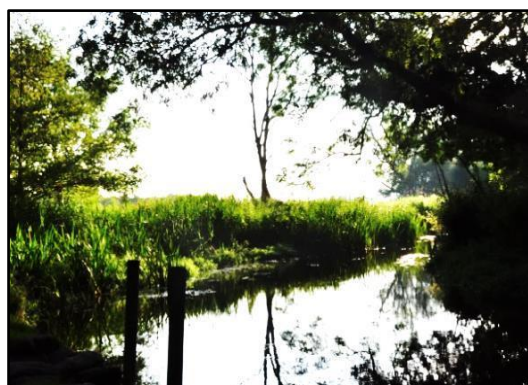
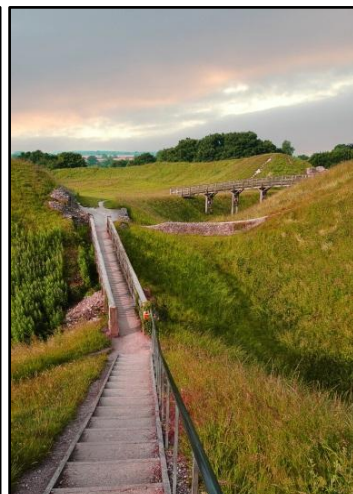
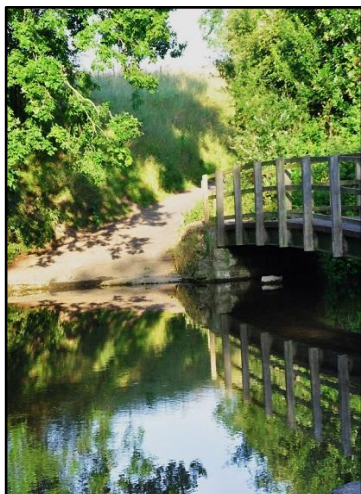


# **CASTLE ACRE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021-2036**

**Referendum version 2021**



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1 The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Development Plan will provide the first ever statutory planning policy document specifically for the Parish of Castle Acre. Neighbourhood Plans such as these 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.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led document for guiding the future development of the parish. It is about the use and development of land between 2019 and 2036. Once the Plan is made and adopted, the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk will use it to determine planning applications. Castle Acre Parish Council will use the Plan to respond to planning applications.
- 1.3 It complements existing national and local planning policy by providing a specific local level of detail attained through consultation with the local community and further research. Commissioned by Castle Acre Parish Council, the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan has been developed by a Steering Group of local residents (see **Appendix 1** for Steering Group members). The aim of the Steering Group is to establish a Neighbourhood Plan for Castle Acre that promotes practical, functional and sympathetic development whilst protecting and enhancing the conservation area and historic landscape and making provision for a self-sustaining community.
- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan 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).
- 1.5 The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan is not a mechanism for stopping development - it is there to ensure that development takes place in an appropriate way for the parish. It has been positively prepared, and its purpose is to support and manage growth, not prevent it. In practice, higher level planning documents such as the emerging Local Plan



for the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk cannot feasibly deal with all of the issues particular to every town and village across the district, whereas Neighbourhood Plans can by providing additional details which reflect specific local circumstances and conditions.

- 1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan provides clarity on what will be expected from development proposals, gives prospective investors confidence in how the area will change in the future, and ensures that the impact of development is anticipated and planned for in Castle Acre. A Neighbourhood Plan is a significant document and will carry legal weight so that developers have to take note when considering future developments in the parish.
- 1.7 This is the referendum copy of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Draft Plan, prepared and amended after examination and further consultation. There were 91 respondents during the Reg.4 consultation period, with representations from local residents, businesses and statutory agencies. All comments have been collated and considered, a table of responses is provided.

#### **Accompanying supporting documents**

- 1.8 When the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan was submitted for independent examination, it was accompanied by the following documents:
  - Basic Conditions Statement – outlining how the statutory basic conditions have been met.
  - Consultation Statement – outlining how and when the public were consulted on the content of the Plan.
  - Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report – which sets out the key environmental, economic and social issues in the Plan area.
  - Habitat Regulation Screening Report – which identifies any potential impacts on protected species or habitats.
  - Site Options and Assessment Report.
  - Castle Acre Housing Needs Assessment
  - A Heritage Impact Assessment for Site CA.3
  - A Traffic Survey to support Site CA.3

#### **Examination and referendum**

- 1.9 After submission, the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk undertook a checking process and further consultation. The plan then underwent an independent examination. This version of the plan is the final referendum version.
- 1.10 At referendum, every resident of Castle Acre who is entitled to vote in the Borough Council elections will have the opportunity to vote on whether or not they agree with the Neighbourhood Plan. At referendum, residents will be asked, *"Do you want the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Castle Acre parish to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood area?"*



If the Plan gets at least 50 per cent support from those who vote in the referendum, the Borough Council will “make” (adopt) the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the statutory development plan.

- 1.11 The Neighbourhood Plan covers the entire Parish of Castle Acre and was formally designated by the Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

**Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area Submission.**

## Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

Borough Council of  
King's Lynn &  
West Norfolk 

### Neighbourhood Area Consultation

Castle Acre have submitted an application to the Borough Council to have a 'Neighbourhood Area' designated, which is the first stage in the process of making a Neighbourhood Plan. The whole of Castle Acre Parish boundary is proposed to be included in the area. The Neighbourhood Plan would relate to the area within the boundary.

#### Do you have any comments on the proposed area?

You can comment by:  
visiting: [www.west-norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk) and following the Neighbourhood Planning link  
email: [ldf@west-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@west-norfolk.gov.uk)  
write to: LDF Team, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1EX



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## **National and Local Planning Policy Context**

- 1.12 Every local planning authority in England is required to prepare a Local Plan. The Borough's Local Plan includes all of the local planning policies for that area and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built and where. The Borough Council's Local Plan, along with any Neighbourhood Plan, provides the basis for determining planning applications and future development in the local area and should be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.13 The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and revised in July 2018 and February 2019<sup>1</sup>. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan is believed to be in conformity with the revised NPPF, in particular taking a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 1.14 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". <sup>2</sup>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"
- 1.15 The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan once "made" (adopted) will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area and future planning applications for new development will be determined using its policies.
- 1.16 Currently, the statutory development plan for the area consists of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2011 and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2016. The Borough Council is in the process of replacing those two documents with a new Local Plan, a draft of which was published for consultation in March 2019. The Plan period of the existing plans runs to 2026 whereas the emerging Local Plan looks to 2036.

### **Policy Framework for Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan**



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<sup>1</sup> The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in July 2021 after the Neighbourhood Plan was examined. The neighbourhood plan was examined under the 2019 version.

<sup>2</sup> Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 55.

- 1.17 Castle Acre is identified as a Key Rural Service Centre in the Core Strategy. A Key Rural Service centre is defined as a settlement which:

*“...provides a range of services that can meet basic day-to-day needs, and a level of public transport that can enable access to and from the settlement... The Borough Council will seek to maintain and enhance facilities to support this function.*

**6.1.12** *Local scale development will be concentrated in identified Key Rural Service Centres. This will include new housing, employment and retail development.”*

- 1.18 In the most recent version of the Emerging Local Plan published in March 2019, Castle Acre is identified again as one of 21 Key Rural Service Centres and as having potential to accommodate growth to sustain the wider rural community. The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016) provided an allocation of at least 15 dwellings in order to meet the identified need at that time through to 2026. To date 19 dwelling excluding windfall have the benefit of planning permission.





## Chapter 2: Castle Acre

### A brief History of Castle Acre

- 2.1 The village of Castle Acre is situated on the northern slope of the valley of the River Nar, approximately 14 miles east of King's Lynn, and 4 miles north of Swaffham. It occupies the south west corner of the Parish, with the River Nar and its wetlands to the south and west and farmland to the north. The long distance footpaths, the Peddars Way and the Nar Valley Way bisect the Parish.
- 2.2 This civil parish has an area of 5.09 sq. mi (13.18 km<sup>2</sup>) and in the 2001 census had a population of 799 in 370 households, the population increasing to 848 at the 2011 Census. The Parish Council estimates that 895 is the current population (2019) with 714 registered electors at June 2019.
- 2.3 The village has a range of historic buildings including the nationally important Grade 1 listed Priory, Castle, Bailey Gate and the Gatehouse of Cluniac Benedictine Priory. There are a further 19 listed buildings including the Ostrich Inn and the red telephone box on Stocks Green and a number of private dwellings around the village that contribute to a rich architectural heritage which has led to the designation of the Castle Acre Conservation Area (See **Appendix 2** for full list). The historic sites and the beauty of its setting draw tourists and visitors to the village, as do frequent artistic and cultural events. The village is a popular location for visitors and walkers and is especially busy on weekends, during school holidays and on bank holidays.
- 2.4 The Castle Acre Conservation Area was designated in 1971, the first to be designated in Norfolk, and extended to include the area of St James' Green in 1990. The designation is based on the distinct area of the Norman and Medieval settlement and the architectural quality of buildings, materials, spaces, trees and the surrounding landscape features.
- 2.5 Castle Acre is a village of contrast with old cottages, open village greens, mature trees, enclosed spaces, narrow streets and sunken lanes. Its antiquity is very evident in the way

that the village fabric is imposed onto and around the 12th Century Castle precinct, with the remains of the Cluniac Benedictine Priory standing a short distance away on the side of the valley beside the river.



- 2.6 These two great scheduled ancient monuments, cared for by English Heritage, contribute significantly to Castle Acre's outstanding conservation area. The core of the village is contained within or beside the defensive earthworks. The Bailey Gate and some of the walls remain. Sited on the steep valley side, the abrupt changes in level of Castle Acre add considerable interest and provide dramatic outward views between the buildings to the countryside beyond. The character of the old village derives from its compact and historic form and from the high proportion of old buildings which exhibit continuity in scale, materials and detailing.
- 2.7 The chalk stream of the River Nar attracted much earlier human occupation, with evidence from prehistoric flint-working sites and then from Roman and Saxon artefacts. There is evidence that the parish was settled from the prehistoric period with both Mesolithic and Neolithic flint working sites found close to the River Nar. Crop Marks indicating two ring ditches are probably the remains of Bronze Age burial barrows. The Roman Peddars Way runs through the parish. Though no definite Roman settlement has been identified, the discovery of Roman coins, pottery and floor tiles suggest that there was a Roman settlement at this crossing point of the river.
- 2.8 A settlement at Castle Acre is referred to in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as comprising a substantial population, suggesting that its origins may go back into the Late Anglo-Saxon period (10th/11th centuries). In addition to the listed population of Castle Acre, Domesday also refers to holdings of two mills, half a salt house, a fishery, cattle, sheep and pigs). An Anglo-Saxon cemetery was found during the construction of a new bank dividing the parishes of Castle Acre and West Acre in 1857. Evidence of Middle Saxon (8th/9th centuries) activity has been uncovered at the Priory.
- 2.9 The De Warenne line ended in 1347 and the estate passed to the FitzAlans of Arundel Castle. Though Castle Acre Castle fell out of use, the settlement prospered as it was on the main route to the medieval shrine at Walsingham and was the stopping off point for

many pilgrims as well as general travellers along the Peddars Way which continued as a major north-south route through Norfolk.

- 2.10 In the early 1400s, the Parish Church of St James the Great was built outside the town walls, probably on the site of an earlier Saxon Church. By 1500, dwellings had extended beyond the boundary of the Norman planned town to the north edge of what is now known as Stocks Green.
- 2.11 Castle Acre thrived as a market town during the medieval period, and may have had two market-places, one at Pales Green, within the outer bailey, and the other at St James' Green. It also had 3 Manors and one Manorial Site has been identified to the west of the village at, GR TF 8124 1540. Aerial photographs show a moat, faintly visible, which formed part of Fox's Manor in the reign of Henry III (1216 to 1272). On the ground, two sides of the moat still exist and are filled with water. There is also an 18th century field boundary, and a pit in the middle of the field that could once be a 'marl' or a gravel pit.
- 2.12 In 1537, the Prior, Thomas Malling, surrendered the Priory and lands to Henry VIII. It then passed to the Gresham and Cecil families before being acquired by the Cokes of Holkham. Bereft of income from pilgrims and without the status of Castle and Priory and as the nearby town of Swaffham overtook Castle Acre as a major trading centre, the village declined.
- 2.13 During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Castle Acre became an "open" village, without direct manorial control of property and where the poor and homeless could move in and find piecemeal employment under the agricultural 'gang masters' schemes. Small terraces to accommodate them were constructed mainly of brick with imported slate roofs and small gardens or yards. These were often financed by tradesmen, craftsmen or small capitalists and, despite their cheapness; many still survive bearing the name or initials of their owner or builder.
- 2.14 Thus, Castle Acre is a village of contrasts: it has the high status sites of Castle, Priory and Church; medieval cottages and 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces and 20<sup>th</sup> century public housing estates. There are open village greens, mature trees, enclosed spaces, narrow streets and sunken lanes. The greatest significance is that the core of the village remains as it was a thousand years ago, contained within or beside the defensive earthworks of the planned Norman town, sited on the steep valley side and with extensive views over the surrounding countryside.

### **Castle Acre today**

- 2.15 The population of Castle Acre Parish was 848 at the 2011 census and was estimated to have risen to 880 by 2016. Approximately 53.5% of the population were female with 46.5% male. In terms of age distribution, approximately half of the resident population was between the ages of 50 and 79 although there were approximately 160 residents aged between 0-19. The Parish Council estimates that the current population is 895.

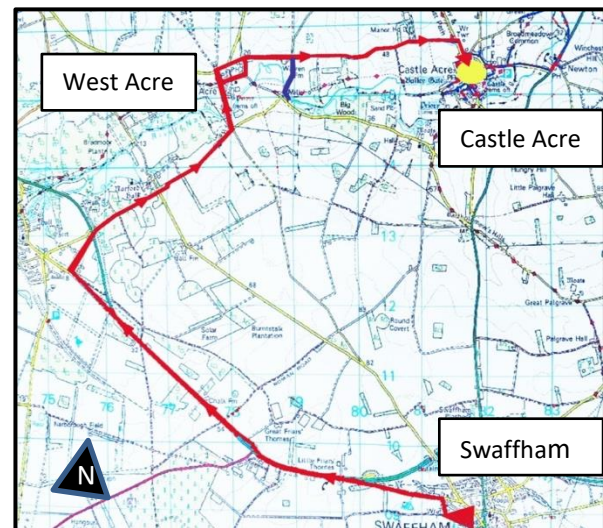


- 2.16 Castle Acre has a significantly high number of semi-detached<sup>3</sup> properties compared to the rest of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (KLWN) and England in general. The amount of terraced housing is low compared to England and comparable to the rest of KLWN. There are 139 one- or- two bedroom properties in Castle Acre. These types of properties are priced similarly in terms of purchase or rent to those in KLWN & England. There are 68 four bedroom houses in Castle Acre, more proportionally than in KLWN & England. There are 174 three bedroom houses in the village and this type of house is offered for sale at about 10% higher than in the rest of KLWN. On average there are nearly 3 bedrooms per house in Castle Acre, slightly higher than KLWN and more than one bedroom greater than the average in England.

## **Infrastructure and Services**

### **2.17 Water supply**

The village water supply comes from boreholes at North Pickenham, via the Swaffham water tower. See map. Water pressure to households is now generally satisfactory and local faults, if reported, are dealt with expeditiously. Anglian Water is confident that current and forecasted building developments to 2036, based on BCKLWN population predictions, will not adversely affect either supply or pressure.



### **2.18 Sewerage**

In 2019/20 Anglian Water introduced a more natural sewage management process in Castle Acre by converting the sewage treatment works at the bottom of the Water Meadows into a water recycling plant. Waste is pumped, via a pipeline, to Swaffham for treatment. Anglian Water is confident that the new plant will cope with the sewerage output from the current and forecast building developments to 2036. Any new house build should only be approved with a connection to mains or a waste treatment plant and with rainwater soakaways.

- *Noted that a number of households are still on septic tanks.*

<sup>3</sup> 2011 Census data

### 2.19 Surface water drainage

Through the Parish Council, Highways and Anglian Water will be urged to maintain a regular flushing of drains at key flood flash points including Foxes Meadow (Meadow End), Orchard and Archer Lanes, Massingham Road, High Street, bottom of Bailey Street, Pales Green and Cuckstool Lane, Jubilee and Newton Road bridges. All village roads should be swept quarterly, particularly to remove the excess sediments (e.g. Orchard Lane/by Jubilee Bridge) and to ensure road drainage ‘grips’ are kept clear. The final surface water drain outlets should also be regularly checked and maintained.



### 2.20 Electricity (and gas)

Managed by UK Power Networks, outages are few and far between, mainly from substation/transformer faults in King’s Lynn. Linking to the British Gas pipeline supply and then onto individual households would be prohibitively expensive and is not recommended, also for reasons related to the need to reduce fossil fuel consumption.

### 2.21 Street lights

The village has 34 streetlight columns, 8 still have the old sodium SOX bulbs, 26 are the brighter and cheaper LED bulbs (at February 2020). The lights are on from dusk to dawn, apart from eleven on timers that go off at midnight. The electricity is supplied under a two year contract and costs the parish around £820 per annum. Castle Acre Parish Council has a ‘dark skies’ policy and encourages both more streetlights to be time limited and individual householders not to leave their security lights on all night. It is Parish Council policy to resist any new streetlights on existing roads or on new housing developments.

### 2.22 Land and mobile telephone services

The village has its own telephone exchange and dedicated number (755). Nationally landline use is declining; however, as over 40% of properties in Castle Acre are occupied by retired residents, it would suggest landline usage will remain steady. There are two mobile phone masts to the north and east of the village. Mobile phone signals from Vodafone and O2 are strong, others less so.

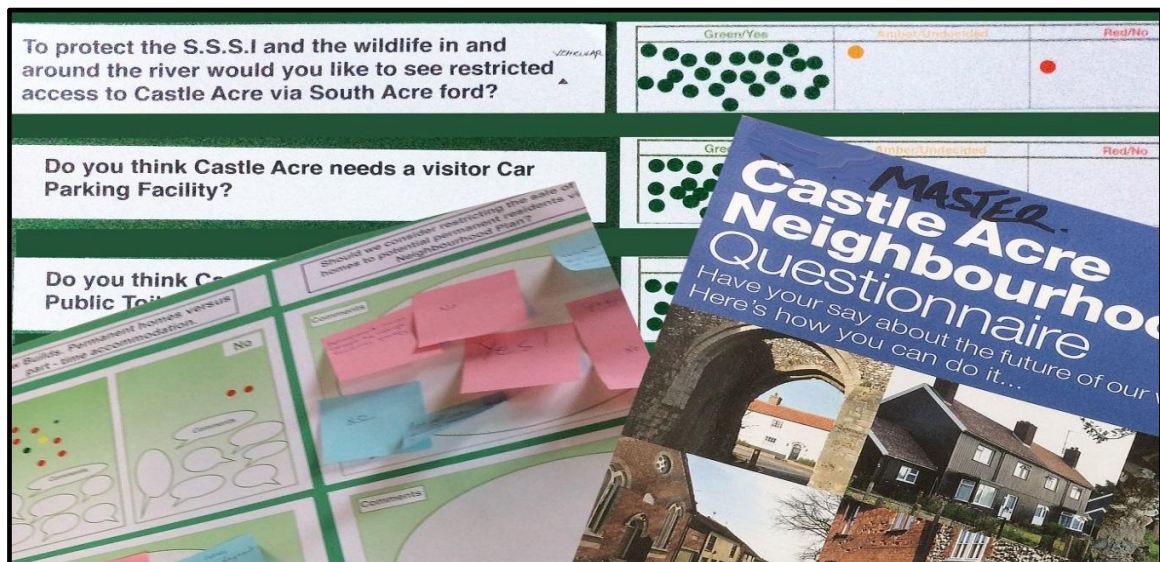
### 2.23 Broadband

There are three superfast broadband fibre services cabinets in the village allowing subscribers to achieve download speeds of between 80 and 35 Mbps on a fibre to cabinet basis. Cabinet to household connection relies on old technologies and is responsible in some cases for speed reduction. A few properties still can’t access fast broadband. Openreach should be encouraged to invest in making these connections.

## 2.24 Public Transport

Castle Acre has daily bus services to Swaffham (Monday to Saturdays) with services in the morning and the afternoon. Connections to Norwich and Dereham using the X1 Service are available from Swaffham Market Place whilst connections to King's Lynn go via Narborough. However, the bus services are not compatible with commuting to work and tend to operate during the working day with return journeys around 3pm. Given the level of day visitors the village receives, it is disappointing that there are not more services that may encourage travel to and from the village by public transport. It is noted that a bus service to support travel to work is a 'preferred' criteria for a Key Rural Service Centre. The service at Castle Acre does not enable this.





## Chapter 3: Key Issues from Consultation

- 3.1 Work began on the Neighbourhood Plan in July 2016. Following a presentation at a meeting of Castle Acre Parish Council (CAPC) to explore interest in formulating a Neighbourhood Plan, a Steering Group of eight volunteers was formed consisting of a mix of Parish Councillors and other local residents not connected to the Parish Council. This group subsequently reduced to 7.
- 3.2 In February 2017, the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (CANPSG) created a Facebook page which links to the village website [www.castleacre.info/neighbourhood\\_plan.html](http://www.castleacre.info/neighbourhood_plan.html).
- A 'drop-in' event was held on 2 May 2017 attended by 92 residents and stakeholders, the results of which were published on the website at: [http://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/00\\_NP\\_Events\\_May2017.pdf](http://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/00_NP_Events_May2017.pdf)
- 3.3 Following the information gained from the first drop-in event, copies of a 14 page, detailed questionnaire were delivered to all 467 households in the Parish in July 2017. 555 questionnaires were completed (a response rate of 65%) and analysed; the results are shown on the website. To view a summary of the questionnaire results, go to: [http://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/00\\_NP\\_Questionnaire\\_Findings.pdf](http://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/00_NP_Questionnaire_Findings.pdf)
- 3.4 Following the analysis of the questionnaires, a further drop-in event was held on 7 April 2018 and attended by 99 residents along with other interested parties which presented the key issues raised by the previous consultation exercises. The full results of this can be seen at: [http://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/00\\_NP\\_Events\\_April2018.pdf](http://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/00_NP_Events_April2018.pdf)

### Key Themes

- 3.5 Analysis of the results of the two drop-in sessions and the questionnaire reveals a number of issues for the parish with some consistent themes emerging.

- House prices are high compared to surrounding area.
- Accommodation for young families is beyond financial means.
- Many new homes coming onto the market are both very expensive and too big
- Affordable housing is a priority.
- Expansion of the village must not detract from the village atmosphere, character and community.
- Any increase in the size of the village should meet local needs and be moderate.
- Development should respect wildlife habitats, existing built and natural environments.
- More moderate size properties to meet local needs are required.
- A high level of second home ownership.
- Dark skies are important to many residents.
- High quality historic environment is much valued and should be protected.
- Concerns over traffic congestion, parking and the associated safety issues.
- Some new development has not been sympathetic to existing character of Castle Acre and the Conservation Area in particular.
- Tourists are seen as positive in respect of job creation and supporting services but negative in terms of parking and traffic congestion.
- Concern over impact of traffic on historic and natural assets, e.g. farm traffic and the Bailey Gate.
- Village amenities such as the school, shop, café/tea shop, church and pub are valued.
- Concerns over surface water drainage after high rainfall.
- Support for restricting vehicle access along South Acre Road to protect the ford and river Nar.

