

Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan Review 2025

SUBMISSION VERSION

Elmsett Parish Council

March 2025



FOREWORD

In 2019 the Parish Council completed the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Elmsett when 93% of residents that voted supported Babergh District Council adopting the Plan and using it when making planning decisions.

Four years on, it was identified that there was a need to update one of the key planning policies in the Plan, the policy that determines where development would be allowed to take place.

In November 2023, Babergh District Council adopted Part 1 of a new Joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts. Whereas the previous Local Plan allowed development, including housing, to take place outside of defined "Built-Up Area Boundaries" where a need could be demonstrated, the new Local Plan (Policy SP03) limits all but specific exceptions of development to take place within "Settlement Boundaries". However, the same policy states that "Outside of the settlement boundaries, development will normally only be permitted where... it is in accordance with a made Neighbourhood Plan...".

The made Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan stated that "Proposals for development located outside the Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB) or Rookery Road Hamlet Settlement Boundary will only be permitted where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is an identified local need for the proposal and that it cannot be satisfactorily located within the BUAB/Settlement Boundary."

The consequence of the adoption of the Local Plan is that our Neighbourhood Plan policy was not consistent with many other neighbourhood plans across Babergh. As a result, it was considered that Elmsett could come under pressure for further housing development outside the Settlement Boundaries if a developer can demonstrate to the District Council that a "local need" exists. There had already been a number of speculative housing applications, but they were unable to demonstrate a local housing need.

This Neighbourhood Plan Review primarily focuses on bringing Policy EMST 1 and the Planning Strategy chapter up-to-date. At the same time, opportunities have also been taken to update other background information in the Plan whilst no other changes to planning policies have been made. The updates primarily reflect changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, the adoption of Part 1 of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan, the publication of the 2021 Census results and changes in the village to available services and facilities.

Prepared By Elmsett Parish Council, with support from

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ELMSETT
2002

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ALDHAM
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WHATFIELD
ELMSETT MILL
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ELMSETT
AIRFIELD

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1. Introduction

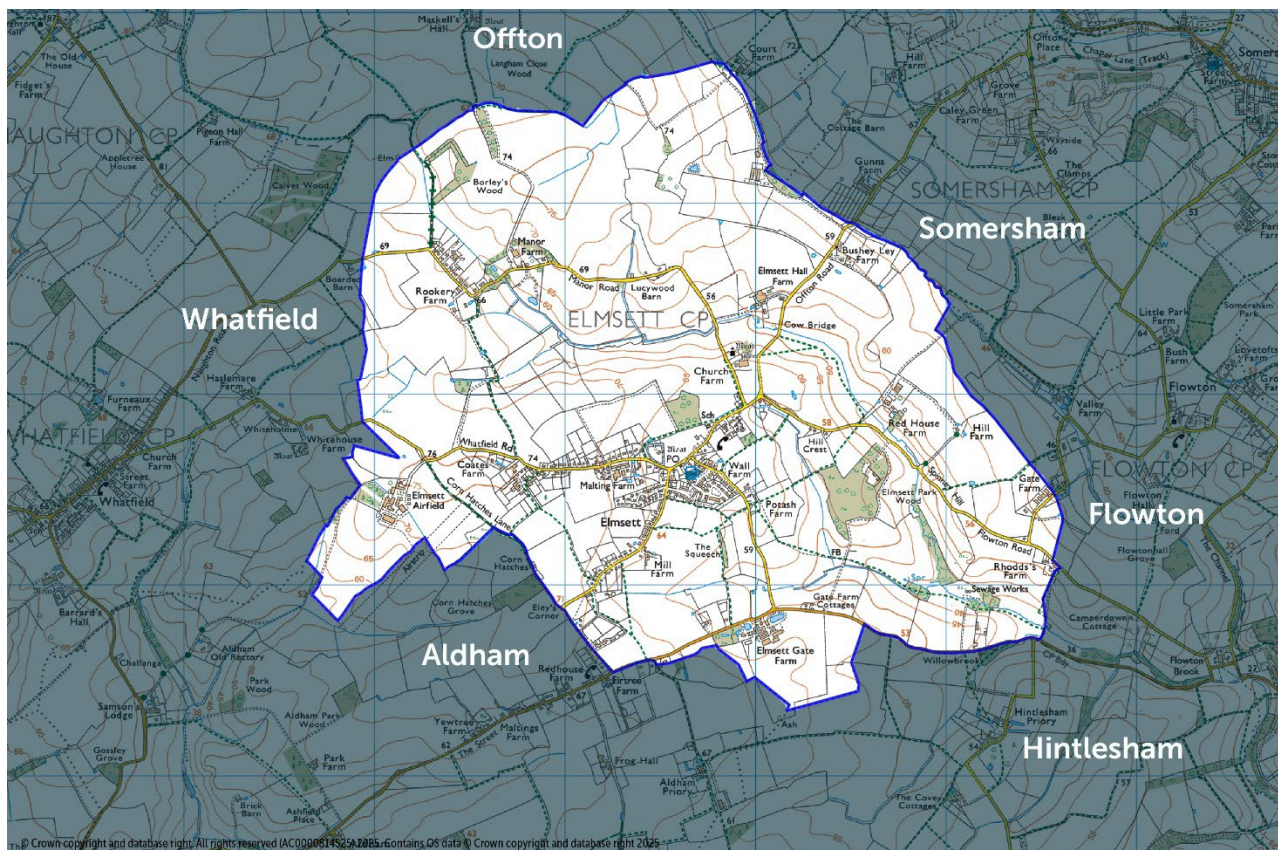
- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan, which can establish local planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood. This document is a Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) as defined in the Act and has been prepared by a Steering Group established by the Parish Council which is the “qualifying body” as defined by the Localism Act 2011. The Neighbourhood Plan was originally “made” adopted by Babergh District Council in 2019 and this is the “Neighbourhood Plan Review” that has been carried out to update Policy EMST1 – Spatial Strategy and the supporting chapter 7. At the same time, factual information contained in the 2019 Plan has been updated to reflect the situation in Elmsett in February 2025 as it relates to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The Plan focuses on local planning related matters and provides the village with greater opportunities than ever before to influence change and development within our area, based upon a fair and democratic consultation process supported by Babergh District Council and the Parish Council.
- 1.3 The local community wishes to preserve the character and services of the village as much as possible. It has a charming and unique character but is vulnerable to external change and, hence, needs to be protected and preserved. There is a recognition that outside pressures will have a growing impact upon the village, and the Parish Council need to be prepared to respond. These have already materialised in the form of a number of proposals for housing growth in the village and it is essential that any future growth has regard to the importance of ensuring that services and facilities have the capacity to cope with growth and that there is no adverse impact on our natural and historic environment.
- 1.4 The Plan is structured to provide information about the neighbourhood plan process; the village’s distinct character, history and geography; and the Vision, Objectives and Plan. The Plan itself contains planning policies and community actions. The latter do not form part of the development plan but identify local initiatives to address issues and concerns raised during the community engagement undertaken in preparing the Plan. The community actions are identified differently from the planning policies to avoid confusion.

Why a Neighbourhood Plan for Elmsett?

- 1.5 Government policies require local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their requirement set out in their adopted Plan. One of the original reasons for preparing the Plan was in response to the Council not having a sufficient housing land supply position and that this had resulted in an increase in speculative housing proposals being submitted across the district, including in Elmsett. The ‘five year’ position has improved since April 2017 and the latest available published figures (at 1 April 2024), show a 6.75 years’ supply of deliverable sites.
- 1.6 At the Parish Council public meeting on 2 October 2017 the Council formally agreed to start the process of making a Neighbourhood Plan for Elmsett. At its meeting on 6

November 2017, following a tendering exercise, the Parish Council appointed Places4People as its planning consultant to assist and steer its way through the legal framework. All of this work was grant funded from the Government Neighbourhood Planning Grant initiative via Locality, for which the Parish Council is grateful.

- 1.7 The Localism Act 2011 provides the opportunity and tools for communities to shape how areas will change and grow through the preparation of their own Plans. These Neighbourhood Plans, when properly made will become part of the legal planning framework for the designated area.
- 1.8 A neighbourhood plan is a community-led planning framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. It is about the use and development of land and contains a vision statement, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, or allocation of key sites for specific kinds of development.
- 1.9 Town and Parish councils are encouraged to produce their own Neighbourhood Plans enabling local people to have a say in how their neighbourhood grows and develops. In a designated neighbourhood area which contains all or part of the administrative area of a town or parish council, the town or parish council is responsible for neighbourhood planning.
- 1.10 Neighbourhood Plans cannot contradict the main government planning policies or the strategic policies in the Local Plan for the area. For example, they cannot propose less development than is planned for in the Local Plan.
- 1.11 The 2019 Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by a Steering Group representing Elmsett Parish Council which, for the purposes of the Localism Act, is the “qualifying body”. Preparation of the Plan was supported by Places4People Planning Consultancy. The content of the Neighbourhood Plan was led by the community and shaped by results of surveys and drop-in events to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan reflected the aspirations of the community.
- 1.12 The 2019 Neighbourhood Plan represented the conclusion of that work and provided a Plan that conformed with the strategic planning policies of the Babergh Local Plan that was in place at the time, the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and, most importantly, reflects the aspirations of the local community.
- 1.13 On 27 October 2017, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, Babergh District Council formally designated the whole parish as a Neighbourhood Plan Area as illustrated on Map 1. Details of the application, publication and designation can be viewed on the District Council’s website under Neighbourhood Planning in Elmsett.



Map 1 – The Neighbourhood Area

- 1.14 There are no other designated Neighbourhood Plan areas within this boundary and the Parish Council is the “qualifying body” responsible for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan for this area.

Purpose and Scope of Plan

- 1.15 When work on the 2019 Neighbourhood Plan started, its purpose and scope was agreed. In summary, the Neighbourhood Plan was to be an approved, legally recognised, planning document that would describe how Elmsett should develop as a sustainable, mixed, thriving community of residents and businesses over the next 20 years. Any recommendations for development would be judged by the views and opinions expressed by the community, informed by analysis of the historical and current physical characteristics and demographic composition of the village.
- 1.16 The Plan is confined to the Elmsett Parish boundary. At the outset it was agreed that it would concentrate mainly upon the needs and planning aspirations of all residents regarding housing development and it would identify:
- The demographic development of the village over the past 30 years and consider likely changes in the future.
 - The likely requirements for the range of accommodation needed for a sustainable mixed community of businesses and homes
 - Possible locations which may provide suitable sites for development and the planning restrictions necessary to protect the character of the village.
 - It would also consider those valued environmental, material and social assets that should be protected.

How the 2019 Plan was prepared

1.17 At the outset of preparing the 2019 Plan, it was agreed that the Plan would focus on the provision of homes but would also consider the transport, employment, education, health and well-being requirements as needed.

- 1.18 The Neighbourhood Plan Regulations require a neighbourhood plan to:
- Be appropriate, having regard to National Planning Policy.
 - Contribute to achieving sustainable development.
 - Be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; and
 - Be compatible with EU obligations and Human Rights requirements.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government's Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and, in particular, has involved considerable local community engagement to gather evidence for the content of the Plan.

1.19 The 2019 Neighbourhood Plan had regard to the originally agreed purpose and scope but, while being in line with then adopted Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy, provided a framework for the period to 2036. It was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government's Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and, in particular, involved considerable local community engagement to gather evidence for the content of the Plan.

1.20 Following individual leafletting of the village residents and an article in the village newsletter, all residents were invited to a drop-in event to publicly launch the preparation of the Plan on the evening of Friday 1st December 2017 and the morning of Saturday 2nd December 2017 at the village hall. We welcomed over 120 residents through the doors over the two-day period and names were taken of those interested in sitting on the Steering Group.

Household Survey

1.21 As a further part of the community engagement process, an introductory letter and questionnaire was delivered during April and May 2018 to all residents of the age of 16 and over. The completed questionnaires were collected two weeks after they were delivered. As an alternative, residents were able to access the questionnaire online using an access code from the introductory letter. In all, a 65% return rate was achieved.

1.22 The questionnaires were totally anonymous, other than a post code, and were analysed using google forms that provided the analytics to produce the results in a large spreadsheet and the ability to produce graphs and bar charts.

School Discussion

- 1.23 Members of the Steering Group were invited to visit the Primary School in July 2018 to talk about the Neighbourhood Plan and ask children what they thought about their village and whether they would like to have further facilities. The ensuing discussion produced the following:

Things children liked about living in Elmsett: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lots of space• Lots of nature and fields• Everything close and easy to get to• Good shop• Quiet roads• Quiet to relax in gardens• Being able to walk to school• Trees for wildlife	Some of the negative things: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only one shop• Speed of cars• Tall grass in front of ditches• Dogs poo everywhere• Lots of potholes• Roadworks diversion• Not enough buses• Blind corners• Harvest spiders• Number of houses being built• Not enough bins	Children's Wishlist: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zebra Crossing near Methodist Church or shop• Lolipop person• Upgrade play equipment at Mill Lane• More football pitches• Buses to Hadleigh / Ipswich at weekends• Tennis court• Better village hall• Skate park
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Consultation and adoption

- 1.24 In October 2018 the draft Plan was subject to a six weeks "Pre-Submission" consultation when residents, landowners, statutory bodies and other organisations were asked for comments. The Plan was amended following consideration of comments and submitted to Babergh District Council in January 2019. The District Council consulted on the Plan in February and March 2019 after which it was submitted for independent examination. The Examiner's Report was received in August 2019 and required some amendments to the Plan in order that it would meet the Basic Conditions. The Plan was then put to a Parish Referendum on 7 November 2019 when 93% of the turnout voted in favour of the Plan being used by the District Council when deciding planning applications. The Plan was formally "made" by Babergh District Council on 10 December 2019.



