Marshland St James Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2038

Made Version

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Section 1: Introduction

1. Marshland St James is a linear settlement, 11 miles southwest of King's Lynn, extending along Smeeth Road, the central part being south of its junction with Walton Road to the cemetery and north to the village hall.
2. Although set in flat, open countryside the presence of mature trees and hedgerows gives a pleasant, enclosed character to certain parts of the settlement such as the areas around the primary school and cemetery.
3. The older buildings vary in both built form, some being single and other two-storeys high, and in materials of construction which include timber and rendered finishes as well as the more common red brick. Most of the roofs of these older houses have slate coverings. Newer buildings are mainly bungalows, usually red, buff, or brown brick with interlocking like roofs.
4. The village has a few local services, including a primary and nursery school, but no shop, pub, or public transport service, except for a dial-a-bus.

Section 2: Process of developing Marshland St James Neighbourhood Plan

5. The Parish area shown in Figure 1 was designated as a Neighbourhood Plan Area in June 2021. Working on behalf of the community, Marshland St James Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has prepared this draft plan that will shape and influence future development and change across the Parish. Looking at Figure 2, we are at the stage of submitting the document to the Borough Council.

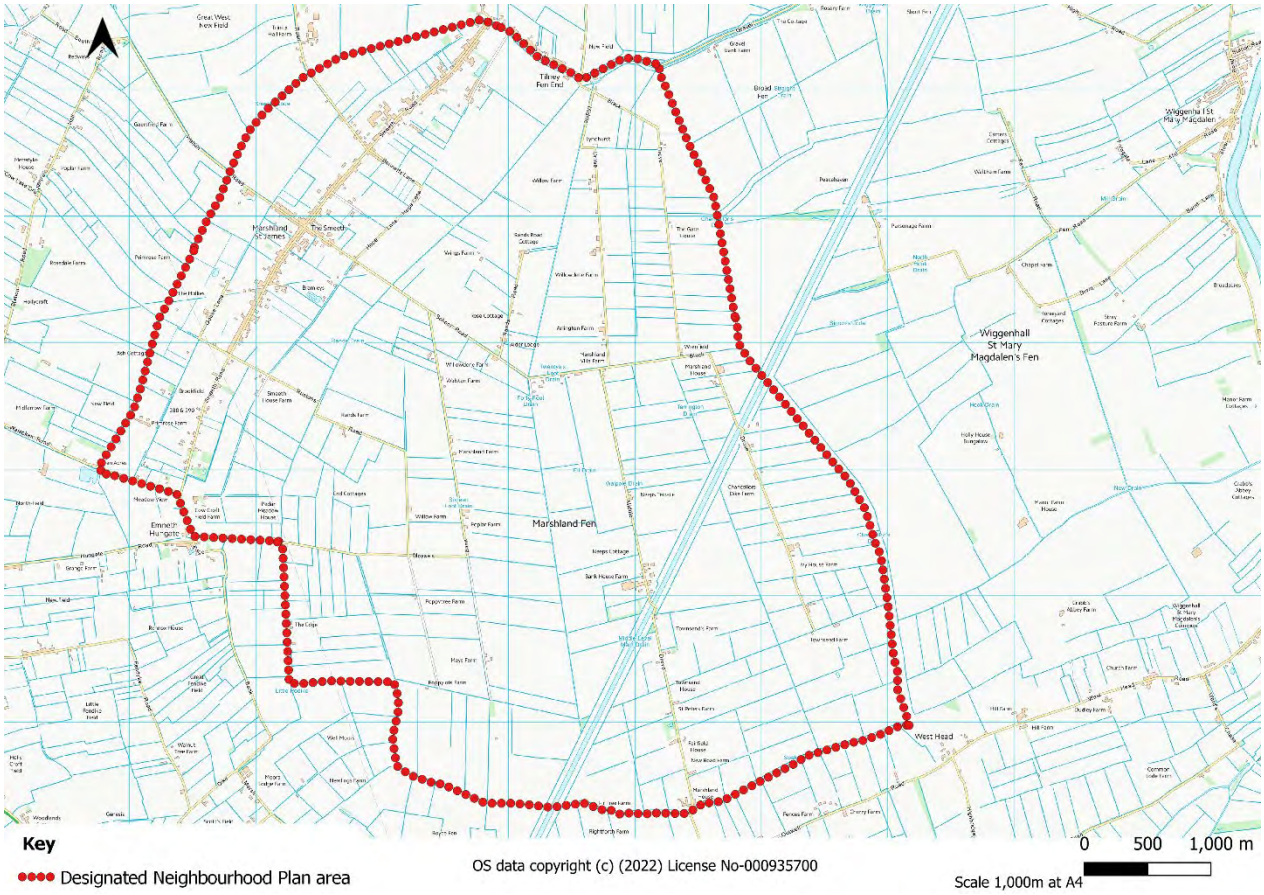

Figure 1: Designated Neighbourhood Area

6. A broad range of evidence has been reviewed to determine issues and develop policies for the plan. This includes population data from the Office of National Statistics, housing data, a review of environmental designations and historical records. Further work to gather new evidence has also been undertaken, including an assessment of local green spaces, key views and heritage assets all supported by consultation activities with the community.

7. Any new development should serve both current and future residents. The policies contained within this plan will enable us to influence the design and type of any new homes being delivered in the Parish, as well as ensuring infrastructure improvements are delivered alongside growth to maximise community benefit.

Figure 2: Neighbourhood Plan Process for Marshland St James

Section 3: Background Policy Context

8. Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act 2011. Neighbourhood Planning legislation came into effect in April 2012 and gives communities the power to agree a Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is an important and powerful tool that gives communities such as parish councils statutory powers to agree a shared vision and shape how their community develops and changes over time.

9. Marshland St James is in the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and so the Neighbourhood Plan sits within the context of the adopted King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan 2021-2040. The Local Plan has replaced the 2011 Core Strategy and the 2016 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies.

10. The Neighbourhood Plan will be a document that sets out planning policies for the Parish and these will be used, alongside the Local Plan, to decide whether planning applications are approved or not. It is a community document, that is written by local people who know and love the area.

11. The Neighbourhood Plan has to support the delivery of the 'strategic policies' contained in the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan, and so it cannot promote less development than set out in local plan for example. The Local Plan sets the overall strategic policies such as the amount of new development and the distribution of that development across the district and the general protection of the environment.

12. Within the adopted Local Plan Marshland St James is a rural village jointly with St John's Fen End and Tilney Fen End. Rural villages are considered to have a limited but locally important role meeting the needs of the immediate village. Sustaining the existing services is a key priority. These settlements may see some limited growth, which will help support surrounding rural areas (e.g., some small-scale infilling or affordable housing).

13. However, Marshland St James does not benefit from public transport linkages to King's Lynn and other settlements except for on a Tuesday and Wednesday morning, when the Dial-a-bus goes to King's Lynn. This also goes to Ely on a Wednesday morning once a month. The service is door to door for people who are unable to access public transport and requires pre-booking. There is also only a limited number of services for the community currently including the primary school.

