



Referendum Plan
Winter 2021/22

Laxfield

Neighbourhood Plan
2018 - 2036

Foreword

The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan, which can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood Plans, when complete, become part of the legal planning policy framework for the designated area. Parish councils are encouraged to produce their own Neighbourhood plans enabling local people to have a say in how their area grows and develops.

The Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by a team of Parish Councillors and volunteers. It was subject to public consultation between 22nd February 2020 to Monday 6th April 2020 (inclusive). Following that consultation, amendments were made in response to comments received before it was submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council for further consultation and then examination by an independent examiner.

The examiner required some amendments to the Plan and these, together with updates, have been made and Mid Suffolk District Council have approved the Plan for referendum. Residents will now have the opportunity to vote on whether the Plan should be used by Mid Suffolk District Council when deciding planning applications.

The Plan focuses on planning related matters of particular significance to Laxfield and provides the village with greater opportunities than ever before to influence change and development within our area. In addition, it includes “community actions” to address concerns and ideas that have emerged through community engagement and discussions with residents.

Laxfield Neighbourhood Planning Team

Cllr Sue Innes (chair), John Worthington, Cllr David Alchin, Candida Wingate, Emma Gray. The late Cllrs Ian Williams and Barry Cable were on the Team prior to their untimely deaths. Previous members of the Team, to whom we are indebted for their enthusiasm, support and advice, include Ian Pettitt, Adam Fairbrother, Jo Lofthouse, Quentin Cowen and Sue Gleave.

We are also most grateful to the Parish Council for their support, in particular Cllrs Tony Oakes, Andy Peachey and Lisa Auchterlonie.

The Team would also like to thank Ian Poole, our consultant from Places4People Planning Consultancy, for guiding us along the road towards achieving this Plan; his advice, experience and practical skills have been invaluable.

The Planning Team is small - but the warmth and support of the community is huge and we could not have achieved this Plan without the dedication and hard work of supporters who have helped with everything from distributing surveys and baking cakes to attending consultations and responding to on line surveys.

CONTENTS

1. About Laxfield	6
2. Why develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Laxfield?	7
3. Laxfield Today	11
4. Key Issues	12
5. Context from National and Local Planning Policy	16
6. LAXFIELD 2036	19
7. Settlement Pattern and Spatial Policy	20
8. Housing Demand and Development Opportunities	23
9. Built Environment and Design	31
10. Natural Environment	44
11. Amenities and Services	49
12. Businesses, Employment and Makers	55
13. Transport, Infrastructure and Distribution Links	58
14. Implementation and Monitoring	62
Policies Map	63
Village Centre Inset Map	64
Appendix 1 - Listed Buildings	65
Appendix 2 - Buildings of Local Significance	66
Appendix 3 - Outstanding Residential Planning Permissions	67
Appendix 4 - Landscape Appraisal	69
Glossary	70

POLICIES

Policy LAX 1 - Spatial Strategy for Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan Area	22
Policy LAX 2 - Housing Development	26
Policy LAX 3 - Land off Cullingford Close	28
Policy LAX 4 - Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites	29
Policy LAX 5 - Housing Mix	30
Policy LAX 6 - Buildings of Local Significance	38
Policy LAX 7 - Heritage Assets	39
Policy LAX 8 - Dark Skies	40
Policy LAX 9 - Design Considerations	41
Policy LAX 10 - Sustainable Construction Practices	43
Policy LAX 11 - Protection of Landscape Setting of Laxfield	46
Policy LAX 12 - Biodiversity	47
Policy LAX 13 - Local Green Spaces	48
Policy LAX 14 - Protecting Existing Services and Facilities	52
Policy LAX 15 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities	53
Policy LAX 16 - New Businesses and Employment	56
Policy LAX 17 - Farm Diversification	57
Policy LAX 18 - Public Rights of Way	60

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Community Action 1 - Community Land Trust	30
Community Action 2 - Guildhall Preservation and Improvements	39
Community Action 3 - Laxfield Design Guidelines	42
Community Action 4 - Sustainable Design and Construction Best Practice	43
Community Action 5 - Footpath and Cyclepaths Working Group	48
Community Action 6 - Local Greenways	48
Community Action 7 - Community Green Space	48
Community Action 8 - Green Laxfield	48
Community Action 9 - Wildflower Meadows	48
Community Action 10 - The Sports Pavilion	53
Community Action 11 - The Playing Field	54
Community Action 12 - Dementia Friendly Laxfield	54
Community Action 13 - Young People's Sport and Recreation	54
Community Action 14 - Laxfield Museum	54
Community Action 15 - Infrastructure Investment Plan	54
Community Action 16 - Small Businesses and Makers	57
Community Action 17 - The Local Economy	57
Community Action 18 - Safe Routes for Active Travel	60
Community Action 19 - Walking and Cycling	60
Community Action 20 - Car Sharing	60
Community Action 21 - Car Parking Improvements	60
Community Action 22 - Business Parking and Deliveries	61
Community Action 23 - Speed and Road Safety	61
Community Action 24 - Central Goods Delivery and Distribution	61
Community Action 25 - Quiet Lanes Project	61

1. About Laxfield

LAXFIELD at a glance

Location: Laxfield is a small ancient village in Hoxne district, Suffolk. The village stands near the source of the river Blyth, 6¼ miles N of Framlingham.

Size of Parish: 3,630 acres

Total Population: 945 in 2017 (Office for National Statistics (web))

Number of houses: 410 (Mid Suffolk District Council Housing and Population Data Profile, 2015)

Main parish land usage: Agriculture

Main character: Ancient Settlement, centred around the Church, Guildhall and Marketplace, with development clustered along the main Street and linked thoroughfares, surrounded by farmland with dispersed farmsteads and a few homestead clusters distributed along the main access routes. The village is home to a diverse and energetic community that enjoys numerous cultural and sporting events held at the Village Hall, the two pubs, the Guildhall and the playing field.

LAXFIELD: a short history

Laxfield arose in Saxon times and Prehistoric and Roman finds recorded from the parish, particularly related to the topography and watercourses, hints at early occupation in the area. It is known that an early church was there and the village itself appears in the Domesday Book. In 1226, Laxfield was given charter to hold a market. Saturday was the selected market day and we are proud to say

that the tradition continues, with a thriving community market held on and around Church Plain on the first Saturday of each month. All Saints Church in Laxfield is largely of 14th century construct and was essentially complete by 1488.

Up until the 1950s, Laxfield was a thriving agricultural village, with a successful High Street. It boasted nine pubs, a range of shops and, in 1904, a railway. Laxfield was the final station on the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway, which ran from the Great Eastern Railway line at Haughley and was hugely important to life in Laxfield until its closure in 1952.

Since the 1950s, and the widespread adoption of the car as the main mode of transport and the mechanisation of farming, the local economy has shifted to being predominantly service-based and, largely, low-waged, with a significant number of people working outside the local area. Many residents have moved to Laxfield from other parts of the country, but the village still retains its character as a vibrant community, with a good spread of population across the generations.

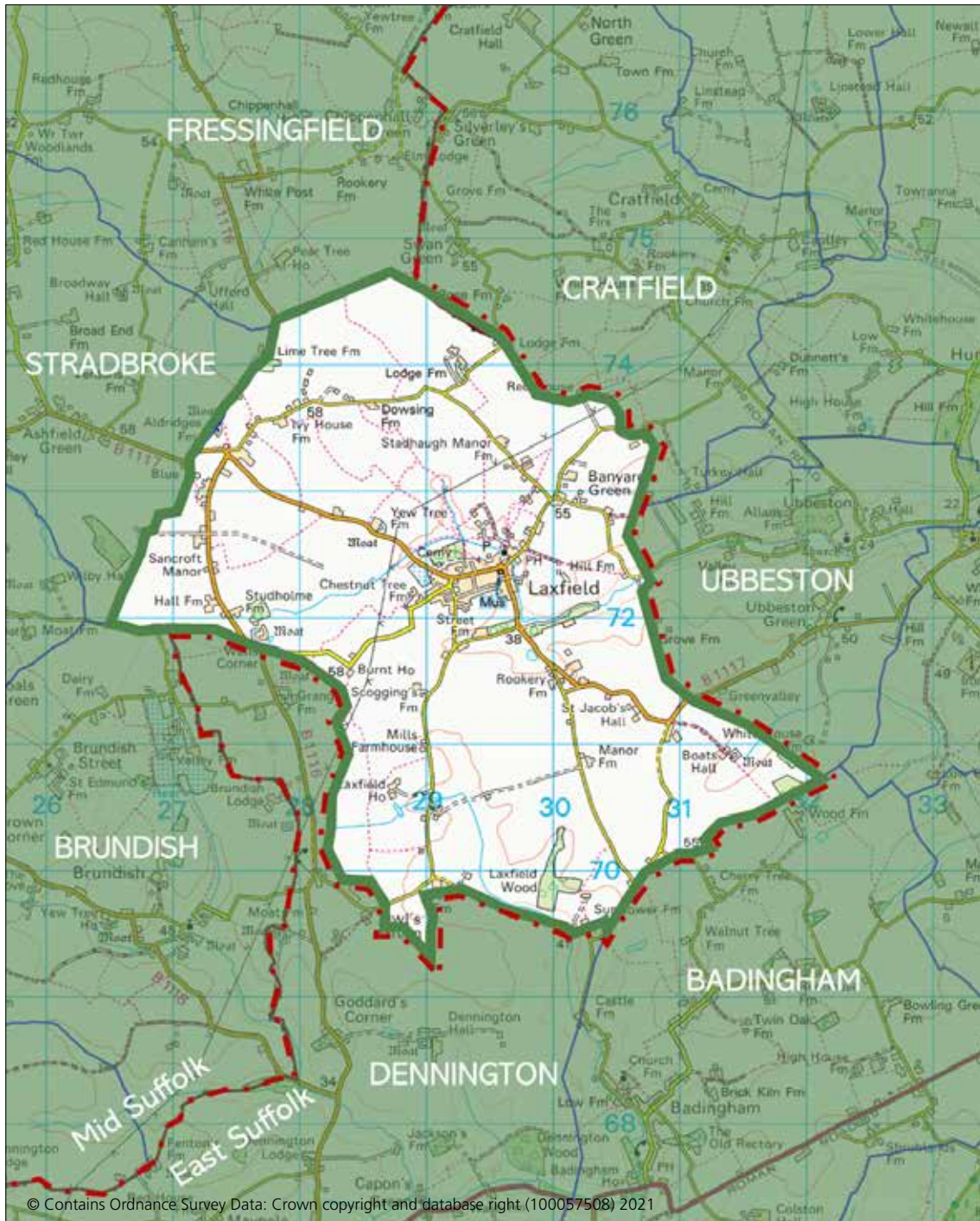
Laxfield has a noteworthy wide main street which, until the 1950s, was an active commercial and trading centre to the village; the character of the village is prized by residents, particularly the central Church Plain where the medieval Church and Guildhall are sited, close to two pubs, the village shop and post office.

2. Why develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Laxfield?

- Members of the local community believe it is important to have a Neighbourhood Plan, so that the needs and priorities of Laxfield residents can be taken into account for all future planning and development applications.
- We know that Laxfield will be expected to accept new housing developments; planning new homes can be contentious, but the Neighbourhood Plan can guide what is needed, where homes should be and the size and design of developments.
- Laxfield has specific housing needs. To ensure the Parish remains somewhere in which all generations can enjoy living, we should be clear about this demand in our Plan.
- We believe that this is a great opportunity to find out what makes Laxfield the place it is and to work together to ensure it evolves but retains its identity and values.
- The Neighbourhood Plan will help initiate Community Actions (CAs) to work on projects that the community feels are important to Laxfield. This could be green areas, paths and bridleways, improving the use of the playing field and working towards a 'Greener Laxfield'

2.1 The Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of Laxfield Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated by Mid Suffolk District Council in February 2018.

Laxfield Parish: Neighbourhood Plan Area



MAP 1 - The Neighbourhood Plan Area

How we did it

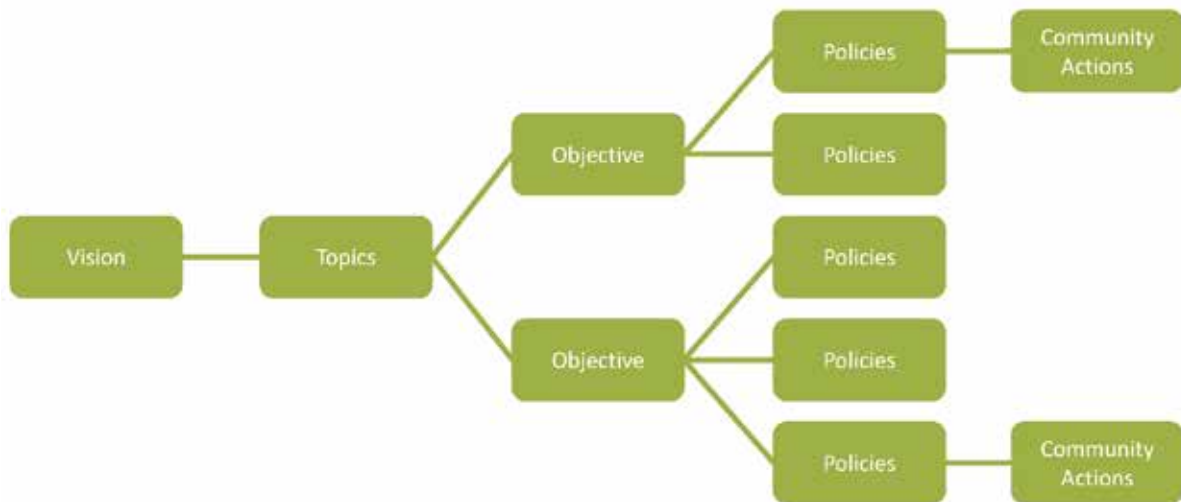
- 2.2 By building a strong Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Team** - The Team comes from all over the village and all walks of life and includes Parish Councillors; we also have an enthusiastic group of supporters to call on whenever we need them. To guide our activity, we produced a Mission Statement and a Project Plan, and we held regular meetings to assess progress and develop the Plan.
- 2.3 Through enthusiastic community engagement** - We have come up with lots of different ways to engage and stay engaged with our community along the way. These included: public consultation events, questionnaires, stalls at the market, tab on the Parish Council website, email mailbox, frequent articles in parish magazine, door-to-door fliers, posters, and presentations to local groups.
- 2.4 With strong support from the Parish Council** - we have engaged valuable expertise, including from our Mid Suffolk District Council officers, our professional consultant and other NP groups.

Key Milestones

Gathering of volunteers and preliminary research on value of NP	Nov 2017 - Feb 2018
Parish Council Decision to pursue NP	Feb 2018
Formation of NP Working Party	Feb 2018
Designation of Neighbourhood Area	Feb 2018
Living Laxfield – First Community Consultation event	July 2018
Village Questionnaire (including Housing Needs Survey)	Oct 2018
Second Community Consultation event	May 2019
Draft NP Document	May - Sept 2019
Distribution of Policy Options to all households	Aug/Sept 2019
Feedback Period	Sept-Oct 2019
Third Community Consultation; feedback on Policies	Oct 2019
Revision of NP Document	Oct/Nov 2019
Pre-submission draft NP Document approved by Parish Council	Jan 2020
Pre-Submission Plan Statutory Consultation (6-week period)	Feb-Apr 2020
Submission of revised NP to MSDC July 2020	June 2020
Submission Plan consultation by MSDC (minimum 6-week period)	August 2020
Independent examination	Q4 2020
Referendum	Q1 2022

The Structure of the Plan

- 2.5 In developing the Plan, we started with our Vision, considered the current Issues and identified Objectives by Theme before developing Policies and Community Actions to achieve the Vision.
- 2.6 The Plan develops the main themes identified by the community, provides more detail on the specific Laxfield context and expands on the key issues that emerged during the consultation events.
- 2.7 From this and the objectives in the Emerging Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan we have developed Objectives, Policies and Community Actions that apply to each Theme



3. Laxfield Today

Assessment of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis)

This work was used to help draft the areas of discussion for further community consultations. These are the themes that residents felt most strongly about. Some are consistent with the Village Appraisal of 2008, while others are new.