### **Evidence**

3.6 In addition to the evidence provided by the consultation exercises, there is a wealth of information collected by the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (C.A.N.P.S.G) which provides an extensive evidence base to support the Development of the Neighbourhood Plan policies. This includes statistical information drawn from the 2011 Census, information provided by the Borough Council, housing and population statistics, information covering the historical significance of the parish and also information on the range of wildlife habitats and landscape features contained in the parish. In 2019, funded by Locality, the C.A.N.P.S.G also commissioned a local Housing Needs Assessment, a Habitats Regulations Assessment, a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Site Options and Assessment Report. The Group (C.A.N.P.S.G) also undertook a traffic study in Castle Acre during February 2019.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Consultation Event – May 2017**



### Fete - 9th July 2017



### 2<sup>nd</sup> Drop-in Session April 2018



- 3.7 In order to develop some solutions to the issues raised both through the consultation exercises and through analysis of the evidence base, the CANPSG developed a range of thematic objectives which would guide the formulation of the planning policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### 3.8 Assessments, Reports and Writing the Plan.

Once the planning policies were established and the decision was made to allocate sites for development within the plan the necessary reports and assessments were carried out between April 2018 and February 2020 and the Pre-Submission, Regulation 14 version of the plan was written. The following assessments were carried out:

- i) Habitats Regulations Assessment
- ii) Strategic Environment Assessment
- iii) Site Assessment and Options Report
- iv) Castle Acre Housing Needs Assessment
- v) A Heritage Impact Assessment for Site CA.3
- vi) A Traffic Survey to support Site CA.3

### 3.9 Regulation 14 Consultation

Between March 12<sup>th</sup> and April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020 the formal Regulation 14 Consultation for the pre-submission version of the Castle Acre Draft Neighbourhood Plan was conducted. Consultation documents were delivered to all households in the parish and emailed to Statutory Consultees. Responses were received in either paper or electronic formats. There were 92 respondents commenting on the content of the draft plan. There were 257 written comments from parishioners and 49 from consultees. All of the responses were tabulated, considered and amendments made to the plan where



appropriate. The list of Consultees and the table of responses is available in the Consultation Statement.

The CANPSG would like to thank all respondents for their comments and observations.

**Key Points raised at Reg. 14.**

1. Heritage impact issues relating to allocated sites.
2. Access issues relating to allocated sites and the car parking provision at Priory Road
3. Clarification of landowner's position in relation to lease of the car park plot and final structuring of the CA.2 site allocation.
4. The CA.2 Landowners representative repeatedly promoting a previously submitted site H.032 for allocation within the plan, despite the potential negative impact on the character of the village and that it delivers housing far in excess of local need.
5. Overall the plan received very positive and supportive responses from parishioners. There were some objections to site allocations. (See the Response table in the Consultation Statement). The themes and objectives receive almost unanimous support.

**Actions resulting from Reg 14 Consultation.**

1. Commission a Heritage Impact Statement for site CA.3.
2. Seek clarification of conflicting information between Savills and their client, the Holkham Estate, relating to site development at CA.2 and the development of a car park on Holkham land off Priory Road. (Confirmation of support for Car Park received from Holkham Estate July 14<sup>th</sup> 2021)
3. Produce a Traffic Survey for Site CA.3 to support the site.

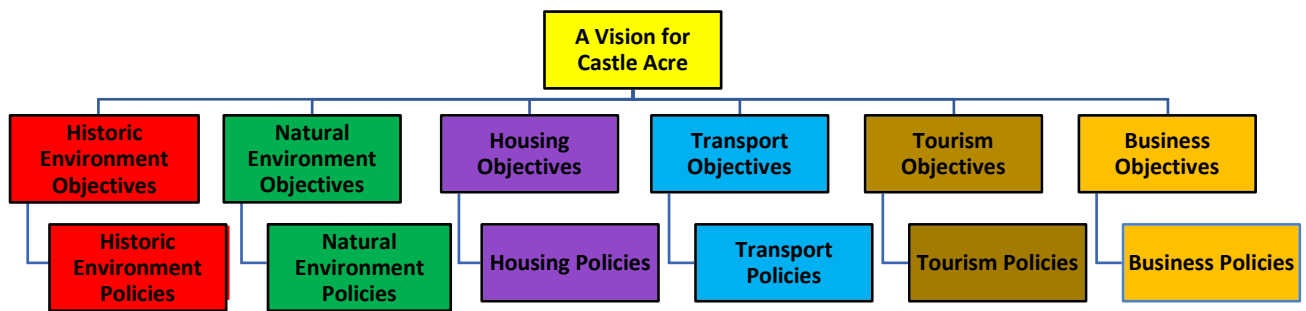


## Chapter 4: Vision and Objectives

<b>Vision</b>	<b>Castle Acre will continue to be a rural parish and historic village rejoicing in its community, history and natural surroundings. Future development will meet local needs and provide sustainable homes which respect the special identity and character of Castle Acre and its surrounding landscape.</b>
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- 4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan vision is an overarching statement outlining what Castle Acre should be like at the end of the Plan period i.e. in 2036.
- 4.2 The vision sets out what Castle Acre residents wish their parish to be like in 16 years-time. It was drafted in response to early consultation and then finalised through, research, further consultation and liaison. The vision attempts to capture what is unique about Castle Acre parish now, whilst looking ahead 16 years to what it could be.
- 4.3 The vision underpins the objective and policies of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan and is referred to throughout the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.4 From the vision, flow the different objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and from there, the policies. The following diagram outlines this relationship.

### Structure of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan



- 4.5 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are broad statements of intent. They are there to help deliver the vision and address key issues in Castle Acre. The objectives were developed early on and checked with the community through each of the consultation stages.

<p><b>The Historic Environment, Historic Landscape &amp; Vernacular Architecture</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 1:</b> Protect and enhance this rare example of a fortified Norman town, its surrounding historic landscape and hitherto undiscovered and unexplored historic sites and landscape features.</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> Protect and conserve views to and from the village and retain its scenic, historic and visual character.</p> <p><b>Objective 3:</b> Provide a framework for new development within the Conservation Area.</p>
<p><b>The Natural Environment</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 4:</b> Protect and enhance the natural environment and wildlife habitats of the village as well as provide a framework within which the natural environment of Castle Acre may be improved without negative impact by future development.</p>
<p><b>Housing &amp; Development</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 5 :</b> Deliver the number of new homes required to meet local housing need.</p> <p><b>Objective 6 :</b> Encourage dwellings of a size, type and tenure, that meet the existing and future needs of villagers.</p> <p><b>Objective 7 :</b> Promote well designed, high quality standards of building design which enhance the character of the area, respect the rural context, and meet the requirements of modern, sustainable living.</p>
<p><b>Traffic &amp; Transport</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 8:</b> Manage ‘on road’ car parking in the centre of the village to reduce congestion and to allow permitted traffic to pass through the village safely. Provide designated ‘off street’ parking to <b>improve</b> pedestrian safety and to reduce the visual dominance and physical impact of parking in the village centre. Review speed limits especially in relation to proposed sites allocated through the plan.</p> <p><b>Objective 9:</b> Restrict vehicle access to South Acre Ford.</p>

**Tourism &  
Community**

**Objective 10:** Safeguard existing tourism assets, visitor and community facilities and encourage 'low impact' tourism.

**Business**

**Objective 11:** Encourage local enterprise and local businesses to flourish.

**Policies**

- 4.6 The vision and objectives have provided the framework to develop the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Each policy relates to a particular objective under the following seven broad themes: The Historic Environment, The Natural Environment, Housing and Development, Traffic and Transport, Community and Services, Tourism and Business.
- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 The Neighbourhood Plan policies follow the government's guidance, they exist to:
- Set out locally led requirements in advance for new development in the parish.
  - 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<sup>4</sup>.
- 4.9 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.

**Projects and community aspirations**

- 4.10 As expected, during consultation events the local community identified a number of 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 within the relevant Chapter. 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 11** for more details on implementation of the Plan.

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<sup>4</sup> Tony Burton, Writing Planning Policies, Locality.





## Chapter 5: The Historic Environment, Historic Landscape and Vernacular Architecture

*"CASTLE ACRE, 4 miles N. of Swaffham, and 14 miles E. by S. of Lynn, is a considerable village, of great antiquity, having some traces of a Roman station, and the remains of an immense Castle and extensive Priory".*

**WILLIAM WHITE 1845**

### **Castle Acre's Historic Environment.**

- 5.1 A key ambition of the Neighbourhood Plan is to protect and enhance the specific historical assets and character of the village as well as provide a framework within which the historic environment of Castle Acre may be improved. The Castle Acre Conservation Area was established in 1971, it was the first designation in Norfolk since Conservation Areas were introduced nationally in 1967. It was extended to include the area of St James' Green in 1990. Castle Acre still retains much of the original Norman and subsequent historical planned forms, with a village green and much of the older village still reflecting the layout of the Mott and Bailey fortifications established in the 11th Century. Castle Acre has 23 listed buildings and monuments, and most of them are within the Conservation Area. The original Character Area Statement supporting the Conservation Area Designation was revised by the Borough Council in 2009. A considerable amount of the archaeological and historic exploration is incomplete, and the Parish Council is pursuing a Heritage Lottery Grant to help fund projects to remedy this and to improve the knowledge and understanding of the origins of the settlement in order to interpret it for residents and visitors.
- 5.2 As shown above, the sheer richness of Castle Acre's historic environment sets it apart from many other Norfolk villages. This wealth of historic assets acts as a major attractor to visitors and the village is very much a "honeypot" tourist attraction with a

considerable number of visitors at peak times such as school holidays, bank holidays and weekends. This has led to an inherent tension between the desire to protect the important historic assets but also to promote the enjoyment and understanding of them to visitors. The challenges of managing the impacts on the residential environment of the village that large numbers of visitors bring, whilst not wishing to deter them completely, is a key issue for Castle Acre.

- 5.3 The results of the initial drop in session (See Consultation Statement) revealed that residents value the Castle Acre Conservation Area and wish to protect the historic village but had concerns about recent infill and fringe development. The character of the village is seen as a real strength and the view was expressed that new development should be managed to avoid its erosion. Also highlighted was the need for careful consideration to traffic and parking management in order to help preserve the sense of 'village'. In the broadest terms the community is keen to ensure good ongoing management of the historical and natural assets of Castle Acre and to uphold the principles of conservation, especially in the village centre.
- 5.4 The results of the two events held by the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (CANPSG) in May 2017 and April 2018 respectively, together with the village questionnaire delivered to all households in July 2017, highlight the value placed by the community on their environment but also indicates the problems that living in a community which has large numbers of visitors can bring particularly in terms of traffic congestion and parking.
- 5.5 The results of the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire revealed more detail behind some of the issues highlighted in the earlier 'drop-in' session. The Historic Environment (276 responses), was shown to be the third most important overall characteristic of the village behind a safe and secure environment (287) and village shops (279). Other important features included the Conservation Area (203), the church and churchyard (213), restricting access to South Acre Ford (362) and the village Greens (203), whereas traditional style houses featured slightly lower (173).
- 5.6 The Questionnaire also asked about residents' concerns and the results indicated that aside from dog fouling and litter, the impact of new buildings on the village character was a key issue and, unsurprisingly given these views, traditional design is favoured over modern or new builds. The use of local building materials is also supported. Retaining the current village character, beauty and natural amenities is seen by residents as important as well as protecting archaeological heritage and historic landscapes. However, expanding the Conservation Area is considered to be less important.
- 5.7 The Questionnaire also considered the issue of visitors and tourism and the results indicate that the village needs to cater more appropriately for the level of tourism activity that it currently experiences. It was also suggested that Historic England could do more to support tourism more broadly within the village especially as the key visitor attractions are its archaeological sites.

- 5.8 The second meeting, a ‘drop-in’ event held in April 2018, revealed a divide in opinion between varied (23 responses) and traditional (17 responses) in respect of the first choice for styles of new development.
- 5.9 In order to address the key Historic Environment issues highlighted by the three separate consultation exercises, some specific Historic Environment objectives were developed as follows:

KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM CONSULTATION: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT	
●	Protection of existing Historic Assets
●	Protection of the Conservation Area
●	Local Character and Vernacular Architecture
●	Important Views
●	Managing Visitors
KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT	
<b>Objective 1:</b>	Protect and enhance this rare example of a fortified Norman town and its surrounding historic landscape and preserve the hitherto undiscovered and unexplored historic sites and landscape features.
<b>Objective 2 :</b>	Protect and preserve views to and from the village and retain its scenic, historic and visual character.
<b>Objective 3:</b>	Provide a framework for new development within the Conservation Area.

### **Protection of Historic Assets**

- 5.10 Castle Acre is a rare and complete survival of a Norman planned settlement, including a Castle, Priory, Parish Church and planned streets, with the Bailey Gate and Norman boundary bank. It was largely the work of the wealthy and influential Norman baronial family, the Warennes, during the 11th and 12th centuries.
- 5.11 Each of these elements is important in its own right. The Castle is noted for the huge scale of its Norman earthworks as well as being a superb example of a motte-and-bailey construction. The Cluniac Priory retains the west front of the monastic church; the Priory’s lodgings; cloisters and the monks’ domestic buildings. The parish church is Grade 1 listed whilst the Bailey Gate was added as a defensive gatehouse in about 1200 and the main road into the village still runs between its towers. The most significant recorded historic assets are Scheduled Monuments and the Grade 1 listed buildings which are;

1. Norman Castle and its defences
2. Cluniac Benedictine Priory of St Mary and St Peter and St Paul
3. Remains of the Cluniac Priory Gatehouse
4. Bailey Gate.

5.12 There are a further 19 nationally Listed Buildings identified for their national importance by Historic England (See **Appendix 2**). They are;

- 1 Church of St James. (Grade I Listed)
- 2 Tudor Lodgings and attached service wing. (Grade II\* Listed)
- 3 Castle Acre and Newton War Memorial. (Grade II Listed)
- 4 Abbot House, Stocks Green. (Grade II Listed)
- 5 Willow Cottage, Stocks Green. (Grade II Listed)
- 6 Wittles Cafe, High Street. (Grade II Listed)
- 7 The Stone Barn. (Grade II Listed)
- 8 12 and 14 High Street (Grade II Listed)
- 9 Dovecote SE of Tudor Lodgings. (Grade II Listed)
- 10 Albert Victor Public House (now a residential dwelling). (Grade II Listed)
- 11 Barn ESE of Tudor Lodgings. (Grade II Listed)
- 12 1 – 3 Bailey Street. (Grade II Listed)
- 13 63 and 64 Bailey Street. (Grade II Listed)
- 14 Abbey Cottage. (Grade II Listed)
- 15 15 and 16 St James Green. (Grade II Listed)
- 16 Western House. (Grade II Listed)
- 17 The Old Foundry, Newton Road. (Grade II Listed)
- 18 The Ostrich Inn. (Grade II Listed)
- 19 K6 Telephone Box on Stocks Green. (Grade II Listed)

### **Protection of Non-designated Heritage Buildings**

5.13 In addition, there are 173 other buildings or structures whose vernacular style and materials contribute significantly to the unified visual appearance and character of the townscape/settlement and are recognised as being of heritage significance in a local context. These can be identified by the inclusion of any of the following: chalk; random and coursed field flint nodules; knapped flint; dressed (shaped) limestone from the castle and priory; Norfolk red brick; red or grey clay pantiles and black glazed Welsh slate roofing tiles. The buildings are shown on the map on **page 29**, where they are highlighted in grey and entitled 'Important unlisted buildings', but are also referred to as Non-designated buildings of Heritage significance. Some examples are listed in **Appendix 2**. Non-designated buildings of Heritage significance include;

- 1 the Victorian School on Stocks Green, built in 1839 and enlarged in 1874;
- 2 the wooden Swedish council houses built in de Warenne Place in 1947;
- 3 the Methodist Chapel, 1878, in Bailey Street;
- 4 the Primitive Methodist (Ranters) Chapel in Pales Green;
- 5 the Baptist Chapel, built in 1841; now the Village Hall, Pye's Lane;

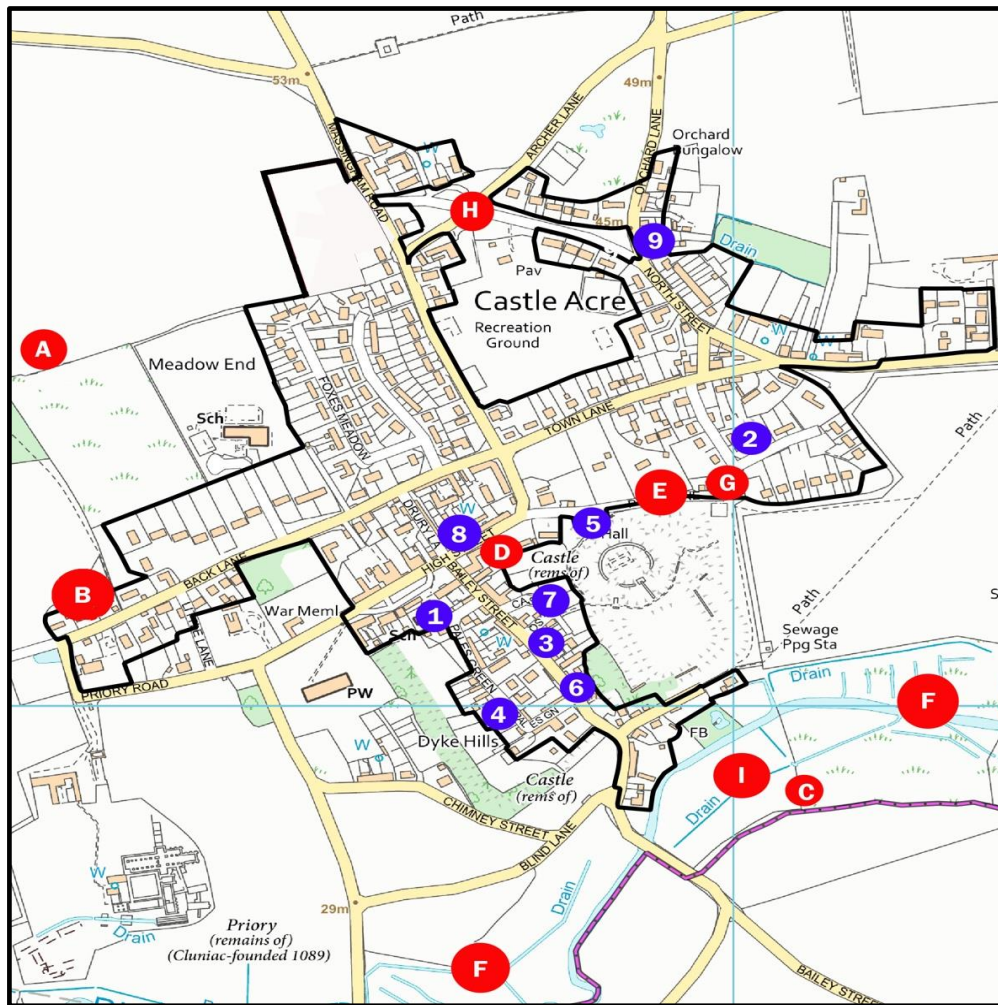


- 6 the terraced dwellings in Bailey Street, Stocks Green, Drury Lane, High Street and North Street

### Protection of Non-designated Heritage Sites

- 5.14 There are also a number of non-designated heritage site located within Castle Acre which merit recognition and protection. **See map on page 26.** They provide evidence of how ‘ordinary’ people have lived in and used the landscape in the past. They might become scheduled monuments or listed sites in the future, should more become known about them through archaeological and archival investigation. These sites include;
  - 1 Wicken Deserted Medieval Village
  - 2 Possible Medieval Moat
  - 3 Moated Medieval Manor
  - 4 Brick Kiln
  - 5 Medieval Kiln and Pits at Drury Lane Farm
  - 6 Post Medieval Earthworks
  - 7 Earth bank (Pye’s Lane)
  - 8 Low Bank on driveway, east of One Bailey Gate.
  - 9 Mill Mounds (Little Winds)
  - 10 Water Meadows
  - 11 Site of Post Medieval Bridge
  - 12 Non-Conformist Burial Ground
  - 13 St James Green
  - 14 Earl’s Pond
- 5.15 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.
- 5.16 Given the number and quality of the designated and non-designated heritage assets in Castle Acre and also the value that the local community and visitors attach to them, it is considered important that there are adequate policy safeguards in place to protect their historic and archaeological value and that sufficient guidance is given to enable the consideration of any future development proposals that may affect them (either directly or indirectly).
- 5.17 As mentioned above, much of Castle Acre’s archaeological heritage is still to be fully discovered. Given the richness of the known and designated assets, proposals for any development on land that has hitherto been undeveloped should take account of the need for the recording of any potential hidden assets. The Norfolk Historic Environment Record for Castle Acre lists 198 sites where evidence of human occupation has been found. These records must be taken into account in terms of the historic landscape and any potential developments and achieved through applications for all new development on undeveloped sites in the village being accompanied by archaeological surveys.

**Map HE.1 Non-designated Heritage Assets in and around the Settlement Boundary**



	Non-Designated Buildings		Non-Designated Sites
1	Victorian School	A	Medieval Moated Manor
2	Swedish Wooden Houses	B	Brick Kiln
3	Methodist Chapel	C	Mill Mounds
4	Primitive 'Ranters' Chapel	D	Boundary Bank
5	Baptist Chapel (now Village Hall)	E	Earth bank
6	Terraced dwellings Bailey Street	F	Water meadows
7	Terraced dwellings Castle Square	G	Non-Conformist Burial Ground
8	Terraced dwellings High Street/Stocks Green	H	St James' Green
9	Terraced dwellings Orchard Lane	I	Site of Earl's Pond

For more information regarding these Historic Assets please see **Appendix 2**.

### **Policy HE.1 Protecting Historic Assets (Designated and Non-Designated)**

Proposals for new development, irrespective of scale, that could either directly or indirectly affect the historic significance of any of Castle Acre's designated or non-designated historic assets (**as shown on Map HE.1 page 26**) will not be supported, unless the tests set out in national guidance can be met and clear and convincing justification can be given.

Such proposals should be supported by a detailed assessment in the form of a Heritage Statement.

Proposals for new development on undeveloped sites where there is a reasonable prospect of unknown and unrecorded archaeological or historical assets being present should be accompanied by a detailed assessment of the potential impacts of the proposal on the unidentified asset to allow for an informed judgment to be made.

Where previously unknown or unrecorded assets are found to be present, then developers will be required to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. It should be noted that the ability to record and document such heritage assets will not be the deciding factor in deciding whether any loss (wholly or in part) will be permitted.

In assessing the impact of any proposal on any of the non-designated heritage assets identified in this plan or via the planning process a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

### **Castle Acre's Conservation Area**

- 5.18 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.
- 5.19 The Conservation Area is loosely drawn and includes a significant portion of the village. It includes the Castle and the Priory together with the historic core of the village – Bailey Street, Stocks Green, High Street, St James Green and North Street as well as undeveloped pastures to the south of the village.
- 5.20 The Borough Council produced an updated Character Statement underpinning the Conservation Area in 2009. The Character Statement explains the rationale behind the designation, describes the historic character and highlights the important buildings within it. The Statement also highlights two significant detractors – one being overhead wires and associated poles and the other being parking at Stocks Green particularly at weekends which is visually intrusive. The Statement also usefully sets out a number of Conservation Objectives for the Conservation Area.

- 5.21 It is clear from the results of the consultation undertaken in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan to date that some development that has taken place either within or adjacent to the Conservation Areas has not been well received locally and that there is a concern that the character and quality of the Conservation Area is in danger of being significantly eroded. There is also a view held locally that the recommendations and suggestions contained in the Conservation Area Character Statement have not been satisfactorily implemented or given enough weight in determining planning applications, possibly due to the lack of an Article 4 Direction.
- 5.22 Conservation Area Character Statements have a role to play in shaping planning policies and in the determination of planning applications where there are material considerations to be taken into account. However, they do not carry the same weight as adopted planning policies. It has therefore been considered necessary to try to capture the positive elements of the Character Statement in a Neighbourhood Planning policy where it can be given greater weight. It is the strongly held view of the Parish Council that the current Character Appraisal should be reviewed by the Borough Council as soon as possible, in tandem with serious consideration given to the serving of an Article 4 direction to prevent further erosion of the character of the Conservation Area.

