land south of Old Stowmarket Road

- 4.3.1 The site is shown as WPT3 (MSDC site ref. SS0547) on the Policies Map. A planning application for 120 new homes was submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council on 1 April 2016. The proposal included 42 affordable homes, the provision of a car park for Woolpit Health Centre, areas of public open space, and off site highway improvements. The

District Council granted outline planning permission on 4 July 2018 and the permission is subject to a Section 106 Planning Obligation, which includes:

- 136-space car park to serve Woolpit Health Centre
- Pedestrian and cycle link to the Health Centre
- Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
- Landscape and Historic Visual Impact Assessment

4.3.2 The Neighbourhood Plan confirms this decision through the allocation of the site for housing. As the development details are worked up, it is expected that proposals should have regard to the housing needs in this Plan in terms of the size and form of dwellings. Given the size of this development, which will create a significant new area of housing in the village, it is important that it is of high quality design that respects the setting of the site and the local vernacular architecture. In particular, the form of the development should be guided by the principles of the Suffolk Design Guide and the Manual for Streets.

Policy WPT3 New homes at land south of Old Stowmarket Road

Land south of Old Stowmarket Road, identified on the Policies Map, is allocated for up to 120 homes provided that the following are part of the development:

- The housing density is no higher than 23 dwellings per hectare;
- Mix of dwelling types and sizes across all tenures including bungalows;
- The development will include 35% of affordable housing to address local housing needs;
- Sufficient outdoor green space with high standard landscaping is included;
- Each new dwelling will include adequate parking space at least to minimum standards, as contained within the Suffolk Guidance for Parking updated 2015.

In order to improve connectivity of the site with the village centre, developers will be expected to enter into a planning obligation to provide the following off-site improvements:

- Raised table pedestrian crossings on Heath Road at Woolpit Health Centre and at the junction of Old Stowmarket Road with Heath Road; and
- New pedestrian linkages to enable residents to walk to all facilities in the village centre.

4.4 Allocation of land east of Green Road

4.4.1 The site is shown as WPT4 (MSDC site ref. SS0093) on the Policies Map. A full planning application for 49 new homes was submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council on 5 May 2016. The proposal includes 17 affordable homes, the provision of a children's play area and off site highway improvements. The District Council refused planning consent, but the Planning Inspectorate allowed an appeal and granted planning permission on 28 September 2018 subject to a Section 106 Planning Obligation to secure:

- 17 Affordable dwellings
- 360 m² children's play space
- Improvements to the Public Right of Way
- Contribution towards primary school provision
- Offsite highway improvements to Green Road
- Mitigation of impact on skylark nesting habitat

4.4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan confirms this decision by the Planning Inspectorate through the allocation of the site for housing.

Policy WPT4 New homes at land east of Green Road

Land east of Green Road, identified on the Policies Map, is allocated for up to 49 homes provided that the following are part of the development:

- The housing density is no higher than 23 dwellings per hectare;
- Mix of dwelling types and sizes across all tenures including bungalows;
- The development will include 35% of affordable housing to address local housing needs;
- Sufficient children's play space with high standard landscaping is included;
- Each new dwelling will include adequate parking space at least to minimum standards, as contained within the Suffolk Guidance for Parking updated 2015.

In order to improve connectivity of the site with the village centre, developers will be expected to enter into a planning obligation to provide the following off-site improvements:

- New pedestrian linkages to enable residents to walk to all facilities in the village centre.

4.5 Allocation of land north of Woolpit Primary School

- 4.5.1 The site is shown as WPT5 (MSDC site ref. SS0823) on the Policies Map. A proposal for 36 new homes is at an advanced pre-application stage. The proposal includes 12 affordable homes and a pedestrian cycle/link from site WPT3 to the rear of the school. Development of the site must conform to the housing policies of this Plan and follow the guidelines provided by the AECOM Site Assessment Report and the Landscape Appraisal by Alison Farmer Associates.
- 4.5.2 The Neighbourhood Plan supports this proposal through the allocation of the site for housing. As the development details are worked up, it is expected that proposals should have regard to the housing needs identified in this Plan in terms of the size and form of dwellings.

Policy WPT5 New homes at land north of Woolpit Primary School

Land north of Woolpit Primary School, identified on the Policies Map, is allocated for up to 36 homes, provided that the following are part of the development:

- The housing density is no higher than 23 dwellings per hectare;
- Mix of dwelling types and sizes across all tenures including bungalows;
- The development will include 35% of affordable housing to address local housing needs;
- Sufficient outdoor green space with high standard landscaping is included;
- Each new dwelling will include adequate parking space at least to minimum standards, as contained within the Suffolk Guidance for Parking updated 2015.

In order to improve connectivity of the site with the village centre, developers will be expected to enter into a planning obligation to provide the following off-site improvements:

- New pedestrian linkages to enable residents to walk to all facilities in the village centre.

4.6 Housing Type / Mix – meeting local needs

Objective relating to Housing Type/Mix

SO3 To enable the population to grow and become more balanced in terms of age profile.

4.6.1 Context

Paragraph 65 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires the Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) Local Plan to establish strategic priorities which ‘set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations’.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment undertaken on behalf of MSDC by Peter Brett in 2016 identified a number of important trends relating to housing type:

- Household size has dropped from 2.41 to 2.36 persons over the period of 2001 -2011.
- There has been a particularly high proportionate growth in lone parent households
- The MSDC area has a relatively high proportion of detached properties and a relatively low proportion of purpose built flats.
- The ratio of house price to residents income is 8.8 compared with an England average of 7.2

As at January 2016 the housing & population data profile for Woolpit was as follows:

- Village Population – 1,995, 49.1% males 50.9% females
- Working Adults – 1,202 (60.2%)
- People 65 years or older 478 (24%)
- The housing mix per occupied household comprised (Number of Bedrooms)

1 Bed	31	3.7%
2 Bed	177	21.2%
3 Bed	308	36.9%
4 Bed+	318	38.1%

4.6.2 Vision

The Neighbourhood Development Plan provides a framework to enable Woolpit to continue as a modern village, in line with the Vision in paragraph 3.1, with enhanced facilities, but with a traditional feel which protects and enhances its historic character and community spirit.

4.6.3 Demographics

Going forward, proposals for new development within Woolpit will be required to take account of current and future local housing needs. In common with many communities Woolpit has an over-65 population of 24% forecast to rise to circa 38% by 2037. In order to sustain the village, planned growth needs to ensure a supply of suitable housing for young people looking for 2 and 3 bedroom properties, maturing families looking for 4+ bedroom properties and older people looking to downsize into accommodation suitable for lifetime occupation. This will require an appropriate mix of size and type of housing to be incorporated into planning.

4.6.4 Housing Forecast - Growth, Mix and Tenure

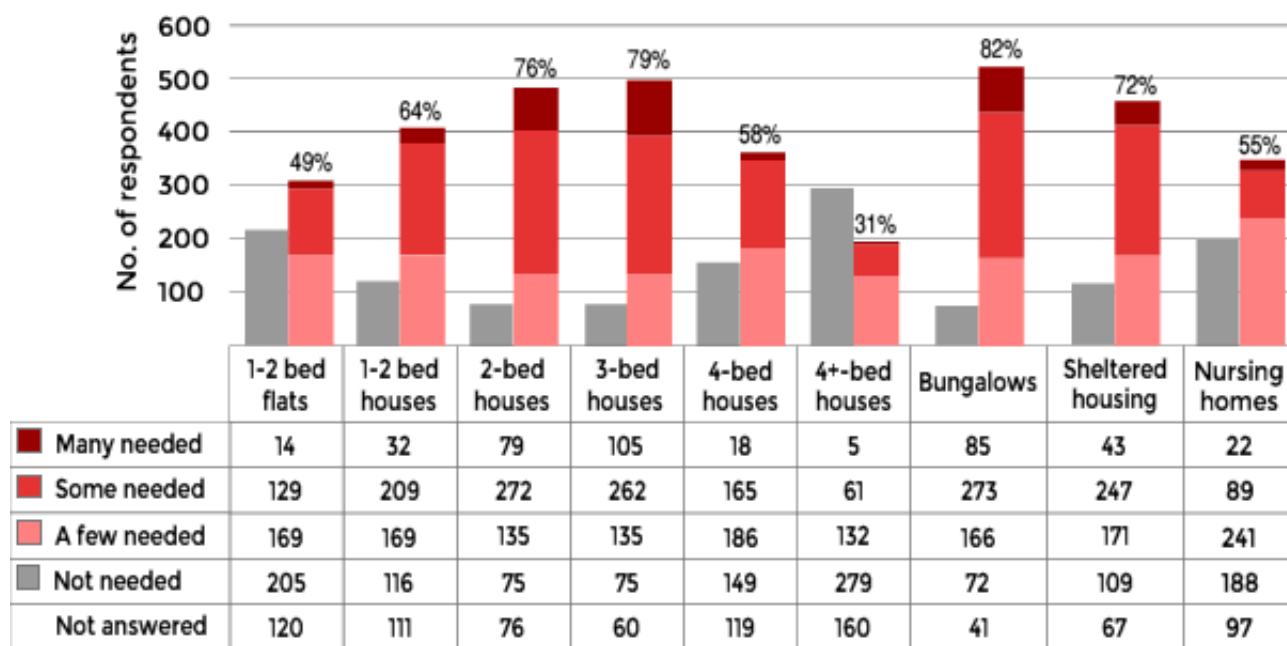
In determining the mix of houses there is need to take account of the recommendations of both the Woolpit Landscape Appraisal and Site Allocations report undertaken on behalf of the Woolpit Parish Council, the Local Plan and the impact on the Conservation Area.

MSDC’s 2014 Suffolk Housing Needs Survey indicates there is a high demand for smaller homes both for young people and for older people who are looking to downsize.

An analysis of responses to the Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire supports this and provides a more detailed estimate of the anticipated demand for new housing stock by bedroom and housing type in Woolpit (**Figure 8**).

It highlights the strong local demand from respondents for middle sized family homes and 2 and 3 bedroom houses. There is also an indicated need for the provision of sheltered housing and nursing home places. The development of homes for lifetime occupation should therefore specifically include properties that meet current Building for Life Standards or their equivalent.