Strengths: What do we enjoy about Laxfield?	Weaknesses: What could be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive character and quality • “Best allotments in Suffolk” • Well used and diverse footpath system • Service economy: hospitality, food, environment, care • Village quality, small scale, organic growth, friendly, supportive and welcoming • Opportunity for choice of lifestyle: centre and periphery • Diversity of skills and services • Clear hierarchy of movement: Through roads, connecting byways • Variety of events and amenities- “This village punches above its weight for entertainment on shops, pubs, village hall.” • Aware of past, willing to embrace future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of footpaths - ease of accessibility and way-finding • More intensive utilisation of existing assets • Limited availability of affordable and appropriate housing • Limited means of communicating available resources and opportunities • Poor public transport • Vehicles dominate (inconsiderate speed, noise and parking)
Opportunities: What could we do, add or improve?	Threats: What are potential constraints?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain the village quality whilst growing the economy • Encourage and work with developers to consider existing residents • Welcome new arrivals • Provide accessible, all-weather, safe pathways for walkers, cyclists and mobility scooters • Create variety of publicly accessible green places eg “Dog park”, “community orchard” place of reflection, “fitness trail”, “village green” • Provide shared parking and storage. Allow for intensification of central area development, Flexibility of usage • Stimulate: Community Resource Exchange (Laxi-Taxi), shared use of space, services, resources • Prepare plan for playing fields: access, uses, building new or repurposed (health/wellness centre) • Support business collaboration: Shared sourcing and marketing, Register of skills and trades. Drop in centre, shared resources. • Consider Guildhall as community asset: Building and site • Broaden use of Sports Pavilion and village hall • Take a role in deciding new development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing conflicting demands • Speed and scale of growth • Inconsiderate behaviour (dog walkers, cyclists, drivers) • The need to raise significant funding to realise ambitions • Lack of participation and support from local residents • Don’t take what we have for granted. Success requires energy and commitment of volunteers (Museum) and local sourcing (food and services) • Community recognition of need for long term conservation and maintenance plan

4. Key Issues

4.1 The outputs of the SWOT analysis were developed into issues through feedback received at public consultation events and further informed by responses to the household survey. This section summarises the key issues, relating to each of the seven identified Themes. These Issues are repeated in the sections for each Theme, which are:

- **Settlement Pattern and Spatial Policy**
- **Housing Demand and Development Opportunity**
- **Built Environment and Design**
- **Natural Environment**
- **Amenities and Services**
- **Businesses, Employment and Makers**
- **Transport, Infrastructure and Distribution**

Settlement Pattern and Spatial Policy Issues (SPI)

SPI-1: There are no sites available within the Settlement Boundary (Local Plan 1998) for developments of more than four houses, so only windfall development is possible within the Settlement Boundary. Laxfield residents feel very strongly that the existing Settlement Boundary should not be extended.

SPI-2: It is vital to achieve **inclusive growth** to retain or attract those who will help sustain and grow the wealth of the village.

Housing Demand and Development Opportunity Issues (HDI)

HDI-1: We need to balance the District's target to build 65 new houses by 2036 and the Community interest to retain and enhance the quality of the village through incremental, organic growth planned with future generations in mind and care for the Natural Environment.

HDI-2: Laxfield has a significant number of large homes; **there is a need for homes of 2-3 bedrooms,** as evidenced in the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment (July 2019).

HDI-3: Laxfield has a significant number of low-waged residents. For the population

to be accommodated, there is a strong need for **low-cost housing**. This, it is felt, will improve the ability of the parish to retain young people and families.

HDI-4: Space Standards for new development need to meet the specific needs of parish residents.

HDI-5: New developments should aim to be compact, consider shared green amenities, minimise the visual impact of car parking, integrate with surrounding neighbourhoods and open space, and balance privacy and community.

Built Environment and Design Issues (BEI)

- BEI-1:** The historic core of the village is valued by residents and there is a significant desire to protect its character for the future.
- BEI-2:** The Guildhall is a medieval building and requires investment to preserve the fabric of the building, improve access and develop its use as a village asset.
- BEI-3:** There is a need for growth in the local economy without damaging village identity.
- BEI-4:** There is little open green space within the Settlement Boundary and developments in the mid twentieth century have eliminated the view of green space for a number of properties in the centre of the village.
- BEI-5:** Our cherished landmarks and views need to be protected.
- BEI-6:** Use of sustainable materials and building practices and design should be given a high priority.

Natural Environment Issues (NEI)

- NEI-1:** We need to protect and improve our natural biodiversity, hedgerows and mature trees.
- NEI-2:** People clearly stated that they would like more publicly-accessible green spaces in and around Laxfield, as well as for some of the green spaces we do have - specifically the playing field - to be improved and made more attractive.
- NEI-3:** Residents feel strongly that we need more footpaths and bridleways, and that the ones we have need to be better signposted and maintained. We need to maintain the current ones and develop new ones, suitably surfaced for all uses, and we need to develop a wider network of permissive paths.
- NEI-4:** We would like to take steps for Laxfield to become a Green Village.

Amenities and Services Issues (ASI)

- ASI-1: Medical facilities.** There is no doctor's or dentist's surgery in the village. Residents without cars find it difficult to get to appointments which makes accessing health services difficult.
- ASI-2: Primary School and Pre-school.** The school is at capacity, raising questions about the need for an additional classroom.
- ASI-3: The playing field and sports pavilion are currently under-used.**
- ASI-4:** There is substantial support for **making Laxfield a 'Dementia-friendly village'**.
- ASI-5:** There is a great demand for **increased access to the Museum** and for more events to be staged by the Museum.
- ASI-6: Hartismere House.** There is not as much of a link between Hartismere House residents and the wider community as there was previously.

Businesses, Employment and Makers Issues (BEMI)

- BEMI-1: The lack of public transport** is one of the greatest inhibitors to work as indicated by the fact that over 30% of survey respondents cited this.
- BEMI-2: Care for children or adult dependents.** The availability (22%) and cost (23%) of care prevents a number of people from working. This contributes to the low wage position of a large number of Laxfield residents, particularly the younger members of the community.
- BEMI-3: There is no infrastructure or local business support to assist small businesses.**
- BEMI-4: Communications infrastructure.** Both broadband and mobile coverage and service has improved recently; although no longer as significant an issue within the Settlement Boundary as it was a year ago, it is still a problem for those living in outlying parts of the Parish.

Transport, Infrastructure and Distribution Issues (TIDI)

TIDI-1: Parking is a major issue of concern in the centre of the village, near the shop, Guildhall and Church.

TIDI-2: There is also a problem with **parking near the School**, creating an environment that is unsafe for pupils, parents and residents and other road users.

TIDI-3: Speeding is seen as a problem, despite the introduction of the speed displays.

TIDI-4: The increasing number of large agricultural and delivery vehicles on small roads and in the village centre can be hazardous, particularly when driven at inconsiderate speed.

TIDI-5: There is very limited public transport, which is isolating and limiting for people who do not have their own transport.

TIDI-6: There is a great deal of interest in reducing the use of motorised vehicles by **encouraging more people to cycle and walk within the village** and improving footpaths and creating safe cycle routes.

TIDI-7: Safety of pedestrians is a concern, with requests for the introduction of more dropped kerbs and pedestrian crossings and refuges.

5. Context from National and Local Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's high-level planning policies which must be taken into account in the preparation of development plan documents and when deciding planning applications. In February 2019 the Government published a Revised NPPF, and the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared within the context of the 2019 NPPF * The Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states:

Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For plan-making this means that:

- a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole

5.2 The NPPF requires that communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans should:

- develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development
- plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan

Mid Suffolk Local Plan

5.3 At a more local level, the adopted development plan comprises:

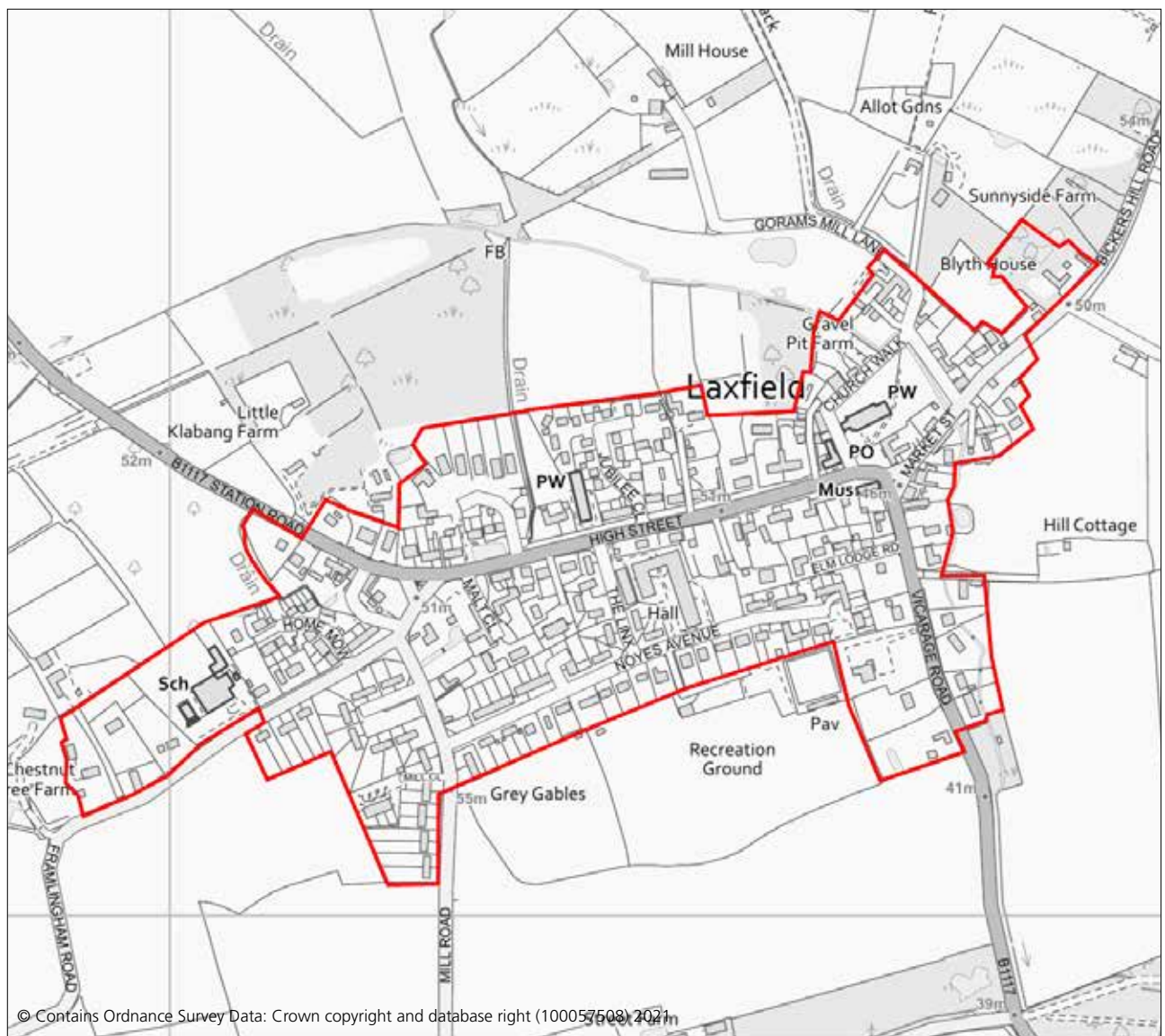
- the saved policies of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998;
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008; and
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review 2012

5.4 The 1998 Local Plan defines a Settlement Boundary for the village as illustrated below. Within the Settlement Boundary there was a presumption in favour of development as long as it did not have a detrimental impact on the environment, the amenity of residents and on infrastructure capacity.

5.5 A number of the planning policies in the 1998 Local Plan remain in force some 20 years later as they have yet to be replaced by a more up-to-date local plan.

* In July 2021 the Government published a further revised NPPF. However, the Neighbourhood Plan was examined under the 2019 version and the decision by Mid Suffolk District Council to proceed to Referendum was made before the July 2021 NPPF was published.

5.6 In 2008 the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy was adopted. This contains the high-level planning strategy for the district, primarily identifying the amount and distribution of growth in the district up to 2031. The Core Strategy designates Laxfield as a “Primary Village” where “small scale housing growth to meet local needs, particularly affordable housing, will be appropriate. Development will be limited to sites within the Settlement Boundary or, by allocation in the Site Specific Allocation document, to sites adjacent to the Settlement Boundary.”



Map 2 – 1998 Local Plan Settlement Boundary

5.7 Some elements of the Core Strategy were superseded by the Core Strategy Focused Review in 2011. In particular, the Focused Review updated the amount of new housing to be built across the district. Policy FC2 of the Focused Review identified the distribution of housing growth across the differing settlement categories. It made provision for 300 new homes across all Primary Villages in Mid Suffolk between 2012 and 2027. By 2016 207 of these had been built.

Emerging Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan

- 5.8** Early in 2015 the District Council announced their intention to produce a new Joint Local Plan with Babergh District Council that would provide a planning framework for the management of growth across the districts to 2036. In August 2017 a consultation document was published that identified a number of options for the content of the Joint Local Plan including the strategy for the location of growth across the districts. The consultation document proposed that Laxfield be designated as a “hinterland village” based on its level of services and facilities and proximity to higher order settlements that had a greater range of services and infrastructure.
- 5.9** In July 2019 the District Council consulted on the “Preferred Options” for the draft Joint Local Plan, and this was followed by the pre-submission draft Joint Local Plan in November 2020. The Neighbourhood Plan has some regard for the content of the emerging Joint Local Plan given the stage that it had reached at the time of preparation.
- 5.10** The emerging Joint Local Plan identifies a hierarchy of settlements according to their level of services and function within the District. Laxfield is identified as a Hinterland Village where draft Policy SP03 states that development will be permitted within the Settlement Boundary where:
- i “Design is sympathetic to its rural surrounding and demonstrates high-quality design by having regard to the relevant policies of the [local] plan;
 - ii A high standard of hard and soft landscaping, appropriate for the location is used;
 - iii Hedgerows and treelines which make an important contribution to the wider context and setting are protected, particularly in edge of settlement locations; and
 - iv The cumulative impact of proposals will be a major consideration.”
- 5.11** The Neighbourhood Plan was being independently examined when the Pre-Submission Joint Local Plan was published for consultation. The Independent Examiner addressed this matter in her Report and required modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan to reflect a changed housing requirement for the parish.

6. LAXFIELD 2036

The Vision

- 6.1** The vision for Laxfield is that **it should be a vibrant, inclusive place to live for all residents, that it values and cares for all generations and takes particular care of its young and old people. We want to live in a greener and more sustainable way, reducing our reliance on cars and facilitating conditions for a range of employment types in the locality. We value our natural environment and our built heritage and will work actively to maintain and enhance them for future generations as well as developing village amenities and outdoor leisure facilities to encourage everyone to live active and healthy lives.**
- 6.2** When asked how they would like Laxfield to be described in 2036, 85% of respondents to the household survey said they would like the description to be 'a strong sense of community'; 'caring', 'tranquil and quiet' and 'inclusive' also all scored highly as residents' preferred descriptions. Their least favourites were 'commuter centre' (2%), 'retirement destination' (8%) and 'tourist destination' (18%).
- 6.3** The community vision reflects how Laxfield will be in 2036. It is generated from residents' comments gathered from our consultations and interviews with stakeholders. At the same time, it is mindful of statutory demands and the need to remain in harmony with Mid Suffolk's Local Plan and Core Strategy.
- 6.4** In support of achieving the Vision we identified five Guiding Principles:

Guiding Principles

Change incrementally: Organic and gradual development that contributes to the wellbeing and successful livelihoods of all.

Consider others: Anticipate climate change in ways that enhance the desirability of the location and minimize environmental impact. A place which people wish to visit and stay.

Use existing resources wisely: recycle, renew, revitalise. Minimise additional land take and encourage the sharing of services and amenities.

