



NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan

***THE FUTURE OF OUR TOWN
2020 to 2037***

***Referendum Version
November 2021***





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◆ PREFACE

This version of the draft Needham Market Neighbourhood Development Plan (NMNP) has been prepared by the Needham Market Town Council.

The NMNP is a community-led document and its purpose is to provide policies to help guide development in the Parish from 2020 up to 2037. In order to create a Plan that represents the needs and aspirations of residents, the Town Council has drawn upon several sources, including evidence gathered through a programme of events involving the people and businesses of the town and the nearby Parishes since 2014. These include, consultation days held in June and September 2014, March 2015 and March 2019, Business Community Survey in July 2014, Community Engagement questionnaire in March 2019, school events and pop-up High Street Shop and, consultation on a draft plan in August 2015 together with regular updates in the Needham Market newsletter. Other research and analysis from a wide range of national and local sources has also been examined.

This is the **Referendum Version** of the Neighbourhood Plan and it has been amended following the independent examination held in April and May 2021. Prior to the examination, consultation on the Regulation 16 Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan took place between 2nd December 2020 and 27th January 2021. This followed the 2nd Pre-Submission Consultation that had taken place between Friday 17th January 2020 and Tuesday 10th March 2020. All responses received during the public consultation exercises were analysed and amendments made to the plan as appropriate.

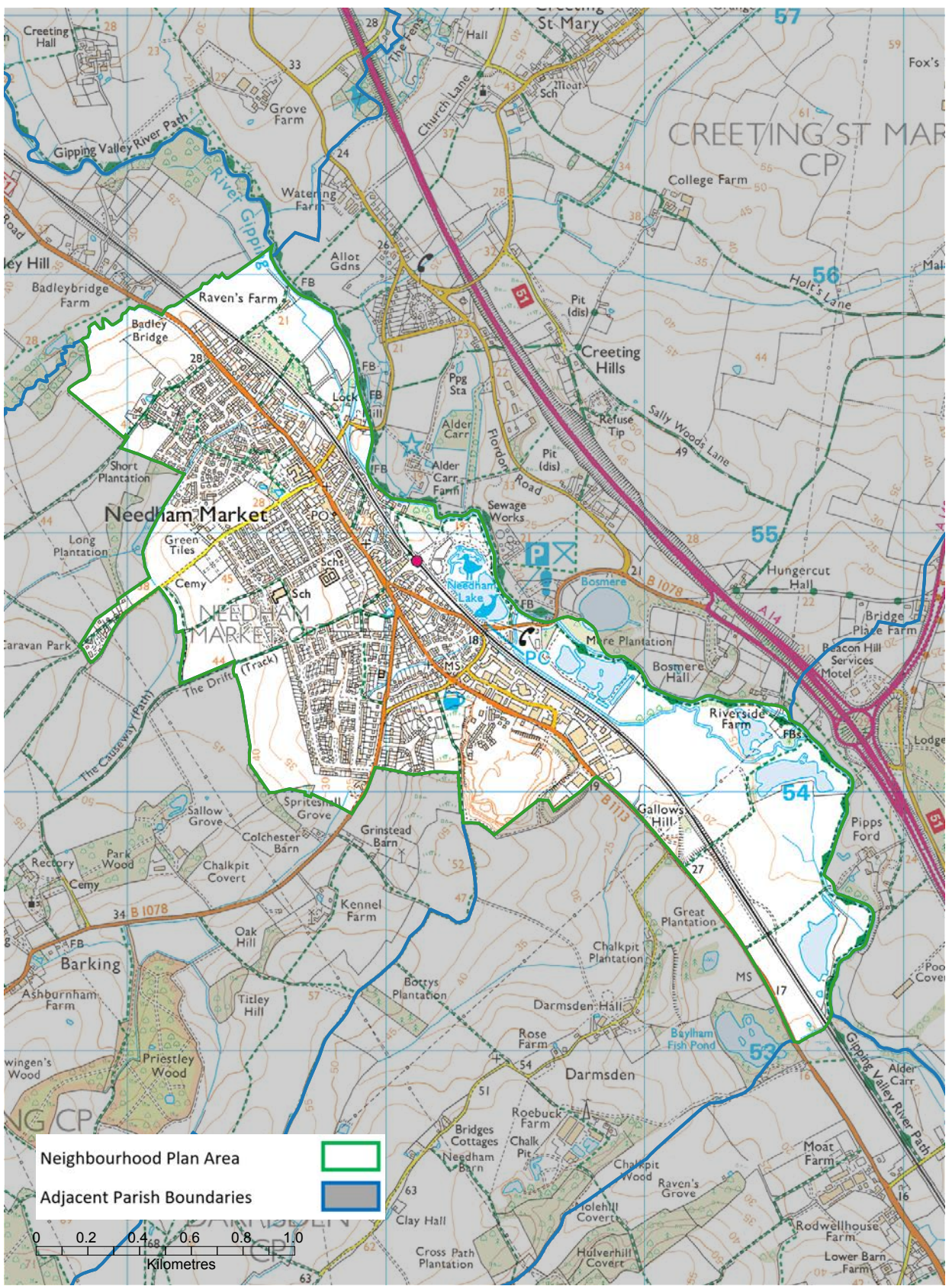


◆ INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan will provide the first ever statutory planning policy document specifically for the Town of Needham Market. Neighbourhood Plans such as this were made possible by powers contained within the 2011 Localism Act which sought to decentralise policy making to the local level and give more powers to communities and the right to shape future development where they live. It complements existing national and local planning policy by providing a specifically local level of detail attained through consultation with the local community and further research.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan relates to planning matters (the use and development of land) and has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). The Neighbourhood Plan Period runs from 2020 to 2037. *The period has been extended by one year from 2036 to 2037 so that the new end date now coincides with the emerging district level Joint Local Plan.*
Once the Plan is “made” (adopted), it will be used by Mid Suffolk District Council to help determine planning applications and will form part of the statutory planning framework for the area.
- 1.3 The Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan (NMNP) is not a mechanism for stopping development - it is there to ensure that development takes place in an appropriate way for the town. In practice, higher level planning documents such as the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan (BMSJLP) cannot feasibly deal with all of the issues particular to every town and village across the two districts, whereas Neighbourhood Plans can by providing additional details which reflect specific local circumstances and conditions.
- 1.4. The NMNP covers the entire town and the Neighbourhood Plan area was formally designated by Mid Suffolk District Council on 27th September 2013 and is shown on Map 1 below.
- 1.5 This is the referendum Version of the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan. The second Pre-Consultation draft of the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan was consulted on between January and March 2020. The first version was prepared and consulted on in August 2015, however the decision was then made by the Town Council in 2016 to suspend further work on that plan due to lack of progress on the Local Plan and a shortage in 5 Year Housing Land Supply across the District resulting in some appeals being allowed and developments to take place.
- 1.6 In early 2018, work on the Neighbourhood Plan was resurrected and the Town Council, with Central Government funding, instructed AECOM (Master Planning consultants) to produce a feasibility study on the concept of the creation of a relief road, connecting Barking Road with Stowmarket Road. The relief road was intended to form a new development boundary for the town in response to anticipated housing growth and relieving the High Street of additional traffic that will result from that growth. The approach was also intended to provide a strategic plan for new infrastructure (Health, Education etc) commensurate with the demand new housing development generates.
- 1.7 The draft AECOM report on the Feasibility Study was presented to Town Councillors, representatives from Mid Suffolk District Council and Barking Parish Council (the latter as the projected route of the relief road extends slightly beyond the current Needham Market boundary) in July 2018 and feedback sought. The report was made available for public viewing and a public engagement/consultation event was held in March 2019. The results of those consultation sessions have been accommodated in the final report which will help to influence further reviews of the Neighbourhood Plan.



◆ NEEDHAM MARKET DESIGNATED AREA



Map 1: Needham Market Neighbourhood Area



1.8 In November 2020, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils working together, published the Pre-Submission Version of the Joint Local Plan for consultation. The BMSJLP identifies Needham Market as a market town in the settlement hierarchy but does not identify it for substantial growth and indeed the figure of 512 for the town for the plan period is largely a commitment figure which reflects a high level of unplanned housing developments permitted in the town during the period of shortfall for the 5 year land supply. This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the emerging Local Plan (as well as the adopted development plan) and no new housing allocations are proposed. The final report produced by AECOM which is titled “Development Framework and Design Guidelines” and completed in July 2020, will therefore help to inform future reviews of the Neighbourhood and Local Plans.

1.9 This Neighbourhood Plan was the subject of a second “pre-submission consultation”¹ for the six weeks between 17th January 2020 and 10th March 2020. Local residents, businesses and statutory agencies were given the opportunity to comment upon the draft plan. At the end of the consultation period all comments were collated and considered by the Town Council. The Plan was then amended before being submitted² to Mid Suffolk District Council. On submission, the District Council checked the Neighbourhood Plan for conformity with existing national and local planning policies and undertook a further 6-week period of public consultation. The Plan was then sent to an Independent Examiner appointed by the District Council to undertake an examination of the plan. The Examiner’s report the Plan was received in May 2021 and recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan should then proceed to referendum. At the referendum every resident of Needham Market who is entitled to vote in elections, will have the opportunity to vote on the following question:

“Do you want Mid Suffolk District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Needham Market town to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

If the Neighbourhood Plan receives over 50% support from those that vote in the referendum, then Mid Suffolk District Council will “make” the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.10 The overarching aim has been to support the development of a Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan which reflects the needs and priorities of the town and its community, within the national, county and district policies that apply, and sets out a positive and sustainable future for the town. The vision is one that seeks to ensure a sustainable, self-contained living town that is healthy, diverse, attractive and economically vibrant for present and future generations of Needham Market.

1.11 The driver for the Neighbourhood Plan was to give residents a voice in the sustainable development of the town, by building a Plan that is inclusive, innovative and bespoke to the needs of the town. The Plan is based on providing the housing and jobs required by the town’s local community and preserving unique and positive features that residents’ value. It promotes community cohesion and develops a framework for economic, social and environmental sustainability.

¹REG 14 of the Neighbourhood Plan (General) Regulations 2012.

²REG 16 of the Neighbourhood Plan (General) Regulation



◆ NEEDHAM MARKET

A Brief History

- 2.1 The town of Needham Market has grown up alongside the River Gipping on its western bank in the lea of the river Gipping valley sides. Its earliest traces were found during pre-construction archaeology at the “Needham Maltings” housing development site. This one site showed evidence of Bronze Age funerary circles and ditches associated with Middle Bronze Age land divisions, some limited Roman finds and an Anglo-Saxon settlement from the 7th and 8th Century. The barns and other commercial buildings that lie along the river’s edge reflect the Gipping’s commercial use as a navigable river until the 1960s. The road which followed the river valley between Ipswich and Stowmarket was also an important local artery serving the needs of industry, agriculture and the local communities.
- 2.2 The name Needham Market, according to the gazetteer in a reputable Atlas of the British Isles, means “needy homestead with a market”. There is no mention of Needham Market in the Domesday Book, but it should be remembered that originally Needham was only a hamlet of Barking and did not become a separate parish until the early part of the 20th century. In old notes relating to the town it is spelt ‘Nedeham’, ‘Nedham’ or Neidham’ and the first mention of the town under its present name is in 1245.
- 2.3 It is likely that a hamlet existed before the time the Domesday Book was written, due to its position on the main road to Bury St Edmunds, a very important road at that time, and situated as it is on the river. History shows that Roger Bigot held a portion of the Parish of Barking which included a church. As he did not hold Barking church and as Darmsden was not part of Barking at the time, it is likely that the church mentioned was at Needham. The church is mentioned in the Index Eliensis, a survey of property belonging to the See of Ely in 1277, although this church predates the present building which was probably built in 1460.
- 2.4 Although there were weaving and wool combing sheds in the town in Church Street and Hawks Mill Street, weaving was not a staple trade in Needham as it was in other towns in Suffolk. The principal trade was wool combing, which was a method of preparing wool for the weavers. This was an important industry before 1660 but the trade was lost and never to return, when Needham was isolated due to the plague in 1663 to 1665. During the plague money was left at Chainhouse and Chainbridge and food was left in return. Rumour has it that the town was deserted, grass grew in the streets and the dead were buried in fields near the Lion Inn and near to Chainbridge at Stowmarket Road. There are no records of the plague in the town and it is not known how many died. What is known is that the houses at the bottom of Bridge Street were ‘sick’ houses and ‘Airing houses’ were provided on high ground at Darmsden for those lucky enough to survive.
- 2.5 In 1245 King Henry III granted a market charter for Needham to Hugh, Bishop of Ely. This market flourished for many years and it is likely that the plague brought it to an end when trade moved to Ipswich and Stowmarket. An attempt was made to revive the market in 1776 but failed. The Annual Fair was held in the main street on the 28th October, the feast of Saints Simon and Jude, this appears to have carried on to some extent until around 1900.
- 2.6 Samuel Read, the well-known artist, was born in a cottage on the site of the old Town Hall. He was the first artist ever sent out as a War Artist when he was despatched to the Crimea by the Illustrated London News. Edmund Pole of Needham Market was burned at the stake for his religious beliefs in 1558 during the reign of Queen Mary. Mr James Day, a blacksmith in the town, built the Needham Two-Man Safety Cycle from a design by George Scopes, also of Needham Market. It is believed to be the only one in existence. Uvedale Hall is named after the great botanist Samuel Uvedale who built Bosmere Hall and whose son and grandson were both rectors of Barking. Joseph Priestley, the scientist, was the minister at the church, now Christchurch, and he discovered oxygen and invented soda water. It is almost certain there are many more residents of note scattered throughout



2: NEEDHAM MARKET

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the history of this town. Clark's history of Ipswich mentions one; William Alexander, who resided in Needham. He was committed to the County Gaol for promulgating the tenets of the Quakers. Another claim to fame, perhaps best forgotten!

- 2.7 Manufacturing in the town has included a glue works, a patent manure works, a paper mill, brick making and a mouse trap factory, but the chief employment after the decline of the wool trade was agriculture.
- 2.8 The town was part of the "Turnpike" system from the early 18th century. The town also benefitted from being located in the River Gipping valley when the Eastern Union Railway routed its line between Ipswich, Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds (or Norwich) in the 1840s.
- 2.9 Needham Market has adapted and grown since the 1880s and the maps below present a clearer picture of how the town has developed over time.
- 2.10 At the town's core lies the High Street which has a gentle "wynd" or bend, just sufficient to ensure a charm that arises from the constantly changing view of so many attractive Listed Buildings. The town's back streets linking to the High Street enjoy the narrowness and intimacy associated with terraces and cottages from the 18th/19th centuries.
- 2.11 Generally, the use of traditional building methods with timber frame / lime render and plain tile roofs is complimented by some local rat-trap bond brickwork, pantiled roofs and knapped flint walls; including those of the Parish Church of St John the Baptist.
- 2.12 The river valley is punctuated by much valued ancient woodlands which provide an attractive backdrop to the town and offer pleasant opportunities for walking. The rural nature of the town is emphasised by the scale of the arable farming that surrounds it and accounts for circa 90% of the land uses around the town's boundaries.
- 2.13 The modern buildings on both sides of the High Street around the car park bear witness to the bombing of the town by German aircraft during the Second World War in 1942; causing the deaths of seven residents, the destruction of several properties including the telephone exchange. There was also considerable damage to both Christchurch (formerly the Congregational Church) and the Modern School.
- 2.14 The town has its own coat of arms, the Arms of the Earls of Ashburnham, who graciously gave permission for their use. The heraldic description is as follows:

"Gules a fess between six mullets argent; crest out of a ducal coronet, or, an ash tree proper; Supporters, to greyhounds sable, their faces, breasts and feet argent, collared and lined"





Needham Market Today

- 2.15 At the last census in 2011, the population of Needham Market was 4,528 with a 48%:52% split between males and females. 16.4% of the population were under 16 which was lower than both Mid Suffolk and England averages of the same period³. 60% of the population were working age adults and 23.6% of the population were aged over 65. This was higher than both the figures for Mid Suffolk (20.1%) and England as a whole (16.3%). Unsurprisingly given these figures approximately 20% (433) households were occupied by a single pensioner which is almost double the Mid Suffolk and England figures.
- 2.16 The general health of the population is reflected in this age breakdown. 44% of the population was considered to be in very good health – lower than both the Mid Suffolk (47.9%) and England (47.2%). However, the remaining health figures for Good, Fair, Bad and Very Bad, all present a Needham Market population that is healthier than the England average but less healthy than elsewhere in Mid Suffolk.
- 2.17 In 2011, there were 2,123 occupied households of which 71% were owner occupied. This was lower than Mid Suffolk (75.1%) but higher than the England average (63.3%). The figures for shared ownership, socially rented and privately rented are all higher than the Mid Suffolk average figures but lower than the national averages.
- 2.18 In 2014⁴ the average wages for Mid Suffolk was £26,301 and the average house price was £203,220. Together these paint a picture of a Needham Market population that is healthier and wealthier than then national average but still less healthy and poorer than much of its surrounding local population.
- 2.19 The more modern elements of the town's development have featured volume house building with varying standards of construction and design. There has been some criticism during the Neighbourhood Plan consultation phase for the way in which the redevelopment of the "Needham Maltings" housing development site has punctured the High Street rather than integrated with the scale and appearance of the typical frontages.
- 2.20 The growth of the town is illustrated in the maps above which illustrate how Needham Market has grown from its historic core, broadening out across the valley away from the River Gipping.