Neighbourhood Plan Review

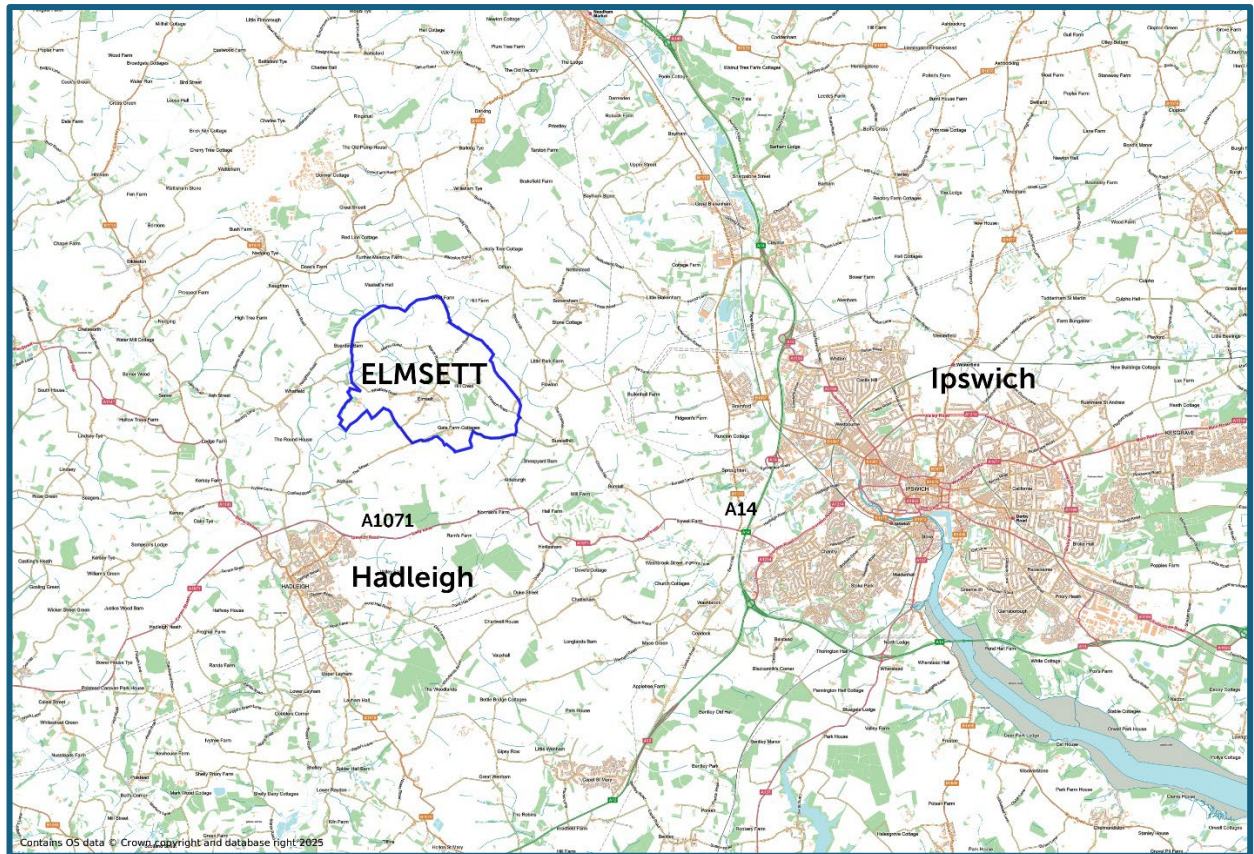
- 1.25 At its meeting of 23 January 2024, the Parish Council agreed to proceed with a partial Review of the Neighbourhood Plan. A consultation was held on the proposed changes between 22 March and 13 May 2024. The changes focus on updating Policy EMST1 – Spatial Strategy, Chapter 4 – Planning Policy Context and Chapter 7. However, paragraphs across the Plan have been amended and brought up-to-date to reflect changes that have occurred since 2019, both in terms of local circumstances and the district and national planning policy context. A separate Schedule of Plan Changes has been submitted to accompany the Plan Review to assist in identifying what has changed since the 2019 Plan.
- 1.26 This is the Submission draft of the Neighbourhood Plan Review. It is now subject to further consultation before being submitted to an independent Neighbourhood Plan Examiner. The Examiner will determine whether the nature and extent of the changes to the 2019 Plan deem it necessary for a parish referendum before the new Plan can be adopted.



2. Elmsett in historic context

Mentioned in a will dated about the year 975 Ylmesaetun: "The settlement by the elm trees"

- 2.1 Elmsett: different spelling same place. Still a settlement and classified in today's planning policy documents as a hinterland village. The 975 will made by Lady Aethelflaed leaves the estate of Elmsett together with seven upper estates to her sister Aelflaed, who in 1002 left it to "my Lord the King", who was Ethelred the Unready. Later it came into the ownership of king Harold II and was confiscated, with the rest of the Country, after the Battle of Hastings by the victor, Duke William of Normandy. William handed Elmsett for safe keeping to one of his financiers, Roger D'Auberville, who appears to have spent most of his time thereafter in London and France rather than his estates.
- 2.2 Until the end of World War 2, Elmsett was an entirely agricultural community. Although farm mechanisation made a momentous change to all such villages from the late 1770's onward, it is noted that the register of births from 1883 to 1945 records still show the fathers' occupation as 96% agricultural in nature. By 1950 there is a considerable change, reflecting the fact that mechanised farms needed fewer workers and improved means of travel made access to work outside the community easier. Elmsett then became a different village. More people were attracted to settle in this rural place and this led to a surge in house building with its attendant surge in population. In the 1801 census there were 324 inhabitants. In 1961 there were 363 by 1971 there were 530 and today there are approximately 820 residents.
- 2.3 Elmsett still retains a number of buildings with the Suffolk characteristic timber frames and thatched roofs. These are highly valued nowadays as the last examples of characterful construction. They have survived because they are built on a low brick foundation. Earlier timber frames without the supporting bricks rotted away and were lost. Some have been given a "modernised" outward appearance in Edwardian and Victorian times, but inside still preserve the original timbers. There are also some "tythe barns" in the area, although they are mostly now changed into dwellings. Timber frames can still be seen inside some buildings which on the outside look much later in date.
- 2.4 A sad note in the history of the village is that a bomb was dropped in 1941 by a German aircraft which was caught in the beam of a searchlight and it destroyed a row of eight cottages in The Street, ten residents were killed. Modern houses stand on the site now.
- 2.5 A strange Memorial Stone, ten feet or more in height, stands accusingly opposite the gate to Elmsett Parish Church. On it is carved "To commerate (sic.) the Tythe Seizure at Elmsett Hall of furniture, including a baby's bed & blankets, herd of dairy cow, eight corn and seed stacks valued at £1200 for a Tythe valued at £385." In 1932, at a time when the recession meant that farms were in serious financial difficulty, the Church continued to insist on its "pound of flesh". The memorial was erected by a very angry Charles Westren, the farmer. However, before the bailiffs could carry out the seizure, Elmsett Hall was barricaded and the Church Commissioners successfully turned away by a very large and angry crowd of Villagers and Farmers some of whom came in support from as far away as Cambridge. This unpopular law was changed in 1936 and finally abolished by Parliament in October 1977.



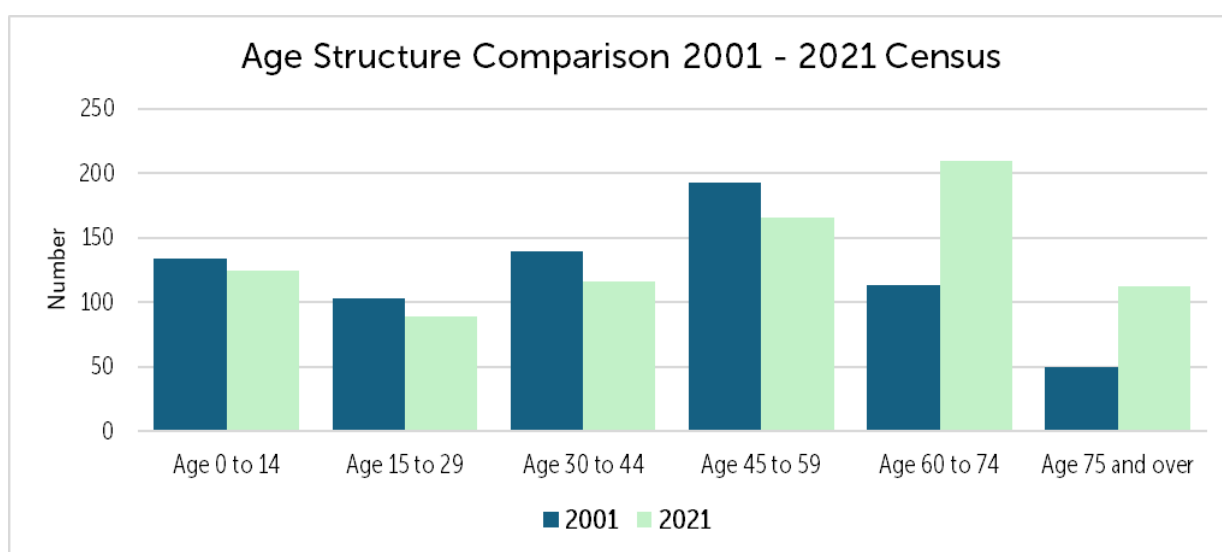
Map 2: Location of Elmsett

- 2.6 Outside the immediate village area there are farm fields and woods. One wood is the remains of Elmsett Park wood which dates back to medieval time as a Royal hunting wood. Another, Lucy Wood was rooted up prior to 1950. After the end of the Second World War, between 1945 and 1969 there was upsurge of new building, filling in the spaces between older properties. This resulted in a very “linear” style and gave the new properties large gardens both at the front and rear. The exceptions to this layout were the older Council houses, with smaller front gardens but still generously large back gardens. A similar arrangement was adopted for the Council properties in Garrards Road.
- 2.7 There were two further developments, larger but following the same style. In the mid-60’s Newlands was built followed in the late 60’s by Windings. In the mid 80’s Sawyers was developed, this was a different style again with larger detached houses. Further development in the village included the re-development of the Mill Site and the provision of local needs housing at Hazelwood and Church View. Two further large site have been developed, Matings Farm, south of Whatfield Road and The Hornbeams to the east of Hadleigh Road.
- 2.8 And so, to the present. The access roads into Elmsett follow the route of centuries - old farm tracks. Indeed, Flowton Road was gated until about 1945. Most houses throughout the village have good views of the surrounding farmland. The Post Office closed in 2023 followed by the Village Shop in 2024 with a new “community shop” opening at the Village Hall on an experimental basis in early 2025. The Rose and Crown Pub and Primary School are well supported and used. Beyond these, the only other main sources of local employment remain the farms, business units at Gate Farm and Elmsett Airfield and that provided on the Airfield site.

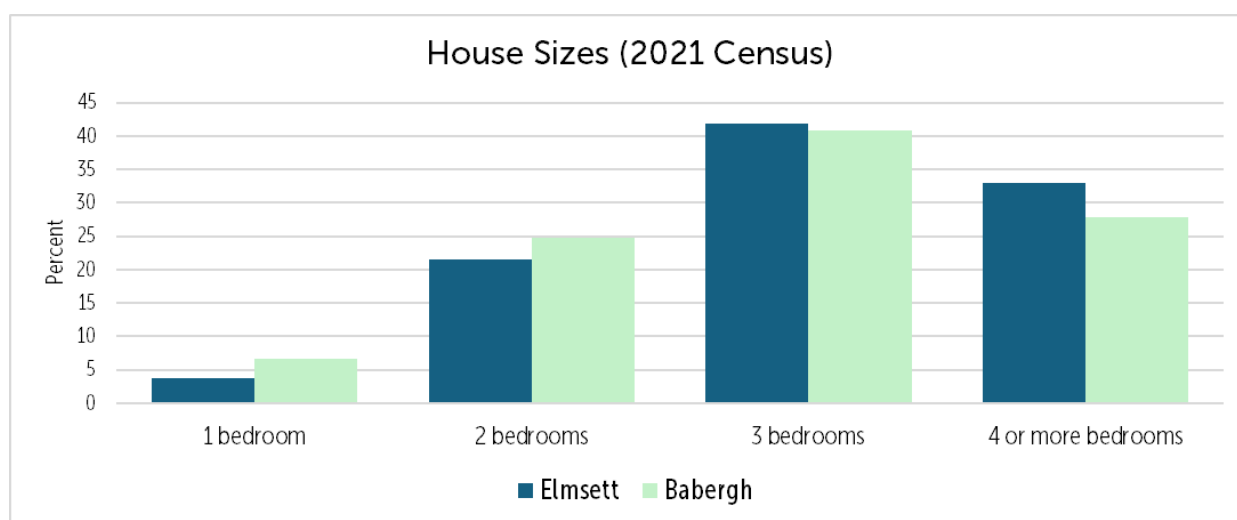
2.9 Most of the village is now connected to fast broadband which does enable home working. Services connections including gas are available for most houses and for businesses, and the old water main through the village has been replaced. Roads are not lit, other than Hazelwood and Church View. "No street lights" is a decision supported by the majority of residents and we therefore enjoy dark skies and clear views of the heavens. So, the village of Elmsett grew into a modern, quiet, neighbourly place to live.

Key Census data

2.10 The Census 2021 includes the most recent population data for the parish which indicates a population of 820, compared to 788 in the 2011 Census. The proportion of older people (aged 65 or over) in the Parish has been steadily increasing from 16% in 2001, 23% in 2011 and 32 % in 2021.



2.11 When compared with the whole of Babergh district, the village has a higher proportion of homes that have three or more bedrooms. This is not unusual for villages as the larger settlements such as Sudbury and Hadleigh will have a higher proportion of smaller properties.



- 2.12 At the time of the 2021 Census, over half of the residents are in employment. Of these, 35% were in part-time jobs. 26% travel less than 10km to work and 33.5% work mainly from home compared to 16.5% in 2011. However, the figures for those working from home may well be impacted by the restrictions placed by the COVID pandemic.

Household Survey

- 2.13 In line with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidelines, the Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan survey was conducted in order not to obstruct or disagree with our District Council and National Plans, but instead to 'take the pulse' of the village with regard to both what is cherished about our rural village life along with the negative issues, current or perceived. In short, to identify what we must seek to protect or correct, as we enter a period of change with the potential of new housing developments and population growth in the future.
- 2.14 Whilst we made strenuous efforts to canvas the entire Parish for their opinion by offering both fully anonymised hand delivered paper and an online survey options to all persons aged over 16 years of age, some did, as expected, decline to complete the survey. However we were pleased with the overall 65% return, amounting to 349 responses.
- 2.15 The launch of the survey on 21 April 2018 was subsequent to our initial drop-in events in December 2017. These drew a good attendance from which we formed our steering committee representative members from the community.
- 2.16 The survey was by necessity complex as we had to establish not only opinions regarding new developments but also strengths of feelings regarding the village and (community) infrastructure. The summary highlights follow and, as part our consultation / dialogue, have all been reported back to the village in our print and online newsletter.

