

Carbrooke Neighbourhood Plan

2026-2046



Regulation 14 version July 2026

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	4
PURPOSE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN	4
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA	4
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	6
HOW THE PLAN HAS BEEN PREPARED	6
PLAN PERIOD.....	6
CHAPTER 2: ABOUT CARBROOKE.....	7
THE PARISH.....	7
LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER	7
ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	7
MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY	8
GROWTH AND CHANGE	8
CHAPTER 3: VISION AND OBJECTIVES	9
VISION	9
OBJECTIVES	9
CHAPTER 4: LANDSCAPE-LED GROWTH.....	11
LOCAL CONTEXT	11
STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTEXT	12
POLICY CNP1 STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE GAP AND TRANSITIONAL EDGE	12
CHAPTER 5: CHARACTER AND DESIGN.....	15
LOCAL CONTEXT	15
STRATEGIC CONTEXT	16
POLICY CNP2: DESIGN AND LOCAL CHARACTER	17
POLICY CNP3: WATTON STRATEGIC URBAN EXTENSION DESIGN PRINCIPLES	19
CHAPTER 6: ENVIRONMENT, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND NATURE RECOVERY	22
LOCAL CONTEXT	22
STRATEGIC CONTEXT	24
POLICY CNP4: LOCAL GREEN SPACES.....	25
POLICY CNP5: NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONNECTIVITY	27
CHAPTER 7: MOVEMENT AND RURAL LANES.....	29
LOCAL CONTEXT	29
STRATEGIC CONTEXT	31
POLICY CNP6: MOVEMENT AND RURAL LANES	32
POLICIES MAP	33
CHAPTER 8: COMMUNITY ACTIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES....	35
COMMUNITY ACTION 1: VILLAGE HALL	35
COMMUNITY ACTION 2: VILLAGE HALL CAR PARK	36
COMMUNITY ACTION 3: SCHOOL WALKING ROUTE	36
COMMUNITY ACTION 4: TREE PLANTING	37

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Designated Neighbourhood Area	5
Figure 2: Objectives / Policy Matrix	10
Figure 3: Landscape Gap	13
Figure 4: Design Response Framework to the Watton SUE	20
Figure 5: Green Infrastructure Network	23
Figure 6: Local Green Spaces	26
Figure 7: Map of key transport links	30
Figure 8: Walking route to the school	31
Figure 9: Carbrooke Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map –neighbourhood area.....	33
Figure 10: Carbrooke Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map – detailed inset.....	34

Chapter 1: Introduction

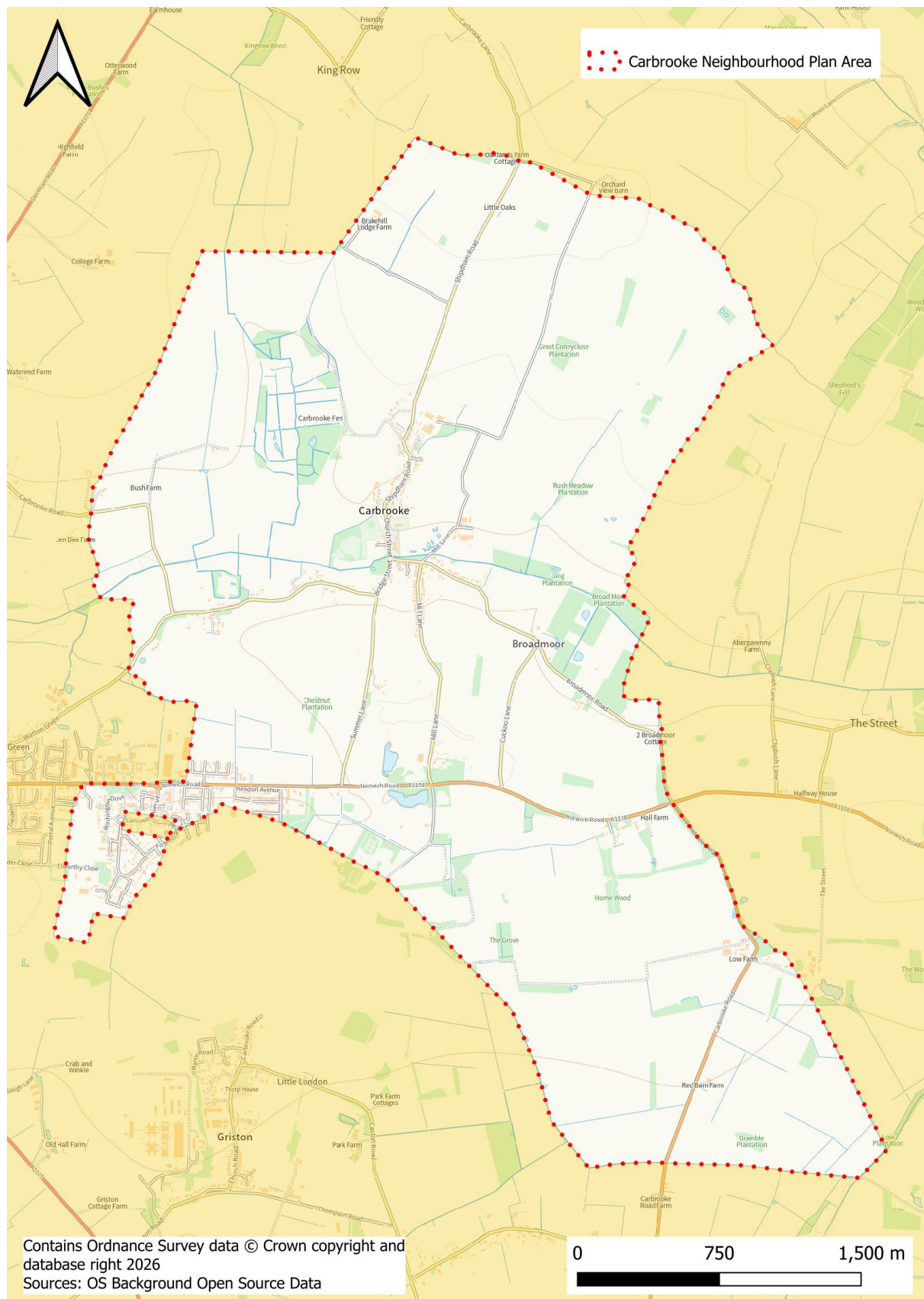
Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan

1. This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Carbrooke Parish Council on behalf of the local community. The Plan sets out a vision and planning policies to guide development within the parish over the period 2026 to 2046.
2. Neighbourhood plans form part of the statutory development plan and are used alongside national planning policy and local planning policies when determining planning applications. Once made, the policies in the Plan will be used by Breckland Council when making decisions on planning proposals within the designated Neighbourhood Area.
3. The Plan has been prepared in response to the opportunities and challenges facing the parish, particularly the significant growth proposed through the emerging Breckland Local Plan on land in the parish adjacent to Carbrooke village. The Plan does not seek to challenge the principle of strategic growth identified through the Local Plan process. Instead, it seeks to ensure that future development responds positively to the character, identity, landscape setting and environmental qualities that make Carbrooke a distinctive rural parish.
4. The policies within the Plan have been informed by community engagement, locally prepared evidence and national and local planning policy. Together they provide a locally distinctive framework for managing change whilst protecting and enhancing the qualities valued by residents.
5. The Policies Map at the end of the Plan shows the areas and sites to which the spatial policies apply. More detailed maps are also included alongside individual policies where necessary.

The Neighbourhood Area

6. The Carbrooke Neighbourhood Area covers the entire parish of Carbrooke and was designated by Breckland Council on 15 January 2025.
7. The parish lies immediately to the south-west of Watton in Norfolk and includes the village of Carbrooke together with the surrounding agricultural landscape, rural lanes, open spaces and environmental assets that contribute to the character of the area.
8. **Figure 1** identifies the designated Neighbourhood Area.

Figure 1: Designated Neighbourhood Area



Relationship with the Development Plan

9. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared having regard to national planning policy and the statutory basic conditions applying to neighbourhood plans. These include requirements relating to sustainable development, climate change mitigation and adaptation, housing delivery and the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
10. The Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory development plan for the area and should be read alongside the National Planning Policy Framework and the development plan policies prepared by Breckland Council.
11. The Plan does not repeat existing national or local planning policies. Instead, it focuses on issues that are of particular importance to Carbrooke and provides locally specific policies that complement the wider planning framework.

How the Plan has been Prepared

12. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Carbrooke Parish Council with the support of a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
13. Preparation of the Plan has been informed by community engagement undertaken throughout the plan-making process. Residents, businesses, landowners, local organisations, statutory consultees and other stakeholders have been invited to contribute to the development of the Plan through surveys and formal consultation stages.
14. A series of evidence documents have also been prepared to inform the Plan, including studies relating to landscape, settlement character, design, green infrastructure, nature recovery and Local Green Space designation. These documents provide the evidence base for the policies contained within the Plan.
15. Further information regarding consultation and engagement is contained within the Consultation Statement and supporting evidence documents.

Plan Period

16. The Carbrooke Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2026 to 2046.
17. The Plan has been prepared to align with the emerging Breckland Local Plan and to provide a framework for managing change over the longer term. During this period the parish is expected to experience significant change, particularly as a result of strategic growth proposed within the parish.
18. The Plan seeks to ensure that future development is planned positively and contributes towards a sustainable future for Carbrooke whilst protecting the distinctive qualities that define the parish today.