### **Policy HE.2 Conservation Area**

The established special character of the Conservation Area and its setting will be protected and reinforced.

This will be achieved by:

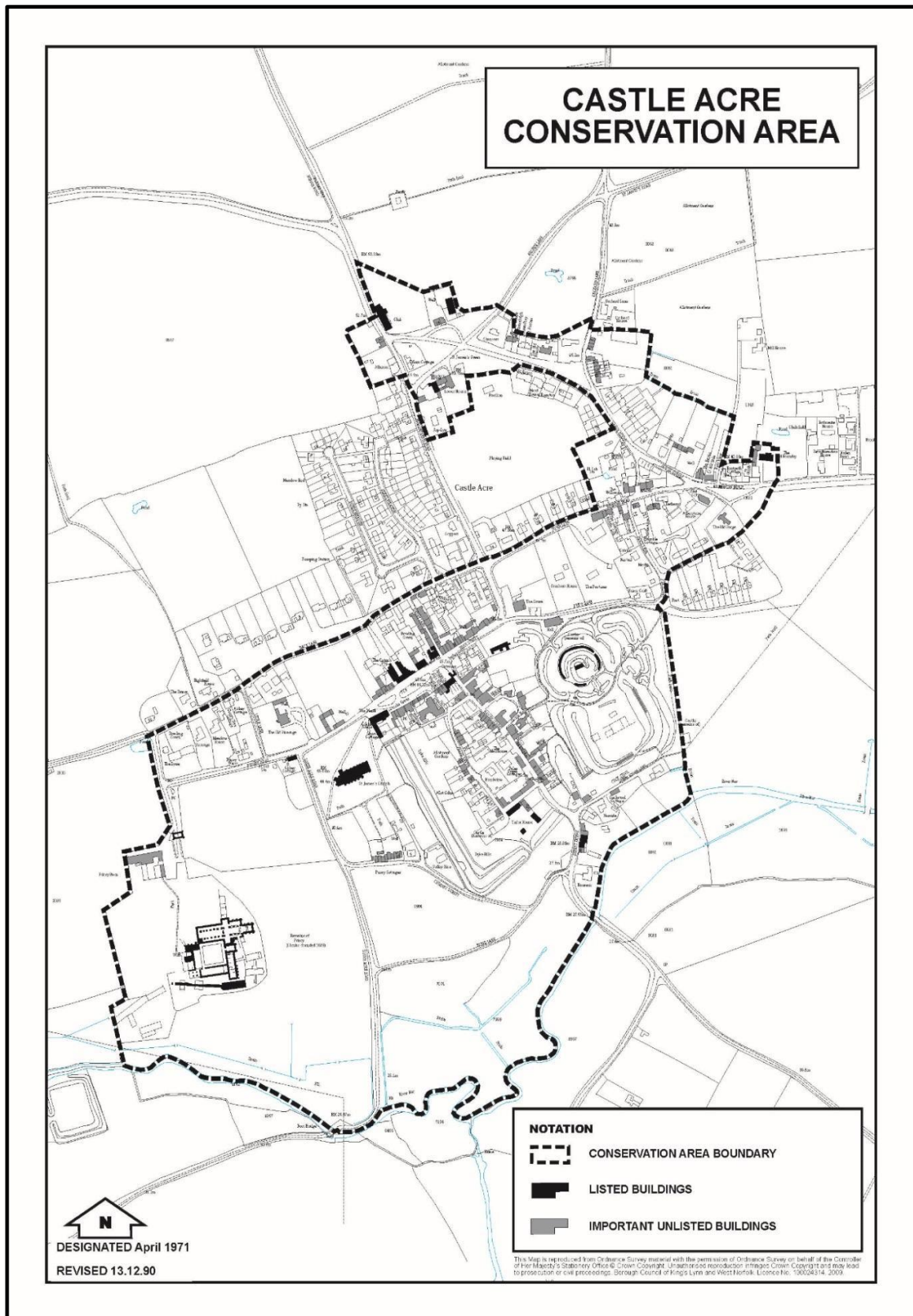
- a) Encouraging the retention and maintenance of buildings which contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area.
- b) Ensuring that new development is sympathetic to the special qualities and character of the Conservation Area.
- c) Protecting the setting of the Conservation Area from development which adversely affects views into or out of the area.

Proposals for the demolition, redevelopment or substantial alterations to the Important Unlisted Buildings identified in the Conservation Area Character Statement 2009 and shown on **Map HE.2 (page 29)** should demonstrate the consideration that has been given to retaining the:

- a. important character building or historic feature itself;
- b. most distinctive and important features;
- c. positive elements of its setting and its relationship to its immediate surroundings; and
- d. contribution that the building or historic feature and its setting makes to the character of the local area.



## Map HE.2 Conservation Area and Important Unlisted Buildings



### **Castle Acre's Local Character and Vernacular Architecture**

- 5.23 The essence of what makes one area distinct from another is its “character”. Vernacular architecture is a term that is commonly used to describe the architecture of a place that uses traditional materials local to that area.
- 5.24 The character of Castle Acre is typified by the use of local traditional materials in the construction of its historic buildings. These materials include:
- Chalk
  - Coursed and knapped flint
  - Dressed limestone (salvaged from the adjacent archaeological ruins)
  - Soft red Norfolk Brick
  - Clay Pantiles – red and black (with glazing)
  - Welsh Slate
  - Render – ranging in colours
  - Colourwash bricks
- 5.25 Understanding the characteristics of the village is important in designing new development. New development within or next to either of the Conservation Areas or listed buildings must make sure it preserves **or** enhances the character of the area. Other areas may require a different design approach - for example, there may be opportunities for new development to change the character of less positive places by introducing architectural harmony or variation in relation to the immediate surroundings.
- 5.26 The majority of buildings in Castle Acre (excluding the high status Castle, Priory and Church) are constructed of flint, chalk and brick or a combination of the three. Flint occurs as beds in the underlying chalk or as glacial drift on the surface and is used in the buildings in Castle Acre in a variety of ways. Rough flints are laid randomly, without courses: they are laid in rough courses made of irregular nodules or pebbles; or they are trimmed, or carefully selected for shape, and laid in regular courses. Coursed flint, in contrast, mostly appears on 18<sup>th</sup> century and later buildings and is characterised by regularly-shaped flints laid in precise courses. However, there are few/no vernacular buildings which are entirely of flint. Most are a combination of flint and brick with the latter used for openings (doors and windows) and often corners.
- 5.27 Chalk itself has been used, throughout history, as a building material. In fact, hard chalk, or ‘clunch’, provides a reasonably durable construction material. There are some dwellings constructed largely or entirely of chalk, though even these have brick for corners and for openings (doors and windows). More common are those in which the two materials (chalk and brick) are more evenly combined. Before the railways brought materials from elsewhere, bricks were made from the local clay (many estates had their own brick kilns) and were therefore unique in composition and colour being handmade in their exact dimensions.
- 5.28 Brick can be laid in a number of different ‘bonds’ and there is evidence of several bonds in Castle Acre. The earlier walls have irregular bonds, of relatively thin and usually fairly

irregularly arranged bricks. In the course of the 17th century, bonds became more regular with the most frequently used being English bond', in which there were alternate courses of headers and stretchers. Many houses and outbuildings are of red or orange-coloured brick but those built by the Holkham Estate are of instantly recognisable yellow brick.

- 5.29 Traditionally, thatch would have been the main roofing material but by the 18th-century the main alternatives to thatch – tile or slate – had become relatively cheap and slate brought by rail from the Welsh quarries. The majority of the slate roofs in Castle Acre therefore occur on buildings dating from the later 18th and 19th centuries. One indication of a roof originally thatched is its steep pitch and high gable ends. Thatch is not in itself waterproof, so a steep pitch is required in order to ensure that droplets of water proceed smoothly downwards, dripping from reed to reed (or straw to straw).
- 5.30 Tiled roofs occur throughout the village. These make use of the pantiles so typical of East Anglia, with a section like a shallow ~ . Unlike standard plain tiles they are not nailed or pegged into the roof battens and are laid in such a way that each only overlaps one, rather than two, others. Pantiles were introduced into England from the Low Countries – the Dutch word 'pan' means 'tile'. They were first imported into East Anglia in the late 17th century and were manufactured locally from the start of the 18th. An innovation of the mid-18th century was the glazed tile, usually black: glazing was mainly intended to protect the tile from frost cracking.
- 5.31 The overwhelming majority of windows are of simple rectangular or square shape, often with slightly arched lintels, with only a handful of rounded arches. There are some pointed arches in the ecclesiastical style, but these are all Victorian.
- 5.32 Doors are also, for the most part, relatively simple forms, with the overwhelming majority having a simple rectangular shape. Some, mainly of 18th- and 19th-century in date, have arches of unadorned rounded form. The surrounds of doors and windows are usually relatively plain or have brick quoining, especially noticeable where flint or chalk buildings have openings with brick surrounds.
- 5.33 The small number of windows with mullions are in medieval buildings or re-used in later buildings. In fact, many of the houses in the village contain reused medieval stonework, probably taken from the ruins of the Priory. Other buildings in the village have medieval origins, such as Abbey Cottage which dates back to the 15th century and may have been the almoner's chapel. Nos. 63 and 64 in Bailey Street were once one building, and may have been a pilgrim's hospice, or a fish house associated with the nearby fishpond. Tudor Lodgings is a 16th century flint and brick house, with a 16th century barn and dovecote.
- 5.34 Decorative brickwork is a noticeable feature of buildings, with skilled local bricklayers using different coloured bricks laid in patterns (often in the form of diamonds or 'diapers'). Chimneys, made of brick because of its high resistance to heat, were often afforded decorative treatment when resources and expertise allowed. Whether semi-detached, in a terraced row, or free-standing, the form of Castle Acre's dwellings

appears to be largely a function of size and status. The larger and wealthier houses, and those standing nearer the perimeter of the historic village, are more likely to be single and detached.

- 5.35 The Steering Group undertook some survey work to examine the “character” of Castle Acre in more detail and this has covered the whole village, not just the Conservation Area. The detailed findings are shown in **Appendix 3** and the summaries are shown below and these have helped to influence the policy:

	<p><b>Stocks Green and High Street</b></p> <p>Continuous row of two storey buildings, including 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages fronting onto the Green and High Street including some traditional shop fronts. A mix of materials but includes brick arch detailing to some windows.</p>
	<p><b>Bailey Street.</b></p> <p>A steep street sloping down from the Bailey Gate containing terraces of cottages fronting directly onto the roadway. Mix of materials but includes some brightly coloured render and bricks.</p>
	<p><b>Drury Lane.</b></p> <p>A narrow lane with terraced buildings right on the street frontage with a telescopic view through to the Bailey Gate. A mix of materials including brick and render.</p>
	<p><b>St James Green.</b></p> <p>A mix of low density traditional and modern houses, arranged round the green, largely set back from the roadway, with low boundary walls and hedges. Dominant materials are brick and flint.</p>
	<p><b>Town Lane, Newton Road</b></p> <p>A short street with post war local authority housing on one side and modern development in traditional style on the other set back from the road. Some rendered cottages at one end. A range of brick colours and types with slate roofs.</p>
	<p><b>De Warenne Place</b></p> <p>Swedish style houses with wooden cladding, donated by the Swedish Government and erected after the second world war. There is a further example on Town Lane’</p>



	<p><b>Foxes Meadow</b> Street of low density post-war local authority housing in reasonable sized plots set back from the road. Materials largely red brick and red roofs.</p>
	<p><b>Massingham Road.</b> Entrance to the village and follows historic line of the Peddars Way, A range of two storey and single storey buildings covering a wide time period. Older buildings have flint but more modern include brick and render. Very mixed area.</p>
	<p><b>New build including infill development</b> Small scale development including infill which are largely confined by the size of the plot and are individually designed, often borrowing design features from around the village and making use of local materials. They provide contrast and/or harmony with their surroundings. The Water Tower to the north of the village is an example of innovative and contemporary design which provides architectural contrast and stylistic juxtaposition.</p>

### **Policy HE.3 Castle Acre's Local Character and Vernacular Architecture**

All new development irrespective of scale should reflect Castle Acre's local distinctiveness and seek to preserve or enhance the existing visual character of the village.

New housing should respect the scale, materials and character of existing and surrounding buildings, reinforce local development patterns and be compatible with the form, scale, massing and character of adjacent properties where this provides a positive contribution. This can be achieved by new developments seeking to incorporate the following important characteristic details within the design of the scheme:

- (a) the use of traditional materials such as flint, pantile, slate and render;
- (b) the use of sustainable materials;
- (c) the use of traditional detailing such as such as quoins, stone and brick lintels, brick bonds, roof lines, window and door types.

### **Important Views**

- 5.36 The topography of the landscape surrounding Castle Acre, its prominent position above the Nar Valley and consequent changes in elevation, afford for a number of striking views. These include long views towards the village itself from all directions as well as shorter views looking into the Conservation Area and from within the Conservation Area looking out to the wider landscape. These also afford fleeting and substantive views of the designated historic assets including the Castle, the Priory and the Bailey Gate. New development should seek to minimise the number of overhead utility cables required in order to preserve local views.

- 5.37 From its elevated position the Castle has commanding views over the Nar valley and St. James Church tower can be seen together with the rooftops of properties along Bailey Street, set amongst tree canopies. Trees provide a backdrop for the ruins and the area around the village hall provides a viewpoint for the castle walls, the River Nar and its surrounding countryside.
- 5.38 St James Church stands within a walled churchyard, and the view opens out over the grounds of the Priory to the opposite valley side. Glimpses of the church through the trees provide a link with the rest of the village.
- 5.39 Bailey Street is characterised by its steep downward gradient winding gently southwards from the Bailey Gate towards the open pastures in the south. The steepness of the street reveals views of the properties fronting Bailey Street and across to the softer landscape of trees and hedges on the opposite valley side. Chimney Street affords wide views across the open pasture towards the river.
- 5.40 The lanes which lead from the centre are also important. The high hedges and sunken roadways contain views, so that occasional glimpses of the surrounding countryside are all the sharper and more dramatic.
- 5.41 The views towards the Cluniac Priory from Priory Road and from South Acre Ford are eye-catching. The latter aspect clearly shows the monks' former domestic buildings (dormitories and lavatories) as well the drainage system.
- 5.42 There is an impressive vista across the water meadows and down to the Nar Valley from East Green, at the end of North Street.
- 5.43 Views into the village from the north and northwest characterise the traditional rural village in harmony with the rural landscape.

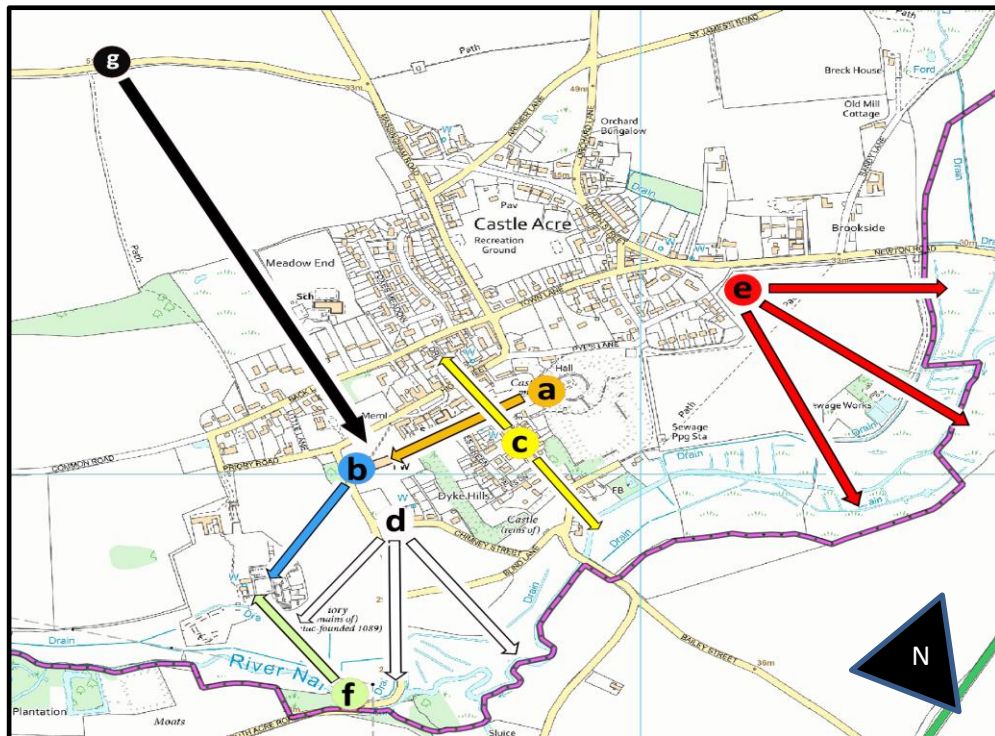
#### **Policy HE.4 Important Views**

The following views and vistas (**See map HE.4, page 35**) are identified as Important Public Local Views:

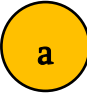

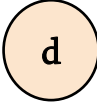

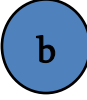

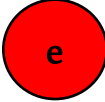







- a) View from the Castle looking south west, and towards St James Tower;
- b) Views from St James Church out over the Priory and across the valley;
- c) Views along Bailey Street, to and from the Bailey Gate;
- d) Views from Chimney Street towards the river and across Castle Meadow;
- e) Views from East Green across open countryside;
- f) View from South Acre Ford across the meadow to the Priory;
- g) Views from West Acre Road towards the village and Church of St James.

Proposals for development that would be visible within or would affect an important view should ensure that they respect and take account of the view concerned. Developments which would have an adverse impact on the landscape or character of the view or vista will not be supported.

## Map HE.4 Important Views



### Key to Important Views

	From the Castle looking south west towards St James Tower.			From Chimney Street towards the river and across the Water Meadows.	
	Out from St James Church over the Priory and across the valley.			From East Green across open countryside.	
	Along Bailey Street, to and from the Bailey Gate.			From South Acre Ford across the meadow to the Priory.	
	From West Acre Road towards the village and Church of St James.				

### **Managing Visitors**

- 5.44 As mentioned above the attractiveness of Castle Acre’s high quality Historic Environment does present problems relating to management of visitors. This is largely an issue related to parking and traffic. At peak times, such as holidays and weekends, it leads to parking obstructions, erosion of verges and general congestion. The parking of vehicles at Stocks Green and Pye’s Lane has been identified as a detractor from the character of the Conservation Area and the Castle in the Character Statement - and presents a significant visual intrusion into the area- as well as resulting in damages to grassed areas and verges. Given that the issue is largely related to the movement of visitors, it is discussed in more detail in the traffic and transport section (**Chapter 8**).

### **Community Action Projects**

The following Community Action Project has been identified for the Historic Environment.

#### **Historic Environment:**

- Support a Castle Acre Heritage project for a programme of archaeological investigations and activities in and around Castle Acre including wildlife surveys and improvements to habitats, aimed at both residents, their families, special interest groups and visitors.
- Press the Borough Council to review the Conservation Area Appraisal with a view to serving an Article 4 Direction





## Chapter 6: The Natural Environment

### **Castle Acre's Natural Environment**

- 6.1 It is virtually impossible to separate the present-day natural environment and its wildlife from the historic land management of preceding centuries and the historic environment of present day Castle Acre. The natural topography of the area and the river valley providing the rationale for the positioning of the Castle and the Priory and the relationship between the historic and natural landscapes has been interlinked ever since.
- 6.2 It is the intention of the Neighbourhood Plan is to protect and enhance the specific natural environment and conservation areas of the village as well as provide a framework within which the natural environment of Castle Acre may be improved.
- 6.3 The River Nar originates as a spring-fed stream, west of Mileham in Norfolk and flows for 42 km before joining the River Great Ouse at King's Lynn where a sluice prevents the penetration of seawater at high tide. The river combines the characteristics of a southern chalk stream and an East Anglian fen river. Together with the adjacent terrestrial habitats, the Nar is an outstanding river system of its type.
- 6.4 The variation in physical features and the influence of the underlying chalk give rise to a rich and diverse flora with 78 species of riverine and bankside plants. The variations in river profile including slope, width and depth are important factors in the provision of nesting sites for kingfishers and sand martins, and the combination of water meadow, fen, scrub and woodland in the upper Nar provides feeding and nesting grounds for a number of other birds including grey wagtail, reed warblers, teal, marsh harriers, willow and marsh tits. Entomological studies are incomplete but 12 different species of dragonfly were recorded in 1991 at several locations along the Nar; this represents an outstanding assemblage for the UK.
- 6.5 Also of significance is the area of the floated water meadows. Constructed in 1809, their channels and aqueducts survive as the most intact survival of such historic land

management in Norfolk. These grassland communities are exceptionally diverse and make this the most important valley grassland site in west Norfolk.

- 6.6 The richness of the natural environment in Castle Acre should not be underestimated and its scenic beauty and variety of species adds to the village's attraction for visitors.

- 6.7 At the first consultation event held in May 2017, the subject of the existing natural environment was considered with the summary of the event concluding that:

*“River and countryside walks, dark skies and local wildlife delight the residents as does the individuality and historic heritage of the village. Castle Acre is generally viewed as picturesque and unspoilt although perhaps threatened by the style of potential new development. People enjoy clean air, quietness and the natural habitats within and around the village. The Castle Acre Conservation Area is protecting the historic village, but infill and fringe development is of concern to some. Traffic is seen as a threat to nature habitats such as the SSSI at the river crossing. Oversized vehicles can and do damage buildings and verges. An increase in traffic could present an increased Health and Safety risk whilst also increasing pollution. Littering presents a problem in some areas while dog fouling is a major anti-social concern”.*

- 6.8 It was felt that trees and hedges need to be protected and public areas regularly maintained. The character of the village is seen as a real strength and development must be managed to avoid its erosion. Careful consideration to traffic and parking management needs to be given to help preserve the sense of village. Farming in the locality was viewed as a double-edged sword. It contributes greatly to the rural feel of Castle Acre, providing green views away from the village and helping to contain sprawling development, whilst also providing employment and wealth to the area. On the other hand, there is the detrimental impact of large farm vehicles and lorries passing through the village with the associated safety issues, noise, fumes and physical damage to buildings and verges. In the broadest terms the community is keen to ensure good ongoing management of the historical and natural assets of Castle Acre and to uphold the principles of conservation, especially in the village centre.

- 6.9 The results of the questionnaire also indicated that the natural environment was important to the community with the area being seen as of outstanding natural beauty by 250 residents, the Water Meadows and the River Nar are seen as most important by 229, footpaths and walks by 225, peace and tranquillity by 225 and the rural character of the parish by 219. Concerns expressed at the same time by villagers were all potential detrimental impacts on the environment such as litter, fly tipping, dog fouling, damage from vehicles to South Acre Ford and all forms of pollution. The questionnaire included a specific section on the environment and the results indicated that ongoing management of the village environment was a key issue for residents, together with the Water Meadows, restricting vehicular access to South Acre Ford, tree preservation, footpaths and the protection of wildlife habitats.