Figure 8 Housing Mix



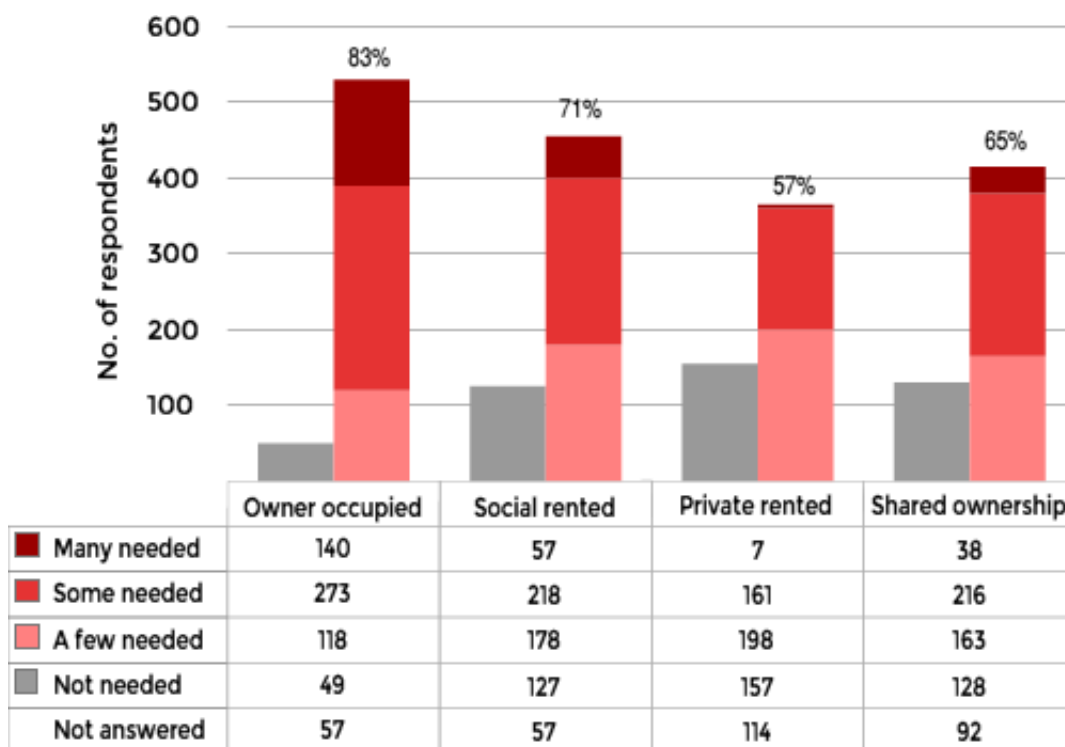
This breaks down the responses on Housing Mix in the Questionnaire (Q1), excluding “not needed”.

It clearly demonstrates the wish of Woolpit residents to own their own homes and is in line with the rest of Mid Suffolk where over 75% own their own homes. The responses however also recognize the need for affordable rented properties (**Figure 9**).

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks, in particular but not exclusively, to ensure there is a supply of suitable housing for young people/first time buyers from the village who wish to continue living here once they become independent. Therefore, to conform to the NPPF, paragraph 64, on major developments at least 10% of homes are expected to be available for affordable home ownership. Exemptions to this principle are listed in the NPPF. In addition, the needs of an aging population looking to downsize into smaller homes will have to be accommodated.

Woolpit would welcome proposals for housing on sites that make provision for open market housing to be made available for sale to local residents for a period of three months prior to release onto the open market, though it is accepted that this cannot be a condition of planning permission.

Figure 9 Housing Tenure



This breaks down the responses on Housing Tenure in the Questionnaire (Q2) "not needed".

Policy WPT6 Housing Type

Proposals for housing developments of 10 or more homes will be supported if they specifically provide a mix of appropriate and diverse types of housing, which include two or more of these options:

- one and two bedroom homes;
- family homes, with 3 or 4 bedrooms;
- bungalows of 1 to 2 bedrooms.

The majority of dwellings should comprise homes with 2 or 3 bedrooms. A proportion of the dwellings must be designed for lifetime occupation.

At least 10% of the affordable housing in a development of 10 or more homes should comprise dwellings intended to provide an affordable route to home ownership, in order to meet the known local demand for such housing.

4.7 Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

Objectives relating to Affordable Housing

- SO3 To enable the population to grow and become more balanced in terms of age profile.
- SO5 To regulate housing development so that it responds to housing needs and provides a high quality built environment.

4.7.1 Context

A common response to our local consultations on housing need has been a demand for housing suitably priced to allow those with such a need, and particularly first time buyers with a Woolpit connection, to enter the market. Woolpit's Housing Need Survey (2015) revealed a maximum need for 39 of these homes.

4.7.2 Support for lower-cost homes for people in housing need with a local connection

Contributions made by the developer under Section 106 of the Town and County Planning Acts and the Community Infrastructure Levy may be regarded as sufficient contribution to the additional infrastructure necessitated by a development site, but they do not fully reflect the value added by the community to the land value. We will look for a more imaginative approach to the sharing of the planning gain with the community:

- by seeking to have land within the development envelope made available for genuinely affordable housing; or
- by identifying exception sites outside the envelope.

Policy WPT7 Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

Proposals for the development of small scale affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites outside but adjacent to the settlement boundary, where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, will be supported where there is a proven local need and provided that the housing:

- always remains affordable;
- is for people who are in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in the village at open-market prices;
- is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated local connection as identified in paragraph 4.4 of the Mid Suffolk Choice-based Lettings Scheme 2016. Where there is no need, a property should then be offered to those from neighbouring villages with a demonstrated need for affordable housing.

These restrictions should be delivered through a legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing.

4.8 Housing for the Elderly

Objective relating to Housing for the Elderly

- S05 To regulate housing development so that it responds to housing needs and provides a high quality built environment.

4.8.1 Context

In the Neighbourhood Plan's 2017 Community Questionnaire, 42.9% of respondents stated that some bungalows are needed; 38.1% said that we need some sheltered housing; and 37.8% that a few Nursing Homes are needed. This last choice was perhaps badly worded, but was probably understood by respondents to mean that a few nursing home places are needed, rather than separate institutions.

Residents of Woolpit have indicated the need for a nursing home and sheltered accommodation – in other words care provision for the elderly. We know many people

who have grown up or moved into the village as young people, want to remain in the village so as to be close to family and friends in order to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness in old age.

During our public consultation many people have stated that they would like to downsize to a two-bedroomed bungalow or similar. There is no longer any sheltered accommodation provision in Woolpit.

The Housing Needs Survey 2015 indicated a pressure for housing suitable for older residents to downsize (22% of Housing comments, 4% of all comments received).

The 2011 Census data for Woolpit shows that out of a population of 1,995 (51% female, 49% male; median age 47) 24% were aged 65 or over – 478 people. There were 130 single pensioner households. For comparison, Office for National Statistics data in 2016 indicated that 18% of the UK population was aged 65 and over, with 2.4% aged 85 and over. This proportion is expected to grow.

4.8.2 Age and Health

In the UK, life expectancy is 86.2 years for women and 81.3 years for men. In February 2016 Age UK reported that it was of great concern that the most recent data indicates that there is likely to be more ill health and disability later in life. The Alzheimer's Society reported that there are over 850,000 people with dementia in the UK, with numbers set to rise to over 1 million by 2025 (and over 2 million by 2051 – Dementia UK report Autumn 2014). This increase of around 17% is expected to happen within the first half of the lifespan of the Neighbourhood Plan. The risk of dementia increases with age, from 1 in 50 for people aged 65-70, rising to 1 in 5 for those aged 80 and over.

Most people over the age of 75 have one or more health conditions, although almost 50% do not consider themselves to be living with a life limiting or long term condition. This means that even if they have one or more health conditions, this is not perceived to have a significant impact on their lives.

The increasing complexity of some people's healthcare needs indicates the need for suitable accommodation to meet those requirements. Older people living with frailty are at risk of adverse health events, such as falls or infection; and some can experience changes in their mental and physical well being and are no longer be able to be cared for in their own homes. In such cases they require appropriate accommodation such as residential or nursing care.

There is no provision for residential or nursing home care in Woolpit, the nearest being Stowlangtoft Hall, which is managed by Stowe Healthcare. Decreases in Local Authority funding, despite joint funding with the NHS, have not reduced the need for this type of care. However, costs due to the minimum wage for care staff, adherence to Care Quality Commission guidelines and recommendations, etc, and the squeeze on Local Authority budgets for Adult Care mean that some care homes are in difficulty or closing their doors.

People struggle to manage in their own homes when their health condition impacts on their ability to perform their normal activities of daily living: washing, dressing, toileting, mobilising and feeding themselves. The more conditions someone has, the greater the impact on their ability to perform their normal activities of daily living and the greater the need for health and social care input. 16.4% of people aged 65, rising to around half of

those aged 85, require some assistance with these activities. By their late 80s, over 1 in 3 have difficulty undertaking five or more activities of daily living.

The National Audit Office estimated that Local Authority funding reduced by 25% in real terms between 2010-11 and 2015-16, with the Care Quality Commission reporting that 81% of Councils reduced their spending on Adult Social care during the same period. NHS contributions towards care stood at £1.33 billion in 2015-16 compared with £204 million in 2006-07. This rapid decline in spending mirrors wider cuts in the Local Authority budget over the period 2005-06 to 2015-16. The Better Care Fund announced in 2013 came into effect in 2015-16, with £3.46 million of funding from the NHS. The figures indicate a growing funding pressure on social care at a time when there is a growing number of people aged 65 and over (9.71 million in 2015-16).

In addition, 1 in 5 over 65s are providing informal care, with over 2 million carers aged over 65, and 417,000 aged 80 years and older.

Age UK has indicated that there has been only a 9% increase in nursing home beds since 2010, and a steady decline in residential home beds. Local Authorities report difficulty sourcing care locally as they now commission, rather than provide, residential, sheltered or extra care housing.

