

# HOLT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2016 - 2036



## SUBMISSION PLAN VERSION

Published by Holt Town Council for examination under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

SEPTEMBER 2022



## **A Guide to Reading this Plan**

Of necessity, this Neighbourhood Plan is a detailed technical document. The purpose of this page is to explain the structure and help you find your way around the plan.

### **1. Introduction & Background**

This section explains the background to this Neighbourhood Plan and how you can take part in and respond to the consultation.

### **2. The Neighbourhood Area**

This section details many of the features of the designated area.

### **3. Planning Policy Context**

This rather technical section relates this Plan to the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning policies of the local planning authority, North Norfolk District Council.

### **4. Community Views on Planning Issues**

This section explains the community involvement that has taken place.

### **5. Aspirations, Objectives & Land Use Policies**

This is the key section. Firstly, it provides a statement on the Town Council's aspirations and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. It then details Policies which are proposed to address the issues outlined in the Foreword and in Section 4.

### **6. Implementation**

This section explains how the Plan will be implemented and future development guided and managed. It suggests priorities for how financial contributions from future development in the town should support local infrastructure improvements. Finally, it deals with a number of issues which although relevant are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan.

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## FOREWORD

### **Welcome to the HOLT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

*Through the aspirations and needs of the local community of Holt, as identified to us at various consultations and meetings throughout our time spent developing the plan, we have identified matters which will help to determine how our town grows over the coming years.*

- *Our Plan will have a positive impact on many aspects of possible improvements and future development.*
- *Our Plan will be addressing topics such as “character” to enable us to guide planning to suit the needs of our own residents and necessary infrastructure.*
- *Our Plan will be a document which gives legal weight and good reasoning to our choices.*

*A strong priority was to liaise with our community, relevant authorities and organizations and to observe the relevant policies. In developing the plan, we have had to work in stages, through a number of processes and specific steps.*

*Our aim was to produce a Neighbourhood Plan specifically for Holt and its community, which is in line with the strategic policies of North Norfolk’s adopted and forthcoming plans. We publicised our intentions to all people living in Holt and consulted according to the official guidance for Neighbourhood Planning.*

*We developed key aims according to local need:*

- *Promoting sustainable development, particularly appropriate housing for the community.*
- *Seeking high quality design and standards of amenity, whilst conserving heritage assets.*
- *Promote mixed use development.*
- *Consider patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and to focus significant development in locations which are, or can be made, suitable.*
- *Protecting green space to serve the local community*

*Once our Plan is adopted, following a favourable local referendum, it will form part of the ‘development plan’ alongside the North Norfolk Local Plan. Together they are the starting point for deciding how future development should take place in Holt, including type and quality of that development to ensure that it meets local objectives and needs.*

*I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has contributed directly to the development and completion of Holt Neighbourhood Plan and all members of our community for their willing engagement and input that has shaped and determined the objectives for the future of Holt.*

*Maggie Prior*

Chair, Holt Neighbourhood Plan

### **Neighbourhood Plan Finishing Group**

Cllr Maggie Prior (Chair Holt Neighbourhood Plan), Cllr Bryan Payne, Cllr Ray Moore and Gemma Harrison (Town Clerk)

## LIST OF POLICIES

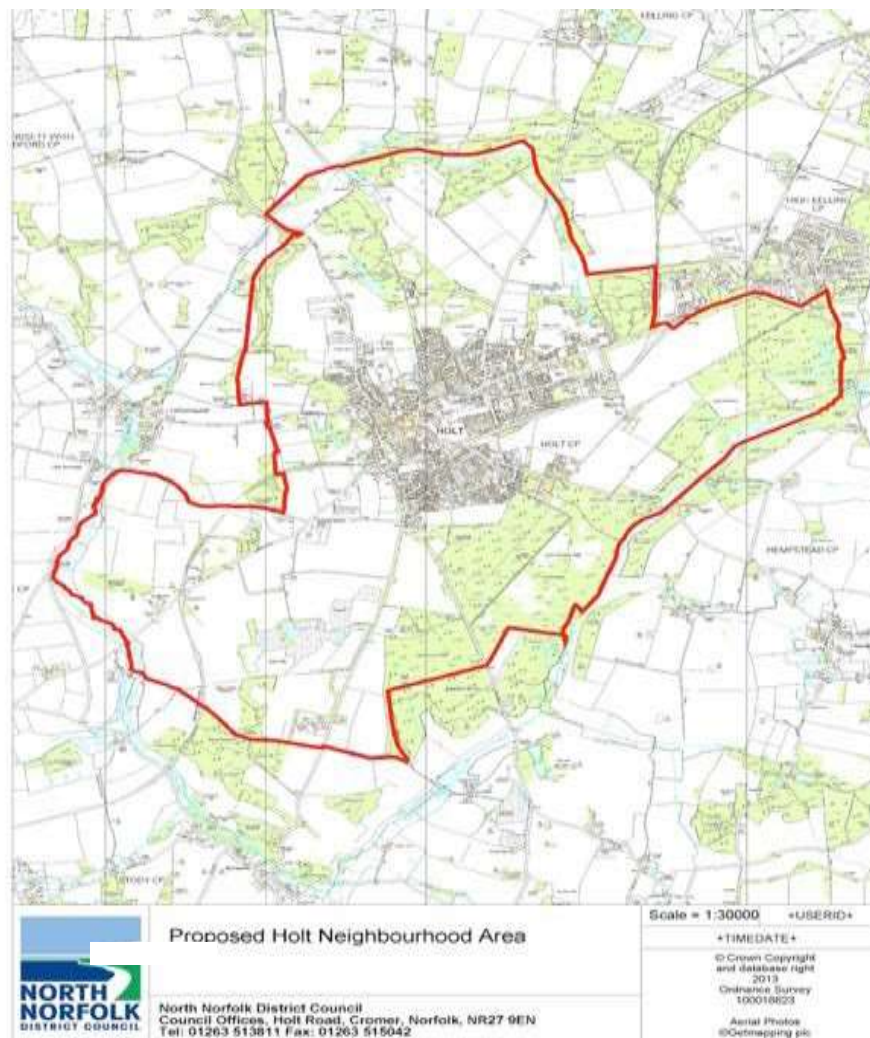
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## 1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1 Holt Town Council has prepared this Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authority, North Norfolk District Council (NNDC), in December 2013. The plan is being prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations of 2012 (as amended).

1.2 The designated area coincides with the Town Council's administrative boundary (see Plan A below) and is centred on the town.

1.3 The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to set out a series of planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications in the area in the period to 2036. The Plan will form part of the development plan for Holt, alongside the adopted North Norfolk Core Strategy and Development Control Policies of 2008 and the forthcoming North Norfolk Local Plan, which will replace the 2011 policies and roll forward the plan period from 2021 to 2036.



*Plan A: Designated Neighbourhood Area for Holt (Source: North Norfolk District Council)*

1.4 Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities, like Holt, with the chance to manage the quality of development of their areas. Once subjected to independent examination and approved at a referendum, the Plan will become part of the statutory development plan for the area and will carry weight as a material consideration in how planning applications are decided. Plans must therefore contain only land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Plan if they are not directly related to planning.

1.5 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet some ‘basic conditions’. In essence, the conditions are:

- Is the Plan consistent with the national planning policy?
- Is the Plan consistent with local planning policy?
- Does the plan promote the principles of sustainable development?
- Has the process of making the plan met the necessary requirements?

1.6 In addition, the Town Council needs to demonstrate to an independent examiner that it has successfully engaged with the local community in preparing the Plan. If the examiner is satisfied that it has, and considers the Plan meets the above conditions, then the Plan will go to a referendum of the local electorate. If a simple majority of the turnout votes in favour of the Plan, then it becomes adopted as formal planning policy.

### **Future Changes to the Planning System**

1.7 In May 2022 the Government published its Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill, which contains proposals to change both the development plan and management system. Neighbourhood plans remain a strong part of that system, but, like Local Plans, would have to avoid repeating or conflicting with national development management policies. There are also changes to the ‘basic conditions’ proposed in respect of judging general conformity with the development plan.

1.8 It is not known how long the Bill will take to enact, nor the extent to which its first proposals will survive Parliament scrutiny. Should the Act and other Regulations come into force soon after the Neighbourhood Plan is made, then the Town Council may review the Plan to ensure the town remains well planned.

### **The Pre-Submission Plan**

1.9 A draft (‘Pre-Submission’) Neighbourhood Plan was published in 2018 for formal consultation following extensive engagement with the community and other stakeholders in the previous five years. The feedback demonstrated healthy support for the vision and objectives although further work was necessary to translate them into effective planning policies which would dovetail with those of the adopted and emerging Local Plan.

1.10 A draft final version of the plan was discussed with NNDC in 2019 prior to finalising its submission for examination but unfortunately, Covid 19 has had a serious effect on progress in finishing the work during 2020/21. In the meantime, NNDC has made progress with its new Local Plan and the Town Council considered it sensible to wait for the publication by NNDC of the final draft version of the Local Plan (in February 2022) before finalising the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **Sustainability Appraisal & the Habitats Regulations**

1.11 The District Council has provided a 'screening opinion' on the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to have a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to identify its potential to lead to significant environmental effects (as per the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended)). Following consultation with the statutory bodies – Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England– it has concluded that there is no potential for such a scale of effects and therefore no SEA is necessary.

1.12 As part of the process the town council must demonstrate how the Neighbourhood Plan achieves sustainable development as one of the examination tests.