Environment

- 2.21 The town centre is a Conservation Area designated in 1970 by East Suffolk Council, and this was extended in 2000 by Mid Suffolk. Mid Suffolk produced a Conservation Area Appraisal for the Conservation Area in 2011. More detail can be found in the policies chapter.
- 2.22 The importance of the landscape and river valley surrounding the town has been recognised by Mid Suffolk through the Special Landscape Area designation. It is likely that this designation will be replaced in the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan and therefore value which is attached to this area by the local population is recognised in Policy NM7.

Community Facilities

- 2.23 As would be expected of a town of its size, Needham Market possesses a range of community facilities including a Medical Practice, recently reconfigured Primary school, community centre, day care, sports pitches and a wide range of clubs and societies.

Employment and Commercial Activity

- 2.24 The Town centre provides a wide range of shops and services including food retail, restaurant/cafes, hot food takeaways, public houses, hairdressers, beauty therapy, post office, property businesses and other commercial enterprises such as accountants. Outside of the town centre the main commercial hub of activity is the Lion Barn Industrial Estate which is located to the south of the town and is home to a wide range of manufacturing, automotive, commercial and office-based businesses as well as a gym.

³ ONS census 2011

⁴ LGA website



Public Transport and Access

- 2.25 The town is located just off the busy A14 trunk road between the port of Felixstowe and the Midlands. It has a railway station and offers regular services to Norwich and London, also Cambridge and the Midlands via Ipswich and Stowmarket and connections to Bury St Edmunds.
- 2.26 The town is relatively well served by public transport with a range of buses available for journeys to Stowmarket, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. There is also an extensive Public Rights of Way network in the town which allows for good walking and cycling access to the countryside including safe access both east and west of the railway line.

Floodrisk

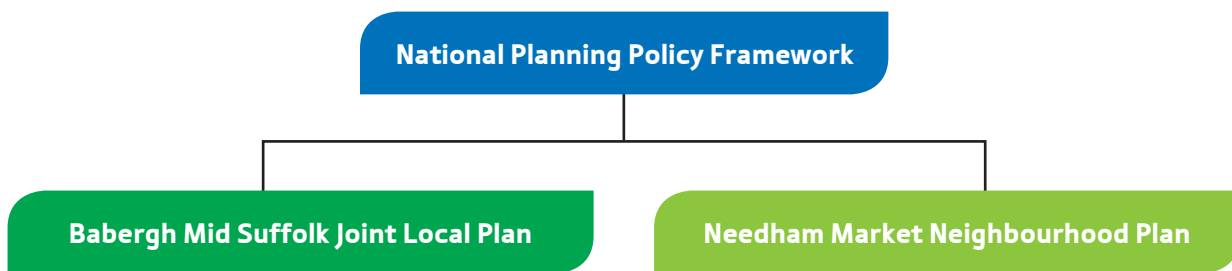
- 2.27 Given its position within the Gipping Valley, Needham Market is at fluvial flood risk from the River Gipping. The town is predicted to be affected by a number of different flood risks and was subjected to a significant flood event in May 2012, which resulted in a detailed flood risk study by the Environment Agency being undertaken which was published in 2015. The River Gipping is currently being re-modelled by the Environment Agency and the modelling involves simulating the course of the river using computer software. The results of this modelling exercise will be released and is expected to be available late in 2020. There are also two ordinary watercourses; Orchardgate watercourse and Lion Barn drain. Both are classed as Main Rivers within the catchment. The Environment Agency have not modelled these watercourses and the flood risk from these sources currently remains unknown.





◆ NATIONAL & LOCAL CONTEXT

- 3.1 Development is defined as “the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land”.⁵ Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 emphasises that the planning system continues to be a “plan-led” system and restates the requirement that “determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.
- 3.2 The Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan once “made” will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area and future planning applications for new development will be determined using its policies.
- 3.3 Currently the statutory development plan for the area consists of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 (Saved Policies), the Local Plan Alteration 2006, the Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2008 (Saved Policies) and the Core Strategy Focussed Review 2012. Mid Suffolk District Council are in the process of producing a Joint Local Plan with Babergh District Council. The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan BMSJLP was submitted for examination on 31st March 2021.



- 3.4 Needham Market is identified as a Market Town in Policy CS1 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2008 with the expectation that it would be a location where economic development and housing growth would take place in the period 2025/6. Needham Market was identified in the Core Strategy as needing to provide approximately 510 new homes between 2010 and 2025 which was the length of the plan period. A substantial proportion of these (360) were projected to be delivered on brownfield sites within the town.
- 3.5 A focussed Review of the Core Strategy that was completed in 2012, further reinforced Needham Market’s position in the strategic hierarchy and identified a slightly revised figure of 470 new homes across an extended plan period of 15 years from 2012. Approximately 320 homes were identified as being provided on brownfield sites.
- 3.6 The most recent version of the Emerging Local Plan – the Pre-Submission Version (2020) again defines Needham Market as a market town in the hierarchy with a housing figure of 512 homes. This figure is largely a committed figure with three allocations identified.
- 3.7 In the context of the production of this Neighbourhood Plan the Emerging Joint Local Plan was initially at the very early stages although it has now been submitted for examination. The requirement is for the Neighbourhood Plan to be generally consistent with the adopted strategic policies – in this case the Core Strategy. However as show above, Needham Market has remained static in the District hierarchy and the housing numbers have also remained relatively consistent.

⁵ Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 55.



◆ THE STORY SO FAR...

- 4.1 Gathering an evidence base together provides a sound starting point for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. Many sources of information have been identified and used to produce a comprehensive picture of the town of Needham Market.

These included:

- The Suffolk Observatory – for local statistics on employment, age structure, education and health information.
- A Community profile for Needham Market, © ACRE, OCSI 2013.
- The Census 2011 – for health and wellbeing, car ownership and economic activity.
- Mid Suffolk District Council - for Planning and Conservation Area issues affecting the town. The District Council website also considers flood risk matters and provision of recreation / sport facilities.

- 4.2 In addition, “The Needham Market Health Check 2004”, the town’s last extensive appraisal, before the Neighbourhood Plan process began, offered some valuable baseline information and, the following key issues affecting the town were identified as shown below.

Rising average age of resident population	Outreach of health facilities – keeping active – keeping safe – maintaining good mental health
Growth of younger peoples age group	Facilities – education – leisure including sport and informal recreation
Rising House prices	Continuing need for a broad mix of homes across a range of tenures including affordable homes for rent.
Employment opportunities	Encouraging and maintaining business growth
Low crime rates	Maintaining an effective local Police presence

- 4.3 Since work began on the Neighbourhood Plan in 2013, a programme of events has been used to help offer the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan to the people and businesses of the town and the nearby Parishes
- First discussion with adjoining parishes and Open Annual Town Meeting 2013.
 - Consultation with local groups including Bosmere school parents via Environment Week School Project.
 - Publicity through the NM newsletter.
 - Evidence base prepared for Town Council – initial findings circulated 4 April 2014.
 - First Consultation Open Day 22 June 2014.
 - Business Community Survey – High Street focus + industrial areas July 2014.
 - Non statutory invitation to allow other agencies involvement - letters sent August 2014.
 - Second Consultation Open Day 20 September 2014.
 - Popup High Street shop days October 2014.
 - Facebook/Twitter presence October 2014.
 - Third Consultation Open Day 21 March 2015.
 - Regulation 14 Public Consultation – 6 weeks – August 2015.



4: THE STORY SO FAR...

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- Work suspended 2016.
- Public Exhibition on AECOM Feasibility – March 2019.
- Stakeholder Meetings with Mid Suffolk and Suffolk County Council – July 2019.
- Stakeholder Meeting with Barking Parish Council – July 2019.
- 2nd Regulation 14 Consultation – January to March 2020.

Summary of Key Issues Raised

4.4 The key issues raised by participants during the various consultation events were:

- Some new homes will be needed to maintain a healthy flow without swamping the town.
- There is strong opposition to the development of “greenfield” (currently in use for agriculture) land on the fringe of the town before development of “brown field” sites are exhausted.
- It is anticipated several “brown field” sites (areas of land which have been used previously e.g. Needham Market Middle School site) will become available for redevelopment during the plan period NB: The downside of “brown field” redevelopment is it rarely delivers meaningful contribution to improvements in infrastructure and/or public service benefits as developers are often able to make a case for making no or reduced contributions as a result of viability. Additional costs regularly apply to redevelopment of “brown field” sites which don't exist for development of “greenfield” sites (e.g. remediation of land).
- Needham Market Country Practice (GP Surgery and Pharmacy) would be far better located in the core of the town – the current location of the Practice demands the use of a vehicle for many patients causing pressure on grossly inadequate parking facilities.
- The High Street is already very busy and, does it have capacity to cope with extra traffic?
- The High Street is subject to a vehicle weight restriction but, this is often ignored causing disruption and danger to people in the vicinity plus damage to heritage properties.
- The provision of adequate parking for visitors/ customers of High Street businesses is vital to those businesses' prosperity.
- There are significant traffic related areas of concern, notably at Needham Market Country Practice, Barking Road and problems associated with the low railway bridge on Coddendam Road, which provides the only direct link from the town to the A14.
- The impact of 'school' traffic on Quinton Road has led to the rerouting of a bus service to the detriment of bus users (particularly older people and people with young children).
- Access to Needham Market Railway Station is restricted for people who have mobility problems.
- Business and employment opportunities are good provided the industrial/commercial/retail areas of the town remain vibrant and attractive.
- The loss of banking facilities in the town has undermined its offer to businesses, visitors and residents.
- The population is living longer – so there will be an increasing number of older people in the town.
- There is a significant growth in young people forecast in the plan period (to 2037) and additional development of new housing will bring young families to the town.
- Premises which provide facilities for children and young people (e.g. the Scout Hut at the Camping Land and the Internet Cafe in School Street) are at or nearing end of life.
- The general environment of the town is good, and it benefits considerably from the proximity of Needham Lake.



4.5 The Town Health Check undertaken in 2004 provided an opportunity for the Town Council to reassess the issues raised through that process, in the context of the issues raised through the Neighbourhood Plan consultation events and an initial **SWOT** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was undertaken.

Strengths

- Distinctive buildings in the historic core of the town
- Attractive shopping area
- Good quality environment in the High Street e.g. improved pedestrian safety and public realm improvements
- Good footpath and cycle routes and access to countryside
- Lack of recent greenfield development
- Protection of open spaces
- Broad range of shops and reasonably high occupancy rate
- Low unemployment
- Training opportunities reflecting employers' needs
- Good tourism economy
- Range of cultural and sporting activities
- Low crime
- Ease of movement to and from the town by public transport

Weaknesses

- Limited range of quality tourism accommodation
- Poor national coach service and accessibility
- Conflict between pedestrians and cars at specific locations in the town centre
- Limited disabled parking
- Access to A14 impeded by Coddendam Railway Bridge

Opportunities

- Management and value of the countryside
- Increased job opportunities and expansion of existing companies at Lion Barn Estate
- Better promotion of the town centre (particularly at the Lake)
- Scope for new safe walking and cycling routes; including secure cycle parking

Threats

- Loss of retail floorspace
- Limited range of tourism accommodation
- Inadequate signage to visitor attractions
- Housing affordability
- Frequency of rail services
- Condition of some sport and leisure facilities
- Congestion in the town centre increasing
- Poor public transport connections to surrounding villages



4: THE STORY SO FAR...

4.6 The issues outlined above provided Needham Market Town Council with some prompts to work towards the establishing of an overarching vision and a set of objectives to refine through debate at the consultation open days and workshops. The outcomes from these discussions produced an updated SWOT assessment which helped shape the vision and identified objectives to deliver that vision.

Strengths

- Quality High Street environment as a Heritage Asset
- Good breadth of services available to the community
- Job available locally and low unemployment compared with national average
- Housing stock in generally good condition
- Attractive rural setting for the town
- Community spirit based on an activity of key community workers and participants

Weaknesses

- Age of buildings housing community groups
- Disconnect between the town and Needham Lake
- Dependency on a few key community workers/participants
- Poor approach to the town from Coddendam Road

Opportunities

- New housing to take place on largely brownfield sites
- Attraction of Needham Lake to tourists and other visitors
- High quality heritage assets in the town
- Opportunities afforded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to deliver community priorities
- Planning for the future through the Neighbourhood Plan process

Threats

- Prospect of increased traffic in the town centre due to new development
- High Street environment eroded by increased traffic
- Ageing population placing increasing pressure on local health facilities
- Decline of key community workers
- Job losses/relocation of District Council offices away from the town
- Key development sites yielding low community benefits



◆ VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Our Vision for Needham Market to 2037 is:

“To ensure that Needham Market’s future growth occurs in a balanced and sustainable way, which preserves and enhances its attractive, historic core, promotes the health and well-being of local people and maintains the community way of life already present in the town. Needham Market will continue to be a self-contained settlement providing the necessary housing and jobs needed by its local residents.”

- 5.1 It is important that any Neighbourhood Plan contains a short and simple vision statement which sums up the community’s aim for the future of the town. The Neighbourhood Plan vision is an overarching statement describing what Needham Market should be like at the end of the Plan period i.e. 2037. The vision has been developed with local people who participated at both the Issues and Options Open Days and Town Meetings which emphasised the need to protect, maintain and enhance the current characteristics of the town. It results in a vision statement which captures the overarching spirit and ambition of the local community and the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.2 The vision underpins the objective and policies of the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan and is referred to throughout the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.3 From the vision flows the different objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and from there, the policies. The diagram below outlines this relationship.

Structure of the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan





5: VISION & OBJECTIVES

5.4. The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are broad statements of intent. They are there to help deliver the vision and link to the issues that Needham Market is seeking to address. They have been drafted using themes picked up at an early stage and have been refined through the community consultation exercises.

Housing	Objective 1: To deliver the new homes expected in the District Council's Local Plan in accordance with the vision of the Neighbourhood Plan.
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Employment & Business	Objective 2: To provide enough land, buildings and infrastructure to support local economic development and promote local employment opportunities.
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Community	Objective 3: To maintain the existing level of facilities in the town and to deliver new services to meet the changing needs of residents during the Neighbourhood Plan period.
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Natural Historic & Environment	Objective 4: To protect and enhance Needham Market's environmental, natural and green assets.
	Objective 5: To preserve and enhance the historic town centre of Needham Market.

Transport	Objective 6: To improve connections and services within the town, to prevent the need to travel elsewhere, particularly by car.
	Objective 7: To encourage healthier lifestyles by helping people to enjoy walking and cycling safely.



