

Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan

Supporting Document 10 - Traffic and Transport

1. A key issue for many neighbourhood planning groups and the area for which they are preparing planning policies, is that of transport. Concern was expressed by parishioners in the initial consultation about the level of traffic in the Parish, particularly in the Cross Street/Heckfield Green and Green Street/Low Street areas, and the impact development would have on future traffic issues.
2. However, some transport issues fall into the scope of the planning policies the NDP can influence and some that it cannot. So, in some instances, transport matters are relevant and in some they are not. It is quite confusing and perplexing when a NDP is recommending development in a certain location and, clearly, infrastructure issues arise from that development, that these issues cannot be addressed by the NDP.
3. "Transport" is not just about vehicular traffic and parking, but also about public transport, pedestrian facilities, cycling and other modes of travel. Indeed, in theory at least, a balanced range of transport options is a key element in making places such as Hoxne sustainable. In assessing the "transport" issue it is important for the NDP to differentiate between planning and non-planning aspects of transport and how the NDP policies can address them.
4. Some examples of transport considerations relevant to planning include:
 - Ensuring new development has adequate parking and servicing provision. This could include car parking, cycle storage and delivery areas for commercial development.
 - Making sure the layout of development allows for pedestrian convenience and safety.
 - Ensuring development includes cycle paths.
 - Creating easy pedestrian access to public transport facilities in terms of direct and convenient connections.
 - Considering whether access arrangements to a site, existing or proposed, are adequate.
 - Making sure that local transport capacity is adequate to serve development. This could include consideration of highway capacity, train services, bus services and other modes of transport.
5. However, traffic matters that fall outside the scope of NDP planning policies. Examples of these are changes to traffic management on existing transport networks which are usually a matter for the highways authority to deal with. So changes to speed limits, signage and points and other traffic management devices fall outside the scope of plan making.
6. Confusion can set in where a new development would impact on existing networks, and this necessitates changes to those networks in order to accommodate such development. However, even in cases like these, a neighbourhood plan cannot be prescriptive about the actual solution and therefore cannot set out, for example, changes to the speed limit or specific highway improvements.

7. It is however possible for an NDP to highlight localised traffic capacity and safety issues, or infrastructure deficiencies that would need to be addressed when considering development proposals. It is then for the local planning authority (LPA) to assess development proposals submitted for planning permission and to decide whether it would be necessary to impose conditions or a Section 106 obligation in order to approve the scheme. It is also possible for the Neighbourhood Plan to include community policies which do not form part of the Development Plan and therefore have less force but nevertheless may also be able to influence decision making.

