Sedgeford
Neighbourhood Development Plan
2017-2036



Pre-Submission Consultation Draft

September 2018

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Foreword

Sue Crump Chair of Sedgeford Parish Council

The Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for everyone in the village to have a real influence on the way Sedgeford develops over the period up to 2036. Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the government in 2011 and may contain policies relating to the development and use of land. When the Plan is brought into effect these policies will have real force as they will form part of the statutory development plan and will therefore be applied in the determination of planning applications.

The Draft Plan has been prepared by a Working Group set up by the Parish Council assisted by a consultant with planning experience and expertise and supported by a grant from the Community Rights Programme.

In preparing it we have tried to ensure that we understand the views of residents and businesses through a programme of consultation which has involved a questionnaire to all households and two open days. The next stage is a six week period of consultation with residents, businesses and statutory consultees. This is a legal requirement and we will then consider all the comments that are received and determine whether changes to the Pre-Submission Draft are necessary.

The Plan will then be submitted to the Borough Council and will be the subject of an independent examination to check whether it complies with national policy and guidance, the strategic policies of the Borough Council and European regulations. If it passes this test it will be the subject of a referendum of all those registered on the electoral roll to determine whether it will be brought into effect.

I would like to encourage everyone in the Parish to take this opportunity to read and comment on the Plan.

1. Introduction

1.1. Neighbourhood plans were introduced in the Localism Act 2011. In very simple terms, a neighbourhood plan is a document that sets out planning policies for a local area, in this case Sedgeford. Planning policies are used to decide planning applications. Local people can create a plan that allows them to develop planning policies that reflect the priorities for their area. The whole community then decides at a referendum vote whether the local authority should bring the plan into force.

1.2. A neighbourhood plan is an important document with real legal force. However, as it forms part of a hierarchy of planning policies there are some limitations on what it can do, known as the basic conditions:

- It must have regard to government planning policies and guidance.
- It must contribute to sustainable development
- It must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan produced by the local planning authority (in this case the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk)
- It must conform to European environmental legislation.
- It must not conflict with the European Convention on Human Rights

1.3. It must also meet legal requirements contained in the Town and Country Planning Act 1991 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

2. Preparation of the Plan so far

2.1. The draft Sedgeford Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by a Working Group set up by the Parish Council consisting of Parish Councillors and volunteers.

2.2. The Parish of Sedgeford was designated as a neighbourhood area in July 2016. The area is shown in Map 1. Since then the Working Group has worked with the community to develop the draft plan. There have been three main opportunities so far for residents and those who work or do business in the area to contribute to and comment on the emerging plan:

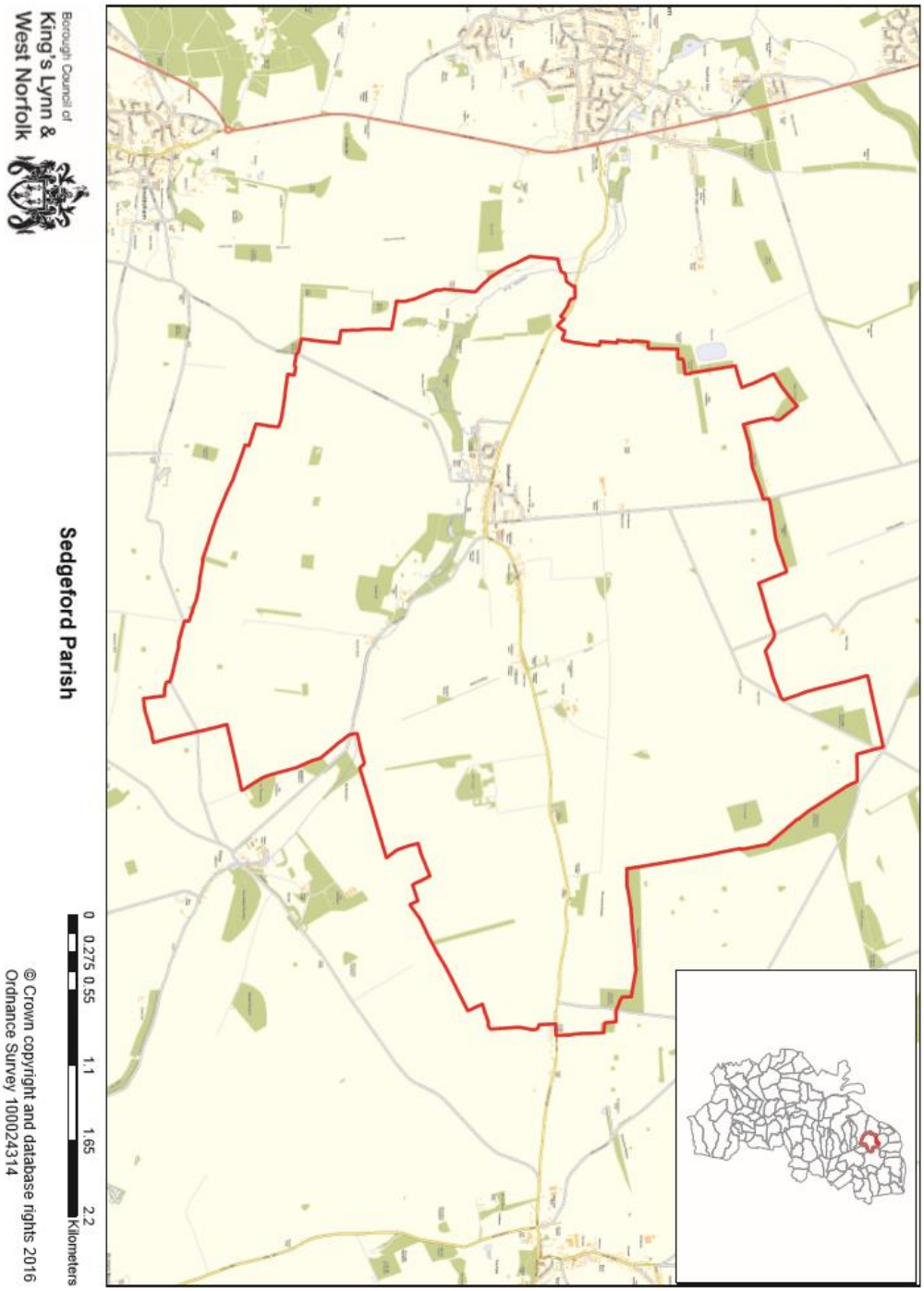
- A questionnaire circulated to all households and to other interested parties in April 2017; this gave us information about the village and identified the key issues which are important to local people
- A drop-in session to present the findings of the questionnaire held on 9-10 June 2017
- A further drop-in session to present the emerging policies of the Plan on 17 October 2017.

Both drop-in sessions were extensively publicised through the village newsletter, with leaflets, on the village website and Facebook page and in the local press.

2.3. This stage of consultation is a legal requirement of the plan preparation process. Before submitting a draft plan it must be publicised for a period of 6 weeks to allow local residents, businesses, workers and interest groups the opportunity to comment. It must also be sent

to a large number of statutory consultees.

Map 1: The Neighbourhood Area



2.4. Throughout the process of preparing the Plan the working group has liaised closely with planning officers at the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, to ensure that the draft plan is aligned with the Council's strategic policies and to understand the evidence which will influence the Borough Council's emerging Local Plan.

3. The Next Steps

3.1. After this consultation, all the comments that are received will be considered and where necessary changes will be made to the Draft Plan which take these comments into account. A consultation statement summarising all the comments received and the action taken will also be prepared.

3.2. The amended plan will then be submitted to the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk who are required to appoint an independent examiner to see if the Plan meets the basic conditions and legal requirements. The examiner may recommend some modifications and will make a recommendation to the Borough Council on whether or not the Plan can proceed to a referendum. If the Plan receives the support of over 50% of those voting at a referendum it can be brought into effect. It will then become part of the statutory development plan. This means that it carries real weight in the determination of planning applications.

4. A Portrait of Sedgeford

4.1. Sedgeford is a relatively small village with a very long history. The main settlement is now on the north side of the valley of the Heacham River about 3 miles east of the Wash, 4 miles from the seaside resort of Hunstanton and 16 miles from the market town of King's Lynn. Its location and transport connections are shown on Map 2.