Built and Natural Environment Designations

- 2.17 There are a number of designations across the Neighbourhood Plan Area that have to be taken account of in considering development proposals. These are identified in the following paragraphs.

The Historic Built Environment

- 2.18 Although there is no designated Conservation Area in Elmsett, there are currently 18 Listed Buildings across the parish. Appendix 1 provides a list of these properties. In addition to the listed buildings, the moated site at The Old Rectory is a Scheduled Monument. Its extent is illustrated on the map.



Map 3—The Old Rectory Scheduled Monument

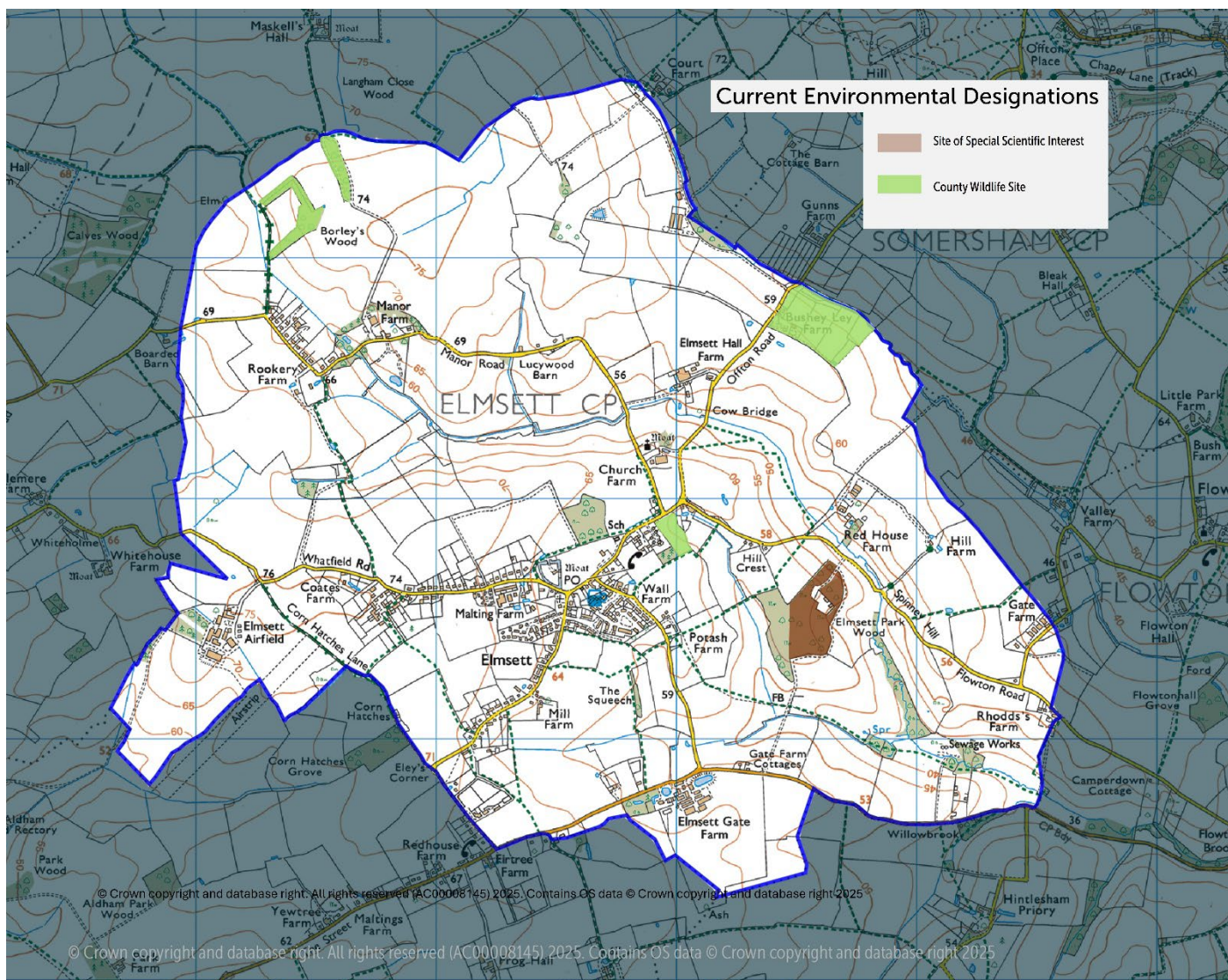
The Natural Environment

2.19 Within the Plan Area there are a number of natural environment designations. These include:

- A site of special scientific interest
- Three County Wildlife Sites
- A number of Tree Preservation Orders
- Ancient Woodlands

The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has taken into account these designations to ensure that the policies and proposals will not have a detrimental impact on them.





Map 4 – Environmental Designations

Current issues

2.20 In summary, following to the collection of background evidence and the outcomes of the information from residents, the main issues that informed the content of the 2019 Neighbourhood Plan can be summarised as:

- Loss of village identity
- Need to manage growth
- Minimising the impact of development on the roads
- Protecting the historic and natural environment
- Ensuring existing infrastructure and services are maintained and improved
- Maintaining the rural character of Elmsett
- Sustaining the strong community spirit

3. Planning policy context

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Plans must have regard to the content of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the relevant Local Plan documents. Our original Plan (adopted in December 2019) was prepared in the context of the 2012 NPPF, the 2014 Babergh Core Strategy, and the saved policies from the 2006 Babergh Local Plan. With changes to all, it has been necessary to update our Plan in part to now have regard to the latest NPPF and Local Plan documents that cover the parish. The paragraphs below identify these and explain how they are relevant to our Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's high-level planning policies that must be taken into account in the preparation of development plan documents and when deciding planning applications. In December 2024 the Government published a Revised NPPF. The Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states: "Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:
- a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;
 - b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole".
- 3.3 Paragraph 29 of the NPPF states that: "Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies."

The Local Plan

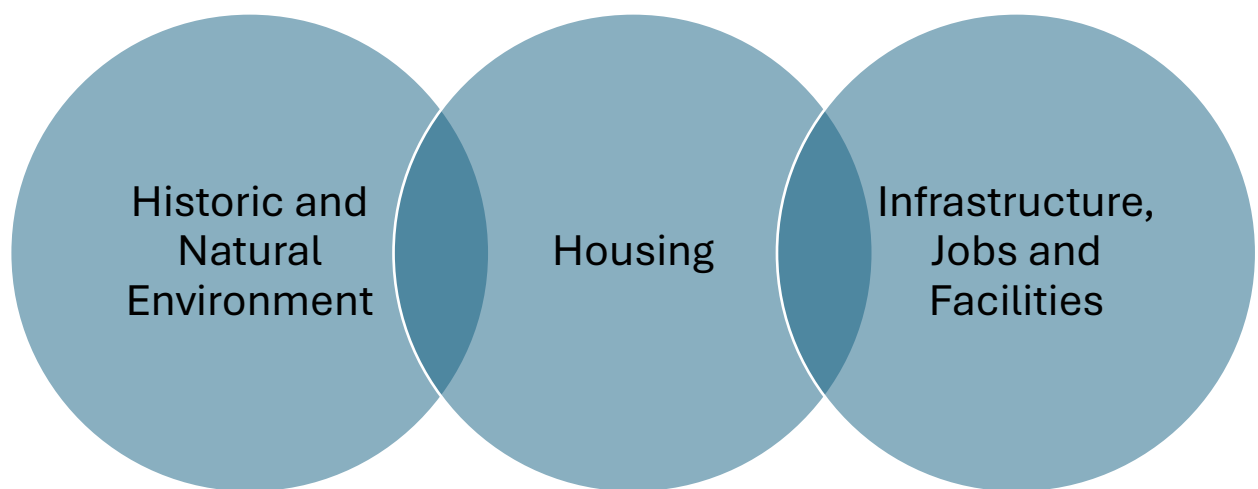
- 3.4 In November 2023, Babergh District Council adopted a new Local Plan, the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan - Part 1 [referred to as 'JLP1 in this document]. JLP1 provides a set of strategic and local development management policies, which will be used to inform decisions on planning applications and appeals. These do not need to be repeated here but our Neighbourhood Plan can complement JLP1 by adding locally based detail.

- 3.5 In February 2025 the District Council announced that it would be preparing a totally new Joint Local Plan with Mid Suffolk. The published Local Development Scheme stated that the new Joint Local Plan will cover the period to at least 2044 with consultations commencing in Spring 2026. It is not anticipated that the new Plan will be adopted until 2029.
- 3.6 In July 2020, Suffolk County Council adopted the Minerals and Waste Local Plan which is part of the strategic policy framework for the area. Much of the parish does fall within a Minerals Consultation Area and the District Council will consult the County Council on planning applications that fall within this area.



4. The Plan

4.1 The Plan focuses on three themes, namely:



- 4.2 These themes form the foundation for the content of the Plan and distinct chapters cover policies and aspirations for each theme. Within each chapter there is a reminder of the relevant objectives, a summary of what the evidence showed, with further discussion culminating in planning policies and, where appropriate, community actions and projects.
- 4.3 The planning policies form part of the statutory development plan which will be used for determining planning applications in the parish. In addition to the planning policies, community actions are included in the Plan. It must be emphasised at the outset that community actions do not form part of the “statutory” Neighbourhood Plan but are included for completeness to identify other areas of improvement and change that residents have identified during the preparation of the Plan. The planning policies appear in boxes numbered EMST1, EMST2 etc and distinctly different coloured boxes define the non-statutory community actions.

Sustainable Development

- 4.4 There is no legal requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to be accompanied by a sustainability appraisal. However, those preparing the plan must demonstrate how it contributes to achieving sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework defines three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) and there is a need for the planning system, including Neighbourhood Plans, to perform the following roles:
- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
 - a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations;

and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.5 In some limited circumstances, where a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental impacts, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft Neighbourhood Plan proposals are therefore assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental impacts. Babergh District Council managed this process as part of their duty to support the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. The outcome of this exercise was that the need for a SEA Scoping Report and the need HRA Scoping Report were both 'screened-out' for the originally made Plan. This exercise has been repeated as part of the review process and came to the same conclusions. Copies of the relevant reports and Notices of Determination (both January 2019 and July 2024) are available on the Babergh DC website.



5. Vision and objectives

- 5.1 The vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan have been prepared taking into consideration the outcomes of the community engagement referred to earlier in this Plan as well as the evidence collected from published data, surveys and assessments. They also take account of the need to prepare a neighbourhood plan that conforms with the strategic policies of the local plan. The Vision sets out the over-arching approach to how the future development of Elmsett will be delivered through the Neighbourhood Plan. This is amplified through the definition of objectives for the three topic areas that have guided the identification of both planning policies and community actions contained in the Plan. The planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan do not repeat the policies in local plans or the NPPF but supplement them by adding local detail of addressing locally specific matters.
- 5.2 Elmsett is a small rural community with limited services and facilities reflected in its designation as a Hinterland Village in the Babergh Core Strategy. Our Vision for the village through to 2036 is one where the level of growth is commensurate with maintaining existing services and minimising the impact on the environment and the infrastructure.

VISION

In 2036 Elmsett will be a thriving rural village and will have balanced the provision of housing growth with the need to maintain existing village services and minimising the impact of growth on both the local environment and infrastructure.

Objectives

- 5.3 The Objectives of the Plan have been developed as a result of the information gathered during the preparation of the Plan. Each Objective has informed and guided the content of the Planning Policies and Community Actions that follow.

Housing Objectives

1. Housing growth is appropriate in scale to the role of the village.
2. New homes are designed to meet the long terms needs of local residents.
3. New development is of a high-quality design, eco-friendly and of a scale that reinforces local character.

Historic and Natural Environment Objectives

4. Conserve and enhance the heritage assets of the parish.
5. Protect and improve the features which contribute to historic character.
6. Maintain the village's rural setting.
7. Protect the important green spaces, woodland and countryside.
8. Protect important views and links to the wider countryside.

Infrastructure and Facilities

9. Improve and sustain high quality local facilities for existing and future residents.
10. Encourage opportunities for home working and local employment.

6. Planning Strategy

- 6.1 The planning policy framework for the Parish is now established in the adopted Babergh Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 (November 2023) and the 2019 “made” Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan. The term “Built Up Area Boundary” has been superseded in the Joint Local Plan and they are now known as Settlement Boundaries.
- 6.2 The principle of development within Settlement Boundaries is accepted while there is a general presumption against development outside them, unless this is allowed for by national or specific local policies. The level of services and facilities in the village as well as the limited accessibility to higher order settlements means that only limited housing growth is appropriate in the village over the period of the Plan. It is, however, essential that the growth is focused on the existing built-up area of the village where there is a close relationship with accessibility of the existing services and facilities.
- 6.3 Part 1 of the Joint Local Plan does not define a settlement hierarchy across Babergh nor allocate sites for development. These matters are being addressed in the emerging Part 2 of the Joint Local Plan, planned for completion in 2026. As such, there is no housing requirement for Elmsett that the Neighbourhood Plan has to meet.
- 6.4 Policy SP03 of the Part 1 Joint Local Plan sets out where new development would be supported, but the approach is very high level with general references to windfall development in accordance with the policies in Neighbourhood Plans or elsewhere in the Joint Local Plan.

Settlement Boundaries

- 6.5 The Neighbourhood Plan Review confirms the Settlement Boundaries of the 2019 Plan.
- 6.6 In accordance with Policy SP03 of the Joint Local Plan, the spatial strategy for Elmsett supports the principle of development within the defined settlement boundaries subject to the consideration of the impact of the proposal as assessed against other policies in the Joint Local Plan - Part 1 and Neighbourhood Plan, such as
- the presence of heritage assets;
 - the landscape setting of the village;
 - the capacity of services and infrastructure;
 - the potential impact on the amenity of existing residents; and
 - the impact of development on the wider area.

This approach will ensure that the largely undeveloped countryside will remain preserved.