- 6.10 In order to address the key natural environment issues highlighted by the consultation exercises, a broad ranging Natural Environment objective has been developed as follows:

KEY ISSUES: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape setting.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Habitats and Features.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Green Spaces.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dark Skies.</li> </ul>
KEY OBJECTIVE FOR THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
<p><b>Objective 4:</b> Protect and enhance the natural environment and wildlife habitats of the village as well as provide a framework within which the natural environment of Castle Acre may be improved without negative impact by future development.</p>

### **The Landscape Setting of Castle Acre**

- 6.11 Government guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework indicates that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. This should be achieved through protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services.
- 6.12 The King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (KLWN LCA), produced by Chris Blandford Associates in 2007, to support the Core Strategy identifies Castle Acre as falling within the “Rolling Open Farmland Character Area”. Situated to the east of the Borough, this area of open farmland is characterised by strongly rolling topography.
- 6.13 The landscape consists of predominantly arable farmland with a large regular field pattern broken up by belts and copses of mixed and coniferous woodland and plantations. Generally mature intact hedgerows with oak and ash hedgerow trees demarcate field boundaries. Narrow country lanes cross the rural landscape providing access to the villages and isolated dwellings. The roads are often lined with mature trees that form canopies across the roads creating a sense of enclosure. Amongst the patchwork of fields lie scattered farmsteads and cottages.
- 6.14 Settlement is concentrated in the south eastern corner of the area in Castle Acre with other villages in the area including the edge of Little Massingham in the northeast and Gayton Thorpe in the southwest. The buildings in the villages are often in local vernacular style with chalk and flint facing to the walls. Key landscape features within the landscape include the mature parkland south of Home Farm with mature decaying pastureland and scattered trees and the circular marl pits with beech trees. Just to the south of the character area, the valley of the River Nar meanders across the landscape.

Water meadows associated with the river corridors also contribute to distinctive character. The area has a very strong sense of tranquillity and isolation.

- 6.15 The landscape setting of Castle Acre is characterised by a mature landscape structure including belts and copses, woodlands, mature trees and patches of intact hedgerow. There is a strong sense of openness to the south with wide views across the Nar Valley and the Water Meadows. The River Nar Valley is a mature corridor and contains a range of important habitats.
- 6.16 The Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment recommends that any new development should seek to conserve and enhance the existing belts and copses of plantation woodland and other tall vegetation within the area and conserve the landscape setting of Castle Acre. In addition, the generally undeveloped, rural character of the area and related strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity should be preserved and care taken in relation to retaining prominent skyline locations both within and adjacent to the village. The study also encourages the promotion of the use of local materials within the village.

### **Policy NE.1 Protection of Landscape Setting**

The visual scenic value of the landscape and countryside in the Neighbourhood Area outside the defined settlement boundary will be protected from development that may adversely affect its visual appearance or harm sensitive features typical of the Rolling Open Farmland Character Area. Developments which adversely impact the historic landscape setting of Castle Acre and of the River Nar Valley including views over the Water Meadows will not be supported.

### **Protection of Natural Habitats and Features**

- 6.17 Within the Neighbourhood Area there are a number of important natural features. The River Nar is a globally rare chalk-stream and is arguably Norfolk's most unspoilt and beautiful example. The river and its banks are rich in chalk stream plants, many of which are nationally scarce or rare and this is reflected in its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The river is well-known locally for its brown trout and supports a further eleven species of fish.
- 6.18 Where land adjacent to the river is seasonally flooded and has not been reclaimed as pasture, areas of rough fen and unmanaged scrub remain. Further downstream this scrub has developed into mature wet woodland, dominated by Alder Carr. The result is a river corridor of considerable importance to wildlife. Although the river channel can be regarded as nationally important in its own right, the quality and type of adjacent habitats increases its value for fauna which use both the river and floodplain. Breeding birds include snipe, lapwing, redshank, sedge and grasshopper warblers. Entomological studies are incomplete but 12 different species of dragonfly were recorded in 1991 at several locations along the Nar; this represents an outstanding assemblage for the UK. The Nar Catchment Plan is designed to help conserve and enhance the river Nar's rich and diverse ecology.



- 6.19 When determining planning applications that might affect an SSSI, local planning authorities should avoid significant harm to biodiversity, and where harm cannot be avoided then planning permission should be refused.
- 6.20 The River Nar’s SSSI status gives it a higher degree of protection under the planning system and it is reasonable to refuse an application for development where any adverse impacts of permitting the development would adversely affect a Site designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

### **River Nar.**



*For the **Site of Special Scientific Interest Statement**, please see **Appendix 4**.*

- 6.21 Development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 6.22 Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
- 6.23 Along with the Priory, Castle, Bailey Gate and Stocks Green, South Acre Ford represents one of the main attractions of this conservation village, enjoyed by visitors and residents

over the generations whose children played in the water and families enjoyed picnics while admiring the iconic view of the Cluniac Priory across the water meadows – an activity that continues until this day. The ford is within the SSSI, while the ‘road’ and river footbridge form part of the Peddars Way, a long distance trail. Families enjoy the tranquillity, the birdsong and the ripple of water over the stones.

### **South Acre Ford**



- 6.24 Driving through the ford damages the riverbanks, causes mud to flow back into the pristine waters and leads to the destruction of fish spawns. Other known risks include oil spills from the vehicles, risk of spreading invasive species such as the killer shrimp, American Signal Crayfish and invasive plants of which there are many.
- 6.25 The results of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation exercises indicate a strong desire that Castle Acre must continue to sustain a harmonious relationship with the surrounding environment. Villagers and visitors alike value greatly the recreational, artistic and leisure opportunities that the countryside around Castle Acre offers. Observing wildlife, fishing and walking are just a few of the activities that are essential to the lifestyle of the villagers and its visitors. The river and its SSSI status, footpaths, commons and open landscape contribute greatly to the wellbeing of the population and is captured in the following policy. Additionally, the Plan strongly supports a Community Action project (page 49) using a Traffic Restriction Order which will restrict vehicular access to South Acre Ford with the objective of protecting the habitats within the River Nar SSSI.

## **Policy NE.2 Habitats and Natural Features**

The following Natural Features (Map NE.2 page 44) will be protected from development that would have a significant adverse impact upon their character, appearance and wildlife value:

- 1) The River Nar Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- 2) Minns Meadow
- 3) The Water Meadows to the south and east of the village.
- 4) Broadmeadow Common,
- 5) Emanuel's Common
- 6) Castle Acre Common
- 7) County Wildlife Sites (Map N.E 2.1, page 45)
- 8) European Protection Sites e.g. the Breckland S.P.A (Map N.E 2.2, page 45)

All development proposals will be expected to retain existing features of landscape and biodiversity value (including ponds, trees, woodland, hedgerows and verges) and, where practical to do so, provide a net gain in biodiversity through for example:

- a) the creation of new natural habitats.
- b) the planting of additional trees and hedgerows and restoring and repairing fragmented biodiversity networks.

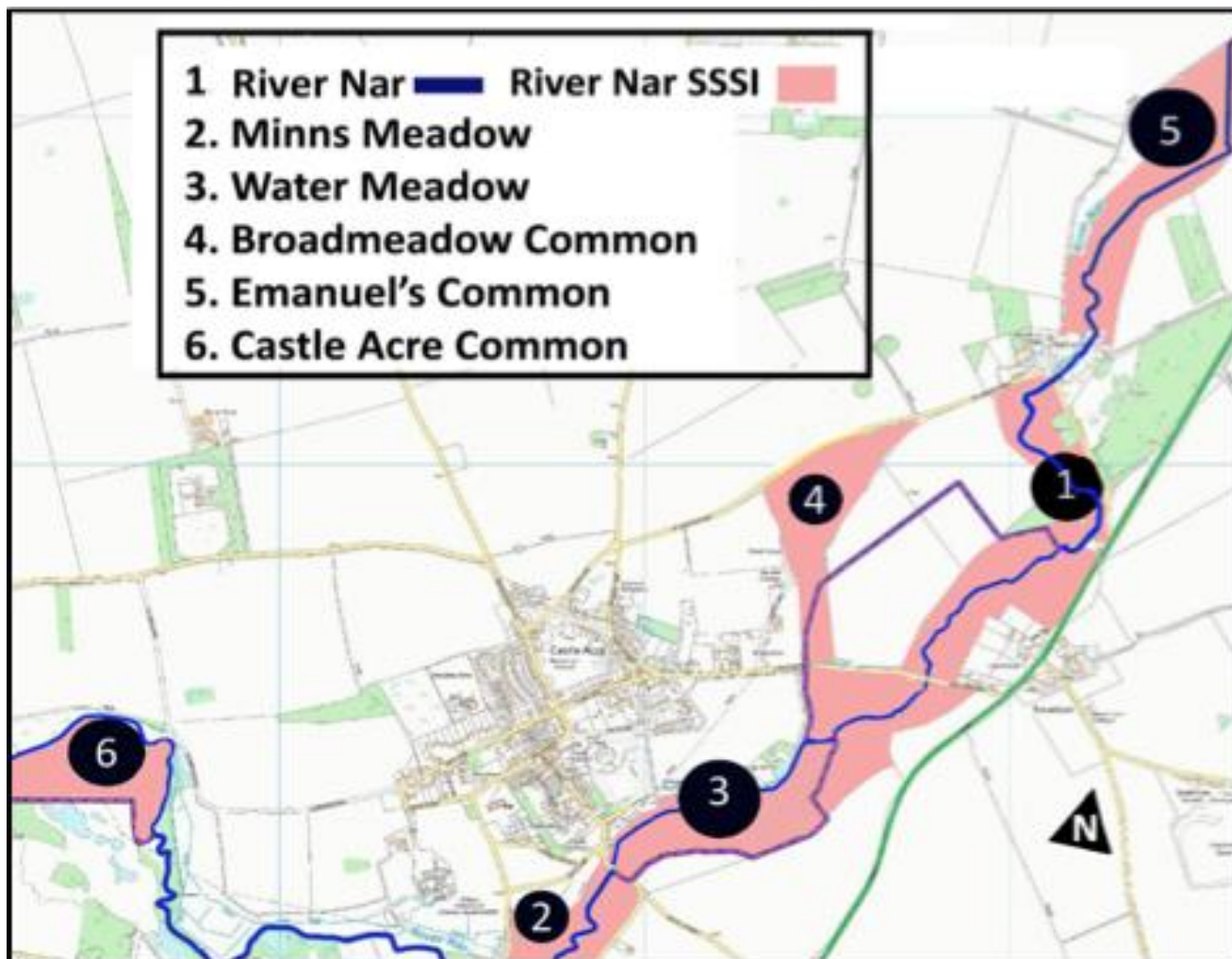
Where loss or damage is unavoidable, the benefits of the development proposals must be demonstrated clearly to outweigh any impacts and the development shall provide for appropriate replacement planting on site together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting.

Any development brought forward within the Neighbourhood Plan area must ensure that it can be implemented without any adverse effects upon the integrity of the European sites. Proposals that will adversely affect the integrity of European sites will not be supported. Attention is drawn in particular to the overarching Policy DM19 within the SADMP (2015) and the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Natura 2000 sites Monitoring and Mitigation Strategy (2015), which describes measures to ensure no adverse effect on European sites, including that of housing, developers must pay a standard contribution to the monitoring and mitigation of European sites within Norfolk. This rate is currently £50 per dwelling.

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

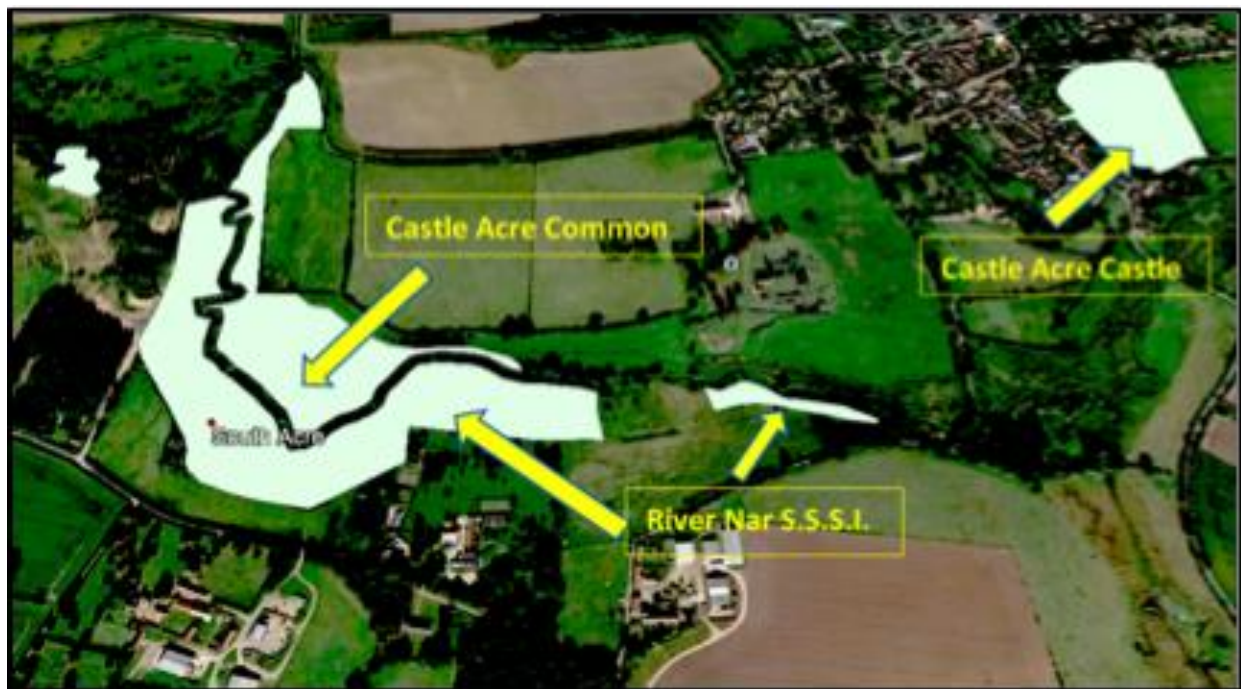


**Map NE.2 – Natural Features**

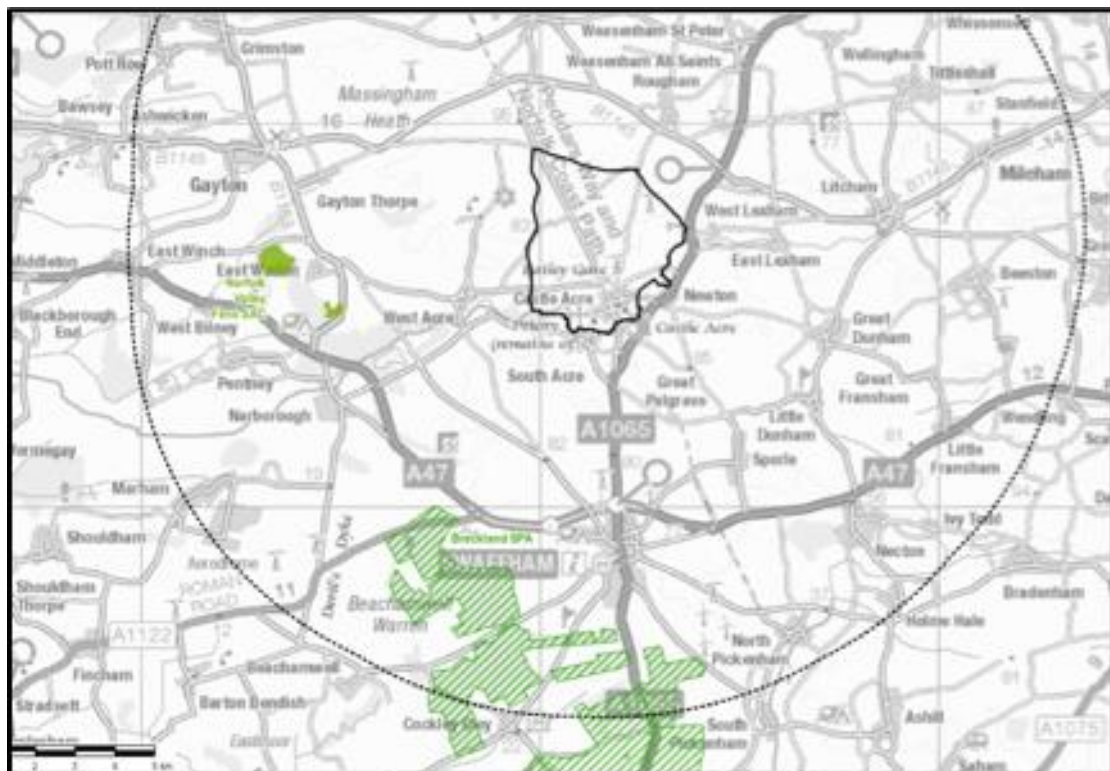




### Map NE.2.1 County Wildlife Sites



### Map NE.2.2 European Protection Sites



### Local Green Spaces

6.26 Paragraph 99 of the NPPF allows for the designation of land as Local Green Space (LGS) through Local and Neighbourhood plans which enable communities to identify and

protect green areas of particular importance to them. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a Plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period.

- 6.27 Paragraph 100 of the NPPF also outlines criteria that those Local Green Spaces must satisfy if they are to be included in a statutory plan and places emphasis on the space having a genuine value to the community rather than for it to be used as tool to prevent development. These criteria are as follows:

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

- a. in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - b. demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
  - c. local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 6.28 Once a compliant space has been identified the protection it will enjoy will be consistent with those for Green Belts and is one of the strongest protections available. The Open Spaces Society has sought to provide clarification of the NPPF Local Green Space criteria which is helpful for communities in preparing their Neighbourhood Plans and this is shown in **Appendix 5**.
- 6.29 Given the importance of the natural environment to the residents of Castle Acre, the Steering Group has undertaken some survey work on Local Green Spaces and has identified three spaces that are considered to have a value to the local community.
- 6.30 They have been assessed against the criteria outlined in the NPPF. The two proposed Local Green Spaces are:
- a. Castle Meadow.
  - b. Castle Acre Playing Field

An assessment of each of the spaces against the NPPF criteria is also shown in **Appendix 6**.

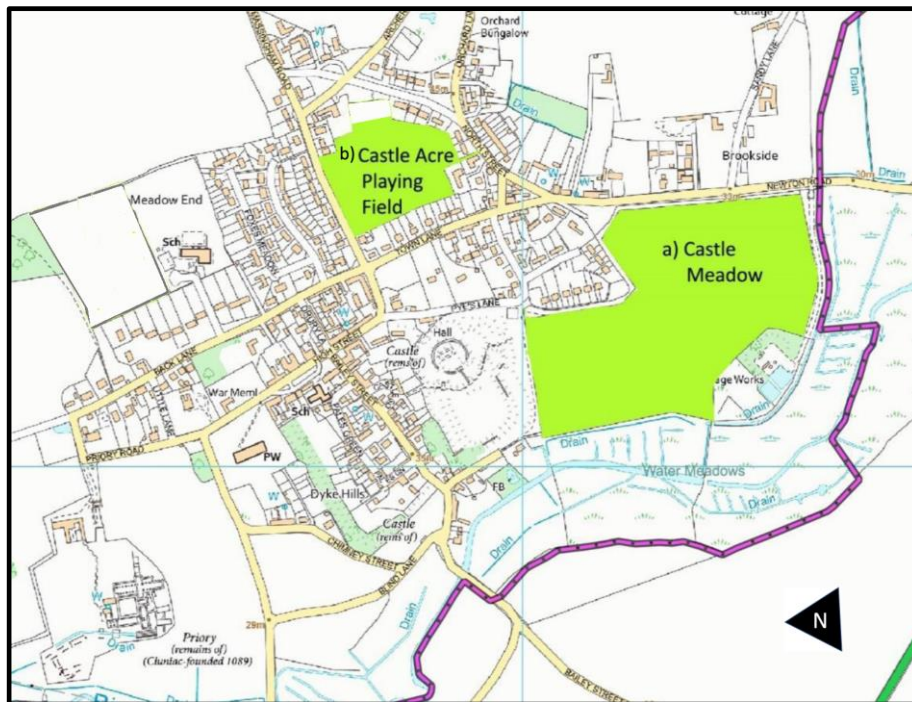
### **Policy NE:3 Local Green Spaces**

The following areas are designated as Local Green Space for special protection (as shown in Map NE.3, page 47).

- a) Castle Meadow.
- b) Castle Acre Playing Field.

Development in the Local Green Spaces will be consistent with national policy for Green Belts.

### **Map NE.3 – Local Green Spaces.**



## Dark Skies

- 6.31 The questionnaire indicated that the issue of light pollution was of concern to local residents. Given the wealth of historic assets and natural habitats and species prevalent within the Neighbourhood Plan area this is not unsurprising. The Parish Council already operates a “dark skies” policy in relation to the street lighting that it is responsible for and encourages homeowners to use timers on any outside lighting.
- 6.32 Nil or low levels of light pollution are an important aspect of tranquillity. Light pollution comes in many forms:
- Sky glow is a product of light being scattered by water droplets or particles in the air.
  - Light trespass occurs when unwanted artificial light illuminates an area that would otherwise be dark.
  - Glare is created by light that shines horizontally.
  - Over illumination refers to the use of artificial light beyond what is required for a specific activity.
- 6.33 There is increasing evidence of issues arising as a result of artificial lighting. Wildlife and human health can be affected and inefficient use of lighting wastes money and energy affecting homes and businesses.
- 6.34 Artificial lighting is not detrimental in all cases, and the solution to light pollution is not turning off all lighting. Light pollution refers to artificial light that is excessive or intrudes where it is not wanted or expected. For example, some older street lights emit light

pollution, as do security lights mounted at an angle above the horizontal. Well-designed lighting, on the other hand, sends light only where it is needed without scattering it elsewhere - “The right amount of light and only when and where needed” (Campaign for Dark Skies motto).

- 6.35 The NPPF states at Paragraph 180 that ‘by encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions ‘should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation’.
- 6.36 From the national dark skies/light pollution maps produced by the Campaign for Rural England (CPRE),<sup>5</sup> Castle Acre falls into Category 3 (of a scale of 9, with 9 being the most polluted). However, many of the surrounding villages fall into Category 2 – less light pollution - and from the maps Castle Acre is clearly visible as an island of light in an otherwise darkened landscape. The main reason for this would be that Castle Acre is the largest centre of population for some distance when compared to neighbouring villages such as West and South Acre. However there remains more that can be done to reduce the levels of light pollution in and around Castle Acre.
- 6.37 When considering lighting as part of any development scheme, applicants need to consider the following early on in the design of a scheme, and justification for it contained in the planning/design and access statement submitted with the planning application:
- Do you need light in the first place, and if so why?
  - What is the lighting task/area to be lit?
  - Are you over- lighting?
  - What is the minimum lighting you require?
  - If lighting is required, is it designed to not add to sky glow and not result in light trespass, and so that glare does not over illuminate? How?
- 6.38 It is acknowledged that lighting schemes alone do not always need planning permission. However, where they are part of the proposal it is reasonable to seek to control them. The policy addresses both general street lighting and specific lighting on residential and commercial buildings. On the latter point the Plan acknowledges that certain lighting on buildings is permitted development and therefore beyond planning control.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/> Put PE32 into the search box



### **Policy NE.4 Dark Skies**

Development proposals that address light spillage and eliminate all unnecessary forms of artificial outdoor lighting, by ensuring that good lighting management and design are applied throughout the Neighbourhood Plan Area, will be supported.

Development proposals that involve external lighting will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they are required for safety, security or community reasons and where the design minimises light spillage.

Applicants are required to demonstrate that they meet or exceed the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance and other relevant standards or guidance for lighting<sup>6</sup>.

Where street lighting and the lighting of residential dwellings or businesses is proposed, proposals will be supported that include environmentally efficient lighting that is sympathetic in design (for example, down lighting) and limited where adjacent to the countryside, the designated historic assets and the protected natural habitats and features identified in **Policy NE.2**.

### **Community Action Projects**

The following has been identified as a Community Action Project for the Natural Environment.

#### **Natural Environment: Protecting the River Nar SSSI:**

- To prohibit vehicles from using part of South Acre Road from 50 metres below the junction with Blind Lane, across South Acre ford and onto Church Farm. This is to preserve the tranquillity of this SSSI beauty spot and to protect the gravel riverbed from engine pollution and damage to fish spawning.