◆ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

- 6.1 The vision and objectives have provided the framework to develop the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Each policy relates to a particular objective under each theme: Housing, Business and Employment, Community, Historic & Natural Environment and Transport.
- 6.2 The Neighbourhood Plan is first and foremost a land-use document for planning purposes. All policies in the Plan have been derived from a series of consultation events, stakeholder engagement and desk research, which provide the justification and evidence base for their writing.
- 6.3 The Neighbourhood Plan policies follow the government's guidance, they exist to:
- Set out locally led requirements in advance for new development in the Town.
 - Inform and guide decisions on planning applications.
 - Ensure that the multitude of individual decisions add up to something coherent for the area as a whole.⁶
- 6.4 To aid interpretation for decision makers and planning applicants, each policy is accompanied by supporting text, which includes context for the theme, the views of residents, guidelines and reference to strategic plans. This is set out before each of the policies.



Hawks Mill

⁶ Tony Burton, Writing Planning Policies, Locality.



New Housing

Objective 1: To deliver the new homes expected in the District Council's Local Plan in accordance with the vision of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 6.1.1 The built environment is defined as human-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity, ranging in scale from buildings to parks.⁷ The Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan seeks to provide a clear and positive framework which will provide the context for the determination of future planning applications in the town. It seeks to raise the bar for the standards of development and plans positively for an improved built environment for the town.
- 6.1.2 The Plan period of the Needham Market Neighbourhood Development Plan runs to 31st March 2037. The existing adopted Development Plan for the area comprises the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 (Saved Policies), the Local Plan Alteration 2006, the Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2008 (Saved Policies) and the Core Strategy Focussed Review 2012. Mid Suffolk District Council is producing a Joint Local Plan with Babergh District Council - the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan (BMSJLP). The Pre-Submission (Reg 19) Version was consulted on between November and December 2020 before being submitted for examination in March 2021.
- 6.1.3 Neighbourhood Plans are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained within the adopted development plan for the area. (See Basic Conditions Statement). This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the MSLP, MSCS and the CSFR, also the emerging BMSJLP insofar as the content of that document is known at the time of preparation of this Plan. Paragraph 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that where it is not possible to provide a (housing) requirement figure for a neighbourhood area, the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body. The Pre-Submission Version of the BMSJLP contain a figure of 512 for Needham Market up to 2037. The draft BMSJLP makes three "allocations" as follows:
- Land west of Stowmarket Road – 66 dwellings (planning permission granted under DC/17/05549/OUT)
 - Former Needham Market Middle School – 41 dwellings (planning permission granted for 41 affordable units and library under DC/18/04811 on 10th December 2019)
 - Former Mid Suffolk District Council Offices – 94 dwellings (with planning permission granted under DC/18/05104 on 10th October 2019)
- 6.1.4 All three of the allocations now have the benefit of planning permission, two of which are brownfield sites. According to the most up to date monitoring report⁸ published by MSDC, at the base date of the plan (1st April 2018), there were existing permissions for a further 311 dwellings yet to be completed. The majority, of these dwellings, were on two sites; the former Chalk Quarry and, at Hill House Lane. Whilst one site has an outline permission and therefore the principle of development of the site for residential development is established, it will require the submission of further reserved matters applications which will need to be approved before construction of the dwellings can begin. Depending upon the timing of the submission of those reserved matters applications, the policies within this Neighbourhood Plan will be able to influence those subsequent applications to a greater or lesser extent depending upon the stage the Plan has reached in the statutory process. If those permissions lapse, within the plan period and fresh outline applications are made, the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will be used in the determination of those applications and would influence the final developments.

⁷ Wikipedia, 16.05.19

⁸ Draft BMSJLP SHELAA July 2019



- 6.1.5 The draft BMSJLP Nov 2020 identifies Needham Market as a Market Town under the emerging Settlement Hierarchy, due to the level of services and facilities which are well provided for in the town. Market Towns are expected to account for 31% of the growth over the BMSJLP plan period which equates to 3,966 dwellings, of which 1,124 are already committed. The preferred spatial strategy focusses on the transport corridors of the A14 and the A12. Whilst Needham Market has a railway station and is located close to the A14, the link between the town and the A14 is considered to be poor and this together with the high level of outstanding commitment, and the lack of planned school provision accounts for the low level of new allocations for the town in the draft BMSJLP. The Town Council endorses this approach. It is not anticipated therefore that Needham Market's position in the settlement hierarchy will change as the emerging plan progresses.
- 6.1.6 The Town Council acknowledges the desire locally to improve the link between the town and the A14, whether this be through the provision of a new link or a realignment of the Coddendam Road but is also mindful that this may be something of a 'double edged sword', if improved accessibility leads to higher levels of growth in future plans.
- 6.1.7 The Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan does not anticipate making further allocations for new development given the high levels of outstanding commitment and the level of change that will occur as those commitments and allocations come forward during the plan period. The Neighbourhood Plan policies will instead provide guidance for applications that come forward on the sites identified in the emerging BMSJLP plus any windfall⁹ sites that may come forward within the existing built up area boundary (settlement boundary).
- 6.1.8 Historically, the Mid Suffolk Local Plan and the subsequent plans of the Local Development Framework have recognised the important relationship between Needham Market and nearby Stowmarket. Although there is some interchange of residents for work between the two towns, they have retained a separate identity born from physical separation and planning policy controls. There has been a long term commitment on the part of both Town Councils and the District Council to preventing the two becoming joined up by further development in the gap between the two settlements and this ambition for Needham Market to remain self-contained and provide for the economic and social needs of its residents, is still relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.1.9 The National Planning Policy Framework advises, at paragraph 105, where large-scale new housing development is to take place it should be focused in locations that are, or can be, made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Provision should also be made for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities. Larger developments should be comprehensively planned and phased to ensure that supporting infrastructure is suitably timed to be in place to serve the needs of the emerging development and to prevent piecemeal and poorly designed developments. The Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan supports the delivery of a minimum of 512 homes during the plan period up to 2037 in accordance with requirements of the emerging Babergh Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan.

AECOM Feasibility Study/Development Guidelines for Future Growth

- 6.1.10 In considering responses received through early consultation exercises on the draft Neighbourhood Plan, and in particular those concerns raised about traffic in the town centre, the Town Council felt it was appropriate to tentatively explore some options for relieving traffic in the town centre and specifically options around a relief road for the town. It was acknowledged that such a scheme would require considerable funding and therefore consultants AECOM were commissioned by the Town Council under the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) programme of support for Neighbourhood Plans operated by Locality, to undertake a feasibility study to determine the necessary quantum and potential location of new

⁹ Windfall sites are 'sites not specifically identified in the development plan' and include previously developed land that has unexpectedly become available, new dwellings formed through the subdivision of an existing property or small infill plots within the existing built up area boundary.



housing required to fund a relief road. This work took place during 2018/19 and resulted in a draft feasibility report and associated Master Plan which was presented to the public in March 2019. The key headlines from the study indicated that approximately 1400 houses would be required to fund a new road from north of the High Street, with a junction on Stowmarket Road (B1113) to the west of the town with a junction on Barking Road (B1078). For the reasons outlined above, it has not been considered necessary for this Neighbourhood Plan to make new housing allocations.

6.1.11 However the feasibility work is available to inform subsequent reviews of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan should circumstances change in the future. The Town Council is mindful of the need to plan for the longer term and to anticipate the future growth of Needham Market beyond the current Local Plan allocations. It is possible that this could include strategic growth to the west of the Town as envisaged by the Feasibility Study. The Town Council therefore amended the original commission to include further design guidance on how strategic growth should be planned and designed to create an attractive, sustainable and resilient expansion of Needham Market if this is needed in the future. The revised AECOM report “Development Framework & Design Guidelines for Future Growth at Needham Market” was completed in July 2020 and is intended to assist the Town Council in positively shaping the future of Needham Market and support on-going engagement with residents and other stakeholders on how the Town should grow in the future. The Concept Framework provides a development guideline not a blueprint. Likewise the Design Guidelines provides a development framework and a set of design principles to guide strategic growth at Needham Market should this be appropriate in the future.

Housing Mix

6.1.12 To an extent the town has been historically, physically restrained from growth by the barriers of the railway and river Gipping on one side and the valley sides to the other, however, the town has had an organic growth of new homes over the last thirty years. Evidence from early consultation events indicates there is a perception that the volume of 2/3 bedroom homes built over that period, has outweighed the larger family homes and the balance should be restored, by building more 4/5 bedroom houses. Others have commented that a lack of smaller homes, especially bungalows has meant that there are limited opportunities for older people to ‘downsize’ to release the stock of larger houses. This tends to suggest that the balance of house sizes may be about right. A developer’s choice of house type will depend on the ability to rent or sell it promptly. Whilst larger “luxury” homes may bring a profit premium the developers will know that there are other house styles which will maintain a healthy balance in the market and sell equally quickly. The Neighbourhood Plan enables policy guidance on the mix of house types and the type of tenure. The Ipswich Housing Market Area Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which covers both Babergh and Mid Suffolk was first published in 2017 and has been updated in 2019 provides some strategic level guidance on this subject.

6.1.13 The updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2019 provides evidence and context for future housing needs within both districts looking at both open market and affordable sectors balanced against population trends and forecasts. The SHMA (Part 2) identifies the mix of housing required to 2036 in terms of the size and tenure. The SHMA projects that there will continue to be a decline in couple households with children whilst other households will continue to grow. For Mid Suffolk the overall profile of affordable housing appropriate to meet the population over the plan period derived from Local Housing Need is: 12.7% of housing to be Affordable Rented and 10.0% affordable home ownership (of which 5.8% could be Shared Ownership and 4.2% Starter Homes demand rather than requirement 16) reflects the mix of housing that would best address the needs of the local population.



Affordable Housing

- 6.1.14 The mix of house types discussed above is a subtly different matter from that of the need for affordable housing. The affordability question relates to the ability of local people to be able to purchase or rent property in the property open market. This specifically requires that the relationship between the cost of a mortgage or monthly rental is practical and capable of being paid - without causing distress or hardship to the persons seeking a home. To establish the housing need of residents and their families in the town for future iterations of the Neighbourhood Plan, a more specific Housing Needs Assessment for Needham Market should be undertaken as part of the evidence base for future Neighbourhood Plans.
- 6.1.15 The housing mix outlined in Policy NM1 below is the stated preference of the community established through consultation exercises and is supplemented by the housing need information gathered by the District Council.

Policy NM1 – Housing Mix – Size, Type and Tenure

All new development proposals should provide a range of housing types to enable the creation of mixed and inclusive communities and to reflect the latest available local housing needs evidence, subject to the location, suitability and viability of the site.

The mix of housing could include:

- a) Housing for Older People (to include retirement living housing, supported/sheltered housing, bungalows and/or retirement complexes)
- b) Smaller and larger family housing both market and affordable
- c) Adaptable, 'life-time' homes¹⁰
- d) Self-build¹²

Design

- 6.1.16 One of the determinants of whether any new development is successful or not, will be dependent upon how well it is considered to integrate with its surroundings. Matters such as design, impact on local character, layout and scale are the most common issues that will cause a local community concerns about any impending new development. If a community believes it has been involved with and been able to influence the design of a development at an early stage the higher the likelihood that the development will be considered to be acceptable.
- 6.1.17 Whilst to an extent design and impact on local character are subjective judgments these can be influenced by breaking design elements down into component parts and attempting to address them. Whether a proposed new development is 'in keeping' with what is already there is one of the most common judgments to be made, yet there is often very little evidence or guidance to assist local people in making that judgement.
- 6.1.18 A key purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is not only to help influence the designers and proposers of development at an early stage of formulating their proposals but also to help promote an understanding of what elements make up the character of the area and what constitutes good design that respects local character.
- 6.1.19 To decide whether something is 'in keeping' with the existing development is subjective. In this case the District Council has a Landscape Character Assessment which was completed in 2015 together with Heritage and Sensitivity Assessments (March 2018) of its main settlements. Additionally, there is also a Conservation Area Appraisal which covers the historic core of the town centre which was completed in 2011. This is explored in more detail by **Policy NM8**.

¹⁰ Adaptable Homes - Homes that are built using 16 specific design criteria which allows them to be easily adapted for use by older or disabled people

¹² Housing built by an individual or group of individuals or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual



- 6.1.20 A key issue raised by residents during early consultation was the desire to ensure that brownfield sites in the town were developed before new greenfield development was permitted. Two of the sites identified in the emerging BMSJLP are brownfield sites including the redevelopment of former office and school buildings close to the town centre. It is recognised brownfield sites can be more expensive to develop and they are often physically constrained however opportunities to improve the overall standard of design in an area should still be taken. Residents wish to see new development that positively contributes to the town's character through sympathetic and visually attractive design.
- 6.1.21 Considerable emphasis is given to achieving well-designed places in the NPPF. Paragraph 126 describes it as fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development proposals acceptable to communities. Effective engagement between applicants, communities and local planning authorities is essential.
- 6.1.22 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states 'Design policies should be developed with local communities so that they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.' Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of an area and how it should be reflected in development. There are also potential benefits to health when considering designs. For example, provision of sufficient green spaces would promote good physical and mental health. Large green spaces should be easily accessible via safe walking and cycling routes and include benches to promote accessibility to all, thereby increasing activity. Measures that prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists, have multiple benefits including reducing congestion, reducing emissions and improving health.
- 6.1.23 Through the consultation exercises residents expressed some clear preferences in terms of the design of new development particularly in relation to parking and provision for waste and recycling storage to be included. Where development takes place on the edge of the town and where it is close to open countryside landscaping was highlighted as a critical factor in helping to protect the town's rural setting.

Policy NM2 – Securing Good Design and Layout

The detailed design and appearance of new housing shall contribute to the character of the area by reflecting the pattern of development in its surroundings and seek to enhance its quality. New housing developments shall take account of the following:

Layout

- a) Proposed densities should be compatible with those prevailing in the immediate locality.
- b) The proposed heights of buildings shall be appropriate to the character and appearance of the area.
- c) Proposals will avoid over development of a site by ensuring that a residential plot can satisfactorily accommodate the needs of modern dwellings, including the provision of useable private garden space, which where appropriate, can also be accessed externally.
- d) Provision shall be made for sufficient external space for refuse and recycling storage.
- e) All development proposals shall demonstrate how they have had regard to Secure by Design¹³ in minimising the likelihood and fear of crime

Parking

- f) Proposals shall have regard to the 'Suffolk Guidance for Parking (updated 2019)' published by Suffolk County Council or any successor document.
- g) Where garaging is proposed, it shall be of sufficient dimensions to accommodate an average sized car and provide enough internal space to open the doors.
- h) Satisfactory provision shall be made to accommodate the access needs for delivery drivers, including refuse, public transport vehicles, fire and other emergency services.

¹³ <https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/design-guides>



Wildlife and Landscaping

- i) Proposals shall include features to encourage and attract wildlife, create net gains for biodiversity, create new habitats and enhance and extend existing wildlife corridors.
- j) Proposals will retain trees and hedgerows worthy of retention, wherever possible, and minimise their loss by limiting this to essential access requirements.
- k) Proposals shall include soft well-landscaped boundary edges where adjacent to open countryside or edge of settlement, which shall connect to existing ecological networks.
- l) Proposals shall include appropriate landscaping areas including the use of native species in new planting which benefit pollinator species.
- m) Provision shall be made for an appropriate quantity and quality of green spaces, including children's play and recreational areas, to serve the needs of the development in accordance with the latest standards adopted by the District Council, particularly for young families to encourage physical activity.

Sustainability

- n) Proposals are encouraged to include features that allow for increased energy efficiency performance and renewable energy provision.
 - o) Should a development site be located adjacent or close to any footway or cycle route, every opportunity should be taken to secure a connection to them and the design shall ensure integration with the new development.
 - p) Development design and layout shall prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists, by providing safe, attractive and convenient links within the development and to existing pedestrian and cycle networks
 - q) Proposals for developments of 10 or more dwellings, where appropriate, shall include the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which could include wetland and water features which can help reduce Floodrisk whilst offering other benefits such as protecting against pollution, wider amenity/recreational and biodiversity benefits.
 - r) Accessible electric charging points shall be provided within all new development.
 - s) Suitable infrastructure capable of allowing superfast broadband connections shall be included.
- Landscaping plans will be required for all developments of more than five dwellings which will include details of their future maintenance.