Create places: That provide a distinctive identity through the quality of design, appropriateness of functions, accessibility of location and diversity of lifestyles.

Collaborate to succeed: By sharing common aspirations, respecting diverse points of view and recognising the value of continuous community involvement from inception to post occupancy.

7. Settlement Pattern and Spatial Policy

Current Position

- 7.1** Laxfield's main built-up area is focused primarily around the main village centre, where 75% of the parish population live. Outside this area there is a significant number of farms. Because of the dispersed nature of these farms there is not one notable population mass that would qualify for designation as a hamlet in the emerging Joint Local Plan Settlement Hierarchy.
- 7.2** Connectivity from these dwellings to the centre of the village is primarily via narrow country lanes that are not currently safe for walking and cycling. Within the centre of the village, footway networks extend along many roads and services and facilities are therefore within walkable distances to most able residents.

Landscape around Laxfield

- 7.3** In approximate terms, the outer parish can be described in four quadrants; North-West, North-East, South-East, and South-West.

<p>North-West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open, generally flat, with limited tree and hedge row cover. • Main highway is the B1117 to Stradbroke, with parallel routes to north and south. • Good Public Right of Way (PROW) footpath access intersect the fields. • Typical agricultural landscape with big sky, interrupted by power lines and a few private wind turbines. 	<p>North-East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hamlet of Banyard's Green defines a large part of this area resulting in more varied skylines. • A criss-cross of roads leading to outlying villages and some useful PROWs. • Short hills on roads leading south to the village centre and east to Ubbeston, indicate the valley of the upper reaches of the Blyth.
<p>South-West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you enter this quadrant from the east Laxfield Wood predominates; although truncated over the centuries and not open to public access, this wood is of environmental value. • Beyond the woods the fields, although large, fold gently into water courses. • The large area of agricultural land heading north is bisected by the Sheep Walk, the only public access route. • To the west of Dennington Road the fields are generally smaller with hedge boundaries and the protected environs of Laxfield House, together with the Racecourse field, give a more intimate feel to the landscape. • Several PROW bisect the area. • The parish boundary stops where the hamlet of Owl's Green in the parish of Dennington starts. 	<p>South-East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main road, B1117, winds up and out towards Halesworth. • There are some useful tree belts running east/west at a low level and the buildings with associated gardens and field hedges give additional cover. • Further south the landscape opens up again to larger fields and two roads give access to Badingham and beyond via the A1120.

7.4 In all of the quadrants the nature of the soil and subsoil have a large effect on the field topography. The predominately heavy clay soils mean that drainage ditches intersect the landscape and bounder most fields and form an important feature of the landscape. The boundary ditches can reduce the severe impact of prairie fields and, if the hedges and trees are left alongside, they provide essential pathways for wildlife.

7.5 Over the centuries the fields have been folded down to their edges by acts of ploughing and weathering. Although often described as flat, there is often an appreciable fall from the centre, assisted by the farming practice of installing either piped or deep ploughed (mole) land drains.

Key Issues

SPI-1: **There are no sites available within the Settlement Boundary (Local Plan 1998) for developments of more than four houses**, so windfall development only possible within the Settlement Boundary. Laxfield resident feel very strongly that the existing Settlement Boundary should not be extended, particularly given the number of new homes built around the village in recent years.

SPI-2: **It is vital to achieve inclusive growth** to retain or attract those who will help sustain and grow the wealth of the village.

Planning Objectives

SPO-1: **To provide capacity for sufficient housing to meet local demand and minimum requirement set out in emerging Joint Local Plan.**

SPO-2: **To provide capacity for improved employment opportunities.**

SPO-3: **To focus development on the centre of the Parish, with only limited development outside the village core.**

SPO-4: **To encourage walking and cycling access to facilities and more sustainable ways of living, and reduce vehicle use in order to lower emissions.**

Policies

7.6 National and both adopted and emerging local planning policies support development where it is closely related to existing centres of population and services. This approach is confirmed in the Neighbourhood Plan where the strategy is to focus new development in locations that are closely related and accessible by foot to the main services and facilities of the village. This approach will reduce the need for short journeys to, for example, the school or shops by unsustainable travel modes. Where new development is proposed there will be an expectation that walking routes, in particular, are safe and convenient.

- 7.7 A Settlement Boundary is defined for the centre of the village. It is based on the adopted 1998 Local Plan boundary, but reviewed to reflect changes during that 20-year period and opportunities for new development that will arise during the next 20 years. These changes include sites where permissions for new dwellings have been granted since 1 April 2018, given that the principle of development on these sites is accepted by the District Council.
- 7.8 To manage the potential impacts of growth, new development will be focused within the Settlement Boundary. This will ensure that the undeveloped rural countryside is preserved and remains largely undeveloped. There may be situations where it is necessary for development to take place outside the Settlement Boundary. Such circumstances might be through the conversion of existing buildings or through the construction of new buildings where the development cannot reasonably be located within the Settlement Boundary due to particular circumstances. However, this approach does not restrict the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential uses where proposals meet the government regulations and local planning policies for such conversions.

Policy LAX 1 - Spatial Strategy for Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan Area

The Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with Laxfield's designation as a Primary Village in the 2008 Core Strategy (Policy CS1) and emerging designation as a Hinterland Village in the Joint Local Plan.

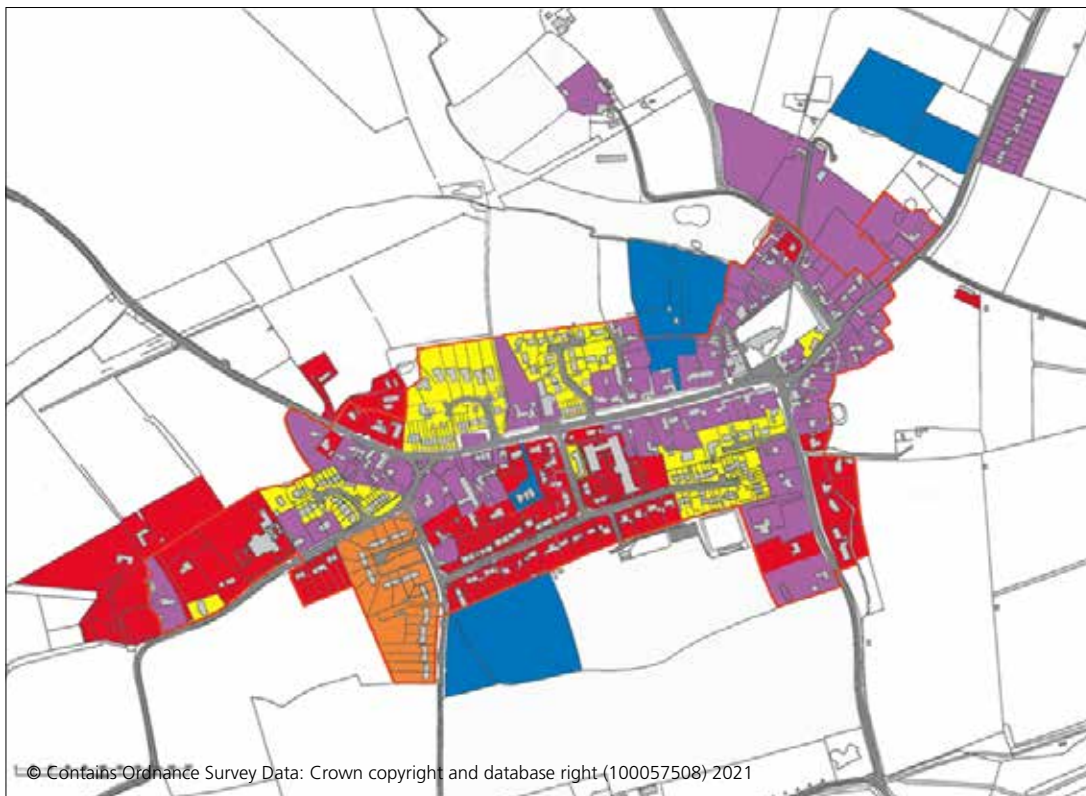
The focus for new development will be within the Settlement Boundary as defined on the Policies Map.

Proposals for development located outside the Settlement Boundary will only be permitted where they accord with national and strategic policies.

8. Housing Demand and Development Opportunities

Current Position

- 8.1** The growth of the village with planned developments begins with public sector housing after the Second World War. Initially, 14 semi-detached two-storied houses with medium-width frontages were constructed on Bickers Hill. These were followed between 1949-57 with two-storied, semi-detached council houses and bungalows at Mill Road, each with a generous garden and frontage, and built around a shared parking and green space. Private development began in the 1980s, with The Orchards, a scheme of seven bungalows with generous gardens and 12 small two-storied, narrow-fronted terraced units fronting on to the Street and village pond with shared garage courts and an access road behind. From 1980 to 1998, a substantial number of new homes were built in the Parish and a further 30 new buildings or conversions were added in the period 1998-2018. Throughout this period the village built up area has grown organically with no development parcel of more than 15 units, and a mix of size and tenure.
- 8.2** Since 2015 there has been a dramatic increase in housing completions and applications. As at 30 November 2020, 113 units had been granted planning permission which are yet to be completed.



Map 3 - Development in Laxfield over time

KEY:

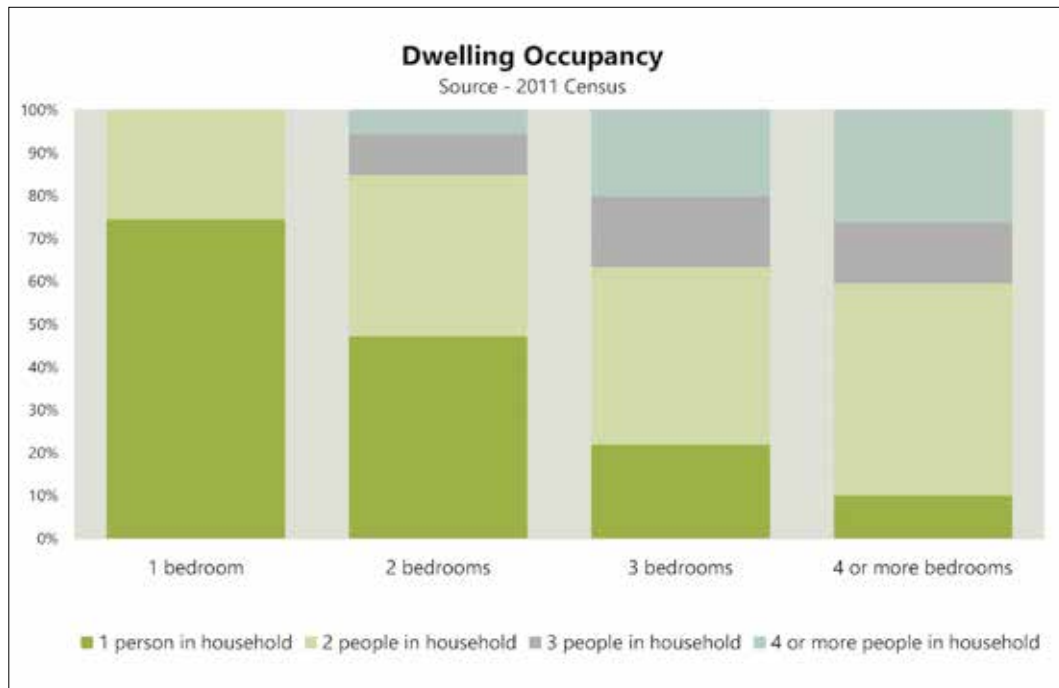
- | | |
|---|---|
|  Development pre-1950 |  1980s & 90s development |
|  1950s development |  Development post 2000 |
|  1960s & 70s development | |

Key Issues

HDI-1: Need to balance the District's minimum requirement to build 97 new houses by 2036 and the Community interest to retain and enhance the quality of the village through incremental, organic growth planned with future generations in mind and care for the Natural Environment.

8.3 The call for sites issued by the Parish Clerk (October 2018) identified 11 sites; one within the Settlement Boundary, and five on adjacent land. Of the five additional sites separate from the central village, two were within the distance for active travel (walking, cycling and mobility scooter) if a safe hard surface direct route could be provided. Providing such routes over the next 20 years would need significant capital investment, collaboration between planning authorities, landowners and the Parish Council and ingenuity. However, the gains in reducing car usage for short journeys could be considerable in carbon emissions, health and wellbeing, accessibility to a wider range of lifestyles, and a reduction of parking at the centre (See Transport, Infrastructure and Distribution).

HDI-2: Laxfield has a significant number of large homes; there is a need for smaller dwellings of 2-3 bedrooms, as evidenced in the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment (July 2019).

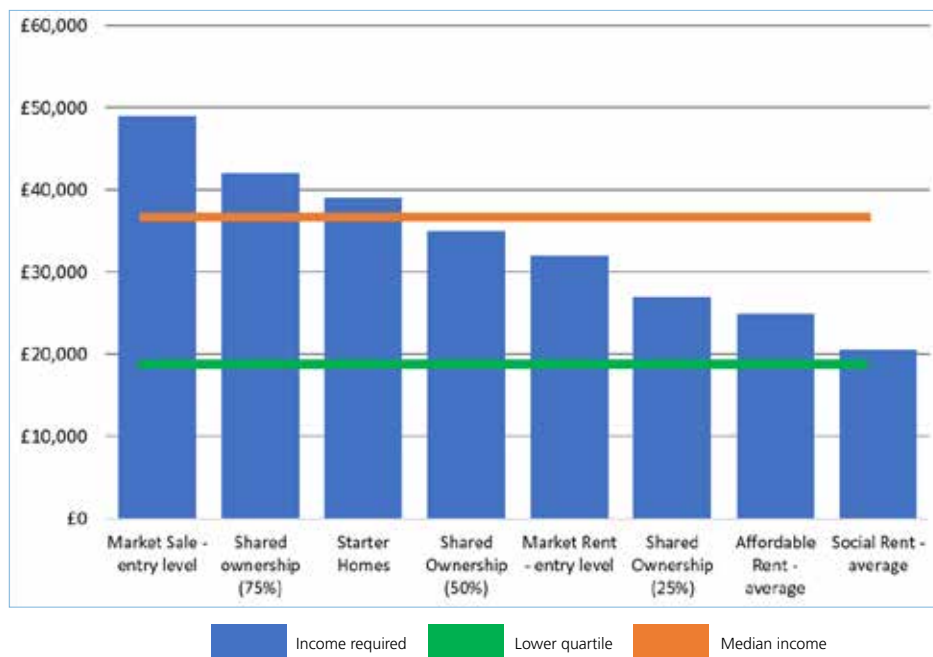


8.4 The AECOM Housing Needs Assessment identifies that, in comparison with Suffolk and England, Laxfield has a lack of small units (bedsit to 2/3 bedrooms). 30% of the current stock has five or more rooms, and there has been a recent increase in dwellings with eight or more rooms.

8.5 AECOM's conclusions are that "Given... Laxfield's current dwelling stock is made up of larger dwellings compared Mid Suffolk, and that the parish's ageing population is likely increasingly to favour smaller dwellings, it is logical that the recommended dwelling mix for new developments over the plan period should be focused on the provision of two-bedroom (30%) three-bedroom (38%) and four-bedroom homes (31%) suitable to down-sizers and young families at the expense of much larger homes".

HDI-3: Laxfield has a significant number of low-waged residents. For the population to be accommodated, there is a strong need for low-cost housing.

8.6 This, it is felt, will improve the ability of the parish to retain young people and families. The AECOM report made a special note of the number of houses above affordability threshold, stating that; 'Taking into consideration the affordability thresholds set out above, it is apparent that the income required to buy an entry-level market home for sale is insufficient for those on median and lower quartile household incomes.'



HDI-4: Space Standards for new development need to meet the specific needs of parish residents.

8.7 In March 2015 the Government introduced nationally described space standards, to provide a uniform way of measuring housing space and ensuring minimum standards are achieved for new or converted units. Policy LP26 of the emerging Joint Local Plan requires new housing development to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards. Policy LAX9, in particular, sets out the design considerations which the Neighbourhood Plan sets for new housing development, while Policy LAX2 sets out the criteria for how proposals that would result in new dwellings will be considered.