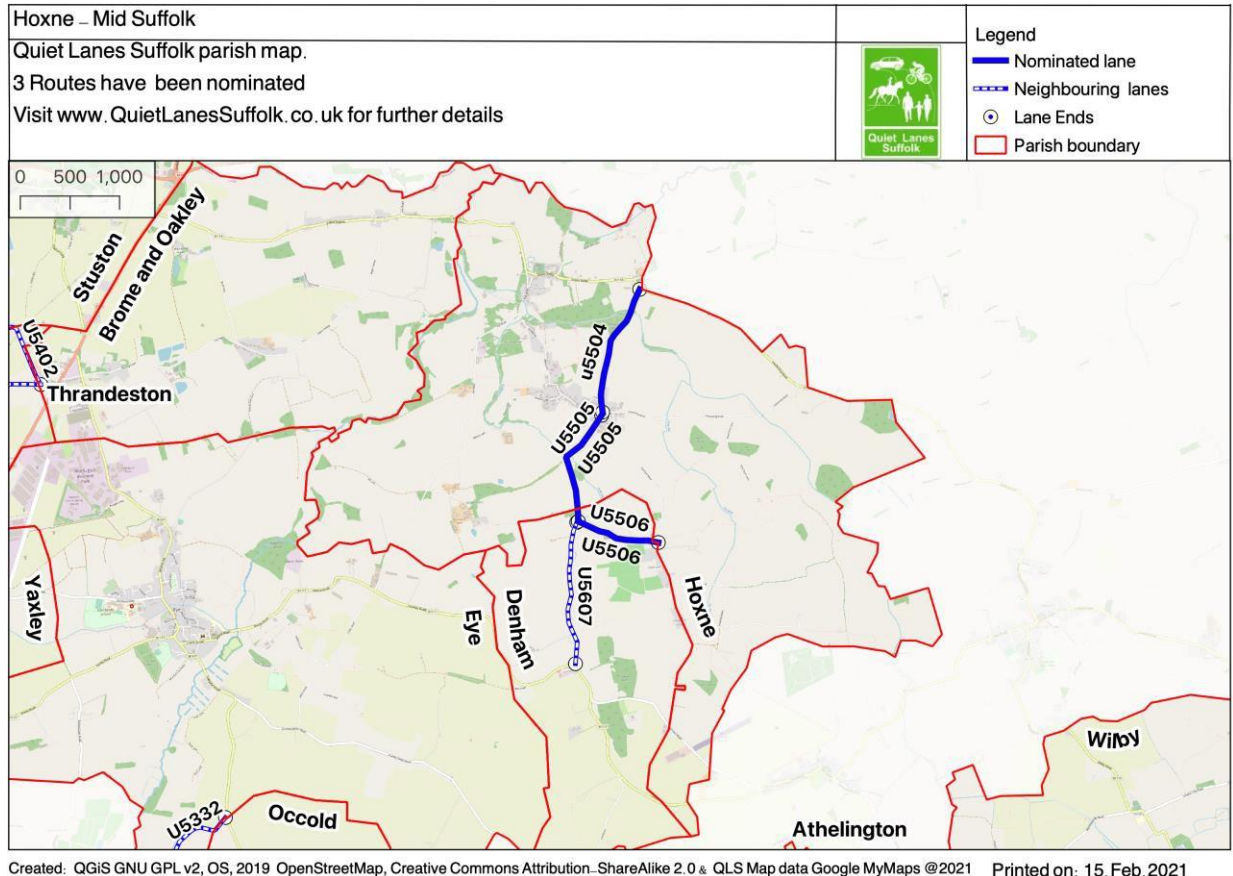
Development Plan Policies

8. The Hoxne NDP can achieve some traffic and pedestrian improvements through the housing development allocations at Denham Low Road and Shreeves Farm sites allocated in the Plan are:
- That the re-development of Shreeves Farm makes suitable provision that allow pedestrians and cyclists safe routes and easy access to the wider village. The only point on the site which achieves this is between the Barn and Castle Farm and will allow access to the opposite footpath that runs on the other side of the Denham Low Road.
 - The development of Shreeves Farm should also make suitable provision for a safe route for pedestrian to access the Denham Low Road footpath access.
 - Both sites provide an opportunity to improve pedestrian safety around St Edmunds Primary School. Shreeves Farm should provide an area for parking for school staff and Denham Low Road should provide an improved access to the playing field, a new footpath joining the site to Cross Street, a footpath outside the school and a Denham Low Road/Cross Street junction improvement.

Community Policies

9. Community Policies in the Plan should support continued efforts to introduce traffic calming in and around the village and the introduction of quiet lanes in the Parish.
10. Over recent years, the Parish Council has contributed to traffic calming on the B1118 and on the junction of Low Street and Goldbrook. The PC is aware of the concerns of residents for both speeding traffic and the volume of HGVs passing through the village. The PC deploys a vehicle activated speed warning sign at four locations in the village. Not only does this serve to educate drivers on their speed and slow traffic speeds, it also provides valuable data to support further measures. The PC is committed to exploring solutions to these problems and regularly liaising with both Suffolk Highways and Suffolk Police to consider schemes including speed limits, traffic calming build outs, improved warning signage, vehicle-activated speed limit signs and enforcement measures.
11. Hoxne Parish Council, in conjunction with Denham Parish Council, is exploring the opportunities to designate certain rural lanes in our village as “Quiet Lanes” as part of a county wide project. Quiet Lanes are a nationally recognised designation and are intended for shared use by walkers, horse riders, cyclists and other road users. They encourage drivers to **‘Expect and Respect’** more vulnerable road users and so allow non-motorised users to enjoy rural lanes in greater safety. This type of lane does not impose traffic restrictions and is not enforced. Advisory signs are placed at either end of Quiet Lanes to show motorised users clearly that the road is a shared space.

12. The lanes being considered are already used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders and link with existing footpaths and bridleways in the village. They also join Hoxne and Denham and will support walking routes between and around both Villages. In conjunction with Suffolk County Council (Highways), Denham Low Road (to the Hoxne Primary School via Clink Hill) and Wittons Lane are being considered for Quiet Lane designation.



Public Rights of Way

13. Hoxne has a notable network of Public Rights of Way which should be retained and enhanced whenever possible – see figure below. All new housing developments should have, where reasonably possible, new footpath and/or bridleway connections created, linking to the existing right of way network surrounding the village. Other strategies support this ambition. This includes Suffolk County Council’s Green Access Strategy (2020-2030)¹. This strategy sets out the County Council’s commitment to enhance public rights of way, including new linkages and upgrading routes where there is a need. The strategy also seeks to improve access for all and to support healthy and sustainable access between communities and services through development funding and partnership working. A policy has been added to the Plan to support improvements to Public Rights of Way.

¹ <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/imported/suffolk-green-access-strategy-2020-2030.pdf>