Chapter 2: About Carbrooke

The Parish

19. Carbrooke is a rural parish located immediately to the east and north-east of Watton within the Breckland district of Norfolk. The parish includes the historic village core centred around Church Street and St Peter and St Paul Church, together with later residential development extending toward Norwich Road and the edge of Watton.
20. Carbrooke has strong functional relationships with Watton for day-to-day services, employment, shopping, healthcare and education. Norwich also represents an important destination for employment and wider services. Despite these links, Carbrooke retains a distinct rural identity and continues to be experienced as a separate village within a wider agricultural landscape.
21. The parish is characterised by its agricultural setting, dispersed settlement pattern, network of rural lanes, mature hedgerows and open countryside. Community engagement undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan identified the rural feel, countryside setting and green spaces as some of the characteristics most valued by residents.

Landscape and Settlement Character

22. Carbrooke lies predominantly within the “Settled Tributary Farmland” landscape type identified in the Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment. The surrounding landscape is characterised by agricultural land, hedgerows, mature trees, drainage features and dispersed settlement patterns.
23. Historically, Carbrooke developed as an agricultural village along rural routes including Church Street, Broadmoor Road, Mill Lane and Drury Lane. The settlement retains a predominantly linear and dispersed form, with many parts of the village transitioning directly into open countryside.
24. The older part of the village is characterised by an informal layout, narrow rural lanes, varied building forms and a strong relationship with the surrounding landscape. Mature vegetation, grass verges and soft boundaries contribute significantly to local character.
25. More recent development south of Norwich Road has introduced a more suburban and planned form of development, including estate layouts, higher densities and engineered streets. This creates a clear contrast between the historic village core and newer residential areas within the parish.

Environment and Green Infrastructure

26. The parish contains a network of green and blue infrastructure features including hedgerows, trees, ponds, drainage ditches, public rights of way, recreational open spaces and agricultural land. These features contribute to biodiversity, landscape character, recreation, drainage and habitat connectivity.
27. Important publicly accessible green spaces within the parish include Millennium Green, the churchyard surrounding St Peter and St Paul Church, the Buckingham Road community hub play area and the Blenheim Grange play

area. These spaces contribute to recreation, wellbeing, biodiversity and community life.

28. The Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) identifies the wider area around Carbrooke as forming part of a broader environmental network, with opportunities for habitat connectivity and nature recovery.
29. The parish also retains relatively dark rural skies in comparison to the brighter urban edge of Watton. Open agricultural land between Carbrooke and Watton contributes to this transition in night-time character and reinforces the parish's rural setting.

Movement and Connectivity

30. Carbrooke is connected to surrounding settlements primarily through a network of rural roads and lanes. The parish has strong day-to-day links with Watton for employment, shopping, schools and healthcare. Most journeys are currently made by private vehicle, reflecting the rural nature of the area and the limited availability of alternatives to the car.
31. The parish contains a network of public rights of way and rural walking routes, although connectivity varies across different parts of the parish. There is community support for improved walking and cycling links, particularly between residential areas, Watton and the primary school.
32. Rural lanes such as Drury Lane, Summer Lane and Mill Lane are an important part of the parish's character. These routes are generally narrow and informal in nature, with limited footway provision and strong relationships to the surrounding countryside.

Growth and Change

33. Carbrooke has experienced significant recent growth. The parish population increased from 2,073 residents in 2011 to an estimated 2,607 residents in 2024, representing an increase of approximately 25%.
34. The emerging Breckland Local Plan identifies substantial strategic growth through the proposed Watton Strategic Urban Extension (SUE) north and east of Shrublands. This allocation lies adjacent to the southern edge of Carbrooke village and will significantly influence the future relationship between the village, Watton and the surrounding landscape.
35. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to challenge the principle of strategic growth identified through the Local Plan process. Instead, the purpose of the Plan is to provide a locally distinctive and landscape-led framework to help ensure that future growth responds positively to the character, landscape setting and identity of Carbrooke.

Chapter 3: Vision and Objectives

Vision

By the end of the plan period, Carbrooke will remain a distinct rural parish with a strong sense of community. Carbrooke village will retain a clear identity separate from Watton, shaped by its historic village core, agricultural setting, valued green spaces, local wildlife, dark skies and network of rural lanes.

Future growth in and around the parish will be planned in a way that respects Carbrooke's landscape setting, maintains meaningful separation from the expanding urban edge of Watton and delivers a landscape-led transition between new development and the existing village.

New development will respond positively to local character, reinforce the relationship between the village and surrounding countryside, and contribute to green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage and safe opportunities for walking. Carbrooke will remain a connected and attractive rural parish while retaining the qualities that make it recognisably Carbrooke.

Objectives

Objective 1 – Distinct Village Identity

Maintain Carbrooke's distinct identity as a separate rural village, including its dispersed settlement form, agricultural setting and relationship with the surrounding countryside.

Objective 2 – Landscape-Led Growth

Ensure future growth adjacent to the parish is landscape-led and maintains a meaningful transition between Carbrooke and the expanding urban edge of Watton.

Objective 3 – Nature Recovery and Green Infrastructure

Protect and enhance the parish's network of hedgerows, trees, drainage features, open spaces, habitats and green and blue infrastructure in order to support biodiversity, habitat connectivity, nature recovery and climate resilience.

Objective 4 – Walking and Rural Lanes

Support safe and attractive walking connections within the parish, particularly between residential areas, the primary school and Watton, whilst protecting the rural character of lanes such as Drury Lane, Summer Lane and Mill Lane.

Objective 5 – Character and Design

Ensure development responds positively to the rural character, landscape structure, settlement pattern and countryside setting of Carbrooke.

36. The objectives provide the framework for the planning policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan. **Figure 2** identifies how the policies contribute towards the delivery of each objective.

Figure 2: Objectives / Policy Matrix

Objective	Relevant Policies
Objective 1 – Distinct Village Identity	CNP1 Strategic Landscape Gap and Transitional Edge CNP2 Design and Local Character
Objective 2 – Landscape-Led Growth	CNP1 Strategic Landscape Gap and Transitional Edge CNP3 Design Principles for the Watton SUE
Objective 3 – Nature Recovery and Green Infrastructure	CNP4 Local Green Spaces CNP5 Nature Recovery and Environmental Connectivity
Objective 4 – Walking and Rural Lanes	CNP6 Movement and Rural Lanes
Objective 5 – Character and Design	CNP2 Design and Local Character CNP3 Design Principles for the Watton SUE

Chapter 4: Landscape-Led Growth

How this chapter delivers the Vision and Objectives

Objective 1 – Distinct Village Identity

Maintain Carbrooke's distinct identity as a separate rural village, including its dispersed settlement form, agricultural setting and relationship with the surrounding countryside.

Objective 2 – Landscape-Led Growth

Ensure future growth adjacent to the parish is landscape-led and maintains a meaningful transition between Carbrooke and the expanding urban edge of Watton.

The chapter establishes a landscape-led framework for managing the relationship between Carbrooke, the proposed Watton Strategic Urban Extension and the surrounding countryside. It seeks to maintain Carbrooke's distinct identity, protect its rural setting and secure a positive transition between strategic growth and the existing village.

Policies in this chapter

CNP1 Strategic Landscape Gap and Transitional Edge

Local Context

37. Carbrooke is entering a period of significant change. The emerging Breckland Local Plan identifies substantial strategic growth through the proposed Watton Strategic Urban Extension (SUE), located within the parish, immediately adjacent to the southern edge of Carbrooke village.
38. Carbrooke has developed as a dispersed agricultural village with a strong relationship to the surrounding countryside. The historic core is characterised by narrow rural lanes, a direct transition to open agricultural land and a settlement pattern that remains distinct from both Watton and the newer residential areas that have developed south of Norwich Road.
39. The relationship between Carbrooke and the proposed Watton SUE will be one of the most important planning considerations affecting the parish over the plan period. In particular, the agricultural land between Carbrooke village and Watton contributes to settlement separation, protects the rural setting of the village and reinforces the wider landscape structure.
40. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to challenge the principle, scale or location of strategic growth identified through the Local Plan process. Instead, it seeks to establish a locally distinctive framework for how this growth should relate to Carbrooke village and its surrounding landscape.

41. This chapter therefore establishes a landscape-led framework to guide the relationship between Carbrooke village, the proposed Watton SUE and the surrounding agricultural landscape.