Map 2: Sedgeford Location



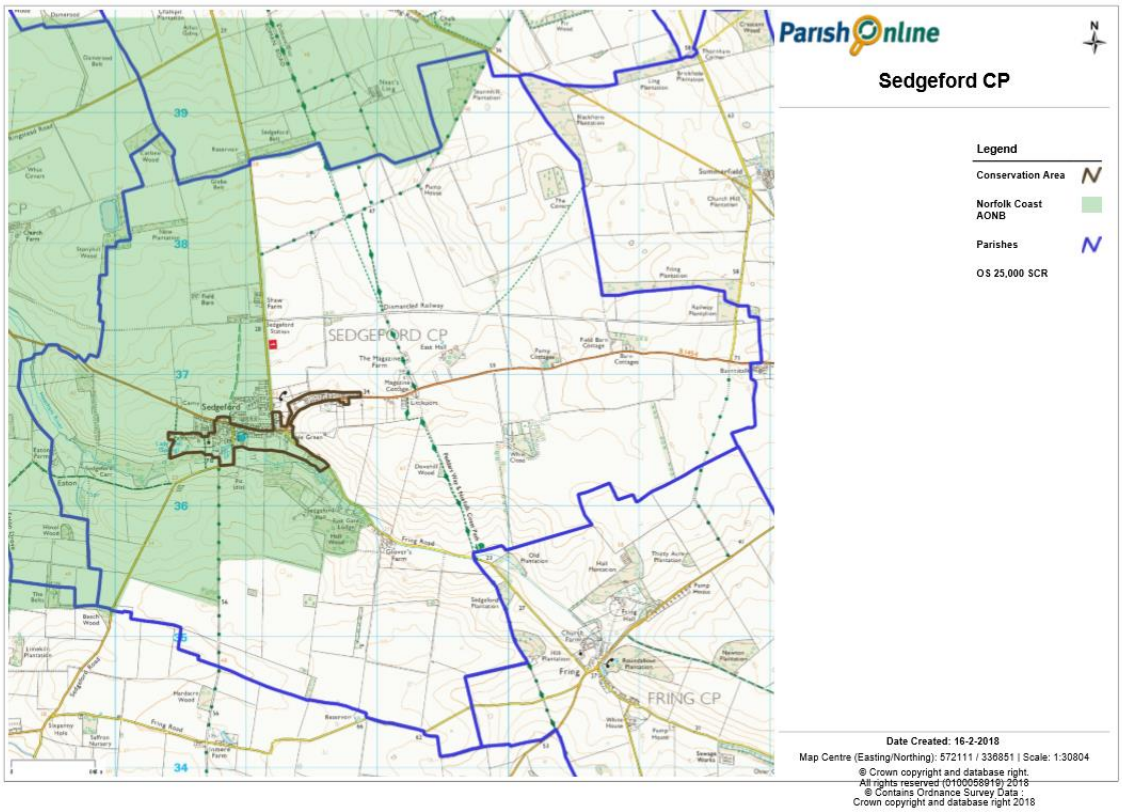
There is evidence of a settlement in the vicinity of Sedgeford for over 2000 years. Human remains and tools have been found dating from at least 4000BC. The Iron Age settlement of 100BC-60AD appears to have been very significant and there is also evidence of settlement in Roman and Anglo-Saxon times. All the early settlement was on the south

side of the river which is the site of the Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project (SHARP) which has been excavating the sites of the various settlements since 1996.

4.2. Around 1100, settlement moved to the north bank of the river in the vicinity of the existing church of St Mary, which dates from the thirteenth century. The size of the church is evidence of the importance of Sedgeford in Mediaeval times. The village has extended to the east since then, mainly in a linear fashion along the existing B1454, which runs between Heacham and Docking, but also in the twentieth century northwards along Ringstead Road.

4.3. Much of the village is included within the Sedgeford Conservation Area shown on Map 3. This includes most of the built up area to the south of the B1454 and includes the meadows between this line of development and the Heacham River in recognition of the importance of the valley setting to the character of the village. It includes two main clusters of development which are of particular quality, one around the church and a separate core of development at Cole Green. The Conservation Area also extends to the east some way along Docking Road and Fring Lane. More modern development to the north along Ringstead Road and the Goodminns Estate south of Heacham Road lies outside the Conservation Area.

Map 3: AONB and Conservation Area



4.4. The Heacham River is a chalk stream which is fed by springs from the underlying chalk aquifer which also forms the higher ground to the north and east. The western part of the parish also lies on the edge of the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

(AONB). (See Map 3). The importance of the AONB is based on the relationship between the saltmarsh, dunes and cliffs of the coast and the higher land to the south, reflecting the distinctive geology which gives rise to a variety of landforms and associated biodiversity of national significance. [1] A summary of the AONB "Statement of Significance" is attached as Appendix 1. The landscape is mostly classified as rolling open farmland with some plateau farmland in the north-eastern part of the Parish.[2]

4.5. The Peddars Way long distance footpath runs along the high ground towards the eastern edge of the Parish and National Cycle Route 1 also passes north- south through the village, along Ringstead Road and Snettisham Road.

4.6. As a small village Sedgeford has relatively few services and facilities. However, it does have a primary school, a village hall and recreation ground, the King William IV Country Inn and the St Mary's Church. The nearest shops are in Heacham 2 miles to the west. There is only a bus service in school term times which runs from Sedgeford to King's Lynn via Docking, mainly carrying students to and from the College of West Anglia.

4.7. Appendix 2 contains a selection of demographic data relating to Sedgeford. The most notable features of this are:

- The age structure of the population of the village is older than that of the Borough of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKLWN) which itself is older than the age structure of England. 63% of the population are over 45, compared with 52% for BCKLWN and 42% for England. This imbalance is also increasing with a large increase in the proportion of the population aged over 65 between 2011 and 2016.
- 24% of dwellings in Sedgeford have no permanent residents compared to 15% in BCKLWN and 4% for England. This suggests a large number of second homes and holiday lets.
- 42% of dwellings are detached houses or bungalows, slightly more than BCKLWN but almost double the figure for England. The proportion of semi-detached houses is also higher than both BCKLWN and England and the proportion of terraced houses or apartments is correspondingly lower.
- One person households make up a lower proportion of the total than in BCKLWN and West Norfolk but of these the proportion aged over 65 is much higher.
- The proportion of households with dependent children and the proportion of dwellings in multiple occupation is significantly lower than in the Borough and the country.
- 72% of dwellings are owner occupied, compared with 66% for KLWN and 63% for England.

[1] http://www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk/partnership/aonb-management-plan/377
[2] https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/downloads/download/77/landscape_character_assessment

- The population is more highly qualified than that in the borough or England, with many more having level 4 qualifications or above and far fewer having no qualifications. This is reflected in higher proportions whose occupation is managerial, professional or skilled trade and less in lower skilled occupations.
- Car ownership is higher in Sedgeford than BCKLWN with 51% of households having 2 or more cars compared with 40% in the borough and 32% in England.

5. Summary of Consultation Findings

5.1. Responses to the questionnaire distributed in April 2017 were in two sections. Quantitative data from the 247 forms returned was entered into a spreadsheet and presented in chart format while comments were collated into a Word file.

5.2. Respondents particularly valued Sedgeford as a safe and secure neighbourhood, enjoying its peace and tranquillity. They highlighted the importance of the natural environment, including green open spaces, footpaths and the river valley, and also the sense of community and opportunities for social interaction.

5.3. Traffic growth and road safety were major issues and many also commented on the lack of public transport. In relation to new housing, concerns were expressed about the scale and appropriateness of future development and its potential impact on the environment – landscape, wildlife and tranquillity.

5.4. Most thought that Sedgeford should remain much as it is, if a little larger – a residential village depending to a significant extent on local towns and other villages for jobs and services. However, they wished to preserve the amenities which currently exist and would welcome some expansion of services, particularly public transport.

5.5. The favoured location for additional housing was within the existing built-up area, with most preferring small groups of houses and opposing larger developments, especially if this took the form of a new housing estate.

5.6. Respondents considered that the greatest need was for homes which would be occupied full-time by the owners and for various types of affordable housing, for rent, shared ownership or suitable for first-time buyers. Nearly all agreed there was no need for any further second homes or for any more ‘high end’, expensive housing.

6. Strategic Context

6.1. One of the statutory requirements for a neighbourhood plan is "general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan". The development plan relating to Sedgeford is:

- The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2011
- The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council Site allocations and Development Management Policies adopted in September 2016

6.2. Both these documents set out proposals for development up to 2026. The Borough Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which will guide development up to 2036 and this Neighbourhood Plan also has this timescale. While a neighbourhood plan is not required to conform to the policies of an emerging plan, as they are subject to change, it should take account of the evidence which is informing it. The Parish Council has maintained a continuing dialogue with officers of the Borough Council to ensure that the strategic context is understood.