HDI-5: New developments should aim to be compact, consider shared green amenities, minimise the visual impact of car parking, integrate with surrounding neighbourhoods and open space, and balance privacy and community.

- 8.8** Within the Adopted Local Plan Settlement Boundary there are no cleared sites for developments of four or more dwellings. Over the twenty-year period, additions to the housing stock within the Settlement Boundary are likely to be predominantly from adaptation, small-scale infill, or division of larger dwellings to create smaller units. Adjacent to the 2018 Settlement Boundary there may be opportunities for sensitive additions of between 4 and 10 dwellings to offer a mix of type, size and tenure, particularly focused on low cost housing to meet local need.

Planning Objectives

HDO-1: Ensure that the amount of new housing is of a scale the local infrastructure can support and is appropriate to both the aspirations and expectations of the community and incomers attracted by the values Laxfield reflects.

HDO-2: Support high-quality design of homes that are eco-friendly, affordable and responsive to change.

HDO-3: Create a diversity of buildings and locations to accommodate a variety of lifestyles.

Policies

8.9 Housing Development

A key role of the Neighbourhood Plan is to identify the quantity and quality of new housing to be provided during the period covered by the Plan and to identify where it will be located. The National Planning Guidance states that “the ‘policies and allocations’ in the plan should meet the identified housing requirement in full, whether it is derived from the standard methodology for local housing need, the housing figure in the area’s strategic policies, an indicative figure provided by the local authority, or where it has exceptionally been determined by the neighbourhood planning body.”

Policy LAX 2 - Housing Development

This Plan provides for around 110 additional dwellings to be developed in the Neighbourhood Plan area between 2018 and 2036. This growth will be met through:

- i the site allocation as identified in Policy LAX 3 in the Plan and on the Policies Map; and
- ii all other sites with planning permission identified in Appendix 3; and
- iii small brownfield “windfall” sites and infill plots within the Settlement Boundary that come forward during the plan period and are not identified in the Plan; and
- iv dwellings outside the Settlement Boundary in accordance with national and strategic policies.

In addition, proposals for the conversion of redundant or disused agricultural barns outside the Settlement Boundary into dwellings will be permitted where:

- a) the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for extension, significant alteration or reconstruction; and

- b) the proposal is a high-quality design and the method of conversion retains the character and historic interest of the building; and
- c) the proposal would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting of the building, and the creation of a residential curtilage and any associated domestic paraphernalia would not have a harmful effect on the character of the site or setting of the building, any wider group of buildings, or the surrounding area.

8.10 The emerging Joint Local Plan (November 2020) identified a total housing requirement for Laxfield of 65 between 2018 and 2036. This figure included any planning permissions for new homes that had not been completed by 1 April 2018 and any new permissions granted after the same date. In November 2020, planning permissions were outstanding for 113 additional homes, meaning that no additional housing sites are necessary to meet the minimum requirement (see detailed list, Appendix 3).

Land off Cullingford Close (Cullingford Close Phase 2)

8.11 A site of approximately 0.71 hectares off Cullingford Close, to the east side of Mill Road is an area of undeveloped land, the remainder of a wider development site which lies to the west and south-west where twelve new dwellings were originally granted by planning permission in 2016. The village playing fields lie adjacent to the east of the site and open countryside to the south. Permission was granted in October 2019 for 13 dwellings, comprising nine open market dwellings and four affordable dwellings. Access to the site is via the existing estate road from the junction with Mill Road, developed as part of the existing adjacent development to the west and south-west.

8.12 Given that the principle of development is accepted and, even though the permissions might lapse before work commences, it is allocated for housing development in Policy LAX 3. Development is expected to take place in accordance with the planning consent in place at the time the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared, unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development on the site



Map 4 - Land of Cullingford Close

Policy LAX 3 - Land off Cullingford Close

A site of 0.71 hectares east of Mill Road, as identified on Map 4 and on the Policies Map, is allocated for thirteen dwellings including four affordable homes.

Development will be expected to take place in accordance with the current planning consent unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development.

Low-cost and Affordable Housing

- 8.13** The Housing Needs Assessment undertaken by AECOM in support of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan identified that the median annual household income (£35,300) is insufficient to occupy most tenures, unless households choose to devote a higher proportion of their income to housing costs. The Assessment suggested that a way forward “may be to offer a more diverse range of tenures in Laxfield, moving away from market sale and towards more viable options such as shared ownership or affordable rent. Delivering greater quantities or smaller sizes of house could also help to increase the number of dwellings accessible to those on lower incomes.”
- 8.14** The adopted Local Plan includes a requirement for up to 35% of housing on new sites of 10 or more houses to be affordable (see Glossary for definition). The requirement is included in the emerging Joint Local Plan (2019). Such sites rarely come forward in smaller villages such as Laxfield and, during the lifetime of this Neighbourhood Plan, it may be necessary to be proactive to deliver affordable housing to meet an identified need of the village.
- 8.15** Granting planning permission on an exceptional basis for affordable housing on land next to but outside the Settlement Boundary is one way to provide affordable housing which will continue to meet local needs. This would require:
- i) a need to be established;
 - ii) a willing landowner being prepared to sell land at a price significantly below the market value for housing land; and
 - iii) a registered social landlord (housing association) willing to work with the Parish Council and District Council to fund and manage a scheme.
- 8.16** The emerging Joint Local Plan (July 2019) does not contain a policy for the delivery of affordable housing on rural exception sites and, therefore, this Neighbourhood Plan addresses the matter should a local need be identified during the period up to 2036.
- 8.17** Where a “rural exception” site is proposed for development, it must be demonstrated that there is an identified local need in the village and its hinterland, and that the site is suitable to meet that local need. In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to permit an element of open market housing to facilitate the delivery of the affordable housing. This is in accordance with paragraph 77 of the NPPF which states that local authorities should consider whether this approach would help to provide additional affordable housing. The exceptional circumstances, where a small number of market homes will be permitted could include, for example, where there is insufficient government grant available, and it is demonstrated, through financial appraisal, that the open market housing is essential to enable the delivery of the affordable housing.

- 8.18** In these cases, the applicant would need to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the District Council, that the inclusion of open market housing is the minimum necessary to enable the delivery of the affordable housing and is not being developed to generate uplift in land values for the landowner. This could be demonstrated through the provision of affordability/profitability modelling data. Where an element of open market housing is proposed as part of an affordable housing exception site, it should be sympathetic to the form and character of the settlement and in accordance with local needs. Local needs can vary, and it could be that smaller market homes are required to meet the needs of first-time buyers or people wishing to downsize to a smaller home. This would need to be established at the time in consultation with the District Council's Housing Service.

Policy LAX 4 - Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes, including entry level homes for purchase (as defined by paragraph 71 of the NPPF) on rural exception sites outside 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:

- i. remains affordable in perpetuity; and
- ii. is for people that are in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in the village at open-market prices; and
- iii. is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated local connection, as defined by the Mid Suffolk Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Where there is no need, a property should then be offered to those with a demonstrated need for affordable housing in neighbouring villages.

These restrictions should be delivered through a legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing. Applications for such development will be considered in relation to the appearance and character of the surrounding area, the potential impact on residential amenity and highway safety.

To be acceptable, proposals should demonstrate that a local need exists which cannot be met by applying normal planning policy for the provision of affordable homes in association with market housing.

Any application for affordable housing in respect of this policy should be accompanied by a detailed need and the accommodation proposed should contribute to meeting this proven need.

In exceptional circumstances, a small number of market homes will be permitted where it can be demonstrated:

- a) that no other means of funding the construction of the affordable homes is available; and
- b) the market housing is subsidiary to the affordable housing element of the proposal and the amount of market housing required is, as demonstrated through a viability assessment, the minimum required to deliver the affordable housing.

Where sites for affordable housing in the countryside are brought forward with an element of market housing, both housing tenures should be built to the same design standards and contribute towards the character of the area.

- 8.19** One option for securing affordable housing that remains available for the local community for all time is through the establishment of a Community Land Trust (CLT). These are a form of community-led housing, set up and run by local people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets. CLTs act as long-term stewards of housing, ensuring that it remains genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, not just for now but for every future occupier.

Community Action 1

Establish a Community Land Trust to investigate options for low-cost housing in or near Laxfield's Settlement Boundary. Work has already started on this, as it is considered to be an extremely high priority for the village. A Working Party was set up in June 2019 and work is underway to evaluate options.

Housing Mix

- 8.20** The AECOM Housing Needs Assessment concluded that, given that the current dwelling stock is made up of larger dwellings compared with Mid Suffolk, and that the parish's ageing population is likely increasingly to favour smaller dwellings, the recommended dwelling mix for new development over Plan period should be focused on the provision of two-bedroom (30%), three-bedroom (38%) and four bedroom homes (31%) suitable to downsizers and young families, at the expense of much larger homes.
- 8.21** A range of house sizes can only realistically be achieved in larger developments and, therefore, in any new developments of 10 or more homes in the Neighbourhood Plan Area a mix of house sizes in accordance with the mix identified will be sought, unless more up-to-date information can demonstrate otherwise.

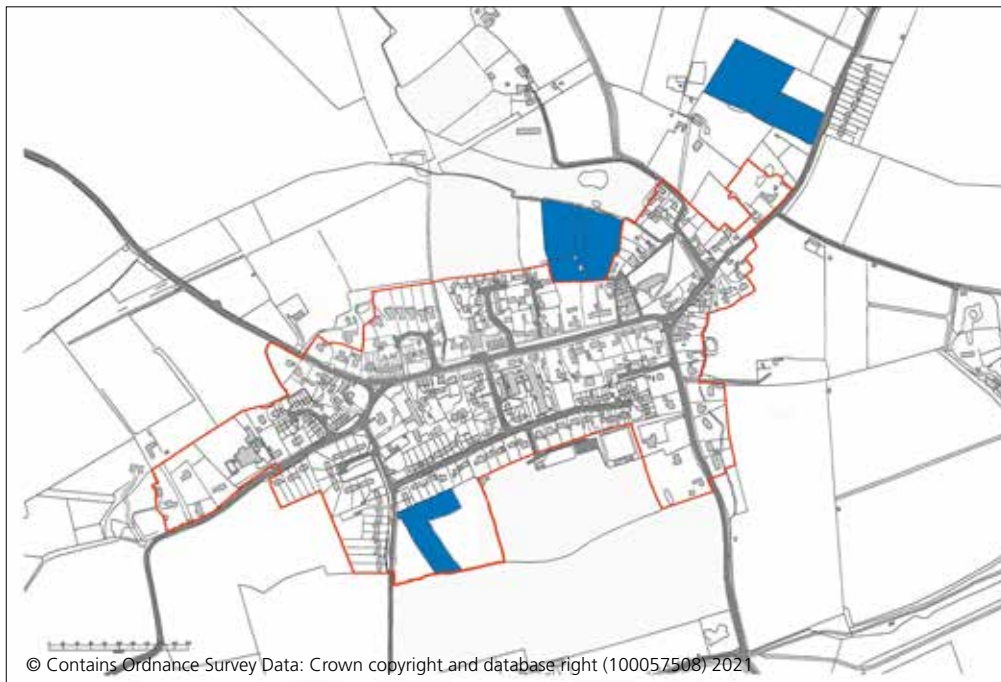
Policy LAX 5 - Housing Mix

In all new housing developments of ten or more homes, there shall be an emphasis on providing a balanced mix of two, three and four bedroomed homes within the scheme, unless it can be demonstrated that the particular circumstances relating to the tenure of the housing dictate otherwise or where such provision is demonstrated to not be in accordance with the latest available housing needs information for the Plan Area.

9. Built Environment and Design

Current Position

- 9.1 There is very little remaining potential development capacity for more than a small group of homes within the built-up area boundary as set out in the 2016 Mid Suffolk District Council Local Plan. As a result, development since then has been outside this boundary, to the north-east and the south-west of the main settlement, as marked in blue on Map 5.



Map 5 - Recent development outside the settlement boundary

- 9.2 Densities in the different parts of the village vary considerably. A key feature of the historic core (see Map 6) is that although the pattern is considered that of a linear village, there are a number of parts where building took place behind other houses, giving a charmingly higgledy-piggledy effect. Densities in these parts of the village tend to be higher than where the houses are set along the High Street itself.



Map 6 - the historic core of Laxfield village

- 9.3** The post-war development is generally much lower density than the later housing, with the exception of the bungalows built behind the High Street in The Orchards and Jubilee Close. These developments are of brick or brick and render, with tiled roofs and generally timber windows; they are of standard design, and tend to follow a much more structured layout than the older buildings, having little variation in form and being set at specific distances from the road frontage.
- 9.4** Laxfield, even with the amount of expansion it has already had, has been able to retain much of its original identity as a village. This Plan seeks to maintain that.

Key Issues

- BEI-1:** The historic core of the village is valued by residents and there is a significant desire to protect its character for the future, as evidenced by community feedback.
- BEI-2:** The Guildhall is a medieval building and requires investment to preserve the fabric of the building, improve access and develop its use as a village asset.

- 9.5 All Saints Church, with its unusual stone-faced tower, is Laxfield's main landmark. Other key features include the Guildhall, the Chapel and the two pubs.



All Saints Church tower from the High Street



Heritage Assets

- 9.6 The Conservation Area Appraisal produced by Mid Suffolk District Council (March 2012) concluded the following:

- "Laxfield's relative isolation has to a large extent been the cause of its good state of preservation. Without modern pressures the central 'commercial' area, such as it is, has gently declined, and is now reduced to a combined shop and post office and two public houses.
- To the south-west of the village centre new infill development has swollen the village beyond its one plot deep original form. 'The Link' is the well named road that connects this to the otherwise untouched Street with a wide visibility splay and a touch of suburbia.
- One other area might also benefit from improvement. The parking area opposite the Low House (King's Head) is somewhat untidy and poorly surfaced and would obscure less of the view of the churchyard, and the stream, if its levels were reduced and it was resurfaced with sympathetic materials similar to Church Plain
- A few unlisted buildings let the side down a bit, with the use of non-traditional uPVC windows and sometimes the painting over of good local materials such as flint or brick.
- Elsewhere there have been improvements with the application of sympathetic surfacing materials on Church Plain and the removal of overhead wiring."

NB: This text is taken verbatim from the document and should be considered in the context of when it was produced.

BEI-3: There is a need for growth of the local economy but this needs to be accomplished without damaging the village identity.

9.7 The Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment for Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts (March 2018), produced as part of the evidence for the Joint Local Plan, identifies four key views in the settlement of Laxfield, which we further summarise as follows:

- View along High Street towards the church and marketplace: This shows the linear nature of the settlement and the historic positioning of the built form within their plots.