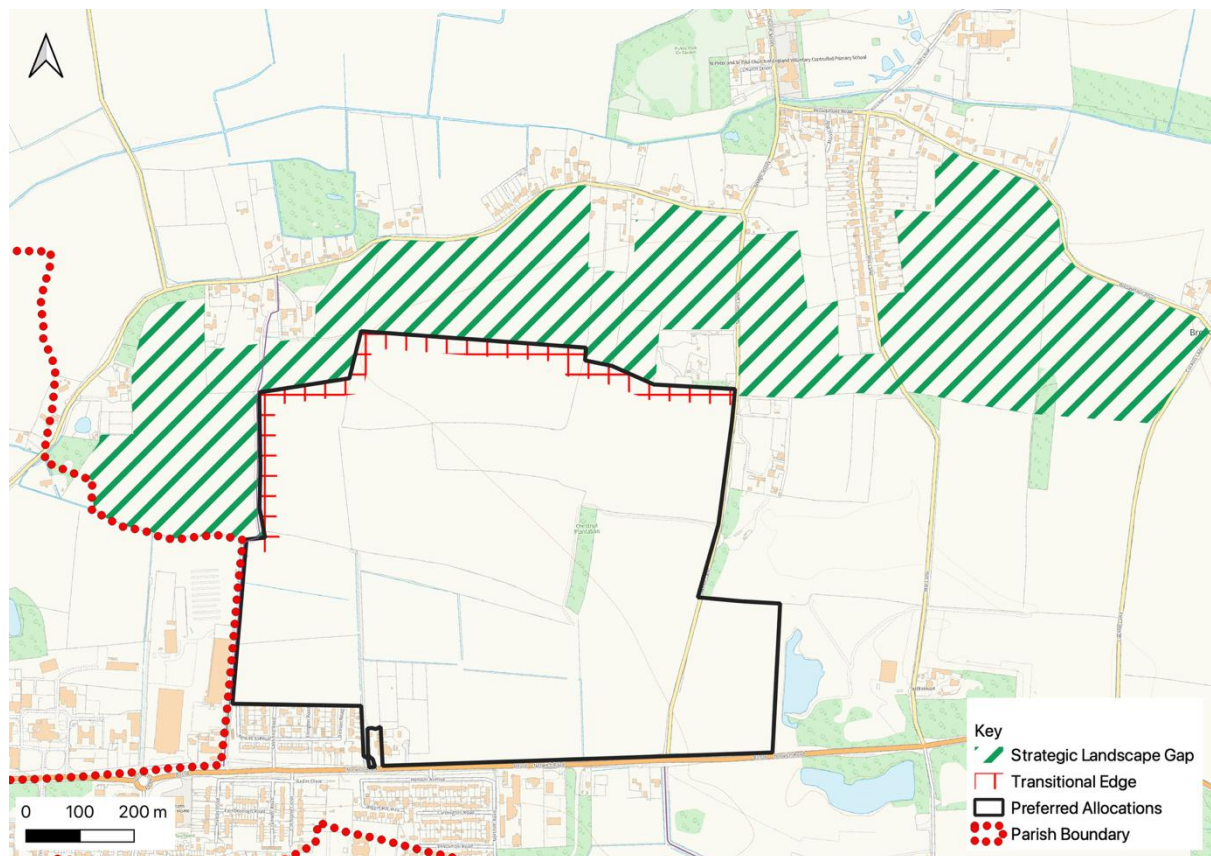
Strategic Planning Context

42. National planning policy supports sustainable development whilst recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the role that neighbourhood plans can play in shaping and directing development at a local level.
43. The adopted Breckland Local Plan establishes the strategic planning framework for the parish, whilst the emerging Local Plan identifies the proposed Watton Strategic Urban Extension (SUE) as a significant area of future growth.
44. The principle, scale and broad location of this growth are established through the Local Plan process and are not reconsidered through the Neighbourhood Plan. However, neighbourhood plans can provide locally specific policies that guide how strategic growth should relate to existing communities and respond to local character.
45. This chapter therefore supplements the strategic planning framework by establishing local policies that manage the interface between Carbrooke village, strategic growth and the wider countryside.

Policy CNP1 Strategic Landscape Gap and Transitional Edge

46. The Strategic Landscape Gap Evidence Paper concludes that the agricultural land along the southern edge of Carbrooke performs an important role in maintaining the village's distinct identity, protecting its rural setting and retaining meaningful separation from the expanding urban edge of Watton.
47. The evidence also demonstrates that internal open space provision, green infrastructure delivered as part of the Watton SUE and reliance on the masterplanning process alone are unlikely to provide sufficient certainty that these functions will be maintained over the long term.
48. Policy CNP1 therefore establishes two complementary elements. The Strategic Landscape Gap identifies land that should remain in its existing open and predominantly agricultural character in order to maintain Carbrooke's distinct identity, protect its rural setting and retain meaningful separation from the expanding urban edge of Watton.
49. The Transitional Edge establishes how development within the Watton SUE should relate to the retained landscape setting. It provides a landscape-led interface between development and countryside, ensuring that the Strategic Landscape Gap continues to be experienced as part of the wider agricultural landscape rather than as an extension of the urban area.
50. Together, these measures provide a proportionate and evidence-based framework that allows strategic growth to come forward whilst protecting the characteristics that make Carbrooke recognisably Carbrooke.

Figure 3: Landscape Gap



Policy CNP1: Strategic Landscape Gap and Transitional Edge

The Strategic Landscape Gap, as shown on Figure 3 and the Policies Map, will be protected to maintain Carbrooke's distinct identity as a separate rural village, protect its rural setting and maintain meaningful separation from the expanding urban edge of Watton.

Development within the Strategic Landscape Gap will only be supported where it:

- a) maintains the distinct identity and rural setting of Carbrooke village;
- b) does not reduce the visual or physical separation between Carbrooke and Watton;
- c) retains the open and predominantly agricultural character of the landscape;
- d) safeguards the landscape structure that contributes to the character of the area; and
- e) does not harm the open character, landscape setting or settlement separation provided by the Strategic Landscape Gap.

Proposals that would narrow, erode or fragment the Strategic Landscape Gap, introduce intrusive built form, or contribute to the coalescence of Carbrooke and Watton will not be supported.

Within the Watton Strategic Urban Extension (SUE), development proposals adjoining the Strategic Landscape Gap must provide a landscape-led Transitional Edge.

The Transitional Edge should:

- f) generally provide a depth of approximately 30 metres, unless an alternative approach can be justified through the masterplanning process;
- g) provide a gradual transition between built development and the surrounding countryside;
- h) retain and strengthen existing hedgerows, trees and landscape features wherever possible;
- i) incorporate structural planting, biodiversity enhancement and sustainable drainage measures; and
- j) exclude built development, including residential curtilage.

Chapter 5: Character and Design

How this chapter delivers the Vision and Objectives

Objective 2 – Landscape-Led Growth

Ensure future growth adjacent to the parish is landscape-led and maintains a meaningful transition between Carbrooke and the expanding urban edge of Watton.

Objective 5 – Character and Design

Ensure development responds positively to the rural character, landscape structure, settlement pattern and countryside setting of Carbrooke.

The chapter establishes design principles that respond to the distinctive character of Carbrooke and provides a locally specific framework for achieving high-quality design. It seeks to ensure that future development reinforces local character, responds positively to the surrounding landscape and contributes to a coherent transition between Carbrooke and the planned growth at Watton.

Policies in this chapter

CNP2 Design and Local Character

CNP3 Watton Strategic Urban Extension Design Principles

Local Context

51. Carbrooke has a distinct and recognisable character shaped by its historic origins, rural setting and relationship with the surrounding landscape. The parish has evolved over time, resulting in a number of character areas that differ in age, layout and appearance, but which collectively contribute to its identity as a rural Norfolk village.
52. The historic village core is centred around the church and surrounding lanes and is characterised by an informal layout, varied building forms and a strong relationship with the surrounding countryside. Narrow rural lanes, mature trees, hedgerows and grass verges contribute to a landscape-led character in which buildings sit comfortably within their setting.
53. More recent phases of development display a progressively more planned and suburban form. Development north of Norwich Road is characterised by a more ordered layout and consistent building lines, whilst the most recent residential development south of Norwich Road reflects a contemporary estate layout with higher densities, engineered streets and a more formal relationship between buildings and landscape.
54. The Character Appraisal identifies a clear progression from the informal and landscape-led qualities of the historic village core towards more standardised forms of development. The evidence highlights the importance of landscape structure, settlement edges, building spacing and the relationship between development and the countryside in defining the character of the parish.

55. Community engagement undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process demonstrates strong support for maintaining Carbrooke's rural character, countryside setting and distinct identity. Residents consistently identified the rural feel of the parish as one of its most valued characteristics and expressed concern regarding the potential erosion of the village's separate identity through future growth.
56. The Character Appraisal also identifies the importance of ensuring that future development responds positively to local character and avoids overly standardised forms of development that could weaken the distinctiveness of the parish. Particular attention is required where new development adjoins open countryside or forms part of the transition between Carbrooke and the planned growth to the south-east.

Strategic Context

57. National planning policy places significant weight on the creation of well-designed places and recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well, add to the overall quality of an area, are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, and establish or maintain a strong sense of place.
58. The National Design Guide emphasises the importance of understanding and responding to local context, recognising that successful places are shaped by their landscape setting, movement patterns, built form, public spaces and local identity. It encourages development that reflects the characteristics of its surroundings whilst responding appropriately to contemporary needs.
59. At the local level, the Breckland Local Plan and Breckland Design Guide provide the strategic framework for achieving high-quality design. These documents seek to ensure that development responds positively to local character, reinforces local distinctiveness, creates attractive and functional places, and integrates successfully with its surroundings.
60. The Carbrooke Character Appraisal and Design Evidence provides a detailed assessment of the parish's built character and identifies the features that contribute to its distinctiveness. The evidence demonstrates that the relationship between development and landscape, the informal character of the historic village core, the role of rural lanes and verges, and the quality of settlement edges are all important characteristics that should inform future development.
61. The Character Appraisal also identifies the need for a locally distinctive design response to future growth, particularly in relation to the planned expansion of Watton and the interface between the Strategic Urban Extension and Carbrooke. Whilst strategic policies establish the overall principles for good design, the Neighbourhood Plan provides locally specific guidance to ensure that development responds positively to the character, identity and landscape setting of the parish.