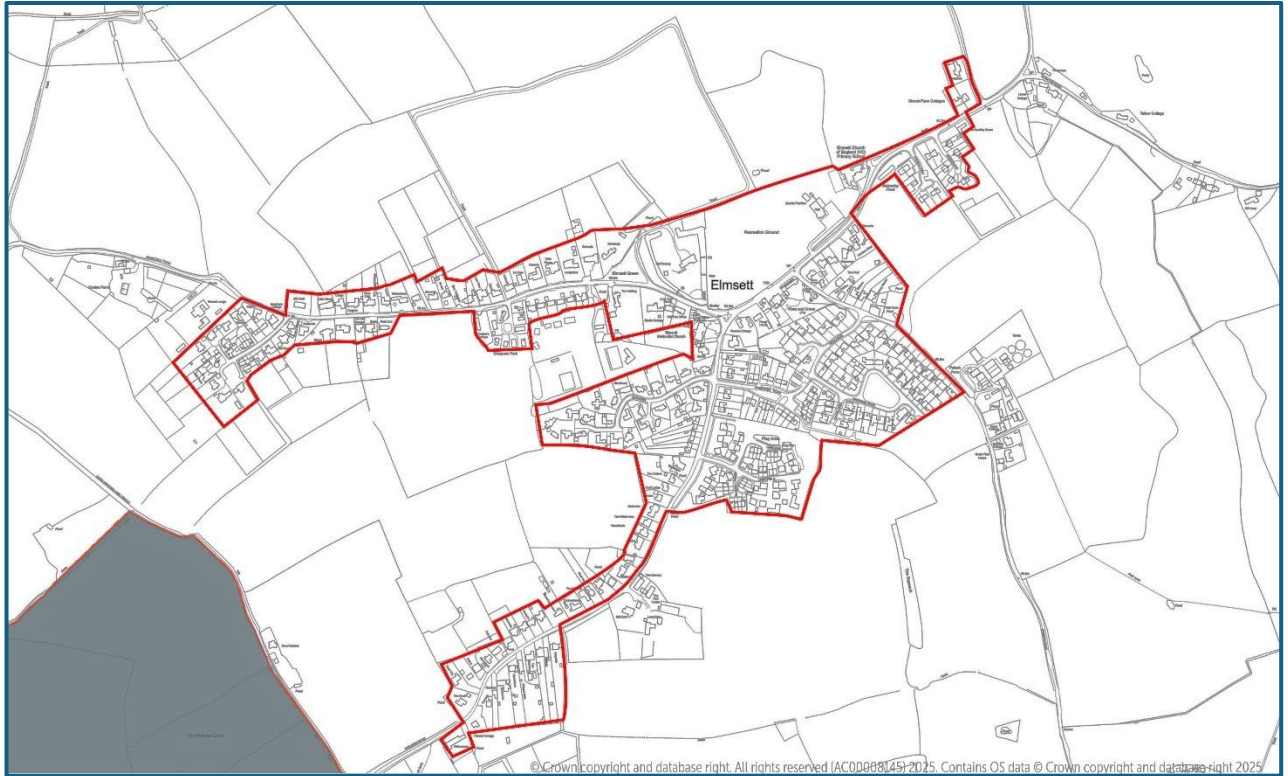
- 6.7 There may be situations where it may be adequately demonstrated that it is necessary for development to take place outside the Settlement Boundaries. However, this will be limited to that which is specifically supported by the NPPF, the Joint Local Plan - Part 1 and the Neighbourhood Plan. Table 5 of the Joint Local Plan - Part 1 identifies the types of development that would, subject to other considerations, be supported outside settlement boundaries.

Revised Policy EMST1 – Spatial Strategy

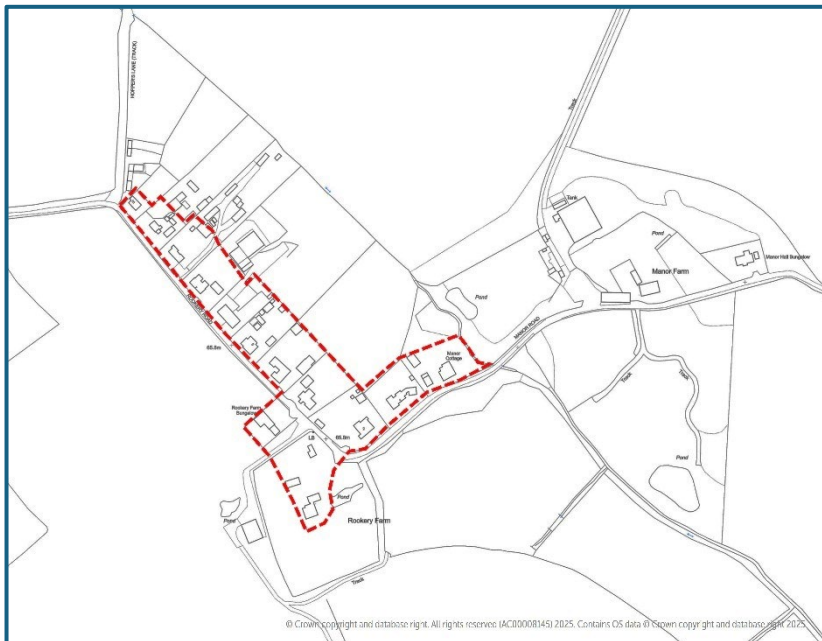
The Neighbourhood Area will accommodate development commensurate with the policies of the adopted Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan - Part 1.

The focus for new development will be within the defined Settlement Boundaries, as shown on the Proposals Map, where the principle of development is accepted.

Proposals for development located outside the Settlement Boundaries will only be permitted where they are in accordance with national, district and neighbourhood level policies and where they would not have a detrimental impact on infrastructure capacity, and heritage and landscape designations.



Map 5 – Village Centre Settlement Boundary



Map 6 – Rookery Road Hamlet

7. Housing

Objectives:

1. Housing growth is appropriate in scale to the role of the village
2. New homes are designed to meet the long terms needs of local residents
3. New development is of a high-quality design, eco-friendly and of a scale that reinforces local character.

- 7.1 A key role of the 2019 Neighbourhood Plan was to identify the amount of new housing to be provided during the period covered by the Plan and to identify where it would be located. In September 2018 the government had published a revised National Planning Guidance that stated that:

"the 'policies and allocations' in the plan should meet the identified housing requirement in full, whether it is derived from the standard methodology for local housing need, the housing figure in the area's strategic policies, an indicative figure provided by the local authority, or where it has exceptionally been determined by the neighbourhood planning body."

The following paragraphs identify how the housing requirement in the 2019 Plan were derived and the determination of future housing requirements in relation to this Review.

- 7.2 When the original Neighbourhood Plan was prepared, the housing figures in the adopted strategic policies were those in the adopted Babergh Core Strategy (2014), which allocated 1,050 new homes to Core and Hinterland Villages in the period to 2031. The August 2017 Joint Local Plan consultation proposed a range of growth across Hinterland Villages of between 5% and 15% of the housing requirement. At the time we applied the net district-wide requirement to the August 2017 distribution options, based upon the proportion of the population in the village compared with the total of all proposed Hinterland Villages. That calculation suggested that the residual requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan as at 1 April 2017 was, as a minimum, between 15 and 46 homes in the period to 2036. Consequently, the draft Joint Local Plan Preferred Options consultation (July 2019) identified a minimum housing requirement for Elmsett of 50 homes between April 2018 and 2036. However, this came after the examination of the neighbourhood Plan and was too late to be taken into account.
- 7.3 The minimum housing requirement (15 to 46 homes) and the subsequent 50 homes requirement had either already been built or had planning permission at the time the original Neighbourhood Plan was made.
- 7.3 In December 2024 the Government announced a new standard methodology for calculating future housing requirements for local plans. With the proposed preparation of a new Joint Local Plan, it is expected that that requirement will result in an indicative housing requirement being identified for the Neighbourhood Plan Area. However, at the time of this Review the Local Plan process was at a very early stage and such a figure had yet to be published and tested.
- 7.4 Appendix 1 provides details of the planning permissions for new homes in Elmsett that had yet to be completed at 1 April 2024, as noted in the Babergh District Council, Five-

Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement 2024. In the absence of an up-to-date and robust indicative housing figure for Elmsett being provided by Babergh, this Review does not allocate any further sites.

7.5 As noted above, at the time of preparing the original Neighbourhood Plan, there were already new housing developments in the pipeline that would exceed the minimum level of growth proposed in the draft Joint Local Plan (July 2019). In addition, it was expected that in the period to 2036 there would continue to be development coming forward on sites that are in accordance with Policy EMST1. On the basis of the above calculations and having regard to the local circumstances, landscape character, local highway capacity, the historic environment and environmental constraints, the 2019 Neighbourhood Plan made provision for the construction of around 60 new homes between 2017 and 2036. The new homes would be delivered through the following approach.

1. The construction of planning consents that had not been completed as at 1 April 2017.
2. The allocation, in this Neighbourhood Plan, of specific sites.
3. An allowance for “windfall” sites of less than 10 homes that will come forward during the neighbourhood plan period in the form of small infill plots within the BUAB or the conversion of existing buildings such as barn conversions.

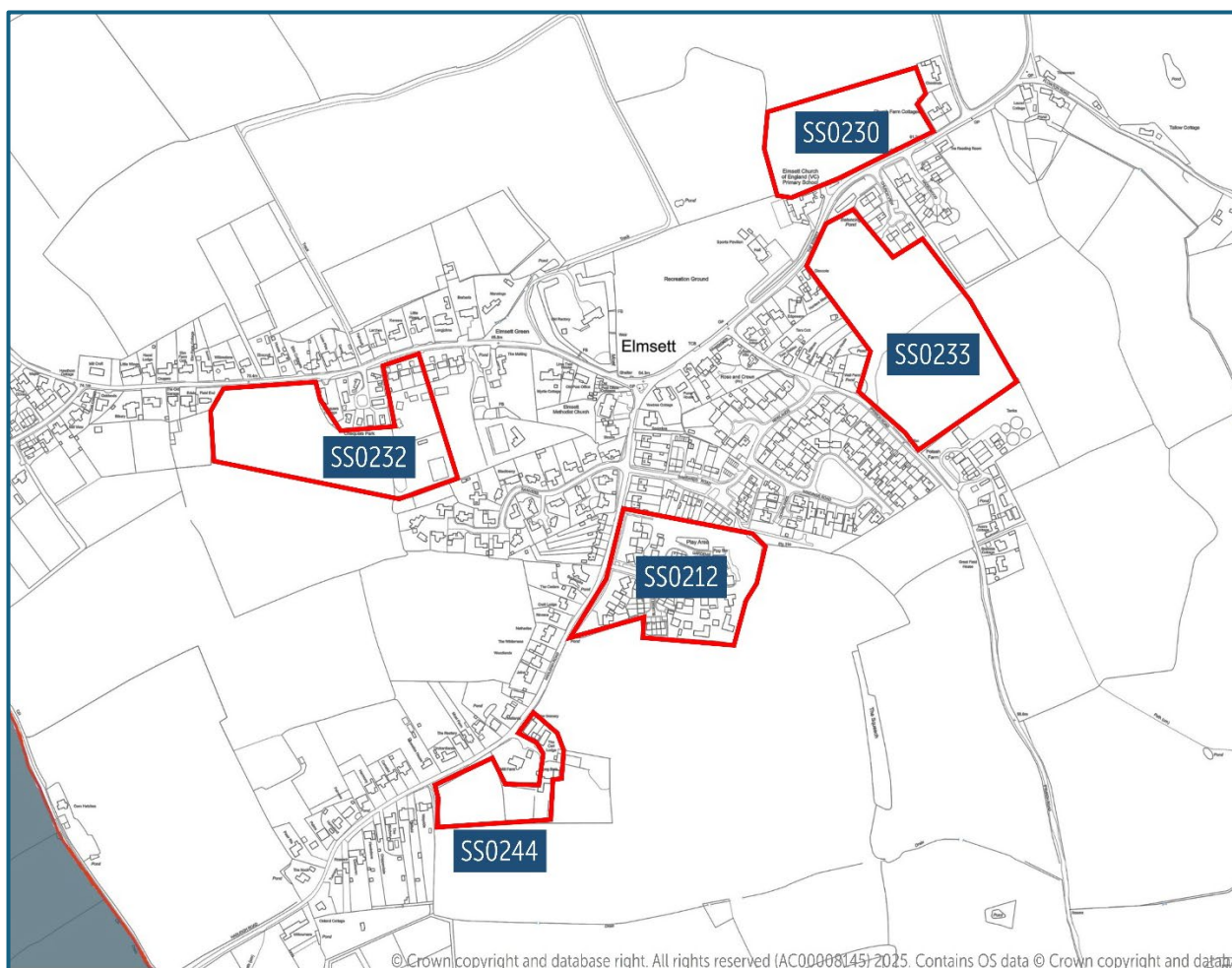
As such, and in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, the Neighbourhood Plan would meet the identified housing requirement in full.

7.6 As at 1 April 2017 there were planning permissions for two new homes in the village that had not been completed. These were barn conversions at Church Farm, Manor Road which have since been completed. This left a residual requirement for around 58 new homes to be provided for in the Neighbourhood Plan. Later in 2017 planning permission was granted for seven new dwellings at The Maltings, Whatfield Road and work commenced on the construction of these in 2019. However, the permission counted as meeting part of the residual requirement, leaving the Plan to identify how sites would deliver the remaining requirement.

7.7 In 2018 the Steering Group applied to the Government Neighbourhood Plan Support programme for technical assistance in assessing sites for their suitability for housing development. AECOM consultants were appointed to undertake an independent and objective assessment of the sites that had been identified as potential candidates for housing in the Neighbourhood Plan. These included sites from the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites process and sites emerging from the Joint Local Plan supporting evidence, such as the 2017 Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). However the AECOM Assessment did not consider sites that had already been rejected by Babergh’s SHELAA.

7.8 Five sites were considered by AECOM for suitability for housing development, as identified in the table and map below

Site Ref.	Site Address	Land Type
SS0212	Land east of Hadleigh Road	Greenfield
SS0230	Land to the north of The Street	Greenfield
SS0232	Land south of Whatfield Road	Greenfield
SS0233	Land north east of Ipswich Road	Greenfield
SS0644	Land south of Hadleigh Road	Greenfield



Map 7- Location of sites assessed for development

7.9 The Assessment concluded that:

- Site SS0212 is suitable for development.
- Site SS0230 is suitable for development.
- Site SS0232 has limited safe pedestrian routes to the village centre and any development would need sensitive design to reduce development impact on the adjacent listed building.
- Site SS0233 has restricted access and limited safe pedestrian routes to the village centre and would be more suitable if the developable area of the site was reduced so as part development of the western or northern aspect of the site is considered to avoid disproportionate development to the existing settlement.
- Site SS0644 - although the SHELAA finds the site potentially suitable for development, a sequential test finds the site is unsuitable for allocation as a logical extension to the village when compared to other sites under consideration.