It should be noted that it may not be appropriate for all development proposals to meet every criteria, however this will need to be justified.



Needham Maltings Development



Objective 2: To provide enough land, buildings and infrastructure to support local economic development and promote local employment opportunities

- 6.2.1 Needham Market has played an important part in the economy of the Gipping River Valley since the river was made navigable through to Stowmarket. Today, it maintains a good supply of industrial and commercial property as part of the A14 corridor provision which lies within and contributes to the strength of the Haven Gateway area and includes Claydon, Great Blakenham and Needham Market. This corridor accommodates the majority of industrial premises in a combination of business and industrial uses.
- 6.2.2 An economic needs assessment undertaken by Lichfields on behalf of Babergh and Mid Suffolk in 2017, shows that employment growth has not matched housing/population growth and that there is a high level of out commuting by residents for work. Overall, the Lichfields Sector Needs Assessment shows that Babergh and Mid Suffolk have modest net additional employment land requirements (as indicated by the 2016 release of the EEFM). Combined, the Babergh requirement of 2.9ha and Mid Suffolk's requirement of 9.4ha indicates a total requirement across the area of 12.3 ha. In quantitative terms, there is therefore considered to be more than enough existing identified land to meet baseline objectively assessed need over the plan period, given the modest baseline forecast in both areas.
- 6.2.3 The emerging BMSJLP Policy SP05 aims to support and encourage sustainable economic growth and ensure a continuous range and diversity of sites and premises which are fit for purpose are available across the Districts and identifies a number of existing strategic employment sites to be protected and their proposed expansion supported in principle. This includes Lion Barn in Needham Market. The policy also supports the principle of the development of net additional employment sites along the strategic transport corridors (A12, A14 and A140) subject to criteria governing highway, parking, layout and design issues. Sites identified under this policy should be retained and their expansion supported where appropriate in scale, character and nature of the locality. These sites will generally be expected to continue to provide for local employment over the plan period.
- 6.2.4 Business premises within Needham Market cater for a range of business needs. The **Lion Barn Estate** which is to the south east of the town between the railway line and the B1113 and accommodates a number of uses such as food processing, computer supplies, gym and fitness and car and van hire.
- 6.2.5 With the closure of the Chalk Pits on Ipswich Road in 2017 approximately 27 jobs were lost or relocated from within the Quarry area to other locations - only 4 jobs were lost on cessation of chalk quarrying, however this and the relocation of the Mid Suffolk District Council offices have had a cumulative impact upon the employment base of the town.



Lion Barn Estate



- 6.2.6 According to the 2011 Census 72.8% of Needham Market's population were economically active with 40% in full time work which was higher than the averages for Suffolk and for England as a whole. Less than 1% of the population was long term unemployed which was significantly lower than the Suffolk and England averages. According to figures from the Suffolk Data Observatory, the levels of qualification within the resident population are on a par with the Suffolk and England averages and the levels of deprivation in the town are low when compared to county and national averages. During 2018 the number of residents not in employment or training were higher than the county and national averages but this has dropped through 2019 and is now below both averages.
- 6.2.7 Strategic planning policies for the area identify a strong economic corridor based on the A14 trunk road which consists of a number of identified Enterprise Zones. Both the Adopted Core Strategy and the emerging BMSJLP seek to focus new large scale economic development to these specific zones. One Enterprise Zone is identified at Stowmarket Enterprise Park, Gateway 14 at Mill Lane which is on the Needham Market side of the town.
- 6.2.8 The total employment land allocation within the area is 39.5 ha net, the Enterprise Park, that sits within Gateway 14, will contribute circa 17ha of serviced employment land. The EZ site is also a designated Food Enterprise Zone (FEZ). The total site extends to approximately 52 ha, of which 34 ha is developable land. This is a designated Enterprise Zone site, that will focus upon providing serviced employment land for development focussed upon business, general industrial and storage and distribution uses¹⁴. Given the strategic emphasis for focussing new economic growth in this area it is unlikely that substantial new employment allocations will be required in Needham Market in this plan period.
- 6.2.9 The Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan survey of industrial enterprises undertaken in July/ August 2014, identified good maintenance and other management of industrial land as important to continued success, but these were not considered to be a threat to the body of industrial and commercial property, at least in the short to medium term.
- 6.2.10 Although the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan is not proposing to allocate further land for industrial/ employment purposes within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, the emphasis is on reinforcing and underpinning the important role of existing employment areas through supporting proposals for development which generate employment opportunities to meet local employment needs in the town – including those from retail.
- 6.2.11 The development of the Lion Barn Industrial Estate, located to the south of the town off the B1113 Ipswich Road has been ongoing for more than 30 years. The site is a former worked aggregate pit. Current uses consist of light industrial, commercial, logistics and a small element of leisure businesses which reflect the changing demands for types of business accommodation over a long period. Development has been delivered in phases in line with approved planning permissions. Many original occupiers of the initial phases of the development are still in situ and when business units become vacant, they are often quickly reoccupied, sometimes following adaptation for specific business needs. The area of land (12.7 acres) that forms the final phase of the development has been prepared and is currently being marketed by the owner who has retained ownership of the entire development from its commencement.
- 6.2.12 A significant change to Needham Market's southern boundary was prompted by the Mid Suffolk (Parish Boundaries) Order 2009. The Order came into force in 1st April 2009 and extended the town to include land transferred from Barking Parish. This included the Lion Barn Industrial Estate and the Needham Chalk Quarry. The latter is now subsequently being used by both a substantial local business involved in waste management services and as a current site for residential development (Hopkins Homes – St Georges Park) for 266 dwellings.
- 6.2.13 There has been a long held ambition to provide a cycleway between Lion Barn Estate and the centre of the town which it is acknowledged is feasible, if there is sufficient highway land to widen the footway on the east side of B1113 Ipswich Road. It is recognised that there are often constraints to improvements of highways, including, insufficient carriageway width and on-street parking for cycle lane installation, narrow footways that cannot be widened due to dwellings being adjacent to the back of footways, insufficient carriageway width to allow footway widening etc. To improve any achievable cycle/footway improvements, developers would be required to provide contributions that are appropriate and proportionate to the development.

¹⁴ From 1st September 2020, the former B1 Business Use has been abolished and a new Commercial, Business and Services Use Class E has been created. Uses formerly within B1 now fall within Class E (c) (iii) – Uses appropriate in a Business Area, Class E (g) (i) – Offices, Class E (g) (ii) – Research and Development and Class E (g) (iii) – Industrial Processes.

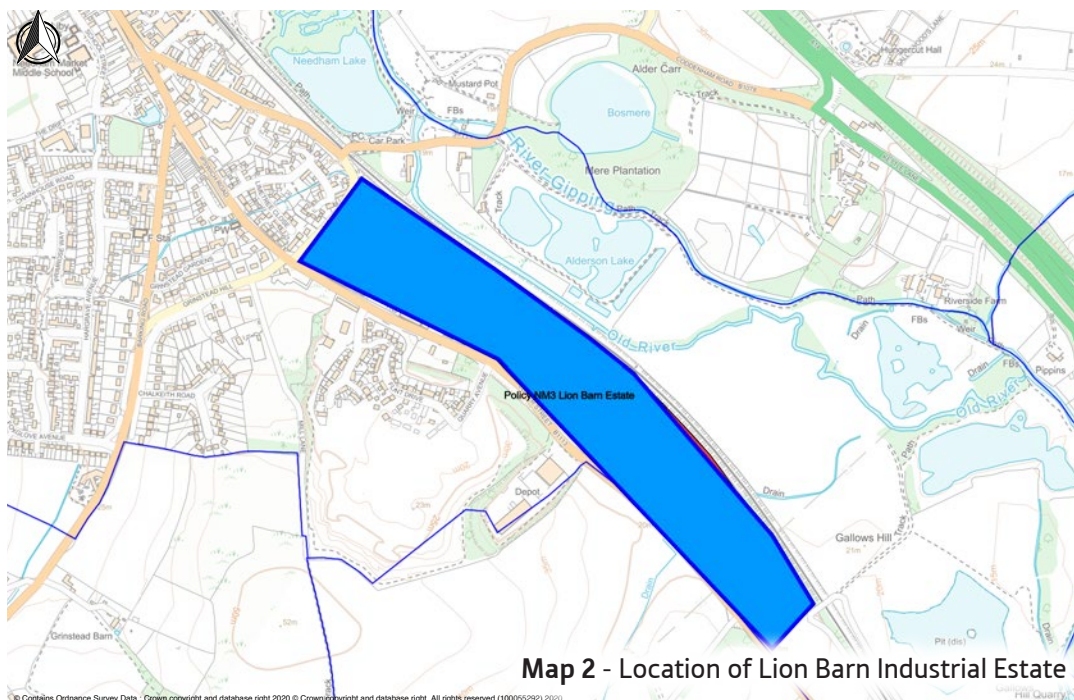
Policy NM3 – Encouraging commercial activity and employment opportunities

Proposals for new business, commercial, service, industrial and employment generating uses (B2, B8, E (g) (i-iii)) will be directed towards the Lion Barn Estate.

New development at Lion Barn Estate, for new land or premises in the use classes (B2, B8, E (g) (i-iii)) will be expected to contribute to the construction and enhancement of the cycle path and footpath network linking the Lion Barn Estate and residential areas of the town to ensure the proper integration of new development with the rest of the town and the town centre. Such contributions will be appropriate and proportionate to the development proposed.

The expansion of existing businesses including small scale extensions will be supported provided they do not have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the area, adjoining uses, or the amenity of local residents, either, through their built form, proposed use or traffic generated.

See Map 2



Map 2 - Location of Lion Barn Industrial Estate

Reinforcing the Commercial Role Needham Market Town Centre

6.2.14 The Business Survey indicated that Needham Market High Street is considered a pleasant and popular place to do business and highlighted the importance of car parking and the link to the Station meaning that the shops and businesses of the Station Yard have also enjoyed a degree of vibrancy. The demise of businesses in either area will be harmful to the appearance and economic fabric of the town. It is recognised that it is not possible to require a business to stay open or indeed to require that other businesses are represented in the Town. However, to ensure that the shop and business owners cannot be drawn away to other “off-centre” premises in the town a policy aimed at preventing the change of use of industrial and commercial premises outside the town’s Primary shopping areas is included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

6.2.15 Prior to its closure in 2017, Needham Market was home to Mid Suffolk District Council’s main administrative offices. Since 1974, the District Council had been a significant employer in the public service sector, providing 150 jobs in the town. The Council’s offices had also been used for community police work and other community focussed activities. The closure of the offices has had an impact on economic well-being the town. Not just in the loss of the Council jobs but also the loss of expenditure from persons eating and spending in the town (particularly at lunchtimes). It has had a detrimental effect on local businesses.



- 6.2.16 The quality of a high street has an impact on whether people choose to visit an area and affects how long they stay. Needham Market's High Street has a lot of history and character and should be celebrated. To preserve the High Street and drive footfall to independent shops there is a need to retain a diverse mix of shops to make people want to return to the town in the future. This can be achieved by better signage at key areas coming into the town, especially near the Needham Lake area. A survey conducted by Mid Suffolk suggested that only 1% of lake visitors in 2018 visited local shops within the town (600,000 visitors). However, it should be borne in mind that these figures include local residents regularly walking their dog and do not represent a true figure for actual day visitors.
- 6.2.17 Community consultation revealed there are concerns that parking and traffic restrictions are deterring customers from shopping within the town and more needs to be done to provide enough free car parking for people to visit as the town grows. The need for public toilets was also considered to be important. There are examples of successful schemes which promote the independent high street e.g. Woodbridge. Independent shops rely on offering a specialist or niche product to attract customers. Encouraging new independent shops is a challenge but would add to the attractive character of the town.



Needham Market Town Centre

- 6.2.18 The emerging BMSJLP seeks to enhance local provision through focussing retail and leisure proposals within existing town centres, with retail uses focussed within primary shopping areas. National newspaper articles¹⁵ highlight the importance of the 'experience economy'. High street shops that had been thriving nationally (prior to the Covid-19 pandemic) are hair and beauty salons, coffee bars, fast-food outlets, health and convenience stores – all are services that cannot be delivered on the internet.
- 6.2.19 The experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic have shone a renewed spotlight on the role of city and town centres as many long standing and previously successful businesses in the retail, food and drink and service sectors have closed as a result of lack of trade caused by increased working from home. Other services such as beauty and hair salons have also been affected as they were required to remain closed for a longer period. Conversely some more rural village and town centres have prospered as workers who would have commuted long distances e.g. into London or regional centres are no longer doing so and are shopping closer to home.

¹⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/17/high-streets-heart-cities-web> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/30/britain-high-streets-shops-marks-spencer>



- 6.2.20 In September 2020, the Government introduced changes to the Use Classes Order which abolished the Class A Uses – which includes, retail, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, pubs and hot food takeaways. Classes A1-A3 were moved into a new Class E which covers Commercial, Business and Services, whilst Pubs and takeaways were reclassified as ‘sui generis’ meaning that changes to and from such uses, would always require the benefit of planning permission. The new Class E also includes former B Uses – Offices, Business, Research and Development . Proposals to move uses within a class do not require the benefit of planning permission and therefore proposals to move from offices to retail and vice versa do not require consent. This can have the consequence of undermining the function of the town centre, if offices in out of centre locations change to retail uses and compete with those in the town centre.
- 6.2.21 There has however been a recognition that in rural areas the loss of village/small town shops to other uses can have a significantly detrimental impact upon the local community. A new Use Class F – Local Community and Learning has been created which specifically reinforces protection for village shops by requiring applications to be submitted where proposals seek to change the use of a small convenience food retail of less than <280sqm, where there is no other similar facility within 1000m.
- 6.2.22 Through consultation, local residents and businesses have identified that the town centre should particularly encourage shops, financial and professional services, and restaurants and cafes, bars and pubs and hot food takeaway¹⁶.
- 6.2.23 It is also recognised that the key to underpinning the town centre is to ensure that the town centre functions well as a whole, is an attractive destination for residents and visitors and has a broad range of retail, business and leisure uses rather than being reliant on a single sector. It has therefore been considered necessary to include a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan that specifically encourages retail, leisure, business and food and drink uses to the town centre in order to underpin its vitality and viability.



Needham Market Town Centre

¹⁶ Until 1st September 2020, these were Use Classes A1-A5. However Classes A1-A3 have been abolished and replaced with Class E (a) Retail, E (b) Café and Restaurants, E (c) (i) and (ii) – Financial and Professional Services.