14. The former King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan, Sites and Allocations Development Management Plan 2016, had allocated two sites for development, G57.1 and G57.2, in Marshland St James for at least 25 dwellings and both benefit from outline and reserved matters for all or part of the sites. G57.1 has now been developed. G57.2 has been carried forward as an allocation in the 2021-2040 Local Plan.

    - G57.1- Land adjacent to Marshland St James Primary School (at least 15 dwellings)
    - G57.2- Land adjacent 145 Smeeth Road (at least 10 dwellings)

15. The Local Plan contains the strategic policies for the area, and the policies in this NDP need to be in general conformity with these. The Plan must also have due regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

16. This NDP contains non-strategic policies to support and add further detail to policies already adopted, specifically for Marshland St James parish, the designated neighbourhood area. The Marshland St James NDP does not have its own general policy on topic areas including housing and design, as this topic is covered in national policy and in the Local Plan. However, some specific detail can be useful for applicants under these factors, which is why the NDP has a policy for example on specific design codes for the area for development to consider. The explanations that go alongside the different policy areas in this plan set out what is already covered by the wider policy framework. Where there are policy details missing that are important for Marshland St James, or where it was felt that a slightly different policy is needed, then new policies have been developed.
17. The policies are intended to meet the vision and objectives set out below. They are aimed at guiding decision makers and applicants to achieve high standards of sustainable development. Development proposals should have regard to all the planning policies in this NDP, and of course those in the Local Plan and national policy.
18. Once a NDP has been 'made', following consultation with residents, examination, and a local referendum, it becomes part of the statutory development plan for the Parish and will be used by the Borough Council in deciding on all planning applications in the Parish. The NDP was approved at referendum on the 3 October 2025.

Figure 3: Local Plan 2021-2040 inset map- Site G57.2 Land adjacent 145 Smeeth Road, Marshland St James

Section 4: Key Issues for the NDP

19. It is important that the NDP adds value to the existing policy framework, providing local detail and focus to support planning decisions within the parish.

20. Key issues for the NDP have been identified through engagement with the local community alongside a process of reviewing existing objective evidence, such as population characteristics, recent planning permissions and housing stock data.

21. Feedback from the community has been sought throughout the plan's development. This includes events at the village hall and two surveys. This engagement and findings from it have helped direct the plan's focus on achieving a sustainable community, with housing and infrastructure that meets local need.

22. The three key issues raised by residents include:

    - The community needs more services locally to support its growth.
    - The mix of new housing should reflect local need.
    - Traffic can have a negative impact on the village given its linear nature.

23. Each of these is explained in more detail below. The plan and its policies have been developed to address these issues.

Recent Housing Growth

24. Residents feel that there has been a considerable amount of development in the village in recent years. Some of this has been planned growth, through the Local Plan allocations, but other new housing has been delivered filling in gaps along Smeeth Road or expanding the village along the side roads like Walton Road. There is concern that many of the new homes built are very large, 4- or 5-bedroom properties that are expensive, serving to benefit the developer rather than the community as a whole. Residents feel that smaller homes would be more affordable for local families.

25. Figure 4 provides an indication of recent residential development which has been permitted over the five-year period 2017-22. Many of these permissions have since been built. Apart from the two allocated sites on School Road and Smeeth Road, the rest of these permissions would be classed as windfall development as unplanned in nature. Much of this development has concentrated on Smeeth Road and has resulted in gaps within the settlement being filled in.

26. Over a slightly longer period of time, 2012-22, seventy-three separate applications were permitted, resulting in a total 140 additional dwellings. The data is presented in the Evidence Base. Most permissions were for new residential development, though there were several for replacement dwellings, annexes or barn conversions. Much of this new development was for larger homes, 4 bed and above, and did not result in affordable housing. In general, it is considered that this recent development has not necessarily met the needs of the local community.

Figure 4: Recent Residential Development 2017-22

27. This level of development is partly as a result of the planning authority previously losing its 5-year housing land supply, which meant they were unable to give full weight to the most important policies in the local plan. Nonetheless, this and the map at Figure 4 demonstrates a desire among landowners to develop their land.

28. As part of developing this neighbourhood plan the option of allocating a site was explored. A call for sites was held in December 2022. The focus of this aimed to reflect comments made by residents, it requested sites were put forward for the development of smaller homes and business units. Overall, 14 sites were put forward by local landowners. These ranged from very small infill sites to larger sites that could accommodate 40 new homes, open green space, and commercial development.

29. An objective assessment was undertaken to determine each site's suitability for future development. This considered physical constraints, location, amenity, highway and environmental benefits, similar as would be considered by the Planning Authority when undertaken their site assessment process. Each of the sites was given a 'red', 'amber' or 'green' rating. The assessment is available as part of the evidence base for this plan.

30. The neighbourhood plan steering group considered each of the sites based on the objective assessment and met with landowners or their agents to further discuss their

potential. Following this, four sites were selected for consultation with the community in December 2023. The site numbers relate to the sites original numbering when submitted as part of the call for sites. Further details on the four sites is below:

- Site 4: Land south of 339 Smeeth Road for six new homes including two pairs of semis which are 2 or 3 bed and two larger homes.
- Site 9: Land adjacent to 70 Smeeth Road for three new homes, including a pair of semis which are 2 or 3 bed.
- Site 11: Land off Smeeth Road/ Chapel Road for approximately 18 new homes including six pairs of 2 or 3 bed semis, six larger homes, four small business units, open green space and children's play area.
- Site 12: Land off Walton Road for approximately 33 new homes including 12 pairs of 2 or 3 bed semis, nine self-build plots, four commercial/business units and open green space.

31. Residents were asked to consider whether they would support development on each of the sites and provide their reasoning for this. It is possible to draw key themes from the comments people made. There were some general concerns, mostly about whether there is sufficient infrastructure to support more development in the village, the impact it may have on roads, especially Smeeth Road, and whether the character of the village would be impacted through delivery of the larger sites. There was also a reflection that development could help to address these concerns. Positive comments were received about development providing housing to meet a local need and commercial units providing an opportunity to gain amenities, such as a shop, which would benefit the community. Meeting local need, by providing more affordable smaller homes was recognised.
32. Overall, despite the comments, residents indicated that they were not generally in favour of any of the sites coming forward as part of the neighbourhood plan, and so a decision was made not to allocate a site as part of this.

Access to local Services

33. The level of service provision in the village is now relatively modest, though as with many other rural communities, there previously was a thriving range of local services, which gradually over time have closed. This includes a shop and pub, both of which have now been converted into residential. There are a few remaining services, including the primary and nursery school. There is also Marshland Hall, a relatively newly built community centre, which incorporates a community café and is the centre for many activities, playing field and Multi Use Games Area. Some of the services closed whilst the village was small in household numbers. It has grown in recent years and many residents feel that infrastructure has not kept pace with this development. Residents would like to see more services available locally.

Transport and Traffic

34. Residents feel that the volume and speed of traffic along Smeeth Road is an issue. Due to the linear nature of the village most homes front onto Smeeth Road. As well as serving villagers, this road is a key route between Emneth, Outwell and Upwell towards King's

Lynn, some people also use it as a back route to access the A47. It experiences a lot of traffic and as Marshland St James and nearby communities have grown, the level of traffic has also increased.