The Assessment report is available to view as a separate evidence document.

7.10 Between 1 April 2018 and 1 July 2019 permission for a further 63 dwellings had been granted by Babergh District Council including 41 homes on Site SS0212 at Hadleigh Road and 18 homes south of Whatfield Road on part of Site SS0232. Together with the allowance for other forms of delivery identified above, it meant that there was no need

at the time to identify any further sites for housing development in the Neighbourhood Plan. A review of the Plan at a future date would enable this to be reassessed in the light of the calculated housing needs at the time and whether sites allocated in the Plan had come forward or whether there was, perhaps, no prospect of them being built. Policy EMST2 provides the generic policy for such an approach to delivering the housing requirement.

- 7.11 As at February 2025, the development of Site SS0212 was nearing completion and the development of the 18 homes at Whatfield Road (SS0232) was under construction.

Policy EMST2 – Housing Development

This Plan provides for around 60 dwellings to be developed in the Neighbourhood Plan area between 2017 and 2036. This growth will be met through:

- i. The allocation of sites as identified in separate policies in the Plan and on the Proposals Map; and
 - ii. Small brownfield “windfall” sites and infill plots of one or two dwellings within the Built-Up Area Boundary that come forward during the plan and are not identified in the plan; and
 - iii. Infill plots of one or two dwellings within the Rookery Road Hamlet.
-

Land off Hadleigh Road

- 7.12 The site is located east of Hadleigh Road and south of Garrards Road and is identified as Site SS0212 in the AECOM Site Assessment report. It has an area of 2.5 hectares and was the subject of an outline planning application for 41 dwellings received by Babergh District Council in April 2017. A plan that accompanied the application set out the following schedule of dwelling sizes

- 2 Bedroom semi-detached cottages: 10
- 3 Bedroom semi-detached cottages: 8
- 3 Bedroom bungalows: 6
- 3 Bedroom terraces: 9
- 4 Bedroom detached houses: 3
- 4/5 Bedroom detached houses: 5

Of these, 11 would be affordable for rent and five would be for shared ownership tenure.

The District Council approved the planning application in June 2018, after the base date for the Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, given that the site was in the early stages of development, it was allocated in Policy EMST 3 of the 2019 Plan to provide certainty in the longer term should the development have not proceeded. Subsequently a detailed planning application was approved for 44 dwellings and the development, known as Daisyfield, is nearing completion. Policy EMST 3 of the 2019 Plan has therefore been deleted in this Review Plan.



Affordable Housing

- 7.13 The latest published government figures identify that the median house prices in Babergh are 11.6 times the median gross annual earnings of residents. This is having a huge impact on the ability of people to buy housing, especially those on lower incomes. Affordable housing provides a potential accommodation solution for those that need to live in the villages but are unable to access open market price housing. The adopted Local Plan policy for affordable housing requires new developments on sites of over ten houses to provide up to 35% of the total as housing that Meet the “affordable” definition (see Glossary). The development at Hadleigh Road referred to above has delivered 15 affordable homes while the redevelopment of part of the Shrublands Nursery south of Whatfield Road is providing a development of 18 affordable homes.
- 7.14 Granting planning permission on an exceptional basis for affordable housing on land next to but outside the defined built up area boundary is one way to provide affordable meet local needs. This approach has already delivered a number of homes for local people in Elmsett in the past. Where a “rural exception” site is proposed for development, it must be demonstrated that there is an identified local need in the village and that the site is suitable to meet that local need. In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to permit an element of open market housing to facilitate the delivery of the affordable housing. This is in accordance with paragraph 82 of the 2024 NPPF, which states that local authorities should consider whether this approach would help provide additional affordable housing. The exceptional circumstances, where a small number of market homes will be permitted could include,

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

Policy EMST3 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites outside the main village Built-Up Area Boundary, where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, will be supported where there is a proven local need and provided that the housing:

- i) remains affordable in perpetuity;
- ii) is for people that are in housing need by virtue that they are unable to buy or rent properties in the villages at open-market prices;
- iii) is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated local connection as identified in paragraph 4.4 of the Babergh Choice Based Lettings Scheme 2016. Where there is no local connection, a property should then be offered to those with a demonstrated need for affordable housing in neighbouring villages.

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

To be acceptable, proposals should demonstrate that a local need exists which cannot be met by applying normal planning policy for the provision of affordable homes in association with market housing. Any application for affordable housing in respect of this policy should be accompanied by a detailed needs assessment and the accommodation proposed should contribute to meeting this proven need.

In exceptional circumstances, a small number of market homes will be where demonstrated that these are financially essential to facilitate the delivery of affordable units.

This policy will not apply to the Rookery Road Settlement Boundary.

- 7.15 One option for securing affordable housing that remains available for the local community for all time is through the establishment of a Community Land Trust (CLT). This is a form of community-led housing, set up and run by local people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets. CLTs act as long-term stewards of housing,

ensuring that it remains genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, not just for now but for every future occupier.

Community Action 1 - Community Land Trust for Elmsett

The Parish Council should explore the establishment of a Community Land Trust for Elmsett with a main aim of delivering, and securing for the long term, affordable housing that meets the needs of residents that need it.

Housing Space Standards

7.16 In March 2015, the Government introduced a 'Nationally Described Space Standard' (or National Standard for short). This sets out more detailed minimum standards than the previous Design and Quality Standards (2007) that applied solely to affordable housing. The current standard requires that:

- a) *the dwelling provides at least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area set out in the table below;*
- b) *a dwelling with two or more bedspaces has at least one double (or twin) bedroom;*
- c) *in order to provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5 m² and is at least 2.15m wide;*
- d) *in order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5m²;*
- e) *one double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55m wide;*
- f) *any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume 8 general floor area of 1m² within the Gross Internal Area);*
- g) *any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900- 1500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all;*
- h) *a built-in wardrobe counts towards the Gross Internal Area and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in excess of 0.72m² in a double bedroom and 0.36m² in a single bedroom counts towards the built-in storage requirement; and*
- i) *the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area.*

A summary table is provided below.

Number of bedrooms (b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) ²			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	128	

Policy EMST4– Housing Space Standards

All new dwellings shall achieve appropriate internal space through adherence to the latest Nationally Described Space Standards.

Dwellings should also make adequate provision for the covered storage of wheelie bins and cycles and meet the current adopted car parking standards.

In addition, all new homes shall provide:

- i) suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband; and
 - ii) one electronic vehicle charging point per off-street parking space.
-

Dwelling Sizes

- 7.17 The 2021 Census identified that Elmsett has a higher proportion of three and four bedroomed homes than Babergh as a whole. The Ipswich Housing Market Area, Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) document, updated in 2017, identifies the mix of dwellings required for all tenures across the area, as follows:

Estimated proportionate demand for all tenure new housing stock by bedroom numbers – Ipswich Housing Market Area

<u>Bed Nos</u>	<u>% of new stock</u>
1	18%
2	29%
3	46%
4+	6%

- 7.18 Given the SHMA evidence and the local statistics, it is important that new homes constructed in Elmsett are designed to address the need for smaller homes in accordance with the Ipswich Housing Market Area requirements, both to enable small families to live independently and, if space standards are met, allowing shrinking households to downsize but remain in the village. This is especially important on larger developments where there are opportunities to make a significant difference to redressing imbalances.

Policy EMST5 – Housing Mix

Housing development must contribute to meeting the existing and future needs of the Plan Area. In new housing developments of 10 or more homes, a minimum of 47% of the development should be one or two bedroomed dwellings unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that such provision and other site requirements would make the development unviable or where such provision is demonstrated to not be in accordance with the latest available housing information for the Plan area.



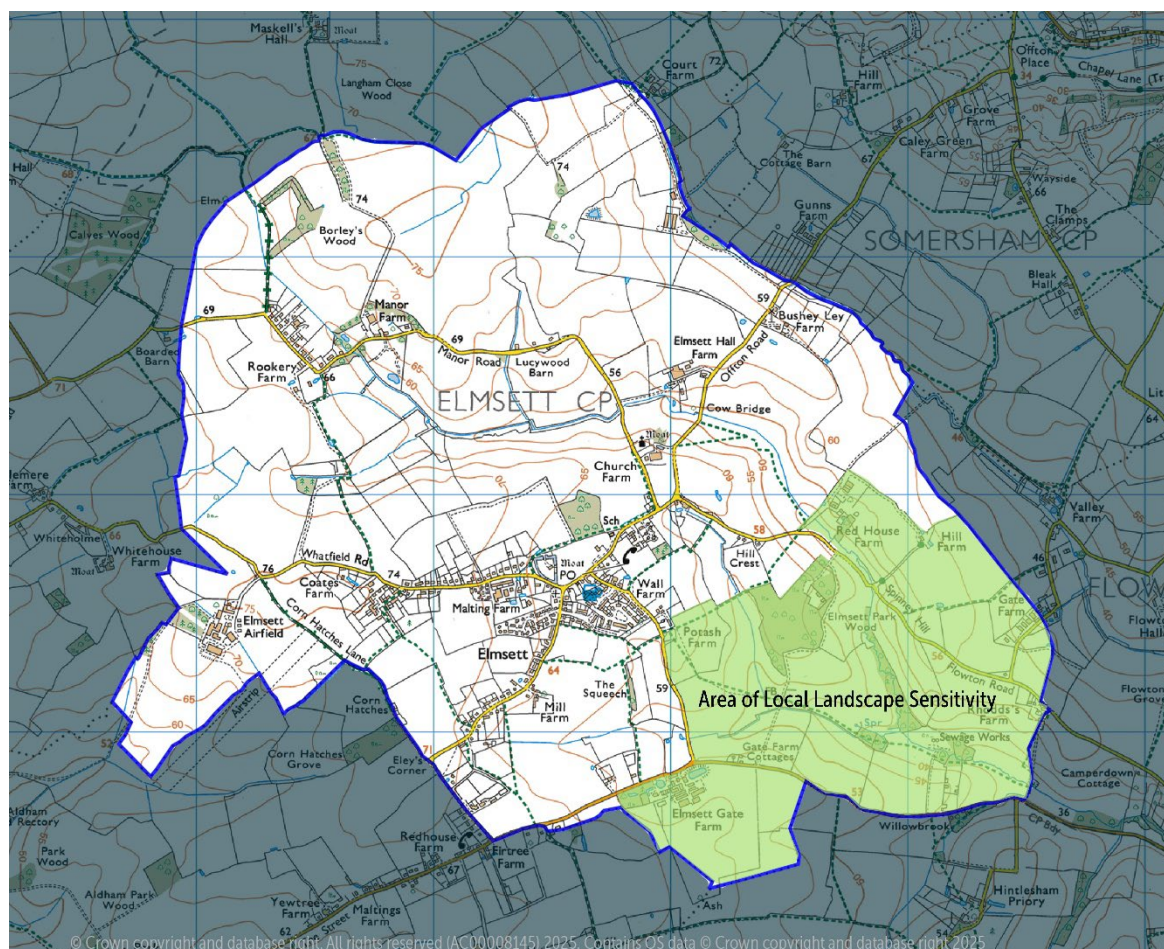
8. Historic and Natural Environment

Objectives

4. Conserve and enhance the heritage assets of the parish
5. Protect and improve the features which contribute to historic character
6. Maintain the village's rural setting
7. Protect the important green spaces, woodland and countryside
8. Protect important views and links to the wider countryside

Elmsett's Landscape Setting

- 8.1 At the time of preparing the 2019 Plan, land to the east and southeast of the village had, since the mid-1980's, been designated in the development plan as a Special Landscape Area (SLA). It comprised an area with tributaries to the River Gipping. Given the uncertainty about the prospect of the SLA being retained in the Joint Local Plan and the importance of this high-quality landscape in the Neighbourhood Plan area, a new local designation, the Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity (ALLS), is made in the Plan. The designated area reflects the boundary of the original SLA but has been refined to follow field boundaries rather than, as in the original SLA designation follow undefined boundaries. The ALLS designation does not, in itself, stop development taking place, but it does ensure that any development within the area should be designed to be in harmony with the special characteristics of the area.



Map 8 - Area of local landscape sensitivity

Policy EMST6 – Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity

Development proposals in the Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity, as identified on the Proposals Map, will be permitted only where they:

- protect or enhance the special landscape qualities of the area; and
 - are designed and sited so as to harmonise with the landscape setting.
-

Local Green Spaces

8.2 There are a number of important open areas within the village that not only make important contributions to the character and setting of the built environment, but also play important roles in providing space for recreation.

8.3 Paragraph 106 of the NPPF states that “neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.” Paragraph 107 states that the designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

It is recognised that the designation of Local Green Spaces (LGS) should not be used simply to block development.

8.4 Background work undertaken during the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of sites that qualify for designation as Local Green Spaces. A separate Local Green Space Appraisal document is available that demonstrates how spaces meet the criteria in paragraph 107 of the NPPF and those that do are identified in Policy EMST7 below. The Local Green Spaces are illustrated on the Map below. The identification of these spaces means that development on these spaces is restricted to that which is essential to the sites, such as that required for utility service providers such as telecommunications equipment.

