



# Assington



## Neighbourhood Plan



2018-2036

# 1. Welcome



## Welcome to our fourth village consultation event

The Assington Neighbourhood Plan was born as a result of a public meeting of residents in 2018 where it was clearly identified that villagers wanted to have their say in the future development of Assington.

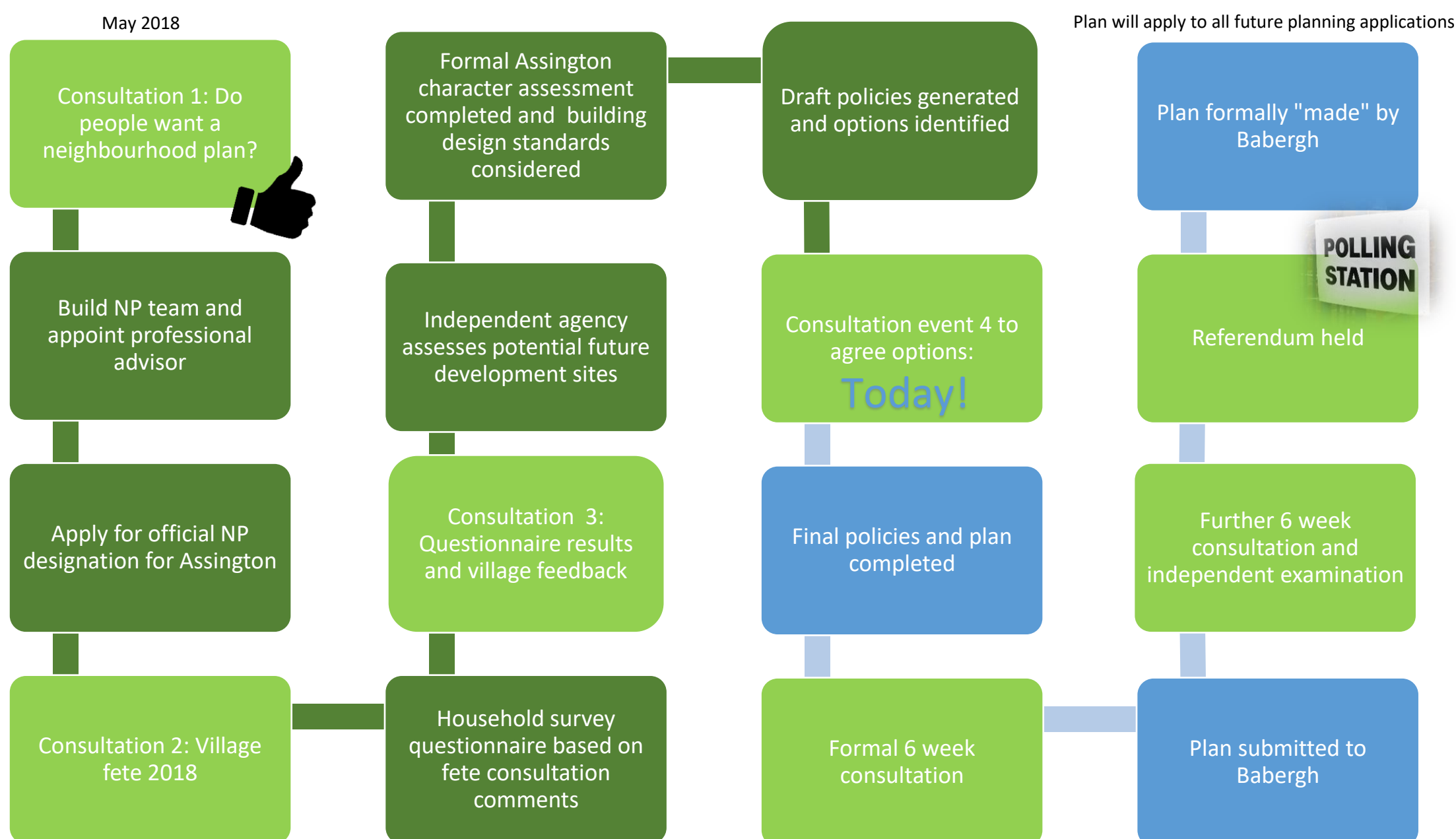
The **Neighbourhood Plan Team** is made up of villagers who have lived in Assington for a long time and villagers who have recently moved here. We live in different locations all over the village and our objective is to collect and collate opinions, views, preferences and suggestions from as many villagers as possible in order to write a Neighbourhood Plan which represents the village as a whole and gives us a formal say in the future development of Assington.