35. Although many of the homes along Smeeth Road are set back from the road, with large front gardens, the traffic and the road in general remain a continuous feature. In addition, some parts of Smeeth Road only have a footway along one side, or the footway is narrow, which can make it more difficult for pedestrians. To address concerns about the speed of traffic, the Parish Council have recently worked with Norfolk County Council to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph throughout the village. The Parish Council is also working with Norfolk County Council to improve the footway provision.

Section 5: Vision and Objectives

36. The vision and objectives for the NDP have been formulated from the opinions expressed in the responses to the parish surveys. It aims to retain the character of the village, whilst recognising the need to adapt to changes around the local economy and the way residents live their lives.

Vision

In 2038 Marshland St James will be a thriving community with high quality housing, improved transport links and more local services, which is valued by its residents and visitors alike. Any future development will look to support this vision with a suitable balance of housing and economic growth, whilst maintaining the essential rural character of the village.

Objectives

A. Ensure that future housing development is a mix and type that meets the needs of the community.
B. Encourage investment in infrastructure, including transport, to support a growing population.
C. Create new employment opportunities.
D. Support high quality design of new development, both in terms of what development looks like and how it performs from an energy perspective.

Section 6: Infrastructure

Objectives

This section supports delivery of the following NDP objectives:

Objective B – Encourage investment in infrastructure to support a growing population.

Objective C – Create new employment opportunities.

Context

37. The availability of local services, facilities and employment opportunities is important to local residents. It is something they feel investment in is essential to support a growing community. NPPF paragraph 88 aims to support a prosperous rural economy. It sets out the importance of retaining and further developing accessible local services and community facilities, such as shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. In the Local Plan, community facilities are protected, and new cultural facilities are actively encouraged.

38. The village currently has a Primary and Nursery School, a mobile library service, Marshland Hall (the recently developed village hall), which has a community café and part-time Post Office, a large playing field with sports pitches and children's play area, and St James Methodist Church. These services play a role in building social capital within the community, by facilitating a range of social activities, clubs and societies. The community has lost a range of services, including most recently a shop and pub, both of which have been converted into residences.

39. New development can trigger the need for infrastructure improvements or result in the market forces necessary to encourage investment in new facilities. The NPPF states that local plans should make sufficient provision for infrastructure requirements including transport, waste management, water management and energy supply. This is in addition to community facilities such as libraries and schools. Development needs to be delivered with adequate infrastructure in place and ensuring any negative impacts can be mitigated. Developers are often required to contribute to infrastructure, particularly those delivering larger sites for housing. Statutory agencies, including Anglian Water, are also responsible for meeting their obligations and responding to growth by ensuring sufficient capacity is available.

40. There are instances where the cumulative impact of development will require more strategic infrastructure, such as a new link road or bypass, or a new medical centre. Indeed, a lot of social and physical infrastructure is planned on a strategic level as part of the local plan, as the need is determined on a much larger scale than for the parish or NDP area. Strategic agencies, such as Norfolk County Council, look at the overall level and distribution of growth across the borough (and even wider) to identify what it means for their services.

41. Investment in facilities such as shops or leisure activities is determined more by market forces, though they can be encouraged through planning policy or development. For example, provision of space specifically for business or service use will encourage

providers to locate in particular communities. Feedback from residents as part of developing the NDP is that they would like to see more facilities available locally. A shop would be welcome to many, as would businesses that provide local employment opportunities.

Policy MSJ1: New Services, Facilities and Employment Opportunities

42. Whilst the NDP is unable to influence strategic service infrastructure, such as healthcare, it can encourage new local facilities and businesses to open in the village. As well as meeting local need, these can also provide jobs, giving without a car or other forms of personal transport the opportunity to work locally. Residents perceive this to be particularly important for younger people.

43. Policy MSJ1 welcomes further provision of community services, facilities, and employment opportunities within the parish, ideally with these well located to the main settlement. This includes new commercial development such as business units, that would be operated under Use Class E. This includes offices, artist's studios, cafes, restaurants, shops and light industrial. Some redundant farm buildings have already been repurposed to promote economic activity, and further growth in this area would be welcome.

44. This policy also supports the conversion of rural farm buildings, including their enlargement, where this is for commercial, or community use identified as Use Class E. Generally, extensions to a rural building as part of its conversion, for example as a Class R which is for flexible commercial use, are unacceptable and proposals to convert buildings should be contained within the confines of the existing building shell. To support rural enterprise and encourage jobs locally the NDP supports enlargement. This relates to business growth, rather than residential, and would be acceptable where the extension is smaller than the existing building, has a design that is in keeping and does not have a negative impact on the character of the surrounding area.

MSJ1: New Services, Facilities and Employment Opportunities
A. Development proposals for new community services, facilities and employment opportunities in Marshland St. James including new commercial development (Use Class E) will be supported. B. Wherever practicable, development proposals should be well-connected to the main settlement area and facilitate sustainable travel opportunities. Development proposals outside the main settlement should be sensitively designed to reduce their impacts on the surrounding landscape. C. Proposals for the enlargement of redundant farm buildings for commercial use will be supported where they do not detract from the character and appearance of their immediate surroundings and are subordinate in scale to the parent building and respect its design and detailing. D. Wherever practicable, development proposals should incorporate sustainable construction practices, including the use of local materials, renewable energy sources, and low-carbon technologies.

Policy MSJ2: Protection of Community Facilities

45. Residents were asked about the importance of existing local facilities as part of consultation activities. There is strong support for protecting key facilities, including the primary/nursery school, Marshland Hall, the playing field, the Methodist Chapel and the dial-a-bus service.

46. Marshland Hall opened in 2018 and is fully accessible. It provides a community hub with main hall and meeting room for hire. There is a tea room that operates from the hall Tuesday to Saturday. This is able to seat up to 50 people inside and more outside on the patio, and also provides a takeaway service. The hall provides sports changing rooms, with separate rooms for home and visitor teams and match officials. All the changing rooms were built to FA standard and include showers and toilet facilities.

47. The Playing Field is a well-used facility within the village with families accessing it from other local communities too. It is particularly well used by football teams and children's football coaching sessions, along with other organisations. Alongside the good quality football pitches there is a floodlit Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The community are keen to support a diversity of uses and would like to see the area extended. There is a well-used children's playground and there are aspirations to upgrade this to a fully inclusive facility.

Figure 5: A selection of community facilities in Marshland St James[1]

[1] Picture Source: Dial A Bus | West Norfolk Community Transport (wnct.co.uk), Google Maps (2022), Home | Marshland St James Primary and Nursery School (marshlandprimary.norfolk.sch.uk)

48. Marshland St James Primary and Nursery School is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust. It is a small school with just over 100 pupils in mixed age classes. Most pupils at the school live in the village as there are also primary schools in the neighbouring communities of Emneth and Terrington St John. The school's capacity is a maximum of 120 children, which means there is some provision for increased growth within the community.