1.13 The District Council was also obliged to screen the Neighbourhood Plan to ascertain if its policies may have a significant effect on any internationally designated habitats sites within influencing distance of the Plan. It has carried out that screening and has consulted with Natural England. Both have confirmed that the potential for such effects can be screened out and no Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Plan is necessary, as per the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

1.14 The Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to NNDC for independent examination and following successful examination the Neighbourhood Plan or modified plan will be subject to a local referendum. If successful it will be put forward to NNDC to adopt as part of the development plan for the parished area of Holt, where it will become, along with the Local Plan material considerations in informing and determining planning applications.



## 2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

2.1 Holt is a market town located in north Norfolk, some 3 miles (5 km) from the north Norfolk coast. The town is 23 miles (36.5 km) north of the city of Norwich, 9.5 miles (15 km) west of Cromer and 35 miles (56 km) east of King's Lynn. The town is on the route of the A148 King's Lynn to Cromer Road. The nearest network railway station is in the town of Sheringham where access to the national rail network can be made via the Bittern Line to Norwich. The nearest airport is Norwich.

2.2 The name 'Holt' is thought to derive from the Anglo-Saxon word for woodland. Holt is located on wooded high ground of the Cromer-Holt ridge at the crossing point of two ancient by-ways, and as such was a natural point for a settlement to grow. Holt has a mention in the Domesday Book and is described as a market town and port (with the nearby port of Cley-next-the-Sea being described as Holt's port). Over the years Holt has grown as a local place of trade and commerce, although the weekly market, which has taken place since before the 1080's, ceased during the 1960's.

2.3 On 1st May 1708 the town of Holt was devastated by a fire which destroyed most of the medieval town, the fire started at Market Place and quickly spread through the timber houses of the town. With most of the medieval buildings destroyed in the fire the townsfolk set about rebuilding the town. The rebuilding made Holt notable for its abundance of Georgian buildings, that being the style at the time the town centre was rebuilt.

2.4 The Parish Church of Saint Andrew the Apostle was established in Holt before 1086, the year of the Domesday Book. The church is situated in the heart of the town at the end of Church Street, which is found behind the War Memorial, at the east end of what was the original market place.

2.5 Holt retains a 'small market town' character with development contained within a limited area, which has so far avoided urban sprawl into the wider countryside. The population of Holt is 3,808 with 1,807 households [Source: 2011 Census].

2.6 The town has seen considerable expansion around its southern boundary over the last few years, with more committed housing and employment schemes to follow in that area in the coming years. The new homes have enabled the town to remain busy, although there are concerns that its local social and traffic (notably town centre parking) infrastructure will be enough to cope with the larger local population. These concerns are being addressed via a separate project "Holt Vision 22" which tackles congestion and parking in the town, as well as looking into increase public realm space. A separate report on Holt Vision 22 is available by request from the Town Council.

2.7 In June 2021 an appeal was approved by the Secretary of State for a scheme to build 110 homes on Beresford Road, also on the southern edge of the town. The proposal includes provision for infrastructure to service land to deliver a new primary school to serve the town and a new public open space. It is anticipated that the County Council as local education authority will bring forward proposals to deliver the new school shortly. The new school may act as a new hub for community activity in that part of the town.

### 3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The town of Holt lies within the North Norfolk planning authority area in the county of Norfolk in eastern England.

#### **National Planning Policy**

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the government in 2021 is an important guide in the preparation of neighbourhood plans and accompanying the NPPF is an online resource known as the Planning Practice Guidance, (PPG), this adds further to the NPPF and assists in its interpretation. A specific section exists for neighbourhood planning; [Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-practice-guidance)

The following paragraphs of the NPPF are considered especially relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan:

- Achieving sustainable development (p8)
- Non-strategic policy making by Neighbourhood Plans (p18 and p29)
- Meet local housing needs (p62)
- Local economic and rural development (p82 and p84)
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres (p86)
- Providing community infrastructure (p93)
- Protecting public open space (p99)
- Promoting sustainable travel (p105)
- Achieving high standards of design (p127)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (p174, p176 and p179)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (p190)

3.3 The Government published its first National Design Guide in autumn 2019 to encourage better design outcomes from the planning system. The Guide encourages local communities to engage in understanding the character of their areas and, where preparing neighbourhood plans, to prepare design policies specific to their local areas.

#### **Strategic Planning Policy**

3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, which primarily comprises the North Norfolk Core Strategy Incorporating Development Control Policies of 2008 and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document of 2011.

#### The Adopted Development Plan

3.5 The Core Strategy envisages that:

*“Holt will thrive as a visitor destination based on its reputation as a ‘niche’ retail centre. The town’s strategic location will be attractive to employers wishing to establish or expand on new serviced employment sites, meeting the employment needs of a wide catchment, including the towns of Cromer and Sheringham and a large part of the AONB. Additional housing will have been provided to help meet the needs of local people without compromising the setting of the town within the Glaven Valley Conservation Area and AONB.”*

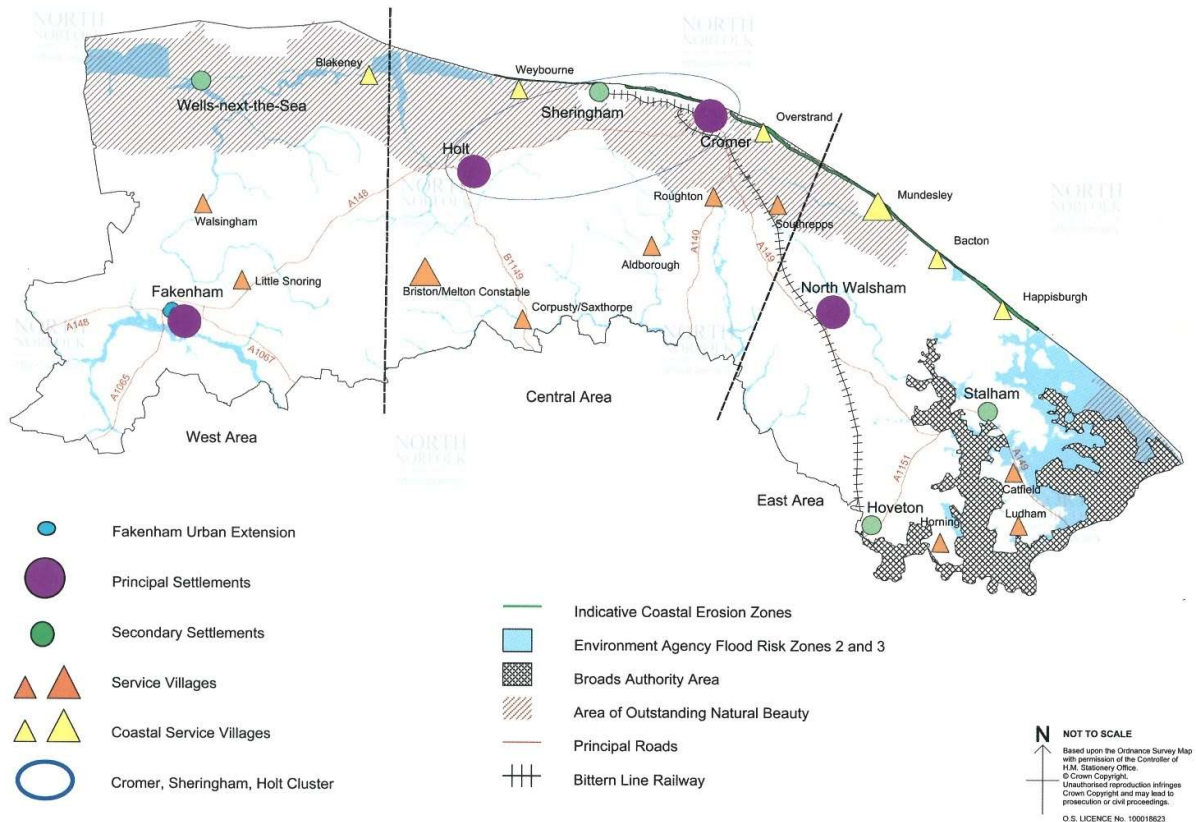
3.6 Its Policy SS1 (the spatial strategy for the district) identifies Holt as one of four Principal

Settlements with a Small Town Centre, as an employment area attracting people from the surrounding area to work in Holt (see Plan B). Its Policy SS3 planned for the delivery of 700 homes in the twenty-year period 2001 – 2021 and its Policy SS5 provided for 15 Ha of new employment land in the town and defined its primary shopping area and retail frontages.

Its policy for the town – SS9 – also encouraged proposals to improve the pedestrian environment of the town centre and its car parking and identified the groundwater catchment area of the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC as requiring special attention in development proposals.

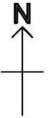
3.7 The document also includes a wide range of development management policies, with its housing mix, Norfolk Coast AONB, landscape character, design, historic environment, biodiversity, retail development, tourism development and accommodation policies being of special interest and relevance to Holt.