Once complete, our Neighbourhood Plan will be a serious consideration by the local authority when making decisions about possible development in Assington and it may indeed be instrumental in securing desirable development in Assington or possibly preventing what is deemed as 'undesirable' development for the village.

### Neighbourhood Plan Team

Please speak to any of our team today who will be pleased to hear your opinions or to offer any further information:

*Helen Wallace (Chair), Ian Jordan (Vice-Chair), Nigel Finch, Catherine Harrison, Andrew Hill (Treasurer), Stephen Lustig (Secretary), Nick Miller.*



Today we particularly want your views in particular on three important issues – protecting our green spaces, saving our favourite views, and whether and where we should allocate any additional sites for housing.

Please fill in the feedback forms and tell us what you think!



# 2. Do Neighbourhood Plans Work?

## An update from Lawshall



### The story in May 2019:

- Lawshall, near Bury St. Edmunds, was one of the first villages in Babergh to complete a neighbourhood plan.
- Almost immediately after the plan was complete, a developer put in an application for 15 houses to be built on a field near the centre of the village.
- The field was considered an important settlement gap in Lawshall, and villagers had made clear that they did not want any developments greater than 5 houses.
- The development complied with many of Babergh's planning policies BUT
- It did not comply with the policies that villagers had agreed as part of their neighbourhood plan
- An extract from Babergh's decision notice is shown here ->

#### LAWSHALL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2016-2036

Made (Adopted) – October 2017



Youth Club College of Lawshall Buildings – unveiled at 1<sup>st</sup> Community Consultation Nov 2015

Lawshall Parish Council

Loving our village – past, present, future!



Site Plan PA02/D - Received 20/06/2018

#### Section B:

Babergh District Council as Local Planning Authority, hereby give notice that **OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION HAS BEEN REFUSED** for the development proposed in the application in accordance with the particulars and plans listed in section A for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development, by virtue of its scale, density, siting and location would result in the loss of a valued settlement gap, harmful to the local character of the Lawshall village, **contrary to Policy LAW3 and LAW9 of the Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan 2017**, Policy CS11 and CS15 of the Babergh Core Strategy (2014) and paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed development, by virtue of its scale, density and internal access arrangement, would result in a residential character alien to the established development pattern in Lawshall and surrounding hamlets, harmful to the local environment and local distinctiveness, contrary to Policy CS11 and CS15 of the Babergh Core Strategy (2014) and paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. The proposal would fail to deliver sustainable development, contrary to Policy CS1, CS11 and CS15 of the Babergh Core Strategy (2014), **the Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan 2017** and the National Planning Policy Framework. In particular the application fails to demonstrate that a suitable sustainable urban drainage scheme can be provided on the site to adequately mitigate the risks of flooding.

#### SUMMARY OF POLICIES WHICH ARE RELEVANT TO THE DECISION:

CS01 - Applying the presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development in Babergh  
CS02 - Settlement Pattern Policy  
CS03 - Strategy for Growth and Development  
CS11 - Core and Hinterland Villages  
CS15 - Implementing Sustainable Development  
CS18 - Mix and Types of Dwellings  
CS19 - Affordable Homes  
CS21 - Infrastructure Provision  
CN01 - Design Standards  
CR07 - Landscaping Schemes  
CR08 - Hedgerows  
TP15 - Parking Standards - New Development  
NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework  
Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan

In August 2019, the developers appealed against Babergh's decision to refuse planning permission. It was then for the government's Bristol-based Planning Inspectorate to take a final decision.

- The Inspectorate upheld the decision made by Babergh and planning permission was refused.
- The Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan was cited in the appeal decision no less than **10 times**.
- Policies created by the Neighbourhood Plan were key reasons why the Inspectorate upheld the decision.

Neighbourhood Plans work –  
even when appealed.