49. The Methodist Church on Smeeth Road has a weekly Sunday service as well as Prayer Fellowship on a Tuesday. It also offers a monthly lunch club to the village, junior church, coffee and chat sessions and meeting space. The church is fully wheelchair accessible, and the small meeting room and large dual-purpose worship space is available to hire for community use.

50. The Dial-a-bus is provided by West Norfolk Community Transport and provides journeys to King's Lynn on a Tuesday and Wednesday morning, and to Ely once a month on a Wednesday morning. The service is door to door for people who are unable to access public transport due to location, age, or mobility issues. It requires pre-booking and is fully accessible.

51. Community facilities are currently protected under local plan policies. Policy MJS2 gives additional local detail to these by identifying the facilities in Marshland St James that these policies should apply to. Note that it is not possible to protect the dial-a-bus in the same way, as it is not an asset within the community as such and planning permission would not be required to change its use.

MSJ2: Protection of Community Facilities
The Plan identifies the following community facilities and services which should be given protection for the application of Policy LP38 – Community and Culture and Policy LP39 – Community Facilities of Local Plan 2021-2040: • Marshland Hall • Marshland St James Playing Field • Marshland St James Primary and Nursery School • The Methodist Church

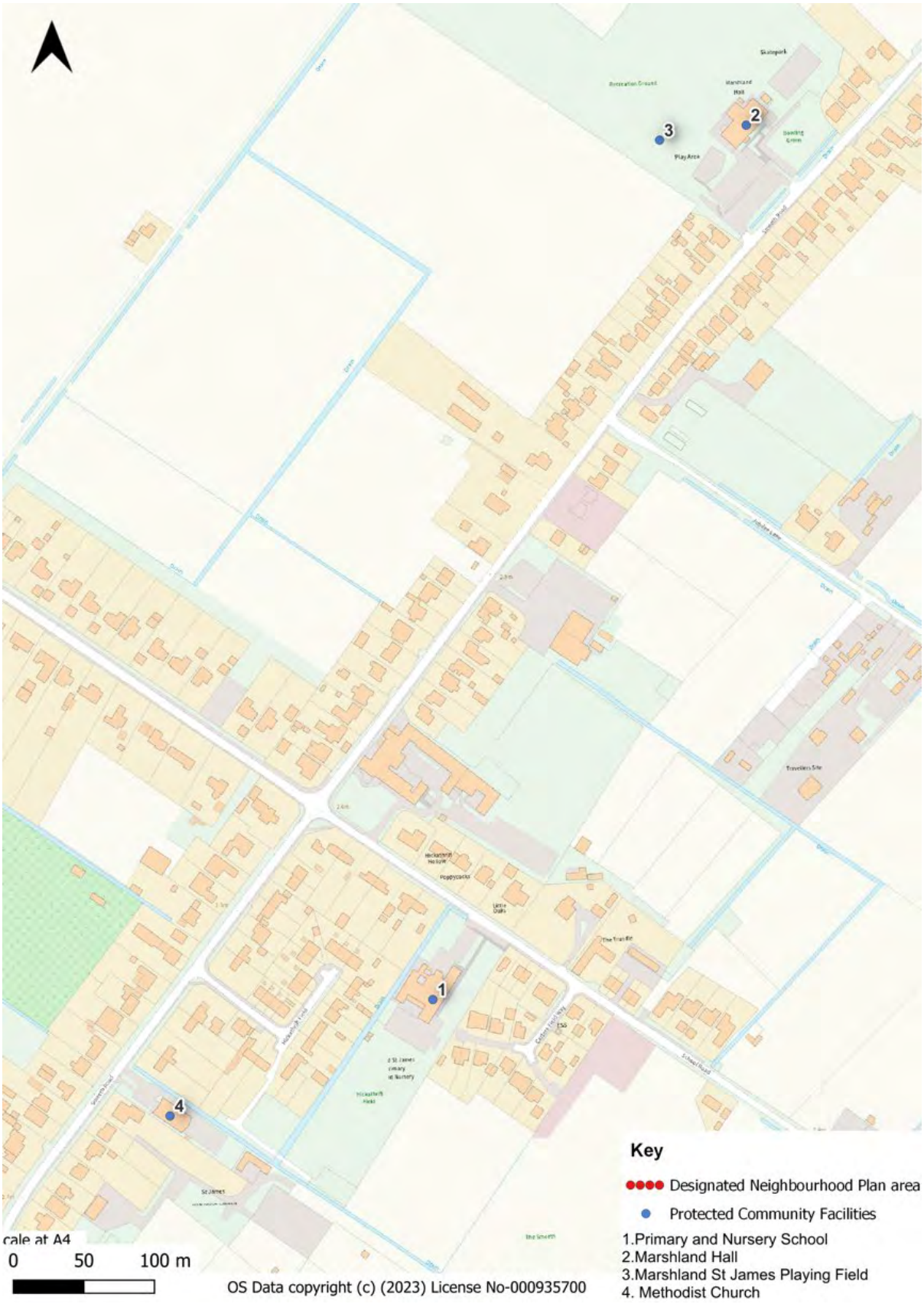

Figure 6: Existing Community facilities to be protected

Section 7: Housing Mix

Objectives

This section supports delivery of the following NDP objectives:

Objective A – Ensure that future housing development is a mix and type that meets the needs of the community**.**

Context

52. The NPPF requires plans to have policies that meet the housing needs of different demographic groups, such as older people, disabled people, self-builders, families etc.[2].There is an opportunity to include a policy within this plan that provides direction for future housing developments in Marshland St James and the mix of housing that is required.

53. A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) was undertaken by AECOM in March 2022 as part of developing this plan. The HNA provides up to date and detailed evidence relating to housing need within the parish. A few pertinent points from this include:

- Most of the population in both 2011 and 2020 were aged 45-64, which is a higher % than the district and England. Whilst some age categories decreased in population from 2011, the age category 65-84 increased by nearly 5%. This suggests that over the last decade the population has become more biased towards the older population, with younger people potentially leaving the area as well as the natural aging of the population.
- Population growth to the end of the plan period can be expected to be driven by the oldest households, with households with a household reference person aged 65 and over expected to increase by 44% between 2011 and 2036.
- The existing housing profile in Marshland St James is shown in Figure 7**,** the dominant dwelling type is detached housing and bungalows followed by semi-detached (2021 data). The proportion of bungalows at 35.6% is higher than the district (27.4%) and England (9.4%).
- As the number of detached dwellings suggests the parish is dominated by larger and more expensive properties.
- 2-and 3-bedroom dwellings make up 75% of the total housing stock overall. Though recently there has been an increase in the number of larger 5-bed+ dwellings, the proportion of these has actually decreased due to a bigger increase in 2 and 3 bed properties over the same period.
- Family households make up around three quarters of the current composition, including families with people aged 65+ (10.6%), families with dependent children (23.6%), families with non-dependent children (10.4%) and families with no children (27.8%). A fifth of households overall are single person households.