Policy CNP2: Design and Local Character

62. Community engagement undertaken during preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan demonstrates strong support for maintaining Carbrooke's rural character, countryside setting and distinct identity. Residents consistently identified the rural feel of the parish as one of its most valued characteristics and expressed concerns regarding the potential erosion of local character through future development.
63. The Character Appraisal identifies a number of design challenges associated with future growth, including the risk of increasingly standardised forms of development, more abrupt settlement edges and a reduced role for landscape in shaping the character of new development. The evidence highlights the importance of ensuring that future proposals respond positively to their surroundings and reinforce the qualities that contribute to local distinctiveness.
64. The relationship between development and the surrounding countryside is particularly important in Carbrooke. Development at the edge of settlements has a significant influence on how the parish is experienced and can either reinforce or weaken its rural character. Careful consideration should therefore be given to the treatment of settlement edges, boundary treatments, landscape features and the transition between built form and the wider landscape.
65. The parish also benefits from a relatively dark night-time environment, particularly away from the urban edge of Watton. Whilst dark skies were not identified as a specific issue through consultation, the rural night-time character of the parish contributes to the tranquillity, countryside setting and sense of place that residents value. Excessive or poorly designed external lighting can erode these qualities and introduce urbanising influences into the rural landscape.
66. This policy seeks to ensure that development responds positively to local character, reinforces the rural identity of the parish and creates attractive places that sit comfortably within their surroundings.

Policy CNP2: Design and Local Character

Development proposals should respond positively to the character, appearance and rural setting of Carbrooke.

Where appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal, development should:

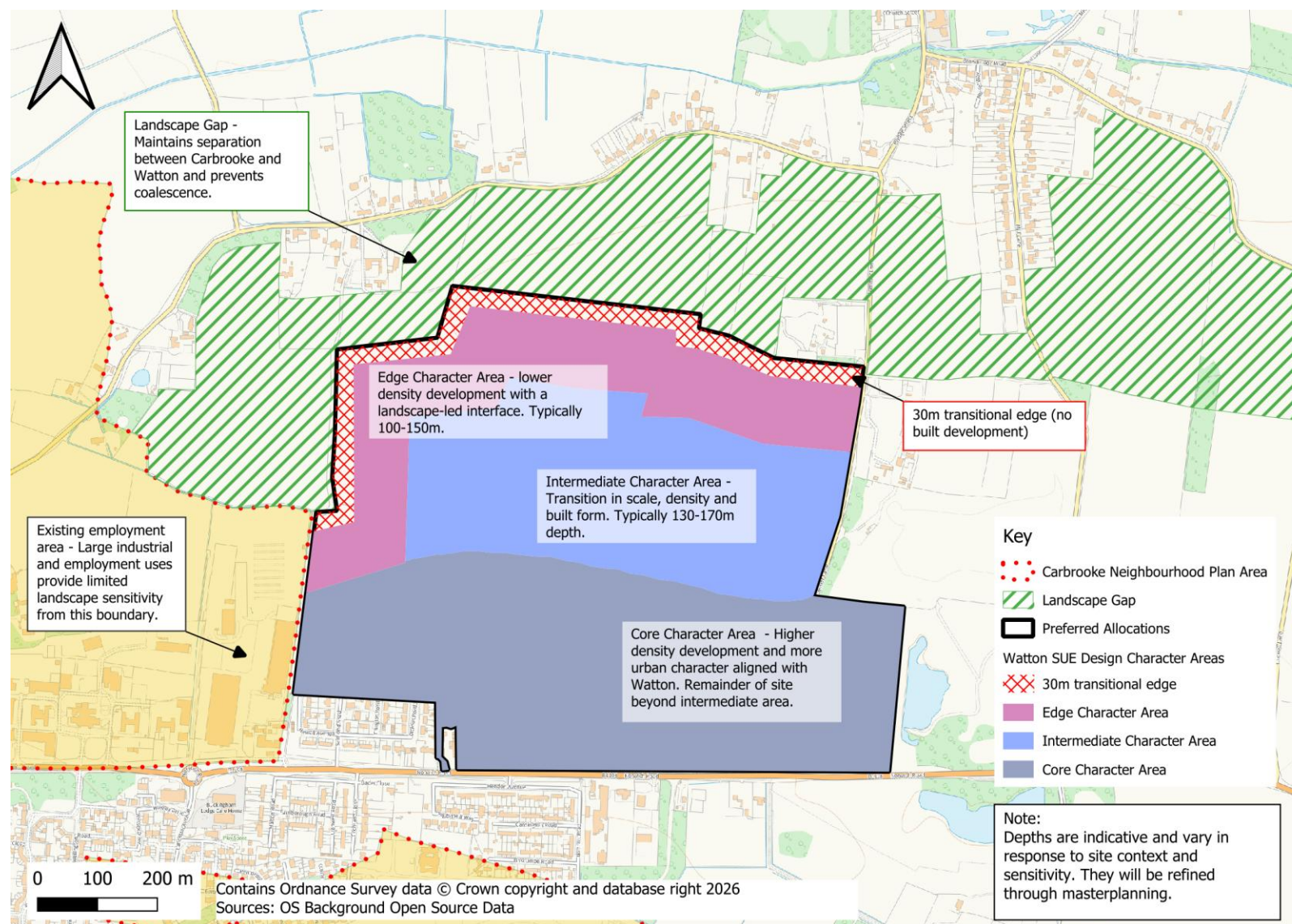
- a) Respond positively to the characteristics of the relevant character area identified in the Carbrooke Character Appraisal and Design Evidence, having regard to building form, layout, scale, spacing, landscape structure and the relationship between development and the surrounding countryside;
- b) Retain and incorporate existing trees, hedgerows, grass verges, ponds and other landscape features that contribute to the landscape-led character of the parish;
- c) Create well-defined and attractive settlement edges that provide an appropriate transition between built development and the surrounding countryside;
- d) Respond positively to the rural character of the parish and avoid design approaches that would erode local distinctiveness;
- e) Ensure that boundary treatments, parking areas, streets and public spaces are designed as integral components of the overall development and contribute positively to local character; and
- f) Protect the parish's dark skies and rural night-time character by avoiding the installation of external lighting unless it is justified for operational, safety or security purposes. Where external lighting is required, it should be proportionate to its purpose, appropriately directed and designed to minimise light spill, glare and adverse impacts on the surrounding landscape and countryside.
- g) Incorporate measures that improve resilience to climate change, including through energy-efficient design, heating and cooling, water efficiency, shade, planting and other nature-based measures, where appropriate to the scale and nature of the development.

Development proposals should demonstrate how they have taken account of the Carbrooke Character Appraisal and Design Evidence, where relevant to the scale, nature and location of the proposal.

Policy CNP3: Watton Strategic Urban Extension Design Principles

67. The Character Appraisal and Design Evidence identifies the proposed Watton Strategic Urban Extension (SUE) as the most significant source of future change affecting Carbrooke during the plan period. Whilst the principle, scale and broad location of this growth are established through the Local Plan process, the evidence demonstrates that the way in which development is designed and arranged will have an important influence on the future relationship between Carbrooke village, the wider parish, Watton and the surrounding countryside.
68. Policy CNP1 establishes a Strategic Landscape Gap and Transitional Edge to maintain separation between Carbrooke and the expanding urban edge of Watton. However, the Character Appraisal concludes that these measures alone will not determine the form and character of development within the Strategic Urban Extension. The evidence demonstrates that different parts of the allocation have different sensitivities and therefore require different design responses.
69. To address this issue, the Character Appraisal identifies a Design Response Framework, shown on **Figure 4**, comprising three broad character areas within the Strategic Urban Extension: the Edge Character Area, Intermediate Character Area and Core Character Area. These areas are indicative rather than prescriptive, but together establish a framework for achieving a graduated transition in character from the rural edge of Carbrooke to the more urban parts of the allocation.
70. The Edge Character Area represents the most sensitive part of the allocation due to its proximity to the Strategic Landscape Gap, Transitional Edge and open countryside. The evidence indicates that development in this area should be landscape-led in character, incorporating lower densities, strong green infrastructure, varied building lines and a strong relationship between built form and landscape. Further into the allocation, the Intermediate Character Area should provide a transition between the landscape-led edge and the more urban Core Character Area, allowing a gradual progression in density, layout and built form. The Core Character Area can accommodate a more compact and urban form appropriate to the strategic scale of the development whilst continuing to respond to the wider landscape framework.
71. The purpose of this policy is not to prescribe architectural styles or replicate the historic form of Carbrooke village within the Strategic Urban Extension. Rather, it seeks to ensure that development responds appropriately to its location within the allocation and delivers a coherent transition between the rural character of Carbrooke village and the strategic growth planned for Watton. By requiring development to respond to the character areas identified on **Figure 4**, the policy provides a locally distinctive and evidence-based framework for achieving high-quality design whilst maintaining the distinct identity and setting of Carbrooke village.