#### **Open spaces and Community Facilities:**

- Secure an agreement with Holkham Estate to maintain open access over the lands close to the river Nar, converting existing footpaths to Public Rights of Way (PROW).

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/obtrusive-light/>



## Chapter 7: Housing and Development

### Housing

- 7.1 One of the most prominent issues to emerge from the consultation with local people was that the Neighbourhood Plan should deliver ‘Homes not Houses’. This relates to local concerns about the ability of local people to buy properties in Castle Acre due to its popularity as a tourist destination and the high quality natural and historic environment that it provides. Opportunities for local people to purchase property are often limited as they are competing in the market with people from outside the local area, usually with higher incomes, some of whom may wish to purchase a property as a second home.
- 7.2 It is the Parish Council’s stated objective that the development of new homes within the parish during the plan period should be exclusively to create ‘homes’ where people live on a permanent basis, where they more fully contribute to and make use of local facilities and services. To achieve this Parish Council would encourage all applicants to discuss their potential applications at an early stage with the Parish Council, prior to formulation of formal proposals.
- 7.3 In the production of any Neighbourhood Plan the prospect of new housing growth is always an issue of key interest to the local community. The Government’s position in respect of housing is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF advises that Neighbourhood Planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area; however, they must not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies. Neighbourhood Plans must be positively prepared and be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained within any development plan for their area. In order to address the key issues that emerged from early consultation with local people, the following Housing Objectives have been developed which in turn have led to the production of the housing policies.

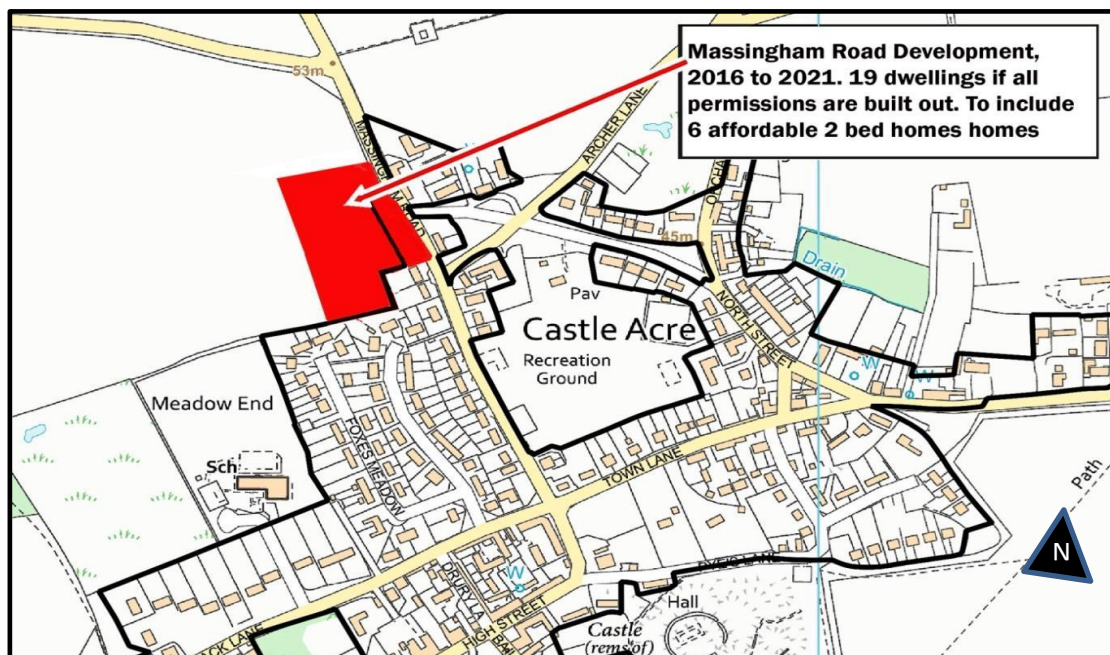
KEY ISSUES: HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expansion of the village should be in line with the village need.</li> <li>▪ Existing housing in Castle Acre is expensive. There is a lack of affordable homes to buy or rent. There are very few incentive/starter schemes and social housing is not available in significant numbers although the percentage in relation to housing stock may appear favourable.</li> <li>▪ A shortage of smaller dwellings and too many large ‘executive’ style houses.</li> <li>▪ Accommodation to meet the needs of the elderly is required.</li> <li>▪ Competition for local people wishing to purchase property in Castle Acre, from people outside of the local area who may be looking to purchase a second home.</li> <li>▪ Impact of recent new build on historic and environmental landscapes.</li> <li>▪ Visual and aesthetic impact of new build.</li> <li>▪ Aligning the aspirations of developers to the needs of the village.</li> </ul>
KEY OBJECTIVES FOR HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT
<b>Objective 5:</b> Deliver the number of new homes required to meet local housing need.
<b>Objective 6:</b> Encourage dwellings of a size, type and tenure that meet the existing and future needs of villagers.
<b>Objective 7:</b> Promote high quality standards of building and design which will enhance the character of the area, respect the rural context and meet the requirements of modern sustainable living.

### **Housing Provision (recent and current context)**

- 7.4 The Neighbourhood Development Plan period runs to 2036 to match the plan period of the emerging King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan (KLWNLP). The Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan Review was recently published and been consulted upon (August/September 2021). It is anticipated that this will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination by the end of 2021, examined during 2022 and adopted by spring 2023. The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan will go to referendum in early 2022 (date to be finalised) and “made” by the Borough Council by spring 2022. The current adopted development plan for the area consists of the BCKLWN Core Strategy Adopted in 2011 and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Adopted in 2016. The Plan period of both of the adopted documents extends to 2026.
- 7.5 In the Core Strategy, Castle Acre is identified as a key service centre and therefore is considered to have the potential to accommodate growth to sustain the wider rural community. The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016) provided an allocation of at least 15 dwellings in order to meet the identified need at that time through to 2026.
- 7.6 The allocated site G22.1 is west of Massingham Road and outline planning permission was granted for 11 dwellings on part of the site under 15/00942/OM and details under 17/02341/RMM. Previous to that, permission was granted for four dwellings on part of the site under 16/02057/F which varied a condition on the outline. These four dwellings have been constructed.

- 7.7 The application (reference 19/00148/F) for an additional four small semi-detached dwellings within site G22.1 above was approved on 22 November 2019. These dwellings were added as a result of the Parish Council’s consultation with local residents. This consultation revealed the need for smaller lower cost homes in the local housing stock, as confirmed by the subsequent Castle Acre Housing Needs Assessment (commissioned through AECOM). These extra two bedroom houses add another social dwelling to the two already delivered by the permitted development, while the other three will be offered on an affordable basis.
- 7.8 Advice from the Borough Council in the early stages of drafting the Neighbourhood Plan (May 2019) was that the Local Plan would not make any further provision for new housing after 2026 in Castle Acre. However, in February 2020 BCKLWN advised that approximately five additional dwellings between 2026 and 2036 would be an appropriate figure to work towards. **(See Appendix 7)** Site selection and allocation to accommodate this figure should therefore be taken forward by the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Plans can provide for a higher figure than that given by the local planning authority, should they so wish.

### **Allocated (previously) Site at Massingham Road. G22.1**



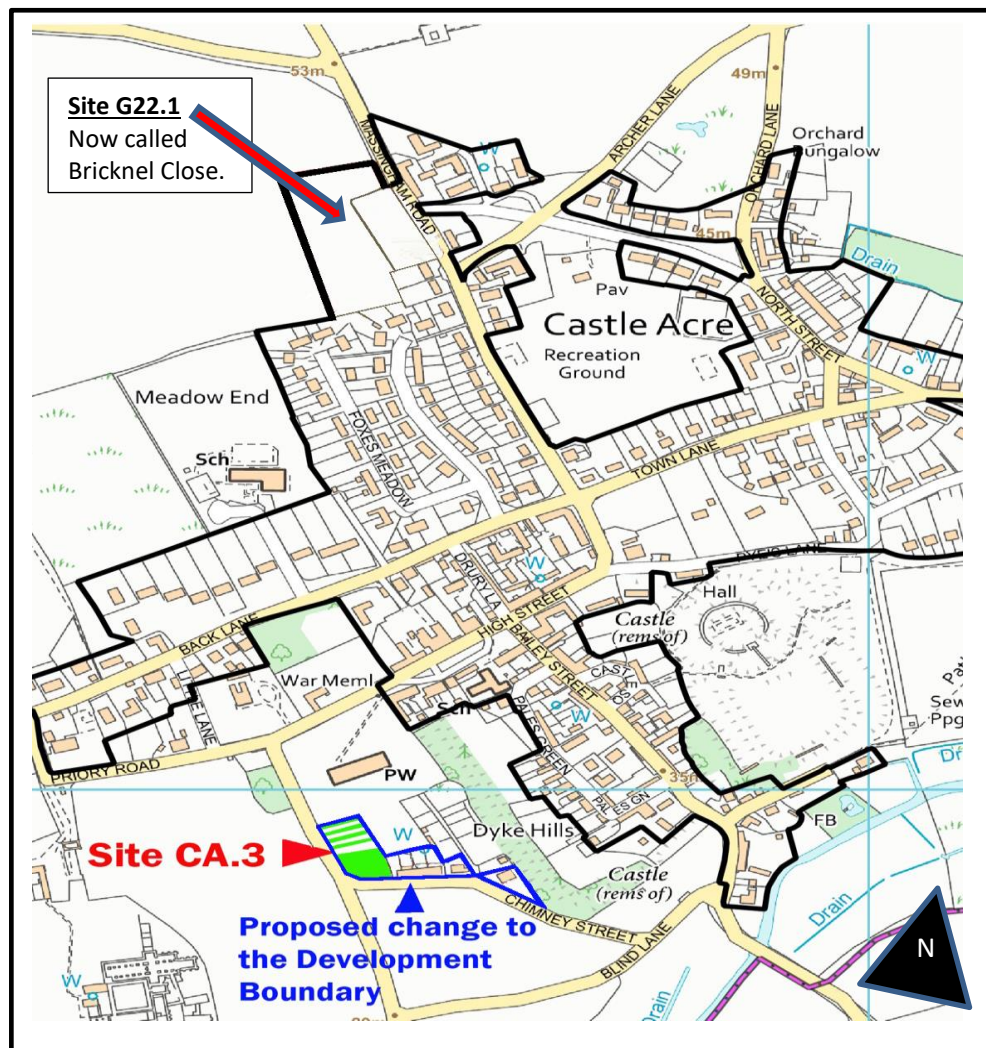
- 7.9 The Parish Council predicts that the number of dwellings completed in Castle Acre between 2014 and 2026 will be around 19 dwellings (excluding windfall), assuming all current permissions on Site G22.1 are built out. These houses have been forwarded under the Borough’s Local Plan arrangements but fall outside of the proposals within this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.10 Because the Borough Council has clearly indicated that the allocation of new housing sites is a matter for the Neighbourhood Plan the Parish Council has reviewed alternative development sites that were not put forward during the ‘call for sites’ process and began some dialogue with relevant landowners to ascertain their appetite for



development. The Parish Council secured their agreement to assess the following two sites for development:

- CA.2, Land to the west of Massingham Road and north of the emerging site G.22.1, (subsequently removed).
- CA.3, Land at The Church Glebe, off South Acre Road.

**Map HD.1. Site CA.3 offered up via the Neighbourhood Plan and Development Boundary Changes (See Policy HD.1)**



**Site CA.3 Legend:**

	Church Car Parking		New dwellings
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**7.11** The results from the Neighbourhood Plan consultation exercises indicated that few people feel that Castle Acre requires a lot more houses (9%) or has too many already (11%); about 44% feel a few more were needed while about 36% feel there was about the right amount of housing.

**Views on number of new homes needed between 2016 and 2036. (from C.A. Questionnaire).**

**Section 3 Building Development.** *Question asked: In your opinion how many new homes should be built in the village in the next 18 years?*

Home numbers needed	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51+
Number of respondents	76	100	97	57	24	16
Percentage	21%	27%	26%	15%	6%	4%

These views and subsequent figures are based on the understanding at the time that development would be required via the Local Plan Housing Need Figure in the Emerging 2026/36 Local Plan. There has been a significant downward shift in the figure since then.

- 7.12** Between 1 and 30 would appear to be the preferred scope of development favoured by about 74% of respondents. There is a general feeling that fewer properties would be better than larger numbers. 48% of respondents opting for 20 or fewer.
- 7.13** Should any site not come forward as envisaged, Neighbourhood Plans require an element of flexibility to be built in. The figure from the Borough Council is a floor not a ceiling. It is not usual practice to allocate sites for fewer than 5 dwellings and these are generally treated as windfall sites. E.g. These include previously developed land that has unexpectedly become available, new dwellings formed through the subdivision of an existing property or residential barn conversions, and small infill plots within the existing built up area boundary. An allowance is often made for such sites in the overall housing calculation and they are addressed in criterion ii) and criterion iii) of the Policy HD.1 on **page 56**.
- 7.14** The focus of windfall development will be expected to take place within the existing Castle Acre development boundary, see map on **page 53**. The Castle Acre development boundary is a mechanism that helps define the built up area of settlements and indicates where in principle development for housing and employment would be suitable. Development boundaries help to control the loss of further undeveloped land in the countryside and urban sprawl. In addition, criterion iii) of the policy limits further new windfall development outside of the settlement development boundary to those allowed for in National Government Guidance.
- 7.15** Given the environmental sensitivities of Castle Acre, the delineation of the development boundary needs to ensure that the location of new developments does not impact negatively on:
1. The Castle Acre Conservation Area.
  2. Historic monuments.
  3. Listed buildings.
  4. Other buildings of historic interest.
  5. Historic landscapes.
  6. Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
  7. The public amenity generally in terms of access, rights of way, etc.

- 7.16 Recent new development in Castle Acre is largely confined to the northern part of the village, due to its location on the northern slopes of the River Nar and the evolution of the village around the historic buildings, historic landscape and the SSSI. Subsequently most post war development has had the effect of extending the village northwards and increasing the number of small estate developments in that area. In preparing this Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed site the development boundary has been reviewed and extended to include the permitted site at Massingham Road (G22.1) and the allocation CA.3, as proposed in this Neighbourhood Plan. In addition to the development boundary amendments set out above, existing development along Chimney Street is included within a new development boundary.
- 7.17 The development boundary is critical to how a village expands over time, given that new development is usually restricted in Local Plan policies to being ‘within’ or ‘adjacent’ to the development boundary. New development beyond the development boundary in rural areas is generally not permitted. Villages, especially those such as Castle Acre where potential land for development adjacent to the settlement boundary is highly constrained, are particularly at risk of over development in the restricted areas where development can be permitted. Future amendments to the development boundary will be made through reviews of the Neighbourhood Plan or through a Local Plan Review involving consultation with the local community. Amendments or extensions will only be supported at locations where it can be demonstrated that there is no detrimental impact upon the landscape and historic assets of the village.

#### **Site CA.3 Glebe Land at South Acre Road/Chimney Street**

- 7.18 Site CA.3: The 1998 Adopted Local Plan map of the Castle Acre development boundary included residential properties to the south west of the village on Chimney Street. This area was excluded from the boundary in the Adopted Version of the Site Allocation Development Plan document in 2016 when the term ‘settlement’ boundary was replaced by ‘development’ boundary and which is used in the current emerging Local Plan.
- 7.19 The review of the boundary undertaken as part of this Neighbourhood Plan process has reinstated this area within the boundary and includes Chimney Street and specifically Site CA.3 The Glebe Land. The site is in an area of high heritage sensitivity, being adjacent to a Grade I listed building, a scheduled monument and ‘important unlisted buildings’ within the Castle Acre Conservation Area. However, development of the site for a terrace of 4 starter homes has the potential to mitigate impact on heritage assets through sympathetic design. A Heritage Impact Statement has been undertaken for the site. The site is contained but partially visible from the River Nar Valley and the Castle Acre Priory remains to the south and west respectively and is in an area of medium landscape sensitivity and visual amenity. On this basis, the site can be considered suitable for allocation.
- The Glebe Land, site CA.3, offers the opportunity for:
- Small units provided by a landowner prepared to deliver low cost housing as a priority to meet the village need.

- Development away from the north and east of the village that helps to reduce the density of housing in those already sensitive areas.
- Discreet housing with little or no impact due to the current landscaping of the site and its surroundings that screen it from the conservation area, historic monuments and the surrounding natural habitats.
- Provision of additional car parking spaces for the church to accommodate more vehicles during periods of high demand and reduce the impact of parking as a detractor to the Conservation Area, specifically around Stocks Green.

### **Policy HD.1 Housing Provision**

The Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development, including ‘windfalls’, commensurate with Castle Acre’s classification as a Key Rural Service Centre within the Local Plan settlement hierarchy. The revised development boundary and a new development boundary are defined on Map, HD.1 (**page 53**). This Plan provides for a minimum of 5 housing units in the Neighbourhood Plan Area between 2020 and 2036.

This need will be met through:

- i) Allocating **Site CA.3**, Glebe Land off South Acre Road for the development of 4 dwellings and an area of car parking for the Church. (2020-2036)
- ii) Small “windfall” sites and infill plots within the development boundaries which will come forward during the plan period but are not identified in the Plan; and
- iii) Conversions of existing buildings outside of the Castle Acre development boundary in accordance with paragraph 79 of the NPPF 2019.

The focus of new windfall development will be within the Castle Acre development boundaries as defined on **MAP HD.1 on page 53**.

**Site CA3 – Glebe Land off South Acre Road** – is allocated for 4 dwellings and an area of car parking for the Church subject to all of the following criteria:

- a) The development of this site will provide for a sensitively designed terrace of four two bedroom homes aimed at those with a local connection and an area of car parking for the Church. Any planning permission granted will be subject to an agreement that both the housing and car parking is provided.
- b) Access to the site will be from South Acre Road or Chimney Street; access arrangements should be designed to ensure that any proposed junction infrastructure respects the rural and historic character and edge of village location (See Historic England guidance). *See footnote ref; Historic England*
- c) All existing trees and hedgerows on the site should be retained wherever possible. Only those necessary to achieve safe access for the housing and car park development should be removed. Any trees or hedgerows totally or partially removed should be appropriately replaced.
- d) The area of proposed new car parking for the church will be to the north of the site closest to the churchyard
- e) Any lighting scheme proposed for the car park and the dwellings on the site shall minimise light pollution to avoid harm to the setting of the church and priory.

**Historic England:** The following two publications contain practical guidance for achieving acceptable highway schemes in sensitive and rural areas. Manual for Streets 2 (particularly section 2.7) and Streets for All



### **Housing Mix – Size, Type and Tenure**

- 7.20 As well as housing numbers, the size, type and tenure of any new housing is also a key issue for local communities in respect of new housing. The specific mix of housing will clearly have an impact on the existing community and therefore careful thought needs to be applied to determining that mix.
- 7.21 The Steering Group obtained funding through Locality and commissioned AECOM to undertake a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) for the Neighbourhood Area which forms a supporting document to this Neighbourhood Plan. The study, produced in April 2019, provides information about the amount and mix of housing that should be provided in the future. The study focussed on the housing mix rather than the overall housing number and followed an identified methodology. The key headlines are as follows:
- *New homes built for owner occupation will only serve a small number of households at the higher end of the income scale. Several factors indicate the need to increase the number of social and affordable rented homes, namely the high proportion of households on low household incomes, the increase in the number of households privately renting between 2001 and 2011 and the relative unaffordability of privately rented properties.*
  - *Whilst current policy in King's Lynn and West Norfolk District is to seek 20% affordable housing in Castle Acre on sites of 5 or more dwellings, split 70% social and affordable rented and 30% shared ownership, our analysis suggests that most of households require affordable housing and that all tenures other than social rented housing are not affordable to the average income household.*
  - *Informed by local demographic evidence and Borough-level evidence, we propose the following mix: One-bedroom: 17.5%; Two-bedrooms: 35%; Three-bedrooms: 27.5%; Four or more-bedrooms: 20%.*
- 7.22 The HNA examines the issue of affordable housing in some detail and concludes that a substantial portion of affordable housing coming through the planning system would need to be social and affordable rented given the median income levels in Castle Acre. It also suggests that starter homes are included in the tenure mix for Castle Acre to provide a route to home ownership for those currently renting but on higher incomes.
- 7.23 The HNA considers the size and type of dwellings and also household composition. Castle Acre has a higher level of single person households than the Borough and the national average; it also has a higher percentage of larger dwellings compared to the rest of the Borough. Household data from the 2011 census also indicated that those larger homes are being occupied by smaller families.
- 7.24 The HNA concluded that a need exists for smaller homes of one or two bedrooms in Castle Acre and there would be less demand or need for dwellings with 3 bedrooms or above. The HNA proposes the following mix:

Size of dwelling	%
One-bedroom	17.5
Two-bedroom	35
Three-bedroom	27.5
Four or more bedrooms	20

- 7.25 The point was made during the consultation exercises that affordable housing needs to be genuinely affordable<sup>7</sup>. The existing average house prices in Castle Acre are above the county average and average salaries (for that in work) are below county averages. Therefore those residents not in full time work will have considerable difficulty accessing housing to meet their needs.
- 7.26 In terms of size of housing needed, the greatest need is for one and two bedroom accommodation and that the affordable housing derived from any new housing on qualifying sites should be solely social and affordable rented. Given the overall level of housing provision for Castle Acre as outlined in Policy HD.1 above, there is unlikely to be a major step change in the housing composition of Castle Acre over the plan period.
- 7.27 The questionnaire results also indicate some support towards ‘eco-friendly’ homes - almost 50% of respondents feel there need to be more, together with support for sustainable measures such as solar panels and ground source heat pumps.
- 7.28 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes is essential to support a sustainable, vibrant and mixed community. Community consultation showed that residents want to have a range of types of accommodation within their parish to meet their changing needs and to cater for any needs that are currently not being met. Families may want to move to larger homes, older residents may wish to down-size or move to specifically adapted accommodation, residents may be looking to start a family and find the right accommodation to allow that to happen. New homes should be of high quality and meet community aspirations for new and existing residents. The mix of housing types outlined in Policy HD.2 below is influenced by the results of the HNA and though consultation with local residents both through the two drop-in events, meetings and the household questionnaire.

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<sup>7</sup> Definition of affordable housing is given in the Glossary.

## **Policy HD.2 – Housing Size, Type and Tenure**

Encouragement will be given to a wide range of types of housing that meet local needs to enable a mixed and inclusive community.

New developments will be expected to provide housing commensurate with the housing needs of Castle Acre in accordance with the mix outlined in the Housing Needs Assessment 2019 or the most up to date housing needs assessment, unless compelling justification for an exception can be provided.

Developments should provide:

- i). 2 bedroom dwellings as starter homes/first time buyers,
- ii). Adaptable, 'lifetime'<sup>8</sup> homes,
- iii). Affordable housing, specifically social and affordable rented,
- iv). Housing for older people (e.g. Retirement living housing/supported/sheltered housing, bungalows and retirement complexes),
- v). Eco-friendly homes<sup>9</sup>.

Support is given for maximising the delivery of affordable housing on all qualifying sites in Castle Acre.