Figure 3 Key Diagram

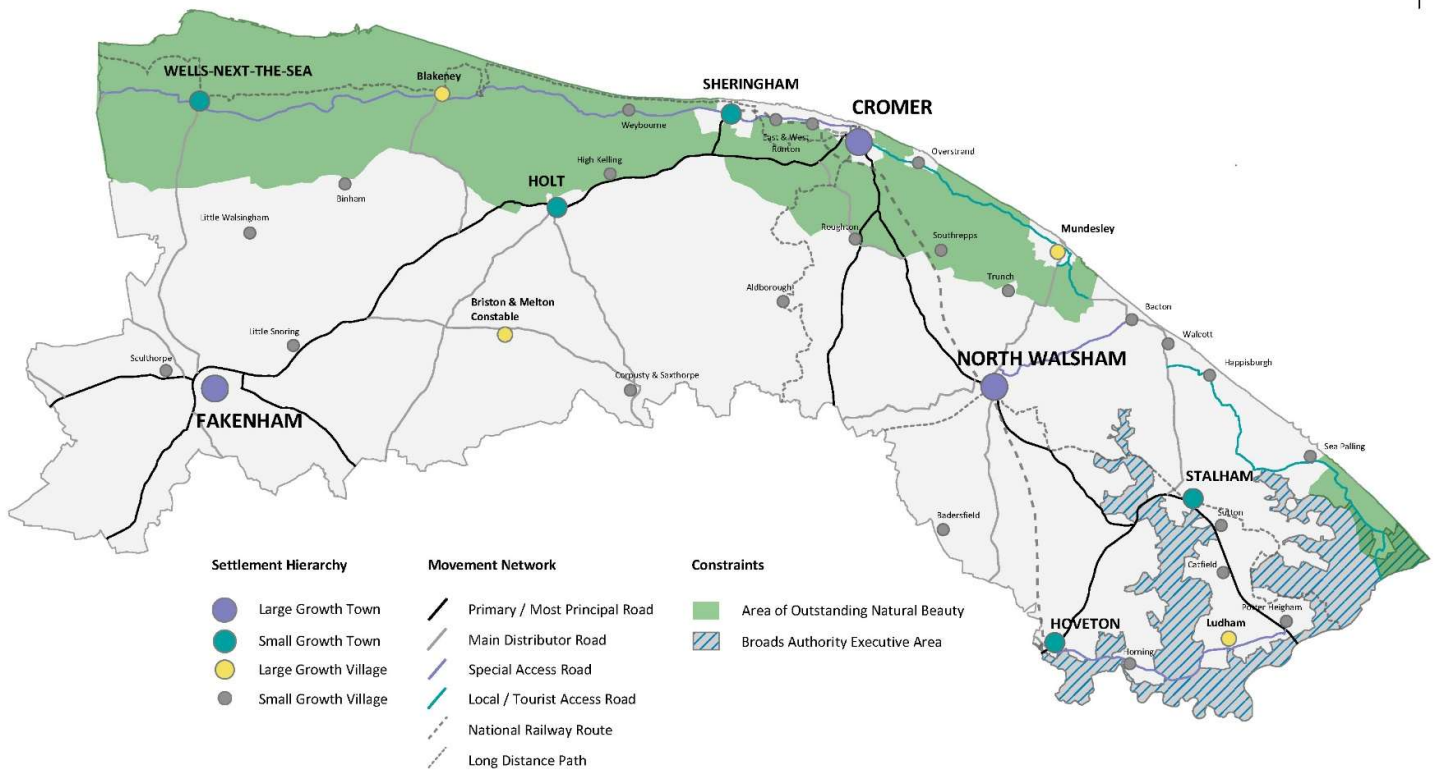


Plan B: Adopted Core Strategy Key Diagram 2008 (Source: North Norfolk District Council)

3.8 The Site Allocations Plan allocated land west of Woodfield Road (Policy H01) for 100 homes, land at Heath Farm/Hempstead Road (H09) for 200 homes and at least 5 Ha of employment uses and land at Thornage Road (CP10) for a new public car park. The housing schemes have now been delivered; there has been no progress on the car park proposal.



**Figure 3 - North Norfolk Key Diagram**



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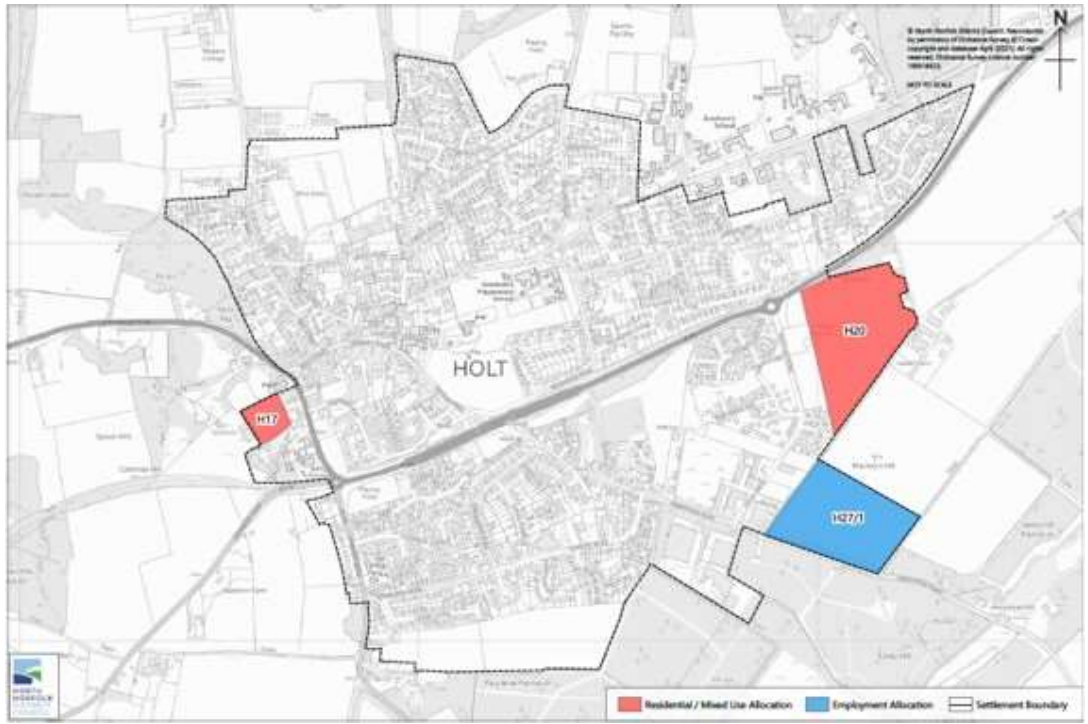
*Plan C: Emerging Proposed Local Plan Key Diagram 2022 (Source: North Norfolk District Council)*

The Emerging North Norfolk Local Plan 2016 – 2036

3.9 The new Local Plan has made significant progress and is expected to be submitted for examination shortly, having completed its Regulation 19 consultation earlier in the year. Its spatial strategy does not change the role of Holt in the District (see Plan C) and it continues to provide a comprehensive range of strategic and non-strategic spatial and development management policies covering all relevant issues for Holt, including three site allocations. They comprise land north of Valley Lane (H17) for 27 homes and further land at Heath Farm for another 180 homes and elderly persons accommodation (H20) and for another 6 Ha of employment land (H27/1), as shown on Plan D below.

3.10 The strategic policies of NNDC set out a housing requirement for Holt which is met in full through the site allocations of the emerging Local plan and it is not the intention of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify additional local need or sites for further growth. The goal for the Neighbourhood Plan is thus a narrow context to refine and add value to the Local Plan policies.

3.11 There are three County-wide waste and minerals development plans that apply in this area, but they are not considered relevant in the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan. There are no made neighbourhood plans in the immediate vicinity of Holt, but a small number have been made elsewhere in the District or are in progress.



*Plan D: North Norfolk Local Plan 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 Allocations in Holt  
(Source: North Norfolk District Council)*

## **4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES**

4.1 A Vision project produced the A Vision for Holt Document that was published in February 2012 after six months of information gathering and consultation. The key purpose of the project was to produce a visioning study for the development of key community, economic and environmental improvements for Holt. A Vision for Holt was something which had been originally identified by the Holt Planning Group (a group formed by the Town Council and other partners in the town). The key outcome was to provide a more coordinated and pro-active forum through which specific projects can be identified, promoted, consulted upon and, most importantly, delivered.

4.2 In October 2014 the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group organised an all-day community event where residents and local businesses were asked about their views on Holt and how to make Holt a better place. A community survey was undertaken, this involved a questionnaire being distributed to every household and business in Holt. 228 completed forms were returned. The survey was analysed by an external company and the results were used to inform and develop the Mission Statement, Objectives and emerging policy statements of the Plan. The Steering Group took part in workshops led by consultations from Planning Aid on a number of specific topics including character assessment and developing a mission statement. Children from Holt Primary School shared their 'likes' and 'dislikes' on different types of buildings at a workshop.

4.3 Community events engaged the wider community to develop a better understanding of what local residents felt was important whilst gathering the evidence to support the HNP. To ensure the consultation process was as inclusive as possible the Steering Group wrote to key stakeholders, and published articles in the local magazine 'The Chronicle', delivered to every household and business in Holt. This was in addition to setting up a dedicated webpage on the Town Council's website to provide information and encourage feedback.

4.4 The outcomes of the community survey, the Mission Statement and Objectives were shared at the Community Consultation event in June 2017, with policy statements being discussed and tested in consultation with local residents. The Steering Group categorised the policies by five key themes and drafted the Neighbourhood Plan to align with the desired outcomes to achieve the Mission Statement and Objectives.

4.5 The pre-submission consultation of the draft HNP was consulted on in January – February 2018, following which, the HNP has been updated to incorporate the comments received from local residents and stakeholders.

## 5. ASPIRATIONS, OBJECTIVES & LAND USE POLICIES

### Aspirations

5.1 The aspiration of the Town Council for the neighbourhood area is:

*“As the gateway to the North Norfolk coast Holt will be recognised as an historic market town, based in a rural setting, with a vibrant town centre. Harnessing its growth potential, whilst retaining a strong local identity and distinctiveness.”*

### Objectives

5.2 The key objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- To preserve the character of Holt, including the spatial balance between the rural, built and historic environment, character and ethos
- To support housing tailored to the needs and context of Holt
- To protect, enhance, strengthen and support economic and tourism activities, seeking the development, growth and regeneration of employment sites for employment uses appropriate to Holt.
- To develop and improve local community facilities, open green space, parking and services (such as recreation, education and medical) for all age groups.
- To support enhanced public transport infrastructure and sustainable transport options, including walking and cycling.