[2] National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)

- Many households are currently considered to be 'under occupied' whereby there are extra bedrooms – 84.2%. This is predominantly families with people aged 65+, suggesting that people do not downsize for whatever reason. The HNA surmises that this could be because the housing mix is not well related to the population demographics.

Dwelling type	2011 (Census)	2021 (VOA)
Bungalow	-	35.60%
Flat	1.50%	1.70%
Terrace	2.30%	1.70%
Semi-detached	21.10%	18.60%
Detached	68.10%	35.60%
Unknown/other	-	6.80%

Figure 7: Accommodation type in Marshland St James in 2011 and 2021 (ONS, 2011, VOA, 2021, AECOM Calculations, 2022[3])

54. Figure 8 (taken from the HNA) identifies a recommended housing mix for new development up to 2036 that is required to meet the expected local housing need. It suggests that need is greatest for 1 to 3 bedrooms homes. There is no need for further 4 or 5+bedroom dwellings. This also reflects feedback from residents, with responses to the survey in March 2022 indicating there is greatest need for additional 2- and 3-bedroom homes.

Number of bedrooms	Starting mix (2011)	Indicative mix (2036)	Balance of new housing to reach indicative mix
1 bedroom	2.4%	7.1%	42.2%
2 bedrooms	24.1%	28.5%	52.3%
3 bedrooms	46.2%	43.6%	5.5%
4 bedrooms	19.1%	16.1%	0%
5 or more bedrooms	8.2%	4.6%	0%

Figure 8: Suggested dwelling size mix to 2036 in Marshland St James (AECOM Calculations, 2022)

[3] Note: As explained in the tenure and affordability chapter and Appendix A.1 of the Housing Need Assessment (2022) some data sources are only available at the LSOA level for Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data meaning that other Parishes including Walton Highway, West Walton, Walpole Highway, Walpole St Andrew, Walpole St Peter, Walpole Marsh, Walpole Cross Keys, and parts of Walsoken fall into the data. This is why raw figures have been opposed, and percentages are used instead.

Policy MSJ3: Housing Mix

55. Considering the evidence presented in the HNA and feedback from residents together would suggest a housing mix policy that aims to provide for more homes that are three bedrooms or less. Although the HNA recommends smaller homes should comprise 100% of new builds, it is not good practice to be so prescriptive. It is recognised that with building conversions and self-build this may not be possible.

56. Policy MSJ1 provides some flexibility, setting a requirement that 75% of new homes, with the exception of individual self-build or custom-build plots, on a development are smaller 1 to 3 bed homes, unless additional evidence can be provided setting out a different need or the requirement is unviable.

57. The reason individual self-build or custom-build plots have been excluded is due to the fact that in line with their legal definition these houses are built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. This individual may have personal needs requiring their home to be larger than three bedrooms e.g. a larger family. The Local Plan sets out a policy on custom and self-build housing including the delivery of these to be secured with a planning condition or S106 agreement. Those who wish to express interest for a custom or self-build plot should do so the Borough Council Self Build Register[4]. This will allow the Borough Council to understand the level of demand in the area.

MJS3: Housing Mix
A. Housing proposals should respond positively to local housing need using the most recent evidence available. Development proposals should be based on the evidence in the Marshland St James Housing Need Assessment (2022) unless more up-to-date, robust evidence identifies a different local housing need. B. Proposals for open market residential development should incorporate a housing mix whereby at least 75% of the homes delivered have three-bedrooms or fewer, unless evidence is provided showing either that there is no longer such a local need, or that such a housing mix would make the scheme unviable.

[4] Custom and self-build housing | Custom and self-build housing | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

Section 8: Affordable Housing

Objectives

This section supports delivery of the following NDP objectives:

Objective A – Ensure that future housing development is a mix and type that meets the needs of the community.

Objective D – Support high quality design of new development, both in terms of what development looks like and how it performs from an energy perspective.

Context

58. Affordability is a worsening challenge in Marshland St James that must be addressed through housing policy. It is likely that the low proportion of younger people and families with children in Marshland St James is an indication that they find it difficult to get on the housing ladder. The HNA demonstrates that on average house prices grew by 87.3% between 2011 (£173.500) and 2020 (£325,000). Detached dwellings have increased in growth price by 87.3%. whilst there was a lack of transactions or houses for sale for other housing types.

59. The HNA suggests that local households on average incomes are unable to access entry level homes unless they have a very large deposit. It is considered that there is a relatively large group of households in Marshland St James who may be able to afford to rent privately but cannot afford home ownership. They are typically earning between around £27,760 and £68,143 per year. This estimated earning for some households will be dependent on the available access to jobs and skills in the district or beyond and one's personal lifestyle such as being dependent on a private vehicle since services in the parish would not offer too many residents, if any, such income.

60. The median house price would require an annual income 106.9% higher than the current average, showing the real disadvantage to many. Across the borough the gross individual lower quartile annual earnings were £13,839 in 2020. To estimate the income of households with two lower quartile earners, this figure is doubled to £27,678, which is still below the lowest expected average earning to afford private rent. This suggests people may on the rare occasion afford private rent on low incomes, but this could mean they are dedicating a large proportion of their income to rental costs, which may have negative consequences for their quality of life and is not considered sustainable.

61. Affordable Housing (subsidised tenure products) can be a way to address this. The HNA identifies a need for affordable homes, especially to rent. Residents in the consultation survey (2022) made comments on the need for housing for locals particularly for affordable homes for all ages including first time buyers to keep young people in the parish.

62. The NPPF sets out a policy approach to affordable housing, including the need to ensure at least 10% of new houses are affordable homes to buy when major development comes forward. The Local Plan sets out the affordable housing threshold for

development in rural areas. Policy on Rural Exception Sites for affordable housing is covered in the NPPF and the adopted Local Plan.

63. It is important to note that Affordable Housing as defined in the NPPF is housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for local key workers). Examples of these will be housing that is discounted at least 20% below market value[5]. There is currently a Government strategy for 'First Homes', which are only available for people buying their first home, with a minimum discount of 30% below full market value. The level of discount can be set higher, to 40 or 50% where suitably evidenced. After the discount is applied the initial sale price must not exceed £250,000. First Homes will be subject to legal restrictions ensuring discount is retained for future occupants and to stop the allowance of renting or sub-letting. There is a national requirement that First Homes make up 25% of Affordable Housing provision on development sites.

64. A local eligibility criteria can be applied to First Homes and will apply for a maximum of three months from when a home is first marketed. If a suitable buyer has not reserved a home after 3 months, the eligibility criteria will revert to the national criteria so as to widen the consumer base. The local eligibility criteria for Marshland St James are set out in Policy MSJ4 and aims to establish a local connection as a preference. Examples of evidence which will be acceptable to prove connectivity can include being registered in the parish on the electoral roll, proof of employment in the area from a payslip, utility bills, previous records of living in the parish.