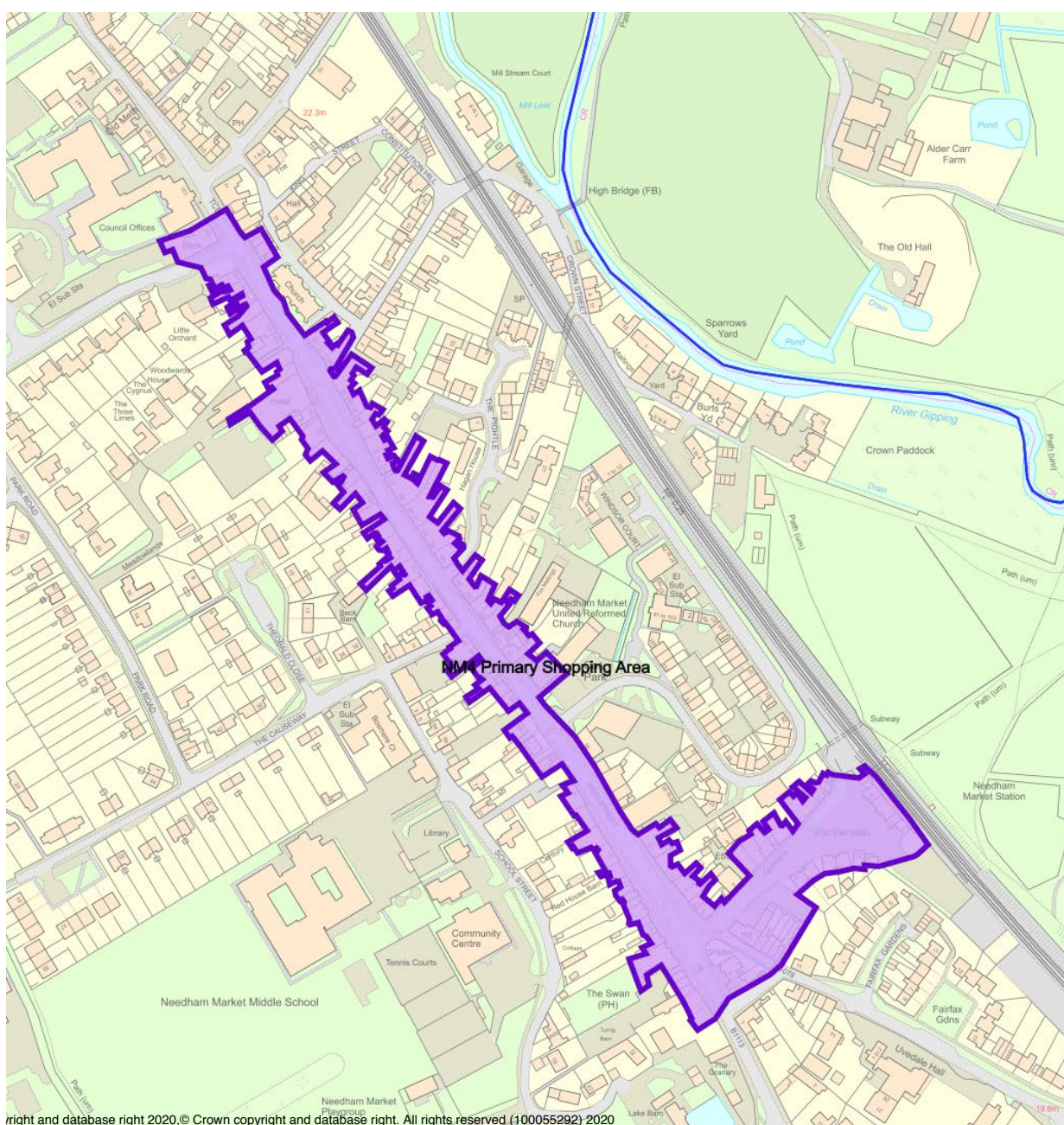
POLICY NM4 – Reinforcing the town centre vitality and viability

In order, to underpin the important function of Needham Market Town centre as a viable and attractive commercial centre, proposals for new retail, leisure, and town centre uses will be supported within the identified Primary Shopping Area as defined on Map 3.

Proposals that would involve the change of use of an existing town centre building, to a non-town centre use (B2/B8) within the Primary Shopping Area will be refused.

Outside of the Primary shopping area, development proposals that involve the change of use from Employment Use Class E (g), B2 and B8 into a retail or leisure use will be refused.

Map 3 – Primary Shopping Area





- 6.2.24 Much of the new housing planned for Needham Market over this plan period has taken place on brownfield sites close to the town centre and there has been considerable redevelopment and reconfiguration taking place in the town centre. The closure of the former Mid Suffolk District Council offices and subsequent planned redevelopment for housing and retail use, the development of the former Middle School for housing and also the redevelopment of a former garage showrooms site in the town centre for housing will all have an impact upon the physical environment of the town centre as well as its vitality and viability.
- 6.2.25 There are still a number of 'gap' and underused sites in the town centre that could be the subject of proposals for redevelopment during this Neighbourhood Plan period although they are not specifically identified. It is therefore considered appropriate that the Neighbourhood Plan contains a policy that sets out the criteria considered important for the consideration of redevelopment sites.

POLICY NM5 Redevelopment Opportunities in the Town Centre

Proposals for the redevelopment of unused or underused brownfield sites for mixed uses including small retail units, commercial uses, community spaces and housing in the town centre will be supported.

Proposals that add to the range of tourist or visitor attractions or facilities, adding a positive visitor experience will be supported.

Parking provision should be sufficient to cater for the needs of the development and should be safe, discreet, and accessible in accordance with adopted parking guidance and should seek to avoid adverse highway impacts at peak times.



Objective 3: To maintain the existing level of facilities in the town and to deliver new services to meet the changing needs of residents during the Neighbourhood Plan period

Vibrant and Healthy Communities

- 6.3.1 The overarching social objective of the planning system as set out in the NPPF is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support the health, social and cultural well-being of communities.
- 6.3.2 In order to achieve this, planning of new development must go hand in hand with planning for the community services and facilities that need to be in place to support development and meet the needs of residents. This includes transport, education, library provision, green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, footways and cycle ways, allotments, fire hydrant provision, health services and a range of cultural facilities. These together are described as 'community infrastructure'. Housing and other development will be expected to contribute towards improving local services and infrastructure through either the payment of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); planning obligations (via a s106 agreement / s278 agreement); or use of a planning condition/s.
- 6.3.3 Presently Needham Market is relatively well served by community infrastructure. There is a Primary School which now includes pupils up to year 6 following closure of the Middle School in 2015. There is a doctor's surgery, library, dentists, local shops, garages, pubs, takeaway restaurants, a community centre, places of worship, day care facilities, play areas, tennis courts, sports pitches, and a scout hut. However, as the population of the town has continued to increase a number of these services are either at or nearing capacity. Therefore, with at least 512 new houses expected in the town up to 2037 there may be a need for new, improved, or reconfigured facilities.

Education

6.3.4 *Early Years Care*

Needham Market has Early Years provisions at the Jigsaw Preschool. There is currently a deficit of -26 places¹⁸, however with considerations of other pending applications, the deficit is -36 places. Suffolk County Council have asked for developer contributions towards improving early years provision in response to these applications. SCC owns the Jigsaw site, and therefore can monitor the demand for places and propose expansion if needed. The Council would expect new development to contribute to improving the provision of early years places in the town.

6.3.5 *Primary Education*

The local primary school, Bosmere CP School, had a total capacity of 315 places but a recent project has increased capacity to 360 places. When taking account of permitted development, once completed there is an expected slight surplus of capacity at the school.



Bosmere Primary School

¹⁷ Term used to describe services required to support mixed and inclusive communities e.g. medical, educational, social and community services

¹⁸ At March 2020



6.3.6 Secondary Education

With regard to secondary school provision, with the closure of Needham Market Middle School, an increased number of young people of secondary school age attend schools outside the town. There is no secondary school provision in the town – local pupils tend to go to Stowmarket or Stowupland High Schools. Suffolk County Council has no plans for new High School provision in the town and this has been confirmed by Mid Suffolk District Council as one of the key reasons why Needham Market has not been allocated further housing growth in the emerging Local Plan. Stowmarket High School caters for pupils aged 11-18 and is currently being rebuilt via the Priority School Building Programme (PSBP) which is led by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The County Council are expecting a need to expand the school to accommodate some of the expected pupils arising from existing permitted developments once they are complete.

6.3.7 Whenever the prospect of housing growth is discussed, it is inevitable that there will be concerns expressed about how the vital community infrastructure needed to support a viable community will keep pace with the expected population growth. It is essential that thought is given to community infrastructure at an early stage and the needs of the current community, the capacity of existing services and the anticipated needs of new residents are taken account of.

Medical Provision

6.3.8 It is acknowledged that it is a complex subject as there are multiple factors to take into account including the demographics of new patients, the remuneration these patients will bring, the ability to recruit appropriately qualified staff and the development and implementation of new models of care. Needham Market is fortunate in having a full complement of GPs within the 'Country Practice'. Along with a dedicated team of Practice Nurses, reception and administrative staff, the Practice serves over 12,500 patients, of whom about 4500 reside in the town. The 'First Responders' initiative is well supported in Needham Market and trained volunteers provide vital rapid emergency assessment and care.



Needham Market Country Practice

6.3.9 Although historic anticipation of future health care needs for the local and expanding population has not been regarded as a strength by the local community, it is acknowledged that the Clinical Commissioning Group now control all aspects of primary healthcare planning. The Town Council is pleased to note that the CCG welcomes the opportunity to work in partnership with them and other healthcare providers to enhance future healthcare provision. Health and wellbeing encompasses much more than traditional NHS services and we seek to encourage all other aspects, especially within new housing developments. Initiatives that promote exercise should be incorporated at the planning stages. For example, cycle paths and pedestrian walkways, wide enough for mobility scooters, should be well lit and connect any new housing with the High Street.



- 6.3.10 Statistics from Suffolk Observatory for 2017, show that Needham Market has a slightly higher proportion of residents over the age of 65 (25.6%) than Suffolk as a whole (22.9%). With increasing age comes a higher risk of dementia. In recent years there have been local projects to make shop keepers more aware of the problems faced by dementia sufferers and to encourage shops to become 'dementia friendly'. The Town Council fully supports this and any initiatives which allow dementia sufferers to retain their independence for as long as possible.
- 6.3.11 There are also private gyms and exercise classes of many types in the local area which encourage healthy lifestyles. These are important additions to any formal health care provision by central government. These factors can increase and reduce demand on resources. The timescales for any new development to be agreed and built out would mean new models of care are likely to already be having an impact on how increased demand is satisfied. Needham Market's position is strengthened by the availability of a wide range of community services, but, in the life of this Neighbourhood Plan, inherent weaknesses in these services may become of significant importance. The NM Country Practice provides high quality services to the residents of NM and beyond but is currently hampered by limited car parking at or near the surgery and the need to expand the premises in which it operates. Any proposals which emerge during the plan period to help resolve this issue would be supported. The Emerging BMSJLP indicates that the cumulative growth of existing commitments and growth planned through the Joint Local Plan, may require an expansion to current healthcare facilities.

Leisure Provision

- 6.3.12 There are potentially an improving range of sporting pursuits in the town - football, skateboarding, cricket, running, netball - but there is currently nowhere, particularly in colder weather, for youngsters to meet, spend time, relax with their friends and have the support of caring adults, outside their families. Hence, the affiliation to the town of some of the nonsporting youngsters may, over time, diminish and the Town Council acknowledges there are high aspirations from the youth in the town and the town needs to cater for the current and future needs of its youth population, including through encouraging the dual use of school facilities.
- 6.3.13 In terms of **sports and recreation** provision, Crowley Park is an asset to the community, with its play area and playing fields, used by the Cricket Club and people playing football, either organised by Needham Market Football Club or more informally. The park is being refenced, which will add to its attraction and the Cricket Pavilion is to be rebuilt, possibly to include a cafe and to improve access to the facility by all sectors of the community. A Skate Park Committee is seeking funding to install a Skate Park on Crowley Park and improve the play equipment available for younger children which will add significantly to the facilities available for younger members of the community.
- 6.3.14 The Needham Market Football Club has recently amalgamated with the Needham Market Phoenix Youth Football Club, thus offering support and services to footballers, irrespective of age and gender. The expanding club offers an academy and has recently opened a cafe, the Hub, at its premises. In addition, the netball courts at Needham Market Community Centre have recently been refurbished to a professional standard.
- 6.3.15 The Sunday morning Park Run held at Needham Lake is one of the largest in the country, being well attended and relatively longstanding. The annual Raft Race held on the lake brings the community together. Additionally, there is a club that uses the lake for model boats; anglers fish there; walkers use the footpaths; there are picnic tables, play equipment, a nature reserve, a wooded play area and a small climbing wall for children and families. A new Scout Hut is planned on or adjacent to the Camping Land and a new Visitor Information Centre and café facility at Needham Lake is soon to be built by BMSDC.
- 6.3.16 The precise detail of community infrastructure provision will be determined through the Local Plan process together with the overall housing figure. The current Local Plan policy requires some specific infrastructure from development (e.g. recreation) and developers then pay Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to cover other infrastructure requirements. It is rare for the developer to provide the infrastructure themselves. On larger developments the developer would usually make land available for the relevant infrastructure provider.



Play Area at Needham Lake

6.3.17 The Neighbourhood Plan can influence provision and there is community support for the shared spaces and shared facilities in order to maximise access. Community Infrastructure provision that provides for useable and adaptable spaces that would suit the needs of a range of potential services providers will be supported. In addition, existing community services will be protected. It is accepted that the needs of service users may change over time and therefore some existing services may no longer be viable later in the Plan period, in their current form. Policy NM6 does not seek to protect unviable services in perpetuity but requires that lack of viability is demonstrated and for alternative configurations of provision to be investigated before alternative proposals are approved.

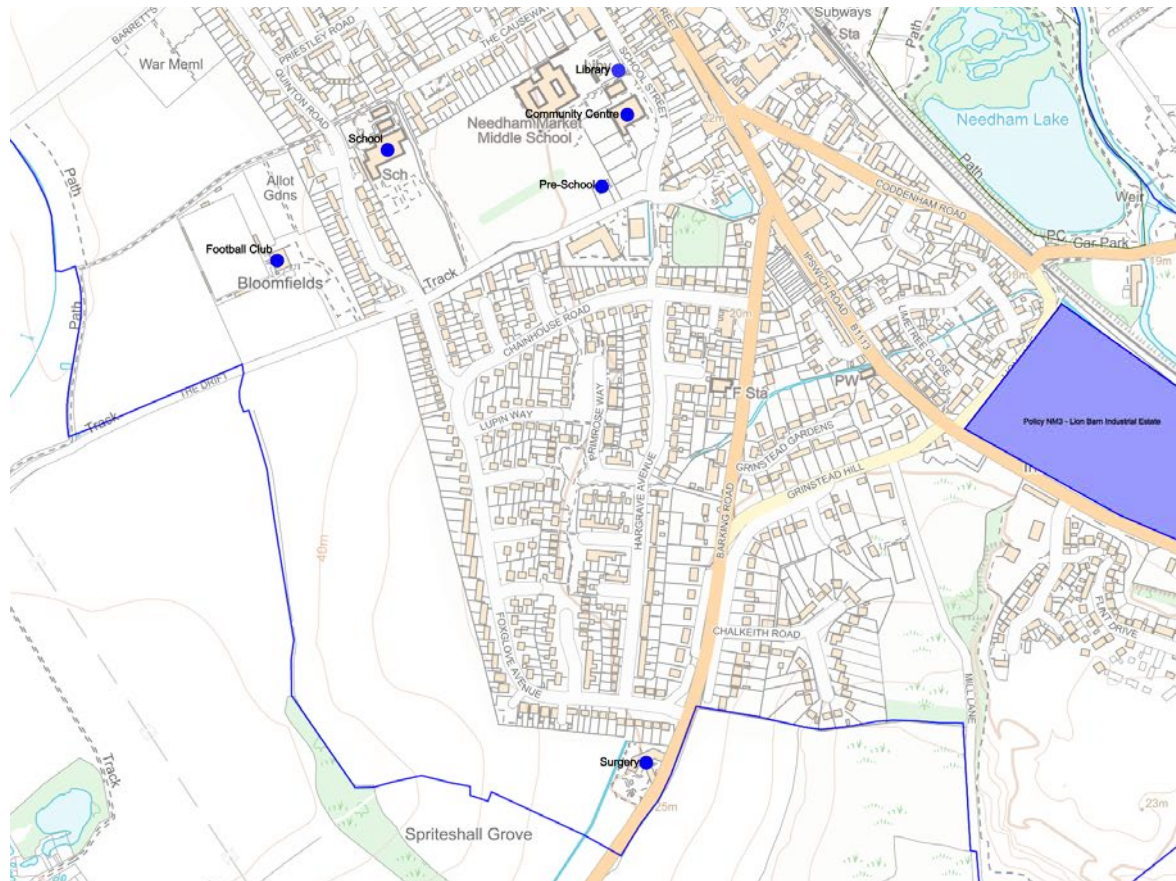
6.3.18 The BMSJLP identifies existing planning commitments and growth through the Joint Local Plan will result in Stowmarket Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) operating over capacity. Therefore, development in Needham Market will be expected to make contributions towards additional HWRC provision.