Mid Suffolk District Council planned from April 2017 to reduce the number of sheltered schemes they managed. These are now provided for in the private sector either by private companies, housing associations, or not-for-profit agencies. For example, Orbit Housing Association run Blackbourne View at nearby Ixworth, which provides enhanced Sheltered Accommodation and Close Care housing. This provides rented accommodation for those that require at least 4 hours of care per week. Care UK has been working with Suffolk County Council since 2013, when it took over the running of Local Authority Care homes providing a wide range of 24-hour care from residential and nursing care to short term respite care, and specialist care for people with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

4.8.3 **Housing provision for older people**

A range of types of provision exist:

- Private ownership
- Independent living for older people
- Supported housing
- Sheltered housing
- Very sheltered housing
- Extra care housing
- Nursing homes
- Residential care homes

Please see the glossary for an explanation of these types of provision.

Strategic Housing for Older People, a document by the Chartered Institute of Housing, highlights that there are many barriers for people moving to accommodation for older people. These comprise not only the costs and fees, but the emotional attachment they have to their own community and home area. Where they move to has to be very

attractive to them, and suitable for their needs over a 20-30 year period. They often need to be close to family and friends.

It also highlights that the Government is committed to fund and develop supported housing, including sheltered, 'step down' and extra care housing. The Government has already announced funding worth a total of £7.1 billion through an expanded and more flexible homes programme for Housing Associations, Affordable Housing and not-for-profit developers, and the backing of Local Authorities to build especially on their own land (white paper section 4.43 – to help older people to move at the right time and in the right way could also help their quality of life, at the same time freeing up more homes for other buyers).

4.8.4 Conclusions

The village needs smaller homes for those wishing to downsize and remain in Woolpit, as evidenced by the Housing Needs Survey 2015; and for suitable accommodation to meet the increasing needs of older people who want to remain in the village until the end of their lives.

Mid Suffolk District Council's Core Strategy 2008 (section 3.58) stated that in Mid Suffolk new housing development should provide a mix of housing, types, size and affordability, to ensure homes meet the local need as identified in Housing Needs Surveys and house market assessment. This includes the needs of particular groups such as older and disabled people, an ageing population, and smaller households.

MSDC's Core Strategy updated in January 2016 identified that within the existing housing stock there is a deficit of suitable housing for the elderly. 6% of all households have elderly relatives who may need to move to Suffolk within 3 years. The new Joint Local Plan highlights the growing elderly population, and the State of Suffolk (Suffolk County Council 2015) report identified that people aged over 85 years make up a higher percentage of the care home population in Suffolk than the national average. It also showed that Suffolk has high rates of permanent admission to residential care and nursing homes for people aged 65 and over, when compared to many other regions in England. It is no longer a question of whether we should be delivering more housing for the elderly, but how much, when, and where.

Policy WPT8 Housing for the elderly

Proposals will be welcomed for development which incorporates specific provision for the elderly, which may include:

- Bungalows to accommodate older people as well as those with disabilities;
- Sheltered housing for those capable of living independently;
- Care home provision for those no longer capable of independent living.

5 Business Policies

5.1 Location

Objectives relating to Location

- SO1 To improve the parking especially near the school and health centre.
- SO2 To maintain easy access to the village centre and reduce traffic congestion and the shortage of parking.
- BO2 To ensure land is made available for businesses start-up or expansion outside the historic centre while creating easy access to the village centre.
- BO3 To encourage the maintenance of a responsive and competitive business community.
- EO6 To support new development which contributes positively to Woolpit's existing buildings, its rural village character and not becoming a town.

5.1.1 Context

Woolpit currently has a number of thriving businesses providing both employment opportunities and local facilities. A core goal is to both support and grow these, while also attracting new businesses at a sustainable rate.

To be of maximum benefit to the village, businesses might provide a mixture of good quality jobs that can be offered to local people. In order to mitigate our ageing population, which is above the national and county average, it is important that Woolpit bring in new businesses and commensurate employment opportunities, as well as supporting the existing ones.

At present, most businesses in the village are either centrally located retail outlets, primarily serving the local population, or larger employers located in such places where they relate well to the A14. Encouraging businesses into the right locations and following this pattern is critical. Those that are in planning use A categories (retail) units should be in easy walking distance of the housing centres, while those in category B uses (office and industrial) would ideally be placed so as to minimise trips through the centre.

Many of the common nuisances associated with commercial development can be addressed at the design and planning stage. For example, sufficient parking should be provided to stop vehicles spilling out into the village streets and lighting designed to direct light downwards to avoid a glow into the sky or into the windows of nearby houses. We will look to developers to provide suitable design statements to demonstrate that such issues have been addressed.

Buildings themselves should be designed to be sympathetic to their location, with landscaping to screen them where they are more exposed to open countryside. Site layouts should be of a density where there is space for such landscaping to be put in place, avoiding an overly urban feel.

Policy WPT9 Location of business sites

Proposals for redevelopment of brownfield sites for business / industrial use, and construction or redevelopment on existing employment sites will be supported, subject to meeting the following conditions:

- being within the capacity of the existing infrastructure and road layout of the village, or providing the necessary additional capacity;
- not eliminating or encroaching on the gaps between the main village of Woolpit and one or more of the outlying settlements;
- good access to A14 avoiding the village centre;
- mitigation of traffic / road impacts from the development;
- improvement of pedestrian / cycling links with the built-up area of the village;
- enough on-site parking to meet the needs of the proposed use;
- avoidance of nuisance (from noise, fumes, smells, light pollution or other disturbance) to neighbouring properties;
- any lighting plan that will keep pedestrians and other users safe without a detrimental effect on the environment;
- mitigation of visual impacts on rural setting of the village consistent with the recommendations of the Landscape Appraisal;
- no adverse impacts on a heritage asset or its setting, including the Conservation Area;
- enhancement of the environment consistent with the recommendations of the Landscape Sensitivity Study.

In any other case, proposals for new business / employment development will be supported where there is a demonstrable need in Woolpit Parish or in Mid Suffolk District, and more particularly where there is a demonstrable benefit to the parish community and its infrastructure, in all cases subject to meeting the same conditions as listed above.

5.2 Sustainability and support for the community

Objectives relating to Sustainability and support for the community

- BO1 To maintain and encourage the expansion of our existing services, particularly the health centre and school.
- BO4 To become a sustainable, cohesive and thriving community supporting a high standard of living for its residents.

5.2.2 Context

Woolpit's Vision Statement expects the village to remain a well-integrated, sustainable community. Business is no exception to this: modern facilities and infrastructure have been supported by steady growth of housing and businesses at a rate that could be integrated into the community, supporting the existing shops and services. Investing in the village has kept us up to date with amenities demanded by residents. It is clear that business is integral to the wellbeing of our community going forward and may reasonably be expected to contribute towards that goal.

There is already a substantial and growing business community in Woolpit. Some - shops, food outlets, complementary health services, an estate agent, to give a few examples - are located in or near the village centre, creating a vibrant core. Others - some much larger - are mainly located on the business parks to the west and east of the main

settlement; Woolpit has the third largest concentration of business/commercial enterprise in Mid Suffolk. Windmill Avenue Business Park to the west and Brickfields Business Park to the east are thriving enterprise areas, while Swan Lake Business Park (also to the east) might benefit from investment and redevelopment.

Planning for sustainable development is what national planning policy is all about (NPPF paragraph 7), and it identifies three dimensions: economic, social and environmental (NPPF paragraph 8). While the first of these defines a business and industrial strategy:

to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available ... and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure ...

the other two dimensions emphasize the importance of community sustainability:

to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities ... with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being ...

and sustaining the environment through protection and enhancement:

to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment ... helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change ...

In planning terms, no one of these dimensions can be taken in isolation from the others; a holistic approach is indispensable. The three dimensions are *interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives)* (NPPF, paragraph 8).

5.2.3 A policy for business 'parks'

From this flow a number of linked conclusions. Where a business park development is proposed, the management of that development must subscribe to these principles of sustainability. This can be best demonstrated through a vision for long-term growth as a part of a sustainable, growing community, and a sustainable site management plan to implement that vision. A commitment to invest in community facilities, to support the community in realising community projects, to collaborate in enhancing the local built and natural environment and embrace future change by making the local economy more resilient - one or more of these could be taken by the community as a token of seriousness on the part of the developer.

The scale or scope of these community aspirations may need explanation. Investing in community facilities could cover, for example, equipment in community venues; realising community projects might involve sponsorship of local events or contributing towards a service such as a youth club; enhancement of the local environment might involve improving local footpaths - particularly between the proposal site and the village centre - or encouraging wildlife by planting suitable habitats on site. Developers are encouraged to be imaginative in what they can offer.

It is recognised that the resources of individual small businesses are limited, and it is less likely that they would be able to commit significantly to the investment outlined above. This is why it is suggested that this policy should be applicable to business parks, and that they in turn should have their own policy and plan for meeting the obligation.

Policy WPT10 Sustainability and support for the community

Proposals for the development of employment sites, ie ‘business parks’ will be supported where in addition to complying with other Policies it can be clearly demonstrated that there exists a long term, sustainable site management plan and a vision for growth in line with the gradual growth of housing, infrastructure and services in Woolpit.

Proposals would be viewed more favourably from developers who are willing to, for example:

- invest in expansion of existing community facilities;
- contribute to community projects and services;
- make improvements to the footpaths / cycleways between their location and the village centre, or improve the network of footpaths and cycleways in the vicinity of their location;
- install low-carbon / carbon-neutral energy generation;
- enhance biodiversity by enhancing and maintaining the local natural environment.