#### The Planning Inspectorate

#### Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 August 2019

by Sarah Dyer BA BTP MRTPI MCM1

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/W/19/3224220  
Land West of Bury Road, Lawshall IP29 4PJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Hartog Hutton Ltd against the decision of Babergh District Council.
- The application Ref DC/18/02099, dated 10 May 2018, was refused by notice dated 14 December 2018.
- The development proposed is erection of 15 Dwellings (including 5 affordable homes), with associated parking and sustainable drainage. Along with new vehicular access.

#### Decision

1. **The appeal is dismissed.**

#### Procedural Matters

2. The planning application was in outline with all matters reserved with the exception of access. I have had regard to the submitted plans but have considered all elements of these drawings as indicative except the access from Bury Road.
3. **The Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2036 (2017) (the NP) has been made and forms part of the Development Plan.**

#### Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
  - The effect of the development on:
    - the setting of Lawshall within the wider landscape; and
    - the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

# 3. Housing

## How should Assington develop?



Guided by the questionnaire results and feedback from villagers at our consultation events, we have developed some clear ideas on people's views on housing and these will be in the draft plan:

Assington is in the process of taking more than its "fair share" of additional housing through recent planning permissions

No further planning permissions should be granted until the latter stages of the plan (towards 2036)

No developments of more than 5 houses should be permitted



Priority should be given to 2 and 3 bedroom properties including bungalows

The rural character of the village should be preserved, even where it means that accessibility is reduced

We have to be guided by legislation and our professional advisors as to what is 'possible'. Many things the village might like to do e.g. ensure people with a connection to Assington have first rights to new houses, or to mandate only affordable or social housing, are difficult to achieve under current government policy.

– What do you think?



# 4. Housing

## Should we allocate sites for housing?



The village can choose one of three approaches to allocating sites for possible future housing in the Neighbourhood Plan:

- 1) Allocate no sites for housing
- 2) Allocate (only) sites that already have planning permission (as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018) and which have not yet been commenced.
- 3) Allocate additional sites which do not currently have planning permission.

In the household survey, 92% of parishioners wanted the neighbourhood plan to allocate sites – this leaves us to consider option 2) or 3)





# 5. Site Allocations

## Sites with planning permission



We are able to allocate all sites which have planning permission but where house building has not been commenced. The main three sites, totalling 29 houses, are shown below:

In the south end of The Street:



In the north end of The Street:



Total housing provided: 29 houses.

Site A: 15 houses / Site B: 8 houses / Site C: 6 houses

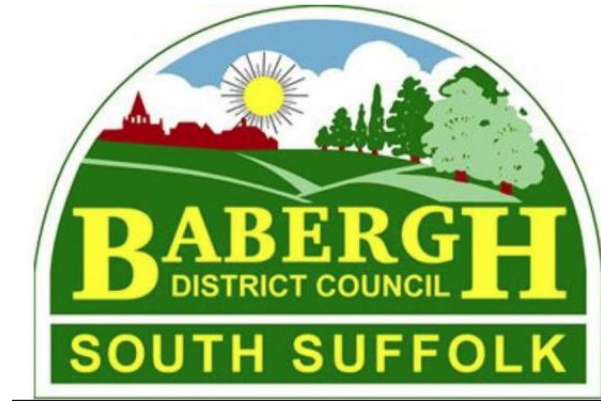


# 6. Site Allocations

## Sites without planning permission



The Babergh Local Plan specifies a **minimum** housing requirement for Assington between 2018 and 2036 of 38 houses.



The household survey showed that 86% of people thought the village should have between zero and 25 houses over the next twenty years. Less than 3% wanted more than 50.

In total, since April 2018, 54 houses have been given planning permission. 16 of these have been rejected by Babergh but then overturned on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.



## Planning Inspectorate

It is also likely that, over the years, additional 'windfall sites', for example, barn conversions, add additional houses to the total.

So WHY should we allocate any additional sites in our plan?

- New sites allow us to specify, with some precision, the type of housing that would be allowed.
- This can include the size of new homes and when they would be allowed, for example, not before 2025 or 2030.
- We could mandate green space requirements, new footpaths or landscaping features, for example requiring trees to be included to improve the street scene.