### **Second Homes**

- 7.29 According to the Borough Council's Council Tax base in June 2019, there are 466 dwellings in Castle Acre Parish of which 419 are occupied properties, fourteen are empty dwellings and a further 33 (7.1%) are registered as second homes/holiday homes. Altogether there are 47 dwellings (10.1%) of dwellings that are empty or are not permanent residences. With the removal of Council Tax rebates for second homes, it is probable that this is a significant under-estimate as there is no longer an incentive to register a house as a second home. However there are an additional 21 properties which carry non-domestic rates such as the school, the shop, the public house, etc. Included in the non-domestic rates there are an extra 5 self-catering holiday lets (dwellings). Therefore there are 38 (not 33 as above) second/holiday homes accounting for 8.2% of Castle Acre's housing stock. The total number of dwellings empty or non-permanent residences then rises from 10.1% to 11.16%.
- 7.30 The issue was raised through the community consultation exercises with almost 70% of respondents indicating that they thought there were too many second homes in Castle Acre. The summary of the questionnaire states that: *"the village has a developing imbalance of newcomers against established residents, perhaps due to the lack of affordable housing for locals and or the restricted job opportunities. There is also a feeling that 'new blood' is needed in the village to avoid a sedentary decline"*. This is not a situation exclusive to Castle Acre and many communities, particularly in North

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<sup>8</sup> Housing that is built to specific design criteria called Lifetime Homes standard to enable them to be lived in by residents with changing needs <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/revised-design-criteria.html>

<sup>9</sup> an environmentally low-impact home designed and built using materials and technology that reduces its carbon footprint and lowers its energy needs

Norfolk are experiencing the same effect but to a greater degree (for example 62% of properties in Brancaster are second homes).

- 7.31 Information provided by the Borough Council reveals a concentration of second homes, specifically around Stocks Green, the top of Newton Road, in Chimney Street, in Pales Green, on Bailey Street and along the High Street. As these areas are within the Conservation Area and the most visible to residents and visitors alike, this might give a misleading impression that there is a wider problem of second homes not being permanently lived in across the village and wider parish. This is borne out by the Borough Council's tax returns between 2004 and 2020 which show that the percentage of second homes relative to the overall housing stock has varied between 8.8% (2004) and 6.9% (2019). Even adding in the growth of full house self-catering and Airbnb properties to rent (14), there is no significant upward trend in Castle Acre properties that are not occupied full time.
- 7.32 Had that figure of second homes been at least 33% of dwellings, with evidence of that percentage significantly increasing towards a majority of the residential stock not being a permanent residence, then there would merit in introducing a Principal Residence planning policy within the Neighbourhood Plan restricting sales of new builds of less than 90m<sup>2</sup> to residents or their families living nearby. Restricting the sale of new properties as second homes cannot be achieved through the planning system as planning permission is not required to use a house as a second home and house buying on the open market are private financial transactions.
- 7.33 It is acknowledged that as second homes are only being used on a part time basis, their users could contribute less to the functioning of the village in terms of underpinning local facilities and services. However, there is no quantifiable evidence that intermittent use of second homes, especially in the winter months, affects the viability of Castle Acre's local services. The number of second homes could also reduce the support for local facilities such as the village hall and playing field and affect community cohesion and hence the potential for social isolation. The village school could be affected by falling pupil intakes if there is a reduction in the resident population of young families.
- 7.34 The current level of second homes in the Parish is not the only contributory factor in affecting residential homes to purchase or rent. The relationship between average house prices in the village and local household incomes, confirmed by the Housing Needs Assessment (**see 7.22**), will often mean that local people find themselves priced out of the local housing market by those who may live further afield but are more affluent in terms of their household income. A further factor can be that those downsizing from large properties in Norfolk or from other parts of the country - attracted by the beauty and tranquillity of Castle Acre as a place to retire - can also lead to upward pressure on local house prices. Higher prices also reflect a wider trend across many rural areas countrywide about local people not being able to afford housing in local villages - even in areas where there isn't a high percentage of second homes - driven by a national planning policy over the past 25 years which restricts developments in rural areas in favour of concentrating in urban areas/towns.



- 7.35 This critical issue has been rigorously investigated by the Steering Group but it has been reluctantly concluded that such a Principal Residence policy within the Neighbourhood Plan could not meet statutory examination as a planning criterion. Castle Acre Parish Council is alive to the potential impact any increase in second homes or full house rentals could have on the community and throughout the life of this Neighbourhood Plan will be monitoring annually any growth with the intention of amending this policy, should the need arise.
- 7.36 Castle Acre’s housing supply policy to 2036 should focus on housing developments that are more likely to be affordable for local people while providing enhanced opportunities for those with a local connection to compete in both the social and open housing markets. To this end, the Borough and the Parish Council will employ the use of local connection criteria to prioritise the allocation of affordable housing to local people and their families. In addition, the developers of the sites allocated in Policy HD.1, and those of any windfall development that might come forward during the plan period, will be encouraged by the Borough and the Parish Council to undertake a **“launch for locals”** which would involve opportunities for residents and their families living nearby to be informed in advance, via the Parish Council, as to when the properties are to be launched onto the market and be invited in for pre-launch viewings.
- 7.37 Of the 19 dwellings off the Massingham Road, approved for development three will be social houses for rent . The four dwellings on the Church Glebe land will be marketed as starter homes with priority given to village residents and their locally based families. In total between 2020 and 2036, 10 affordably priced homes will come onto the market should all granted permissions be built out and the allocation within this plan approved.

## **Design**

- 7.38 One of the determinants of whether any new development is considered to be 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 that it has been involved with and been able to influence the design of a development at an early stage, the higher the likelihood that development will be considered to be acceptable.
- 7.39 While to an extent design and impact on local character are subjective judgements, 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 judgements to be made, yet there is often very little evidence or guidance to assist local people in making that judgement.
- 7.40 As well as defining the local vernacular architecture, influencing the design and quality of new developments and ensuring that they respect and integrate with their surroundings will require guidance on issues relating to the layout of new residential developments. Examples of where development has worked well and where it has

worked less well have been examined and the density, layout and landscaping of new development sites have been highlighted as particular issues. Matters such as parking, garages, external storage, room for wheeled bin storage, road layouts, closeness of dwellings and the visual appearance of the edges of development have been considered in detail. Given that any new housing developments in Castle Acre will almost certainly have to be located on the edges of the current built up area immediately adjacent to the open countryside - and that the village sits within a sensitive historic landscape setting - particular care needs to be taken.

- 7.41 Considerable emphasis is given to achieving well designed places. In the NPPF 2019. Paragraph 124 describes this as fundamental to what the planning and development process should be achieved. 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 applications, communities and local planning authorities are essential. Landowners and developers will be encouraged to liaise with the village, via the Parish Council, regarding suitable site locations, before submitting a site for planning consideration.

### **HD.3 Design**

All new development should be of a high quality, be well designed, respect and wherever possible enhance the form and character of Castle Acre. Careful consideration should be given to the form, character and setting of new development to reduce the risk of over dominance by new development. Development within or adjacent to the settlement boundary should respect the rural character and setting of the village and avoid creating hard urban fringes and edges to ensure that development is assimilated into the surrounding countryside. Small sites (up to 5 properties), dependent on local housing need, are encouraged.

All new development is expected to accord with the following criteria:

#### **a) Building Character**

New development should respect the compact and rural character of Castle Acre. Use of repetitive building uniformity and layout features should be avoided and careful consideration should be given to orientation, roof heights and shapes in order to create an interesting and aesthetically pleasing development which enhances the overall village scape of Castle Acre. New development should have careful regard to height, layout, building line, massing and scale of existing development in the immediate area. Designs should draw upon detail from existing vernacular architecture and take account of the Character Appraisal within the plan. **(Appendix 3)**

#### **b) Building Materials**

The use of traditional materials common in the parish (as identified in the Character Appraisal, **Appendix 3** and **Policy HE.3**), especially those sourced locally and of low ecological/ environmental impact, will be encouraged. Proposals that promote the positive application of S.U.D.S measures will be supported thus minimising the use of hard non-porous surfaces.

#### **c) Building Detail**

Architectural details should reflect and or complement those traditionally used within the village, (see also **Policy HE.3**). Reference at the design stage should be made to the Character Appraisal work within this plan.

**d) Landscaping.**

The landscaping of new development is crucial to how the development impacts upon both the surroundings and the Conservation Area and should be an integral part of any design proposal and should be developed at an early stage alongside/within the scheme. Native species will be encouraged together with measures designed to attract and benefit wildlife including the provision of new habitats. Where appropriate, trees and hedgerows used as structural landscaping and boundary treatments should be subject to a preservation order and/or a replanting condition in the first five years.

**e) Dwelling Amenity.**

Development proposals for new dwellings should provide;

- i) sufficient private amenity space to meet the needs of new residents, such as garden space which should be at least equal to the cubic footprint of the dwelling,
- ii) off street vehicular parking for residents and visitors,
- iii) ancillary storage for refuse and recycling.

New development should not be harmful to the living conditions of the residents of adjacent properties.

The provision of high speed internet connections is encouraged.

**f) Building Style**

The design of new development should be of a high quality that will be valued now and in the future. There is no presumption in favour of either traditional or contemporary design. A range of high quality traditional and more innovative contemporary designs will be encouraged.

**g) New Technologies and Eco living**

Where appropriate, support will be given to the use of new efficient and environmentally low impact technologies such as ground and air source heating, solar panels, water recycling, etc.

## **Community Action Projects**

The following has been identified as a Community Action Project to be taken forward outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

### **Housing and Development**

The Parish Council will work actively with the developers of new housing in the Neighbourhood Area to promote their new build properties for sale or rent to residents or their families living nearby ahead of a full open market launch.



## Chapter 8: Traffic and Transport

- 8.1 Castle Acre is located 4 miles to the north of Swaffham and just west of the A1065 Swaffham to Fakenham Road. The village sits as a centre of a number of local routes. The route from Great Massingham from the north is the former Roman Road and route of the long distance Peddars Way. East-west routes from Great Dunham, West Acre, Newton and East Lexham converge just north of the village centre.
- 8.2 It is acknowledged that ‘transport’ is not just about vehicular traffic but that it includes pedestrian facilities, cycling and other modes of transport. There are a range of ‘transport’ issues that are relevant to planning including ensuring that new development has adequate car parking, cycle storage and delivery areas. New developments should allow for pedestrian convenience, include footways and footpaths to minimise conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.
- 8.3 The entrance to the village centre from the south is marked by the Bailey Gate which acts as a pinch point for traffic and consequently heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) are directed via the designated through route of Newton Road, North Street, St James’ Green to Massingham Road. There are a number of public footpaths within the parish, many of which again converge at the village centre.
- 8.4 As mentioned in earlier chapters, the tight built form of the centre of the village, the absence of footways and the presence of historic assets, including the Bailey Gate, means that there are conflicts between traffic and pedestrians and limited space for parking – both for residents and visitors.



- 8.5 Parking at Stocks Green, traffic congestion and routing for HGVs were all issues that were prominent in the consultation exercises.
- 8.6 The consultation results also indicated that there was a perception that Castle Acre has been subject to a step change in the volume of through traffic, particularly HGVs and large farm-vehicles. As a result, the roads are now unable to cope with the increase in volume and the increase in vehicle size. Accordingly, there is now a grave concern locally that there is a serious risk to life. Moreover, large vehicles are now regularly damaging village infrastructure as they cut up the verges and the grass area on the corner of Archer Lane and St James' Green.
- 8.7 The problems highlighted above were addressed three years ago by generating a comprehensive 'Through-Traffic-Plan', to assist the Parish Council and highway authorities to improve safety and protect village infrastructure. The TTP was adopted and is considered to be working successfully.
- 8.8 It is now the centre of the village that is the priority rather than through traffic itself. In order to address the key Traffic and Transport issues highlighted by the consultation exercises, a broad ranging Traffic and Transport objective has been developed as follows:

KEY ISSUES: TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor parking on Stocks Green, St James Green, Pales Green, Pye's Lane and Bailey Street; inappropriate 'off road' parking causing damage to greens and verges; inconsiderate parking blocking resident access to their own property and 'off road' parking facility; negative impact on the conservation area.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-road parking at peak times by visitors to the Castle, the Priory and the Church.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversized vehicles using and damaging the Bailey Gate.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speeding on roads inside and outside of the village centre.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accident risk from congestion.</li> </ul>	
KEY OBJECTIVES FOR TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT	
<p><b>Objective 8:</b> Manage 'on road' car parking in the centre of the village to reduce congestion and to allow permitted traffic to pass through the village safely. Provide designated 'off street' parking to improve pedestrian safety and to reduce the visual dominance and physical impact of parking in the village centre. Review speed limits especially in relation to proposed sites allocated through the plan.</p>	
<p><b>Objective 9:</b> Restrict vehicle access to South Acre Ford.</p>	

### **Steering Group Traffic Survey**

- 8.9 The Steering Group also undertook a village traffic survey in February 2019. The aim of the survey was to help identify issues relating to traffic and transport and their potential inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. The survey rationale was to provide empirical and statistical (quantitative) data to complement the anecdotal (qualitative) evidence that has been collected from the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire and the public events organised by the Steering Group. The survey consists of traffic counts as well as recording traffic movements. A summary of the results of the survey work is shown at **Appendix 9**.
- 8.10 The Castle Acre traffic survey has provided the village with empirical data and evidence that can be used in relation to specific site allocations and ongoing projects. More such data can be gathered when necessary as specific issues demand, e.g. improving safety in specific locations where the safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians is compromised. In summary, most pedestrian movements occur in or close to the village centre where there is considerable traffic movement, areas of poor visibility, restricted and narrow roads and poor or no footways. This collection of factors makes the village centre a potentially dangerous location especially if vehicles are travelling too fast, parking too close to junctions and on restricted roads with poor visibility. The speed of vehicles on some roads is an issue, both close to the village centre and on some of the outlying lanes. For their own convenience some road users have taken to ignoring traffic prohibition notices such as 'No Entry' signs. Over 130 hours of traffic observation revealed that cars make up 82% of vehicle movements, vans 13%, lorries 2%, buses 1%, agricultural vehicles 0.3%. 77% of all movements are on weekdays and 53% are on either Massingham Road or Newton Road, 20% of the traffic movements on weekdays occur on the St James' Green through road.
- 8.11 Traffic counts were conducted by 24 volunteers at 7 locations over 65 two hour observation sessions. Over the survey period, of 130 hours there were 8328 recorded vehicle movements and 1803 recorded pedestrian movements. The total recorded movements by vehicle type were as follows:
- Cars 82%
  - Vans 13%
  - Lorries 2%
  - Buses 1%
  - Campers 0.2%
  - Motorcycles 0.4%
  - Cycles 1.8%
  - Agricultural 0.3%
  - Pedestrians 18% (as part of total movements)
- 8.12 The majority of pedestrian movements, 79% occurred near to the village centre, i.e. on Stocks Green, Bailey Street and Back Lane. 46% of pedestrian movements occurred at the weekend. 28% on Sunday. An average of 11% of the pedestrian footfall occurred on

each of the weekdays. A considerable percentage of those on foot were dog walkers - 28%.

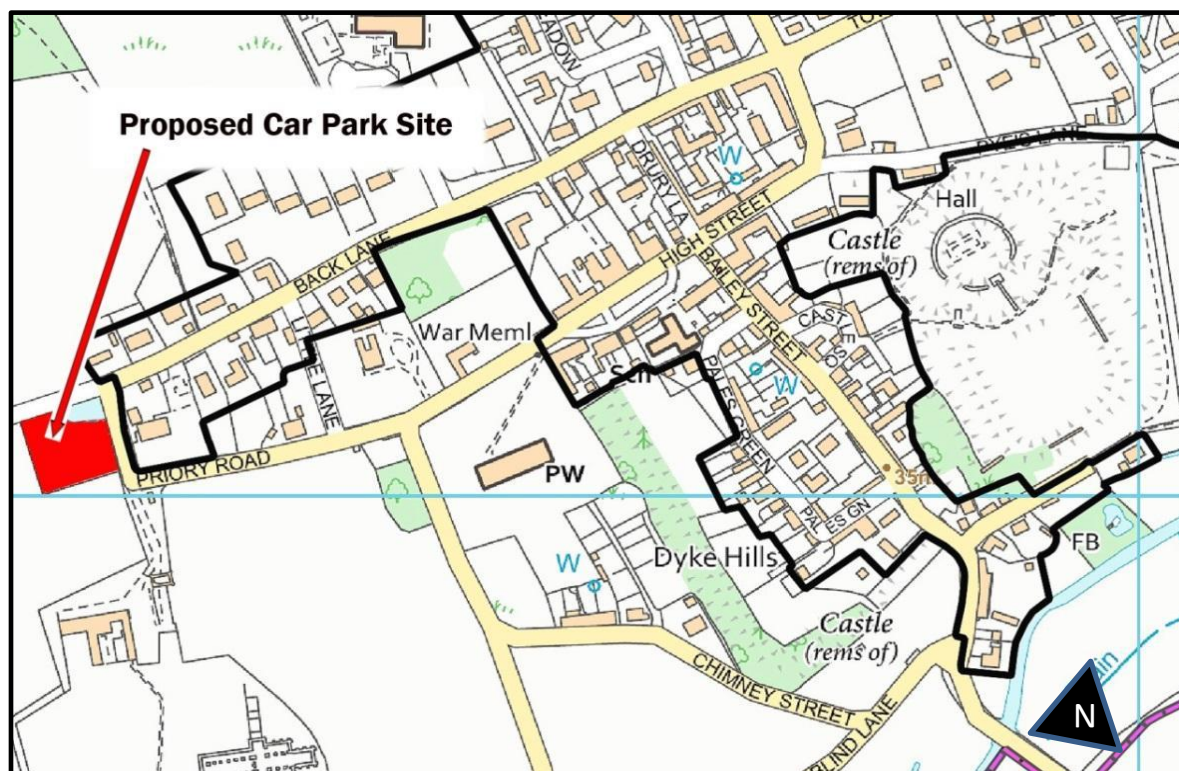
- 8.13 Evidence gathered at more popular visitor periods indicates a significant increase in parking, not just in designated spaces but also on narrow lanes, footways, verges and on Village Greens. At these times there is also an increase in visitor traffic and pedestrians using the village roads and footways thus increasing the risk of accidents.
- 8.14 New developments in and around the village must provide off road parking for the residents of new properties but also look to the broader issues of safety generated by their location and the impact of increased traffic flow at identified 'pinch points' such as the junctions between Massingham Road and Back Lane and Bailey Street, Stocks Green and High Street. Where traffic issues relate directly to new development, they will be considered in the planning process. Where there are more widespread issues such as public parking provision, impact on historic and natural environments, then the Parish Council will undertake the necessary work and try to promote positive change via specific projects. Where appropriate, it will engage the support of bodies such as the Borough Council, Norfolk County Council Highways, Historic England, etc.
- 8.15 When taken together, the Steering Group's survey, the concerns raised through the consultation and the content of the T.T.P, a consistent picture of transport issues in Castle Acre emerges. A number of non-planning policy actions have been identified which are captured below as Community Action Projects for this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.16 However, the need for a site for a visitor car park to be used at peak periods is a land use issue and therefore it has been considered appropriate to include support for it as a policy within the Neighbourhood Plan. The Steering Group have assessed the proposed site for suitability and impact. **See Appendix 9.**

### **TT.1 Visitor Car Parking**

Support will be given to otherwise acceptable proposals that help to relieve traffic congestion in the village centre (Bailey Street, High Street, Priory Road, Pales Green, Stocks Green, etc) and/or provide solutions to existing problems caused by 'on street' parking especially during peak periods. Particular support is given for the creation of new designated visitor parking off Priory Road (**see Map TT.1, page 68**). This facility would help free up parking space in the village centre and also help reduce the visual dominance of car parking in the heart of the village and Conservation Area which is identified as a 'detractor' in the Conservation Area Character Statement.

- 8.17 An additional church car park is proposed as part of the development site allocation CA.3 at South Acre Road/Chimney Street specifically to accommodate additional parking demand at the church at peak periods. **See Policy HD.1 page 56 and pages 108 and 109.**

**Map TT.1 Proposed Car Parking Site at Priory Road.**





## **Community Action Projects**

The following Community Action Projects have been identified in relation to traffic and transport issues.

### **Traffic and Transport:**

- Restrict vehicular access to South Acre Ford to protect the riverbed and aquatic habitats and species.
- Develop an appropriate contingency plan to identify and deliver an appropriate 'off road' parking facility should the proposed plan for a car park on Priory Road not be granted 'change of use' permission.
- Review speed limits in and around the village through liaison with NCC Highways
- Encourage/promote the use of public transport and look at different routes
- Support discrete directional signing on Stocks Green and along Priory Road to new designated visitor parking off Priory Road.
- Lobby for effective road safety measures at the Massingham Road/Back Lane junction by the SPAR shop.
- Maintain the through traffic directions Newton Road/North Street/St James' Green/Massingham Road and to press for both North Street and St James Green to be gritted in the winter.
- Encourage residents to park off-road on their driveways/garages to keep traffic pinch points clear e.g. Bailey Street, Pales Green, North Street.
- Encourage Highways to amend the second directional sign to Castle Acre on the A1065 at Lower Lane (from Swaffham) to encourage restricted traffic to continue to the Newton Road turning.
- Encourage all suppliers/HGVs/farm vehicles not to drive up or down Bailey Street and through Bailey Gate.
- Contact national Sat Nav. suppliers to amend their software to highlight through routes and to avoid unsuitable routes e.g. Bailey Street.
- Add a one way priority chicane before the eastern edge of the 30 mph sign on Newton Road to reduce traffic speeding.
- Extend the Trod along St James' Green to North Street.
- Maintain vigilance on vehicle speeding within the village boundaries and take appropriate action.
- Press for a 20 mph speed limit within the village boundaries.
- To lobby for 'High Risk' signs along the West Acre Road between Manor Farm and West Acre house to warn drivers of blind bends and the danger of further fatal vehicle collisions.
- Not to add any further entry gates to village access routes.

*NB: It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and that some projects will require approval by the Parish Council and other bodies before they can be implemented.*



## Chapter 9: Tourism and Community Facilities

### Tourism in Castle Acre

- 9.1 The biggest attractions for tourists in Castle Acre are the Castle, the Priory and the River. Castle Acre is one of the recognised 'honeypot' sites in the county, described by 'Visit Norfolk' as 'an important Norfolk visitor attraction' because of its beautiful rural setting and 'extraordinary wealth of history' with the ruins of the Cluniac Priory; 12th century Castle and Bailey Gate and Grade 1 Listed 14th century parish church.
- 9.2 The Castle ruins and the Church are open all year, but the Priory is open only on weekends during the winter months. Between the Priory and the Castle is the centre of the village which has some facilities to support tourism. There is a pub offering meals and accommodation, a tearoom, a general store with a post office and public toilets (restricted to Priory open times) at the Priory car park.
- 9.3 Visitors also come to Castle Acre for arts and cultural events. Open Studios events over three weekends in May and June each year attract around 300 visitors each year. There is a 'Castle Acre Trail' which includes up to twelve talented artists across ten local venues exhibiting paintings, mosaics, sculptures, sketches, knitwear, furniture, pottery and digital art. In addition, the village hall hosts up to five craft fairs and exhibitions during the year, as well as concerts and 'music with supper' evenings. The Friends of Castle Acre Church host concerts in the church which attract audiences from Swaffham and the surrounding villages.

- 9.4 As mentioned in earlier chapters, there are impacts associated with this high level of visitor activity in the village. At peak times it can be very congested within the village as visitors try to find somewhere to park. The very limited parking on Stocks Green has implications for the wear and tear on the village fabric, and high footfall levels at the tourism attractions themselves.
- 9.5 Issues related to the tourism activity were raised at each stage of consultation – positive aspects in relation to local businesses and recognition that holiday and second homes provide jobs for local people such as cleaning, gardening and caretaking. Less positive impacts relating to traffic, congestion, dog fouling, litter, lack of parking space and access for residents at peak periods detract from what makes Castle Acre so special.
- 9.6 While taking justifiable pride in Castle Acre’s unique status, the results of the consultation would support the consolidation of existing visitor levels and not encourage promotional campaigns or to attract even more visitors than those who are already drawn to Castle Acre.

KEY ISSUES: Tourism and Community Facilities
▪ Effective promotion of heritage sites.
▪ Dedicated visitor car park.
▪ Encouragement of walkers and cyclists and ‘low impact’ tourism.
▪ Managing the impacts of tourism – parking, dog fouling, litter.
▪ Recognition that holiday and second homes provided jobs for local people such as cleaning, gardening and caretaking (albeit generally low waged jobs).
▪ Recognition that visitors supported community facilities such as the pub, tearoom shop and post office.
▪ Homes used for holiday lets being empty for periods of the year.