5.3 Retail outlets and small businesses

Objectives relating to Retail outlets and small businesses

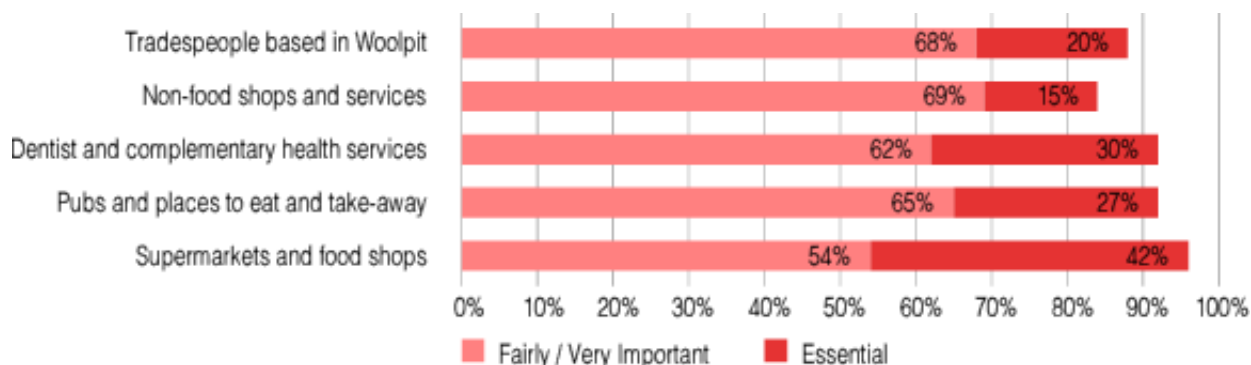
- SO2 To maintain easy access to the village centre and reduce traffic congestion and the shortage of parking.
- BO1 To maintain and encourage the expansion of our existing services, particularly the health centre and school.
- EO6 To support new development which contributes positively to Woolpit’s historic buildings, its rural village character and not becoming a town.

5.3.1 Overview of current needs

The Woolpit Questionnaire 2017 asked which shops and services are most valued within the village. All statements were of some importance to at least 80% of respondents with the highest importance being placed on supermarkets and food shops.

Figure 10 Importance of shops and services (Question 15)

The percentage of respondents rating amenities as fairly/very important, or essential



The Woolpit Questionnaire identified a strong view that existing facilities are sufficient and that expansion is not needed. This will need to be kept under review in conjunction with increased residential development to ensure needs continue to be met.

5.3.2 **Small Businesses and Shops within the Conservation Area**

A key part of the character and charm of Woolpit is the central area. This has been protected by designation as a Conservation Area since 1972. There is a range of privately owned shops and small businesses within the Conservation Area, which provide a valuable service to the community and enhance the charm and character of the village.

Woolpit is well served by a number of shops within the Conservation Area. These are categorized by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as: A1 (shops), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes) and A4 (Drinking Establishments).

In order to maintain the character of the village and to safeguard existing retailers, applications for non category A use or from large multiple retail organisations would not be supported within the Conservation Area.

The intimate feel and vitality of Woolpit's retail core must be protected and enhanced. Future development or provision of shops and small businesses within Class A would be supported provided that they will not lead to traffic congestion or generate unacceptable levels of noise, fumes, light or other disturbance to neighbouring properties.

Any reduction in the range of retail facilities within the village centre would diminish the amenity and increase the need for people to travel beyond the village. In particular this would impact adversely on members of the community with limited mobility or access to transport.

In recent years two significant shops, Addisons grocery and food shop, and the old Post Office have closed and permission has been granted for conversion of the premises into residential accommodation. Within the Woolpit Questionnaire there was a common theme expressed by those who would prefer a separate post office re-instated in the village.

In order to maintain a vital retail core within the village change of use of ground floor shops and services within Woolpit will only be supported if the business is closed and has been marketed continuously and at a realistic price for at least 12 months.

5.3.3 **Small Businesses and Shops outside the Conservation Area**

Outside the Conservation Area, proposals for small businesses including food shops will be supported where they can show that they would significantly enhance the amenity and that there would not be any adverse impact on the Conservation area or wider locality.

For sustainability, community coherence, and to maintain and enhance Woolpit's unique character as an historic village, shops should be within walking distance of the village centre, and the creation of any widely separated focus of retail activity will be resisted.

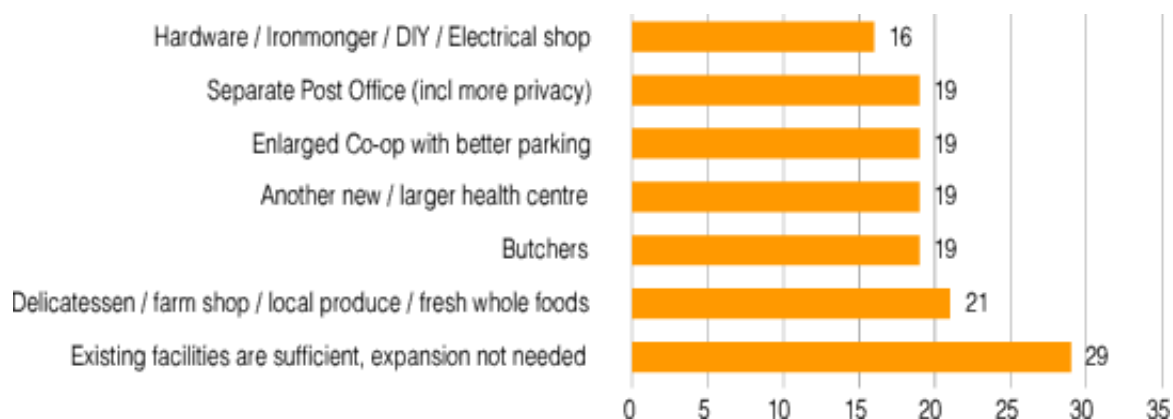
Any proposal for development should ensure easy, safe and well-lit pedestrian and cycle access to and from the village centre, which for food shops should be within 800 metres walking distance.

A Costcutter store opened in 2014 together with a filling station and service garage. This provides a valuable resource for the village community. The site is not deemed to

contribute positively to the Conservation Area and is therefore excluded from it. An appraisal adopted as supplementary planning guidance by MSDC Environment Policy Panel, 19 June 2012 notes; 'Its future redevelopment has the potential to recreate a more traditional built up street frontage.'

The Woolpit Questionnaire 2017 also asked what other shops and services we need as Woolpit expands. There were 195 comments made for this question. A significant number felt that the existing facilities were good and currently fulfilling their needs (Figure 11). This supports the statistics shown in Figure 10 above.

Figure 11 Most frequent comments about other wanted shops / services (Question 16)



Policy WPT11 Retail outlets and small businesses

Within the Conservation Area, the development of a wider range of retail outlets will be supported, provided that: the character and architectural heritage is respected and development is sympathetic to and in keeping with the height, scale and appearance of neighbouring properties and the street scene.

Outside the Conservation Area proposals for the development of small businesses including food shops will be supported but must be able to show that:

- there is access for commercial vehicles without passing through the village centre;
- there will be on-site servicing and delivery arrangements;
- the development will not generate unacceptable nuisance (noise, fumes, smells, light pollution or other disturbance) to neighbouring properties
- the Conservation Area, the setting of the historic core, the rural setting of the village and the key views will not be adversely impacted;
- responsibility is accepted, for dealing with litter, refuse and packing materials which are generated by the activities of the business, and there is a management plan for dealing with this.

6 Environment Policies

6.1 Local Green Space

Objective relating to Local Green Space

EO5 To maintain our green places and provide additional green spaces.

6.1.2 Planning context

The NPPF identifies three overarching objectives in sustainable development, and underlines their interdependence, so that the planning system needs to pursue these objectives ‘in mutually supportive ways’ (NPPF, paragraph 8). In this neighbourhood plan environment policy forms an integral part of the whole.

In our community consultation one of the most important issues was the demand for enhanced footpath and cycleway provision within the parish, and also linking Woolpit to Elmswell and the railway station (Community Consultation Summary Report, January 2017)¹⁰. Another pressing need is for better play facilities for young children, and recreational space for older children and teenagers. Other significant issues included protection for wildlife and green spaces.

While some of these matters may be addressed through community actions, planning policy also has a role to play. The NPPF considers that in promoting healthy communities, policy must be specific:

Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities ... and opportunities for new provision (paragraph 96);

Planning policies ... should protect and enhance public rights of way and access (paragraph 98);

The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them (paragraph 99).

Our Vision Statement aspires to ensuring that Woolpit benefits from ‘a diverse range of footpaths, cycle ways and roads’, and foresees investment in the village to keep us up to date with amenities demanded by residents, including ‘sporting facilities for all’.

6.1.3 Local Green Space designation

The NPPF sets out precise requirements for this designation:

100. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

¹⁰ When the A45 (now A14) bypass was built, two footpaths between the villages were severed.

A number of Woolpit's green spaces, which were designated as Visually Important Open Spaces in Mid Suffolk District Council's 1998 Local Plan, are carried over into this Neighbourhood Plan as Local Green Space (LGS) designations; they are listed below. The Sports Field and the Village Hall Playing Field have been omitted from the list in Policy WPT12, as it might prevent expansion of facilities such as the cricket pavilion. They come under a separate designation in Policy WPT13.

Other green spaces in the parish have been assessed according to the guidelines in NPPF paragraph 100. Some have been rejected; the remainder are also designated as LGS. A supporting document, *Local Green Space Assessments*, contains full details of each site.

Visually Important Open Spaces (VIOS - local designation in MSDC's 1998 Local Plan) are:

- St Mary's Churchyard
- Village Hall Playing Field
- Sports Field
- Lady's Well and enclosure
- Meadows within the Conservation Area between Elmswell Road and the Old Rectory
- Meadowlands meadow
- Wooded ridge and grassed area adjacent to Wrights Way and Lower Broom Road
- Grassed recreation space adjacent to Steeles Road



Figure 12 Lady's Well

Policy WPT12 Local Green Space

The green spaces listed below and identified on the Policies Map (Village Centre Inset Map), having been assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and found to meet those criteria, are to be designated Local Green Space. New development on designated Local Green Space will only be permitted in very special circumstances.

- St Mary's Churchyard
- Lady's Well and enclosure
- Meadows within the Conservation Area between Elmswell Road and the Old Rectory
- Meadowlands meadow
- Wooded ridge and grassed area adjacent to Wrights Way and Lower Broom Road
- Grassed recreation space adjacent to Steeles Road
- Baker's Piece
- Former allotments site adjacent to Rags Lane
- Millennium Garden
- Pump garden
- Mitre Close green space
- Briar Hill green space
- Land within the Conservation Area north of Monks Close
- Steeles Road garden
- Allotments adjacent to Warren Lane
- Graveyard behind The Room (White Elm Road)

6.2 Sports and Recreational Areas

- 6.2.1 The Sports Field and the Village Hall Playing Field, which are VIOS under MSDC's 1998 Local Plan, are not designated as Local Green Space, as noted above.