Settlement and historic positioning of buildings

- Views along Vicarage Road, Bickers Road and Gorams Mill Lane towards the Church of All Saints, highlighting the church's dominant position within the settlement:



Vicarage Road towards the Church



View showing Bickers Hill Road descending towards the Church



View of the Church from Gorams Mill Lane



These views show the immediate interrelationship between the open landscape and the historic church

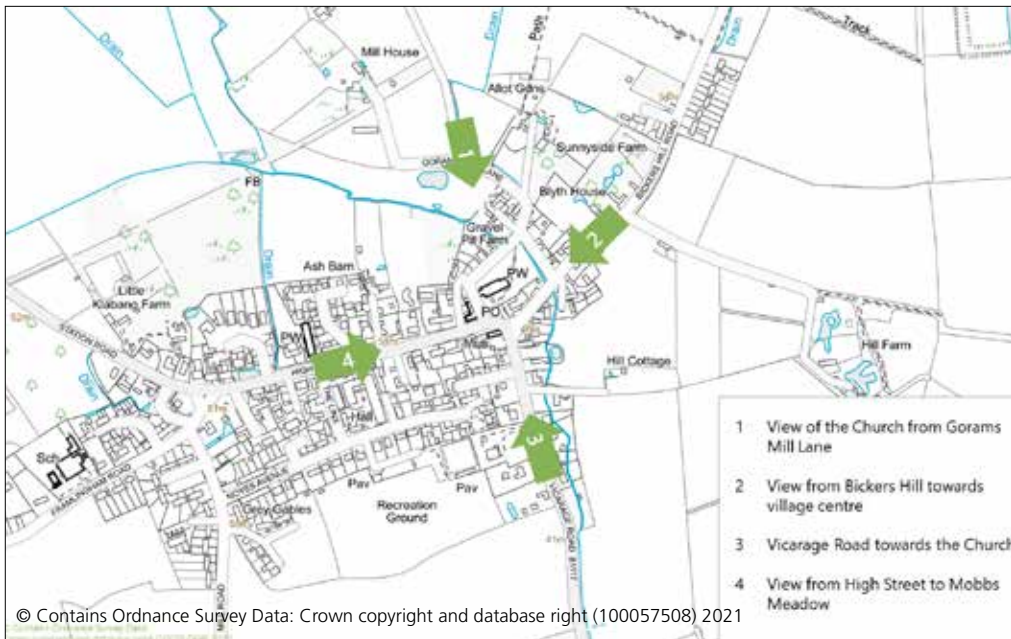
9.8 Local residents also feel very strongly that the view from the High Street of Mobbs Meadow is important, emphasising the natural environment surrounding the village which many people value highly. It is also worth noting that over 90% of respondents to the surveys felt that the open views around the parish - not just the village itself - are important assets.

BEI-4: There is little open green space within the Settlement Boundary and post-war developments eliminated the view of green space for a number of properties in the centre of the village.

BEI-5: Our cherished landmarks and views need to be protected.



View of Mobbs Meadow from the High Street



© Contains Ordnance Survey Data: Crown copyright and database right (100057508) 2021

Map 7 - Key Views

Planning Objectives

- BEO-1:** Development within the historic core of the village needs to be sympathetic to the scale, height, form and massing of the existing Built Environment.
- BEO-2:** New development should integrate energy efficient technologies and use sustainable design and construction methods.
- BEO-3:** Any business development should not damage village identity.
- BEO-4:** All aspects of new development; buildings, landscapes, access and circulation, parking, open space; should be well related to each other and to existing development.
- BEO-5:** Development proposals and designs should utilise locally appropriate materials and design details.

Policies

- 9.9** Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service's Historic Environment Record HER provides details of finds and the Service should be consulted at the earliest possible stages of preparing a planning application. The public version of the HER can be viewed online through the Suffolk Heritage Explorer.

Policy LAX 6 - Buildings of Local Significance

The retention and protection of local heritage assets and buildings of local significance, including buildings, structures, features and gardens of local interest, will be secured.

Proposals for any works that would lead to the loss of, or substantial harm to, a building of local significance should be supported by an appropriate analysis of the significance of the asset together with an explanation of the wider public benefits of the proposal.

Appendix 2 identifies buildings of local significance, which are also identified on the Policies Map.

- 9.10** The Local Plan policies for the consideration of development affecting Heritage Assets are significantly out-of-date and therefore planning decisions are reliant on the high-level guidelines provided in the NPPF. A planning policy is therefore included in the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that development proposals affecting heritage assets are given appropriate consideration.

Policy LAX 7 - Heritage Assets

To ensure the conservation and enhancement of the village's designated and non-designated heritage assets, proposals must:

- a. preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets of the village, their setting and the wider built environment, including views into, within and out of the conservation area as identified on the Policies Map;
- b. retain buildings and spaces, the loss of which would cause harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- c. contribute to the village's local distinctiveness, built form and scale of its heritage assets, as described in the Landscape Appraisal and Built Environment Character Assessment, through the use of appropriate design and materials;
- d. be of an appropriate scale, form, height, massing, alignment and detailed design which respects the area's character, appearance and its setting

Proposals will not be supported where any harm, less than substantial or substantial harm, or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, caused as a result of the impact of a proposed scheme, is not outweighed by the public benefits that would be provided.

Where a planning proposal affects designated or a non-designated heritage asset, it must be accompanied by a Heritage Statement identifying, as a minimum, the significance of the asset, and an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the heritage asset. The level of detail of the Heritage Statement should be proportionate to the importance of the asset, the works proposed and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance and/or setting.

- 9.11** The Grade 2* listed Guildhall is one of Laxfield's key buildings and is much valued by residents. It currently houses the Museum on the first floor, and the Parish Rooms on the ground floor as well as other areas which are let to tenants for storage. It needs investment in significant repair and maintenance work to preserve it for the long term. Work also needs to be done to see whether it is possible to enable it to become financially sustainable and to support more extensive use of this community asset.

Community Action 2

Establish a Working Group to work with the Trustees of the Guildhall to develop a business case for investment in this historic building to preserve and improve its usability

- 9.12** The minimal amount of street lighting and resultant dark skies add to the rural character and sense of place. Paragraph 180 (c) of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should “limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation”. Artificial lighting of development, while increasing security, can also impact upon residential amenity, the character and appearance of an area (particularly rural locations) and the environment. Aspects such as poor design, location, or the expulsion of unnecessarily high levels of light can also have a harmful impact.

Policy LAX 8 - Dark Skies

While ensuring that new developments are secure in terms of occupier and vehicle safety, dark skies are to be preferred over streetlights. Any future outdoor lighting systems should have a minimum impact on the environment, minimising light pollution and adverse effects on wildlife subject to highway safety, the needs of particular individuals or groups, and security. Schemes should reduce the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies, keeping the night-time skies dark and reducing glare.

Design Considerations

- 9.13** The historic core of the village and its strong sense of community is valued by residents. The village quality is enhanced by its organic accretion over time, the relation from the centre to the countryside beyond and, above all, the sense of community spirit provided by the relationship of houses to public ways and each other.
- 9.14** To retain what is treasured, views of the countryside, safe public ways to dwell, not dominated by cars, and a sense of togetherness, will need collaboration. Community spirit comes from open dialogue, a willingness to address conflicting demands and respect for others. Quality places arise from community awareness and active participation. Written rules are insufficient. Policy LAX 9 will be supported by exemplars of best practice and Guidelines.
- 9.15** In addition, provision of space for the storage of wheelie bins is an important matter that, without careful consideration, can have a significant detrimental impact on the local environment. A lack of careful consideration to this detail can spoil the quality of even the highest quality designed homes and, therefore, new homes should incorporate the provision of covered storage areas for wheelie bins.
- 9.16** The provision of secure and covered storage for cycles is also important if we are to encourage greater use of sustainable modes of travel for short journeys in and around the village. As such, new homes should also make provision for covered cycle parking in accordance with the minimum standards set out in the Suffolk Parking Guidance.

Policy LAX 9 - Design Considerations

Proposals for new development must reflect the local character in the Neighbourhood Plan area and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment

In particular, proposals will be supported where, as appropriate to the proposal, they:

- a. recognise and address the key features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area and/or building as identified in the Built Environment Character Assessment and, on sites located outside the Settlement Boundary, prepare a landscape character appraisal to demonstrate this;
- b. maintain or create the village's sense of place and/or local character avoiding, where possible, developments which do not reflect the lane hierarchy and form of the settlement;
- c. do not involve the loss of gardens, open, green or landscaped areas or the erosion of the settlement gaps identified on the Policies Map, which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the village;
- d. taking mitigation measures into account, do not result in a significant adverse effect on:
 - i. the historic character, architectural or archaeological heritage assets of the site and its surroundings, including those locally identified Buildings of Local Significance listed in Appendix 2 and as identified on the Policies Map;
 - ii. landscape characteristics including trees and ancient hedgerows and other prominent topographical features;
 - iii. identified important views into, out of, or within the village as identified on the Policies Map;
 - iv. sites, habitats, species and features of ecological interest;
 - v. the amenities of adjacent areas by reason of noise, smell, vibration, overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light, other pollution (including light pollution), or volume or type of vehicular activity generated; and/or residential amenity;
- e. produce designs that respect the character, scale, height and density of the locality;
- f. produce designs, in accordance with standards, that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network ensuring that all appropriate vehicle parking is provided within the plot, a proportion of parking is provided on street but is well designed, located and integrated into the scheme to avoid obstruction to all highway users and visibility seeking always to ensure permeability through new housing areas, connecting any new development into the heart of the existing settlement, prioritising the movement of pedestrians and cyclists;

(continued)

(continued)

- g. wherever possible ensure that development faces on to existing lanes, retaining the rural character and creates cross streets or new back streets in keeping with the settlement's hierarchy of routes;
- h. do not result in water run-off that would add to or create surface water flooding; and shall include the use of above-ground open Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). These could include wetland and other water features, which can help reduce flood risk whilst offering other benefits including water quality, amenity/recreational areas, and biodiversity benefit;
- i. where appropriate, make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and for cycle storage in accordance with adopted cycle parking standards;
- j. include suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband; and
- k. provide one electronic vehicle charging point per new off-street parking place created.

Community Action 3

Establish a Working Group to define Design Guidelines.

Sustainability

9.17 Many energy-saving initiatives can be installed in homes within permitted development rights (ie: planning permission is not required) but there may be occasions where schemes that do require planning permission could have a potential adverse impact on the character of the area and the amenity nearby of residents. However, neighbourhood plans cannot impose any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction or performance of new dwellings.

9.18 Mains gas is not available in Laxfield, and therefore many residents are reliant on expensive and less efficient alternatives such as oil, coal or LPG. In line with national government policy, the long-term aim should be to reduce the overall use of all fossil fuels - gas, oil and coal - and move towards more sustainable energy sources.

9.19 While it is not appropriate for planning policies to require additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction or performance of new dwellings in neighbourhood plans, broader sustainability concerns need to be addressed non-residential development, including (but not limited to) water, materials, resource efficiency and biodiversity as well as the economic and social concerns discussed in some of the other areas of this Plan. Measures that reduce water usage including recycling will be supported and where Sustainable Drainage Systems are implemented, designs should seek to mimic the natural environment, and provide amenity and biodiversity benefits.

9.20 Sustainability is a concern for many residents, and there is strong support for making Laxfield a Green Village to ensure that sustainability is incorporated into the way we live as well as into development of the built environment.

BEI-6: Use of sustainable materials and building practices and design: 52% of respondents to the survey felt this was important.

Policy LAX 10 - Sustainable Construction Practices

This policy only applies to non-residential development.

Proposals that incorporate current best practice in energy conservation will be supported where such measures are designed to be integral to the building design and minimise any detrimental impact on the building or its surroundings. Development proposals should:

- a. demonstrate how they maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings;
- b. incorporate best practice in energy conservation and be designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency;
- c. avoid installing new fossil fuel-based heating systems; and
- d. incorporate sustainable design and construction measures and energy efficiency measures including, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, photovoltaics, solar panels and grey water recycling and rainwater and stormwater harvesting.

Community Action 4

Explore means of sharing best practice for sustainable design and construction techniques.



Example of eco-friendly house

10. Natural Environment

Landscape Character

- 10.1** The parish landscape is gently undulating, with a heavy clay plateau to the north of the settlement and rolling valleys along the River Blyth, which rises from a number of streams around the parish and flows east towards Halesworth.
- 10.2** Arable farming dominates the landscape, with predominantly large open fields but with stretches of hedging and generally small patches of woodland providing strong visual impact and breaking up the wide open views. Hedges are predominantly of hawthorn, blackthorn, dogwood and field maple with boundary trees - oak, ash and field maple in particular - also present; there were, at one time, also many elm trees, which have more recently been lost to Dutch Elm Disease. Laxfield Wood (which lies towards the southernmost part of the parish) is a small remnant of ancient woodland.
- 10.3** The historic settlement pattern outside the main Laxfield Settlement Boundary consists of dispersed farmsteads, with areas of clustered development of various sizes. This sparse settlement pattern is an important part of the intrinsic character of the landscape of the parish. Over recent years there has been a move to increase field sizes to utilise larger machinery.
- 10.4** There is a network of footpaths around the parish, although some of these seem to have been truncated and no longer have an obvious destination. 50% of survey respondents felt that we need more footpaths and bridleways, while around 70% felt that the existing paths and bridleways should be better signposted.
- 10.5** Local roads are predominantly rural lanes (often single track with passing places) flanked by ditches and hedges. The network of ditches establishes a strong rhythm across the landscape.
- 10.6** There are three County Wildlife Sites within the parish: Laxfield Cemetery, Mobbs Meadow (also known as Laxfield Meadow) and Laxfield Wood.

Green Spaces

- 10.7** Laxfield residents feel very strongly about the green spaces in the village: the trees and wide green verges of the High Street are a key part of the village character, and around 90% of survey respondents felt that it is important to retain the way the High Street looks. Mobbs Meadow, and the view of it from Church Plain in particular, is treasured by many local residents.
- 10.8** Other key green spaces include several allotment sites and the large (eight acre) playing field, as well as the village pond. There is strong support for protecting key sites that are not otherwise safeguarded by classifying them as Local Green Spaces.
- 10.9** 94% of respondents to the Household and 84% to the Young Adults surveys agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I value the wildlife and biodiversity around the village". Similar numbers also felt that the hedgerows and mature trees in the parish need to be protected. The majority of respondents also felt that the open views across field and woodland are important assets to the village (94% of Household and 86% of Young Adults). Responses to these statements are clearly high enough to mean that policies should be put in place to ensure that these aspects of the natural environment remain for future generations to enjoy.

NEI-1: Protecting our natural biodiversity, hedgerows and mature trees.

10.10 There is a distinct difference in residents' opinions on certain aspects of the natural environment, between respondents to the Household and the Young Adult surveys. For example, in responding to the statement "If faced with the choice, Laxfield's housing needs should take priority over protection of green spaces", responses were as follows: 76% of Household respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, 55% of Young Adult respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed; 18% of Household respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 41% of Young Adult respondents agreed or strongly agreed

10.11 This is not surprising, given that the young adult age group is the one most affected by high - and, for very many, unaffordable - housing costs in the parish at present, and the lack of opportunities for those who have been able to find smaller one or two-bedroom properties to move to family homes of three bedroomed accommodation.

NEI-2: Green spaces to walk in and enjoy. People clearly stated that they would like more publicly-accessible green spaces in and around Laxfield, as well as for some of the green spaces we do have - specifically the playing field - to be improved and made more attractive.

NEI-3: Footpaths and bridleways. Residents feel strongly that we need more footpaths and bridleways, and that the ones we have need to be better signposted and maintained. We need to maintain the current ones and develop new ones, suitably surfaced for all uses, and we need to develop a wider network of permissive paths.

NEI-4: Laxfield as a Green Village. This section of the Neighbourhood Plan makes several references to the aspiration to become a 'Green Village'. Whilst this term is generally understood to mean 'environmentally friendly', the Neighbourhood Planning Group prefers to apply the more precise principle applied by the Transition Network. As such, the term 'Green Village' is understood to mean that the local community 'respects resource limits and creates resilience, recognising the urgent need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, greatly reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and make wise use of precious resources.'

Planning Objectives

10.12 Residents have a strongly expressed vision of Laxfield as a lively, community-minded village set in a much-loved green environment which is of high biodiversity value. In ensuring that this vision can be maintained into the future, there is a tension which has to be addressed between the need for future development (which is clearly identified in all the community consultation that has taken place), and the strong desire to protect and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity in the Parish.

10.13 The natural environment objectives set out in this Plan therefore try to address that tension and provide the necessary protection whilst still supporting and encouraging future (appropriate) growth and change. They have been identified in the survey responses and tested at the public consultation event on 4th May 2019.

NEO-1: Protect and enhance the biodiversity and the natural environment around the Parish. This encompasses the importance of hedgerows and green spaces and of wildlife and biodiversity.

NEO-2: Protect the open views around the Parish.

NEO-3: The existing footpath network should be maintained and developed to enable everyone to walk or exercise in a green environment. This is an objective which could benefit from Laxfield's co-operation with neighbouring parishes.

NEO-4: Increase the amount of community green space.

NEO-5: Make Laxfield a Green Village.