Access to community infrastructure

6.3.19 Needham Market has an active Access for All Group which is working hard to garner funding and support to improve accessibility at the Needham Market Railway Station. The Town Council is committed to the principle of extending access to better incorporate accessibility of neighbourhoods, facilities and open spaces to all users across all ages. Access to the Library and Community Centre is along School Street, a narrow road with a pavement on one side only that is not wide enough for prams, buggies, or wheelchairs. Many people access services at the Community Centre and Library by walking in the road, which is difficult and dangerous. Needham Market Library is well used and is due to be rehoused by BMSDC in a refurbished, adjacent historic building. The Community Cafe, which was previously an Internet Cafe and before that a Youth Club, is closing and an extension to the Community Centre is planned in its stead. The Community Centre is a vibrant focus for local activities, with in excess of some 25 regular activities taking place in its precincts. Additionally, there are a further score of groups, some County wide, which hold regular meetings at the Community Centre. Needham Market Town Council Office is adjoined to the Community Centre.



Community Centre



Map 4 -Community Infrastructure

POLICY NM6 – Community Infrastructure

New Community Facilities

Proposals that promote and enhance community services and infrastructure for all sectors of the community will be supported where such schemes are otherwise acceptable. In particular support will be given to proposals that:

- a) enable the expansion of the NM Country Practice.
- b) support health and social care services.
- c) provide new or improved school provision.
- d) ensure safe access to community facilities.
- e) encourage new community meeting places such as community cafes
- f) provide and improve facilities for younger people in the town
- g) incorporate natural spaces and green areas for community recreational use.

New development will be expected to provide for necessary community infrastructure commensurate with the scale of the proposed development. These facilities should be clustered together to enable opportunities for shared spaces and promote accessibility.

Existing community facilities

Proposals that would result in the loss of an existing community building or facility will not be supported unless:

- a) It can be demonstrated that the need for the building or facility no longer exists or it is no longer viable or
- b) It can be demonstrated that suitable alternative provision exists in an equally more accessible location elsewhere within the Town and this would avoid a duplication of facilities or
- c) Suitable alternative provision will be delivered by new development.



Natural Environment

Objective 4: To protect and enhance Needham Market's environmental, natural and green assets.

- 6.4.1 Needham Market is located within the valley of the River Gipping and sits on the south of the river and the railway line. Of the remaining landscape surrounding the urban settlement; north west there is a section characterised as Rolling Valley Claylands, west and south is primarily characterised as Ancient Plateau Claylands with sections of Rolling Valley Farmlands to the south, south-west and further north-east.
- 6.4.2 The surrounding landscape to the east is defined by the River Gipping and the river floodplain and includes several high quality mill complexes as well as several lake features to the east and west of the river. Beyond the new settlement edges to the north, west and south the landscape is agricultural in character with several historic farmsteads set on rising ground some containing listed buildings.
- 6.4.3 Needham Market is a small town in a rural area, surrounded by a mix of open agricultural land, managed woodland, and a river ecosystem with green spaces available within the settlement and beyond for a variety of recreational pursuits. There is an excellent network of footpaths, for walkers, which are regularly, used by people walking their dogs and ramblers, from within and outside the area. There are also allotments available to rent and a wide range of sporting and leisure pursuits are available in the town. Clear signage with well-marked routes encourages exercise. The UK charity Mental Health Foundation promotes this idea:

“Access to nature through purpose-built spaces creates a meeting space for all age groups and positively affects their social interaction and cohesion. Living near natural space has been related to crime reduction and increased neighbourliness. Opportunities for socialising and the strengthening of neighbourhood ties are provided by community gardens and club or group green activities. Building communities through participation in local nature activities increases a sense of community pride and strength.”

- 6.4.4 Additionally, the town benefits from established recreational facilities at Crowley Park, the Camping Land and Needham Lake. These green spaces contribute to both the local economy and the wellbeing of the town's residents and are protected in the emerging Local Plan. Community consultation highlighted the value attached to these spaces by local residents and the Town Council is committed to preserving its green spaces for future generations.



River Gipping



6.4.7 As part of the evidence base underpinning the emerging Local Plan, Mid Suffolk commissioned work on the Landscape and Heritage Sensitivity of several key settlements. The study recognises that the historic environment is sensitive to change and can be severely adversely affected by inappropriate development. It therefore needs to be properly understood before changes are planned, to ensure that it can make a positive contribution to shaping sustainable development, to encourage the creation of communities which reflect and complement the significant historic character of the area within which they live. The assessments have been designed to produce an analysis of the susceptibility of the historic settlements within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts to new development and identifies both areas and settlements which are sensitive, vulnerable or irreplaceable areas and highlight specific heritage assets of particular importance both above and below ground. It also identifies those settlements which are of lower value, which have a greater capacity from a heritage perspective to accommodate development. Needham Market was given an overall medium to low rating which indicates that the settlement can accommodate development in many situations without significant adverse impact on the key aspects that contribute to the significance, special interest and importance of the heritage assets or landscapes affected and that there is some potential for enhancement.

The resulting report published in 2018¹⁹ identifies 4 key views within Needham Market which make important contribution to the significance of the settlement or individually significance assets as follows:

1. View looking north-west up the High Street. This allows an appreciation of the character of the historic built form within the historic built core, and of the historic form of the settlement.
2. View looking south-east up the High Street. This similarly allows an appreciation of the character of the historic built form within the historic built core, and of the historic form of the settlement.
3. Shorter views along Hawkes Mill Street looking west towards the mill complex. This not only highlights the visual prominence of the mill complex, but also the historic character and industry of the river valley.
4. Shorter view along Coddendam Road looking north-west towards the mill complex. This again highlights the character of the river valley and therefore reinforces the character of the historic landscape surrounding Needham Market.

The results of the consultation events indicate that local people value the quality of both the landscape and the townscape in and around Needham Market and therefore it is considered necessary for a policy to be included within the Neighbourhood Plan that seeks to protect both the rural setting of the town as well as the important views into, out of and within the town which are identified in the heritage sensitivity study.

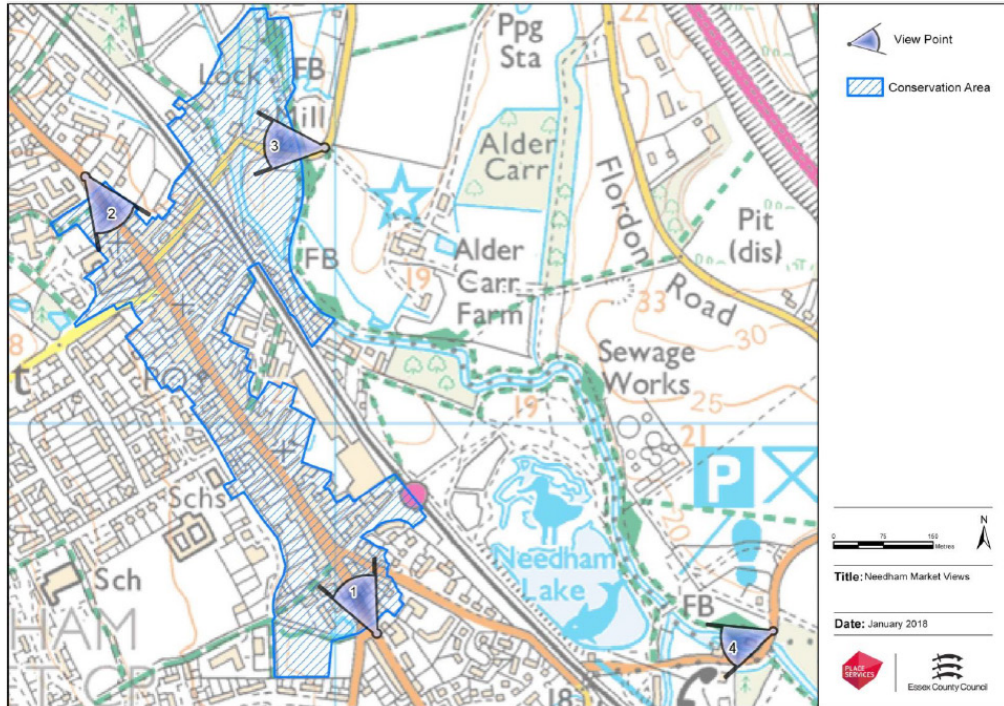
POLICY NM7 - Preserving the town's setting and retention of important views.

The visual scenic value of the landscape and countryside surrounding Needham Market including Needham Lake and the valley of the River Gipping will be protected from development that may adversely affect its character.

Important views into, from and within the town will be protected from inappropriate development. Development that significantly detracts from the following views (shown on **Map 6**), by failing to respect their distinctive characteristics, will not be supported.

- 1) View looking north-west up the High Street.
- 2) View looking south-east up the High Street.
- 3) Short views along Hawks Mill Street looking west towards the mill complex.
- 4) Short view along Coddendam Road looking north-west towards the mill complex.

¹⁹ Babergh and Mid Suffolk Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment Final Report March 2018



Map 6 – Important Views

Historic Environment

Objective 5: To preserve and enhance the historic town centre of Needham Market.

- 6.4.8 Needham Market is an historic town with some buildings dating back to the Medieval period. The historic core of the settlement is linear in nature and is located along a single main axial street running north-west to south-east. This is the historic road between Bury St. Edmunds and Ipswich, and it is heavily populated with historic buildings, albeit with areas of twentieth century infill. The High Street and close environs are a conservation area designated in 1970. The built form consists of a high number of listed buildings (in excess of 80 out of a town total of 107) and heritage assets mainly focussed within the Conservation Area, inter-dispersed with 20th century development.
- 6.4.9 A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. They were introduced by the 1967 Civic Amenities Act although the main legislation governing their implementation is now contained in the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act which requires the review of existing Conservation Areas as well as allowing for the designation of new ones. Mid Suffolk District Council produced an updated Character Statement underpinning the Conservation Area in 2011.



Historic Needham Market



- 6.4.10 The quality of the built environment within the historic core/conservation area is reinforced by the number of Grade II* listed buildings. There is only one Grade I Listed building which is **The Parish Church, St John the Baptist**, Grade I, which was built as a chapel of ease to the Parish Church at Barking and built between 1458 and 1500 with many unusual aspects and with its crowning glory, the spectacular hammer beam roof sometimes described as the most unusual and unique in the country.
- 6.4.11 However, there are a number of Grade II* buildings, which are in good repair and include timber framed houses such as
- The Tudor House**, 111 High Street. The brick façade added in the nineteenth century hides a typical fifteenth century timber frame house.
 - The Ancient House**, 1-3 King William Street. Built in the late fifteenth century, it was occupied by John Flegg and later by John Gardner, two wealthy clothiers. On the wall of the Ancient House a stone commemorates the Suffolk Show which was held in the town in 1893.
 - The Bull Inn**, at 86 High Street, early 16th Century and roughcast rendered with an elaborate dragon post.
 - The Limes Hotel**, 99 High Street, formerly Boule House, a high-quality timber framed building built around 1500 with a brick façade added in 1771. It is thought that this was a stopping place for pilgrims on their way to Bury St Edmunds.
 - 93 High Street**, 17th Century with an early 18th Century front in red and white brick
- 6.4.12 The historic core of the town is susceptible to development along the main road and there has been considerable modern infill between or directly adjacent to the historic built form. Similarly, the Mill complexes to the east of the settlement are susceptible to development that would encircle or obscure. The historic linear core of the town is of high value and contains several gap sites that could be the subject of development proposals in the future and therefore a high standard of design should be required.
- 6.4.13 Outside of the historic core are two notable high quality listed Mill complexes. Both are large watermills which at one time harnessed the power of the river's flow for grinding corn: Bosmere Mill to the east near Needham Lakes and Hawks Mill at the north end of the town. Both were sited adjacent to locks on the Gipping navigation, remains of which can still be seen despite being converted to sluices by the predecessor to the Environment Agency.
- 6.4.14 It is acknowledged that the historic core contains unlisted buildings that make a contribution to the character and appearance of the built fabric of the Conservation Area. It has not been possible to identify these and the specific contribution they make, as part of this Neighbourhood Plan however, their importance is recognised and therefore a Community Action Project (**See Chapter 7**) has been identified to compile a List of Non Designated Heritage Assets – which could include unlisted buildings both inside and outside of the Conservation Area – that can inform a review of the Neighbourhood Plan and influence future planning decisions.

Local Vernacular

- 6.4.15 Needham Market is characterised by lime render and plain tiles, very much in the Suffolk tradition of timber-framed construction, although instances do occur where the frame is exposed. Some of these older buildings now have more recent brick fronts and can only be spotted by their remaining steep plain tile roofs. These often have slate eaves courses, a local detail evolved most probably to cover the brick front, where the roof has been extended.
- 6.4.16 The more recent buildings of the 19th Century in local soft red or white bricks are more often slate roofed, the brickwork sometimes lost behind a rendered or painted finish. The picture is completed by a scattering of other local materials including red brick built in rat-trap bond, pantile roofs, one thatched roof and a few examples of black weatherboarding on outbuildings and barns. Knapped flint was used on parts of the Church, and also appears unworked in numerous boundary walls in the town, usually with red brick piers and cappings. Flints can also be found as a paving material throughout the town, usually as cobbled aprons to back of pavement areas. At one time the entire High Street was paved in York stone with a cobbled edge strip at the kerb.



6.4.17 Government guidance indicates that planning policies should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. The Town Council through this Neighbourhood Plan supports the use of statutory conservation powers including enforcement and repairs notices that will endeavour to protect and preserve the condition of the buildings in this important historic town centre.

Signage

- 6.4.18 The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which are subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.
- 6.4.19 Where there are redevelopment or new development proposals in the town centre that may require additional or reconfigured signage, care should be taken to ensure that the proposed signage does not detract from the historic character of the conservation area either through its size, design or siting. Where it is proposed to attach signage to a Listed Building, the impact of the signage on the significance of the Listed Building will be taken into account through the determination of the relevant Listed Building consent.

The Conservation Area is shown in **Appendix C**



Policy NM8 –The Historic Town Centre and Conservation Area

Development within the Historic Town Centre and Conservation Area will be supported where they respect the historic fabric and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area taking into account the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting.

This will be achieved through:

- a) Encouraging the preservation of buildings which contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area.
- b) Ensuring that new development is sympathetic to the special qualities and character of the Conservation Area through the use of appropriate, high quality materials.
- c) Protecting the setting of the conservation area including views into or out of the area where it contributes to its character and appearance.

Furthermore:

- d) Proposals incorporating new below ground building works should be subject to consultation with Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service to determine whether archaeological investigation is required.
- e) Where new or reconfigured advertising signage is proposed, consideration should be given to its size, design and siting to ensure that it does not detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- f) Proposals seeking to enhance the streetscape and public realm through appropriate use of street furniture²⁰ which preserves and enhances the area will be supported.