6.3. Sedgeford is identified as a Rural Village within the settlement hierarchy defined in Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy. The policy for Rural Villages is:
"*Limited minor development will be permitted which meets the needs of settlements and helps to sustain existing services in accordance with Policy CS06 Development in Rural Areas*".

6.4. Policy CS06 aims to focus most development in key rural service centres. In rural villages it aims to provide for "*more modest levels of development, as detailed in policy CS09 to meet the local needs and maintain the vitality of these communities where this can be achieved in a sustainable manner particularly with regard to accessibility to housing, employment services and markets without detriment to the character of the surrounding area or landscap*e."

6.5. Policy CSO9 Housing Distribution indicates that in the 34 Rural Villages a total of at least 1280 new dwellings will be provided between 2011 and 2026 including the allocation of new sites to accommodate 215 dwellings.

6.6. Policy G78.1 in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document adopted in 2010 allocates a site off Jarvie Close (shown on Map 4) for the development of 10 dwellings. In addition to these, 20 dwellings have been completed since 2011, 7 are under construction and there are outstanding planning permissions for a further 7. There is thus potential for at least a further 24 dwellings to be built up to 2025. (though some are replacement dwellings) These developments are listed in Appendix 3.

6.7. The Borough Council does not envisage any change in the position of Sedgeford in the settlement hierarchy in the roll forward of the Local Plan to 2036. No specific figure has been given for the amount of development to be accommodated but the Borough Council

has indicated that a rate of development similar to that in recent years would be consistent with strategic requirements.

6.8. The recently issued second edition of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) indicates that local planning authorities should provide an indicative figure of the number of new dwellings that should be provided, if requested. Such a request has been made, meanwhile the neighbourhood plan has relied on the previous advice and has sought to identify sites for at least a further ten dwellings. It is likely that in addition to this some further dwellings will be accommodated on infill windfall sites.

7. Vision and Objectives

7.1. The vision for the Sedgeford Neighbourhood Plan has been developed on the basis of the views expressed in the responses to the questionnaire issued in April 2017 to all households.

Sedgeford will remain a cohesive and sustainable community with an appropriate range of local services and, while accommodating sufficient new development to meet local needs for housing and jobs, will retain its rural character and setting.

7.2. Sedgeford residents enjoy the sense of community and the feeling that this is a safe and secure neighbourhood. The peace and tranquillity, the footpaths and walks and the green open spaces within the village are particularly valued. The school, the church, the King William IV public house and the village hall are also very important to residents.

7.3. From the Vision, four main objectives have been developed and the policies of the Plan are designed to deliver the Vision and Objectives. Neighbourhood Plans must demonstrate that they contribute to sustainable development. Sustainable development has three dimensions: economic, social and environmental[3] and the four objectives are closely aligned with them.

1. **Housing**
   To provide new housing that will meet the needs of the community and relate well to the existing village in terms of location and character.

2. **The Natural and Built Environment**
   To conserve the characteristics of the natural and built environment that contribute to the identity of this part of West Norfolk and to the quality of life in the village.

3. **Community Facilities and Services**
   To maintain or improve the existing community facilities and services.

[3] National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 7

4. **Employment Opportunities**
   To provide opportunities for new employment of appropriate nature and scale and maintain existing employment opportunities.

8. Policies

8.1. Housing

a) Development at Jarvie Close

8.1.1. A site of 0.57ha. on the south side of Jarvie Close has been allocated for the development of at least 10 dwellings through policy G78.1 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD. Outline planning permission was granted in October 2016 for the development of 9 dwellings on the site (application ref 16/01414/O), but the reserved matters have not been determined at the time this plan is being drafted. There is therefore an opportunity for the neighbourhood plan to influence the final form of development.

8.1.2. A development of 10 dwellings or less would mean that in accordance with the Borough Council's current policy which reflects recent changes to national policy any contribution to affordable housing would be in the form of a cash contribution unless the development had a total internal area of more than 1000sqm. (Appendix 4) This would not necessarily result in new affordable housing in Sedgeford. In view of the approved policy requirement for "at least 10 dwellings" there is therefore a strong case for the provision of a minimum of 11 dwellings or 1000sq m on the site. In accordance with Policy CS09 of the Core Strategy, subject to viability, 11 dwellings would result in the provision of 2 affordable dwellings in the village while a development of less than 11 dwellings but more than 1000sq m would lead to the provision of 1 affordable dwelling and a cash contribution to reflect the number of dwellings in excess of 6. A development of 11 dwellings would equate to 19 dwellings per hectare, not an unduly high density of development.

8.1.3. A footpath runs along the western boundary of the proposed site and provides easy access to the countryside and to Heacham Road for existing residents. The maintenance of access to this footpath can easily be incorporated into the design of the development and would contribute to sustainable development.

8.1.4. Jarvie Close is in a fairly elevated position within the village and offers commanding views across the valley of the Heacham River. While the development of the site will inevitably have an impact on these views from some locations, careful treatment of rooflines and spacing between dwellings can help to retain the important relationship with the valley from public viewpoints.

Policy H1: Development of site allocated at Jarvie Close

The development of the site allocated under Policy G78.1 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Polices DPD will be required to meet the following criteria:
a) The development shall be for a minimum of 11 dwellings or 1000sq m to facilitate the provision of two affordable dwellings;
b) The layout of the development will provide for the maintenance of access from Jarvie Close to the footpath that runs along the western boundary of the site;
c) The rooflines and spacing of the development should be designed to minimise the obstruction of views across the river valley from public places on Jarvie Close and should not appear higher than those in the existing Jarvie Close development in views across the valley from the south.

b) New Allocation

8.1.5. One of the main requirements for neighbourhood plans is that they should not "*promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies".*

8.1.6. The expectation that the rate of development in the village up to 2036 should be similar to that proposed in the Local Plan up to 2028 suggests the need for an additional site for 5-10 dwellings. It is possible that sufficient new dwellings will be built in the form of infill development without the need for a new allocation. However, there can be no certainty of this and one of the opportunities presented by neighbourhood plans is to influence the location of new development. If no allocations are made it is possible that development will come forward in locations which would not be preferred by the community. Also, one or more new allocations allow for the possibility that new development could include affordable housing, which would be unlikely in the case of infill development.

8.1.7. 6 Sites were submitted to the Borough Council in response to its "Call for Sites" for the Local Plan roll forward. However, The Borough Council has agreed than any allocations should be made through the Neighbourhood Plan. Three additional sites have been identified by the Parish Council for consideration.

8.1.8. The potential of these sites has been initially evaluated using the Housing and Economic Land Allocations Assessment (HELAA) methodology which has been agreed by all the Norfolk Local Authorities and is consistent with Planning Practice Guidance.[4] The methodology is described and applied to each of these sites in Appendix 5. This methodology has been designed for use in relation to locations for relatively large scale growth but is also used by the Borough Council in smaller locations. It is used to screen out sites that have constraints that cannot be overcome. It does not provide a basis for comparing sites that could be suitable for development. A further evaluation has therefore been carried out to compare the seven sites remaining. This methodology and the results of applying it are contained in Appendix 6.

[4] https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20216/local_plan_review_2016_-_2036/630/local_plan_review_call_for_sites

8.1.9. As a result of this process sites 1 and 2 on Map 4 emerge clearly as the most suitable sites for development.[5] Both sites are very well located in easy walking distance of the school and the other facilities in the village. Highway access can be provided safely and the development of the sites would be a natural extension to the village. The footpath on the east side of Ringstead Road could be extended to Site 1. The feasibility of extending it to site 2 needs further investigation. The development will need to respect the character of the row of cottages between the two sites which, although outside the Conservation Area, are identified as significant buildings in the Draft Conservation Area Character Statement. Site 1 is not prominent in views from the east, because of its position relatively low down on the slope of Ringstead Road and the retention of a clump of trees on the north-west corner of the site will help to screen development. While site 2 is rather more visible in views from Peddars Way to the east, the retention of a further small clump of trees just outside the boundary of the site and appropriate planting will screen the development. The only significant constraint is that site 2 is not available until 2021. However, that still leaves 15 years of the Plan period for its development.

POLICY H2: The location of new residential development

Sites 1 and 2 shown on Map 4 are allocated for residential development. Development proposals will be required to meet the following criteria:

- **a) Site 1 will accommodate a minimum of 4 dwellings and site 2 a minimum of 8 dwellings;**
- **b) The design of the development and the materials used will respect the character of the existing cottages between the two sites and the development on the west side of Ringstead Road by being aligned with Ringstead Road;**
- **c) Subject to the provision of safe access, the boundary hedge facing Ringstead Road will be retained;**
- **d) The footpath on the east side of Ringstead road should be extended to serve both sites unless a feasibility study demonstrates that this is not possible for site 2;**
- e) **Proposals will be required to include a landscape impact assessment to demonstrate how the impact of the development on the open countryside in views from the east will be minimised;**
- **f) The development will respect the living conditions of the residents of the row of cottages between the two sites;**
- g) **Affordable housing will be provided in accordance with Borough Council policy.**

[5] These sites are numbered sites 5 and 4 in the evaluation process.