Policy WPT13 Sports and Recreational Areas (SRA)

The areas listed below, and identified on the Policies Map, make a vital contribution to the health and well-being of the community, and therefore development on any of these areas will not be permitted unless it can be shown that

- they are no longer used for sport or recreation, or;
- an equivalent or better replacement will be provided in a location which is at least as suitable and convenient; or
- the development will enhance the sports / recreational facilities on the site to meet community needs, the benefits clearly outweighing any loss.

Designated areas:

- Sports Field
- Village Hall Playing Field
- Woolpit School playing field

6.3 Areas of Special Landscape Quality

Objectives relating to Areas of Special Landscape Quality

- EO1 To maintain and enhance access to open countryside and ensure sustainable access to new housing developments by the creation of safe paths and cycle ways.
- EO3 To maintain existing 'important' views.
- EO4 To keep as much of our agricultural land as possible for agriculture, while encouraging biodiversity.

- 6.3.1 The same principles of access to the countryside, retaining and enhancing landscapes, visual amenity and sustaining biodiversity that apply to Green Belts (NPPF, paragraph 141) underpin environmental policy in a rural district just as they do in proximity to large urban areas. In seeking to comply with the principles enunciated in the NPPF, in particular providing 'a platform for local people to shape their surroundings' (paragraph 15), 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside' (paragraph 170 b), and 'conserving and enhancing the natural environment' (chapter 15, paragraphs 170-177), Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan carried out a Landscape Character Assessment of the parish, following an approved methodology. We also commissioned a landscape consultant, Alison Farmer Associates, to analyse and assess the landscape surrounding the village settlement. More informally, a survey was conducted to discover which were the most highly valued views in the parish, from a short list of twelve (some looking in towards the village and some looking out from the village) ¹¹.

6.3.2 **Areas previously designated as Special Landscape Areas**

Areas designated as Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) in Mid Suffolk District Council's 1998 Local Plan comprise all the woods in the east of the parish, to the east of Warren Lane—

¹¹ Supporting documents: *Landscape Character Appraisal*; *Landscape Appraisal*; *Key Views Survey*.

Wood Road—Borley Green; and the valley of the Black Bourn river in the north-west corner of the parish. These are carried over as Areas of Special Landscape Quality.

6.3.3 Areas identified in the Landscape Appraisal

Additionally, areas of land identified in the Landscape Appraisal as highly sensitive, providing a high quality rural setting to the village and a valued landscape — emphasized by a high ranking in the key views survey — are also so designated.

In the National Character Areas guidance planners are urged to ‘recognise the importance of conserving and enhancing the landscape and the sense of history’, encouraging local communities to identify locally valued landscape and improve the setting of settlements ‘through the allocation of new greenspace and woodland planting’.

The woodlands in the east of the parish contain designated County Wildlife Sites. Practically the whole of Woolpit Wood (south of the A14) is covered by one of these designations.

Woolpit’s Landscape Appraisal considers that the ‘small scale and intimate character’ of the Black Bourn valley renders it highly sensitive. The area has ‘high scenic quality’, and development is not recommended.

Bishop Karney Green and the westward-facing slopes south west of the village are also considered unsuitable for residential or commercial development as they provide

a high quality rural setting to the village of Woolpit and Woolpit Green as well as a valued landscape on the fringes of these settlements which is highly accessible. The open, elevated and sloping nature of this area means that it is visually sensitive when viewed from the west.

Footpaths and lanes through this area are popular with walkers; the Landscape Appraisal notes: ‘Recreation opportunities are valued and views to the church close to the urban edge bolster sense of place’; ‘Views ... westwards to the Windmills ... are also memorable’.



Figure 13 Drinkstone windmills

South of the village fields separate the main settlement from the hamlets of Woolpit Green and The Heath.

This area is highly sensitive due to its visual prominence located on open elevated land which forms a distinct ridge. It is also sensitive because of its role in reinforcing the gap between Woolpit, Woolpit Green and Woolpit Heath and in reinforcing the individual identity of these settlements ... As a result this landscape is not considered suitable for residential or commercial development.

Of the glebe land to the east of the village centre and immediately south east of Lady’s Well, the Landscape Appraisal’s assessment is that as well as providing an open rural setting to the Scheduled Ancient Monument, this area has an important function as part of the main gateway to Woolpit, with its views of the church. It also has historic

significance in separating the village core from the area of the former brickworks further east along Old Stowmarket Road.

Policy WPT14 Areas of Special Landscape Quality

Development proposals in areas of special landscape quality, as identified by the Landscape Character Appraisal and the Landscape Appraisal, and shown on the Policies Map, will only be permitted where, over and above any proposed mitigation of impacts, they

- protect and enhance the special qualities of the area; and
- are designed and sited so as to harmonise with the landscape setting.

The benefits of development proposals must demonstrably outweigh any adverse impacts and provide for appropriate replacement on site of any features lost, together with an ongoing management and maintenance plan.

The areas are marked on the Policies Map, and comprise:

- Woodland in the east of the parish, east of the line Warren Lane—Wood Road—Borley Green, north and south of the A14
- The valley of the Black Bourn river in the north-west corner of the parish
- Bishop Karney Green
- Westerly facing slopes south-west of Woolpit village, with views of Drinkstone Mills
- The land separating Woolpit village from the settlements of Woolpit Green and The Heath
- Glebe land north of Old Stowmarket Road

6.4 Settlement gaps and views

Objective relating to Settlement gaps and views

EO3 To maintain existing 'important' views.

- 6.4.1 Policy Policy WPT14 recognises the need for an appropriate balance to be drawn between any development needs and ensuring the most important visual qualities of the village and its setting are retained. It has a distinctive nucleated form separate from its surrounding hamlets.
- 6.4.2 Woolpit's settlement pattern is a series of hamlets connected by open countryside. Woolpit village can be described as a nucleated village due to the fairly dense cluster of housing in the centre, which opens out to open countryside to the northeast and southwest. This settlement pattern contributes significantly to the character of the village.
- 6.4.3 In the Landscape Appraisal commissioned from Alison Farmer Associates the guidelines include the protection of the settlement gaps between Woolpit and Woolpit Green and Woolpit Heath. Any new development should avoid ribbon development and the gradual urbanisation along rural lanes which visually intrudes/detracts from the tranquility and undeveloped character and remoteness.
- 6.4.4 Because Woolpit is located on a shoulder of elevated land above the Black Bourn stream, there are elevated views to the wider landscape from the edges of the settlement and especially from the settlement gateways. Similarly, the undulating nature of the landscape surrounding the village results in views across the river valleys and lower lying areas back to the village and its associated church landmark.

6.4.5 The location and orientation of key views both into and out from the village are listed in the Key Views assessment, a supplementary document.

6.4.6 Key features which contribute to sense of place and orientation have been identified and the majority are illustrated on Figure 14. They include the following:

- Woolpit Primary School bell tower
- St Mary's Church
- Drinkstone windmills
- Elmswell Church
- Village triangular marketplace
- Lady's Well
- Norton Wood
- The Warren and Woolpit Wood

Figure 14 Views and landmarks



Woolpit Primary School (bell tower)



St Mary's Church



Village triangular marketplace



Elmswell Church



Norton Wood



The Warren and Woolpit Wood

6.4.7 Views are critical in defining and reinforcing sense of place and local distinctiveness, connecting places where people live with the wider environment, providing opportunities to appreciate special qualities and connecting to local landmarks, which can aid orientation.

Policy WPT15 Settlement gaps and key views

In order to preserve the Key Views (as identified on the Policies Map) and visual qualities of the landscape, prevent encroachment onto the gaps between the settlements to retain their separate and distinctive identities, developments will only be permitted within identified areas if:

- they maintain the physical and/or visual separation of the settlements; and
- they safeguard the integrity of the gaps between settlements, either individually or in combination with other existing or proposed development;
- they retain the public visual amenity of the landscape setting; and
- defined Key Views will be protected.

6.5 Footpaths and cycleways

Objectives relating to Footpaths and cycleways

SO2 To maintain easy access to the village centre and reduce traffic congestion and the shortage of parking.

EO1 To maintain and enhance access to open countryside and ensure sustainable access to new housing developments by the creation of safe paths and cycle ways.

- 6.5.1 Our community consultation revealed unresolved concern about Traffic, Footpaths and Cycleways. Most of the comments focussed on road safety, parking, congestion in the village centre, volume of traffic and traffic speeds. Getting about the village for day to day purposes now carries risks that many regard as unacceptable, particularly at pinch points and along those stretches of highway where there is no, or only a very narrow, pavement. 8% of all comments made in the consultation related to the need for wider, safer, better maintained and better lit footpaths and pavements. It is not possible to walk safely along the road to Elmswell, nor is there any accessible public footpath to Elmswell over private land.
- 6.5.2 Although National Cycle route 51 passes through the village, the increased volume and general speed of traffic makes cycling, whether for recreational purposes or for getting about the village, risky. Questionnaire responders have suggested it is too risky to allow young children to cycle to school on the public highway or to the railway station at Elmswell.
- 6.5.3 The 12 principles of sustainable development include a demand that patterns of growth make fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. The NPPF requires our neighbourhood to support local development and to support any strategic development plans that may at some stage be contained in a Local Plan. The corollary of that support is delivery on all those principles, including ensuring safe passage along public highways and within the village for travellers by foot or cycle.

Policy WPT16 Footpaths and cycleways

In order to support the sustainability objectives of promoting walking and cycling and access to the countryside via the Public Rights of Way, larger new proposals (10 houses or more) will be required to provide linked or extended routes to existing footpaths and cycleways.

Proposals to reroute existing public rights of way as part of a development will be supported if they result in an enhanced route being obtained that will benefit the community.

Community Action – Pavements and footpaths

Objectives relating to this Community Action

SO2 To maintain easy access to the village centre and reduce traffic congestion and the shortage of parking.

EO1 To maintain and enhance access to open countryside and ensure sustainable access to new housing developments by the creation of safe paths and cycle ways.