Policy MSJ4 Affordable Housing

65. The HNA estimates that Marshland St James requires roughly 23.8 units of affordable housing over the plan period. Using overall housing tenures, it is suggested that roughly 70% of this should be for social/affordable rented housing and roughly 30% for affordable home ownership such as First Homes and Shared Ownership. This would equate to the need for 16.2 units of affordable rental housing and 7.6 units of affordable home ownership over the plan period. Both forms of Affordable Housing appear to be valuable in meeting the needs of people on various incomes. Whilst it is unlikely that the number of dwellings delivered in the plan period will meet the affordable housing need, an appropriate benchmark to take in the policy for tenure mix is ensuring affordable rented housing is a priority with a ratio of 70:30 (70% rented and 30% ownership going forward). Development proposals which incorporate a different mix of affordable housing should provide appropriate evidence to justify such an approach.

MSJ4: Affordable Housing
In line with the indicative tenure split set out in the Marshland St James HNA (2022), Affordable Housing delivered within the parish should comprise: • 70% Affordable Rented Housing • 30% Affordable Home Ownership

[5] National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)

MSJ4: Affordable Housing
In addition to national eligibility criteria, the development of First Homes should comply with at least one of the following criteria: A. Current residents of the parish who are renting or living with other family members; B. Former residents of the parish who moved away within the last three years and are renting or living with other family members; C. People who are renting or living with other family members outside of the parish but who have caring responsibilities in the parish; or D. People who are working in local employment within the parish.

Section 9: Design

Objectives

This section supports delivery of the following NDP objectives:

Objective D – Support high quality design of new development, both in terms of what development looks like and how it performs from an energy perspective.

Context

66. Design is another key area where the Neighbourhood Plan can have significant influence. Design is considered to be a key aspect of achieving sustainable development and plays a critical role in shaping better places in which people can live and work within. Whilst design covers not just appearance but how a place functions, the appearance is seen as critical with national policy. As stated in the NPPF "The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve."

67. As set out in the National Design Guide (2021)[6] a well-designed place comes through making the right choices at all levels including layout, form and scale of buildings, appearance, landscape, and materials. Other characteristics include the climate, character, and community. The ten characteristics set out in the National Design Guide reflect the importance of a well-designed place as set out in Figure 9.

Figure 9: The ten characteristics of a well-designed place (National Design Guide, 2021)

68. NPPF Chapter 12 requires plans to have design policies that have community support and that pick up the defining characteristics of the area. The Government has been raising the importance of high-quality design with the development of national design guides, codes, and policies[7], and encourages neighbourhood plans to have their own

[6] National_design_guide.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

[7] National Planning Policy Framework (2021), National Design Guide (2021), National Model Design Code (2021), Building for a Healthy Life (2020), Manual for Streets (2007)

design policies and codes to identify the special qualities of their areas which should be reflected in development. Although national policy supports development that is sympathetic to the local and historic character of an area, it also encourages innovative design and high levels of sustainability to support movement towards a carbon zero future.

69. Design of new homes is important to residents, with 61% of those who responded to the neighbourhood plan survey in 2022 supporting development of a design guide. Ensuring new development benefits from low carbon technologies and sustainable construction practices is also important, with 80% of respondents indicating this. Sustainable carbon practices include making use of local materials and trades people. Almost all recent new build homes have incorporated some form of low carbon energy generation, such as ground source heat pumps.

70. The Local Plan requires all new development to be of high-quality design. It requires proposals to demonstrate things such as the ability to protect and enhance the historic environment, respond to the context and character of the environment ensuring the scale, density, layout, and access will enhance the quality of the environment and enhance community wellbeing etc. It also gives details of promoting opportunities to achieve high standards of sustainable design and efficiency, flood risk and climate change and renewable energy.

71. The Local Plan also sets out the expected sustainability criteria to be met by new development, such as construction techniques to improve energy efficiency and good access by walking and cycling.

72. Whilst there is already a considerable amount of general detail in existing policy on design principles which can be used for proposals coming forward in Marshland St James, the Neighbourhood Plan aims to set more specific local design codes. In 2022 AECOM, with input from the local community, produced Design Guidance and Codes for Marshland St James. This provides a baseline assessment of existing local character, including design materials, boundary treatments, housing types and layout. There is a lot of detail in the assessment, with this based on there being three character areas; CA1- Smeeth Road, CA2- Countryside and CA3- Edge of settlement, see Figure 10. The key characteristics of these areas is summarised below.

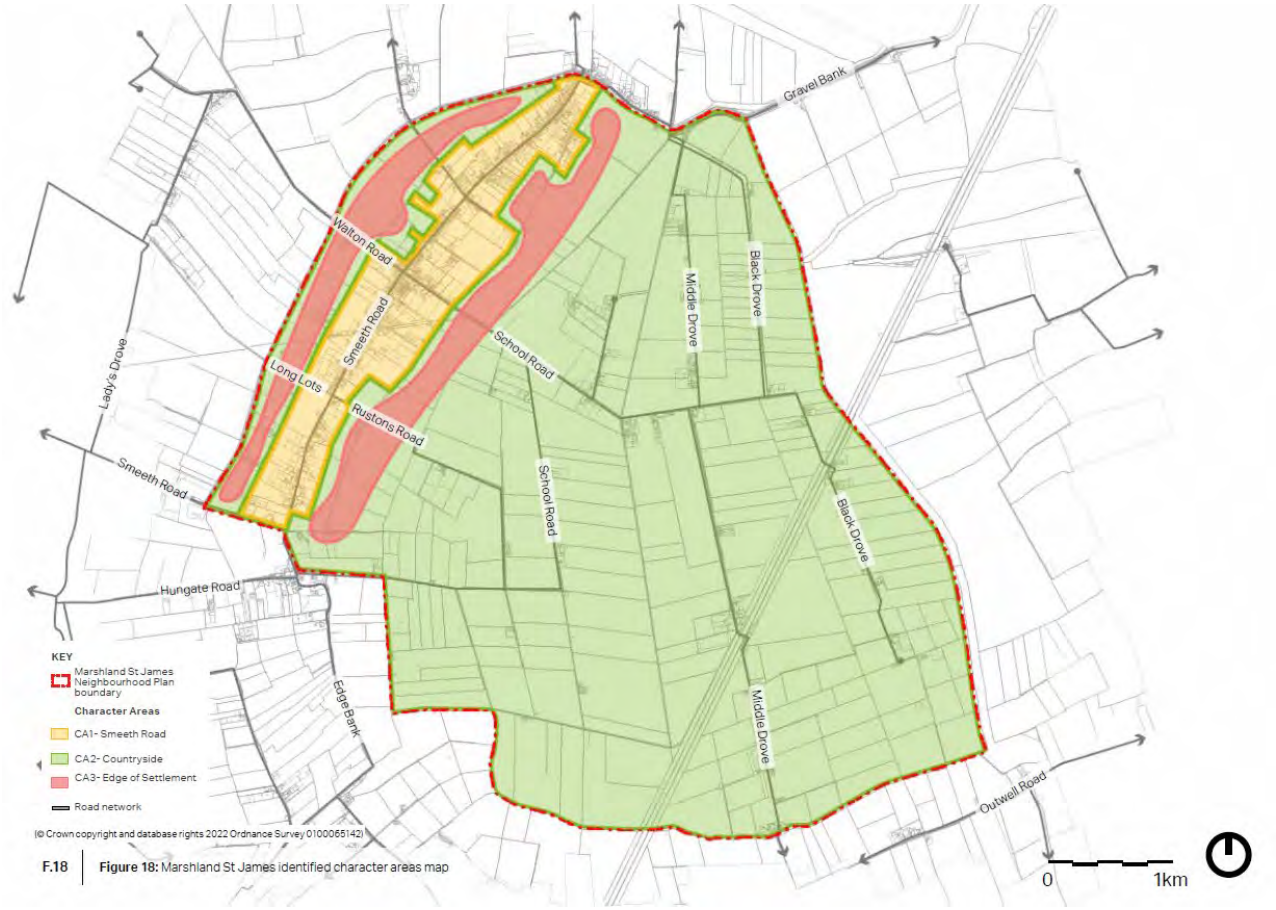

Figure 10: Marshland St James Character Areas (AECOM, 2022)