Map 4: Proposed Housing Sites, Jarvie Close Allocation and Development Boundary



Development Boundary and Affordable Housing Exception Sites

8.1.10. The development boundary of Sedgeford was defined in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document and is shown on Map 4. It closely follows the boundary of the built-up area of Sedgeford which is generally quite tightly defined. This boundary has been retained in the Neighbourhood Plan.

8.1.11. Only 10% of the housing stock in Sedgeford is social-rented housing, well below the figure for West Norfolk which is 14%. House prices in Sedgeford are high. The average house price in England in September 2017 was £243,945 and in King's Lynn and West Norfolk £206,639.[6] Strictly comparable figures are not available at a local level, but the Zoopla Zed index gives an average value for Sedgeford of £344,900 in November 2017. This no doubt partly reflects the higher representation of relatively large houses in Sedgeford. It is, though, evident that at these price levels houses are not easily affordable for first time buyers or those on low incomes.

8.1.12. A local Housing Needs Survey for Sedgeford was commissioned by Hastoe Housing Association (Appendix 7). This shows a need for 9 affordable houses. The survey recommends the provision of a minimum of 5 affordable houses as need identified in a survey does not always translate into effective demand. There is therefore clear evidence of a need for affordable housing.

8.1.13. Because of the recent changes to legislation referred to in paragraph 8.1.2 there is no certainty that any affordable housing will be provided in association with small scale market housing developments. For this reason rural exception sites outside the development boundary offer the best prospect for the provision of affordable housing.

POLICY H3: Development Boundary and Rural Housing Exception Sites

a) Within the development boundary of Sedgeford infill development, of individual, or possibly small groups of dwellings will be permitted where:

- **It would relate well to the neighbouring development in terms of height, scale and impact on the street scene, and, where applicable, would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and**
- **It would not be harmful to the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring property, and**
- **The provision of a vehicular access would not be harmful to highway safety and on-site parking can be provided in accordance with NCC standards.**
- **Dwellings would not occupy more than 40% of the plot**
- **The development does not conflict with other development plan policies**

[6] UK House Price Index – England September 2017

b) Outside the village development boundary new housing development will only be permitted in accordance with Local Plan and national policies for development in the countryside, including, where there is clear evidence of local need, the development of affordable housing, to be retained as such in perpetuity on rural exception sites:

- **That are adjacent to the development boundary,**
- **Where development would not be intrusive in the countryside, particularly the AONB,**
- **Where the development would not be harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring residents and**
- **Subject to an appraisal on the basis of the criteria used to evaluate the sites considered for allocation in Policy H1.**

Priority in the allocation of these dwellings will be given to people who can demonstrate a local connection. In this context a local connection means those:

- **Who have lived in the village or a neighbouring village for 5 out of the last 8 years or**
- **Who are employed in the village for a minimum of 16 hours a week or**
- **Who have parents or children who have been living in the village for at least 5 years.**

Housing Mix

8.1.14. Table 2 in Appendix 2 shows that Sedgeford has a higher proportion of detached, and to a lesser extent, semi-detached houses than BCKLWN as a whole or the country. At the same time, the results of the parish questionnaire showed that residents felt that the greatest need was for smaller dwellings. Table 3 of the Appendix 2 shows that 57% of households have two or more bedrooms in in excess of their theoretical need. While many families may choose to have this surplus accommodation, these statistics suggest that there may well be older people living in relatively large houses who may wish to downsize. The evidence certainly suggests that the need is more likely to be for smaller rather than larger houses.

8.1.15. The 2014 update of the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment for the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk provides the most up to date borough wide evidence on the types of housing needed. It is difficult to summarise the very detailed information it provides and to extract their implications for one village. However, among the key findings are:

- House prices are significantly higher in the northern rural part of the borough than in other parts of the borough[7]
- The gap between affordable rents and market rents and between social rents and market rents is much higher in the northern parts of the borough

[7] Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 update pp 46-56

- 67% of new housing should be market housing, 21.4% affordable rent, 6.1% social rented and 5.9% shared ownership[8]
- For market housing the greatest need is for three bedroom dwellings (35%) followed by 4 bedroom (30%) and then 2 bedroom (25%)
- For affordable rented, social rented and shared ownership housing the greatest need is for 2 bedroom houses

8.1.16. In some cases, the characteristics of the site may lend themselves to larger dwellings, but where possible the layout should aim to provide mainly two and three-bedroom dwellings. There is a risk that over time relatively small dwellings may be extended repeatedly and become much larger. Careful design and strict adherence to the limits on plot coverage and extensions can limit the potential for this to happen.

Policy H4: Housing Mix

All new development proposals will be required to demonstrate how the housing mix reflects the identified need for two and three-bedroom dwellings, or the need identified by the most up to date published information on housing need, having regard to the characteristics of the site. Where smaller dwellings are provided the layout should aim to limit the potential for large extensions or the amalgamation of dwellings which would erode the supply of smaller dwellings.

Replacement dwellings

8.1.17. In recent years several of the new houses in Sedgeford have taken the form of replacement dwellings. In principle there is no objection to this form of development. However, if relatively small dwellings are replaced by very large ones the stock of smaller dwellings is eroded. It is also important that replacement dwellings do not give rise to an overcrowded or urbanised street scene which would detract from the character of the village. The generally linear layout of Sedgeford means that in many places there are views of open countryside or the river valley between houses. This contributes to local distinctiveness and the erosion of these gaps would detract from the rural character of the village.

Policy H5: Replacement dwellings

Within the development boundary replacement dwellings will be permitted where they meet the requirements of Policy H2b) and the footprint of the new dwelling does

[8] Ibid p117

not exceed that of the original dwelling by more than 40% unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- **There is a demonstrable need for an identified first occupant for the dwelling and**
- **The new building will not appear cramped or inappropriate in its setting in the village, or significantly reduce gaps in frontage development which offer views of open countryside.**

Extensions to existing dwellings

8.1.18. The justification for policy H6 relates both to the quality of the built environment and to the evidence of housing need. Sedgeford benefits from a relatively spacious pattern of development and very few dwellings have a plot coverage, taken together with existing outbuildings of more than 40%. The spaces between dwellings also help to retain the important relationship with the surrounding countryside. The expansion of existing dwellings could undermine this and over time lead to a more intense and urban character. This would undermine local distinctiveness and the important relationship between the village and the surrounding countryside. It is therefore important to ensure that new extensions are in proportion to the size of the original dwelling and do not excessively erode the spaces between dwellings.

8.1.19. There is also a strong case for limiting the scale of extensions to existing dwellings because of the evidence that there is already an over-representation of larger dwellings in relation to the size of households. The progressive expansion of existing dwellings would tend to further skew the housing mix towards larger dwellings and reduce the already limited availability of relatively small dwellings. The limit of 40% for the extension of existing dwellings has been chosen as it offers a balance between the understandable desire of residents to expand their homes to meet their needs and the desirability of ensuring that a supply of relatively small dwellings is retained.

Policy H6: Residential Extensions

Extensions to existing dwellings will be permitted where they:

- **Respect the character of the original dwelling and neighbouring development**
- **Do not reduce the gaps between existing dwellings in a way which leads to a cramped appearance or undermines the rural character of the village**
- **Are subordinate to the original dwelling and do not increase the total internal floorspace of the dwelling by more than 40%**
- **Do not, taking account of any existing outbuildings and garages, result in a plot coverage of more than 40%**
- **Retain sufficient space for off street parking for the expanded dwelling in accordance with Norfolk County Council parking standards.**

Second Homes

8.1.20. In 2011 almost 24% of the households in Sedgeford were not permanently occupied as a main residence. While this figure is not as high as in some other villages on the North Norfolk coast, it is comparable with the figure in St Ives in Cornwall where a policy to prevent the use of new dwellings as second homes has been accepted. Much of the North Norfolk coast has exceptionally high proportions of second homes or holiday lets. In some villages the proportion is over 50%. There is evidence that the proportion of homes without permanent residents in Sedgeford is rising rapidly as in 2001 it was only 17%[9]. (see Appendix 2 Table 2) While detailed information is not available for the period since 2011, members of the working group can identify several dwellings which have come onto the market and have become holiday homes or lets since 2011. For example, during the past 3 years, at least 4 houses along Docking Road, which were previously permanent residences, are now either occupied on a part-time basis or (in one instance) unoccupied.