²⁰ *including, but not limited to, high quality lighting, railings, seating, litter bins, bollards, and cycle racks



Transport

- 6.5.1 Needham Market's general accessibility is enhanced by its location along the A14 trunk road. However, the most direct road link between the key A14 junction and the town along Coddendam Road (B1078) is impeded by a railway bridge which has a height limit of 2.5m and which prevents HGVs and other large vehicles from accessing the town via that route. The risk of the bridge being struck by inappropriate vehicles which could result in bridge damage, road closure and closure of the main railway line between Norwich and London, is high. It is assumed to be one of the reasons why the town has not been identified in the emerging BMSJLP for further new housing growth on top of existing commitments.
- 6.5.2 Previous versions of this Neighbourhood Plan have articulated a long-term belief in the provision of a link road across the River Gipping Valley would benefit the town of Needham Market. It would:
- Help remove Stowmarket bound HGV traffic from passing through the High Street, in contravention of the existing vehicle weight limit of 7.5 tonnes.
 - Take away vibration and traffic carbons from the fabric of the bulk of Listed Buildings in the High Street and the service pipelines that lay under the street.
 - Reduce costs, CO2 and emissions from HGVs operating from the Barking / Wattisham Airfield side of town and the Lion Barn Estate.
 - Remove the threat to the Norwich to Liverpool Street rail services from bridge strikes at the Coddendam Road Bridge.
- 6.5.3 Informal costings, for the construction for a new direct road link to the A14 replacing the existing Coddendam route, indicate the cost might lie anywhere between £20 and £30 million and would need support from the Highways Agency and Suffolk County Council. Nevertheless, the Neighbourhood Plan wishes to maintain a long term commitment to further consideration of such an arrangement if major development is to be proposed in subsequent rounds of strategic planning policy making at the District Council level.
- 6.5.4 The town has a railway station which provides access to London via Ipswich and also to Norwich, Cambridge and Peterborough. Needham Market has the potential to become a significant transport hub, integrating public and private modes of transport including the local and inter-city railway service, the Ipswich to Stowmarket bus service, national and local cycle routes and footpath networks, however it is considered locally that to enable this there needs to be more car parking available at the station which is both accessible and affordable.
- 6.5.5 Anecdotal evidence from community consultation suggests the volume of traffic in the High Street is increasing coupled with a growing concern that numbers are likely to increase further. Many drivers appear to be exceeding the 30mph speed limit and this results in vibration, noise, fumes and the danger of serious accidents. Many residents and visitors, including the young and elderly, feel nervous about walking in the high street shopping area due to speeding traffic. Parking can also be difficult at particular times, so many people simply go elsewhere. The existing situation will only become more critical when the current permitted growth for the town is completed and the risk of detriment to the economic, social and environmental quality of the town will be harmed. The key priority that will inform future reviews of the Neighbourhood Plan is to obtain empirical evidence on the transport and traffic issues facing the town to test the anecdotal inclination in the form of a comprehensive traffic assessment. This will help to justify much needed financial investment in the transport infrastructure and maintain a solid foundation for any future changes.
- 6.5.6 Such a survey should monitor speed, volume and weight of traffic and its environmental impact on air quality and the built environment. The principle area of survey should be the High Street, Stowmarket Road, Ipswich Road and Barking Road and Coddendam Road together with their connecting road junctions. Alongside this, there is a need to undertake a detailed public consultation exercise which must gauge public views, adding to the knowledge that has already been built up during previous consultation exercises on this plan. The results of this work would provide a very firm platform to justify expenditure on a range of improvements.



6.5 TRANSPORT

6.5.7 Public consultation undertaken in previous stages of the formulation of this Neighbourhood Plan has indicated three key transport issues:

- 1) Constructing a major relief road to link the A14/A140 interchange with Ipswich Road.

This would aim to avoid the Coddendam Road railway bridge and the very narrow road junctions at the south eastern end of the town. In this way, congestion in the town would be significantly reduced and vehicular access to Needham Market's growing major industrial areas improved. It is acknowledged that this is an aspiration at present, to be considered if further major development allocations are made to Needham Market in future reviews of Local and Neighbourhood Plans. This Neighbourhood Plan notes that there is no mechanism for delivering this road currently. Suffolk County Council have recognised through the Neighbourhood Plan process, the desire for a link road across the Gipping Valley, related to concerns regarding the low rail bridge and understand the local support for this, although the Council is not committed to this scheme at present.



Coddendam Road Railway Bridge



2. Providing more accessible free car parking to serve the High Street and Railway Station
3. Extending the 20mph speed limit between Barking Road and Stowmarket Road on the roads which serve the main residential areas of the town.

This would encourage more considerate driving, deliver environmental benefits and support economic growth. Rationalising out-of-date traffic signage and providing new and innovative way markers to places of interest will also boost tourism and visitor spending.

- 6.5.8 Suffolk County Council have through the Neighbourhood Plan process noted the desire to extend the 20mph zone within the town. The County Council has a set of criteria against which it assesses the suitability of roads to have a 20mph limit applied.

Unless in exceptional circumstances, locations will not be considered for 20mph schemes where any of the following apply:

- they are on A or B class roads;
- they have existing mean speeds above 30 mph;
- there is no significant community support as assessed by the local County Councillor.

Locations will then only be considered for 20 mph limits or zones if two out of three of the following criteria are met:

- current mean speeds are at or below 24 mph;
- there is a depth of residential development and evidence of pedestrian and cyclist movements within the area;
- there is a record of injury accidents (based on police accident data) within the area within the last five years.

- 6.5.9 The Town Council has explored measures that could alleviate the current situation. These include:

- Ensuring satnavs are up to date and do not continue to show an over rail crossing that was located close to the bridge, but which has been closed for many years.
- A physical device in addition to road signage e.g. overhanging the road that could trigger a noise and/or a visual alarm.
- Realignment of the B1078 Coddensham Road junction with the slip road, which takes traffic onto the A14. HGVs must negotiate a difficult access onto the A14 slip road whereas the B1078 takes them directly towards Needham Market and into conflict with the low bridge.

Objective 6: To improve connections and services within the town, to prevent the need to travel elsewhere, particularly by car

Policy NM9 – Reducing and Managing the Impact of Traffic

Otherwise acceptable development proposals will be supported which promote or introduce measures to minimise the effects of through traffic in the town centre. Support will be given for measures that:

- a) reduce the need for traffic from the employment areas, including HGVs to travel through the town centre, and
- b) improve accessibility by modes other than the car between the town centre and the employment areas (See Policy NM3)



Traffic in the High Street

Access to Public Transport

6.5.10 The town has regular bus services, although these have recently been reduced so that the routes do not give easy access to the services for people living at a distance from the High Street, and disproportionately affects people with limited mobility, who have relied on the now defunct routes for access to services. Similarly, Needham Market Railway Station has good services towards Ipswich – and onwards to London - and Stowmarket - and onwards to Bury St Edmunds, Cambridge and Peterborough, with a change of train making Norwich readily accessible. The Ipswich bound platform at the station is inaccessible for many people with disabilities and difficult for parents and grandparents with young children in prams or buggies. The inaccessibility problem is the subject of a current and well supported local campaign (Access for All – Needham Market Railway Station).

Access to the countryside and walking and cycling

Objective 7: To encourage healthier lifestyles by helping people to enjoy walking and cycling safely.

- 6.5.11 Additionally, the Town Council will strive to improve routes between the town centre and the countryside, whether through maintaining and expanding existing links or working in partnership with the District Council, developers and the Suffolk County Council Public Rights of Way and Access Team to create new ones. Development that incorporates green spaces and allows easy access to the countryside is actively encouraged. The implications of any proposed developments, or revisions to the town's boundary, will be assessed in light of this policy, ensuring that the town will continue to have ample access to the countryside and woodland. Full consultation with the community will be recommended to ensure that the town grows sympathetically to its rural setting.
- 6.5.12 Access to the countryside on the west side of the town is also available by several very well used footpaths running parallel up the hill perpendicular to the High Street. These ascend the valley side passing through modern developments to reach the fields along the ridge. One of these is 'The Causeway', a track used for funeral processions up until the 1900's, leading from Needham Market to the burial ground at Barking church. Immediately to the south of the town, this same hillside has been carved out into a chalk pit (currently being developed for housing), one path leading southwards up the hill running along an apparent cliff-top.
- 6.5.13 National Cycle Route 51 is a long-distance cycling route that connects several cities in southern England. It begins in Oxford and passes Milton Keynes, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich before reaching the coast at Felixstowe. Part of the route runs through the Neighbourhood Plan area as it follows the River Gipping through the town.



Policy NM10 – Encouraging safe walking and cycling

Development should preserve existing Public Rights of Way and where possible enhance Public Rights of Way through the improvement of existing routes, or the creation of new routes and connections.

New footways and cycleways should connect to the town centre to enable easy access to facilities and services, to existing cycleways and should form part of a safe, accessible and coherent network in and around the town.

Proposals for new development should demonstrate how they:

- i) promote connections with other parts of the existing cycle and footpath networks; and
- ii) contribute to the delivery of public transport connections, clearly marked on-street cycling, and walking facilities for the town, including the provision of cycle parking in the town centre, that favour young families and older people and that offers good access.



7 Community Action Projects

7.1 As expected, during consultation events, the local community identified many projects that fall outside the remit of planning policy. These have been identified as non-planning policy actions called 'community action projects' and are listed below. The Community Action Projects will be taken forward outside the Neighbourhood Plan process. These are included only for topics where relevant and are not an exhaustive list. See **Chapter 8** for more details on implementation of the Plan.

- Achieve full accessibility at Needham Market Railway Station including onto both platforms.
- Improved rail connections.
- Improved Bus Services (routes serving more areas of the town plus increased frequency).
- Improvements to Coddendam Road to mitigate its current misuse by HGVs, plus a strategically planned new direct link to the A14, when conceivable.
- Footpath/cycleway between Lion Barn Estate and the town centre to ensure integration of edge of town development and amenities with the core of the town (e.g. from Lion Barn Estate, Needham Chalk Quarry development and Needham Lake, to the town centre).
- Comprehensive Traffic Survey to inform future plans.
- Housing Needs Assessment to inform future Plans.
- Consultation with and projects to improve facilities for young people in the town.
- Character Appraisal Design Checklist and updated Assessment to inform future plans
- Compilation of list of Non Designated Heritage Assets to inform future plans.



8: IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

Implementation

- 8.1 The Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to assist with the planning of sustainable growth across the town for a period up to 2037. The implementation of the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan will require the co-ordinated input and co-operation of relevant statutory and non-statutory agencies, private sector organisations and the local community.
- 8.2 Alongside other strategic documents and policies, the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan is intended to provide a starting point for working together to implement positive physical change in the town.
- 8.3 The policies in this document shape the way in which development happens within the town of Needham Market. Some of the policies included within the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan have a delivery element, often a requirement of development or 'planning obligation'. Planning obligations, (often referred to as section 106 agreements) are legal agreements negotiated between the Council and a developer or landowner (usually in the context of a planning application). Planning obligations are typically used to ensure that new developments:
 - comply with planning policy - for instance, by requiring affordable housing or public open space to be provided; and
 - do not impose undue burdens on existing facilities - for instance, by requiring financial contributions to increase/improve local services such as schools, libraries or transport.
- 8.4 In order to see delivery realised, it will require Needham Market Town Council and partner organisations to be proactive in getting the best results for the town of Needham Market. Working in partnership with Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council will be particularly important regarding strategic matters such as addressing traffic and highway safety issues. Particularly as these have already been highlighted as major issues for future plan reviews.
- 8.5 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008, to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of the area. Mid Suffolk District Council has an adopted CIL Policy in place for the District and once the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made,' Needham Market Town Council will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from development that takes place in Needham Market. This revenue will be used to fund projects contained in the Neighbourhood Plan as well as other community priorities that may be identified during the plan period.



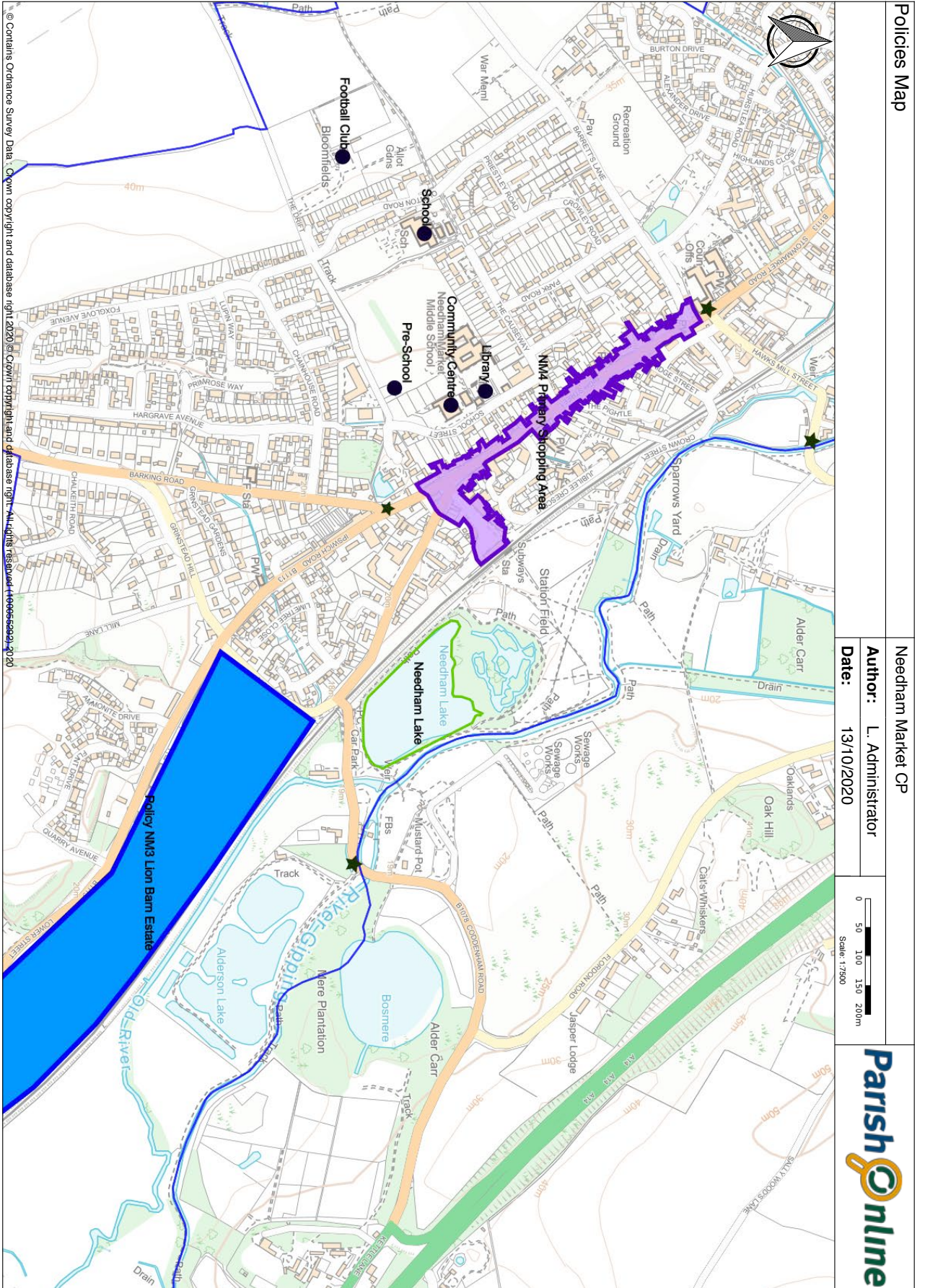
8: IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

Monitoring

- 8.6 A formal review process in consultation with the local community and Mid Suffolk District Council should be undertaken at a minimum of every five years, to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan is still current and remains a positive planning tool to deliver sustainable growth. In order to determine when a review is necessary, the Town Council will monitor development in Needham Market along with local and national planning policy and in the appropriate legislative context. It is anticipated the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan will require review during its life and that it will be the role of the Town Council to update the Neighbourhood Plan at the appropriate time. It is possible that further development will take place during the Neighbourhood Plan period (2020 – 2037). Some of the first Neighbourhood Plans that were ‘made’ across the country are now in the process of review and alteration.
- 8.7 Any review will provide an opportunity to reassess the town’s housing and economic markets and to resolve some of the bigger issues surrounding development in and around Needham Market including those relating to traffic in the town centre and access to the A14.
- 8.8 The Town Council will report annually on the implementation of policies, and the progress made on taking forward the identified Community Action Projects. This will be contained in Town Council meeting Minutes, at the Annual Town Meeting and be available to view on the Town Council website.