# 7. Site Allocations

## Sites without planning permission

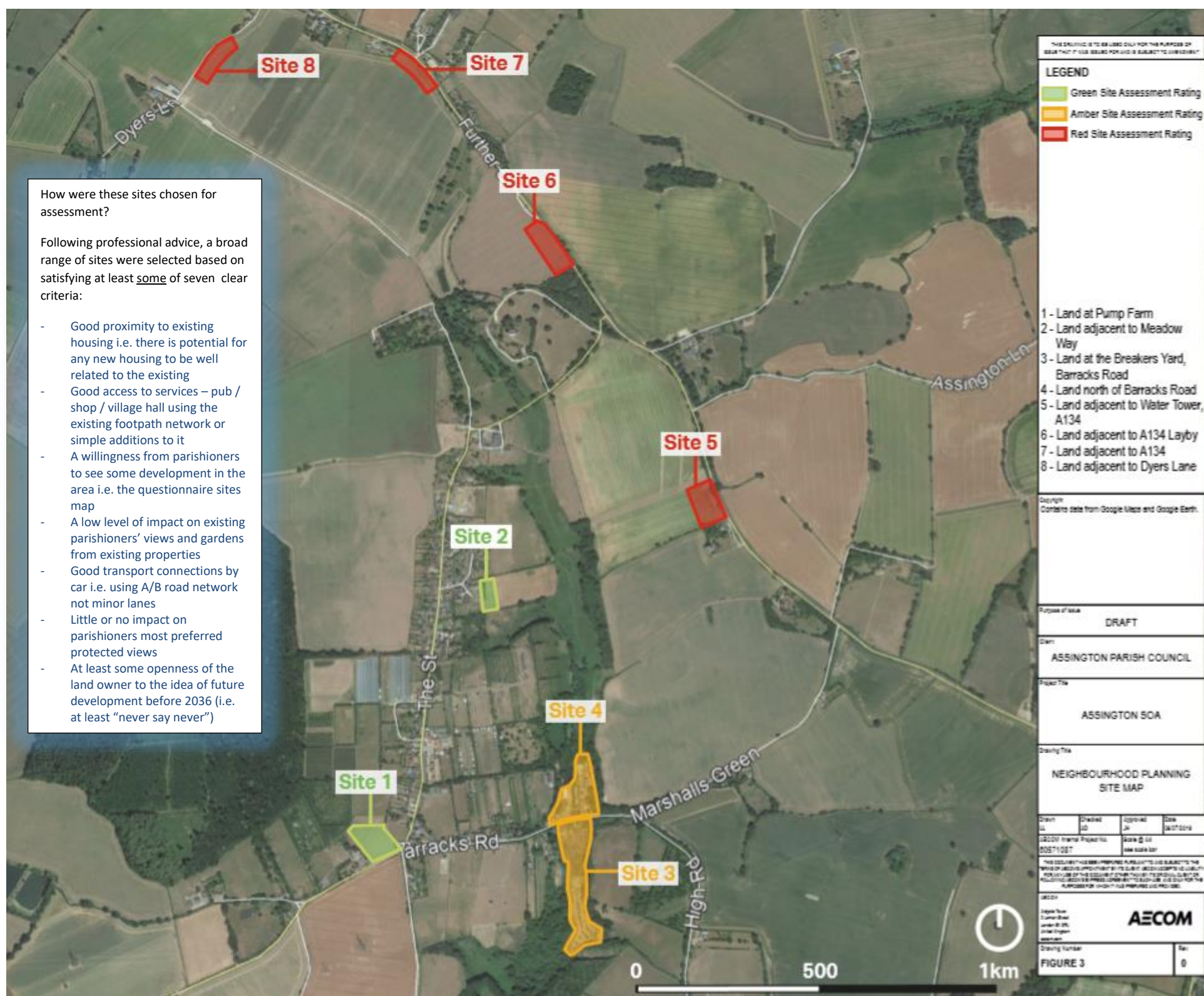


Over summer, the team has been working with government appointed professional advisor AECOM to assess potential locations in Assington for their suitability if the village chose to allocate additional sites.

In total, AECOM assessed eight sites, spread across the village and each having different positive and negative reasons for being chosen. In all cases, the land owner was consulted to ensure there was a realistic prospect that the sites could be delivered over the next 18 years.

AECOM appraised eight sites based primarily on the Government's National Planning Practice Guidance, and gave a green, amber or red verdict on their suitability.