### Land Use Policies

5.3 The following seven policies relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area of Holt. They focus on a small number of specific planning matters that are of greatest interest to the local community, leaving other policy matters to the Local Plan to cover. This has avoided unnecessary repetition of policies between these plans, though they have a mutual, helpful inter-dependence.

5.4 Each policy is numbered and titled, and it is shown in bold italics. Where necessary, the area to which it will apply is shown on the Policies Map at the end of the document. After each policy is some supporting text that explains the purpose of the policy, how it will be applied and, where helpful, how it relates to other development plan policies.



## **HOLT1 Design Guidance**

***The design of development proposals should be in conformity with the North Norfolk Design Guide and, where applicable, with the Holt Conservation Area Appraisal and should have regard to the following special interest and character of the Neighbourhood Area as relevant to the location, nature and scale of the proposals:***

**1. *In the town centre, including the Conservation Area:***

- The tight grain of buildings and spaces arranged around a medieval layout of roads and alleyways***
- The generally narrow plots and mix of commercial, residential and community uses***
- The mix of two and three storey town house, commercial and other buildings***
- The predominance of vernacular building, roofing and boundary materials***
- The prominence in the street scene of major landmark buildings that punctuate or terminate key views along High Street and Market Place***
- The presence of individual or groups of non-designated heritage asset buildings and structures that enhance the significance of the Conservation Area and its listed buildings, most notably St Andrew's Church Hall, Church Street; St Andrew's Church Rooms; Methodist Church Hall, Loades Hall; the War Memorial; the Obelisk; Blind Sam; Stone Lion (Lion House); The Great Fire Memorial Board; and the Holt Town Sign.***

**2. *Elsewhere within the defined Holt Settlement Boundary:***

- The importance of a combination of long and revealed views into the Conservation Area from public vantage points on its outskirts***
- The predominance of two storey, residential detached or semi-detached buildings, with occasional bungalows, all set within regular plot shapes and sizes in regular street patterns***

**3. *Elsewhere within the Neighbourhood Area:***

- The definitive role played by the appearance and topography and key characteristics of the Glaven Valley in forming the open landscape character of the setting of the town to its south and west***
- The large fields, rolling hills and woodlands forming the agricultural landscape that surrounds the town in framing its rural setting, most notably the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to its north***
- The prominence on the edge of town of the distinctive Gresham's School set within large, formally laid out grounds.***

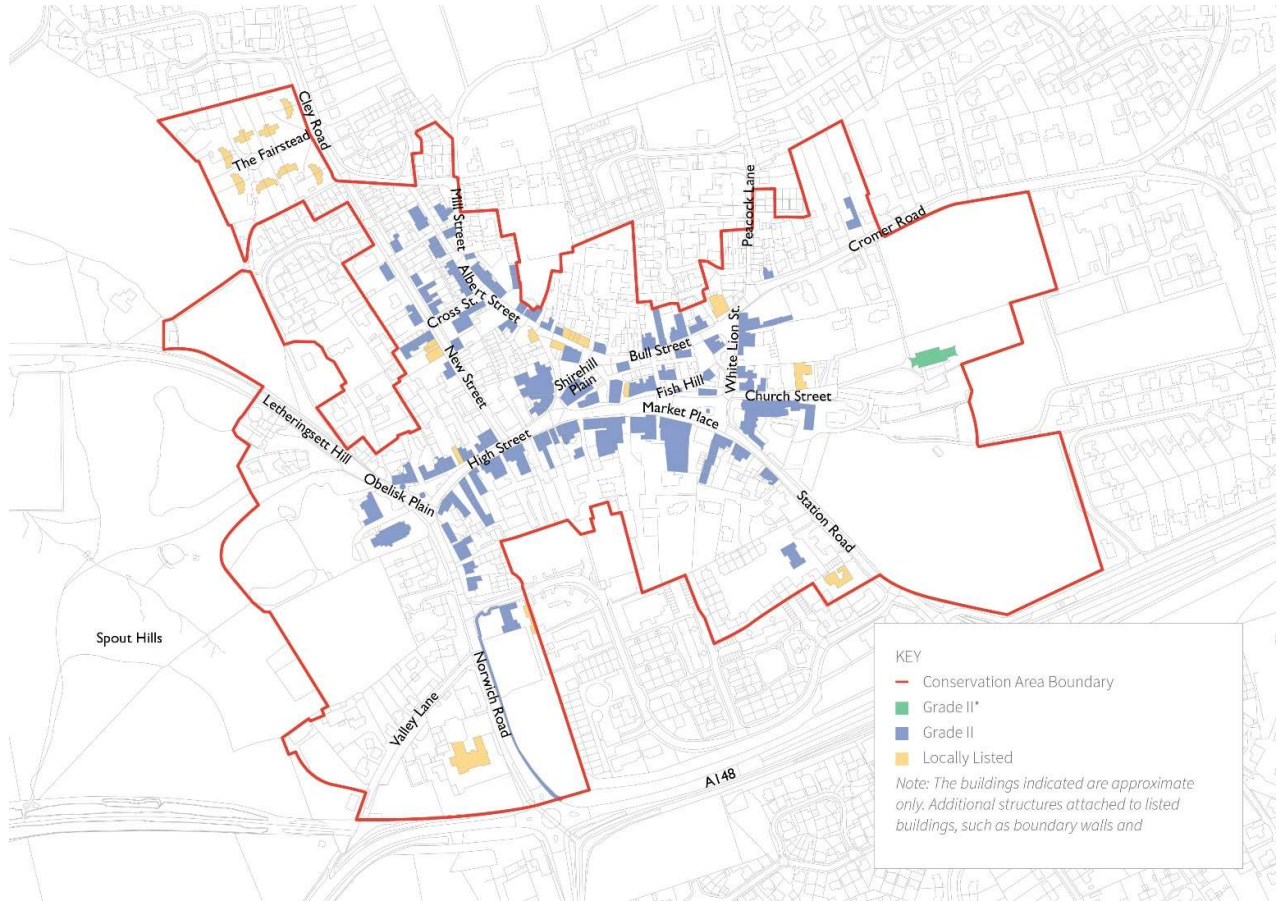
5.5 This policy refines policies ENV2, ENV7 and ENV8 of the emerging Local Plan to aid their application in Holt, not just within its Conservation Area but also other parts of the town and its special landscape setting. It requires proposals within the Conservation Area and its setting to have acknowledged, understood and responded to the Appraisal that has recently been updated by NNDC but draws out of it a small number of essential characteristics in its first clause.

5.6 Holt is a historic market town full of character (see Plan E). Most of the medieval town was destroyed in 1708 in the great fire of Holt, which broke out amongst the market stalls. It swept through the wooden buildings of the town; the Norman parish church was repaired and the town centre was rebuilt, which now has an abundance of important Georgian and some early Victorian buildings.



A noticeable survivor of the fire is the Listed Grade II Byfords building (1–3 Shirehall Plain) which is thought to be the oldest house in Holt (the cellar dates back to the 15th century). The premises traded as a hardware shop or ironmonger's for over 100 years under the ownership of the Byford family. Byford's is now run as a café, delicatessen and bed & breakfast.

5.7 The centre of Holt was designated a Conservation Area in December 1974, covering the historic centre of Holt and includes primarily early-mid Victorian housing to the north and green spaces bordering the town on the east and west sides. Holt has a wealth of designated and non-designated heritage assets. In all, there are 118 listed buildings, two Grade II\*; the Old Rectory and the Parish Church of St. Andrew the Apostle, with the remaining 116 Grade II listed.



*Plan E: Holt Conservation Area and Heritage Assets August 2021 (Source: North Norfolk District Council)*

5.8 The historic core of the town is rectangular in plan, bordered by Market Place, Bull Street, White Lion Street and Shire Hall Plain. The High Street extends away to the west from this, encouraging more linear development. The Conservation Area is enclosed on the northern, southern and western sides by 20th century development. North of the town is Holt Hall, Grade II Listed, built in the 1840s and extended in the 1860s. The Hall is located in an 86-acre (35 ha) estate made up of ancient woodlands, lawns, lakes and gardens. Until 2022 it was used as a Field Study Centre run by Norfolk County Council, but it has now closed and its future is uncertain.

5.9 The pineapple-topped Obelisk at Holt is one of a pair of gateposts from Melton Constable Park, the other having been given to the town of Dereham in 1757. Each gatepost records distances, to various places from Holt and Dereham respectively, carved into the stone.

At the start of World War II, to avoid assisting the enemy in the event of invasion, the townspeople of Dereham dumped their obelisk down a deep well, where it remains to this day. The people of Holt whitewashed their obelisk at the start of World War II and it remains in good condition and a cause of great interest.

5.10 Blind Sam is the name given locally to the Queen Victoria Jubilee Lantern located in Obelisk Plain. Dating from 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, it stood until 1921 in the Market Place, where it served two functions; to provide light to the Market Place and provide drinking water from two fountains at the bottom. The light was powered by the town's gas supply, which at times was sporadic and unreliable, hence the nickname "Blind Sam". It was moved to Obelisk Plain in 1921 to make way for the war memorial.



### **HOLT2 Housing Mix & Tenure**

- 1. In addition to meeting other development plan requirements for accessible and adaptable homes, all proposals for residential development should incorporate the design principles of dementia friendly communities unless demonstrably impractical.***
- 2. Proposals for specialist residential accommodation for older people will be supported provided they are within the defined Holt Settlement Boundary and are suitably located in terms of their amenity and proximity to local services.***
- 3. Proposals for residential development that can demonstrate they will meet defined needs of Holt for affordable homes, including First Homes for eligible first-time buyers, will be encouraged.***

5.11 This policy addresses three housing related issues at either end of the market for new homes. Its first clause supplements the provisions of Policy HOU8 of the emerging Local Plan in respect of new housing schemes being dementia friendly.