Figure 4: Design Response Framework to the Watton SUE



Policy CNP3: Watton Strategic Urban Extension Design Principles

Development proposals within the Watton Strategic Urban Extension adjoining Carbrooke village should demonstrate how they have responded to the Design Response Framework and Character Areas identified on **Figure 4**.

Development should provide a graduated transition in character from the rural edge of Carbrooke to the more urban parts of the Strategic Urban Extension.

Where relevant to the scale, nature and location of development:

- a) Development within the Edge Character Area should provide a landscape-led transition between Carbrooke and the wider Strategic Urban Extension, incorporating lower densities, strong green infrastructure, varied building lines, informal layouts and a strong relationship between built form and landscape;
- b) Development within the Intermediate Character Area should provide a transition between the landscape-led character of the Edge Character Area and the more urban character of the Core Character Area through a gradual progression in density, layout and built form;
- c) Development within the Core Character Area should maintain a clear relationship with the wider landscape framework whilst accommodating the higher densities and more urban form associated with the Strategic Urban Extension;
- d) Existing trees, hedgerows and landscape features that contribute to the landscape structure of the site should be retained and incorporated wherever practicable;
- e) Streets, public spaces and green infrastructure should be designed as integral components of the overall development and should reinforce the transition between character areas; and
- f) Development should avoid creating a visually abrupt or prominent urban edge when viewed from Carbrooke, the Strategic Landscape Gap, surrounding countryside or public rights of way.

Development proposals should demonstrate how they have taken account of the Carbrooke Character Appraisal and Design Evidence and the Design Response Framework.

Chapter 6: Environment, Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery

How this chapter delivers the Vision and Objectives

Objective 3 – Nature Recovery and Green Infrastructure

Protect and enhance the parish's network of hedgerows, trees, drainage features, open spaces, habitats and green and blue infrastructure in order to support biodiversity, habitat connectivity, nature recovery and climate resilience.

The chapter seeks to protect and enhance the environmental assets that contribute to the character, biodiversity and resilience of the parish. It supports nature recovery, strengthens environmental connectivity and helps ensure that future development contributes positively to Carbrooke's network of green and blue infrastructure.

Policies in this chapter

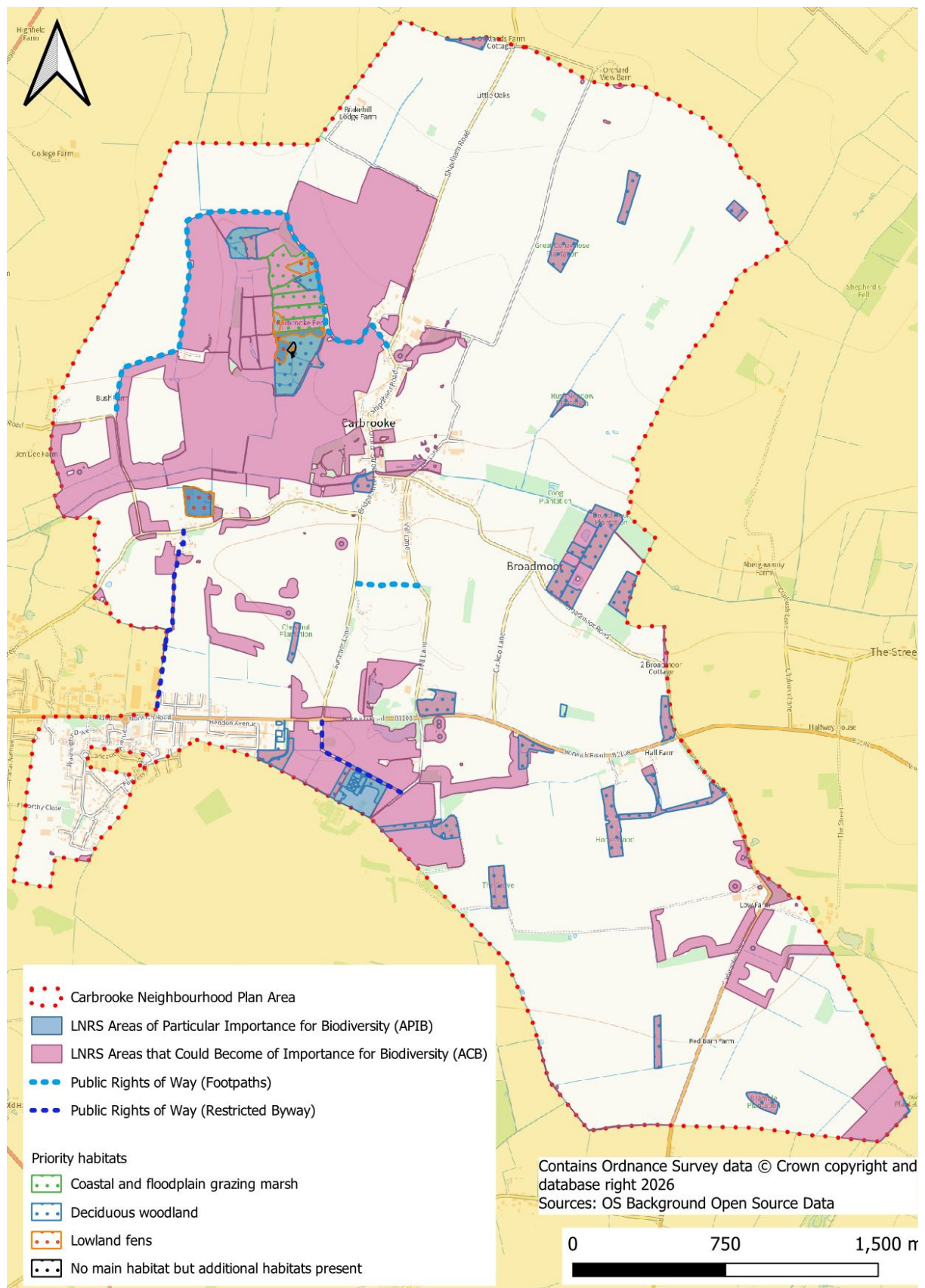
CNP4 Local Green Spaces

CNP5 Nature Recovery and Environmental Connectivity

Local Context

72. The Carbrooke Environment and Nature Recovery Evidence Paper identifies a diverse network of environmental assets that contribute to the parish's rural character, biodiversity, landscape quality and resilience. This network includes hedgerows, trees, field boundaries, ponds, drainage ditches, watercourses, associated wetland habitats, open spaces and public rights of way which together form an interconnected green and blue infrastructure network across the parish.
73. The evidence paper identifies several areas within the parish that are particularly important for their environmental, recreational and community value, including Carbrooke Fen, Millennium Green and the churchyard of St Peter and St Paul Church. These assets provide opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of the countryside whilst also supporting biodiversity and habitat connectivity. The parish also contains an extensive network of drainage ditches, watercourses and associated wetland habitats which contribute to biodiversity, landscape character and local water management.
74. The evidence demonstrates that, unlike areas where biodiversity is concentrated within a small number of designated sites, the environmental value of Carbrooke is distributed throughout the wider landscape. Hedgerows, field boundaries, trees, drainage corridors and watercourses provide important connections between habitats, allowing wildlife to move through the parish and supporting a more resilient ecological network. The agricultural landscape surrounding the village plays an important role in this network and contributes significantly to the parish's rural setting and character.

Figure 5: Green Infrastructure Network



75. The Environment and Nature Recovery Evidence Paper identifies opportunities to strengthen habitat connectivity and support nature recovery within the parish, informed by the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including through the enhancement of existing habitats, landscape corridors and green infrastructure.
76. Community engagement undertaken to inform the Neighbourhood Plan demonstrates the importance of the parish's environmental assets to local residents. The community survey identified the rural feel and countryside setting of Carbrooke as the aspect most valued by respondents, whilst green spaces and access to nature were also identified as important features of the parish. Residents highlighted tree planting, biodiversity improvements and improved green spaces as priorities for the future. Millennium Green was identified as the most frequently used green space within the parish, whilst respondents also recognised the importance of the churchyard, public footpaths, rural walks and the wider countryside. Together, these findings demonstrate the importance of maintaining and enhancing Carbrooke's network of green spaces, habitats and landscape features.
77. Climate change is expected to increase pressures associated with extreme temperatures, drought, water availability and intense rainfall. The Plan contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation by supporting walking, retaining and increasing vegetation, strengthening connected habitats, integrating sustainable drainage and ensuring development responds positively to the landscape and environmental characteristics of the parish.

Strategic Context

78. The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment, support biodiversity, strengthen ecological networks and promote nature recovery. It recognises the importance of green infrastructure, sustainable drainage systems and multifunctional landscapes in creating resilient and sustainable places.
79. At the county level, the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy provides a strategic framework for reversing biodiversity decline and improving habitat connectivity. The Strategy identifies priorities and opportunities for ecological enhancement and the strengthening of ecological networks across Norfolk, including within and around Carbrooke Parish.
80. At the local level, the adopted Breckland Local Plan contains a range of policies relating to biodiversity, landscape, green infrastructure, trees, hedgerows and sustainable drainage. The emerging Breckland Local Plan builds upon this approach through policies relating to green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement, including the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain and the consideration of opportunities identified through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
81. Significant growth is planned within Carbrooke Parish during the plan period and will change parts of the existing landscape and environmental network. Whilst strategic planning policies establish the principle of development and provide overarching requirements relating to biodiversity, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage, there is an opportunity for the Neighbourhood Plan

to help ensure that growth contributes positively to environmental connectivity, nature recovery and green infrastructure within the parish.

82. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to duplicate strategic planning policies or create new environmental designations. Instead, it provides locally specific guidance informed by the Carbrooke Environment and Nature Recovery Evidence Paper, focusing on the particular characteristics of the parish's environmental network and the opportunities to strengthen environmental connectivity, nature recovery and green infrastructure at a local level.

Policy CNP4: Local Green Spaces

83. National planning policy enables neighbourhood plans to designate Local Green Spaces that are demonstrably special to the local community. Such spaces should be reasonably close to the community they serve, hold particular local significance and be local in character.
84. The Local Green Space Assessment builds upon the findings of the Environment and Nature Recovery Evidence Paper and community engagement undertaken to inform the Neighbourhood Plan. It identifies four green spaces that are demonstrably special to the local community because of their recreational, environmental, historic, cultural and community value. The assessment demonstrates that each site is reasonably close to the community it serves, holds particular local significance and is local in character, consistent with national planning policy.
85. The designated Local Green Spaces make an important contribution to the character, identity and environmental quality of Carbrooke. Their protection will help retain valued community assets and ensure that future development respects the features that are important to local residents.

Policy CNP4: Local Green Spaces

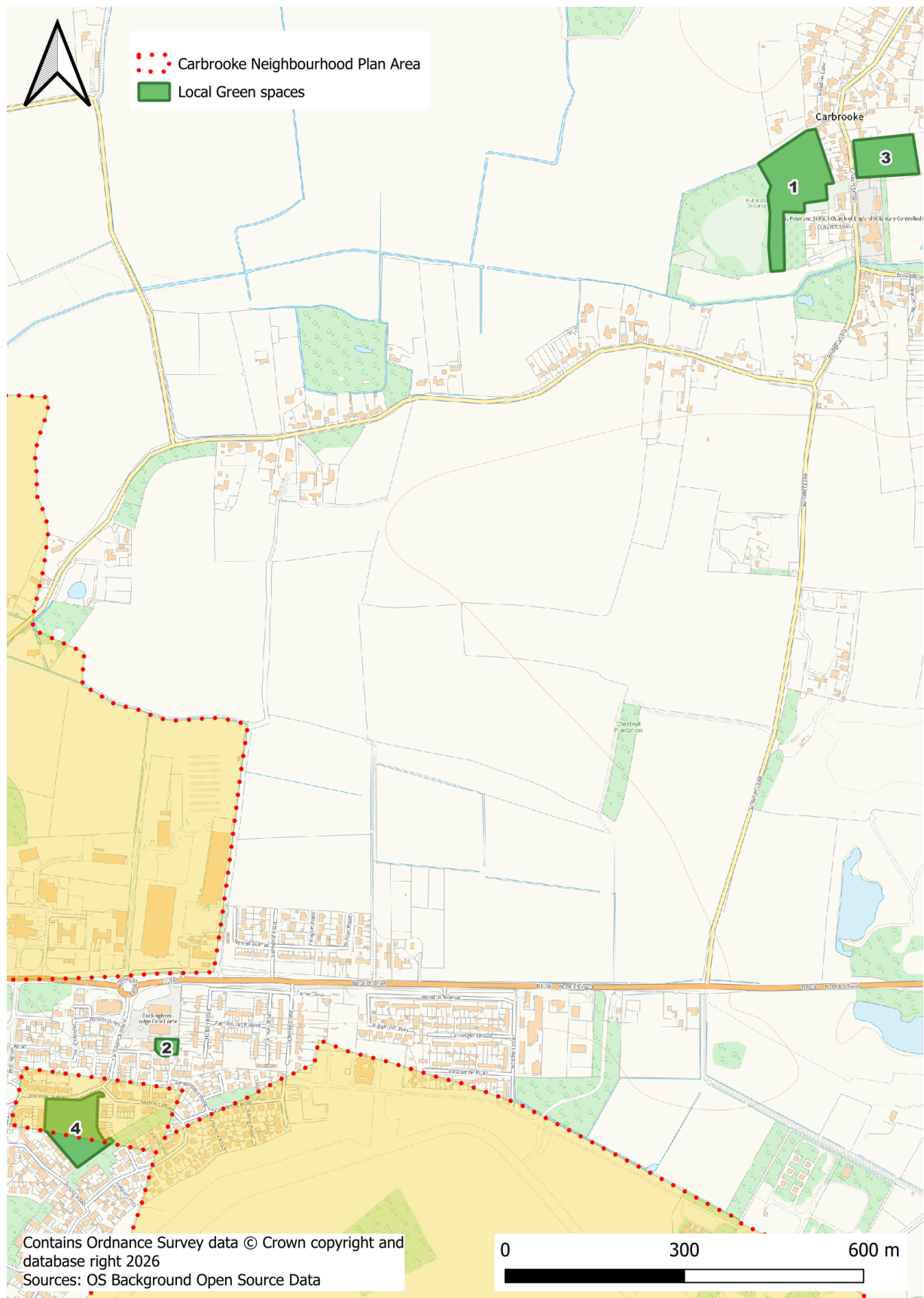
The following sites, as shown on Figure 6, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

1. Millennium Green
2. Community Hub Play Area
3. Green Space at St Peter and St Paul Church
4. Blenheim Grange Play Area

Development proposals affecting a designated Local Green Space will only be supported where they are consistent with the protection afforded to Local Green Spaces under national planning policy.

Development proposals should conserve the openness and the particular local significance for which the space was designated.

Figure 6: Local Green Spaces



Policy CNP5: Nature Recovery and Environmental Connectivity

86. The Carbrooke Environment and Nature Recovery Evidence Paper identifies environmental connectivity as a key characteristic of the parish. The network of habitats, green spaces, drainage corridors and landscape features across Carbrooke provides opportunities to support biodiversity, reinforce landscape character and improve ecological connectivity.
87. Mapping identifies localised areas of fluvial and surface-water flood risk within the parish, together with drainage ditches, watercourses and overland flow routes that form part of the wider green and blue infrastructure network. Development should respond to all relevant sources of flood risk and should use appropriately designed sustainable drainage measures to manage runoff close to source, avoid increasing risk elsewhere and provide benefits for biodiversity, water quality and climate resilience.
88. The Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy identifies opportunities to strengthen habitat connectivity and support nature recovery across this part of Norfolk. At the same time, significant growth is planned within Carbrooke Parish during the plan period. Whilst development will inevitably change parts of the landscape, it also presents opportunities to strengthen environmental connections, create new habitats and contribute towards wider nature recovery objectives.
89. Strategic planning policies already require biodiversity enhancement, green infrastructure provision and Biodiversity Net Gain. This policy provides locally specific guidance by focusing on the connections between habitats, green spaces, drainage features and landscape corridors that characterise Carbrooke's environmental network.

Policy CNP5: Nature Recovery and Environmental Connectivity

Development proposals should contribute positively to the parish's network of green and blue infrastructure and, where appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal, should:

- a) Retain and strengthen existing hedgerows, trees, ponds, watercourses, drainage features and other landscape elements that contribute to environmental connectivity;
- b) Maintain and, where possible, improve connections between habitats, open spaces, water features and the wider countryside;
- c) Take account of relevant priorities and mapped opportunities identified through the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy and support nature recovery and habitat enhancement where appropriate to the site and proposal; and
- d) Integrate green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements and sustainable drainage measures, including nature-based solutions where appropriate, into the design of development.

Development proposals should demonstrate how they have retained and enhanced environmental features and strengthened connections between habitats, green spaces and landscape features where opportunities exist.

Chapter 7: Movement and Rural Lanes

How this chapter delivers the Vision and Objectives

Objective 4 – Walking and Rural Lanes

Support safe and attractive walking connections within the parish, particularly between residential areas, the primary school and Watton, whilst protecting the rural character of lanes such as Drury Lane, Summer Lane and Mill Lane.

The chapter supports safe and attractive opportunities for walking within the parish whilst recognising the important role that rural lanes play in defining local character. It seeks to improve connectivity between key destinations whilst protecting the character and function of Carbrooke's rural road network.

Policies in this chapter

CNP6 Movement and Rural Lanes

Local Context

90. Carbrooke is a rural parish with strong functional links to Watton for employment, education, healthcare, shopping and other day-to-day services. The parish is connected to the surrounding area by a network of rural roads, lanes, public rights of way and bus services. Private car travel remains an important means of transport for many residents, reflecting the rural location of the parish and the limited availability of alternative transport options.
91. The pattern of development within the parish creates movement between Carbrooke Village, newer residential areas near Norwich Road and destinations within Watton. Many routine journeys are relatively short in distance, creating opportunities for walking and cycling where safe and attractive routes are available.
92. The Norfolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan identifies opportunities to improve active travel connections within the wider Watton area, including routes extending towards the southern edge of the parish. Although these proposals are currently indicative, they demonstrate the potential to improve connectivity between residential areas, employment locations, services and community facilities.
93. Carbrooke Village is characterised by a network of narrow rural lanes, including Summer Lane, Drury Lane and Mill Lane. These lanes contribute positively to the rural character of the parish and provide important local movement and walking routes. Community engagement identified concerns regarding traffic speeds, road safety and the potential for future development to increase traffic on these routes.
94. St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary Academy is an important destination within the parish. Existing walking routes to the school include roads and public rights of way with limited or no formal footway provision. The

Transport Evidence Paper identifies the route between the newer housing areas south of Norwich Road and the primary school, including the connection through Summer Lane and Drury Lane, as an important local walking route where improvements could support safer and more attractive school journeys.