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR TOURISM AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES
Objective 10: Safeguard existing tourism assets, visitor and community facilities and encourage low impact tourism.

- 9.7 The Neighbourhood Plan aims to support tourism by advocating improvements so that the existing facilities are open all year and to encourage and promote annual events such as Open Gardens and Open Studios, together with concerts and arts & crafts events, guided tours of the village and organised countryside walks. The Historic England information boards and the general tourism board on Stocks Green are considered to be adequate points of reference. Given the increasing use of mobile apps by visitors further signage is not considered to be necessary.
- 9.8 In terms of planning policy it is possible to protect existing tourist facilities from being lost to other uses and also from development close by that may affect their attractiveness as a valuable tourist facility.

## **TO.1 – Protecting Existing Tourism and Community Facilities**

Proposals for change of use involving a potential loss of an existing tourism or community facility or business, will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) Adequate other facilities offering the same service exist within a reasonable walking distance of the majority of residents, to meet visitor and local needs, or
- b) There is no reasonable prospect of continued viable use and this can be demonstrated through:
  - i) Twelve months of marketing in appropriate publications, for the permitted and similar uses, using an appropriate agent; and
  - ii) Confirmation that it has been offered on a range of terms (including price) agreed to be reasonable on the advice of a qualified independent assessor/agent.

### **Tourism and Community Facilities**

Proposals to improve existing tourism and community facilities will be supported. Upgraded facilities should help retain the character of Castle Acre and not adversely affect Historic and Natural Environments or the Conservation Area. Proposals should not detract from the amenity of local residents or result in an overall unacceptable increase in traffic generation or lead to an increase in 'on street' parking.

9.9 It is recognised that a number of the key issues raised are not land use planning matters and therefore fall outside of the scope of this Neighbourhood Plan in terms of the ability to address the issues.

9.10 There is however a clear Community Action Project to work closely with the tourism providers e.g. Historic England to manage visitor activity more sustainably by promoting walking and cycling access and to broaden the appeal to younger visitors through changes to the offer.

## **Community Action Projects**

The following Community Action Projects have been identified:

### **Tourism and Community Facilities:**

- Manage visitor activity in a more sustainable manner through the promotion of green tourism and walking and cycling access.
- Working with tourism providers such as English Heritage to manage sustainable tourism with particular emphasis on appealing to younger visitors.
- Support arrangements likely to improve the visitor experience by encouraging a year round programme of activities, openings and events (which would benefit locals too).
- Engage local residents in a Heritage Lottery funded programme of archaeological and environmental studies of Castle Acre's rich heritage.





## Chapter 10: Business

- 10.1 In order to maintain a sustainable and viable community there is a need to provide opportunities for local employment and local business.
- 10.2 According to the 2011 Census data, in Castle Acre 63.4% of the population was economically active with 58.9% of those being in employment (including self-employed). Unemployment was less than 2.5% . Of those Castle Acre residents that were in employment, 22% of women worked part time and 7.5% of men. In terms of types of employment, the largest sectors were construction (10.1%) the sale or repair of motor vehicles (14.8%) and human health and social work (11.2%). Despite the rural nature of the area agricultural employment only accounted for 5.2%. The most popular destinations for employment for Castle Acre residents are King's Lynn and Swaffham.
- 10.3 At the time of writing, there are over 50 small businesses in the Castle Acre Parish. These can be categorized as:
- Retail – two businesses
  - Art and Craft – two
  - Agricultural/landscaping - seven
  - General building and utilities - six
  - Services - seven
  - Transport - three
  - Hospitality - ten
  - Self-catering – fourteen
- 10.4 The proportionally high number of hospitality/accommodation businesses reflects Castle Acre's position as an important tourist attraction in West Norfolk. Businesses bring value and employment to the village and should be supported. Given the continued closure of bank branches, the village is fortunate to have a Post Office at the Spar shop with extended opening hours and cash withdrawals.

- 10.5 From the consultation exercises it can be seen that the key concerns around the subject of business and employment related to: the speed of the broadband which was considered to be slow and impacted upon the potential for people to work efficiently from home; that the Parish Council could do more to support existing local enterprises and that tourists visiting the village should be able to rely on seven day a week facilities. It is important that any future small business units and work from home businesses are linked to broadband via fibre to premises.

KEY ISSUES: Business
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More support for local enterprises.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver service for visitors and locals that meets visitor requirements on a seven day a week basis particularly at peak times.</li> </ul>
KEY OBJECTIVES FOR BUSINESS
Objective 11: Encourage local enterprise and local businesses to flourish.

- 10.6 The Parish Council supports the policy of making the village as open and accommodating as possible to all local businesses and services but without compromising the historical and environmental assets of the village.- Sustainable retail, craft and outdoor supply businesses will be encouraged. Local trades' people – builders, joiners, plumbers, electricians etc. - should support training opportunities for young people with links to local further education colleges. Village businesses will always be asked to quote for Parish Council led projects.
- 10.7 The recent availability of superfast broadband is welcome. The village website – [www.castleacre.info](http://www.castleacre.info) – is there to promote village businesses.
- 10.8 The Parish Council backs the initiative of supporting the employment needs of the local population through the provision of new or converted buildings for business or commercial use by working with local landowners to find a suitable location within or close to the development boundary.

#### Policy BU.1 Business Development

Support will be given to proposals that address local employment needs through the provision of ;

- i) Home based and live work units
- ii) Small start-up or incubator units
- iii) Accommodation for office facilities or training facilities

Proposals that would result in the conversion of an existing building are particularly supported.



## Chapter 11: Implementation and Monitoring

### Implementation

- 11.1 The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to assist with the planning of sustainable growth across the parish for a period up to 2036. The implementation of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan will require the co-ordinated input and co-operation of a number of statutory and non-statutory agencies, private sector organisations, landowners and the local community.
- 11.2 Alongside other strategic documents and policies, the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan is intended to provide a starting point for working together to implement positive physical change in the parish.
- 11.3 The policies in this Neighbourhood Development Plan shape the way in which development happens within the parish of Castle Acre. Some of the policies included within the Castle Acre 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 Borough Council and a developer or landowner (usually in the context of a planning application). Planning obligations are typically used to ensure that new developments:
- i) Comply with planning policy ... for instance, by requiring affordable housing or public open space to be provided; and
  - ii) Do not impose undue burdens on existing facilities --- for instance, by requiring financial contributions to improve local services such as schools, libraries or transport.

- 11.4 In order to see delivery realised, it will require Castle Acre Parish Council and partner organisations to be proactive in getting the best results for Castle Acre. Working in partnership with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and Norfolk County Council will be particularly important regarding strategic matters such as addressing traffic and highway safety issues.
- 11.5 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. The Borough Council has introduced CIL which currently operates at 15% , although Castle Acre Parish Council will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from developments that takes place in Castle Acre, once the Neighbourhood Plan is made (adopted).

### **Review**

- 11.6 A formal review process in consultation with the local community and the Borough Council should be undertaken at a minimum of every five years or if there is significant change to the Local Plan to ensure that the Plan is still current and remains a positive planning tool to deliver sustainable growth. In order to determine when a review is necessary, the Parish Council will monitor developments in Castle Acre along with the local and national policy and legislative context. It is understood that the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan will require review during its life and that it will be the role of the Parish Council to update the Neighbourhood Plan at the appropriate time. Some of the first Neighbourhood Plans that were “made” (adopted) across the country are now in the process of review and alteration.

### **Monitoring**

- 11.7 It will be the responsibility of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk to monitor the implementation of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan assisted by Castle Acre Parish Council. It is possible that further development may take place during the Neighbourhood Plan period 2019-2036.
- 11.8 The Parish Council will report annually on the implementation of policies, and the progress made on taking forward any Community Action Projects.



## Appendices

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## **Appendix 1 – Steering Group**

Martin Hickey Sally Hubbard Andrea Long (Compass Point Planning & Rural Consultants) Anne Mason Sheila Moister Fiona Morris Martin Tate (Chair) Judy Woolford
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## **Appendix 2 –Heritage Assets**

### **Designated**

#### **Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade I Listed**

- Castle Acre Castle
- Bailey Gate
- Remains of gatehouse of Cluniac Benedictine Priory of St Mary and St Peter and St Paul, Priory Road
- Remains of Cluniac Benedictine Priory of St Mary and St Peter and St Paul

#### **Grade I**

- Church of St James









#### **Grade II\***

- Tudor Lodgings and attached service wing





#### **Grade II**





- 1 Castle Acre and Newton War Memorial
- 2 Abbot House, Stocks Green
- 3 The Old Tea Shop (Willow Cottage, now a residential dwelling), Stocks Green
- 4 The Stone Barn
- 5 12 and 14 High Street
- 6 Dovecote SE of Tudor Lodgings
- 7 Albert Victor Public House (now a residential dwelling)
- 8 Barn ESE of Tudor Lodgings
- 9 1 – 3 Bailey Street
- 10 Willow Cottage
- 11 Wittles Café (previously Barnfield's) High Street
- 12 63 and 64 Bailey Street
- 13 Abbey Cottage
- 14 15 and 16 St James's Green
- 15 Western House
- 16 The Old Foundry, Newton Road
- 17 The Ostrich Inn
- 18 K2 Telephone Box on Stocks Green

## Non-Designated Heritage Assets





Appendix 2. Examples of non-Listed Buildings of Historical Significance			
Page 26 Map ref; 1	Page 26 Map ref; 2	Page 26 Map ref; 3	Page 26 Map ref; 4
 <p>Victorian School on Stocks Green, built in 1839 and enlarged in 1874.</p>	 <p>Wooden Swedish council houses built in de Warenne Place in 1947.</p>	 <p>Methodist Chapel, 1878, in Bailey Street;</p>	 <p>Primitive Methodist (Ranters) Chapel in Pales Green;</p>
Page 26 Map ref; 5	Page 26 Map ref; 6	Page 26 Map ref; 6	Page 26 Map ref; 6
 <p>Baptist Chapel, built in 1841; now the Village Hall, Pyes Lane.</p>	 <p>Terraced dwellings in Bailey Street</p>	 <p>Terraced dwellings in Castle Square</p>	 <p>Terraced dwellings in Orchard Lane</p>







Appendix 2. Non-Designated Heritage Sites		
Page 26. Map ref; A and B	Page 26. Map ref; C	Page 26. Map ref; D
 <p><b>B) Brick Kiln</b> GR TF 8132 1517 Shown on the 19<sup>th</sup> Century OS map, this is now a pond in a private garden. However, any digging reveals red patches in the subsoil and traces of a flint surfaced trackway where horses pulled the carts up to the road.</p>	<p><b>A) Foxes Moated Medieval Manor.</b> GR TF 8124 1540 Sir Frederick Cherville held Foxe's Manor in temp Henry III, 1216-1272. The field is Foxes Close, on older maps called Foxes</p>  <p><b>C) Mill Mounds</b> Priory Manor had three watermills. One was in the grounds of the priory so is included in the scheduled monument listing.</p> 	 <p><b>D) Low Boundary Bank on driveway, east of Number One Bailey Gate.</b> The low bank across the driveway, visible as a slight elevation despite the surface covering, is possibly part of the northern boundary bank of the Norman planned town.</p>

Appendix 2. Non-Designated Heritage Sites, cont.			
Page 26. Map ref; E	Page 26. Map ref; F	Page 26. Map ref; G	Page 26. Map ref; H
 <p><b>Earth Bank</b></p> <p>GR TF 81942 15246 The earth bank along the north side of Pyes Lane has not been dated but it could be associated with the Peddar's Way or with the outer boundary of the castle precinct.</p>	 <p><b>Water Meadows</b></p> <p>GR TF 824 151 The water meadows were created by a tenant of the Holkham Estate in 1809, as part of the new farming techniques of the Agricultural Revolution. Deliberate flooding of the land adjacent to the River Nar through a system of leets and channels prevented frost damage and encouraged the early growth of grass for livestock. The channels, abutments and brick aqueducts survive as the most intact survival in Norfolk of this land use.</p>	 <p><b>Non-Conformist Burial Ground</b></p> <p>This site is at the eastern end of Pye's Lane and contains the graves of those who attended the chapels in the village</p>	 <p><b>St James' Green</b></p> <p>Site of market from reign of Edward 1 and annual fair. Layout of roads – funnelling in to the centre – suggests this was common land or at least an area where livestock could be held. It was originally much larger and the buildings around it have encroached.</p>

### Appendix 3 – Character Appraisal

<u>St James' Green</u> occupies an elevated position in the northern part of the village, with a mix of low density traditional dwellings and modern houses. North Street is similarly diverse.			
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
A late 17th century flint and 19th century brick cladding using white bricks from the Holkham Estate		An early 17th century pair of cottages, with 19th century alterations. Older part has knapped and squared flint, north part flint rubble and brick. All windows are <a href="#">Holkham Estate</a> iron casements	
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
St James' Green. Early 20 <sup>th</sup> century brick house with sash windows and an extension. The front garden has a flint wall.		Semi-detached and terraced houses all set back from the roadway	



Back Lane provides the northern boundary of the conservation area and is characterised by modern development and some older dwellings.			
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
21 <sup>st</sup> century with flint walls; brick window surrounds and pantiled roof		20 <sup>th</sup> century houses of red brick set back from roadway with substantial front gardens	
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
Modern red brick bungalow with rooms in the roof space, built in a traditional barn style		20 <sup>th</sup> century redbrick detached house, set back from roadway, with a complementary traditional oak framed cart shed garage to the front	



Drury Lane is narrow and is characterised by buildings crowding in on themselves and a telescopic view is gained through to the Bailey Gate.			
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  19 <sup>th</sup> century terrace of red brick on rendered plinth. Frontage directly on roadway		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  Single storey dwelling attached to terrace. Bow window. Frontage rendered or colour-washed.	
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  End house of terrace. Frontage of multi-coloured bricks in random pattern.		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  Single storey 19 <sup>th</sup> century terrace with dormer windows in roofline. Colour-washed frontage; small garden verge in front. Higher gable ends denote formerly thatched.	

Stocks Green is occupied by almost continuous, two storey historic buildings which front onto the green. Small paned windows, gabled roofs with chimneys and traditional shop frontages add to its attractiveness.			
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
19 <sup>th</sup> century terraced cottages. Flint with brick surrounds to windows and doors with pantiled roof.		Bailey Gate terraced cottages. Early 19th century knapped flint, gault brick arches and red pantiles. Symmetrical framed sash windows.	
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
Abbot House . 18th century brick north front, flint east gable, red pantiled roof. Roof hipped at east gable end.		Former Albert Victor Pub. 18th century. Plaster render on brick; red and black glazed pantiles. Doorway with glazing bar fanlight with glazed roundel and lettering.	




<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	

Bailey Street is a steep street which was the main thoroughfare of the Norman town, sloping down from the Bailey Gate. The mixture of materials and architectural detailing add to its interest.			
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  Terrace of early 19th century cottages, flint and brick 2 storeys. All windows and doors have brick masonry arches.		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  Former Methodist Chapel 1878 Red brick with yellow brick and stone surrounds to doors and windows.	
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  Former Red Lion Public House. Brick rendered and also flint walls with brick window and door surrounds. Frontage direct to street.		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  Mid-18 <sup>th</sup> century former Ship Inn of flint with brick frontage and upper storey. Sash windows. Cornerstones are of medieval brick on Pales Green frontage.	





<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>20th and 21<sup>st</sup> century terraced cottages Flint and Brick with red pantiled roofs. Render to upper storey. Jutting out of upper storey is copying medieval construction.</p>		<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>Former Shops with dwellings. Large windows on ground floor denote shop frontages. Frontage of all buildings direct to street (no front gardens).</p>	
<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>63 and 64 Bailey Street 16th century timber-framed building with medieval origins. Knapped flint with brick headers and limestone corner stones</p>		<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>Marcon House. Red brick, two storeys, sash windows, double fronted, garden walls with original ironwork. Constructed by the Holkham Estate for the village doctor in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century</p>	

Pye's Lane is narrow and slopes downhill southwards at a lower level than the modern properties to the west. The change in level is emphasised by height of hedges on banks, and by the sunken nature of gardens to the east. An architecturally distinct group of dark grey timber clad properties built in the 'Swedish style' occur at the junction with De Warrenne Place which is a small close of originally local authority housing dating from 1939.

<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
<p>Former Baptist Chapel 1841 now the village hall. Symmetrical with flint walls; brick surrounds to windows and doors and brick horizontal decorative string course.</p>		<p>Detached houses with front gardens set back from roadway. One 19<sup>th</sup> century</p>	
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
<p>At junction with High Street, a detached house on grander scale than most properties with sash windows; bay windows ground floor and upper storey.</p>		<p>20<sup>th</sup> century Scandinavian-style semi-detached houses with timber cladding.</p>	



<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
<p>Three storey dwelling, rare in Castle Acre but designed to fit the pit within which it is built. Flint frontage with red brick surrounds to windows and doors. One church-style window.</p>		<p>Former Local authority 1950s housing built in mainly red brick.</p>	



Town Lane is a short street with former local authority housing on one side and newer developments on the other.			
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  20 <sup>th</sup> century semi-detached dwellings; local authority build.  Set well back from roadway with large front gardens.		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  20 <sup>th</sup> century detached houses in multi coloured brick; symmetrical arrangement of windows and doors. Garden plots in front.	
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  20 <sup>th</sup> century semi-detached houses of red brick with windows in upper storey designed to look as if dormer windows. Small front garden plots.			



Newton Road has properties which vary in style, materials and distance set back from the road. Some have deep front gardens while others have made best use of the shallow verges at the roadside for domestic planting, contributing to the traditional look of this townscape.			
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  Terraced cottages 19 <sup>th</sup> century brick and flint. Casement windows and red pantiled roof. Small front gardens with flint walling capped with brick.		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  19 <sup>th</sup> century detached dwelling with flint walls and brick surrounds to windows which, on ground floor, gives appearance of panels enclosing two windows and a window and door.	
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  19 <sup>th</sup> century flint semi-detached dwellings with symmetrical frontages. Brick surrounds to windows and doors. Brick vertical central panel on upper storey. Front gardens so dwellings set back from street		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  <u>The Old Foundry</u> A flint and brick house dating back to about 1600 with an 18 <sup>th</sup> century frontage and various 20th century alterations. Steep pitch of roof and high gable ends denotes that probably originally thatched. Dormer window inset within arched surround.	

<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> century terrace probably originally identical dwellings but now with altered windows and doors. Colour-washed with Frontage directly on roadway.</p>		<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>20<sup>th</sup> century detached dwelling in pale red and grey brick with orange pantiled roof. Gable end of extended wing and garage has decorative brickwork. Windows (including dormer windows) and door have timber surrounds.</p>	
<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> century brick house with sash windows; dormer casement window and bay windows on both ground and first floor. Red pantiled roof. Small front gardens with distinctive terracotta and brick herringbone pattern decorative walling.</p>		<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>20<sup>th</sup> century detached dwelling in pale red brick with orange pantiled roof. Gable end half-rendered and with thin timber decorative strips. Three dormer windows.</p>	



<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
<p>18<sup>th</sup> Century detached former forge.</p>		<p>20<sup>th</sup> century detached dwelling in pale red and grey brick with orange pantiled roof.</p>	

Foxes Meadow is an estate built as local authority housing in the second half of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century.			
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
Bungalows in red brick with roofs of concrete tiles.		Semi-detached houses of red brick with roofs of concrete tiles.	
Priory Court represents a larger housing complex in traditional materials which is prominently located at the junction of Massingham Road and Back Lane.			
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
20 <sup>th</sup> century single storey flint with red brick surrounds to casement windows. Houses ranged around rectangular courtyard reminiscent of Priory Cloisters.		Brick cornerstones. Steeply-pitched roof. Regularly-spaced chimney stacks.	



Cuckstool Lane is a mixture of 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottages and 20 <sup>th</sup> century detached houses and bungalows.			
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  Lime Kiln cottage. Possibly an 18 <sup>th</sup> century detached dwelling with 21 <sup>st</sup> century timber-framed porch and cart-shed type storage. Flint walling exposed lower storey; colour-washed upper storey. Set well back in yard.		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  19 <sup>th</sup> century detached dwelling with porch positioned close to gable end. Small front garden enclosed by wall.	
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  20 <sup>th</sup> century house of brick with some flint panelling.		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>  20 <sup>th</sup> century bungalow of red brick. Front garden enclosed by red brick curving wall.	

Pales Green is located off Bailey Street to the west and is a mix of historic cottages and modern houses, dominated by the 16th Century Tudor Lodgings. Continuity is provided through the consistency of materials.

**Building Style and Materials**

19<sup>th</sup> century Terraced cottages

Flint with brick surrounds to windows and doorways. Knapped flint and pebble flint.





**Building Style and Materials**

Tudor Lodgings  
Flint and brick  
medieval dwelling house, with a 16th century barn and dovecote of knapped and galletted flint with brick dressings. Some clunch; pantiled roof. Some reused medieval stonework in walling.








<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
<p>20<sup>th</sup> century detached house of rendered brick.</p>		<p>19th century house detached house. Red brick with casement windows. Gable end onto roadway probably to maximise the plot space available.</p>	
<b>Building Style and Materials</b>		<b>Building Style and Materials</b>	
<p>20<sup>th</sup> century semi-detached flint house with brick surrounds to windows and doors. On plinth to provide for slope of lane with steps, unusual for Castle Acre.</p>		<p>20<sup>th</sup> century detached house of brick with darker brick surrounds to windows and door. Gable end directly onto roadway. .</p>	

<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p>		<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p>	
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Massingham Road is the main entrance to the village from the North and follows the line of the Roman Peddars Way.			
<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>Stone Barn Has medieval stonework in flint walls. Brick slit windows 18th century but cart doors are 19th century. Has tarred plinth foundations. Probably originally thatched.</p>		<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>Red brick detached house with hipped roof, set back from road.</p>	
<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>20<sup>th</sup> century bungalow in brick with render on walls. Grey tiled roof.</p>		<p><b>Building Style and Materials</b></p> <p>21<sup>st</sup> century detached houses with flint walls and brick surrounds to windows and doors. Same materials for the wall on the street frontage. Garage in red brick in cart-shed style.</p>	

Chimney Street is a narrow lane on the southern edge of the village overlooking the River Nar.			
Building Style and Materials		Building Style and Materials	
<p>19<sup>th</sup> century terraced cottages</p> <p>Flint with brick surrounds to windows and doors. Front gardens.</p> <p>Adjacent is later terrace of red brick. Frontage directly onto roadway.</p>	 	<p>20<sup>th</sup> century detached house set back from roadway in large garden.</p> <p>Single storey with roof lights; cross wing, all of flint with red brick surrounds.</p> <p>Cross wing gable end has oriel-type window on brick plinth.</p>	

## **Appendix 4 – River Nar Site of Special Scientific Interest Citation**

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: RIVER NAR

DISTRICT: West Norfolk

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Local Planning Authority: Breckland District Council, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council.

National Grid Reference: TF 897198 to TF 622184

Area: 233.43 (ha) 576.8 (ac)

Length of River SSSI: 40.5 km

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 133, 144

1:10,000: TF 61 NW, SE, SW,  
TF 71 NE, SE, SW, TF 81  
NE, NW, SW, TF 91 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: – Date

Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1992

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

### **Description and Reasons for Notification:**

The River Nar originates as a spring-fed stream, west of Mileham in Norfolk and flows for 42 km before joining the River Great Ouse at Kings Lynn, where a sluice prevents the penetration of seawater at high tide. The River combines the characteristics of a southern chalk stream and an East Anglian fen river. Together with the adjacent terrestrial habitats, the Nar is an outstanding river system of its type.