A working party found that most pavements in Woolpit are approximately 1 metre in width, with some short stretches of less than 0.5 metres. These can be difficult and potentially dangerous for parents with pushchairs and small children, wheelchair users and users of mobility aids. We should aim to make our streets inclusive. Guidance in *A Manual for Streets* suggests pavements of at least 2 metres in residential areas and wider near schools and shops.

Several pavements were very overgrown; the questionnaire highlighted lack of maintenance.

We need to do something to make our streets feel safe and welcoming and to encourage more people to walk to school and to the shops. However, it is not realistic to widen all our pavements.

Actions

- Stretches of pavement less than 0.5 metres wide to be referred to SCC Highways.
- A regular maintenance scheme to be set up for foot/cycle paths.

Community Action – Cycle path to Elmswell

Objectives relating to this Community Action

EO1 To maintain and enhance access to open countryside and ensure sustainable access to new housing developments by the creation of safe paths and cycle ways.

EO2 To mitigate the impact of new development on climate change and encourage a low carbon economy.

80% of questionnaire respondents agree that a cycle path should be created between Woolpit and Elmswell. The land has been previously allocated for this. Currently cyclists use the Elmswell Road and pedestrians walk along the verge. This is the only non-vehicular access to Elmswell and the railway station and is becoming increasingly dangerous.

Action

- The cycle path to Elmswell to be expedited using any funding available.

Community Action – Pedestrian crossings and parking

Objectives relating to this Community Action

SO1 To improve the parking especially near the school and health centre.

SO2 To maintain easy access to the village centre and reduce traffic congestion and the shortage of parking.

The majority of respondents to the community questionnaire agreed that on street parking in the centre should continue. In through-traffic areas such as The Street this has a traffic calming effect, which is important from a road safety aspect. However, on-street parking affects visibility and can cause particular safety issues for children and for wheelchair users. Installing a simple raised pedestrian crossing at The Institute and possibly at the Co-op would make crossing the road much safer.

Parking can be a problem in the centre of the village. It would help greatly if one or two disabled parking spaces reserved for blue badge holders were created. Woolpit has an aging population and we should be catering for this.

Actions

- Install a simple raised pedestrian crossing at The Institute and possibly also at the Co-op.
- Create disabled parking spaces in the village centre, reserved for blue badge holders.

Community Action – Traffic speeds

Objectives relating to this Community Action

SO2 To maintain easy access to the village centre and reduce traffic congestion and the shortage of parking.

Concerns were raised about traffic speeds in the village centre. 81% of respondents to the community questionnaire agree that the speed limit in the village centre should be reduced to 20mph. There were similar concerns about safety on Heath Road where 83% consider that the speed limit should be reduced to 20 mph at key periods.

A 20 mph limit in Woolpit village would make our streets safer, encouraging pedestrians and cyclists, and also reducing traffic noise. It would help to give ownership back to residents of the community, and make our village fit for the demands of the 21st century.

Action

- Options on the extent of the 20 mph speed limit area to be studied, and a 20 mph limit instituted in Woolpit village.

6.6 Public charging points for electric vehicles

Objectives relating to Public charging points for electric vehicles

SO1 To improve the parking especially near the school and health centre.

SO6 To encourage investment in infrastructure and services in line with housing growth.

EO2 To mitigate the impact of new development on climate change and encourage a low carbon economy.

- 6.6.1 While the development of electric powered vehicles is still at an early stage, it is gathering momentum. The Government seeks to ban the sale of new fossil fuelled vehicles by 2040. All major car manufacturers are developing the technology to produce electric and hybrid vehicles. This requires a visionary approach to developing an infrastructure to support the technological change.
- 6.6.2 There is as yet no national guidance on the ratio of electric vehicle charging points (EVCPs) to total parking spaces, but the distinction between active and passive provision is widely recognised. A research paper for Parliament anticipates a 10-fold increase in public EVCPs by 2030.
- 6.6.3 Retrospective installation of cables is costly and disruptive. Therefore, proposals which include the provision of public car parking will only be considered where they provide passive and active electric charging infrastructure in line with the Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan policy.

Policy WPT17 Public charging points for electric vehicles

Where development proposals include car parking spaces for use by the general public, passive provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure (ie underlying infrastructure meeting current best practice, which enables simple installation and activation of charging points at a later date) is required for 20% of all spaces. Parking spaces equipped with activated charging points for electric vehicles (EVCPs) must be provided at a ratio of at least 1 per 20 spaces, and not less than 1 per car park.

7 Design Policies

7.1 Design

Objectives relating to Design

- SO4 To embrace the development of new homes but at steady rate so integration can keep pace for the benefit of the whole village.
- SO5 To regulate housing development so that it responds to housing needs and provides a high quality built environment.
- SO6 To encourage investment in infrastructure and services in line with housing growth.
- BO3 To encourage the maintenance of a responsive and competitive business community.
- BO4 To become a sustainable, cohesive and thriving community supporting a high standard of living for its residents.
- EO2 To mitigate the impact of new development on climate change and encourage a low carbon economy.
- EO3 To maintain existing 'important' views.
- EO4 To keep as much of our agricultural land as possible for agriculture, while encouraging biodiversity.
- EO5 To maintain our green places and provide additional green spaces.
- EO6 To support new development which contributes positively to Woolpit's historic buildings, its rural village character and not becoming a town.

7.1.1 General design

While the definition of what is an affordable home continues to evolve, the principle that those living in such homes should feel welcome and well integrated is an unchanging requirement for an inclusive and sustainable community. In proposals for 10 or more dwellings, affordable homes should be well mixed in (probably in small groups) with market-price dwellings, and not isolated in a discrete part of the development.

For sustainability and a reasonable quality of life, the internal space of dwellings should conform to nationally-recognised minimum standards. Shortcomings in this area tend to be more common in smaller – and therefore generally cheaper – properties, so affordable homes are particularly susceptible to poor design in this respect.

7.1.2 Sustaining / enhancing the quality of the environment

It is inevitable that new development will involve changes to the character of parts of the village. These should not result in the loss of amenity for residents of those areas, to the extent that they suffer a lower quality of life. Nuisance to nearby residents deriving from noise, fumes or smells, light pollution and other disturbances should not be a permanent result of any new development.

Equally, given the rural setting and character of Woolpit, and the irreplaceable nature of its historical assets, development proposals should explore to the maximum the potential for mitigation of visual impacts on the rural setting of the village, with due attention to the guidelines contained in the Landscape Appraisal. Adverse impacts on the Conservation Area and its setting are to be avoided at all cost. Where it is possible and practical to do so, opportunities to enhance the environment should be taken up, again with due regard to the recommendations of the Landscape Appraisal.

7.1.3 **Telecommunications infrastructure**

Good telecommunications are an important element in any sustainable development. They allow firms operating from commercial premises in the village to carry on their business with the minimum use of existing road and rail connections. High-speed broadband is nowadays considered indispensable for business. There are existing high-speed broadband connections within the village and these will be extended as local demand increases. Fibre optic cable is the most resilient carrier of digital signals and all new commercial development should include the necessary electronic infrastructure for fibre optic cable, and new residential development should also include a provision for fibre optic connectivity between individual houses and the nearest BT hub.

7.1.4 **Green spaces and Landscaping**

In order to sustain Woolpit's rural setting, environment, biodiversity and public visual amenity, important woodland, ancient hedgerows, ponds and watercourses, trees and all existing features of biodiversity value are to be retained and protected.

The Conservation Area Appraisal (2012) recognised the open green spaces of value to the village, including the area around the churchyard, the playing fields and Palgrave's meadow.

The Landscape Appraisal points out: 'The village has historically developed on land between the 60m and 65m contour. Below the 60m contour are the valley sides of the Black Bourn. Where development has extended onto the valley slopes as at Mitre Close it is highly visible. Similarly where development has extended onto higher land above the 65m metre contour it is also highly visible and seen breaking the skyline. Here the urban/rural interface is not characteristic and is often harsh. This presents opportunities for enhancement when considering future developments.'

7.1.5 **Renewable energy**

The benefits of small scale renewable energy projects such as solar panels on roofs are recognized. Where these are non intrusive and provide no harmful impact on the environment they will be supported.

Planning applications for larger scale renewable energy projects, such as wind turbines, should require as a minimum an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Consideration must be given to location, scale, form, design and materials to ensure compatibility with the local environment. Any proposal which has an adverse impact on the landscape, heritage or residential amenity will be resisted.

7.1.6 Protection of roofscape

A roofscape should reflect that of adjacent buildings and its impact on the dominant roofscape and have an aesthetic appeal with variations providing visual interest. The skyline and roofscape of Woolpit are dominated by views of St. Mary's Church (Grade 1 listed) with its 19th Century Spire, which is floodlit at night and can be seen from many parts of the village and the A14. It therefore plays a key role in defining the village. Pevsner described the spire as a 'conspicuous spire of 1854 perhaps more at home in the Nene Valley than Suffolk' (Woolpit Conservation Area Appraisal). Allan Jobson (Suffolk Villages 1971) described St. Mary's as the Glory of Woolpit. The tower spire added in the 1850s by architect Richard Phipson replaced a medieval original damaged by lightning.

The roofscape of the Conservation Area exhibits a wide mix of traditional roofing materials, slate, tile and a few thatch e.g. Pepys House and Monks Close. The prevalent roofing materials are clay pantile (red and black glazed variety), plain tile and natural slate. It is important to protect this historical legacy and roofing of any new build should be selected from the range of regional materials characteristic of Mid Suffolk. The roof of a rural building should be darker than the wall in order to help make the building appear smaller in scale, with darker materials for the roof unless using a natural clay pan or plain tile. The roofscape of any new build should reflect the adjacent roofscape of existing buildings so as not to impact upon them. Artificial materials should be avoided.

To maintain and protect the built roofscape environment consideration needs to be given to the placing of overhead wires. The wires in the centre of the village, which falls within the Conservation Area, were placed underground late 20th century. Overhead wires remain in situ from Little Spinners across to the Bull public house and westward along the Bury Road, and from Mill Lane south towards Green Road.

Planning permission is required to install satellite dishes and solar panels (except on roofs) within the Conservation Area, and listed building consent is needed for an installation on a listed building. They should be carefully located and visually unobtrusive. However, there are a number of existing television aerials located within the roofscape of the medieval centre of the village and there are solar panels on the roof of the rectory.