Figure 7: Map of key transport links

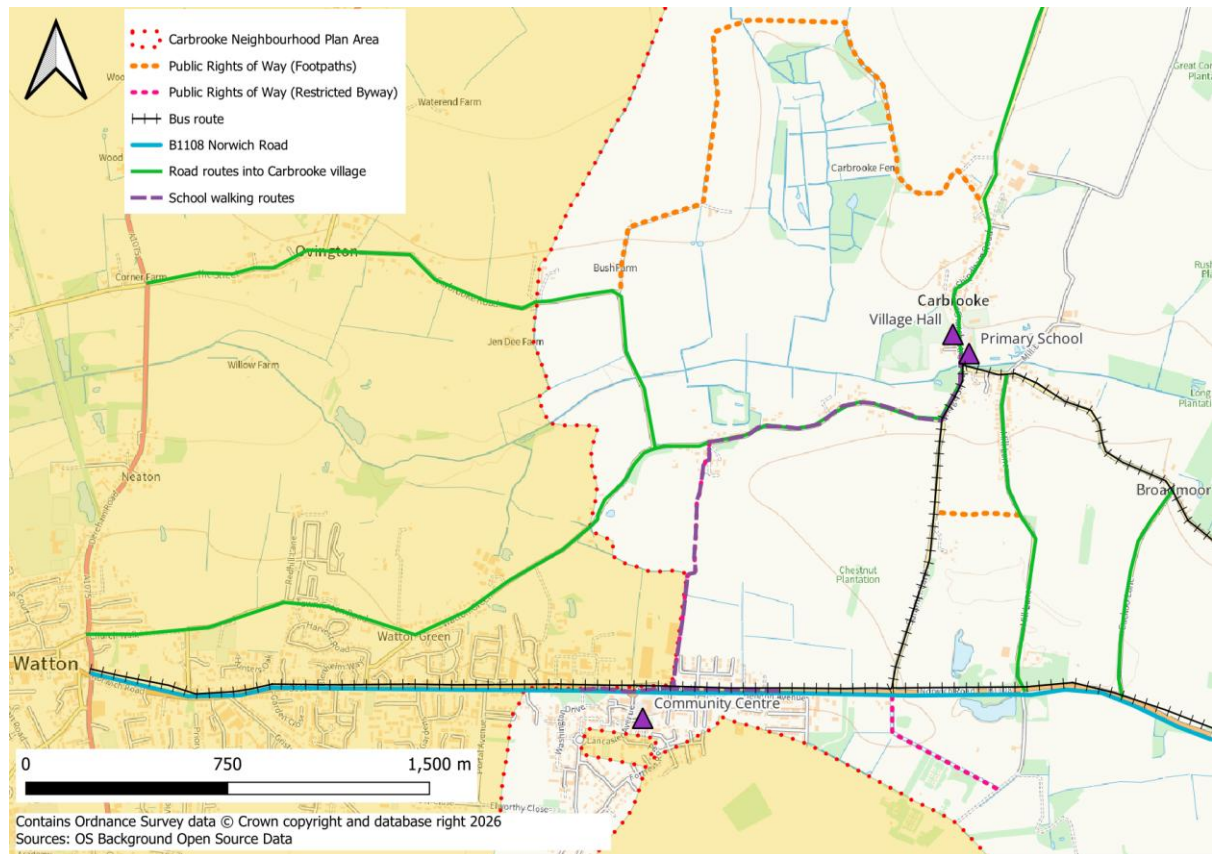
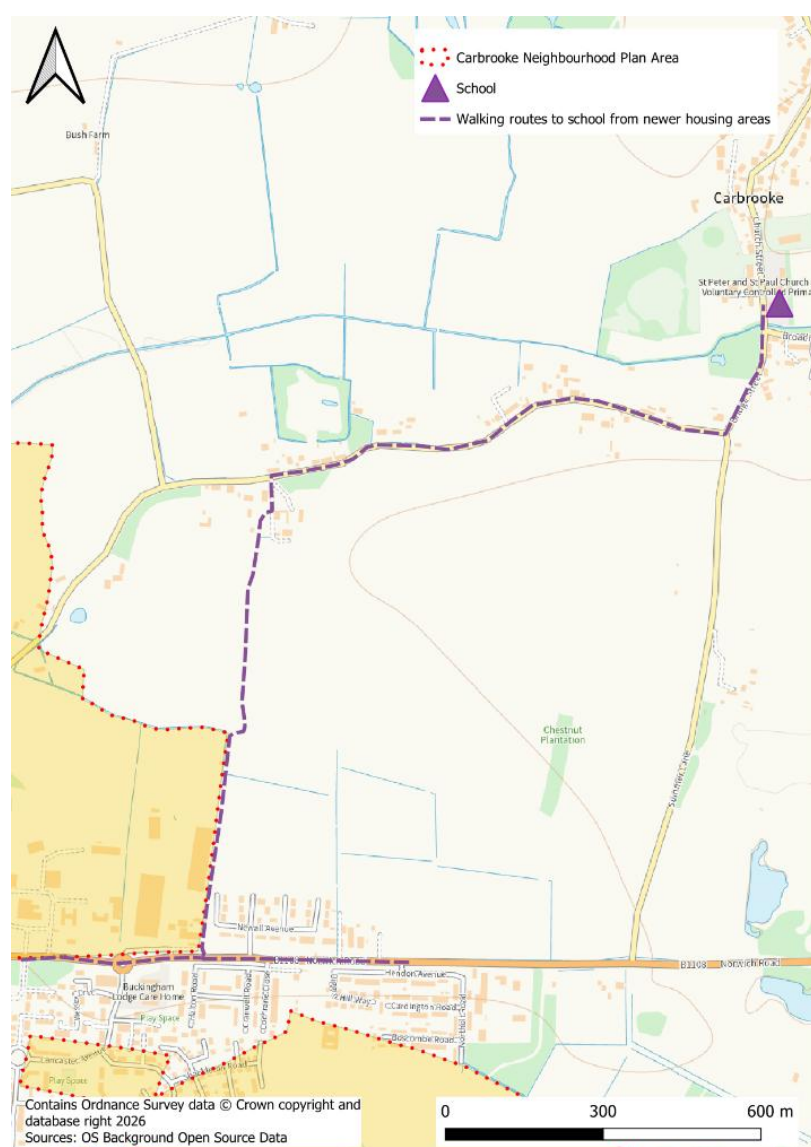


Figure 8: Walking route to the school



Strategic Context

95. National planning policy promotes sustainable transport, supports opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport, and seeks to create safe and accessible places. National policy recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.
96. The Norfolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan identifies opportunities to improve active travel connections within and around Watton. These proposals provide a strategic context for improving walking and cycling connectivity between Carbrooke and nearby services and facilities.
97. The Breckland Local Plan contains policies relating to sustainable transport, active travel, highway safety and the design of development. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to duplicate these policies but provides locally specific guidance relating to movement within the parish, safe walking connections and the protection of rural lanes.

Policy CNP6: Movement and Rural Lanes

98. Carbrooke's rural lanes make an important contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the parish. Lanes such as Summer Lane, Drury Lane and Mill Lane retain a predominantly rural character and are used by both vehicles and pedestrians travelling between residential areas, the village centre, the primary school and the surrounding countryside.
99. Through community engagement and Steering Group discussions, concerns have been raised regarding traffic speeds, road safety and the potential for future development within and adjoining the parish to increase traffic on these routes. There is particular concern that strategic growth on land between Watton and Carbrooke could result in greater use of narrow rural lanes that are not designed to accommodate significant increases in traffic.
100. The detailed design of access arrangements and highway infrastructure will be determined through the planning application process in consultation with the Highway Authority. However, the Neighbourhood Plan can establish local movement principles that support safe walking connections, maintain the role of rural lanes as attractive walking routes and avoid unnecessary through-traffic where reasonable alternatives are available.
101. This policy seeks to support safe and attractive opportunities for walking within the parish whilst recognising the importance of protecting the character and function of Carbrooke's rural lanes.

Policy CNP6: Movement and Rural Lanes

Development proposals should support safe and attractive opportunities for walking within the parish and should have regard to the character, function and capacity of Carbrooke's rural lanes, including Summer Lane, Drury Lane and Mill Lane.