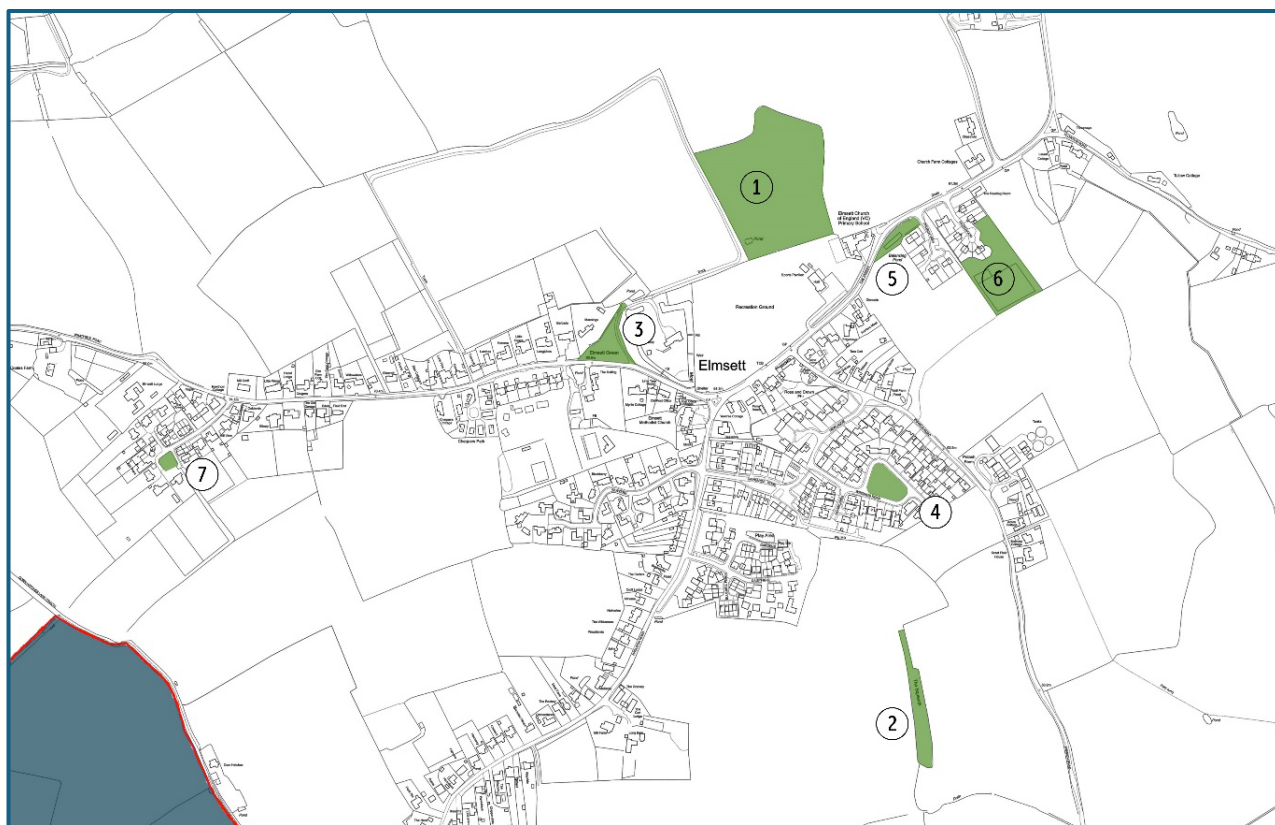


Policy EMST7 – Local Green Spaces

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

1. Buckles Wood
2. The Squeech
3. The Green
4. Green at Windings Road
5. Green at Church View
6. Community Open Space at Hazelwood
7. Green at Mill Lane

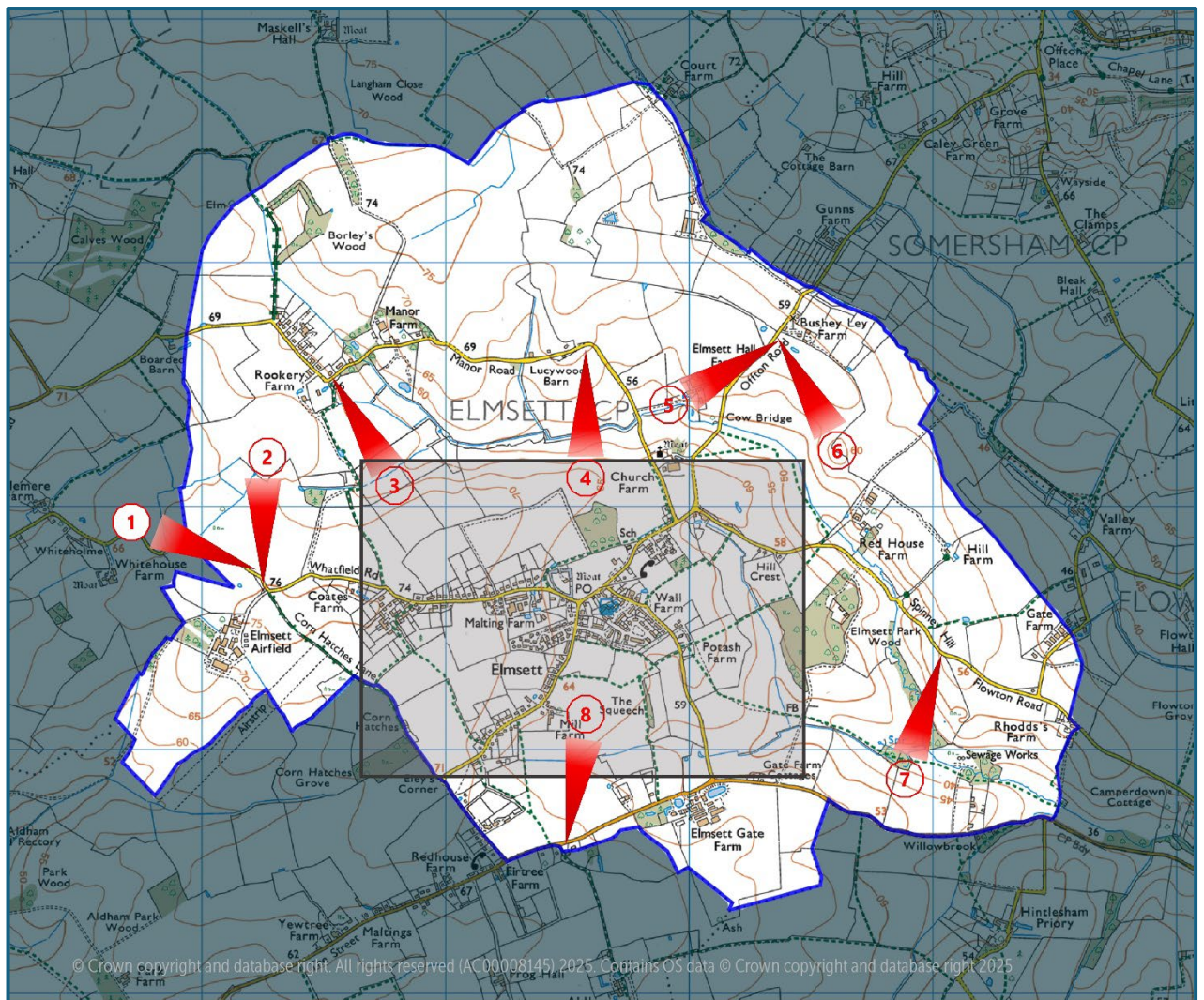
Development on these sites will only be permitted in very special circumstances. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation.



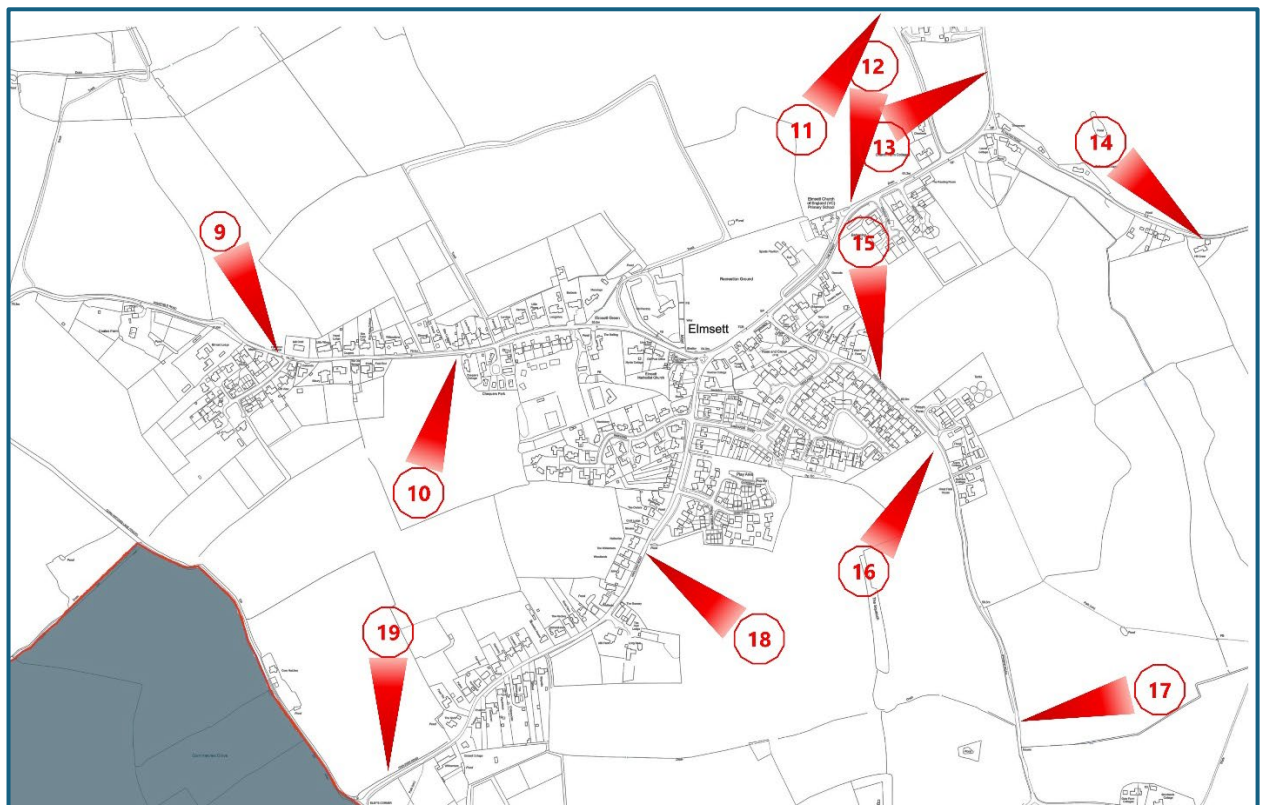
Map 5 – Local Green Spaces

Important Views

- 8.5 Given the location of Elmsett on a relatively high plateau, views into and out of the village are of high importance to its character and sense of rurality. Development that does not have regard to its potential impact on these views could have a significant detrimental impact on the setting of the village. During the preparation of the Plan, an assessment of views from public areas was undertaken to determine which are most important in terms of the setting of the village in the landscape. The separate Elmsett Views Appraisal identifies the important views and, as a result, the most significant views that need to be protected are identified on the adjoining map as well as on the Proposals Map.



Map 6 – Important Views – Parish



Map 7 – Important Views – Village Centre

- 8.6 Inconsiderate development could have a significant and unwanted detrimental impact on the landscape setting of the village and will not be supported. When proposals for development in the village are being prepared, it will be necessary to take account of the impact on views and demonstrate how the buildings can be satisfactorily accommodated within the landscape. Landscape Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) are a recognised tools that specifically aims to ensure that all possible effects of change and development both on the landscape itself and on views and visual amenity, are considered in decision-making.

Policy EMST8 – Protection of Important Views and Landscape Character

Important views from public vantage points either within the built-up area or into or out of the surrounding countryside, are identified on the Proposals Map. Any proposed development should not detract from the key landscape features of these views. Proposals for new buildings outside the BUAB will be required to be accompanied by a Landscape Visual Impact Appraisal or other appropriate and proportionate evidence that demonstrates how the proposal:

- i) can be accommodated in the countryside without having a detrimental impact, by reason of the buildings scale, materials and location, on the character and appearance of the countryside and its distinction from the Built-Up Area; and
 - ii) conserves and enhances the unique landscape and scenic beauty within the parish, having regard to the Suffolk Landscape Character Appraisal.
-

Heritage Assets

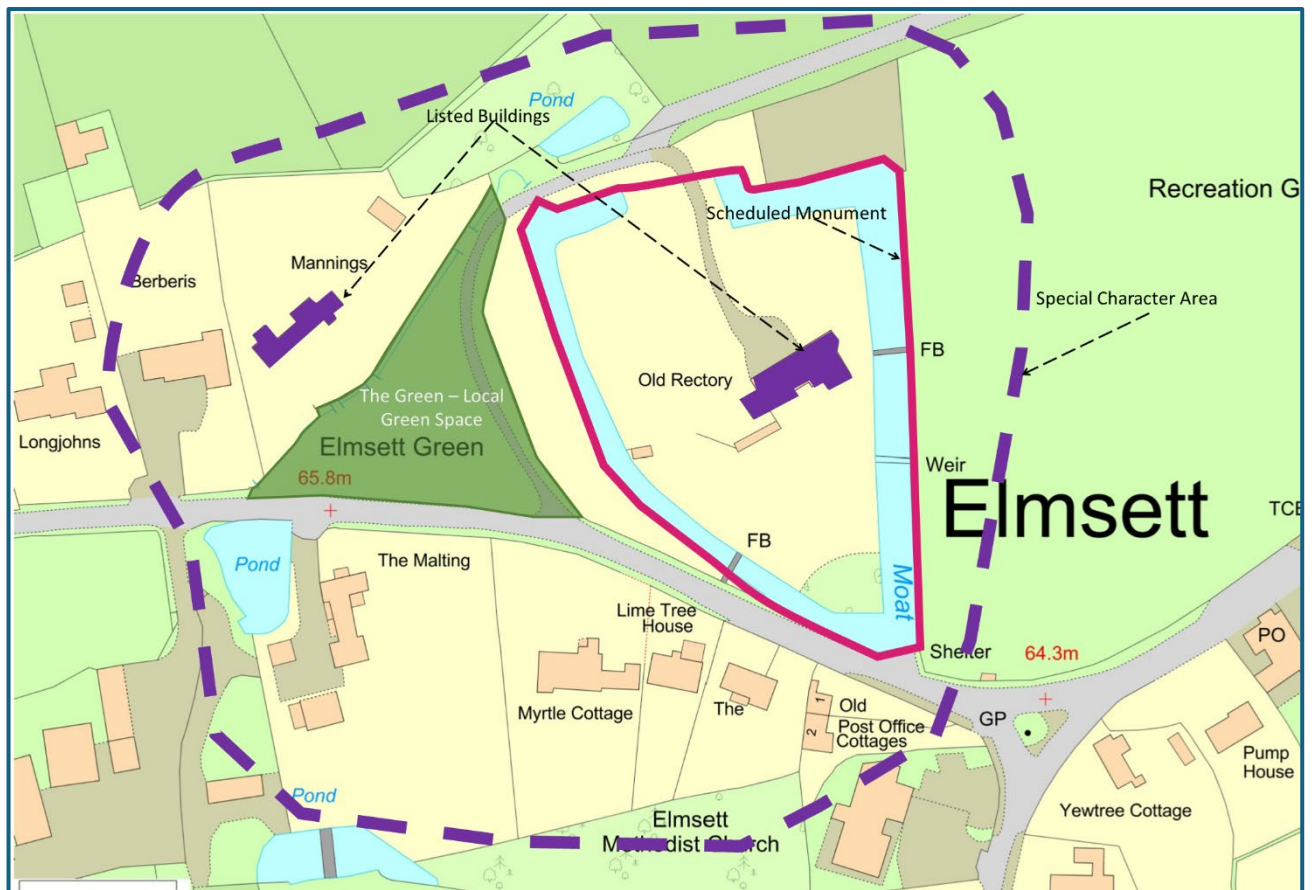
- 8.7 Although there is no designated Conservation Area in the village, there are a number of distinctive historic assets that, in combination, are essential to maintain and preserve to reflect the local character of Elmsett. In particular, the area around The Green on Whatfield Road is of significant local importance, containing a designated Ancient Monument, Listed Buildings, a designated village green and important trees, hedgerows and other natural features. The area is therefore designated as a Special Character Area within which development proposals will need to demonstrate how they preserve and enhance the special characteristics of the area.