8.1.21. While second homes and holiday homes bring some economic benefits, they can also have harmful effects on the village. The increase in second homes has increased house prices disproportionately so that local people, particularly first-time buyers, cannot compete with second home owners. The number of second homes also reduces the support for local facilities such as the school, the village hall and recreation ground and reduces the cohesion and feelings of security in the community. The school is quite small and would be vulnerable to a reduction in the resident population. While a policy to require that new dwellings are occupied as a permanent residence will only affect a small proportion of the housing stock because of the relatively small amount of development envisaged during the plan period, it will increase the potential for local people to purchase property in the village as their main home.

Policy H7: New Housing as permanent dwellings

New open market housing, excluding replacement dwellings, will only be supported where there is a restriction to ensure its occupancy as a Principal Residence.

Sufficient guarantee must be provided of such occupancy restriction through the imposition of a planning condition or legal agreement. New unrestricted second homes will not be supported at any time.

Principal Residences are defined as those occupied as the residents' sole or main residence, where the residents spend the majority of their time when not working away from home.

The condition or obligation on new open market homes will require that they are occupied only as the primary (principal) residence of those persons entitled to occupy them.

[9] 2001 census data is not available for parishes and the figure quoted is the aggregation of two enumeration districts which equates very closely with Sedgeford but also includes the small village of Fring.

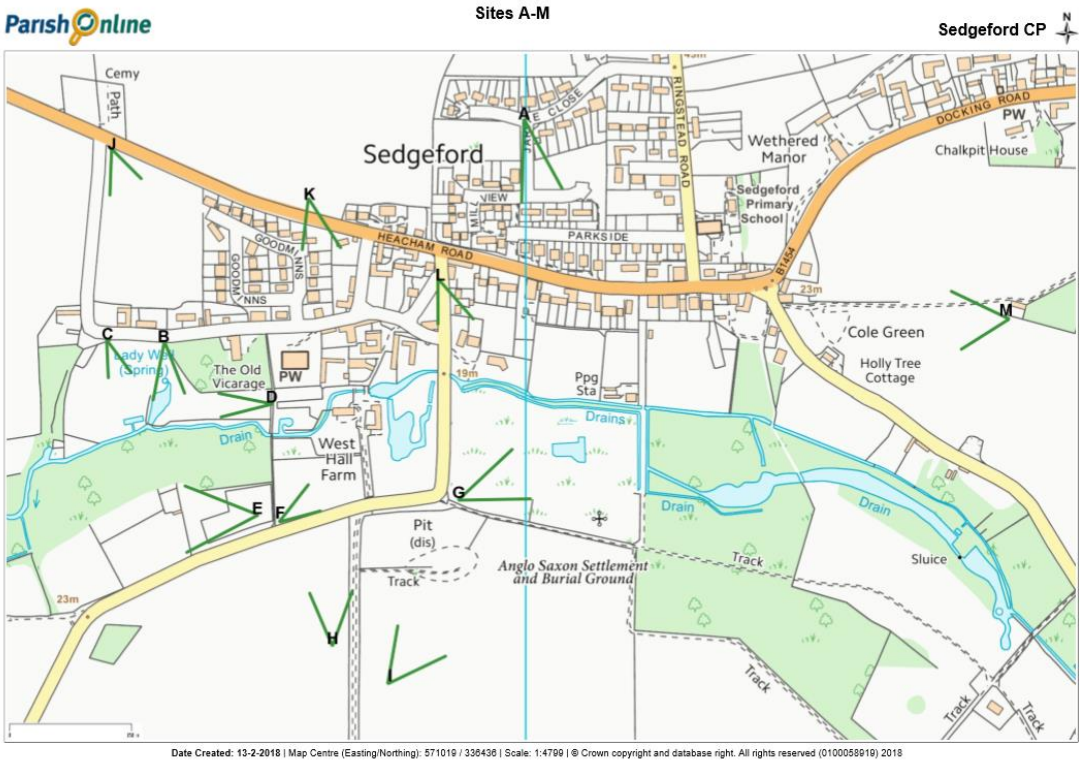
Occupiers of homes with a Principal Residence condition will be required to keep proof that they are meeting the obligation or condition, and be obliged to provide this proof if/when Kings Lynn Borough Council requests this information. Proof of Principal Residence is via verifiable evidence which could include, for example (but not limited to) residents being registered on the local electoral register and being registered for and attending local services (such as healthcare, schools etc).

8.2 The Natural and Built Environment

The River Valley Setting

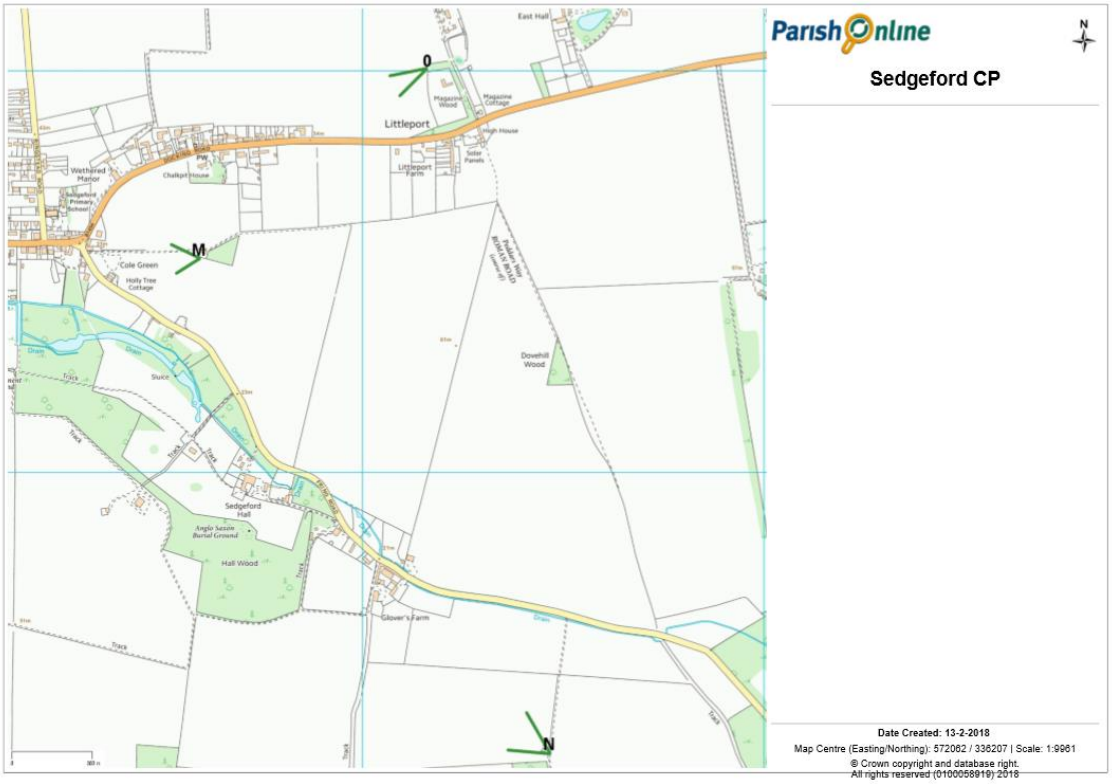
The village has a predominantly linear form along the side of the valley and the relationship of the village to the valley is one of its defining characteristics. The position of Sedgeford in a clearly defined, narrow and quite steep sided valley is quite unusual in this part of West Norfolk. Most villages are either in low lying positions along the coast or in the Fens, or in more elevated positions. Views of the village across the valley, along the valley and over the village from more elevated positions to the north of Heacham Road are all important. Maps 6 and 7 identify the most significant of these views and Appendix 8 illustrates and defines them. Where new development would impact on these characteristics it is important that it is sensitive to them.

Map 5 Important valley views A to M



Policy E1: The River Valley Setting
All new development will be required to respect the unique relationship between the built form of the village and the valley of the Heacham River. Where development proposals would impact on the views across and along the valley including those shown on Maps 5 and 6 a landscape character assessment will be required to demonstrate that they will complement the form of the village and its relationship to the valley and will not be intrusive.

Map 6 Important valley views M-O



The Heacham River

8.2.2. The level of water in the Heacham River is a cause of concern and any further reduction will be damaging to the chalk stream habitat provided by the river; the Parish is committed to working with the Environment Agency to reverse this trend. It is also vital to ensure that new development will not be harmful to the quality of water in the river.