Policies

Policy LAX 11 - Protection of Landscape Setting of Laxfield

To conserve the essential landscape, heritage and rural character of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, development proposals shall, where appropriate, demonstrate how they:

- i) have regard to the rural and landscape character and the setting of the village;
- ii) conserve the open countryside in and around the village area; and
- iii) will not have a detrimental visual impact on the key features of the important views identified on the Policies Map.



Landscape around the Parish of Laxfield

Policy LAX 12 - Biodiversity

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

Development proposals will be supported where they provide a net gain in biodiversity through, for example,

- a) the creation of new natural habitats including ponds;
- b) the planting of additional trees and hedgerows;
- c) restoring and repairing fragmented biodiversity networks; and
- d) the inclusion of swift bricks and/or bat boxes within new buildings.

Local Green Spaces

10.14 There are a number of important open areas within the village that not only make important contributions to the character and setting of the built environment, but also play important roles in providing space for recreation. The emerging Joint Local Plan identifies the allotments on Bickers Hill and the Recreation Ground as important open spaces.

10.15 The NPPF enables the formal designation and protection of land of particular importance to local communities as Local Green Spaces in neighbourhood plans. Such designations rule out new development on them other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 100 states that the designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- 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
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

10.16 The identification of these spaces as Local Green Space means that managing any development will be consistent with national policy for Green Belts. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation.



10.17 A separate Local Green Space Appraisal has been undertaken in preparing this Neighbourhood Plan that demonstrates how spaces meet the criteria in paragraph 100 of the NPPF. Those spaces that meet the criteria are identified in Policy LAX 13 and illustrated on the Policies Map. The identification of these spaces means that development on them is restricted to that which is essential to these sites, e.g. that required for utility service providers such as telecommunications equipment.

Policy LAX 13 - Local Green Spaces

The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on the Policies Map.

- 1 Allotments, Bickers Hill
- 2 Allotments, Station Road
- 3 Mobbs Meadow
- 4 Village Pond
- 5 Field on left of Goram Mill Lane
- 6 High Street verges

Community Action 5

Establish a Working Group to map out and report on the condition of foot and cycle paths and make recommendations for improvement to the Parish Council. This group should also work with neighbouring parishes to extend and develop the footpath and cycle path network.

Community Action 6

Set up a Working Group to produce proposals for the viability and plans for local Greenways (in association with Community Action 5)

Community Action 7

Set up a Working Group to produce proposals for a re-design of our use of community green space such as areas around the edge of the Playing Field which are currently not used for any specific purpose. Such uses include community growing areas, a community orchard, and outdoor gym equipment (in association with Community Action 12)

Community Action 8

Set up a Working Group to produce proposals to deliver a 'Green Laxfield'.

Community Action 9

Set up a Working Group to produce proposals for establishing and maintaining wildflower meadows.

11. Amenities and Services

Current Position

11.1 Laxfield village amenities are well used and appreciated and include:

- All Saints Church of England Primary School
- A preschool
- Two churches
- A modern village hall
- Sheltered, Retirement and Supported Living Accommodation
- A Hardware store. Previously a garage, Grayston's provides a wide range of gardening, domestic and agricultural goods plus servicing for lawnmowers and other light machinery.
- A Co-op, with a Post Office
- Laxfield Museum
- Two pubs
- A large playing field
- A mobile library
- Allotments
- A community market, held once a month in and around the church

ASI-1: Medical provision in the Parish. There is no doctor's or dentist's surgery in the village and residents without cars find it difficult to get to appointments which makes accessing health services difficult.

11.2 All Saints Primary School, which has Academy status, serves children from 5-11 years of age and is currently full at 119 places. There is a pre-school on-site and a stay-and-play facility, thus making provision for pre-school children from the age of six months old. This is a thriving, full school, with a breakfast club and many after-school clubs, supported by an active Parent Teacher Association - Friends of All Saints - that organises fund raising events throughout the year. The school has a swimming pool that is no longer used; children are bused to nearby Stradbroke swimming pool for swimming lessons. The main points raised by respondents to the household Neighbourhood Plan survey were:

- The lack of space internally/ externally and for access
- There are requests for Forest School space
- There are mixed views on the swimming pool. Some would dearly like it restored, others would prefer to continue to use Stradbroke pool, leaving room for a new classroom
- Were a Community Garden to be introduced to the village on the playing field, the school head has suggested the school could willingly be part of this

ASI-2: Primary School and Pre-school. The school is at capacity, with questions raised about the need for an additional classroom. Parking outside the school is a notable problem, with double parking on the road at beginning and end of the day and great concerns about the safety of children, parents and other road users at that time (ref TID I2).

- 11.3** Laxfield Baptist Chapel is situated in the centre of the village and offers a range of services, classes and meetings. In addition to two services each Sunday and a weekly bible study and prayer meeting, the Chapel runs coffee and chat meetings, craft sessions and special events throughout the year. They also run groups for children including: -
- Sparkles - a pre-school playgroup
 - Connect - a group for Reception to Year 5
 - The Buzz - a group for Year 6 and above
- 11.4** All Saints Church of England Church is part of the Four Rivers Benefice. The Church is open throughout the year and runs regular Sunday services. Groups taking place in the Church include a community choir, bell-ringing, discussion groups and a men's group; special events, such as community suppers, are also hosted in the Church, which has recently had the kitchen completely modernised, as well as improvements to the bell tower. The church also opens its doors to the monthly Saturday market and other events.
- 11.5** The Village Hall is a large, recently modernised hall, offering a main hall area, a smaller 'entrance' hall, plus a bar, kitchen and toilets/cloakroom. It is well equipped, having a large storage area, staging, lighting, a sound system, projector and free wifi. There is parking for the disabled and good vehicular access for loading and unloading. The hall is well maintained by a dedicated voluntary committee and is run on a not-for-profit basis and is well used by people from the parish and surroundings, with many regular clubs and activities running weekly, as well as annual and one-off events.
- 11.6** Hartismere House is a complex offering 22 flats, managed by Babergh and Mid-Suffolk District Council for Sheltered Housing, Retirement Housing and Supported Living. The manager is responsible for several similar provisions locally and is non-residential. This is also the site for the visiting Mobile Library.
- ASI-3: Laxfield as a 'Dementia-friendly village'.** There is considerable support on the evidence of comments in the survey and at community events for Laxfield to take steps to put a structure in place so that we can help and support more vulnerable people in our community live happy and healthy lives.
- ASI-4: Hartismere House.** It is felt that there is not as much of a link between Hartismere House residents and the wider community as there was previously, and people would like to see the links strengthened again.
- 11.7** The two shops in Laxfield are Grayston's, a hardware store (also offering mechanical repairs) and the Co-Op, selling groceries and including a Post Office. The Co-Op is located at one end of the village, opposite the Museum, next to All Saints Church and close to The Royal Oak pub; Grayston's is situated at the other end, close to the war memorial; both shops are highly valued by residents and visitors, as they provide essentials supplies and services.
- 11.8** Being located at either end of the High Street, the shops provide an informal meeting place for many residents. Both venues provide general information relating to the village and surrounding area; the Co-Op has a public notice board situated inside the shop and Grayston's has a notice board in the forecourt, as well as collections of cards and leaflets offering local services inside the shop.

11.9 The Museum is housed in the 16th Century Guildhall in the centre of the village and holds an extensive village archive, comprising of photos, documents and artefacts. It is open regularly, for limited periods between April and October. Access is limited as it is on the first floor of a Grade 2 listed building and opening hours are limited. There are links with the school, Hartismere House and the community in general via specific outreach packages for education, therapy and research. The village is proud of its museum; when asked what they valued most about the village, over 50% of household survey respondents said they valued the Guildhall and over 70% said 'village history/built heritage'.

ASI-5: Laxfield Museum. There is a great demand for increased access to the Museum and for more events to be staged by the Museum. Concerns regarding the fabric of the building and unused space within the Guildhall in general were also raised in the Survey.

11.10 There are two pubs in the village, both dating back to the 16th Century and registered as Grade 2 buildings.

11.11 The Royal Oak is situated on the High Street, near to the Co-Op, the Museum and All Saints Church. It hosts a variety of events and entertainments, from Sunday breakfasts with guest speakers to three-day music festivals. It also part-hosts the monthly Community Market, opening up the restaurant area to stall holders selling everything from organic beef to Fair Trade merchandise and ethically produced cosmetics.

11.12 The King's Head, known locally as The Low House, is a thatched building and still has the original tap room, where beer is drawn from wooden casks. It has a restaurant, offers bed and breakfast, and the large garden (previously a bowling green) is used for public entertainments and private functions. The pub was previously owned by Adnams and is now community owned.

11.13 The playing field is reputedly the largest playing field in Suffolk, and offers a large grassed area for sports use, a pavilion, a children's play area, a bowling green and some parking/vehicular access space. This amenity is greatly appreciated as a space and for the opportunities it offers for organised sport and informal outdoor play, but many residents feel that it is under-utilised.

ASI-6: Under-use of playing field and sports pavilion. It is generally thought that both the playing field and the pavilion have the potential to be significantly improved, and that they could be used for many other, different activities; it is considered a valuable space within the village.

11.14 Main points raised by respondents to the Laxfield Village Neighbourhood Development Plan Survey included suggestions for additions to the playing field:

- a skate park
- outdoor fitness equipment for all ages
- a Forest School
- a Community Garden
- more imaginative landscaping/planting
- renovation of the pavilion building.

11.15 The village has two allotment sites; the first on Station Road, entering the village from the Stradbroke direction, and the other on Bickers Hill; the second site stretches across and down to the public footpath that adjoins Gorams' Mill Lane. Plot holders often sell surplus produce from road-side stalls and it is evident that these green spaces are regarded as valuable community spaces.

Planning Objectives

ASO-1: Provide preventative health and well-being facilities

ASO-2: Increase access to the material used and curated by the Museum

Policies

11.16 Given the remoteness of the village from larger centres of population and services, it is essential that services and facilities are protected and enhanced for the use of current and future residents. However, it is recognised that demands change over time and it would be unreasonable to require the retention of facilities if there is no longer a proven need or demand for them. In such circumstances it might be appropriate for those uses to be lost where specific criteria can be met.

11.17 In some instances, the loss of a service might have a significant detrimental impact on the settlement and its sustainability. The 'Assets of Community Value' / 'Community Right to Bid' scheme was introduced by the Government in the Localism Act 2011 and came into force in September 2012. The aim of the Right to Bid is to give community groups time to make realistic bids to buy land or buildings that are of importance to the local community when they come up for sale. Under the Community Right to Bid, community groups are able to nominate non-residential buildings or land within their communities as 'assets of community value' which cannot be sold without the community group being given the opportunity to put together a bid to purchase the asset. A building or other land is an asset of community value if its main use has recently been or is presently used to further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community and could do so in the future. The Localism Act states that 'social interests' include cultural, recreational and sporting interests. It may be appropriate during the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan to seek to get the District Council to designate land or buildings as an Asset of Community Value.

Protecting Existing Facilities and Services

Policy LAX 14 - Protecting existing services and facilities

Proposals that would result in the loss of valued facilities or services which support a local community (or premises last used for such purposes) will only be permitted where:

- a. it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable nor likely to become viable. Where appropriate, supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 12 months; and
- b. it can be demonstrated, through evidenced research, that there is no local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or
- c. alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling or walking.

11.18 Opportunities for participating in exercise are important to the health of residents and reducing pressures on the health service. The Neighbourhood Plan can play an important role in making sure that there are sufficient and adequate services in the villages to meet the needs of current and future residents. As the population of the village grows, there is likely to be a demand for further facilities, either an expansion of the existing or totally new provision. However, it is also important to safeguard what we already have, and existing facilities will be protected from being lost unless there are demonstrable reasons for their loss.

11.19 Around £42,000 has already been secured towards the improvement of the Sports Pavilion and it may be appropriate to try to secure Community Infrastructure Levy funds for further improvements to the amount and quality of sport and recreation provision by 2036.

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

Policy LAX 15 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

Proposals for the provision, enhancement and/or expansion of amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities, as shown on the Policies Map, will be permitted subject to compliance with other Policies in this and other adopted Local Plans. Development which will result in the loss of existing amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will not be allowed unless:

- a. it can be demonstrated that the space or facility is surplus to requirement against the local planning authority's standards for the particular location, and the proposed loss will not result in a likely shortfall during the plan period; or
- b. replacement for the space or facilities lost is made available, of at least equivalent quantity and quality, and in a suitable location to meet the needs of users of the existing space or facility.

Any replacement provision should take account of the needs of the Parish, and the current standards of open space and sports facility provision adopted by the local planning authority.

Where necessary to the acceptability of the development, the local planning authority will require developers of new housing, office, retail or other commercial and mixed development to provide open space including play areas, formal sport/recreation areas, amenity areas and where appropriate, indoor sports facilities or to provide land and a financial contribution towards the cost and maintenance of existing or new facilities, as appropriate. These facilities will be secured through the use of conditions and/or planning obligations.

Clubhouses, pavilions, car parking and ancillary facilities must be of a high standard of design. The location of such facilities must be well related and sensitive to the topography, character and uses of the surrounding area, particularly when located in or close to residential areas. Proposals which give rise to intrusive floodlighting will not be permitted.

Community Action 10

Develop costed options for use and refurbishment of the Sports Pavilion.

Community Action 11

Develop options for increasing use of the Playing Field. There is very strong support and enthusiasm for proposals to develop community gardens and orchards as well as outdoor gym equipment around the edges of the playing field, and several people expressed a desire to become involved in taking these ideas forward (in association with Community Action 6).

Community Action 12

Develop proposals for making Laxfield 'Dementia Friendly' and increase support networks within the village.

Community Action 13

Seek ways to engage young people in the development of recreational and sporting facilities and find ways to actively support delivery of their aspirations.

Community Action 14

Work with the Museum Trustees to explore ways of extending use of this valuable asset.

Community Action 15

Develop a Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan to provide a clear picture of Laxfield's current and potential assets and ensure that appropriate funding can be provided (and where necessary additional funding sought) to maintain and develop those assets appropriately.



12. Businesses, Employment and Makers

12.1 In our Parish Survey, 30% of respondents said they were self-employed or ran their own business in and around the village, with 70% of respondents saying they did not. The 70% includes retired people.

12.2 Of the adult population, 48% of survey respondents said they worked or studied within five miles of Laxfield, 31% 5-20 miles away, 11% 21-40 miles away and 11% over 40 miles away.

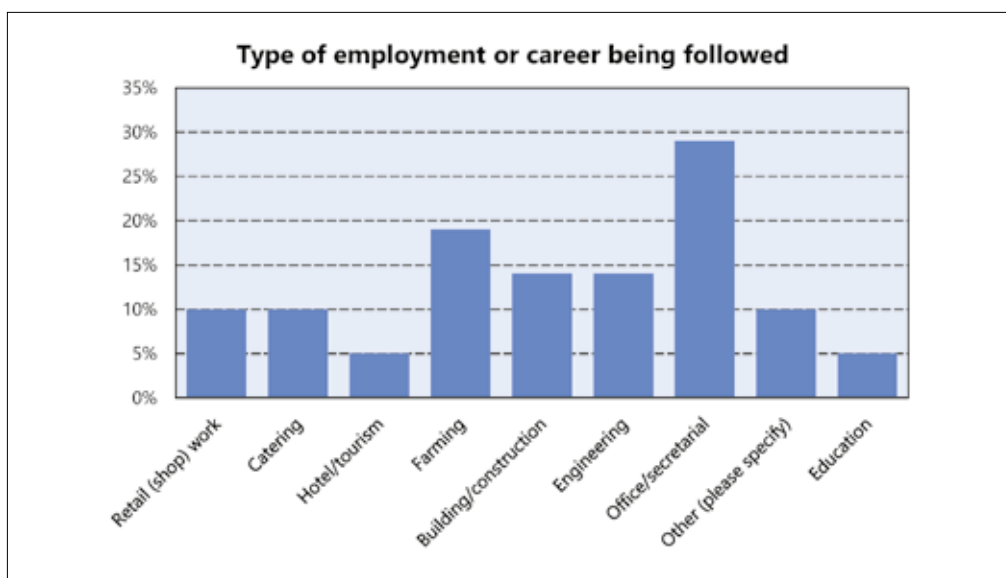
BEMI-1: Public Transport. The shortage of public transport is one of the greatest inhibitors to work, as indicated by the fact that over 30% of survey respondents cited this.