Policy EMST9 – Elmsett Special Character Area

A Special Character Area is identified on the Proposals Map.

Within this area, as well as having regard to the need to preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets in or adjoining the area, consideration should be given as to how a proposal enhances the distinct characteristics of the identified area.

Where the harm caused as a result of the impact of a proposed scheme is not justified by the public benefits that would be provided, it will not be supported.



Map 8 – The Special Character Area

- 8.8 Across the Plan Area, there are a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets that should be preserved and enhanced for the enjoyment and benefit of residents. These designations include Listed Buildings, The Moat Scheduled Monument in the Special Character Area, and archaeological sites. The current list of Designated Heritage Assets is set out in Appendix 2 of the Plan. The Suffolk Historic Environment Record provides an important starting point to identify potential assets and the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service advises that there should be an early consultation of the Historic Environment Record and assessment of the archaeological potential of the area at an appropriate stage in the design of new developments, in order that the requirements of the NPPF and Development Plan policies are met. SCC Archaeological Service can advise on the level of assessment and appropriate stages to be undertaken.

Policy EMST10 – Heritage Assets

To ensure the conservation and enhancement of Elmsett's heritage assets, proposals should:

- preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets of the village;
- demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the asset and of the wider context in which the heritage asset sits, alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the development on the heritage asset and its context; and
- provide clear justification for any works that would lead to substantial harm to or total loss of a designated heritage asset yet be of wider substantial public benefit, through detailed analysis of the asset and the proposal.

A balanced judgment will be taken having regard to the scale of any harm or loss to a non-designated heritage asset in relation to its significance.

- 8.9 Within parts of the village centre, especially within the Special Character Area, overhead power and telephone wires have a detrimental impact on the quality of the area. It is possible to get these placed underground, especially with the use of today's transmission methods and their removal, where possible would significantly improve the environment.

Community Action 2 - Overhead wires

Opportunities will be sought to lobby and persuade the electricity and telephone infrastructure providers to remove overhead wires in the built-up area of the village and place them underground.

Development Design Considerations

- 8.10 As previously identified, Elmsett has grown and evolved over many years and, as a consequence, the village's building characteristics, including designs and materials varies accordingly. The household survey raised a number of concerns about the design of new buildings and their impact on the village. As well as the potential impact of new development on views into or out of the village.
- 8.11 New development should respect the scale, layout and massing of existing development in the vicinity off the site. To reflect the tradition styles of housing in the village, new housing development should not be higher than two storeys and the inclusion of a mix of single storey, 1½ storey and two storey dwellings in developments is encouraged. In addition, where street furniture (bollards, benches, street nameplates etc) is required in development, their placement should not clutter the street scene but be in keeping with the rural nature of Elmsett.
- 8.12 The Plan Area falls within the 13km zone of influence (ZOI) of European designated sites on the Orwell. New housing is likely to have a significant effect upon the interest features of the designated sites, through increased recreational pressure. Local authorities and Natural England have prepared a Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) to mitigate the recreational impacts. Where appropriate, contributions from residential development within the Plan Area will be required to make a financial contribution towards mitigation measures to avoid adverse in-combination recreational disturbance effects on European Sites. Natural England advise that, in the interim, before the Suffolk RAMS is completed, all residential development will need to deliver all measures identified (including strategic measures) through project level HRAs, or otherwise, to mitigate any recreational disturbance impacts in compliance with the Habitat Regulations and Habitats Directive.

Policy EMST11 – Development Design Considerations

Proposals for new development must reflect the local character of Elmsett and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.

Proposals should, as appropriate:

- a) recognise and address the key features, characteristics, landscape/ building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area and/or building and on sites located outside the Built-Up Area Boundary, submit, as part of the planning application, a landscape character appraisal to demonstrate this;
- b) maintain or create Elmsett's sense of place and/or local character;
- c) not involve the loss of gardens and important open, green or landscaped areas which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the village;
- d) incorporate sustainable design and construction measures and energy efficiency measures;
- e) taking mitigation measures into account, not affect adversely:
 - i) any historic character, architectural or archaeological heritage assets of the site and its surroundings;
 - ii) important landscape characteristics including trees and ancient hedgerows and other prominent topographical features;
 - iii) sites, habitats, species and features of ecological interest;
 - iv) the amenities of adjacent areas by reason of noise, smell, vibration, overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light, other pollution (including light pollution), or volume or type of vehicular activity generated; and or residential amenity;
- f) not site sensitive development where its users would be significantly and adversely affected by noise, smell, vibration, or other forms of pollution from existing sources, unless adequate and appropriate mitigation can be implemented;
- g) produce designs that respect the character, scale, height, density of the locality.
- h) produce designs, in accordance with standards, that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network ensuring that all vehicle parking is provided within the plot; and
- i) not increase the risk of both fluvial and pluvial flooding, or the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Where appropriate, contributions from new housing developments will be required to provide mitigation measures identified in the Suffolk Coastal Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) once it has been adopted. Prior to RAMS completion, contributions will be required, where appropriate, through project level HRAs or otherwise, to mitigate any recreational disturbance impacts at the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, in compliance with the UK Habitats Regulations 2017.

9. INFRASTRUCTURE, Jobs and Facilities

Objectives

9. Improve and sustain high quality local facilities for existing and future residents.
 10. Encourage opportunities for home working and local employment.
-
- 9.1 Broadband and Mobile Communications are important to the sustainability of rural communities by enabling working from home and online shopping. Broadband speeds in the village centre are generally very good but this is not necessarily the case in locations away from the current fibre-optic broadband cabinets. It will be important to ensure that future broadband provision in the village keeps pace with improvements to technology. Mobile phone signals are surprisingly poor given the village's elevated position. The location of mobile phone masts can have a detrimental impact on the character of the countryside and this can cause a conundrum between trying to improve mobile phones signals and protecting the character of the village.
 - 9.2 Paragraph 120 of the 24 NPPF states:

"The number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate."

Policy EMST12 – Communications Technology

Proposals from mobile phone network operators to improve mobile coverage will be supported where:

- i) the apparatus is designed and sited to minimise intrusion and visual impact
 - ii) the numbers of radio and telecommunications masts are kept to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network; and
 - iii) proposals have been sited and designed to minimise the impacts on the rural character of Elmsett, having particular regard to the important views identified on the Proposals Map.
-

Community Action 3 – Communications Technology

We will actively monitor, lobby and influence improvements to optimise communications technology infrastructure within the parish.

Jobs

- 9.3 Hinterland villages such as Elmsett are not expected to make provision for a large number of jobs as these would be expected to be provided in higher order settlements such as Hadleigh, Needham Market or Ipswich. This is supported by the data from the 2011 census that identifies that the majority of residents in employment travel between 10 and 20 kilometres to work. However, just under a third of residents work either at

home or travel less than five kilometres to work, which demonstrates that there are local employment opportunities available.

- 9.4 Of particular local importance is the cluster of business units located at Elmsett Airfield and at Gate Farm on Ipswich Road. A range of buildings at each location provide opportunities for a range of jobs and services. At Elmsett Airfield these are partly, but not solely, associated with aircraft servicing and restoration. The protection and retention of these employment opportunities is supported and the loss of employment opportunities on the sites to other uses will be resisted unless particular circumstances prevail that justify such a loss.
- 9.5 There may be opportunities for the intensification and expansion of employment opportunities on the identified sites, but any expansion must not result in unacceptable increases in traffic on the narrow roads that lead to the sites, either through a significant increase in the number of people working on the site or through lorry movements servicing the site.

Policy EMST13 –Employment Sites

The retention and intensification of employment uses at Elmsett Airfield and at Gate Farm, as identified on the Proposals Map, will be supported provided such proposals do not have a detrimental impact on the local landscape character or will generate unacceptable levels of vehicular traffic on local roads.

Proposals for non-employment uses that are expected to have an adverse impact effect on employment generation, will only be permitted where one or more of the following criteria has been met:

- a) evidence can be provided that genuine attempts have been made to sell/let the site in its current use, and that no suitable and viable alternative employment uses can be found or are likely to be found in the foreseeable future;
 - b) the existing use has created over-riding environmental problems (e.g. noise, odours or traffic) and permitting an alternative use would be a substantial environmental benefit that would outweigh the loss of an employment site;
 - c) an alternative use or mix of uses would assist in regeneration and offer greater benefits to the community in meeting local business and employment needs;
 - d) it is for an employment related support facility such as employment training/education, workplace crèche or industrial estate café;
 - e) an alternative use or mix of uses would provide other sustainability benefits that would outweigh the loss of an employment site.
-

Village Services and Facilities

- 9.6 At the time that the 2019 Plan was prepared, Elmsett benefitted from a good range of premises and facilities that provided for some day-to-day needs of residents. These included the Village Hall, the Rose and Crown pub, the adjoining Post Office and shop, the Methodist Church Hall, and the Primary School. However, the Post Office closed in 2023 and then the shop closed in 2024. Early in 2025 a community shop opened in the Village Hall, supported by a £60,000 grant awarded by the Parish Council to the Village Hall Management Committee. A mobile Post Office also visits once a week. It remains vital that these remaining services and facilities are protected and enhanced for the use of current and future residents. However, it is recognised that demands change over

time and it would be unreasonable to require the retention of these facilities if there is no longer a proven need or demand for them. In such circumstances it might be appropriate for those uses to be lost where specific criteria can be met.

Policy EMST14 – Community Facilities and Services

The provision and enhancement of community facilities and services that serve the needs of Elmsett will be permitted where they contribute to the quality of village life and improve the sustainability of the village.

Proposals that will result in the loss of existing valued facilities (or premises last used for such purposes), including:

- the Rose and Crown Pub;
- the Village Hall;
- the Methodist Church Hall;
- the Primary School;

will only be permitted where:

- a) it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable nor likely to become viable. Where appropriate, supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 12 months; and
 - b) it can be demonstrated that there is insufficient local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or
 - c) alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling or walking.
-



Policy EMST15 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

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

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

Any replacement provision should take account of the needs of the settlement where the development is taking place and the current standards of open space and sports facility provision adopted by the local planning authority.

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

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

Roads and Transport

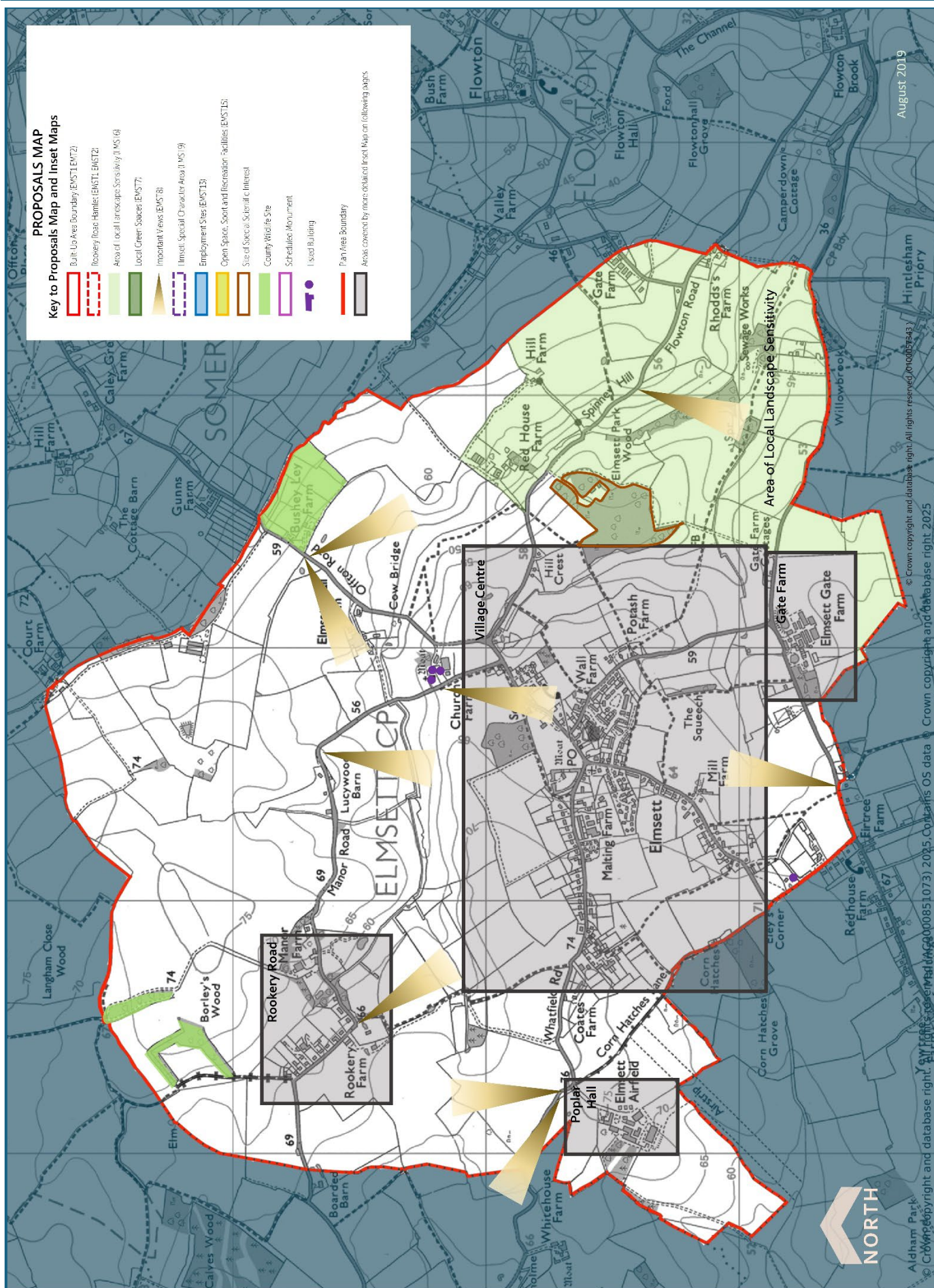
- 9.7 The village is served by a road network that is typical of a rural agricultural area, with access roads to the main destinations being narrow and, in some situations, being reliant on passing places and drivers giving way to allow others to get through. The situation is made worse when large vans and lorries try to access the village. The planning permission for the 44 dwellings east of Hadleigh Road (Daisyfield) required a financial contribution for the creation of passing places in Ipswich Road and Flowton Road, but it is considered that this is unlikely to resolve all the issues due to the narrowness of roads in the wider area. Public transport is also very poor and there is no bus service to either Hadleigh or Ipswich that would enable people to travel to work by public transport.