The eight sites and their ratings are shown below. Two sites were deemed to be suitable locations for new housing.



Full copies of the AECOM reports are available in the hall today and will be on our website shortly



# 8. Site Allocations

Decision Time



What do you think?

Allocating the sites which already have planning permission appears to be an obvious decision to make as it will give the village better protection in the future and the housing is coming whether we support it or not.

Perhaps the most important question at today's event is; should we allocate one or both of the two additional sites 1 or 2?



Site 1 – Land Adjacent to Pump Farm



Site 2 – Meadow Way

If we do, should we include conditions such as:

- Housing must be a maximum of 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms?
- Permission should not be granted before 2025 or 2030?
  - Site 1 is for a maximum of 5 houses?
- Site 2 is for a maximum of 3 properties and these must be bungalows?





# 9. Affordable Housing (Including Social)

## What can we achieve?



From past consultation there is clearly a view that the village does not have sufficient “affordable housing” (a definition that includes a number of types of housing including ‘below market rate’ housing to buy as well as social housing for rent). In order to achieve more of this type of housing, a policy would be needed in the Neighbourhood Plan to allow ‘rural exception sites’, built outside of the immediate village, which would only allow 100% affordable housing.

This would mean less control over where the housing went, but more control over the type of housing delivered.

70% of people in the questionnaire wanted new housing to be social housing



83% thought new development should include affordable housing

88% wanted starter homes for first time buyers

Developers typically prefer to avoid affordable housing as it is less profitable. Neighbourhood plans cannot change national rules to force developers to include it in small sites.



The best way to strongly promote affordable housing is to create a policy allowing a ‘rural exception site’ in the parish.

This would be outside of the village built up area, and would potentially be able to avoid other rules in the Neighbourhood Plan, but would be:

- 100% affordable housing now and in the future
- Required to give priority to people with a connection to Assington



# 10. Roads and Traffic

## Community Actions



From the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire 87% of responders perceived there to be a problem with speeding vehicles through the village, particularly The Street. There were also concerns regarding the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and equine users within the village.

It is proposed to use the Neighbourhood Plan as a springboard to introduce Community Actions for the Parish to undertake which will endeavour to improve the situation where possible. This may be undertaken by the Parish Council or by residents themselves, either individually or as part of a working group.

The Neighbourhood Plan can make a clear statement of villager's opinion, which can be used by the parish council to persuade Suffolk County Council or Babergh of the need to act.

Clearly stated “Community Actions” are the tool used to do this.



From previous consultation responses, our objectives appear very clear:

- A) To reduce vehicle speeds and where possible, volume.
- B) To enhance driver awareness of speed limits within the Parish.
- C) To improve both the safety of pedestrians within the village and their perception of safety
- D) To improve the safety of cyclists and horse riders within the village.

How this is achieved will be subject to further discussion between the parish council and Suffolk County Council, but in previous consultations parishioners have clearly supported:

- Signs giving priority to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
- Reduced speed limits, including a 20mph zone on The Street and extending the 30mph limit to Rose Green and the A134.
- Improving passing places on rural lanes
- Establishing a community speed watch group



# 11. Services and Amenities

How can we protect and improve?



97% of people told us that the pub was important to the village community. In September, the pub was registered with Babergh as an “Asset of Community Value”, giving it greater protection in the future.

The most popular future use of parish funds, with 94% agreeing, was for a children’s playground.

A village group has been set up to raise funds for a playground, and the parish council has made a substantial contribution. It is expected to be in place in 2020.



The questionnaire also suggested people would like to see better connected rural footpaths, more communal green space, more dog bins and public benches in the parish.

What else would you like to see? Clearly not everything is possible or quick to achieve but we can state clear community actions in the neighbourhood plan which will be used to help guide the parish council in future – all the way to 2036!