At present there is a low level of lighting within the Conservation Area, with some areas with no street lighting (as in Rectory Lane and Masons Lane) thus maintaining a dark sky in some roads. Any future building development must take into consideration the impact on the dark skies character of the countryside. The minimum level of exterior lighting required should be used in addition to full cut off lighting to eliminate sky glow. LED directional light should be used to control light spillage (Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Landscape Guidance 2015, paragraph 2.2.1).

Policy WPT18 Design

Affordable homes

Affordable homes are to be well integrated with and not segregated from open market homes on the same site.

Space standards

The gross internal floor space prescribed in the Nationally Described Space Standard shall apply to all dwellings whether or not that standard has been formally adopted by the Local Authority.

Location

The location and design of developments should be such as to achieve:

- avoidance of nuisance (from noise, fumes, smells, light pollution or other disturbance) to neighbouring properties;
- mitigation of visual impacts on rural setting of the village consistent with the recommendations of the Landscape Appraisal;
- no adverse impacts on the Conservation Area or its setting;
- enhancement of the environment consistent with the recommendations of the Landscape Appraisal.

Telecommunications

All proposals are required to show that broadband provision and the associated infrastructure to meet the foreseeable needs of the site form part of the proposal.

Green space and landscaping

All developments must follow the *Management and Development Guidelines* in the Landscape Appraisal (reproduced in Appendix). For the site allocations in this Plan, and for other large proposals (10 or more houses), a landscape strategy shall be submitted, including:

- a biodiversity assessment;
- an appraisal of both near and distant views of the proposed development from principal public vantage points, showing existing landscaping and that proposed to be established after 10 years;
- details of how areas to be retained as open space and/or woodland will be managed in the future.

Renewable energy

Renewable energy projects will be supported where they are located to avoid adverse impacts on the visual or environmental qualities of Local Green Spaces or other public recreational areas, areas of special environmental and landscape value (see Policies Policy WPT12, Policy WPT13 and Policy WPT14), or the historic core of the village.

Roofscape

Proposals to erect solar panels, satellite dishes, and aerials within the Conservation Area will be supported provided that they do not harm

- the historic setting of Woolpit;
- the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, including the setting of nearby listed buildings;
- defined key views into or out of the village.

7.2 Design and Character

Objectives relating to Design and Character

- S05 To regulate housing development so that it responds to housing needs and provides a high quality built environment.
- EO3 To maintain existing important views.
- EO6 To support new development which contributes positively to Woolpit's historic buildings, its rural village character and not becoming a town.

7.2.2 Materials

Most of the grade II listed building are timber framed many of which have been refaced with brick, e.g. the Swan Inn and Woolpit Institute. Others retain their timber framing in its exposed state, e.g. Weaver House. Some of the older buildings have been refaced in the 19th Century with Suffolk Whites from the famous Woolpit brickworks. Timber weatherboarding can be seen in some buildings. It is evident on the old Post Office as well as on several outbuildings. Many of the older buildings and some of the newer ones have been rendered and painted in a variety of colours typical of Suffolk design.

Roofing materials vary with the steeper roofs having red pantiles, less sloping roofs have slate and some of the Georgianised properties now have newer roofs in slate or pantiles. There are also some thatch roofs. The jumble of roofs, dormers and chimneys with different materials, pitches and details gives a rich and interesting roof line from many viewpoints.

7.2.3 Heritage and character

The importance of the heritage of Woolpit is a very prominent message in our Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statement. Woolpit in 2036: *The historic character of the village has been preserved and can be enjoyed by everyone ... Careful design of new buildings has ensured that not only does their character and density complement the village but they integrate new residents with old and maintain a mixed community.*

The community questionnaire asked how important ten criteria are. This table shows the six criteria rated essential by more than 50% and essential or very important by over 85% of respondents.

Criteria	Essential	Very important	Fairly important	Not at all important
Woolpit should remain a village	76.7%	17.1%	5.2%	1.0%
Protect the historic heritage and Woolpit's village character	72.4%	22.2%	4.8%	0.6%
Protect the landscape setting of the parish	61.4%	30.0%	8.1%	0.6%
Improve safety on roads cycle paths and footpaths	55.3%	30.0%	12.8%	1.9%
Protect and enhance the biodiversity of the parish	53.8%	32.2%	12.2%	1.8%
A high quality healthy lifestyle for the community	52.8%	36.0%	10.5%	0.6%

'Adequate access to key services' was also considered essential or very important by over 85% of respondents. These findings were largely supported by additional comments which can be found on page 8 of the Questionnaire Analysis.

These comments show that people living and working locally understand and support the need to maintain the vitality of the community while retaining local identity and enhancing the overall quality of life in Woolpit.

Woolpit is a dynamic village and the need for new development is recognised and welcomed so long as it contributes positively to the character in its immediate vicinity and does not detract from the distinctive nature of the historic centre in line with MSDC Core Strategy Focused Review Policy FC1.1: 'proposals for development must conserve and enhance the local character of the different parts of the district.'

It is clear that the community cherishes the village character of Woolpit and appreciates clearly the key qualities. Proposers of major developments (over 10 houses) should therefore seek to actively engage in consultation with the community and Parish Council. An expanded development brief with a public exhibition before the planning application is submitted would generally result in greater support from the village.

7.2.4 Design for sustainable development

All major development proposals should be accompanied by a Townscape Impact Assessment, a Landscape Visual Impact Statement and where heritage assets are affected, a Heritage Statement.

The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review policy FC1.1 requires that development proposals demonstrate the principals of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan recognises the value of this policy.

The design of all new buildings must use the best design principles of their time so that the rich and varied character of Woolpit will be continued into the future. This would create the kind of surroundings in which residents will thrive.

Policy WPT19 Design and Character

All development proposals including industrial units will be expected to preserve and enhance Woolpit's unique character:

- Within the Conservation Area Woolpit's architectural heritage should be recognised and taken into account in the choice of materials, height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation and design.
- Outside the Conservation Area development should contribute to the street scene so that choice of materials is sympathetic to the surrounding properties and height and scale is in keeping with the neighbouring buildings
- All development should retain and where possible enhance green areas including trees and hedges, or restore local landscape structure through provision of alternative green spaces and appropriate planting.
- When designing the layout of housing development schemes developers should ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to provide easy integration into the village and safe access to key services.

Proposals should address climate change through sustainable design, adaptation and mitigation. Proposers of major developments (over 10 houses) should consult with the Parish Council and the community.

Appendices

List of Abbreviations

AECOM	Architecture, Engineering, Consulting, Operations, and Maintenance
ASLQ	Area of Special Landscape Quality
BMSDC	Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council
BO(1,2,3 ...)	Business Objective (1,2,3 ...)
CAS	Community Action Suffolk
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
EO(1,2,3 ...)	Environmental Objective (1,2,3 ...)
EVCP	Electric Vehicle Charging Point
LED	Light Emitting Diode
LGS	Local Green Space
MSDC	Mid Suffolk District Council
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONS	Office for National Statistics
SCC	Suffolk County Council
SHELAA	Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SLA	Special Landscape Area
SO(1,2,3 ...)	Social Objective (1,2,3 ...)
SRA	Sport and Recreational Area
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
VIOS	Visually Important Open Space
WNP	Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan

Glossary

Lifetime occupation

The Lifetime Homes Standard lists 16 criteria for good housing design features to maximise utility, independence and quality of life, while not compromising other design issues. Such designs will meet the needs of a wide range of households, e.g. families with pushchairs, and some wheelchair users, without the need for substantial alterations.

Private Ownership

One comment made in response to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire suggested McCarthy and Stone style accommodation for older people. This company advertises that it has been providing apartments in prime locations for over 40 years, to suit all lifestyles and stages of retirement, designed to make living easier and to a high standard. They advertise that their Retirement Living provides a safe secure environment, camera entry system, 24-hour emergency call centre, and thoughtful features such as raised ovens to save from bending. Retirement Living Plus offers more support such as in-house catering. This type of retirement property promotes social inclusion and independence whilst enabling person-centred care and communal friendship.

Independent Living for Older People

One example of this type of housing provision in Suffolk is Rye Terrace, Wangford Road in Reydon, which is being advertised by Orwell Housing. These two-bedroomed bungalows are available to those over 55, with priority being given to people with a local connection to Reydon and the surrounding area. These properties are built to enable the continuation of independent living with support available if needed. Orwell Housing advertises two prices: the full price for sale, or for share at 75% of the full market value.

Extra care housing can be a home for life, and a viable alternative to residential care, bringing about an improvement in health and wellbeing where on-site health and care are provided.

Very sheltered housing offers 24-hour care and support on site, for vulnerable people aged over 55 who are in need of at least 4 hours of personal care per week (this requires a Community Care Assessment by Adult Care Services – Local Authority ownership or Housing Association). In the not-for-profit sector Anchor provides purpose-built properties for rent, for people aged over 55, and care for older people.

Sheltered Housing schemes can be either indoor, where tenants' front doors open onto a corridor inside the building, or an outdoor scheme where the doors open onto the street. Most are single-bed, some two-bed and disabled adapted properties.

Supported Housing is where you live as a tenant and get support to live there. The Government published its future model to support systems of supported housing at the end of October 2017, in response to the white paper *Fixing Our Broken Housing Market*.

Nursing homes are for people who require nursing and end of life care.

Residential care homes are for older people who cannot remain safely in their own homes and carry out essential daily living tasks that also cannot be met by carers and/or homecare.