The Village Hall

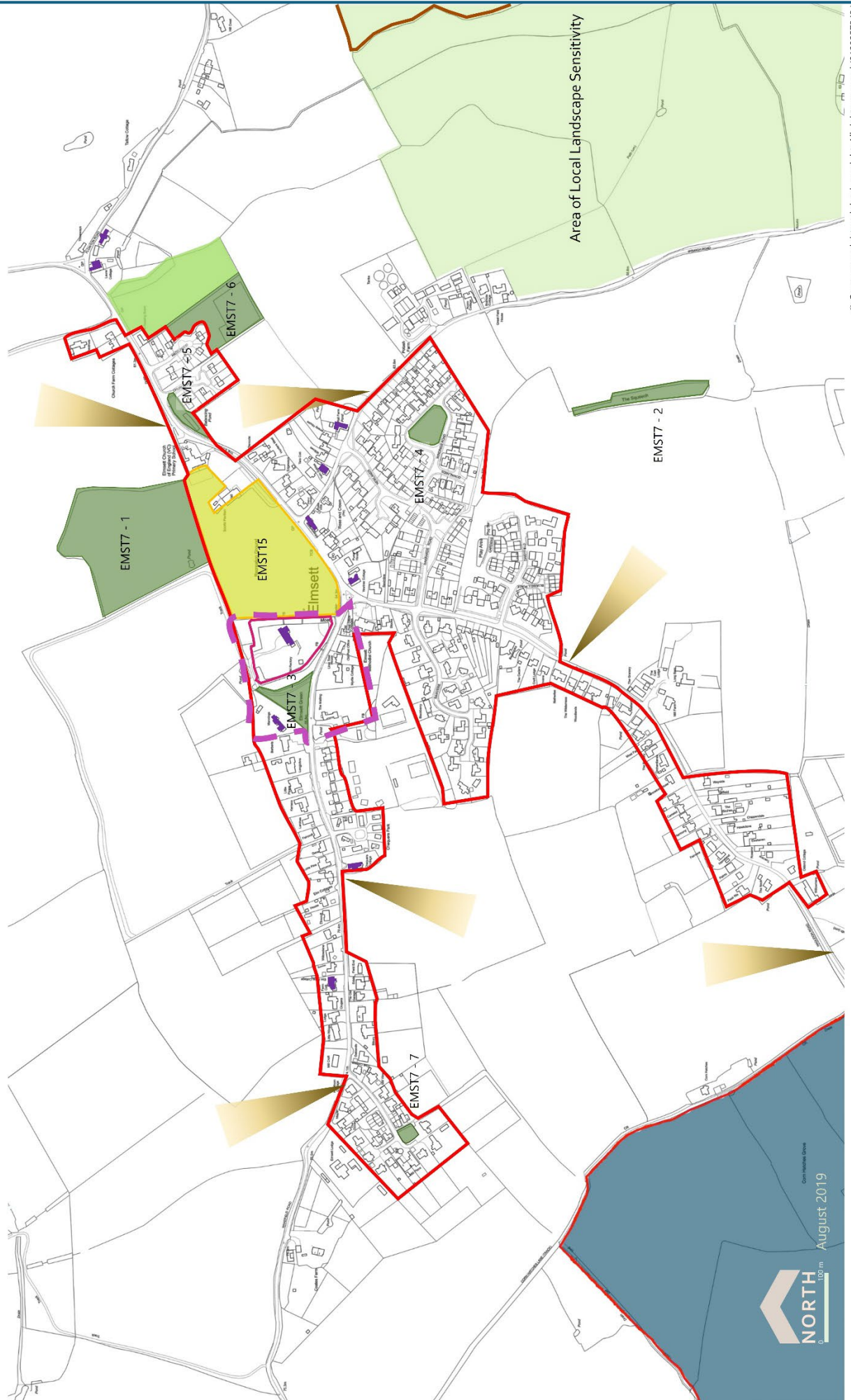
- 9.8 A Village Hall on the Meadow was planned from about 1971. Eventually it was proposed that a pre-cast sectional building would be the best option with an estimated cost of £30,000. The Community Council, a volunteer organisation from the village, took on the project and after extensive fund-raising building work eventually started in 1977. The volunteer work did not stop after the main building work had finished and many then helped to fit out the Hall and decorate it for use. It was finally opened on the 29th May 1979 and at that time the Community Council was disbanded and the Hall was handed over to the Elmsett and Aldham Village Hall and Recreation Ground Charity and was subsequently managed by the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC).
- 9.9 The adjoining village Playing Field provides an important resource capable of accommodating two football pitches and a cricket wicket as well as providing a separate children's play area adjoining the village hall. It is essential that these are maintained and improved as the village continues to grow over the coming years. In this respect, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the playing field from being lost unless equally good or better pitches are provided in an equally accessible location in the village.



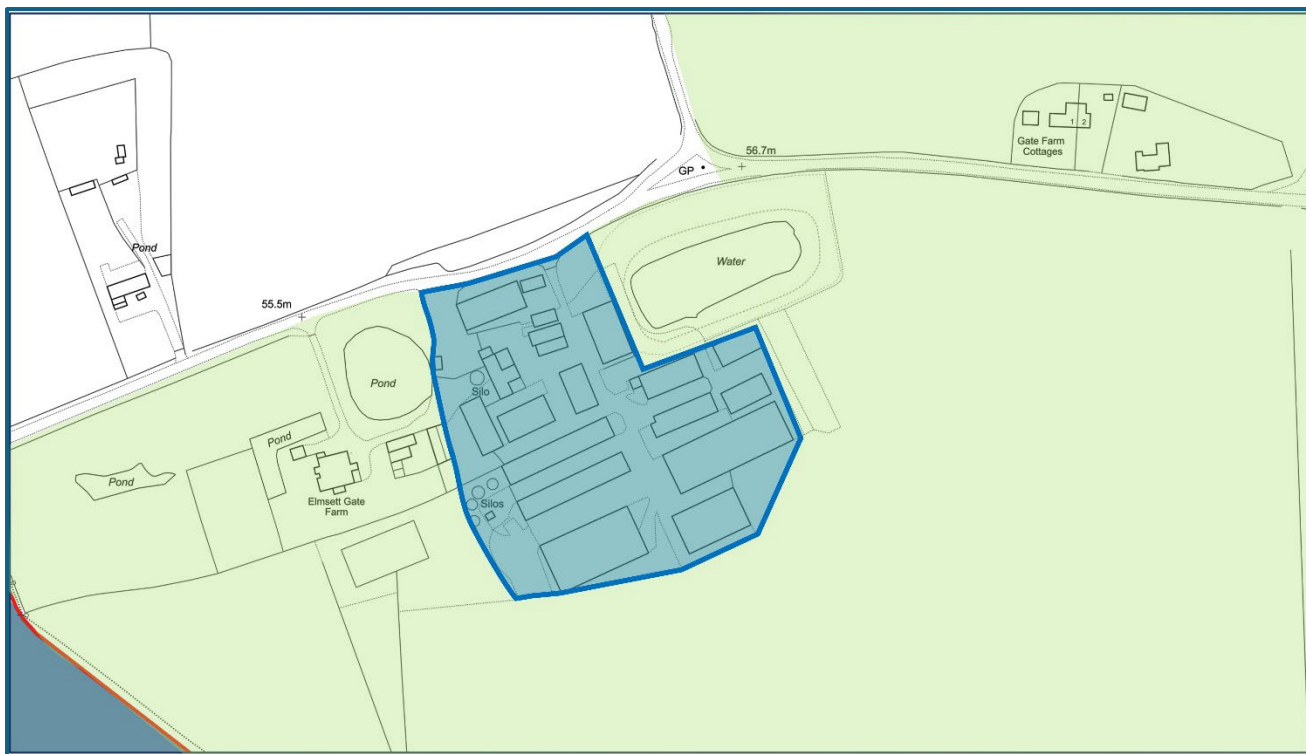




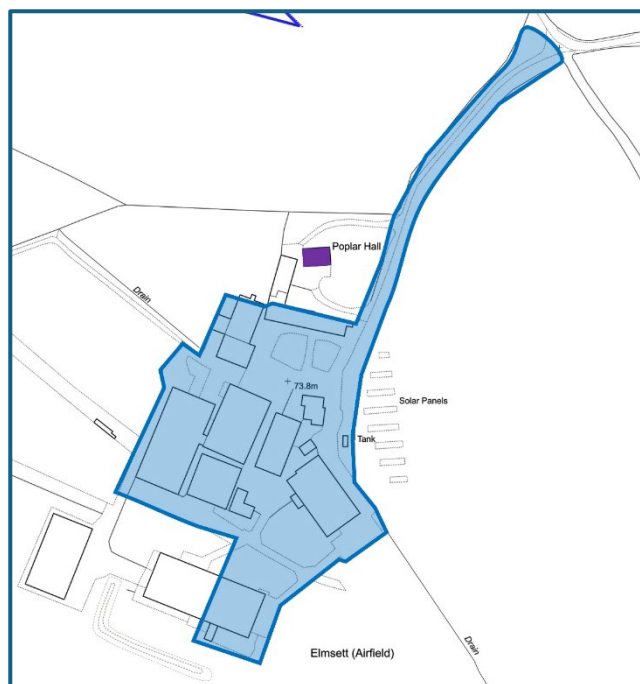
Village Centre Inset Map



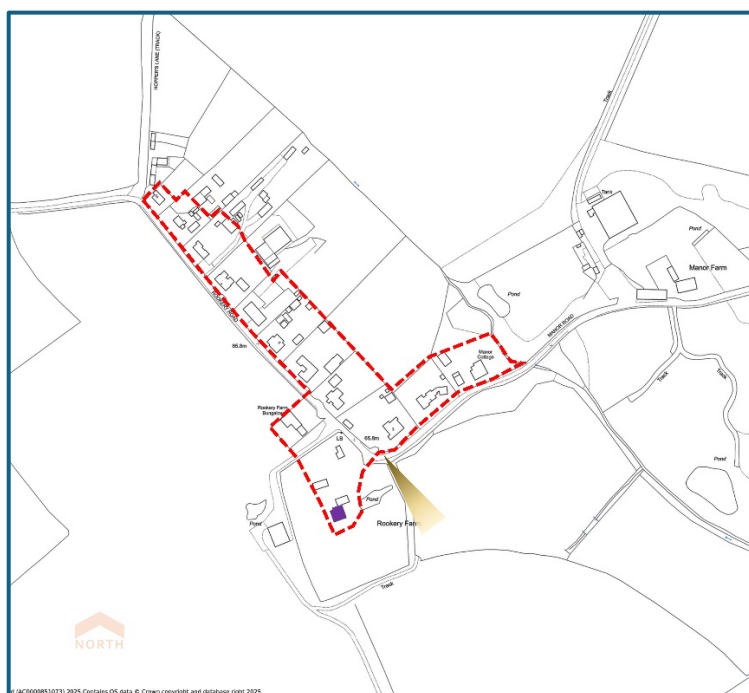
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Gate Farm Inset Map



Elmsett Airfield Inset Map



Rookery Road Hamlet

Glossary

Affordable Housing: Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

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

Best and most versatile agricultural land: Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hinterland Village: Defined in the Babergh Core Strategy 2014 as villages that tend to be small, with very limited facilities and so are dependent on nearby larger villages or urban areas for many of their everyday needs.

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

Infrastructure: The basic physical and organisational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads and power supplies) necessary for development to take place.

International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity: All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategic Environmental Assessment: 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.

Use Classes: The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'.

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

Appendix 1 – Designated Heritage Assets

As at March 2025

Source - Historic England's Register of Listed Buildings

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>

Up to date information on listed buildings and other heritage assets should be sought from Historic England or another reliable source.

Listed Buildings

GRADE I

Church of St Peter, Church Road

GRADE II

Church, Farm, Church Road

Twin Gables, Ipswich Road

Barn to east of Laurel Cottage, Flowton Cottage

Wheelright Cottages, The Street

Elm Farmhouse, Whatfield Road

Yew Tree Cottages, The Street

The Chequers, Whatfield Road

Eleys Cottage, Hadleigh Road

Wall Farmhouse, Ipswich Road

Rectory, Whatfield Road

Poplar Hall Farmhouse, Whatfield Road

Hill Farmhouse, Flowton Road

Mannings Cottage, The Green

Laurel Cottage, Flowton Road

Redhouse Farmhouse, Flowton Road

Rookery Farmhouse, Manor Road

Scheduled Monument

Moated site at The Old Rectory, 150m north east of Malting Farm

Appendix 2 - Housing development in pipeline at 1 April 2024

Source: Babergh District Council, Five-Year Housing Land Supply. Position Statement 2024

Sites with planning permission for housing at 1 April 2024 that had yet to completed at that date.

Planning Application Reference	Address	Number of dwellings (net increase)	Remaining
DC/22/01754/FUL	Land East of Hadleigh Road	44	22
DC/21/05844/RES	Shrubland Park Nurseries	18	18
DC/21/05077/RES	Aldham End, Hadleigh Road	1	1
DC/23/04571/FUL	9 Manor Road	0 – replacement dwelling	0
DC/22/00612/AGD	Cobwebs Farm (Land to the rear of 6 Manor Road)	1	1



1977

ELMSETT