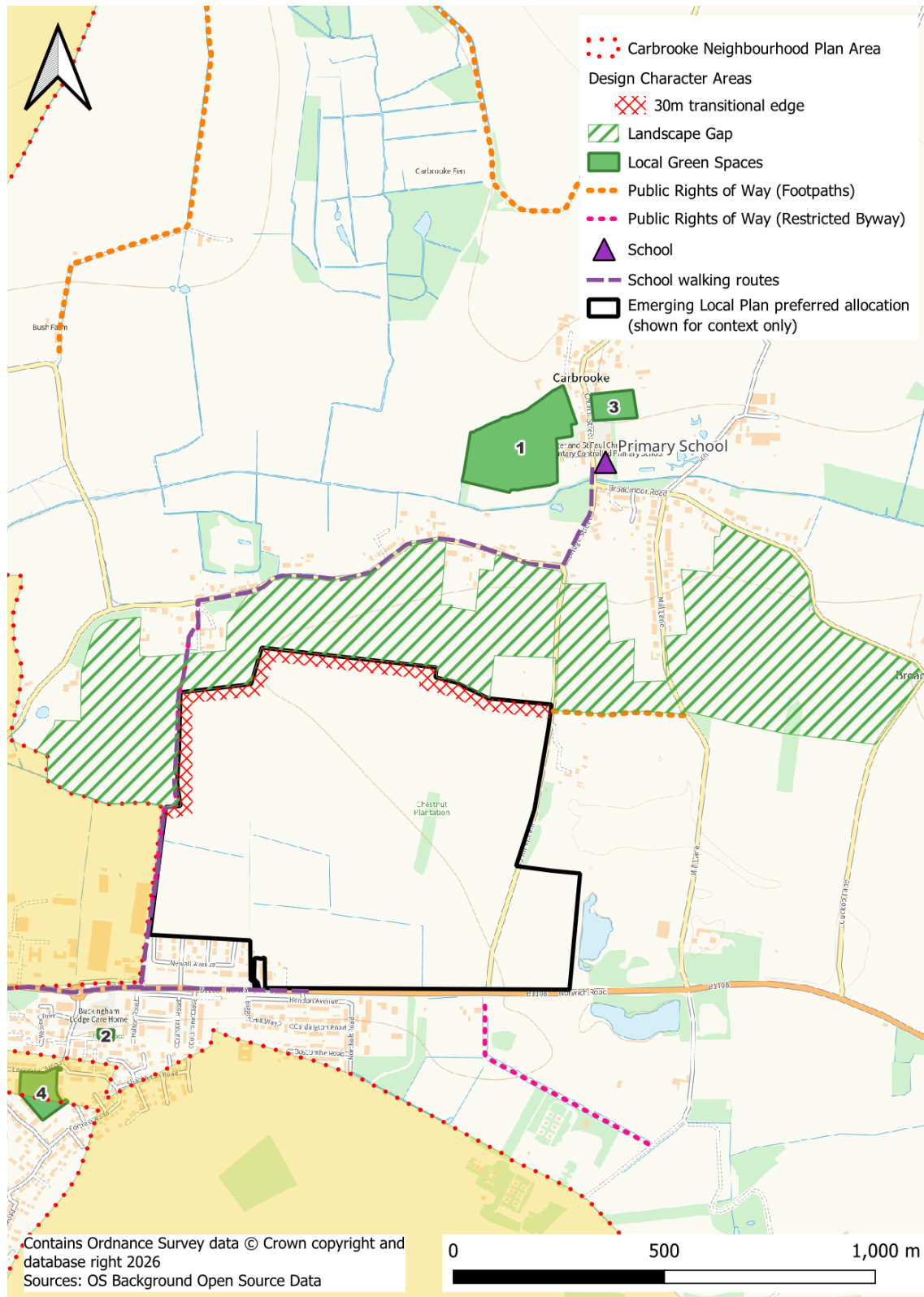
Where appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal, development should:

- a) Provide safe, direct, and convenient walking and cycling connections between residential areas, the village centre, primary school, community facilities and Watton;
- b) Avoid creating unnecessary through-traffic on narrow rural lanes where reasonable alternative access arrangements are available;
- c) Maintain or enhance the role of rural lanes as attractive walking routes; and
- d) Demonstrate how movement arrangements have taken account of the character, function and capacity of local roads and lanes.

102. The Policies Map shows the spatial designations and mapped features referred to in the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. Figure 9 shows the full designated Neighbourhood Area. Figure 11 provides an enlarged view of the central part of the parish. The two maps should be read together.

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Sources: OS Background Open Source Data

Figure 10: Carbrooke Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map – detailed inset



Chapter 8: Community Actions and Infrastructure Priorities

103. The policies contained within this Neighbourhood Plan focus on the use and development of land and will be used in the determination of planning applications.
104. During preparation of the Plan, residents identified a number of wider aspirations and projects that are important to the future of the parish but which cannot be delivered through planning policies alone. These projects may require partnership working between Carbrooke Parish Council, Breckland Council, Norfolk County Council, developers, local organisations, landowners and the wider community.
105. The projects identified in this chapter are not planning policies but instead represent community aspirations that the Parish Council and its partners may seek to pursue during the plan period.

Community Action 1: Village Hall

106. Carbrooke Village Hall has served the community since 1956 and remains an important and well-used local facility. It accommodates clubs, meetings, private functions, community events and regular social activities and is managed by a charitable trust.
107. The hall has benefited from investment in recent years, including improvements to the kitchen and toilets, rewiring, roof replacement, new equipment and works to the entrance. An earlier attempt to obtain funding for a replacement building was unsuccessful.
108. The existing village hall is an important community facility, but the Parish Council has identified the possible need for a replacement building on the existing site.
109. A new hall would require further work to establish community needs, feasibility, costs, funding and management arrangements. As this is a community project rather than a land-use policy requirement, it is included as a Community Action.

Community Action 1: Village Hall
Carbrooke Parish Council will work with the village hall trustees, community organisations, residents, funding bodies and other relevant partners to explore the feasibility of providing a replacement hall on the existing site. This work may include assessment of community needs, the condition and suitability of the building, accessibility, energy efficiency, future uses, design and site requirements, costs, funding opportunities, management arrangements and the relationship with Millennium Green and nearby community facilities.

Community Action 2: Village Hall Car Park

110. Recent improvements around the village hall have included new fencing, works to the entrance, relocation of recycling facilities and installation of electric vehicle charging.
111. The Parish Council has identified the car park surface as a further matter requiring consideration. Improvements could support safer and more accessible use of the hall and neighbouring facilities, but would depend on funding, landowner agreement and any necessary consents.

Community Action 2: Village Hall Car Park

Carbrooke Parish Council will work with the Carbrooke Village Hall Trustees and relevant partners to investigate improvements to the village hall car park and external area.

The work will consider the condition and surfacing of the car park, drainage, pedestrian accessibility, safe vehicle movement, cycle parking, signage, landscaping and the relationship with the hall entrance, electric vehicle charging points and Millennium Green. Any scheme should use materials and planting appropriate to the rural and historic village setting and should include arrangements for future maintenance.

Community Action 3: School Walking Route

112. St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary Academy is an important daily destination within the parish. Existing walking routes to the school include roads with limited or no formal footway provision, with pedestrians in places relying on narrow verges, informal road edges or routes shared with vehicles. Concerns about walking between the newer housing areas south of Norwich Road and Carbrooke village pre-date the Neighbourhood Plan and have previously been raised publicly, including with the local MP.
113. The Transport Evidence Paper identifies Summer Lane and the wider route shown on Figure 8 as an important connection between newer residential areas, possible future development and the school.
114. The Parish Council considers that improvements to the walking route to school could make it safer and more usable throughout the year. Any proposal would require partnership working with Norfolk County Council, the school, landowners and other relevant bodies.

Community Action 3: School Walking Route

Carbrooke Parish Council will work with Norfolk County Council, the Highway Authority, St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary Academy, landowners and other relevant partners to investigate improvements to the walking route between the newer housing areas south of Norwich Road and the primary school, including the public right of way linking the B1108 and Drury Lane.

The work will explore opportunities to improve the surface, accessibility, wayfinding, vegetation management and year-round usability of the route, while protecting the rural character of the surrounding lanes and countryside. Any proposal for lighting will be subject to assessment of safety, ecology, landscape character, maintenance requirements and effects on dark skies, with unlit or low-impact alternatives considered first.

Community Action 4: Tree Planting

115. Trees, hedgerows and other vegetation are important features of Carbrooke's rural landscape. They help define field patterns and settlement edges, filter views, support wildlife movement and contribute to drainage, climate resilience and the character of public open spaces.
116. The parish contains recorded ancient, veteran and notable trees, together with a number of Tree Preservation Orders, reflecting the local importance of its tree stock. Community engagement also identified tree planting and wildlife enhancement as priorities.
117. Although the Plan's policies seek to protect existing trees and secure appropriate planting through development, further opportunities may exist for community-led planting on suitable public, community and privately owned land.

Community Action 4: Tree Planting

Carbrooke Parish Council will work with landowners, residents, community groups and relevant environmental organisations to identify suitable opportunities for tree, hedgerow and other native planting within the parish.

Priority will be given to planting that:

- strengthens existing hedgerows, tree belts and habitat connections;
- enhances public and community spaces;
- reinforces the rural character of settlement edges and lanes;
- provides shade and contributes to climate resilience; and
- supports biodiversity and water management.

Planting should use species appropriate to local conditions and landscape character, avoid harm to important habitats and include arrangements for long-term establishment, maintenance and replacement.