8.2.3. The Heacham River rises near Fring, but the flow on the section between Fring and Sedgeford has been ephemeral in recent years. The permanent source of the River Heacham is found in an area of springs at Sedgeford; these are located in the grounds of Sedgeford Hall, with further springs at the Ladywell and nearby, which provide a high proportion of the river flow. In this area, water comes from crystal clear pools and results in clear gravels and high quality water. The Heacham River is classified as a chalk river from

Sedgeford to Heacham. The water in chalk rivers is highly alkaline, which gives rise to a distinctive ecology and variety of plants and animals, eg brown trout and water crowfoot. Wildlife in chalk rivers is particularly vulnerable to changes in river structure and processes. Over-abstraction can lead to lowered flows and siltation.

8.2.4. In the 1950s, boreholes were installed near the head of the valley at Bircham, lowering water levels in the aquifer. A water treatment plant has recently been installed near Fring because of nitrate pollution entering the aquifer from agriculture.

8.2.5. In July 2014 the Norfolk Rivers Trust, in partnership with the Environment Agency, published a Water Framework Directive local catchment plan for the Heacham River. (Attached at Appendix 9). The Water Framework Directive was introduced in 2000 and commits EU member states to improving the physical and ecological quality of their rivers, groundwater areas and lakes.

8.2.6. The Environment Agency carried out a detailed study to find out whether there might be a problem with over-abstraction in 2014. The Norfolk Rivers Trust Action Plan to 2021 includes a proposal to carry out a hydrological modelling 'ephemeral reach analysis', to obtain clearer information about the actual size of the catchment of the river.

Policy E2: The Heacham River

Where appropriate new development will be required to demonstrate that it will not have a detrimental effect on the flow of water in the Heacham River and any proposed development that would enhance the flow and is consistent with other development plan policies will be supported.

Local Green Spaces

8.2.7. There is relatively little open space in Sedgeford and it is important for the character of the village that the space that is available is protected. The NPPF makes provision for neighbourhood plans to identify for special protection areas of particular importance to them.[10] However, 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 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.

All of the spaces listed in Policy E3 and shown on Map 7 have been evaluated against these criteria in Appendix 10 and are consistent with them. Local Green Spaces are intended to have comparable protection to Green Belts. Thus, while development that relates directly

[10] NPPF Paragraphs 75-78

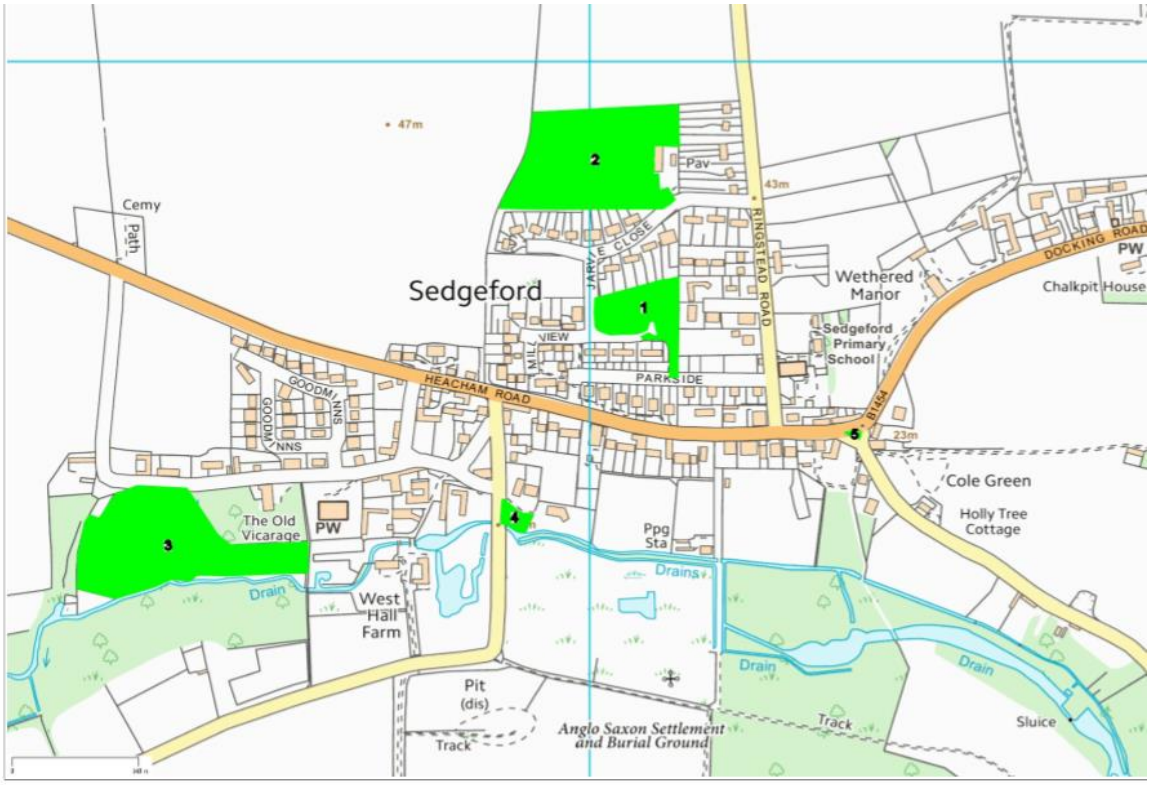
to their function as Local Green Spaces may well be appropriate, other development will only be appropriate in exceptional circumstances.

Policy E3: Local Green Spaces

The areas listed below and defined on Map 7 are allocated as Local Green Spaces. Within these areas development will only be permitted in very special circumstances unless it can be demonstrated that it is clearly related to their function as Local Green Spaces:

- **The Green near the Mill/ Jarvie Close**
- **The Recreation Ground**
- **The Ladywell**
- **The Washpit**
- **Cole Green War Memorial**

Map 7: Proposed Local Green Spaces



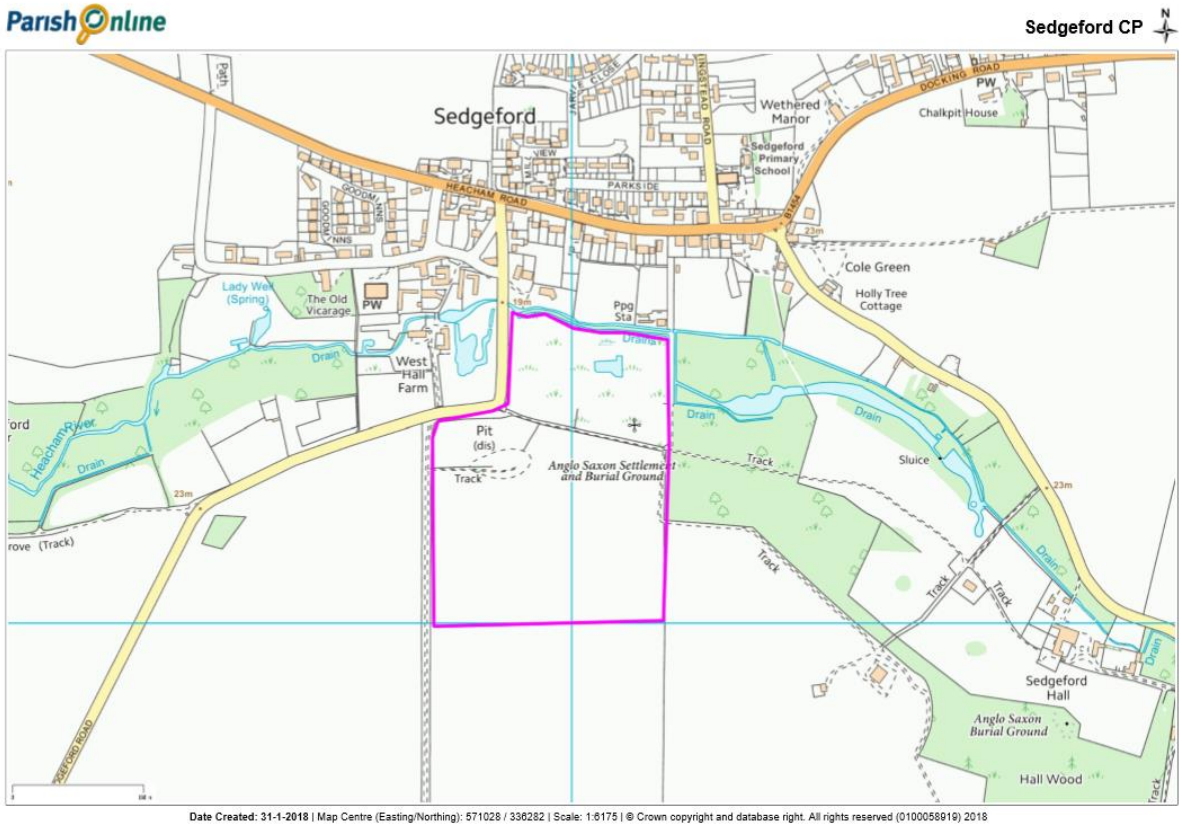
Date Created: 23-1-2018 | Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 570986 / 336648 | Scale: 1:5407 | © Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (0100058919) 2018