BEMI-2: Care for children or adult dependents. The availability and cost of care is an issue that prevents around a quarter of survey participants from working. This contributes to the low wage position of a large number of Laxfield residents, particularly the younger members of the community.

12.3 There is a wide range of businesses which operate from within the Parish. The largest groups are Building Services and Gardening Landscaping Services, while the range of other services offered includes Hairdressers, Beauticians, Dog Walkers, Sewing and Upholstery. Laxfield also has a sizeable number of people who work in the Hospitality sector, Farming and Land, and Retail. A smaller but still significant number classify themselves as working in Creative, Arts and Crafts. The majority of these occupations are low waged. There is a proportion of the population who identify themselves as working in the Professional Services sector, which tends to be better paid than most of the other occupations.

BEMI-3: Support for local businesses. There is no infrastructure or local business support to assist small businesses. Given the interest and support for attracting more small business (56%) and increasing local employment opportunities (72%) this is an issue that would be useful to investigate.

In our Young Adults survey responses, most of employment is low-waged.



BEMI-4: Communications infrastructure. Both broadband and mobile coverage and service has improved recently, but whilst this is no longer a significant issue within the Settlement Boundary it is still a problem for those living in outlying parts of the Parish.

Planning Objectives

BEMO-1: Examine opportunities to support the availability of local employment.

BEMO-2: Encourage opportunities for people to work from home.

Policies

- 12.4** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the creation of new jobs where such development would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the area, the local road network and the amenity of residents living near the site or on the access route to the site. It is envisaged that employment premises would remain small in terms of the size of the premises and the number of people employed on the site.

Policy LAX 16 - New Businesses and Employment

Proposals for new business development will be supported where sites are located within the Settlement Boundary identified on the Policies Map, where they would not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity, heritage assets, highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Outside the Settlement Boundary, proposals will be supported where they relate to small scale leisure or tourism activities, or other forms of commercial/employment-related development or agriculture related development of a scale and nature appropriate to a countryside location and a need to be located outside the Settlement Boundary can be satisfactorily demonstrated.

Where possible, business developments should be sited in existing buildings or on areas of previously developed land and be of a size and scale that do not adversely affect the character, highways, infrastructure, residential amenity and environment of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

- 12.5** Some of the farms in the area have expanded over time with the development of large barns for storage and there is some scope for further commercial development in these areas. However, where new commercial development is proposed it is important that buildings reflect the rural and agricultural building styles typically found in the area. Care is also required to ensure new buildings are not seen breaking the skyline which can make them appear visually intrusive. Wherever possible care should be taken to ensure they have a backdrop of vegetation. Buildings tend to be arranged along the main routes and have a loose arrangement where the wider landscape flows between building groups. This low density and loose arrangement should be retained.

- 12.6** There may be opportunities for the diversification of agricultural businesses, perhaps through the establishment of farm shops, craft units or small-scale business uses. These uses will be supported in principle as long as they do not undermine the viability of the agricultural unit and that the impacts, especially traffic generation, of such uses are acceptable in a rural location.

Policy LAX 17 - Farm Diversification

Applications for new employment uses of redundant traditional farm buildings will be supported, providing it has been demonstrated that they are no longer viable or needed for farming. Re-use for economic development purposes is preferred, but proposals which would result in unacceptable harm to the rural economy or would adversely affect the character, highways, infrastructure, residential amenity, environment (including national and international designated sites) and landscape character will not be supported.

Community Action 16

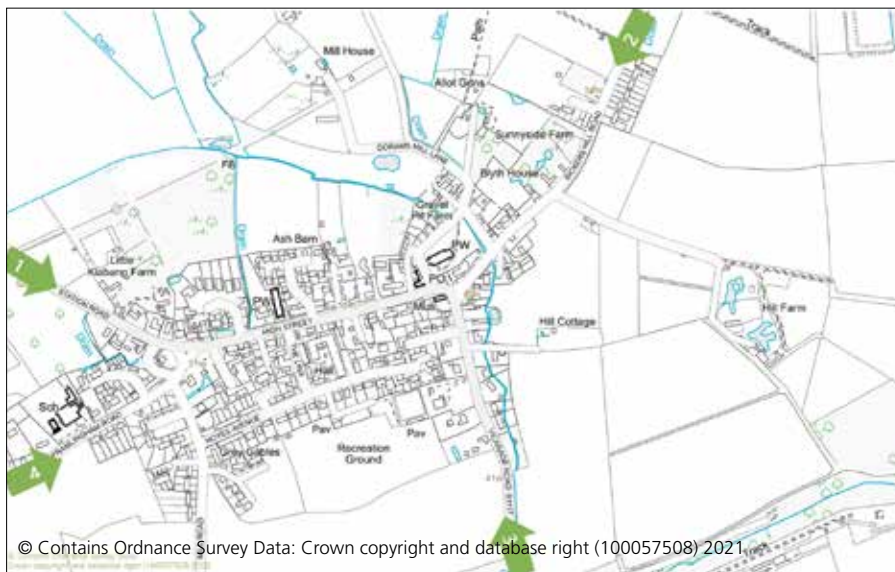
Establish a group to investigate and report on potential for improving facilities for local small businesses and makers.

Community Action 17

Instigate a study of the local economy to understand how it is generated and who contributes to it in different ways.

13. Transport, Infrastructure and Distribution Links

13.1 Over 90% of survey respondents own a car. Over 50% cite walking as a form of transport, and 35% use a bicycle. In neither case is it clear if this is for pleasure or from necessity. Electric Bikes, motor bikes and mopeds account for 6% in total, while mobility vehicles are used by 1%. 9% share cars, although this is not clear if by formal or informal arrangements. 10% use public transport; reliability, route and availability are the main barriers to better bus usage, as well as cost. Disability access and links to other bus/train routes are also important. Halesworth, Diss and Framlingham were the top destinations of choice.



Map 8 - Village Gateways

13.2 There are four entrances to the village - the two principal gateways (numbered 1 and 3 on Map 8 and in the photographs below) are on the main route through the village, the B1117.



1. Station Road (east bound view)



3. Vicarage Road (west bound view)



2. Bickers Hill Road (west bound view)



4. Framlingham Road (east bound view), which has a high usage although on a minor road

13.3 None is currently marked in any significant way, and this represents a missed opportunity to signpost the village and emphasise the Settlement Boundary.

TIDI-1: Parking in the centre of the village, near the shop, Guildhall and Church. 50% of respondents “strongly agreed” that parking was an issue.

13.4 Parking outside the Co-Op was highlighted by many respondents to the Laxfield Village Neighbourhood Development Plan Survey, with many raising the issue of safety for both drivers and pedestrians, particularly families with young children, using the shop.

13.5 There is some parking available outside the Co-Op but, during busy periods, cars are often parked on the opposite side of the road, close to a blind bend. Given the general increase in traffic, including large agricultural vehicles, travelling through the village, this is potentially very dangerous. There have already been incidents where cars reversing away from the Co-Op have backed into cars parked across the road.

TIDI-2: Parking near the School is widely seen as creating an environment that is unsafe for pupils, parents and residents and other road users. 53% of respondents “strongly agreed” that parking around school needed managing.

TIDI-3: Speeding, despite the introduction of a speed indicator device, is still a significant issue for many people. This is not just restricted to cars: lorries, vans and even tractors are known to speed through the village, and this links to TIDI-4 below.

TIDI-4: The increasing number of large agricultural and delivery vehicles on small roads and in village centre can be hazardous, particularly when driven at inconsiderate speed.

TIDI-5: Very limited public transport, which is isolating for people who do not have their own transport, and limits opportunities for work and study.

TIDI-6: There is a great deal of interest in reducing the use of motorised vehicles by encouraging more people to cycle and walk within the village and improving footpaths and creating safe cycle routes - again, there are links here to residents’ concerns about sustainability and the desire to improve Laxfield’s environmental performance.

TIDI-7: Safety of pedestrians is a concern, particularly in the centre of the village. 54% of respondents stated that dropped kerbs were “important” or “very important”, and 31% said pedestrian crossings were “important” or “very important”.

Planning Objectives

TIDO-1: Changes to road layout and new developments need to be sensitive and thoughtful to preserve the character of the village.

TIDO-2: New development must be designed to support the integration of development into the village through provision of alternative transport routes.

TIDO-3: Sufficient off-street parking should be included in new build plans.

**TIDO-4: Encourage a reduction in motorised traffic within the village.
Good local infrastructure that encourages walking and cycling would give environmental and health benefits.**

TIDO-5: Electric car charging must be considered in all new development.

Policies

13.6 It is beyond the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan to influence policy decisions around some of the issues raised above at this stage. We will put in place Community Actions instead, to try to move forward in addressing some of these issues.

Policy LAX 18 - Public Rights of Way

Development which would adversely affect the character or result in the loss of existing or proposed rights of way, will not be permitted unless alternative provision or diversions can be arranged which are at least as attractive, safe and convenient for public use. This will apply to rights of way for pedestrian, cyclist, or horse rider use. Improvements and additions to such rights of way shall be delivered as an integral part of new development to enable new or improved links to be created within the settlement, between settlements and/or providing access to the countryside or green infrastructure sites as appropriate.

Community Action 18

Set up a Working Party to investigate options for planning and implementing safe routes for active travel within 15 minutes' walk of the village

Community Action 19

Establish a Working Group to identify how to facilitate walking and cycling as preferred means of transport within the village and beyond.

Community Action 20

Establish the potential for car sharing and local lifts.

Community Action 21

Examine how to improve parking situation in the village centre and near school, as well as making Disabled Parking spaces enforceable.

Community Action 22

Work with local businesses to identify how to reduce parking demand and the need for large lorries to make deliveries.

Community Action 23

Enhance and enforce speed limits and improve road safety, working with the relevant authorities.

Community Action 24

Investigate options for delivery of goods to be delivered to a central point then re-distributed within a close radius using more sustainable methods.

Community Action 25

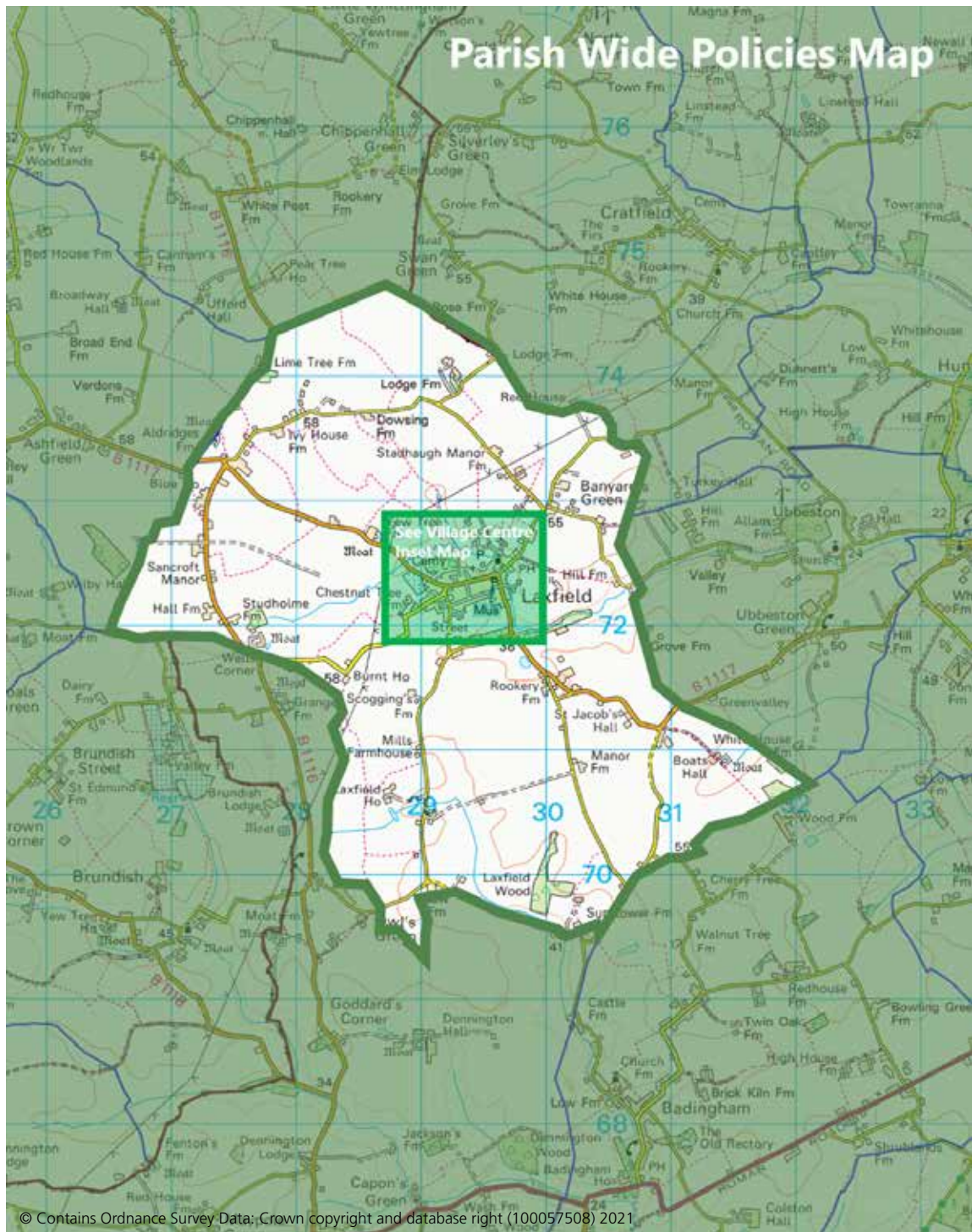
Establish a working group to consider the wider ramifications of creating Quiet Lanes and report back to the Parish Council.

- 13.7** There is an ambition in the Parish to take a different approach to managing traffic, by looking at opportunities to introduce Quiet Lanes rather than simply lowering speed limits. National legislation is in place under The Quiet Lanes and Home Zones Regulations, 2006, and an area has previously been trialled in Suffolk. A Quiet Lane is a nationally recognised designation, requesting people to “Expect and Respect”, as in ‘EXPECT the lane to be used by a variety of people, animals and transport, and RESPECT each others rights to considerate road use’. It is acknowledged that this would be a long-term objective, but is worth further discussion and consideration.