Landscape Appraisal Summary of Findings

7 Summary of Findings

7.1 Special Qualities to Conserve and Enhance

7.1.1 The following conclusions can be reached as to the special qualities of Woolpit and its setting which, wherever possible, should be retained and enhanced. Special qualities include:

- The intact form and fabric of the historic core of Woolpit village which reflects its early layout centered on the triangular market place;
- The position of the village on higher land overlooking the valley and tributary of the Black Brook;
- The distinctive orientation and relationship of buildings around the market place;
- The small scale street pattern comprising the main routes and back streets which interconnect and provide permeability through the historic core;
- Village edges are predominately indented and organic in character;
- Sense of separation between Woolpit village and former brickworks and rural hamlets which retain their individual identity;
- Distinctive spire of Woolpit church and tower of Elmswell church located close to the edges of each settlement;
- Visual connectivity from existing edges of Woolpit across lower lying land and to skyline woodland and built landmarks, reinforce sense of place;
- Gateways into the village remain close to the historic core, reinforcing perceptions of its small scale rural village character;

7.2 Changes to Avoid

7.2.1 This detailed analysis has noted some changes which have resulted in loss of the distinctive qualities of the village. It is useful to highlight these as it may inform decisions regarding any future development or environmental initiatives/management of the village setting.

- Development on visually prominent land to the south of the village above the 65m contour;
- Development which extends below the 50m contour onto the lower valley sides;
- Use of inappropriate building materials and building forms;
- Urban and engineered road layouts which do not reflect the existing hierarchy of routes;
- Cul-de-sac road layouts;
- High density and abrupt urban edges;
- Positioning new development behind existing rural lanes such that there is a poor relationship between historic routes and new development;
- Potential loss of key views to surrounding landmarks affecting visual and physical connectivity between the village and wider landscape;
- Loss of hedgerows and woodland;
- Loss of meadows close to watercourses and conversion to arable use.

7.3 Management and Development Guidelines

7.3.1 The following management and development guidelines have been identified as a result of this detailed settlement and landscape analysis. These guidelines are provided to

inform land management decisions, inspire local community initiatives and to inform the development of proposals by developers and to assist decision makers.

7.3.2 Management guidelines seek to reinforce local character and improve legibility. They include:

- Soften existing hard urban edges with planting where development is visually intrusive;
- Open up views to churches so they act as stronger landmarks and visually/physically connecting areas of open space;
- Create new woodland (possibly community woodland or woodland used as forest school) east of Heath Road, increasing capacity for development and reducing visual effects of existing urban edges;
- Improve pastures associated with watercourses;
- Reinststate hedgerows especially on the valley slopes conserving landscape character and scenic qualities;
- Ensure new gateways enhance sense of arrival through integration of open space, planting and creation of vistas to landmarks;
- Seek opportunities to restore areas of pasture from arable especially where they occur close to the urban edge;
- Conserve and enhance the setting of Our Lady's Well scheduled monument;
- Manage areas of ancient woodland using traditional woodland management techniques including the reintroduction of coppicing where appropriate;
- Seek to minimise the impacts of close board fencing and other curtilage treatment on rural lanes e.g. Broomhill Lane;
- Seek opportunities for the creation of orchards associated with the fringes of settlement particularly on higher slopes between Woolpit and Woolpit Green;
- Reduce visual clutter which may arise from pony paddocks;
- Undertake a detailed hedgerow, tree and woodland survey to identify recent and ancient plantings and the coincidence between species mix and soil type in order to inform any hedge/tree restoration and management work;
- Seek opportunities to reduce noise and visual impact of traffic on the A14 through additional planting and reinstatement of landscape structure where field boundaries have been lost;
- Seek opportunities to fell and replant areas of conifer plantation with native woodland species such as oak;
- Seek opportunities to redesign and enhance the public realm through changes to road layouts and signage, enhancing the street scene, gateways and reducing traffic speeds and congestion.

7.3.3 Development guidelines seek to inform new development and include:

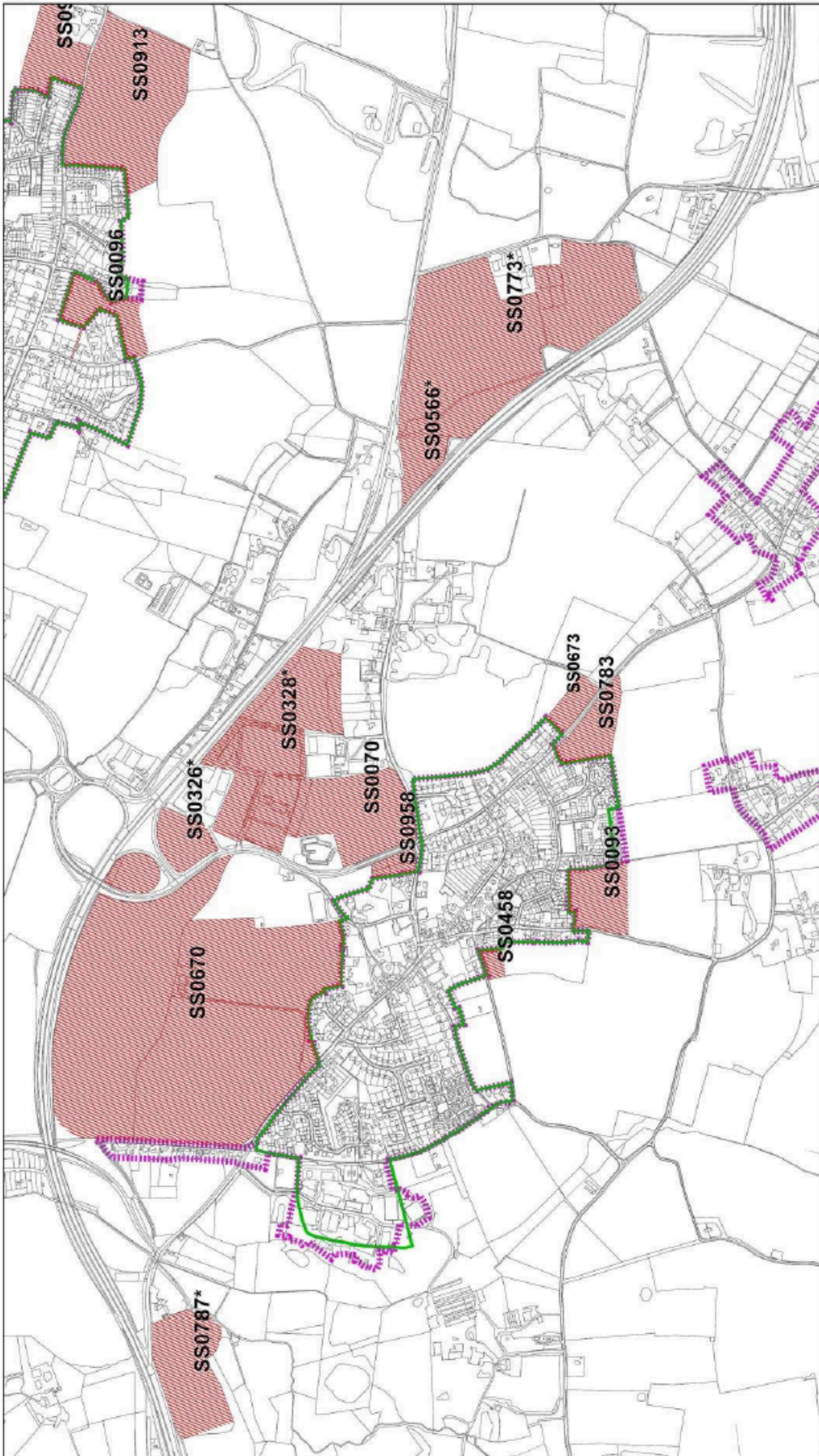
- Ensure Woolpit continues to be perceived as a ridge settlement overlooking the Black Bourne valley and avoid expansion onto lower slopes or higher land which can undermine these perceptions and sense of place;
- Avoid cumulative effects of small housing schemes which collectively, over time, extend the urban edge and relate poorly to one another – seek wider masterplans and visions for broader areas linking in aspirations for open space, reinforcement of rural landscape setting, views and vistas, public rights of way/circular countryside walks and recreation;

- Ensure permeability through new housing areas, connecting any new development into the heart of the existing settlement and avoid cul de sac development wherever possible;
- Ensure that new development is sensitively located and avoids adverse impacts on the setting of landmark buildings and historic landscape patterns;
- Retain a sense of separation between commercial activity and the historic settlement of Woolpit;
- Ensure new development faces onto existing lanes/roads retaining a rural character and creating cross streets or new back streets in keeping with the settlement's hierarchy of routes;
- Avoid new development within the valley floor and on the valley sides which visually intrudes/detracts from the tranquillity, and intimate character;
- Retain open valley slopes visible from the southwest and ensure agricultural land is retained between the urban edge and A14;
- Avoid the development of roundabouts at road junctions which are uncharacteristic and undermine the rural 'village' character of the settlement;
- Seek opportunities to improve access and interpretation of the brick pit industry and biodiversity legacy it has provided.
- Protect rural lanes from verge erosion caused by increased traffic.

7.4 Conclusions

- 7.4.1 In conclusion this assessment has revealed that Woolpit has capacity to accommodate appropriately designed residential and commercial development. To ensure a good fit between new and old it is important that any new development seeks to conserve and enhance the character of the existing settlement in terms of urban form as well as character. The settlement has a number of sensitivities related to its special qualities and as a result opportunities for development tend to be small scale. The future growth of Woolpit should therefore comprise a number of small to modest scale developments rather than a single or couple of large scale schemes.

Potential sites for housing in the draft SHELAA (August 2017)



Woolpit



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List of supporting documents

Document	Source	Published
2011 Census Profile – Woolpit	Suffolk Observatory	
Conservation Area Appraisal	MSDC	June 2012
Woolpit Housing Needs Survey Report	CAS	July 2015
Suffolk Rural Services Report 2015-16	CAS	2016
Woolpit Socio-Economic Profile	MSDC	January 2016
SWOT Analysis	WNP	June 2016
Community Consultation Summary Report	WNP	January 2017
Landscape Character Appraisal	WNP	January 2017
Woolpit Rural Parish Profile	CAS	February 2017
Woolpit Rural Place Profile	CAS	February 2017
Report on Woolpit Businesses	WNP	March 2017
Aims and Objectives	WNP	April 2017
Key Views	WNP	May 2017
Key Views Survey Analysis	WNP	June 2017
Questionnaire	WNP	June 2017
Questionnaire Analysis	WNP	December 2017
Landscape Appraisal	Alison Farmer & Associates	March 2018
Local Green Spaces Appraisal	WNP	April 2018
Site Assessment Report	AECOM	November 2018

Maps