Archaeology

8.2.8. The Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project (SHARP) was set up in 1995 to investigate the history of settlement and land use in the village. It is unusual in that it is both a long-term field research project and an experiment in 'democratic archaeology', which has attracted widespread interest, bringing many visitors to the village. Every

summer volunteer archaeologists, mainly students, spend several weeks camping on the site, studying and progressing the dig, thus contributing to the local economy. It is known that there is still an extensive area on the site and in other areas in the village which are rich sources of archaeological information but have not yet been investigated. A key theme of the research is the reasons for the relocation of the main settlement to the north side of the river. SHARP believes that further finds of international significance are likely in the next few years. A fuller commentary which describes the very wide range of investigations undertaken by SHARP and the potential for further investigation is available at Appendix 11.

Map 8: Main Focus of Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project



Policy E4: Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project

The area identified on Map 8 by Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project (SHARP) as an especially rich source of archaeological information already discovered and yet to be explored will be protected from any development that could prejudice future archaeological investigation. If any development is permitted in this area, or in others which are identified as of archaeological interest, it will be subject to a condition to carry out an archaeological investigation and record and, where appropriate, reclaim any findings in accordance with a methodology to be defined and supervised by SHARP, in consultation with the Norfolk Archaeological Service.

Heritage Assets

8.2.9 There are 11 listed buildings in Sedgeford, listed below and shown on Map 9. Further detail on these buildings is provided in Appendix 11. Development affecting these buildings will be considered in the context of the policies in the Local Plan and the NPPF.

Within the Conservation Area:

Grade I

- Church of St Mary

Grade II

- Lych Gates, Church Lane
- Greyfriars, Church Lane - former rectory
- Buckland, Church Lane - formerly the Buck Inn
- West Hall Farm House
- Wethered Manor, Docking Road

Outside the Conservation Area

Grade II

- High House, Docking Road
- Magazine Cottage, Docking Road
- East Hall Farm House, Docking Road
- Sedgeford Hall, Fring Road
- Sedgeford Hall Barn, Fring Road

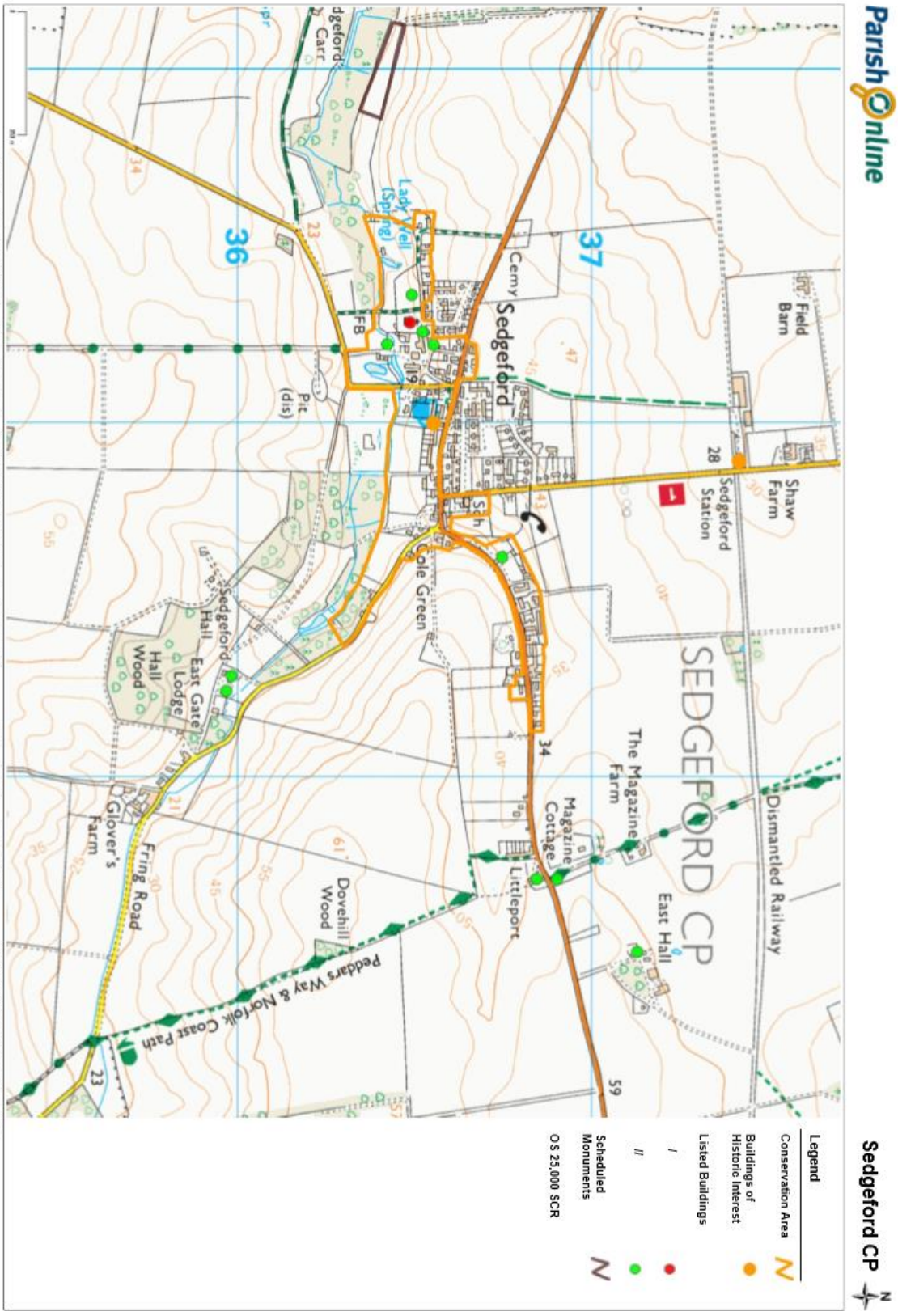
There is also a site of a Roman villa which is a scheduled monument to the west of the village on the north side of the Heacham River.

The Sedgeford Conservation Area Character Statement (Appendix 12) was prepared in 1990. Although it has not been formally adopted by the Borough Council, it remains a useful guide to the qualities of the Conservation Area.

8.2.10 In addition to the listed buildings, there are other buildings in the Parish which are considered to be of historic interest. The Borough Council does not have a "local list" of non-designated heritage assets, but the Parish Council considers that the historic interest of the following buildings is worthy of recognition and that new development should not be harmful to their character:

- The King William Public House on Heacham Road was originally a farmhouse and the building first became a pub in 1836, when the farmer extended the frontage and became innkeeper of the Kings Head. By 1879 it had become the King William Inn.

Map 9: Conservation Area and Heritage Assets



- The Old Station, Ringstead Road was a railway station which served the settlement of Sedgeford in Norfolk, England. Opened by the West Norfolk Junction railway in 1866, it closed with the line in 1952. Sedgeford station was the first station after Heacham on the single-track West Norfolk Junction Railway. It was a small station located in a rural area, equipped with a single platform on the down side, built to smaller dimensions to other stations on the Lynn and Hunstanton Railway, and without a stationmaster's residence. The station buildings have been particularly well preserved as a private residence, complete with the station sign and Great Eastern Railway notices. The level crossing gate remains with a notice reading "*Failure to shut the gate - fine 40/-*".[11]

Policy E5: Conservation Area and buildings of local historic interest

New development will respect the built heritage of Sedgeford and proposals for development within the Conservation Area will be required to demonstrate that they have taken the Sedgeford Conservation Area Character Statement (draft) of 1990 into account.

Development that would affect the buildings listed below which do not have a formal heritage designation should take account of their historic interest and character.