5.12 Nationally it is recognised that there is a rapidly ageing population. Locally the picture is more dramatic with the age structure of the population of Holt significantly older than comparatives for Norfolk as a whole, with 38% of the population aged 65 and over compared with 24% in Norfolk and only 19% for England. This has significant implications for planning and plan-making.

5.13 Baseline data collected for the evidence base indicates that by 2030 there is predicted to be an increase of over 86% - c26,937 people - across Norfolk suffering from dementia. Holt has been designated as a dementia friendly town, for any new development that comes to Holt this is an opportunity for those developments to lead the way by incorporating simple but effective principles into their designs to deliver dementia friendly communities.



5.14 The **'At a Glance: a Checklist for Developing Dementia Friendly Communities'** is a document that offers useful checks and guidance on designing dementia friendly communities. It summarises some of the key design points set out in the Housing LIN Viewpoint *Breaking New Ground: The Quest for Dementia Friendly Communities*, by Dr Lynne Mitchell at the University of Warwick (Viewpoint No.25, Housing LIN, 2012). Recognising how people and their lifestyles change over time, including the need for their homes to be able to adapt with them, it is felt that implementing this simple principle could have a significant impact on health and wellbeing of residents. The policy requires applicants for relevant proposals to be familiar with this document and to show how they have responded to its principles.

5.15 The second clause complements Policy HOU2 of the emerging Local Plan by encouraging the provision of new specialist accommodation for older households in its own right, not just as part of large housing development schemes. Local authorities across Norfolk are working hard to try to reduce pressure on the social care and hospital budgets through a range of measures, called 'early help', and key amongst them is a desire to help keep people at home for as long as possible before moving into residential care accommodation. There is also increasing demand for specialist retirement-type accommodation, sometimes called 'extra-care'. This accommodation includes an element of care that helps people to 'down-size' more easily to more appropriate and desired accommodation. With such an ageing population there is going to be need for more housing with care or sheltered accommodation to be provided in the future. Support will be given to residential care accommodation (Use Class C2), which is normally best placed where it is well related to local services, particularly a doctor's surgery, shops and public transport to enable staff, residents and visitors to have good access.

5.16 The third clause encourages a focus of housing proposals on meeting Holt needs, in adding weight to the affordable housing provisions of Policy HOU2 of the emerging Local Plan. In respect of meeting the town's housing needs, affordability of local houses is a significant issue. With the median salary for North Norfolk, £18,008 and the average house price in Holt at £401,137. This results in an average house price to income ratio of 1:22. Significantly higher than the ratio for Norfolk North and for England at 1:9 and 1:7 respectfully. [Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Office for National Statistics].

5.17 The amount of affordable housing secured on a market-housing site is determined by NNDC through the application of HOU2 of the emerging Local Plan and is secured through Section 106 agreements. There is a requirement within the Core Strategy to provide 45% affordable houses within any new development. The Town Council encourages the NNDC's 'local lettings policy' to support individuals in housing need with a local connection to have priority in accessing some of these dwellings.

5.18 As of June 2022 there were 1091 applicants on the housing list requiring housing in Holt of which 161 are on the Housing Register (high level of need and meet the reasonable preference criteria), 91 are on the Transfer Register\* (specifically wish to transfer to the Holt area) and 839 on the Housing Options Register\*\* (lower levels of need and may not meet one or more of the reasonable preference criteria).

*\* This register contains those qualifying applicants who are an existing tenant of a housing association or registered provider and live in North Norfolk and do not qualify for the housing register as they do not have an urgent housing need.*

*\*\* The Housing Option Register is the register that contains those qualifying applicants who do not meet the qualification criteria for the Housing Register or Transfer Register*

5.19 The demographics of Holt support action to be taken to enable younger people to be able to remain within the community they have grown up in. When a property is allocated to a household under the NNDC's 'Local Lettings' policy the cascade is used so that someone on the housing list who has a local connection would be prioritised above someone who does not have a local connection for these homes even if their identified need is higher on the housing register list.

5.20 For affordable housing on allocated sites and sites within the development boundary the North Norfolk District Council's policy is to give priority to those in greatest housing need from applicants on the Council's housing list. The District Council does not have the right to 'nominate' to shared ownership properties, but Housing Associations will advertise on the Council's Your Choice Your Home website alongside their other marketing activity. For affordable housing on exceptions sites, (these are sites outside of the development boundary), the Council's local allocation criteria applies, including to shared ownership. Applicants with a local connection to Holt and the adjoining parishes will get priority. In addition, Holt and Neighbourhood Housing Society, a local community-led housing group, has its own local allocation policy for the properties it owns and lets.

### **HOLT3 Green Infrastructure**

***The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a Green Infrastructure Network comprising a wide range of existing assets: open spaces, woodlands, water bodies, sustainable drainage land, amenity land, allotments, significant and clusters of mature trees, hedgerows. Development proposals that lie within or adjoin the Network should demonstrate that their layout and landscape schemes will not harm the habitat connectivity present in that part of the Network. Proposals that incorporate measures to enhance habitat connectivity within the Network and/or that enable the Network to be extended and better connected will be encouraged.***

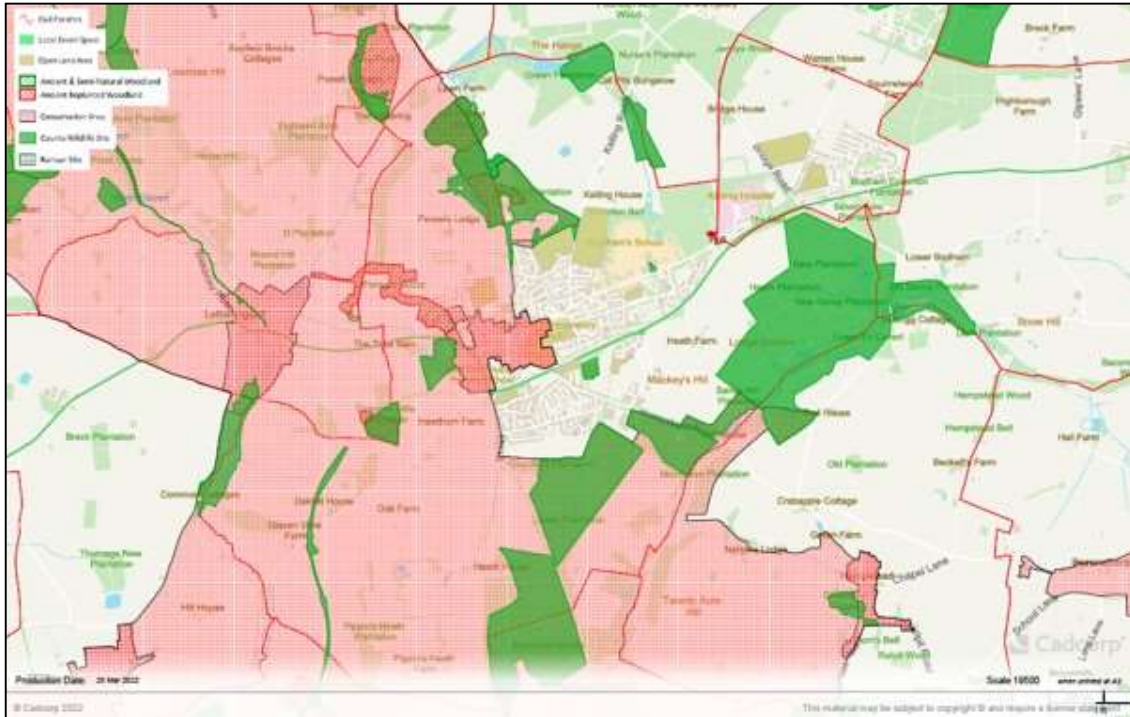
5.21 This policy translates the provisions of green infrastructure policies CC11 and CC12 of the emerging Local Plan into a mapped network within the town and throughout the rest of the Parish, as illustrated on Plan F. Policy CC11 includes footpaths in its provisions for green infrastructure but this is dealt with separately in the Neighbourhood Plan's provisions for the Holt Green Wheel of Policy HOLT6.



5.22 Holt is sited three miles (five kilometres) from the North Norfolk coast. It is at the western end of the Cromer Ridge, a glacial moraine of sandy soil running parallel to the sea, a region that is recognised today as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There is a good deal of woodland around Holt, particularly on the south side. This includes areas of older woodland and more recent plantations of pine trees, which make use of areas of poor acidic soil. The plantations on the east side are broken up by Gresham's School and Kelling Hospital; both of which have large grounds.



5.23 The south side of Holt is separated from the town centre by the A148 road, which separates Holt from the woods to the south and an important local amenity, Holt Country Park. Holt Country Park is a short walk from the town. It has had a chequered history, including a horseracing course, heath, farmland, forestry and woodland garden. It has now been established as tranquil woodland dominated with Scots pine and native broadleaves. Its rich ground flora supports an abundant display of wildlife including deer. The Park has achieved a Green Flag Award every year since 2005 and is very popular with school and families where they join in environmental and arts events throughout the year, with 'way-marked' routes suitable for walkers, wheelchairs and pushchair users. There are also orienteering posts in the park for groups to use. The Park is free to the public with a small charge for parking.



*Plan F: Holt Green Infrastructure Map May 2022 (Source: Holt Town Council)*

*Plan F – A larger scale plan can be viewed at Appendix A*

5.24 The Holt Lowes is an area of heathland to the south of Holt that is open to the public and has long been recognised as an area for wildlife. It was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1954 and for a while managed as a nature reserve by Norfolk Wildlife Trust, which continues to act as managing agents for the trustees. It is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a component unit of the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC and is therefore of international importance for its biodiversity value. Spout Hills is a large area of open green space, which historically provided the town of Holt with all its water needs, enabling it to grow and flourish. An old reservoir still exists but the pumping station was dismantled in the 1950's. Work has been undertaken in more recent years to restore and conserve the hills for future generations by removing scrub, keeping the pastures clear and maintaining the woodlands which have grown up.