14. Implementation and Monitoring

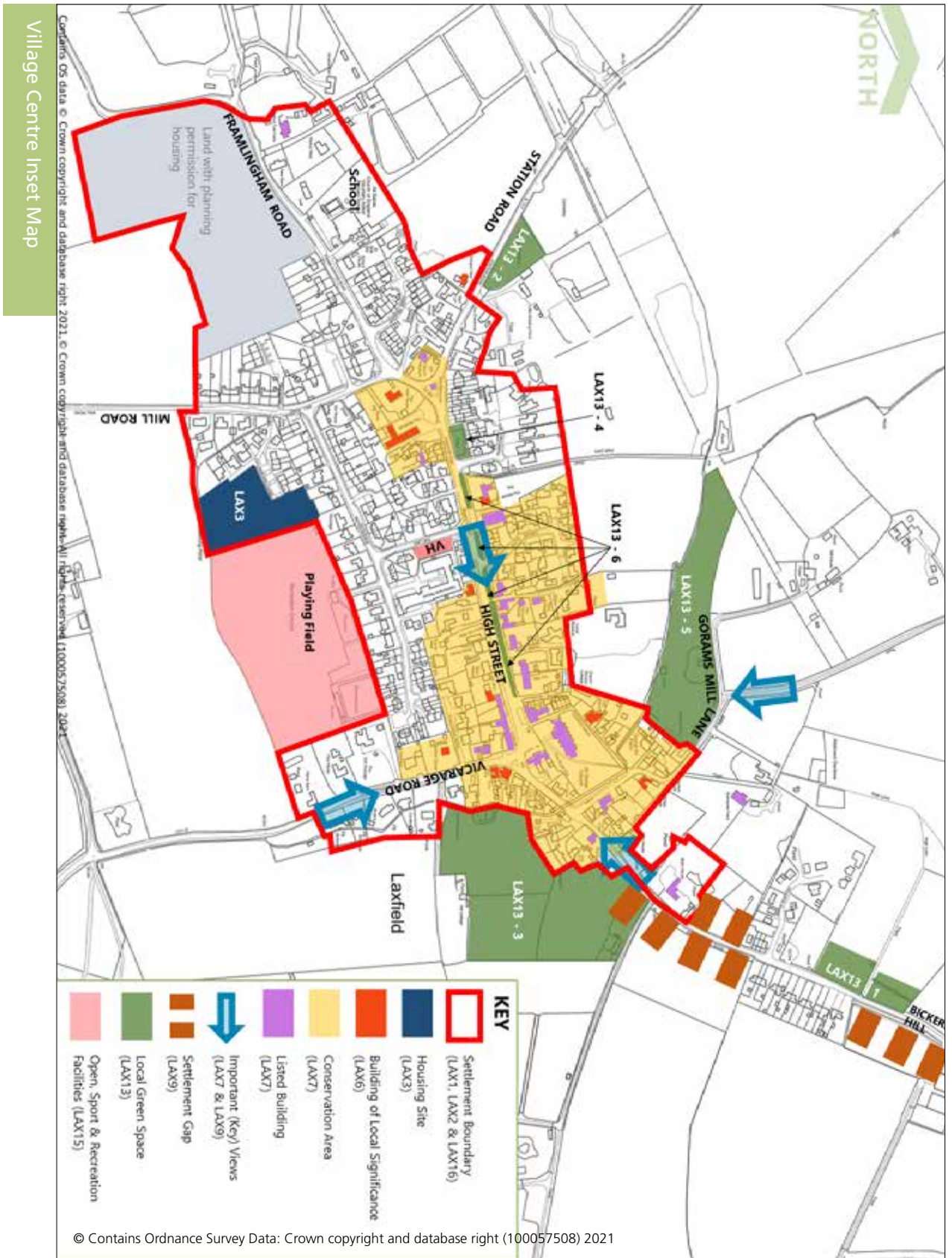
- 14.1** The Parish Council will provide strong support for the Community Actions set out in this Plan, as well as ensuring that the decisions it takes are in line with the policies contained in the Plan. As a first step, it will develop a Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan to provide a clear picture of Laxfield's assets and ensure that appropriate funding decisions can be taken.
- 14.2** The Parish Council will review, at regular intervals, the policies laid out in this Plan. At least annually, the Parish Council will check whether the Policies are being applied as intended and whether overall the Plan is as effective as intended and to keep it current.
- 14.3** The Parish Council will monitor the Plan at least annually to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate given changes to Local and National Planning Policy and will report the outcome to Parish residents.
- 14.4** The Parish Council will be proactive about engaging with those responsible for potential new development before it takes place.
- 14.5** The Parish Council will examine opportunities to improve the quality of future development within the Parish, working where appropriate with outside bodies and expertise to continue developing the Plan.

Policies Maps



Parish Wide Policies Map

Village Centre Inset Map



Appendix 1 - Listed Buildings

The information in this appendix was correct at the time of writing this Plan. Up to date information should be sought from Historic England or Mid Suffolk District Council.

As at 31 January 2020

Grade I

- CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS', THE STREET

Grade II*

- WATERLOO HOUSE, BICKERS HILL ROAD
- ALDRIDGE'S FARMHOUSE, FRESSINGFIELD ROAD
- OLD GUILDHALL, THE STREET
- WHITE HOUSE FARMHOUSE

Grade: II

- WILLOW COTTAGE, THE STREET
- BAPTIST CHAPEL, THE STREET
- RAILINGS ALONG STREET FRONTAGE OF BAPTIST CHAPEL, THE STREET
- LILAC COTTAGE
- LILAC COTTAGE, THE STREET
- BLUE HOUSE FARMHOUSE
- NOYES FARMHOUSE
- ST JACOB'S HALL
- STUDHOLME FARMHOUSE
- MANOR FARMHOUSE, BADINGHAM ROAD
- THE TIMBERS, BANYARD'S GREEN
- STADHAUGH MANOR FARMHOUSE, BANYARD'S GREEN
- BLYTH HOUSE, BICKERS HILL ROAD
- IVY HOUSE FARMHOUSE, CAKE STREET
- LODGE FARMHOUSE, CAKE STREET
- MILLS FARMHOUSE, DENNINGTON ROAD
- LOW FARMHOUSE, DENNINGTON ROAD
- CHESTNUT TREE FARMHOUSE
- CHESTNUT TREE FARMHOUSE, FRAMLINGHAM ROAD
- THE KING'S HEAD, GORAMS MILL LANE
- MOUNT PLEASANT, STATION ROAD
- THE OLD BAKERY, THE STREET
- THE VILLA, THE STREET
- SUFFOLK HOUSE, THE STREET
- K6 TELEPHONE KIOSK OUTSIDE POST OFFICE, THE STREET
- SANCROFT COTTAGE
- STREET FARMHOUSE
- ROOKERY FARMHOUSE, BADINGHAM ROAD
- MOAT FARMHOUSE, BANYARD'S GREEN

- CROUCH COTTAGES, CAKE STREET
- LODGE COTTAGES
- LODGE COTTAGES, CAKE STREET
- LAXFIELD HOUSE, DENNINGTON ROAD
- LIME TREE FARMHOUSE, FRESSINGFIELD ROAD
- SUNNYSIDE FARMHOUSE, GORAMS MILL LANE
- ST HELENS, THE STREET
- THE GENERAL WOLFE, THE STREET
- ROSE COTTAGE, THE STREET
- GLAVEN COTTAGE, VICARAGE ROAD
- WAR MEMORIAL
- WEST END HOUSE, THE STREET
- BARN 20 METRES NORTH OF LOW FARMHOUSE, DENNINGTON ROAD
- HULVERTREE FARMHOUSE, BADINGHAM ROAD
- CRINGLES, THE STREET
- CLEMATIS HOUSE, THE STREET
- THE OLD MANSE, THE STREET
- ELMS FARMHOUSE, WELLS CORNER
- BOATS HALL
- THE OLD WHITE HORSE
- FIELD HOUSE, STATION ROAD
- BARN IMMEDIATELY NORTH WEST OF ALDRIDGE'S FARMHOUSE, FRESSINGFIELD ROAD
- THE ROYAL OAK, THE STREET
- GUILDHALL COTTAGES, 4, THE STREET
- GUILDHALL COTTAGES, 3, THE STREET
- GIBSON AND SCACE FAMILY MONUMENT IMMEDIATELY SW OF THE S PORCH OF THE CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, THE STREET

Appendix 2 - Buildings of Local Significance

1. **Gatehouse (was Gay House)**, Vicarage Road - unusual Flemish Tile façade - was in use as a newsagents shop (Selsby's) in early 20th Century
2. **The Manse (next to the Chapel and in front of the Old Manse)** - thought to be site of the Dame School attended by Sir Alfred Munnings
3. **The Malt House & the Maltings** -the Malt House is an imposing building, home of the Cullingford family. The Maltings is now flats but used to have a butchers shop attached at the High Street end, run by "Boysie" Cullingford
4. **Old Schools**
 - a. **The Boys School** - stands at the junction between Vicarage Road and Market Street, pupils used to cross the road to the Guildhall, where they would climb the back stairs to get their lunches.
 - b. **The Girls School** - is behind the Church, and is now divided into 2 private houses, both closed when the new school was built in 1960's. The Boys school was in use as a youth Club, at one time
5. **Jasmine House, Vicarage Road** - Another handsome property, at one time in use as a public house. There was a fine Victorian glass lean-to in the front garden
6. **Workshop/outhouse adjacent to 4, Guildhall Cottages** - this may have been used as a blacksmiths forge or carpenter's workshop
7. **Bridge House, Gorams Mill Lane (Bridge Street)** - there used to be a lean-to on the side, in use as a barbers; its façade also contains some Flemish tiles as at Gatehouse.
8. **Old Bank House, The Street** - much extended - it was used by Barclays Bank as an off-shoot of the Framlingham branch
9. **Old Police House, Station Road** - originally the residence of the Village policeman

Appendix 3 - Outstanding Residential Planning Permissions

The list below identifies planning permissions which had been granted but not completed at 1 April 2018 or new residential planning permissions between 1 April 2018 and 30 November 2020.

Planning Permission Reference	Site Address	Date of approval	Net dwellings outstanding 2018	Permissions since 1 April 2018
M /3610/12/FUL	Co-operative Food Store, High Street	15/01/2013	1	
M /3844/12/FUL	Belle View, Cake Street	04/04/2013	1	
M /1683/13/FUL	The Old Boys School, Market Street	29/08/2013	1	
M /3064/13/FUL	2 Framlingham Road	03/12/2013	1	
M /2326/14/FUL	Brick barn at Corner Farm, Banyards Green	03/06/2015	1	
M /1683/15/FUL	Land rear of St. Helens, High Street	23/07/2015	1	
M /1073/16/FUL	Fishers Farm, Dennington Rd	11/05/2016	1	
M /3500/16/PRN	Corner Farm, Banyards Green	12/10/2016	2	
M /3642/16/OUT	Land on west side of Bickers Hill Road	11/04/2017	10	
DC/17/03501/FUL	The Villa High Street	12/09/2017	1	
DC/17/04032/FUL	Land to rear of Underlimes and St. Helens, High Street	06/10/2017	1	
DC/17/04774/PRN	Chestnut Tree Farm Framlingham Road	13/11/2017	1	
DC/17/04375/FUL	Land adjacent to Mill Road (south side of 13 Noyes Avenue)	23/11/2017	12	
DC/17/05227/FUL	Yew Tree Farm Station Road	13/03/2018	2	
DC/17/06313/FUL	Land to rear of Suffolk House, Underlimes and St. Helens, High Street	13/03/2018	1	

Planning Permission Reference	Site Address	Date of approval	Net dwellings outstanding 2018	Permissions since 1 April 2018
DC/17/05818/FUL	Land to rear of Suffolk House, High Street		1	
DC/18/02051/FUL	Low Farm House Barn Mill Road	17/07/2018		1
DC/18/03616/FUL	Sandale Banyards Green	29/10/2018		1
DC/18/04432/FUL	Land To Rear Of Underlimes And St Helens High Street,	28/11/2018		1
DC/19/00038/FUL	Land To The East Of Mill Road	13/02/2019		4
DC/19/01441	Land To The Rear Of Suffolk House, High Street	21/05/2019		3
DC/19/01082	Land At Chestnut Tree Farm, Framlingham Road,	16/05/2019		1
DC/19/01072	Barn At Little Meadows Farm Banyards Green	25/04/2019		1
DC/19/00156	Land to the East of Mill Road	18/10/2019		13
DC/19/03856	Prior Approval for Change of Use of Agricultural Building to Dwellinghouse, The Timbers, Banyards Green	15/11/2019		1
DC/19/02312	Land south of Framlingham Road	03/11/2019		49
			38	75

SOURCE - Mid Suffolk District Council online Planning Permissions database

Total relevant permissions = 113

Appendix 4 - Landscape Apraisal

A leisurely bike ride around some of the outlying lanes beyond the settlement area provided an overview of the Parish.

The roads covered included: -

- Bickers Hill
- Banyard's Green
- Cratfield Rd
- Part of Cake St and the leg to Chip Green
- B1117 Vicarage Rd to Cook's Corner
- Cook's Corner to Hulver Tree Farm
- On to Sunflower
- Sunflower to Low Farm
- On to Owls Green
- Dennington Rd

In simple terms, the outer parish can be described in four quadrants; North West, North East, South West and South East.

North West

- Open, generally flat, with limited tree and hedge row cover.
- Main highway is the B1117 to Stradbroke, with parallel routes to north and south.
- Good public footpath (PROW) access intersect the fields.
- Typical agricultural landscape with big sky, interrupted by power lines and a few private wind turbines.

North East

- The hamlet of Banyard's Green defines a large part of this area resulting in more varied skylines.
- A criss-cross of roads leading to outlying villages and some useful PROWs.
- Short hills on roads leading south to the village centre and east to Ubbeston, indicate the valley of the upper reaches of the Blyth.

South West

- The main road, B1117, winds up and out towards Halesworth.
- There some useful tree belts running east/west at a low level (Sewers and St. Farm Rd.) and the buildings with associated gardens and field hedges give additional cover.
- Further south the landscape opens up again to larger fields and two roads give access to Badingham and beyond via the A1120.

South East

- As you enter this quadrant from the east Laxfield Wood predominates; although truncated over the centuries and not open to public access, this wood is of environmental value.
- Beyond the woods the fields, although large, fold gently into water courses.
- The large area of agricultural land heading north is bisected by the Sheep Walk, the only public access route.
- To the west of Dennington Rd the fields are generally smaller with hedge boundaries and the protected environs of Laxfield House, together with the Racecourse field, give a more intimate feel to the landscape.
- Several PROW bisect the area.
- The parish boundary stops where the hamlet of Owl's Green in the parish of Dennington starts.

In all of the quadrants the nature of the soil and subsoil have a large effect on the field topography. The predominately heavy clay soils mean that drainage ditches intersect the landscape and boulder most fields.

Over the centuries the fields have been folded down to their edges by acts of ploughing and weathering.

Although often described as flat there is often an appreciable fall from the centre, assisted by the farming practice of installing either piped or deep ploughed (moled) land drains.

The boundary ditches can reduce the severe impact of prairie fields and, if the hedges and trees are left alongside, they provide essential pathways for wildlife.

Glossary

Affordable housing: Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. The definition also includes “starter homes”.

Archaeological interest: There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

Biodiversity: Describes the range and variety of living organisms within an ecosystem. It can include all living organisms, plants, animals, fungi and bacteria and is often used to indicate the richness or number of species in an area. Such an area can be defined at different levels across the globe or be limited to a local area such as a parish.

Building of Local Significance: Locally important building valued for its contribution to the local scene or for local historical situations but not meriting listed status.

Conservation (for Heritage Policy): The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Community Infrastructure Levy: A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

Development Plan: This includes adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans as defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Habitat: The natural home of an animal or plant often designated as an area of nature conservation interest.

Heritage asset: A term that includes designated heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings, world heritage sites, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered parks and gardens and battlefields) and non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority. Non-designated heritage assets include sites of archaeological interest, buildings, structures or features of local heritage interest listed by, or fulfilling criteria for listing by, the local planning authority.

Historic environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Infrastructure: The basic physical and organisational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads and power supplies) necessary for development to take place. International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity: All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

Local planning authority: The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area which in this case is Mid Suffolk District Council.

Local Plan: The plan for the future development of the district, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community.

Neighbourhood Area: The Neighbourhood Area is that which the Neighbourhood Plan covers. It normally covers a whole parish and is formally designated by the local planning authority upon request of the Parish Council.

Neighbourhood Plan: A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular Neighbourhood Area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Open space: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Renewable and low carbon energy: Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Rural exception sites for affordable housing: Sites for affordable housing development in rural locations where market housing would not normally be acceptable because of planning policy constraints. Homes can be brought forward on these sites only if there is a proven unmet local need for affordable housing and a legal planning agreement is in place to ensure that the homes will always remain affordable, will be for people in housing need and prioritised for those with a strong local connection to the Parish.

Setting of a heritage asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Site of Special Scientific Interest: Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Starter Homes: The Housing and Planning Act 2016 provides the statutory framework for the delivery of starter homes. The Act defines starter homes as new homes costing up to £250,000 (£450,000 in London), to be available at a minimum 20% discount on market value to eligible first-time buyers.

Strategic Environmental Assessment: A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 as amended) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Wildlife corridor: A wildlife corridor is a link of wildlife habitat, generally native vegetation, which joins two or more larger areas of similar wildlife habitat. Corridors are critical for the maintenance of ecological processes including allowing for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable populations of plants and animals.



Laxfield

Neighbourhood Plan
2018 - 2036