CA1- Smeeth Road:

73. Smeeth Road is the main road that runs through the parish and the main settlement is distributed along this, following a linear pattern of mostly residential development. The majority of properties are bungalows with some detached and semi-detached houses. The building height does not exceed two storey and most properties are set back from the street on larger plots with ample front and back gardens. The roof lines are pitched or hipped using slate or pantile materials along with chimney stacks. Parking is either to the front or side of properties. The public realm environment is dominated by the road in parts, with footways often narrow or just on one side of the road.

74. This character area is bounded by open fields and hedgerows, low walls, trees and wooden fences form the boundary treatment. The presence of orchards, meadows, green verges and spacious front gardens enhances the rural character of the village.

Figure 11: Photos of some of the newer development in CA1

CA2- Countryside:

75. This character area forms the larger portion of the Neighbourhood Plan area and includes an intensively farmed low-lying arable landscape comprising mainly of geometric fields cut up by straight drainage channels and dykes. Despite the various human influences within the area, the area is very rural and provides a sense of openness and tranquillity. There is no defined pattern of development in CA2. Nevertheless, there are scattered farmhouses which tend to be on larger plots with spacious front and back gardens. The building heights do not exceed 2 storey and the majority of house roof styles are pitched or hipped. Hedgerows and mature trees are the main form of boundary treatments for CA2.

Figure 12: Example pictures of CA2 in the Design Guide (AECOM, 2022)

CA3- Edge of settlement:

76. This character area is located around the main settlement (CA1). Whilst it is not currently developed to a large extent, this is most likely the area that will be developed in future years. It is currently open fields, orchards, farmlands, and meadows which act as a natural edge and transition into the open countryside. Regarding boundary treatments features used in CA3 are usually hedgerows, low walls, and wooden fences. The plot arrangement shows to be some scattered buildings including farmhouses and industrial estates. These plots are very large with spacious front and back gardens and the height of the buildings is normally 1 storey.
77. There are two linear stretches along the Smeeth Road Character Area (CA1) which future development in CA3 should follow regarding linear development patterns.
78. Any future development is also encouraged to give a feeling of gradual transition regarding the heights of the roofline when moving from CA1 to CA3.

Figure 13: Example pictures of CA3 in the Design Guide (AECOM, 2022)

Policy MSJ5: Design

79. Following an assessment of the three character areas design codes were developed. These are envisaged to provide a valuable tool for securing context-driven, high-quality development in Marshland St James, especially on potential sites that might come forward in the future. The codes will provide more certainty to both developers and the community.

MSJ5: Design
Development proposals should incorporate high-quality design and be consistent with the Marshland St. James Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance and Codes (2022) in general, and specifically as they apply to the following distinct character areas and their defined maps: • CA1: Smeeth Road • CA2: Countryside • CA3: Edge of settlement As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should respond positively to the Design Codes and the checklist set out in Appendix B. The following design considerations are especially important to the area:

MSJ5: Design
A. All new development within CA1 and CA3 should preserve the linear development pattern of the current settlement, backland or estate development will not normally be acceptable. B. Density of new residential development should take into consideration the low and medium density ranges; a higher density will not generally be acceptable. C. New development should have regard to the heights of other buildings in the area and the general low profile of buildings. D. Materials and colours should be used which reflects the local vernacular and adjacent built environment. E. Spacious front and back gardens should be provided to maintain the rural character of the area. F. Design should protect and enhance key landscape features, such as meadows, orchards, green space and ponds, with development integrating trees, hedgerow and vegetation. G. New or existing development proposing boundary treatments should incorporate features such as hedgerows, trees, wooden fences, and low walls built from local materials. H. New development should minimise impact on dark skies and reduce light pollution. I. Development that incorporates zero carbon design or construction principles will be supported. J. New development should demonstrate that the proposal does not result in a detrimental impact on the environment and water infrastructure, including sewers and surface water and other flooding.

Policy MSJ6: Residential Parking

80. Due to the layout of existing streets and buildings, off-street parking areas are a necessity for households in Marshland St James. However, they should not be unsightly or dominate views towards properties. Parking provision should be well designed to retain the attractiveness of the village and ensure a 'sense of place' within residential streets. As set out in two of the three-character areas, existing characteristics of parking is on-plot front and side parking (CA1) and on-plot front parking and on-plot garages (CA2) and the street codes for future developments should follow these layouts depending on which area they fall within as explained in the Design Guidance and Codes (SP05).

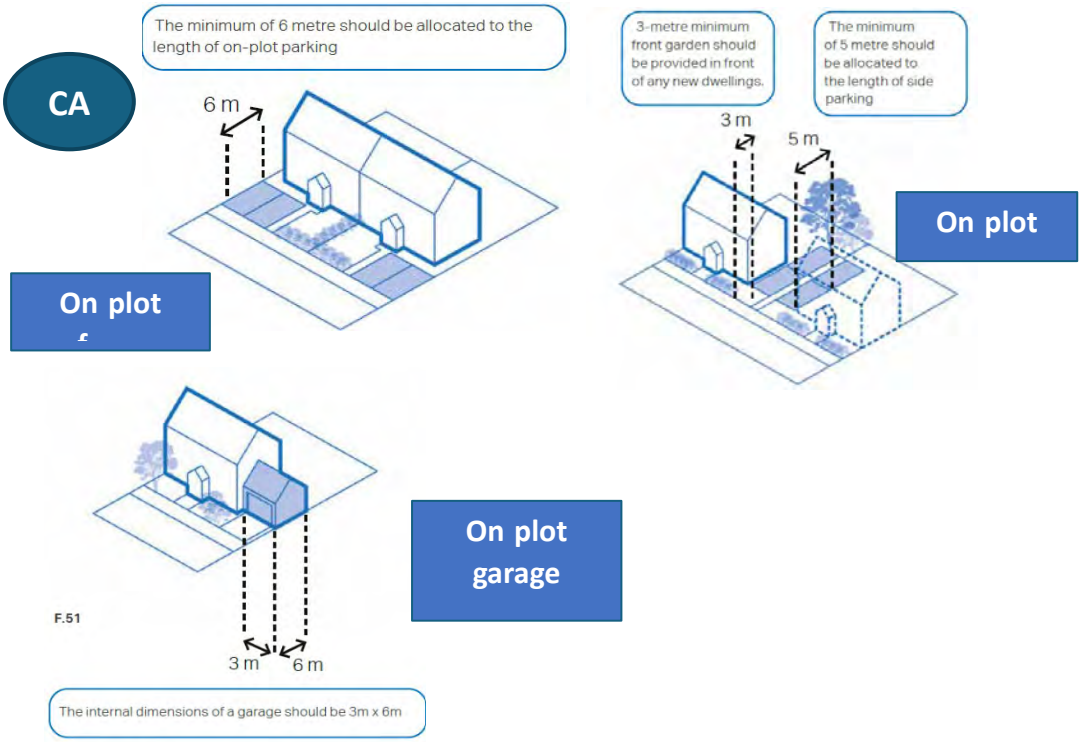

Figure 14: Adapted Parking design examples for CA1 (on-plot front and side parking) and CA2 on-plot garages as shown in the Design Guidance and Codes Document (AECOM, 2022)