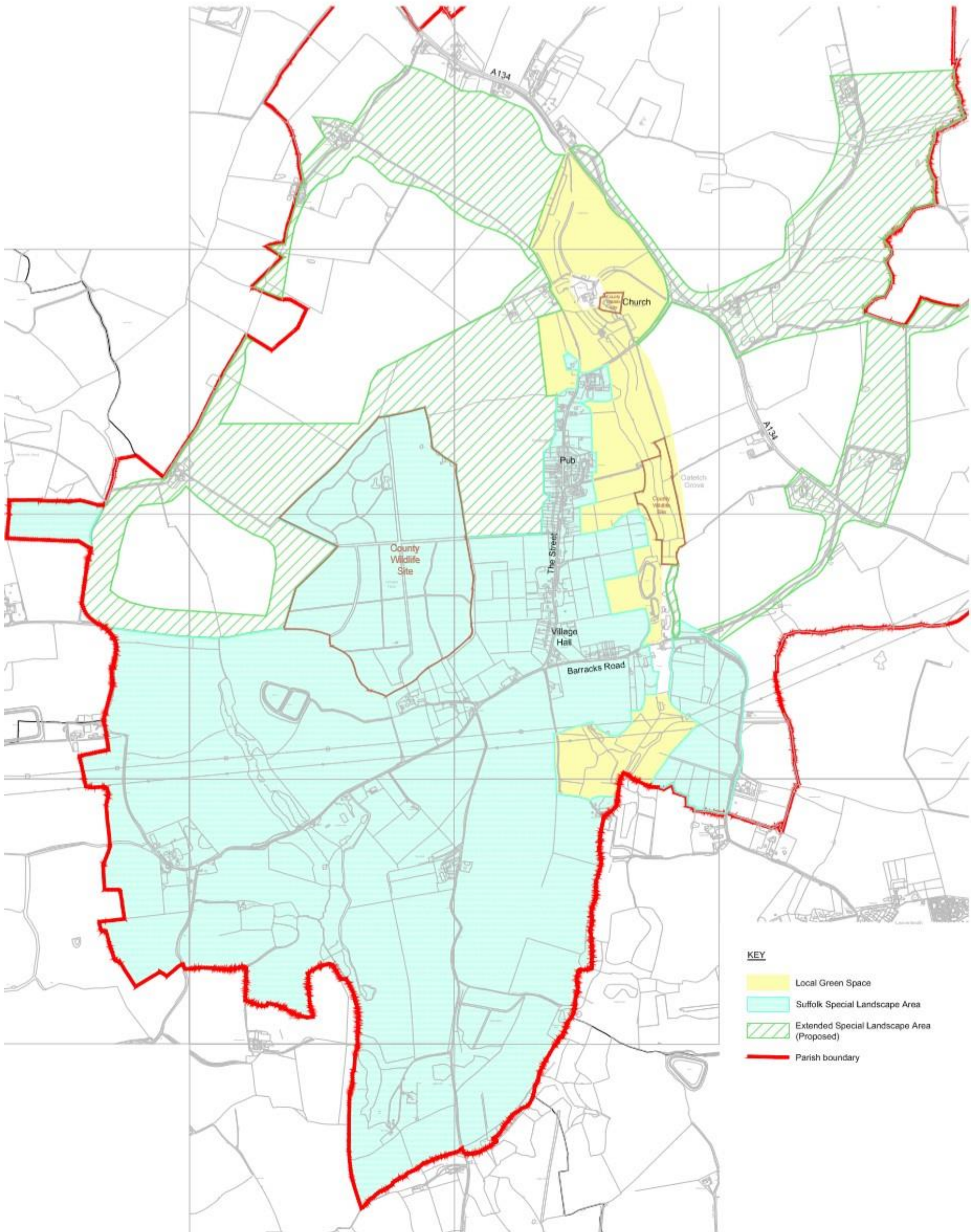


# 12. Green Spaces

## Areas to be protected



Following our previous consultations, these are the areas which were most popular to be designated as green spaces (and which fit the government criteria):