5.25 In the Parish there are a number of areas of Registered Common Land with Open Access under the CROW Act, several areas of registered Ancient Woodland on the Natural England Ancient Woodland database, and a significant number of trees identified as 'veteran trees' in recognition of their age and their landscape and biodiversity value.

5.26 County Wildlife Sites (CWS) designation is non-statutory but is recognition of a site's high value for wildlife, with many sites being of county and often regional or national importance. They often support characteristic or threatened species and habitats that are local and national priorities for conservation. The Parish of Holt has a large number of County Wildlife Sites (CWS), more than most Norfolk Parishes, including Cat's Pit Wood, the Disused Railway, Glaven Farm Meadow, Edgefield Heath, Spout Hills, Old Pollard Wood and Fairfield Lawn. Spout Hills is especially important as a large area of trees, bushes, grassland, a pond and streams, which is close to the town centre. Formerly known as 'The Pleasure Grounds' from Victorian times, the area is well looked after and has won many awards.

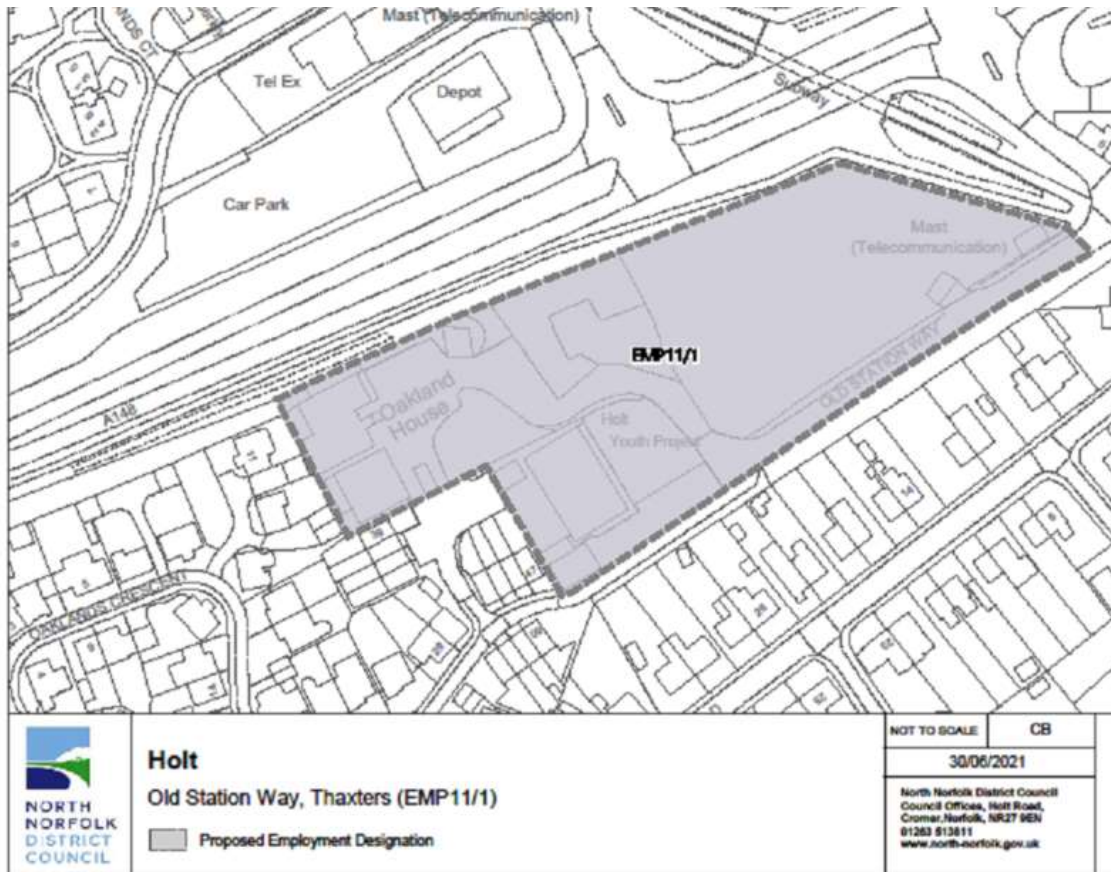
## **HOLT4 Employment Growth in Holt**

- 1. Proposals to intensify defined employment areas and for land allocated for employment development will be supported provided they comprise only uses falling with Use Classes B2, B8, E(g) with the exception of land at Old Station Way, which may also be used for a convenience food retail (Class E(a)) use of up to 1,400 sq.m. gross floor space use or for a C1 hotel use.***
- 2. Proposals for a C1 hotel use will be supported not only in the defined town centre but also in other locations within the defined Holt Settlement Boundary, provided they are suitably located in respect of the amenity of any adjoining, residential properties and in having a site frontage to either the A148, Norwich Road (B1149), Cromer Road, Kelling Road, Thornage Road (B1110), Nightjar Road or Old Station Way.***

5.27 This policy refines some of the employment policies of the emerging Local Plan so that they are better suited to the convenience retail and hotel needs of Holt. Its Policy E1 seeks to protect existing employment areas (which total almost 14 Ha in Holt) and provides for new employment land (another 6 Ha at Heath Farm), which is strongly supported. It defines employment uses as those falling in classes E, B2 and B8 of the 2020 Use Class Order. However, the amalgamation of uses into the new Class E (including retail and services) has the potential to undermine the functional integrity of land supporting businesses in Holt. Its Policy E2 recognises this problem and therefore allows only for new office and light industrial uses of Class E(g) that were formerly Class B1. This approach is also strongly supported given the importance for Holt sustaining a critical mass of this type of employment.



5.28 However, there is one designated employment site on Old Station Way, just beyond the edge of the town centre but within 200m of High Street, that is well suited to a convenience retail use (Class E(a)). In fact, this principle of retail use has been established by a now lapsed planning permission for a food store of up to 1,400 sq.m. gross floorspace. There is a continued need for additional retail to add competition in the local market and to prevent leakage of retail spend to other towns as the local population continues to grow (as noted in the North Norfolk Retail and Main Town Centres Uses Study of 2017. Map below (Plan G) identifies the site at Old Station Way.



*Plan G – An extract from the Proposal Map from the Emerging Local Plan Jan 2022*

5.29 But in practice there is no realistic prospect of land being made available in the defined town centre boundary (by Policy E4) given its physical and heritage constraints. Clause 1 of Policy HOLT4 therefore proposes to make a modest but material exception to Policies E1 and E4 by encouraging new retail (or hotel, see below) proposals to come forward for this specific site which is sequentially best and well related to the town centre. For completeness, the policy wording is carried across from Policy E2 in respect of intensifying existing employment uses.



5.30 The second part of the policy modifies Policy E6 of the emerging Local Plan in not confining hotel proposals to the town centre but recognising there are other suitable locations within the town's Settlement Boundary (as defined by the Local Plan). They include the Old Station Way site identified in the first clause, should proposals for a retail use not come forward.

5.31 Tourism is a key element of the local economy with many tourists being drawn to Holt, the fine 18th century Georgian buildings make the town, with its small market town character, one of the most attractive in North Norfolk. This character is derived not only from the historic town centre, with many period buildings, but also from the attractive countryside, which surrounds the town and its proximity to the North Norfolk coast.

5.32 Tourism is seen as a growth sector both for day and overnight visits. Promoting tourism is one of the HNP Objectives and links to achieving part of the Mission Statement of ... "As the gateway to the North Norfolk coast ...". The community is keen to see Holt make the most of its advantages.

5.33 The town is relatively compact and easy to navigate on foot, even more so with the promotion of the Holt Green Wheel of Policy HOLT7. There is therefore not the same need as may be necessary in larger settlements to require prospective hotel investors in Holt to compete against other town centre businesses in acquiring scarce land by requiring them to prove there are no available sites in the town centre boundary. However, hotel uses can generate car movements from occupiers and so the policy requires that proposals should be located on a main road frontage and show that they would be 'good neighbours' with surrounding residential areas.

#### **HOLT5 Community Facilities**

**1. *The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following as Community Facilities:***

- ***The Venue (Community Centre)***
- ***Holt Playing Fields (Woodfield Road)***
- ***Holt Youth Project (Station Way)***
- ***The Treehouse (Charles Road)***
- ***Scout Hut (Permanent) (Cley Road)***
- ***Owl Playgroup Building (Valley Lane)***
- ***Little Lambs (St Andrew's Church Hall)***

**2. *Development proposals that would result in the loss of buildings and land currently, or last used for a Community Facility will not be permitted unless:***

- ***alternative provision of an equivalent, or better quality, facility is available in the defined Holt Settlement Boundary or will be provided and made available to a relevant operator on reasonable terms prior to commencement of redevelopment; or;***
- ***it meets the tests of the development plan to justify that loss.***

5.34 In its first clause, this policy identifies those community facilities in Holt to which Policy H3 of the emerging Local Plan will apply. Its second clause makes some minor changes to refine the wording of H3 in respect of alternative provision.

5.35 Community facilities are an important focus for the town to encourage social cohesion and wellbeing. There are a large number of well-supported clubs and societies running across Holt, although it is expected that existing facilities will come under increasing pressure to meet the increasing demands from a growing and ageing population. Proposals for high quality community facilities that encourage daily social interaction or community-based events will be supported.