Appendix A – Policies Map



Policies Map

Needham Market CP

Author: L. Administrator

Date: 13/10/2020





Appendix B – Needham Market Town Council

TOWN CLERK

Kevin Hunter

DEPUTY TOWN CLERK

Kelaine Spurdens

Town Council Office, Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market IP6 8BB

Telephone 01449 722246

E.mail: clerk@needhammarkettc.f9.co.uk

LIST OF TOWN COUNCILLORS:

BE Annis

RP Darnell

J Kett

JE Lea MA

(Deputy Town Mayor/Chair of Council 2020/21)

I Mason

MG Norris

M O'Shea

M Ost

S Phillips

(Town Mayor/Chair of Council 2020/21)

J Reardon

L Rix

M Spurling

X Stansfield

COUNTY COUNCILLOR:

K Oakes

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS:

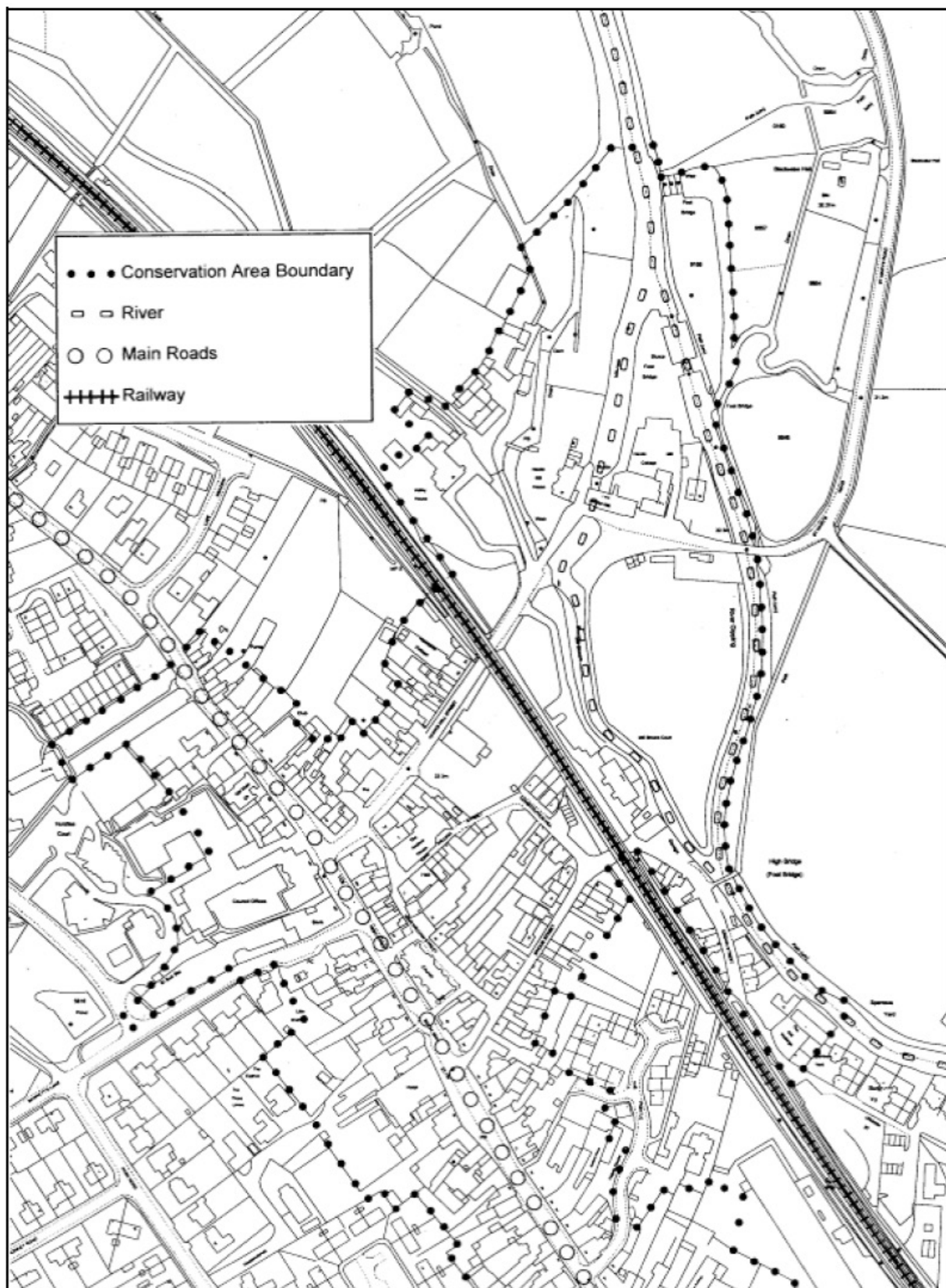
MG Norris

S Phillips



Appendix C – Conservation Area

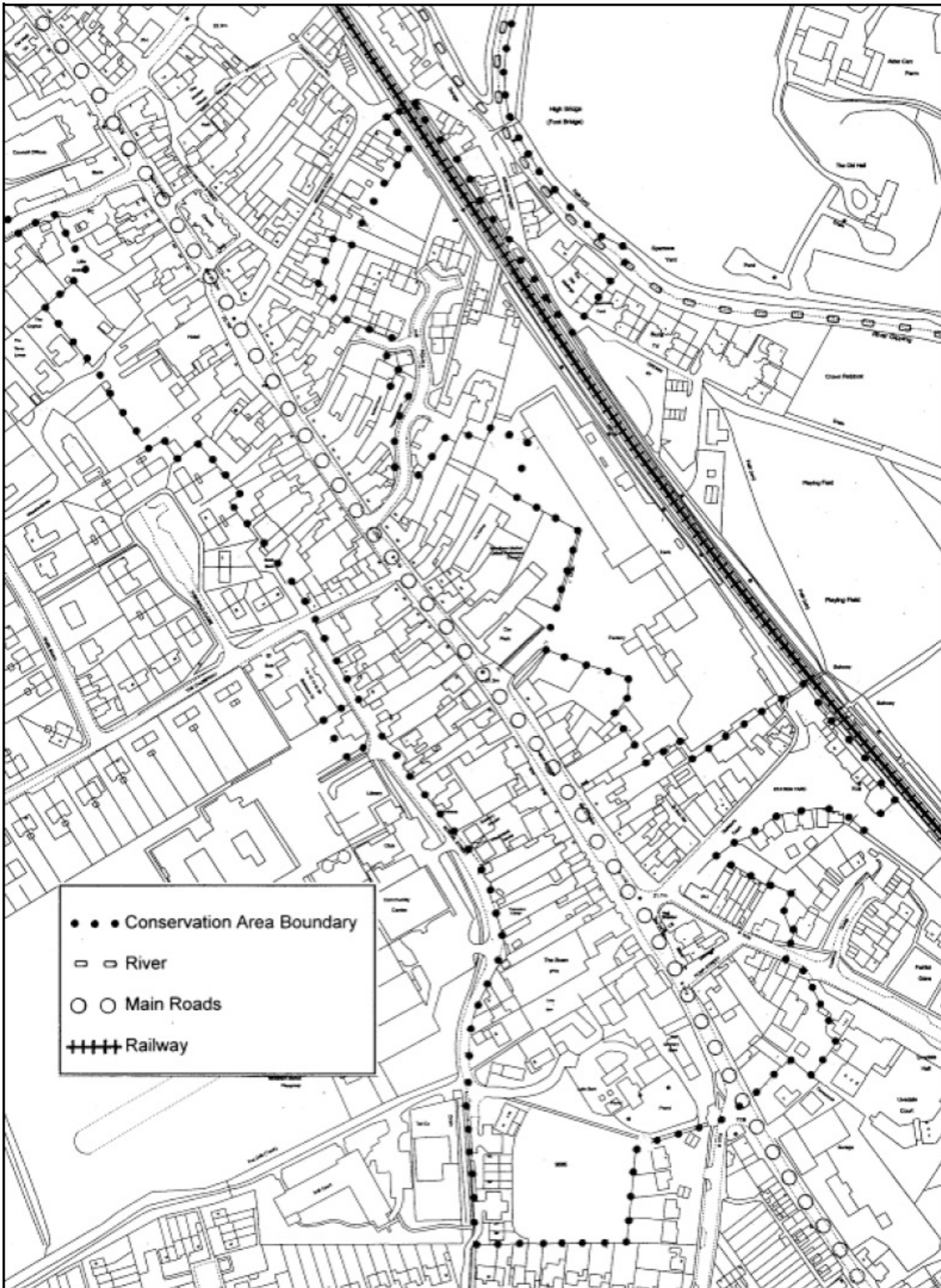
Needham Market NW



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Needham Market SE

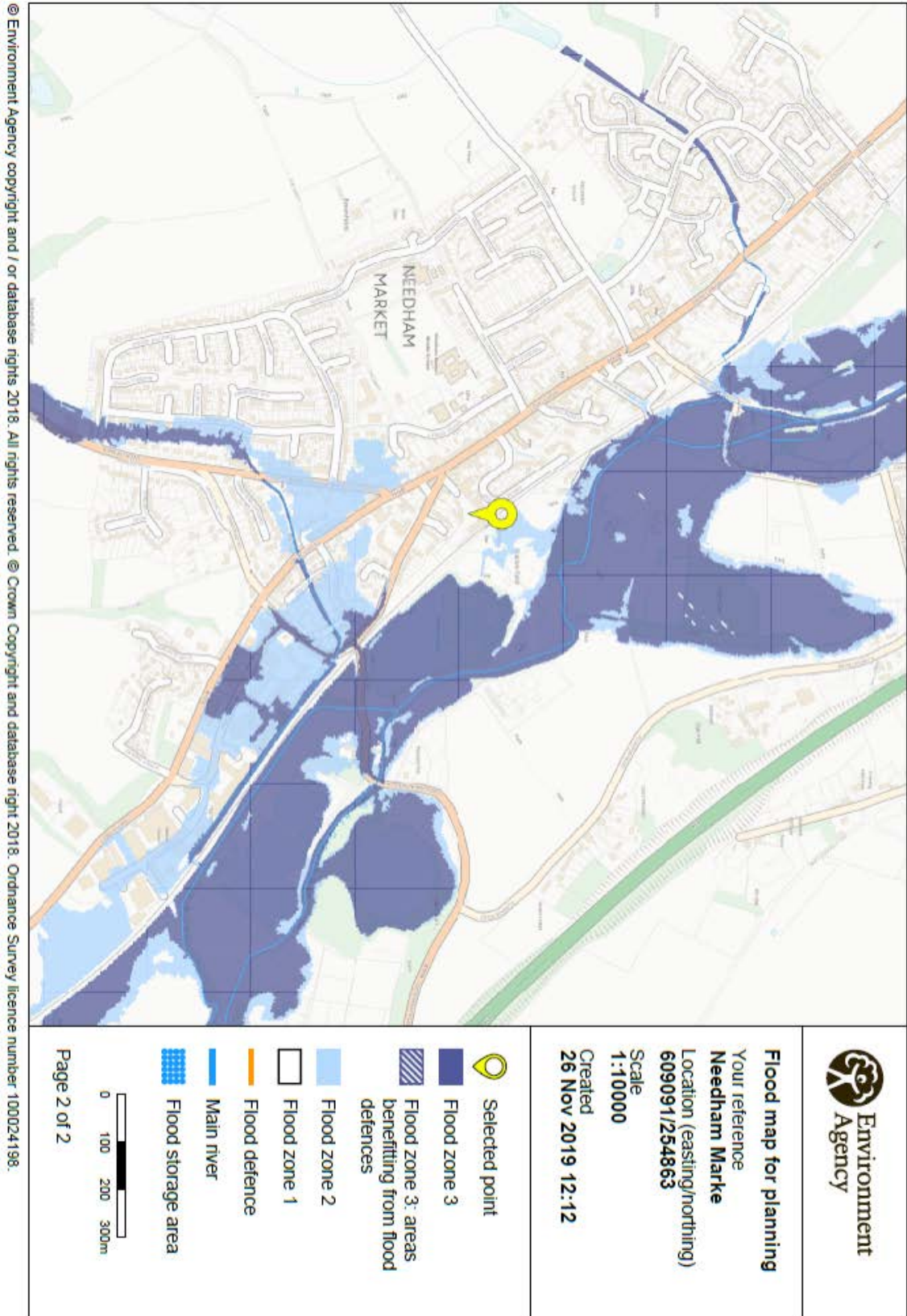


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Appendix D –Environment Agency Flood risk Map

"The information in this appendix is correct at the time of writing the Plan. Up to date information on flood risk should always be sought from the Environment Agency or other reliable sources of information."





Appendix E – Definitions and 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. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
Allocation	An area of land identified for development in a development plan. The allocation will specify the type of development that will be permitted on the land.
Biodiversity	The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variation including plants and animals.
Brownfield Land or Site	Brownfield land is another term for previously developed land.
Community Facilities	Facilities providing for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, leisure and cultural needs of the community.
Conservation Area	An area of special architectural or historic interest, designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, whose character and appearance is protected.
Density	Measurement of the number of dwellings per hectare and often in equivalent dwellings per acre.
Development	Development is defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as “the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over, or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land.” Most forms of development require planning permission.
Duty to Cooperate	Local Councils now have a duty to co-operate with their neighbouring Councils and a set of prescribed bodies as defined by the Localism Act 2011 on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to the strategic priorities.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	EIA is a procedure that must be followed for certain types of development before they are granted permission. The procedure requires the developer to compile an Environmental Statement (ES) describing the likely significant effects of the development on the environment and proposed mitigation measures.
General Conformity	All planning policy documents must align with the expectations of the National Planning Policy Framework. This is known as general conformity.
Greenfield Site	Land that has not previously been used for urban development. It is usually land last used for agriculture and located next to or outside existing built-up areas of a settlement.
Habitat	The natural home of an animal or plant often designated as an area of nature conservation interest.
Infrastructure	Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.
Landscape Character Assessment	A tool to identify and understand the factors that give character to the landscape and to help inform policy and decisions about how the landscape may change in the future.



Listed Building	A building or other structure of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The grades of listing are grade I, II* or II.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	The old-style portfolio or folder of Development Plan Documents and Area Action Plans which collectively set out the Spatial Planning Strategy for a Local Planning Authority area. Local Plans have now replaced the Local Development Framework.
Local List	A list of buildings identified for their local historic, architectural or cultural contribution to the character of an area. The Local List is compiled and adopted by the Local Planning Authority.
Local Green Space	An area of green space that is demonstrably special to a local community by way of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility or richness of its wildlife (see NPPF 2018 paragraph 100).
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Area designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) as being of particular importance to nature conservation and where public understanding of nature conservation issues is encouraged.
Local Plan	The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.
Local Planning Authority (LPA)	The Local Government body responsible for formulating Planning Policies in an area, controlling development through determining planning applications and taking enforcement action when necessary. This is either a District Council, Unitary Authority, Metropolitan Council or National Park Authority.
Material Consideration	A matter that should be taken into account in deciding on a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.
Mixed Use (or Mixed-Use Development)	Provision of a mix of complementary uses, such as residential, community and leisure use, on a site or within a particular area.
Nature Conservation	The protection, management and promotion of wildlife habitat for the benefit of wild species, as well as the communities that use and enjoy them.
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	An area designated by Natural England to protect and conserve nationally important areas of wildlife habitat and geological formations and to promote scientific research.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The NPPF forms the national planning policies that Local Planning Authorities need to take into account when drawing up their Local Plan and other documents and making decisions on planning policies. The NPPF is published by the Department of Communities and Local Government. a new version of this was published in July 2021 which replaced the Feb 2019 version.
Neighbourhood Plans	A Plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
Non Designated Heritage Asset	These are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which are not formally designated heritage assets. In some areas, local authorities identify some non-designated heritage assets as 'locally listed'.



8: APPENDICES

Open Space	Open space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as 'land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground'. Open space should be taken to mean 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 also act as a visual amenity.
Planning Condition	A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.
Planning Obligation	A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.
Protected Species	Plants and animal species afforded protection under certain Acts of Law and Regulations.
Section 106 Agreement	A legal agreement under Section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. See also: Planning Obligations and Agreements.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	A SSSI is identified by Natural England as requiring protection from damaging development on account of its flora, fauna, geological and/or physiological features.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
Sustainable Development	Meeting peoples' needs now, socially, environmentally and economically, without jeopardising the needs of future generations. There are three dimensions to sustainable development as seen in paragraph 7 of the NPPF: - economic contributing to a strong, competitive economy; - social-supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities and – environmental contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.
Town Centre Uses	Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