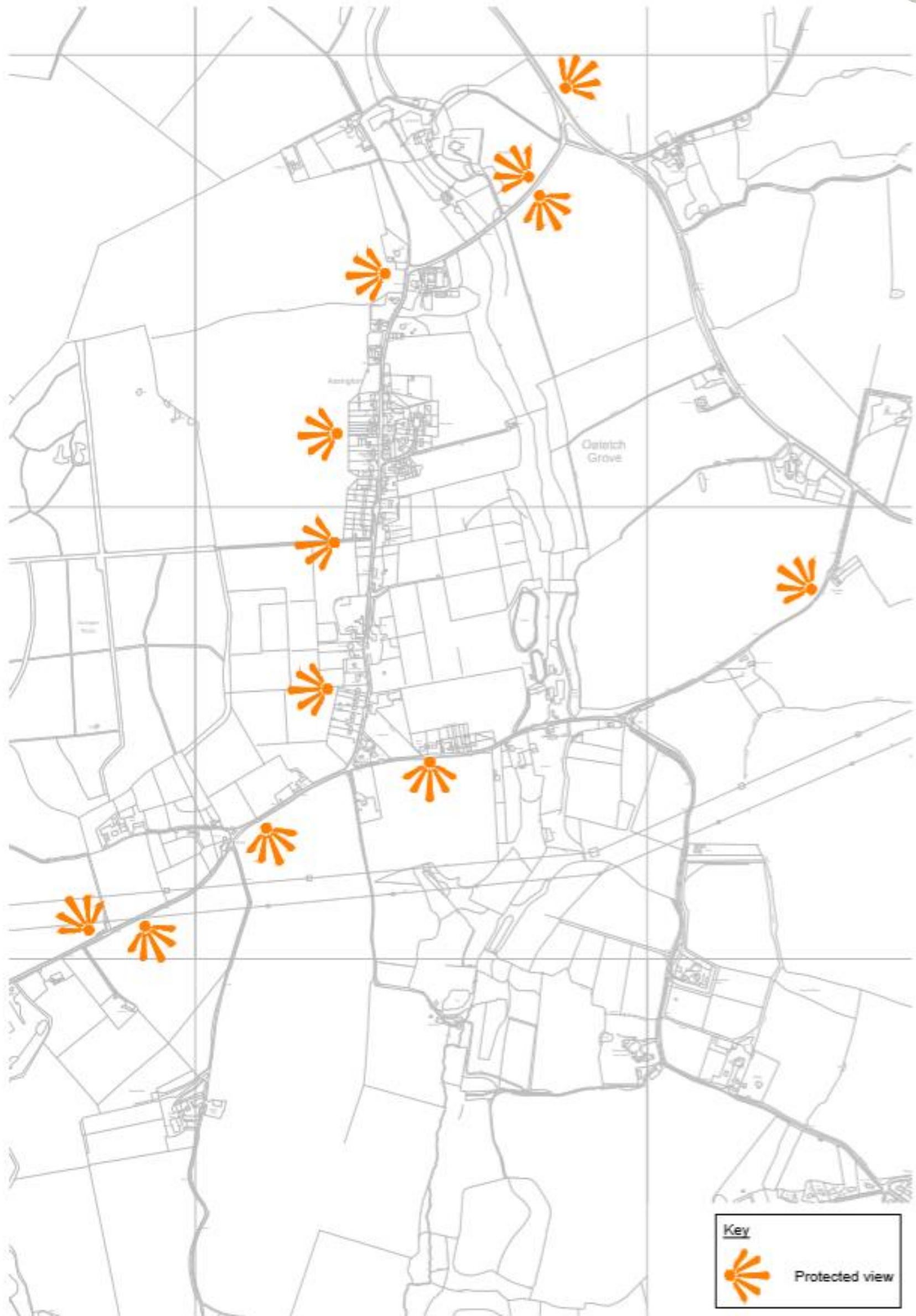


If you have any comments on these, please talk to us and let us know in your feedback form



# 13. Protected Views

Views to be preserved



Using the questionnaire results and feedback from our last consultation, these are the views most popular with villagers to be protected.

If you have any comments on these, please talk to us and let us know in your feedback form



# 14. What's Next?

## Time to finish the plan



Over the coming months and using responses from this consultation, the team will continue to work with our professional consultant to finalise the draft neighbourhood plan.

During this time we will informally consult with Babergh to ensure that they are likely to give it their approval.

Once complete, the parish council will then be asked to approve us putting the draft plan out for statutory consultation, which will be 6 weeks long and give everyone another chance to comment.



A number of villages have taken over 5 years to draft a neighbourhood plan and still do not have one in place.

However, our aim is to have it completed in 2020. This would be a little over 2 years since we started and we believe it is achievable.

With this in mind, we aim to have the plan put to a referendum in 2020. If over 50% vote for the plan it will become part of planning policy for Assington.

The Parish Council will review the plan every two years to ensure it still fulfils the village's needs.