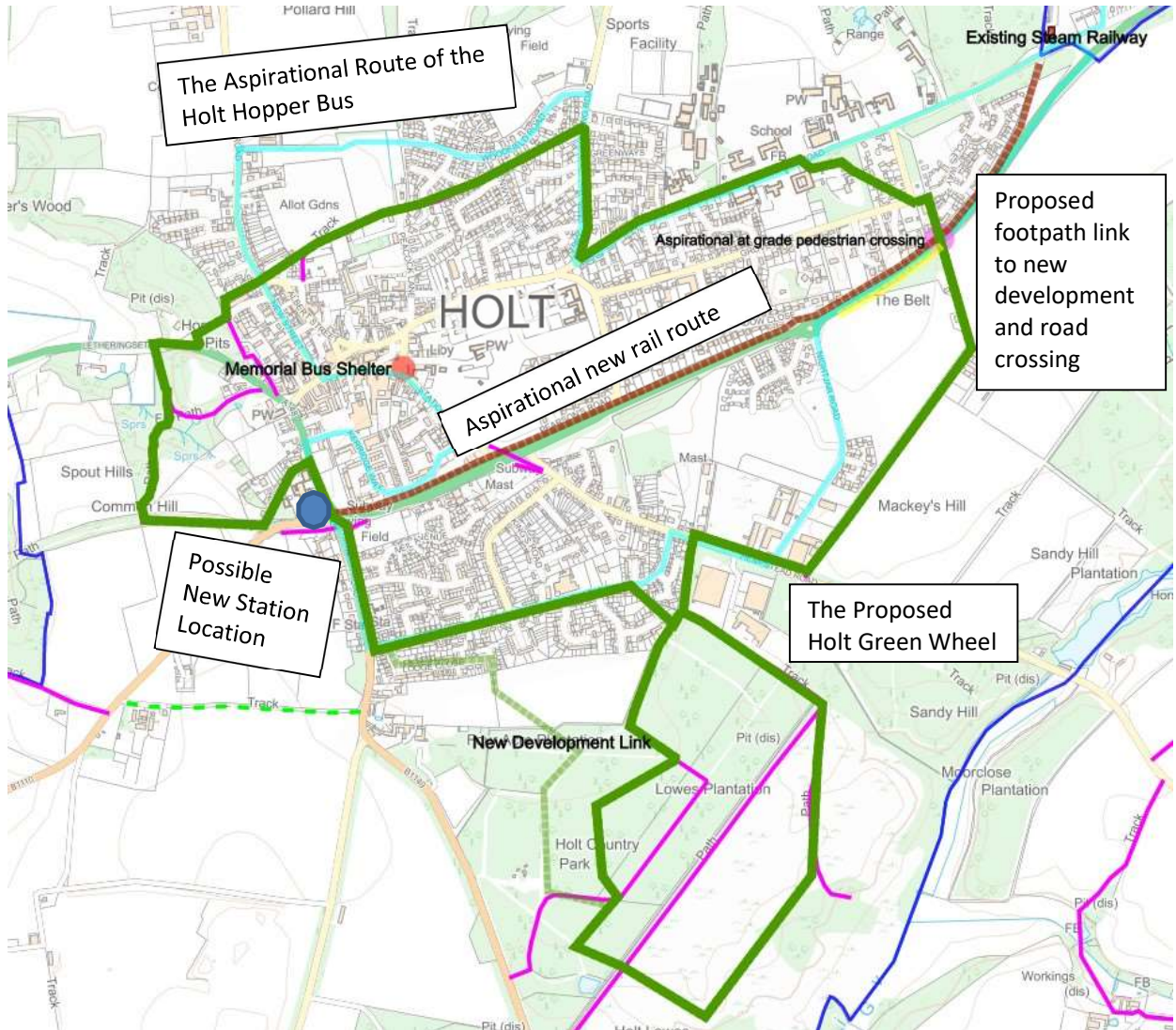
5.36 The Town Council has therefore reviewed the role played by each facility to understand its continued importance and to ascertain if it has capacity problems as the local population grows. Although any loss would be concerning, the policy requires that loss is made up for with the provision of better facilities that are conveniently located to serve the town.



#### **HOLT6 Connectivity in and around Holt**

- 1. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a Green Wheel comprising public footpaths, cycle routes, bridleways, quiet streets/lanes and public transport assets and routes.***
- 2. Proposals for major development, as defined by national planning policy, should demonstrate how their future occupants will be able to access the Green Wheel in safe and convenient ways, both within the site through its layout, access arrangements and permeability and beyond the site boundary.***
- 3. Where proposals require mitigation measures to address their effects on the quality or extent of the Green Wheel, they will be required to make reasonable financial contributions.***

5.37 This policy introduces the Holt Green Wheel concept as illustrated on Plan H. Its first clause translates the green infrastructure principles of Policy CC11 of the emerging Local Plan into a specific, mapped and broader network of walking, cycling etc. routes. Its second and third clauses refine the wording of Policy CC9 on sustainable transport, as well as of CC11 to fit with the Wheel concept.



*Plan H: Holt Green Wheel (Source: Holt Town Council)*

5.38 The Green Wheel brings together public access, and open green spaces and forms a circuit around the town of Holt to connect people and their environment. It will also seek to provide and promote connections into and out of the town including to businesses and tourist attractions in the surrounding area. In addition, it will promote themes of biodiversity, heritage, and landscape and it will benefit the whole community, improving the health and increasing the enjoyment of the countryside around the town by people of all ages.

5.39 The Holt Green Wheel is a long-term vision for linking of publicly accessible green spaces and routes around the town to create a circular route, which is supported by ‘spokes’ of linear paths and corridors, leading from the settlement, out to the settlement boundary and the wider surrounding countryside. The Wheel is considered ‘green’ due to the natural and historic environment. The Green Wheel will also seek to provide and promote connections into and out of the town including to businesses and tourist attractions in the surrounding area by integrating with public transport services, notably the Hopper Bus and potential new station for the proposed Norfolk Orbital Railway (see Section 6).

5.40 The existing Public Rights of Way network and connectivity in Holt is poor. Holt has no Public Bridleways or Byways open to all traffic, only 2 restricted byways and 16 Public Footpaths. Connectivity between public rights of way and public green spaces is poor with the main public open space in the town, Holt Country Park, accessed primarily by car. The second largest public open space in Holt is Spout Hills and Little Hills which is dissected by the busy A148. NNDC’s Open Space Assessment in 2020 actively encourages towns to seek to provide further open space provision.

5.41 The Holt Green Wheel will cater for a wide range of users, meeting recreation, commuting and other service needs. Green spaces and associated features forming the Green Wheel may both be trip destinations in their own right; or may be corridors to other attractions along the wheel. The Wheel looks to deliver enhanced public access, improving connectivity between popular public open spaces in the town, as well as protecting, managing, and promoting other green infrastructure assets, including biodiversity, landscape, and heritage. Where possible, new habitats, landscape features and accessible greenspaces and corridors should be created.

5.42 Greenspaces forming the Green Wheel will range from linear paths and corridors, through amenity greenspaces to natural and semi-natural open spaces in the wider countryside. Where aspirational routes or uses have been identified then landowner consent will be sought to agree access. Where necessary, Holt Town Council will seek to ensure that the appropriate legal process, (whether through permissive agreements or legal orders), is carried out in parallel with any physical construction works needed.

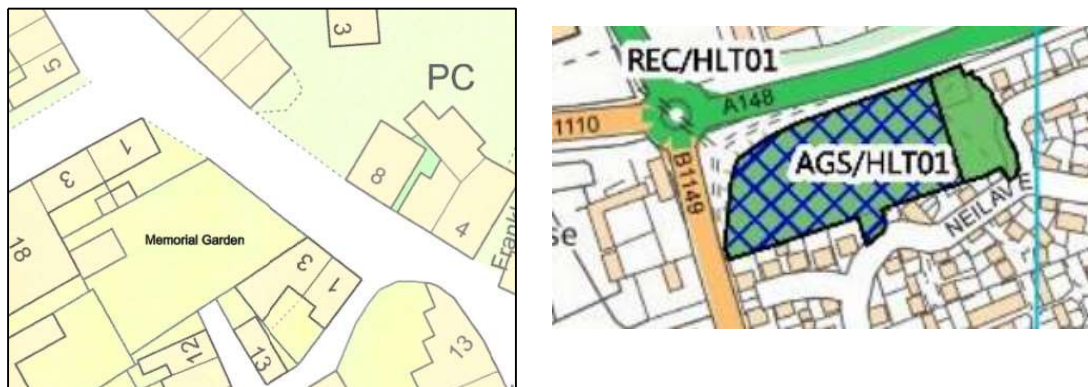
5.43 The entire Green Wheel will be freely available to walkers and eventually cyclists. In the short term, some sections may only cater for walkers, but the long-term aim is to create a complete circuit available to cyclists, including the provision of links to the National Cycle Route (NCR) 1 which runs 14 miles west of the town and links nearby towns such as Wells-next-the-Sea in the northwest and Reepham in the south. NCR 1 is a long-distance route from Dover to Scotland, it is an aspiration for Holt to connect to this popular well publicised cycle route. Sites forming the Green Wheel will be clearly signposted to and from the Green Wheel and the wider network; will be welcoming and clean and safe; will provide informal and engaging activities for people of all ages; and will seek to maximise ecological value and opportunities.