81. Parking is an important consideration in the Design Guidance and Codes (2022). The aim should be to reduce the visual impact of parked cars, particularly on streets. A few comments were made by residents about parking, mostly with respect to this being an important factor should the Neighbourhood Plan allocate a site for development.

Figure 15: Example of off-street parking in Marshland St James

82. The Local Plan sets out minimum standards for parking. This includes 1 off street space for 1-bedroom dwellings, 2 spaces for 2- and 3-bedroom dwellings and 3 spaces for larger 4+ bedroom properties. The local plan policies also indicate that garages under 7m x 3m (internal dimensions) will not be counted as a parking space. The Local Plan sets a requirement for a minimum of one secure and covered cycle space per dwelling and

supports the provision of a minimum of one secure electric vehicle charging point wherever possible on site.

83. Policy MSJ6 adds further local detail to the existing local plan requirements, reflecting the Marshland St James and the Design Guidance and Codes Document (2022).

MSJ6: Residential Parking Requirements
A. Development proposals should incorporate on-plot front or side parking to meet the most up-to-date parking standards. B. Parking areas and driveways should be constructed using sustainable materials, such as permeable paving, to reduce the impact of impermeable surfaces on drainage systems and improve the environmental quality of the development. C. Wherever practicable, parking areas should be landscaped either specifically or within the overall design of the wider development, and ensure that green spaces and soft landscaping elements mitigate the impact of parking areas within the streetscape.

Section 10: Transport and Traffic

Objectives

This section supports delivery of the following NDP objectives:

Objective B – Encourage investment in infrastructure to support a growing population.

Context

84. Marshland St James is dominated by Smeeth Road, a long straight B Road which forms a spine of development through the area. The settlement area extends from the corner at St John's Fen for around 3.5km south-west along Smeeth Road. This road is also a key rural route within the area, so in addition to local traffic, many people travel through from neighbouring villages, such as Emneth, to access the A47. The level of traffic on the road is therefore significant at times.

85. Speeding and traffic levels along Smeeth Road is a key concern for residents. The linear nature of the settlement and design, with development mostly set back some distance from the road, means that the road dominates the streetscene. Smeeth Road was until very recently 40mph. In response to feedback from residents the Parish Council worked with Norfolk County Council to reduce the limit to 30mph in November 2023. Indications are that vehicle speeds have reduced as a result of this, but feeling is that average speeds probably remain above 30mph.

86. Currently there is not a continuous footway running through the village along Smeeth Road, and in places this is poorly maintained or of a low standard. The Parish Council are working with Norfolk County Council to upgrade the footway from an unmade trod to an asphalt finish that is up to highway standards. This is currently at the design phase, with plans being drawn up.

87. The National Cycle Route 1 (NCR1[8]) runs through the parish, along Trinity Road and some parts of Smeeth Road. This links Lowestoft to King's Lynn via Wells-next-the-Sea and in theory provides Marshland St James residents with cycle access to larger towns including King's Lynn. Much of the route is however on road, sections of which are national speed limit of 60mph, so it is used predominantly for leisure or by more confident cyclists.

88. There are very few public footpaths running through the parish, with these along the drainage ditch some distance from the main built-up area. Most residents are unaware of this footpath and would indicate that there are no public footpaths in the parish. There are also no permissive paths. Feedback from engagement with residents is that they would like to see more footpaths into the countryside.

89. The dial-a-bus is mentioned in Section 6 as an important community facility. No other public transport currently operates in the village. Due to this general lack of sustainable travel options most residents rely on a private vehicle. According to the 2021 census, around 96.5% of households in Marshland St James own one or more car or van.

[8] National Cycle Route 1 Source: Sustrans, 2022- Route 1 - Sustrans.org.uk

90. Although not a planning matter, speeding was identified as a key issue for residents during consultation activities, with many people suggesting that traffic calming measures were required to improve safety. The speed limit along Smeeth Road was reduced to 30mph in November 2023, and a part-time 20mph limit is in place within the vicinity of the school. Indications are that this has led to a reduction in the speed of traffic along Smeeth Road. Another ongoing concern raised throughout the development of the plan was regarding the lack of parking near the school. There is work being done to address this concern with highways and the school headteacher. Signs have recently gone up around the area to tell people where they can park.

91. During consultation activities residents were asked about improvements to travel infrastructure they'd like to see within the parish. A high proportion of respondents to the survey indicated they'd like to see improvement to pavements, recreational routes for walking and horse riding and better awareness of the dial-a-bus service.

92. Better facilities for public transport, walking and cycling, alongside a reduction in car traffic, can create many benefits. This includes improved health, air quality and nicer public spaces. Evidence from the Place Based Carbon Calculator[9] demonstrates that Marshland St James has above average emission rates for cars, with this rated as F+, one of the worst grades. So, reducing car usage can also bring significant carbon savings. The Parish Council and wider community is currently involved in a zero-carbon initiative, working with local councils to reduce carbon emissions. Achieving improved sustainable travel infrastructure and promoting its use are important measures to support improved health outcomes for the community.

93. The NPPF Chapter 9 supports walking and cycling being integral to design considerations and requires development to maximise opportunities to promote sustainable transport. The Local Plan promotes integrated and safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists, whilst recognising that the car remains an important means of travel in rural areas.

[9] https://www.carbon.place/about/

Appendix 1- Abbreviations and Glossary

Term	Definition
Affordable Housing (NPPF Definition[10])	**Affordable housing**: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions: a) **Social Rent**: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent; (b) the landlord is a registered provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. b) **Other affordable housing for rent**: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent). c) **Discounted market sales housing**: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households. d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership**: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

[10] National Planning Policy Framework

Term	Definition
BCKLWN	Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk
Dark Skies	
Energy Efficient	**The practice of using less energy to perform the same amount of output for a task, service or produce the same result.**
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Open Market Housing	Open market housing is housing which is built by developers (which may be private companies or housing associations, or Private Registered Providers), for the purposes of sale (or rent) on the open market.
Self-build and custom build housing	Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.
SuDS	Sustainable urban drainage system