The solid geology of the catchment is dominated by chalk of the Upper Cretaceous, which is overlain by glacial drift deposits of varying thickness. The source of the Nar lies in an area of clays, sands and gravels, though near Castle Acre this gives way to exposed chalk. At West Acre the Nar flows over the river valley gravels and then over alluvial silt from Narborough through the fens. The river water is base-rich, alkaline and recharged by clear springs flowing from the underlying chalk.

The upper Nar has a wide range of natural physical features incorporating riffles, pools, gravel beds and meanders, whilst the lower reaches below Narborough are embanked and steep sided with water flowing sluggishly through a predominantly arable flood plain. The variation in physical features and the influence of the underlying chalk give rise to a rich and diverse flora. Amongst the 78 species of riverine and bankside plants are many eutrophic and mesotrophic species, including 5 pondweeds and 8 bryophytes.

The flora of the first 10 km of the river, to West Lexham, is typical of a calcareous, lowland ditch community with an abundance of starwort *Callitriche* spp. and reed sweet- grass,

*Glyceria maxima*. The next 12 km of the River, to Narborough Mill, is fast flowing over stoney substrates and is rich in chalk stream plants including narrow-leaved water- parsnip, *Berula erecta*; mare's-tail, *Hippuris vulgaris*; greater tussock-sedge, *Carex paniculata*; water crowfoot, *Ranunculus pseudofluitans* var. *vertumnus* and opposite-leaved pondweed, *Groenlandia densa*. The wet margins, with a constantly high water table typical of chalk streams, support a wide range of emergent plants. The final 18.5 m is embanked and although less physically

diverse than the upper reaches, it possesses a contrasting flora with several species not found in the upper river. These plants are characteristic of sluggish flows and include 3 pondweeds, *Potamogeton* spp.; 2 water crowfoots, *Ranunculus* spp.; hornwort, *Ceratophyllum demersum*; water-milfoil, *Myriophyllum spicatum*; and river water-dropwort, *Oenanthe aquatica*.

The Nar is well-known locally for its brown trout, *Salmo trutta*. Since 1985, trout numbers have increased steadily; pike, *Esox lucius*, numbers have remained fairly stable whilst roach, *Rutilus rutilus*, and eel, *Anguilla anguilla*, have continued to be the dominant species in the river. A further 11 species have been recorded in the Nar although they contribute only a small amount to the total fish biomass e.g.: chubb, *Leuciscus cephalus*; tench, *Tinca tinca*; gudgeon, *Gobio gobio*; rudd, *Scardinius erythrophthalmus*; bullhead, *Cottus gobio*; rainbow trout, *Salmo gairdneri*; spined loach, *Cobitis taenia*; and roach x bream, *Abramis brama*, hybrids.

The chalk acts as a natural aquifer and thus maintains flows throughout the year, peaking in the spring with frequent flooding of adjacent land. This has led to the development of a range of adjacent semi-natural inundation communities and wetland habitats. Many have their water-tables intricately linked to and therefore dependent on the river whilst others are dependent on seasonal inundation. In the upper reaches of the river extensive areas of traditionally managed unimproved pasture survive. A combination of summer cattle grazing and hay making have encouraged the establishment of a variety of wetland species, including southern marsh orchid, *Dactylorhiza majalis* subsp. *praetermissa*; yellow rattle, *Rhinanthus minor*, and bogbean, *Menyanthes trifoliata*.

Where land adjacent to the river is seasonally flooded and has not been reclaimed as pasture, areas of rough fen and unmanaged scrub remain. Further downstream this scrub has developed into mature wet woodland, dominated by Alder Carr. The result is a river corridor of considerable importance to wildlife. Although the river channel can be regarded as nationally important in its own right, the quality and type of adjacent habitats increases its value for fauna which use both the river and floodplain. Breeding birds include snipe, lapwing, redshank, sedge and grasshopper warblers.

The variations in river profile including slope, width and depth are important factors in the provision of nesting sites for kingfishers and sand martins, and the combination of water meadow, fen, scrub and woodland in the upper Nar provides feeding and resting grounds for a number of other birds including grey wagtail, reed warblers, teal, marsh harriers, willow and marsh tits. Entomological studies are incomplete but 12 different species of dragonfly were recorded in 1991 at several locations along the Nar; this represents an outstanding assemblage for the UK.



## **Appendix 5 – Open Spaces Society Assessment of Local Green Spaces Criteria**

### **1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves**

There is no definition of this in the NPPF and it will be up to individual planning authorities to define. This may vary depending on the size of the community to which the green space relates, the size of the green space or the value placed on it by the community. The land must not be isolated from the community and would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served. Some councils have policies relating to LGS and have introduced a maximum distance between the space and the community. For instance, Leicester has stated it must be within 400 metres, Central Bedfordshire 600 metres.

### **2. Demonstrably special to a local community**

Evidence must be provided of the land's value to and use by the local community to show the land holds a particular local significance. The land must fulfil one or more of the following criteria:

#### ***(a) Beauty***

This relates to the visual attractiveness of the site, and its contribution to landscape, character and or setting of the settlement. LGS would need to contribute to local identity, character of the area and a sense of place, and make an important contribution to the physical form and layout of the settlement. It may link up with other open spaces and allow views through or beyond the settlement which are valued locally.

#### ***(b) Historic significance***

The land should provide a setting for, and allow views of heritage assets or other locally-valued landmarks. It may be necessary to research historic records from the County Archaeologist or National or Local Records Office.

#### ***(c) Recreational value***

It must have local significance for recreation, perhaps through the variety of activities it supports and be of value to the community.

#### ***(d) Tranquillity***

Existing 'tranquillity map' showing areas that provide an oasis of calm and a space for quiet reflection will assist with this judgement.

#### ***(e) Richness of wildlife***

This might include the value of its habitat, and priority areas may have been identified by the council. It may require some objective evidence, such as a designation, like wildlife site or Local Nature Reserve.

### **3. Local in character, not an extensive tract of land.**

The criteria may differ between settlements depending on their physical size and population. The areas would normally be fairly self-contained with clearly defined edges.

Blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate.

There is a no minimum size limit for LGS. Where an identified space is land that already is protected by another designation, e.g. Green Belt (none in the Neighbourhood Area), Conservation Area or Wildlife designation such as SSSI or LNR consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained. This may be in a case where LGS designation could help to identify areas that are of particular importance to the local community.

### **Appendix 6 – Assessment of Proposed Local Green Spaces**

The table below outlines the justification for the inclusion of each Local Green Space Identified. The criteria are based on paragraph 100 of the National Planning Framework Policy Framework 2019 and the detail is provided by the Open Spaces Society Criteria as shown in Appendix 5 above.

	Name of Green Space	Green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	Green space is demonstrably special to the local community because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or wildlife value	Green space is local in character and not an extensive tract of land
a)	Castle Meadow	Area is within easy walking distance of the main built up part of the village and is accessible via the footpath network.	Space has significant historic and visual beauty significance due to its undeveloped and open nature and its function as providing the eastern setting to the Castle .	9.5 hectares
b)	Castle Acre Playing field	Within main built up part of the village and easily accessible. Surrounded by development.	Recreational value by virtue of it being a playing field for open public use.	2.5 hectares

## **Appendix 7 – Letter from Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk**

Your ref: Local Plan review  
Please ask for: Alan Gomm  
Direct dial: (01553) 616237  
E-mail: alan.gomm@west-norfolk.gov.uk

Martin Tate

**Geoff Hall**  
Executive Director

Via email: martintate55@gmail.com

**Environment and Planning**

09 February 2020

Dear Martin,

### **Local Plan review and Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan**

You will be aware that the Borough Council has recently consulted on a draft version of the Local Plan review. This Plan has sought to review the current Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and the Site Allocations and Development Policies Plan (adopted 2016). It looks forward to 2036 and sets out draft policies to guide development in this time period. It also seeks to make further residential site allocations in order to meet the housing need through to 2036.

For communities which are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for their Area, Such as Castle Acre, the Local Plan review does not seek to make further allocations but instead provides a housing number to work towards (5 new homes) and leaves the process of site selection and allocation to the Parish Council, and their steering group, through the Neighbourhood Plan. Clearly you will also have policies on other topics within your Neighbourhood Plan.

Given the above and the comments you had to the Local Plan Review, which indicate progress is being made with your Neighbourhood Plan, we consider it would be appropriate if we could meet in order to discuss the progress of the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan, the process going forward and how we could assist.

We can arrange a meeting at our office or we will happily meet with you in Castle Acre. The Borough Council has a duty to assist communities in preparing their Neighbourhood Plans and we very much aim to achieve this.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,



Alan Gomm, Planning Policy Manager

## **Appendix 8 – Allocated Site Assessments**

The Plan makes provision for a new site allocation for four dwellings excluding windfall to meet housing needs and for a visitor car park between 2026 and 2036:

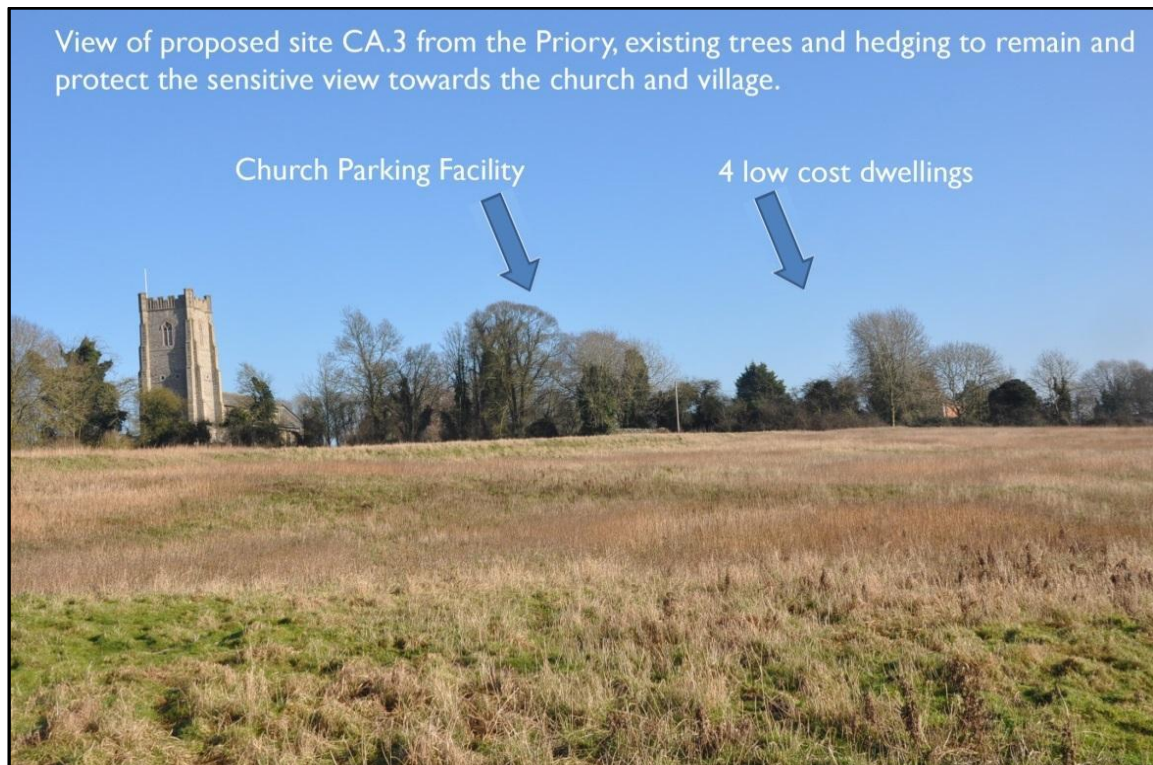
### **CA.3 The Church glebe land off South Acre Road**

Site size 0.54 acres parcel of land, owned by the Castle Acre Parochial Church Council, lies just behind the churchyard wall on the southern boundary of the Grade 1 St James' Church, with access off South Acre Road. It is within the Conservation Area. The land is sheltered by trees and has remained as uncultivated grassland for many years. Building a small number of well-designed, lower cost, two bedroom starter homes there would not



impact on either the church or the existing domestic dwellings on the lower Chimney Street. The land is close enough to draw on existing utility services. More vehicle access along the narrow South Acre Road may be an impediment to this land's development. The allocation also provides for parking that will be used only in conjunction with the church on days of peak demand.





**Suitability assessment:**

(Green = positive, Amber = questionable, red = unsuitable)

Constraint	Score	Comments
Access to Site	Amber	Off the narrow South Acre Road/Chimney Street
Accessibility to Local Services and Facilities	Green	The shop/post office and pub are within five minutes walking distance.
Utilities Capacity	Green	Anglian Water has recently confirmed to the PC that there are no volume constraints on either water supply or sewerage treatment from extra dwellings.
Utilities Infrastructure	Green	Extra supply can be linked from the existing structure
Contamination and Ground Stability	Green	The site is unlikely to be contaminated and has no known ground stability issues.
Flood Risk	Green	The site is at low risk of flooding (within Zone 1)
Market Attractiveness	Green	The site will be located within the £60m2 CIL charging area when the development boundary is extended.
Locally significant Landscape	Green	The site is adjacent to the sensitive Conservation Area. The site is well screened to the south and west with mature hedges and trees.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Green	Currently grassland field. Development would have Geodiversity very limited impact.
Historic Environment	Amber	Sensitive constraints on designs and materials to cause minimal impact on the adjoining Conservation Area.
Open Green Space	Green	This site would not result in the loss of any public open space, it is private land owned by the Diocese of Norwich.
Transport and Roads	Amber	More vehicle access along the narrow South Acre Road may be an impediment to this land's development. Part of the site is allocated for use as overspill car park for use on days where parking demand at the church is high and causes congestion in the Conservation Area.

### **Independent Development Site Assessment. Conclusions provided by AECOM .**

**Site CA.3 Glebe Land:** As the site adjoins a Key Rural Service Centre, in accordance with Policy LP25, the site is potentially suitable for delivery of identified affordable housing need as an exception site where the proposal is supported by evidence of need.

Site CA3 is located in an area of high heritage sensitivity with constrained access, however development of the site for a terrace of 4 homes has potential to mitigate impact on heritage assets through sympathetic design and enhance access on South Acre Road for a new church car park. To support objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan, Site CA3 is suitable for development in exceptional circumstances adjacent to existing settlements where this can be evidenced, and development is of a particularly high quality and would provide significant benefits to the local community (affordable housing and church car park). Further to this the delivery of affordable housing on Site CA3 adjoining the built-up area is supported in principle by emerging Policy LP25, as an exception to normal planning policies, where development proposals are supported by evidence of need.

In conclusion, in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan objectives, the assessment finds the delivery of affordable housing on Site CA3 is ‘...supported in principle by emerging Policy LP25, as an exception to normal planning policies, where the site adjoins a sustainable Key Rural Service Centre and the development proposal is supported by evidence of need.’

### **Assessment of proposed car park site off Priory Road.**

The site is located at the far western extreme of the village and with permission of the owner is currently used for village functions, e.g. Summer Ball and overflow parking.

Currently the site is fallow pasture. There is a bordering hedgerow to the northern and eastern boundaries. In the north eastern corner there is a small pond. Direct access to the site is available from Priory Road. The site can be approached from either Priory Road or Back Lane. The proposed parking area would be covered with grass parking mat to offer surface protection and retain the natural drainage. There would be no building or development on the site.



### **Suitability assessment:**

(Green = positive, Amber = questionable, red = unsuitable)

Constraint	Score	Comments
Access to Site	Amber	Off Priory Road
Accessibility to Local Services and Facilities	N/A	Not applicable.
Utilities Capacity	N/A	Not applicable
Utilities Infrastructure	N/A	Not applicable
Contamination and Ground Stability	Green	The site is unlikely to be contaminated and has no known ground stability issues.
Flood Risk	Green	The site is at low risk of flooding (within Zone 1)
Market Attractiveness	N/A	Not applicable
Locally significant Landscape	Green	The site is adjacent to the sensitive Conservation Area. The site is well screened to the north and northeast with mature hedges and trees.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Green	Currently grassland field, proposal would have very limited impact on Geodiversity.
Historic Environment	Green	The site is adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary but natural or built features shield its view from the nearby Priory ruin.
Open Green Space	Green	This site would not result in the loss of any public open space, it is private land owned by the Holkham Estate.
Transport and Roads	Amber	More vehicle movement along Priory Road and Back Lane at peak visitor times would result but the reduction of 'on street' parking along with the congestion and risks that it presents in the historic centre of the village would be lessened.

## **Appendix 9 – Transport/Traffic Survey**

In addition to the Steering Group survey, traffic volumes into and out of the village are recorded on SAM2 software provided by the Parish Council. It records on average 17,500 vehicle movements per month, in and out of the main village entry roads of Newton Road (and via St James' Green) and Massingham Road. Volunteer observations by the Steering Group survey in February 2019 indicate an approximate split of vehicle flows of 44% on Newton Road, 34% Massingham Road and 23% along Bailey Street. 20% of these vehicles used the St James' Green link road. Data indicates that 50% vehicles are speeding along Newton Road and exceeding the 30mph speed limit. The Parish Council's policy is to maintain vigilance on vehicle speeding within the village boundaries and take appropriate action.

The full results of the survey can be found using the link below:

<https://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/00 NP Traffic Survey Results.pdf>



## **Appendix 10. - Community Action Projects**

### **Historic Environment:**

- Support a Castle Acre Heritage project for a programme of archaeological investigations and activities in and around Castle Acre including wildlife surveys and improvements to habitats, aimed at both residents, their families, special interest groups and visitors.
- Press the Borough Council to review the Conservation Area Appraisal with a view to serving an Article 4 Direction

### **Natural Environment: Protecting the River Nar SSSI:**

- To prohibit vehicles from using part of South Acre Road from 50 metres below the junction with Blind Lane, across South Acre ford and onto Church Farm. This is to preserve the tranquillity of this SSSI beauty spot and to protect the gravel riverbed from engine pollution and damage to fish spawning.

### **Open spaces and Community Facilities:**

- Secure an agreement with Holkham Estate to maintain open access over the lands close to the river Nar, converting existing footpaths to Public Rights of Way (PROW).

### **Housing and Development:**

The Parish Council will work actively with the developers of new housing in the Neighbourhood Area to promote their new build properties for sale or rent to residents or their families living nearby ahead of a full open market launch

### **Traffic and Transport:**

- Restrict vehicular access to South Acre Ford to protect the riverbed and aquatic habitats and species.
- Develop an appropriate contingency plan to identify and deliver an appropriate off road parking facility should the proposed plan for a car park on Priory Road not be granted 'change of use' permission.
- Review speed limits in and around the village through liaison with NCC Highways

**Traffic and Transport cont.**

- Encourage/promote the use of public transport and look at different routes
- Support discrete directional signing on Stocks Green and along Priory Road to new designated visitor parking off Priory Road.
- Lobby for effective road safety measures at the Massingham Road/Back Lane junction by the SPAR shop.
- Maintain the through traffic directions Newton Road/North Street/St James' Green/Massingham Road and to press for both North Street and St James Green to be gritted in the winter.
- Encourage residents to park off-road on their driveways/garages to keep traffic pinch points clear e.g. Bailey Street, Pales Green, North Street.
- Encourage Highways to amend the second directional sign to Castle Acre on the A1065 at Lower Lane (from Swaffham) to encourage restricted traffic to continue to the Newton Road turning.
- Encourage all suppliers/HGVs/farm vehicles not to drive up or down Bailey Street and through Bailey Gate.
- Contact national Sat Nav. suppliers to amend their software to highlight through routes and to avoid unsuitable routes e.g. Bailey Street.
- Add a one way priority chicane before the eastern edge of the 30 mph sign on Newton Road to reduce traffic speeding.
- Extend the Trod along St James' Green to North Street.
- Maintain vigilance on vehicle speeding within the village boundaries and take appropriate action.
- Press for a 20 mph speed limit within the village boundaries.
- To lobby for 'High Risk' signs along the West Acre Road between Manor Farm and West Acre house to warn drivers of blind bends and the danger of further fatal vehicle collisions.
- Not to add any further entry gates to village access routes.

**Tourism and Community Facilities:**

- Manage visitor activity in a more sustainable manner through the promotion of green tourism and walking and cycling access.
- Working with tourism providers such as English Heritage to manage sustainable tourism with particular emphasis on appealing to younger visitors.
- Support arrangements likely to improve the visitor experience by encouraging a year round programme of activities, openings and events (which would benefit locals too).
- Engage local residents in a Heritage Lottery funded programme of archaeological and environmental studies of Castle Acre's rich heritage.

## **Appendix 11 - Glossary and Definitions**

<b>Affordable Housing</b>	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.
<b>Allocation</b>	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.
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variation including plants and animals.
<b>Brownfield Land or Site</b>	Brownfield land is another term for previously developed land.
<b>Community Facilities</b>	Facilities providing for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, leisure and cultural needs of the community
<b>Conservation Area</b>	An area of special architectural or historic interest, designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, whose character and appearance is protected.
<b>Density</b>	Measurement of the number of dwellings per hectare and often in equivalent dwellings per acre.
<b>Development</b>	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.
<b>Duty to Cooperate</b>	Local Councils now have a duty to cooperate 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
<b>Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	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.
<b>General Conformity</b>	All planning policy documents must align with the expectations of the National Planning Policy Framework. This is known as general conformity.
<b>Geodiversity</b>	Geodiversity may be defined as the natural range (diversity) of geological features (rocks, minerals, fossils, structures), geomorphological features (landforms and processes) and soil features that make up the landscape.
<b>Greenfield Site</b>	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.
<b>Habitat</b>	The natural home of an animal or plant, often designated as an area of nature conservation interest.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.
<b>Landscape Character Assessment</b>	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.
<b>Listed Building</b>	A building or other structure of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The grades of listing are grade I, II* or II.

<b>Local Development Framework (LDF)</b>	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.
<b>Local List</b>	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
<b>Local Green Space</b>	An area of green space that is demonstrably special to a local community by way of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife (see NPPF 2019 paragraph 100)
<b>Local Nature Reserve(LNR)</b>	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.
<b>Local Plan</b>	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.
<b>Local Planning Authority(LPA)</b>	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 a District Council, Unitary Authority, Metropolitan Council or National Park Authority, etc.
<b>Material Consideration</b>	A matter that should be taken into account in deciding on a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.
<b>Mixed Use (or Mixed-Use Development)</b>	Provision of a mix of complementary uses, such as residential, community and leisure use, on a site or within a particular area.
<b>Nature Conservation</b>	The protection, management and promotion of wildlife habitat for the benefit of wild species, as well as the communities that use and enjoy them.
<b>National Nature Reserve(NNR)</b>	An area designated by Natural England to protect and conserve nationally important areas of wildlife habitat and geological formations and to promote scientific research.
<b>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</b>	The NPPF forms the national planning policies that Local Planning Authorities and Qualifying Bodies 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 Ministry of Housing . Communities and Local Government
<b>Neighbourhood Plans</b>	A Plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
<b>Non-Designated Heritage Asset</b>	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'.
<b>Open Space</b>	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.
<b>Planning Condition</b>	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
<b>Planning Obligation</b>	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.
<b>Protected Species</b>	Plants and animal species afforded protection under certain Acts of Law and Regulations
<b>Section 106 Agreement</b>	A legal agreement under Section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. See also: Planning Obligations and Agreements.
<b>Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</b>	A SSSI is identified by Natural England as requiring protection from damaging development on account of its flora, fauna, geological and/or physiological features.
<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</b>	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.
<b>Sustainable Development</b>	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 8 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.
<b>Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</b>	To identify and evaluate what the effects of the strategy or plan are likely to be on social, environmental and economic conditions of the strategy or plan area
<b>Tree Preservation Order (TPO)</b>	A mechanism for securing the preservation of single or groups of trees of acknowledged amenity value. A tree subject to an order may not normally be topped, lopped or felled without the consent of the Local Planning Authority