## **HOLT7 Open Spaces**

***The Neighbourhood Plan identifies Memorial Garden or Lodge Close Play Area as open spaces, as shown on the Policies Map. Development on the following open spaces will not be permitted unless:***

- 1. the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity, quality and local accessibility and the alternative provision is made available for use prior to the loss of the area of open space to be built upon; or***
- 2. It can be demonstrated that the recreational use is surplus to requirements within Holt and that any loss would not result in a current or likely shortfall during the plan period, taking into account alternative forms of open space and recreation in Holt.***

5.44 This policy supplements Policy HC2 of the emerging Local Plan by identifying two important open spaces in the town to which the provisions of that policy apply (see Plan H). For completeness, the policy wording is repeated in so far as it is relevant to the Memorial Garden and the Lodge Close Play Area. Both have been shown to be cherished by the local community for their recreational and amenity value.



*Plan H: Proposed Memorial Garden (left) and Lodge Close Play Area (right) Open Spaces  
(Sources: Parish Online and NNDC)*

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION**

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan policies will be implemented through the determination of planning applications for development in the Parish by NNDC as the local planning authority.

### **Development Management**

6.2 NNDC will use a combination of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies to inform and determine its planning application decisions. The Town Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made in its area and it will be made aware of any future planning applications or alterations to those applications by the planning authority. It will seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified and applied correctly by applicants and by officers reaching their decision.

### **Local Infrastructure Improvements**

6.3 National policy advises that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Where opportunities arise through Section 106 agreements to secure financial contributions to invest in improving local infrastructure, the Town Council propose that the priorities for investment of future contributions are:

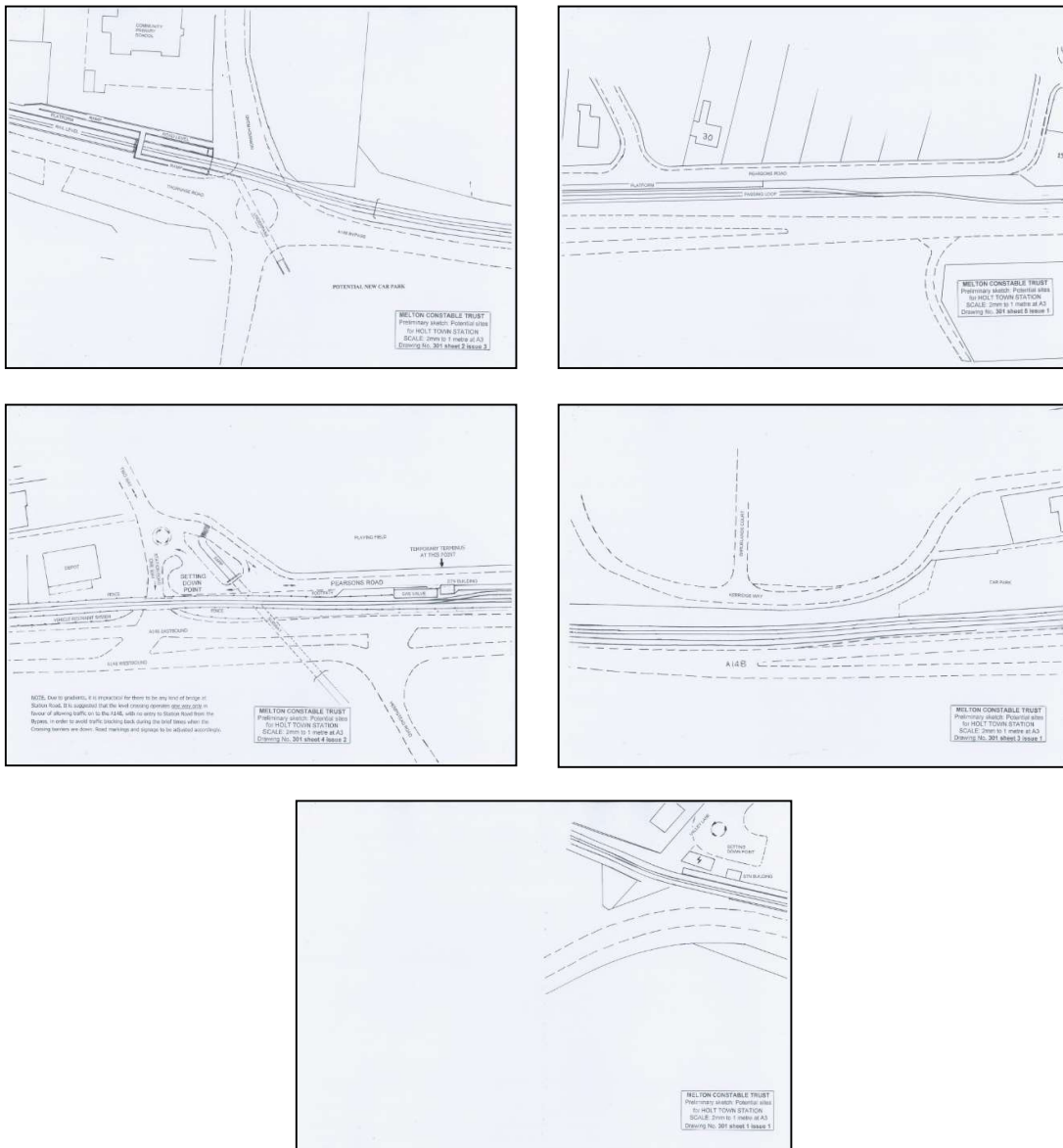
- Improve disabled access in round Holt Town Centre.
- Footpath to Country Park along the Norwich Road.
- Support introduction of the Holt Green Wheel.
- Support introduction of the Norfolk Orbital Railway.
- Develop and improve public transport links (bus and train).
- Facilitate the creation of a 'Farmers Market or Street Market' to promote local produce.
- Enhance Holt's three retail loops.
- Shop front improvements.
- Making small improvements to replace red paving, improve A148 roundabout.
- Remove unnecessary street furniture.
- New pedestrian crossing on High Street.
- Improve bus stops.
- Provide more cycle parking in town centre.
- Establish new commercial space.
- Seek additional residential care facilities.

#### **The Future of Rail Travel for Holt**

6.4 The aspirational plans to return train travel to Holt, via the Norfolk Orbital Railway (NOR), via the reinstatement of the North Norfolk Railing Line have always been borne in mind in the Neighbourhood Plan and is supported by Holt Town Council. It will bring positive support to car-free travel, tourism and sustainable travel.

6.5 The NOR is a project, promoted by a small group of volunteers, that aspires to reinstate a public transport service using modern trains to parts of Norfolk which suffered badly from railway closures in the 1960's. Its principal goal is to provide the very thing for which railways were created: to transport people safely and efficiently for work and leisure purposes. This new railway could also be used by heritage services; further, opportunities for transporting freight by rail are also being pursued. The environmental benefits of rail travel are of major importance, in line with modern thinking about global warming.

6.6 The aim of the NOR will link the North Norfolk Railway (NNR) at High Kelling to Fakenham, where it will join the Mid Norfolk Railway (MNR), which is extending its railway between Wymondham and Dereham through to Fakenham. This, combined with the existing Bittern Line between Norwich and Sheringham, will create a modern rail transport system which will link many of the towns and villages in North Norfolk. These objectives are in line with government policy (reversing Beeching) and the Parliamentary Group's report titled 'Public transport on heritage railways'. The reconstruction of the railway will be subject to the legal process of a Transport and Works Order. The aim is for the new railway to host services operated by the Train Operating Company which has the franchise for the operation of The Bittern Line between Norwich and Sheringham. The construction of the full orbital route is a long-term project which will proceed by achievable stages, thus phasing expenditure. The next, and critically important, stage is to extend the railway into Holt.



*Plan J: Indicative Plans for new Holt Railway Station on the Norfolk Orbital Railway  
(Source: Melton Constable Trust)*

6.7 An indicative scale plan of the potential route to Holt for the railway has been produced. Following investigations by NOR, site visits and surveys, two possible locations for Holt railway station (the Station) have been identified (see Plan J). These have been discussed with representatives of the Town Council, who have guided the choice of the optimum site options, which takes into account local needs. The aspirational site will be on the southern edge of the land currently occupied by Holt Community Primary School (the school), which is scheduled for redevelopment following the relocation of the school to a new site in Holt. Only a narrow strip of land, approximately 7 metres wide, will be required, as illustrated on the preliminary sketch of the potential site for the station and the immediate surrounding area. Consequently, a substantial majority of the current site of the school will be available for other developments.

6.8 The next priorities are to acquire land needed for the route into Holt, to obtain the necessary official permissions and then to begin the construction of the railway over this first part of the NOR route. This has been done before and is being done again. The NNR extended its line from Weybourne to High Kelling in the 1980's, and the MNR is currently making good progress in extending its line from Dereham to County School on the way to Fakenham. There is a margin of land on the North side of the Holt by-pass belonging to Norfolk County Council (NCC) which can accommodate the railway. Some years ago NCC offered this land for the construction of this part of the NOR at little or no cost, although this decision would need to be ratified. An expert railway engineer has demonstrated that there are adequate clearances to accommodate the railway. The Holt by-pass is an existing transport corridor, therefore occasional trains will be hardly noticeable among the existing constant traffic.

6.9 Holt Town Council supports the aspiration to build a railway into Holt as it could establish a link with the Bittern Line, thus enabling people who live in and around Holt to travel by train to locations including Sheringham, Cromer and Norwich. This extended rail link will assist members of the public to travel to and from new, as well as existing, places of work, will attract more visitors to Holt, reduce the acute pressure for additional car parking and enhance local business opportunities. Further, it will enable the NNR to take its heritage trains into Holt, which will further raise its importance as the major tourist attraction in North Norfolk. Consequently, the above could result in a reduction in social exclusion, increased economic activity and fewer road accidents. The use of modern trains will bring significant environmental benefits, including taking traffic off the roads and a reduction in greenhouse gases.





# Appendix A - Holt Green Infrastructure Map (May 2022)

Source: Holt Town Council

(see policy 'HOLT3 Green Infrastructure')