- **King William IV Public House**
- **Former Sedgeford Railway Station**

Dark Skies

8.2.11 The protection of dark skies is a key element of the Vision of the Norfolk Coast Partnership for the AONB.

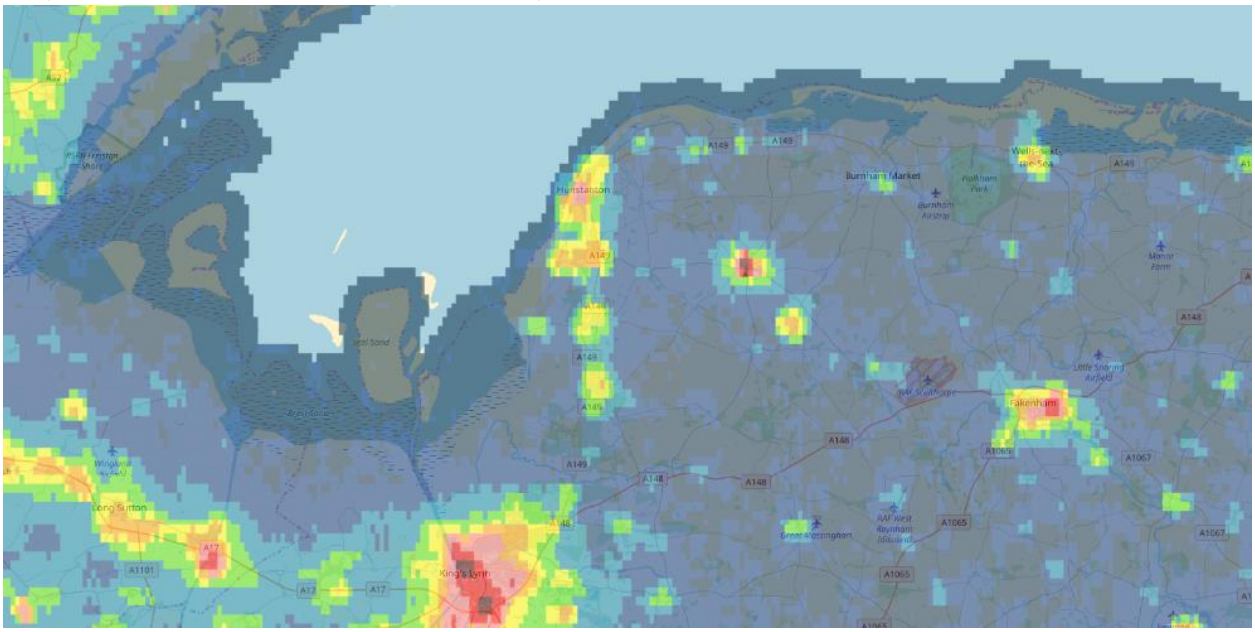
"by 2036 *"...the area will still be essentially unspoilt with a strong feeling of remoteness, peace and tranquillity, with wide skyscapes, seascapes and dark night skies that show the richness and detail of constellations."*

The NPPF also notes how good design can help to "limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation".[12]

8.2.12 Although Sedgeford does have street lighting the LED bulbs are focussed downwards and cause little light pollution. The CPRE Dark Skies Map shows that the village itself has relatively dark skies and in the surrounding countryside there is very little light pollution. Currently, timers are set so that most street lights are switched off between midnight and 5.00am. Additional street lights or intrusive external lighting associated with new development would be detrimental to the character of the village. Although in many cases external lighting is permitted development, it is possible to influence external lighting associated with new development and the evidence of the benefits of sensitive lighting may influence the choices of others.

[11] Wikipedia

Map 10: Extract from CPRE Dark Skies Map



Policy E6: Dark Skies
Development proposals that include sensitive external lighting that will minimise the extent of any light pollution that could be harmful to the dark skies that characterise this part of Norfolk will be supported, subject to conformity with other development plan policies.

8.3 Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Community Facilities

8.3.1 The limited range of facilities and services in Sedgeford is greatly valued by the community. The School, the Parish Church the Village Hall and Recreation Ground and the King William IV pub are all vital and well used facilities for the community. These assets bring cohesion to the community, ensure that people meet and communicate and contribute to the quality of life in the village. Without some new development to accommodate younger families, the increasingly elderly age structure of the village may threaten the viability of some of these facilities, particularly the school.

8.3.2 The questionnaire identified that the community would very much like to add to these facilities with a village shop and a regular bus service. The existing term-time bus service to King's Lynn provided primarily for sixth form students, but available to the public, is of limited general value. There is probably very little that can be done through planning policies to realise these aspirations, given the very limited scale of development that is envisaged in Sedgeford. However, the parish will seek to explore the potential for these

[12] NPPF paragraph 125

facilities whenever it can.

Policy C1: Community Facilities

Development proposals that would result in a change of use of the School, the Village Hall, the Recreation Ground or the King William IV public house will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- **There is insufficient demand to justify the retention of the facility or**
- **Equivalent or better provision has been made in a location where it can be easily accessed by the village.**

Development which would increase the sustainability of these facilities and would be consistent with other policies in the development plan will be supported.

Broadband

8.3.3 Access to high speed broadband is particularly important in a rural area as it improves access to services which may not be present in the village. Although many residents have been able to access higher speeds since the installation of fibre optic cable to the junction box near the Washpit, speeds can vary considerably depending on the distance from this junction box. The proportion of people working from home in the village is almost 60% higher than in England as a whole and 37% higher than in the Borough of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. Working from home is a sustainable form of economic activity which can increase the vitality of the village. However high speed broadband is an essential requirement for it.

Policy C2: Broadband

Any new development will be required to include access to high speed broadband, or where this is not possible to include ducting and cabling to facilitate such access when it is available.

Development which will improve the availability of high speed broadband will be supported.

Traffic in Sedgeford

8.3.4 The B1454 runs in a fairly straight line through Sedgeford and, while not a major road, carries a significant volume of traffic. The same is true of Ringstead Road. The entrances to the village from both the east, west and north are downhill and residents are very concerned about the speed of vehicles passing through the village, notwithstanding the 30 and 40mph limits. The effect of this in terms of highway safety emerged as a particularly important issue in the questionnaire, as footpaths along the B1454 are narrow. While the potential to address this through planning policy is very limited, it is important to ensure that new development does not increase the problem or result in harm to road safety. New development may be required to provide offsite highway improvements or appropriate traffic calming to ensure a safe access and to avoid any adverse effect on road safety.

Policy C3: Speed and volume of traffic passing through the village.

Where appropriate new development will be required to demonstrate how it will contribute to reducing the speed of traffic through the village on the B1454 and Ringstead Road, and, having regard to the legal requirements for planning obligations, may be required to provide or contribute to offsite highway improvements or traffic calming measures to mitigate any potential harm to highway safety.

8.4 Employment

8.4.1 The number of businesses in Sedgeford is limited. Most jobs are in agriculture or in the school and the King William IV. Other employment will relate to holiday accommodation and working from home is also important. The environmental constraints clearly limit the potential for new employment-generating uses on a significant scale, but where they can be accommodated without harm to the character of the village or the surrounding countryside they will be encouraged. There are a number of craft industries in the village and more businesses of this sort would be consistent with the character of the village.

Policy EMP1: Employment related development

Proposals for small scale development which would create new employment opportunities in the form of new buildings, the re-use of redundant buildings or working from home will be supported where they:

- **Are not harmful to the visual character of the village or the countryside**
- **Do not result in traffic generation that would be harmful to highway safety**
- **Are not harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring residents**

9 Monitoring and Review

9.1 It is hoped that these policies will be helpful in guiding development in Sedgeford over most if not all of the Plan period. However, the Parish Council will monitor the performance of the Plan on an annual basis and consider the continuing relevance of its policies in the light of new information and evidence. This may include: changes in government policies and guidance, the policies that are eventually adopted in the emerging Local Plan, up to date evidence of housing need, changes in the availability and access to local services, the impact of individual planning decisions or many other factors. The Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed when this evidence suggests that it is necessary to do so.

10 Parish Aspirations and Initiatives

10.1 The policies of the Plan all relate to the development or use of land and are to be applied in the determination of planning policies. There are, however, some issues that have been identified during the preparation of the Plan which do not relate to land use planning but which the Parish Council wishes to progress pro-actively; these are listed below. These topics will all be discussed by the Parish Council in the coming months and, where appropriate, small working groups could then be set up to discuss the issue.

- **The level and quality of flow in the Heacham River**
- **The designation of the King William IV Inn and the Old Station as "non-designated heritage assets"**
- **The designation of the King William IV Inn as an asset of community value**
- **The provision of a regular bus service to serve the village**
- **The designation of Fring Road as a Green Lane**
- **Investigate the potential to deliver superfast broadband to all households**
- **The continued monitoring of traffic volume and speed and exploration of measures to improve these**
- **The problems associated with parking, especially around Cole Green**