

Sporle with Palgrave Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2046



Draft Version April 2026

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Introduction

1. Sporle with Palgrave is a small rural parish of around 1,000 people located in the Breckland District of Norfolk, approximately three miles northeast of Swaffham and within easy reach of Dereham and King's Lynn via the A47. The area is steeped in history, with both Sporle and Palgrave recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 and archaeological evidence indicating settlement dating back to Anglo-Saxon times.
2. The village of Sporle is situated along a gently undulating agricultural landscape, characterised by open views, big skies, and a strong sense of rural identity. The built form of the village follows a linear pattern along The Street, with historic buildings, including the Grade I listed St Mary's Church, contributing to the distinctive character of the area. The parish retains a strong connection to its agricultural roots, with surrounding farmland and woodland forming an integral part of the local landscape.
3. Sporle with Palgrave benefits from a range of local services including a primary school, shop and Post Office, public house (closed at the time of writing), a church, and a community centre. A number of active community groups and clubs operate within the parish, helping to foster a strong sense of local identity and social cohesion. The village also has access to recreational amenities such as a playing field, pavilion, and children's playground.
4. The parish is served by limited public transport, with most residents relying on private vehicles for access to employment, education, and healthcare services in nearby towns. The Peddars Way national trail runs through the parish, providing valuable off-road access to the countryside and supporting opportunities for walking, cycling, and horse riding.
5. The Neighbourhood Plan for Sporle with Palgrave seeks to guide future development in a way that respects the parish's unique character, supports the needs of its residents, and protects its natural and historic environment. It aims to ensure that growth is sustainable, appropriately scaled, and contributes positively to the quality of life in the parish.



Overview of Neighbourhood Planning

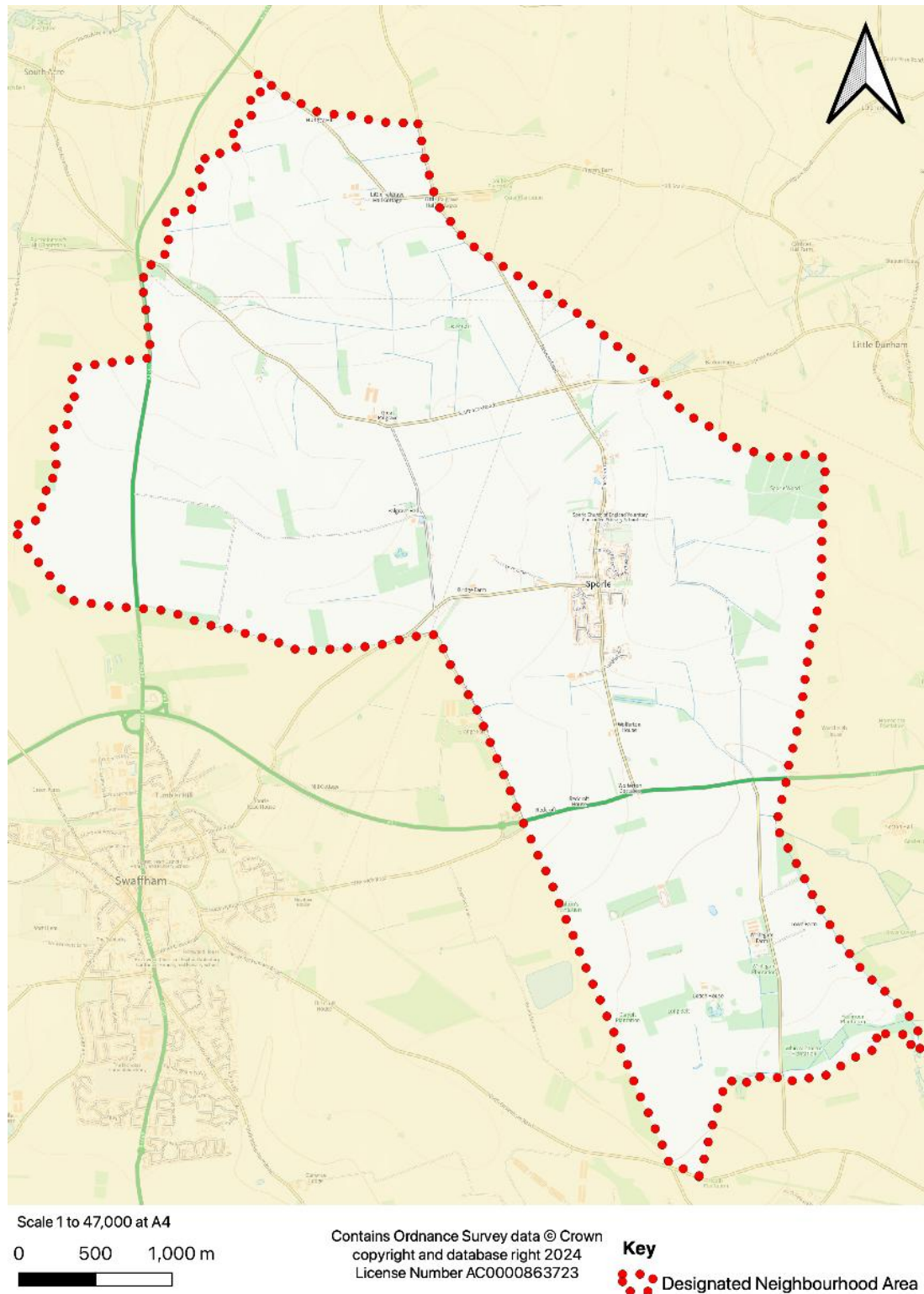
6. Neighbourhood Planning was introduced by the Localism Act 2011, the legislation for which came into effect in April 2012, giving communities the power to agree a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). It is an important and powerful tool that gives communities such as parish councils statutory powers to agree a shared vision and shape how their community develops and changes over time.
7. There is already a policy framework in place that applicants must have regard to when building in Sporle with Palgrave; these are the national and Local Plan policies. Sporle with Palgrave is in the District of Breckland, and the Neighbourhood Plan sits within the context of the Breckland Local Plan 2019-2036. The Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and undertook a partial review for a single policy (Policy INF03) to ensure that the housing supply, economic development and Gypsy & Traveller policies in the Local Plan were not deemed to be out-of-date for decision-taking. This partial review was completed in September 2023. In September 2022 Breckland District Council (BDC) agreed to undertake a full update of the adopted Local Plan with the proposed time period being 2022-2042.
8. The Parish area shown in Figure 1 was designated as the NDP Area in January 2024. The Plan period is 2025 to 2046. Working on behalf of the community, The Sporle with Palgrave Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has prepared this Plan that will be used to shape and influence future development and change across the Parish. Our neighbourhood plan period is generally in line with the Local Plan reviews timeline. The Local Plan update is ongoing.
9. The Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory development plan and will be used alongside the Breckland Local Plan and national policy in determining planning applications.
10. It provides locally specific planning policies to guide the form, design and location of development within Sporle with Palgrave.
11. The Plan has been prepared having regard to national planning policy and guidance and is intended to support the delivery of sustainable development. It does not allocate sites for development and is not intended to prevent or restrict development provided for through the development plan. Instead, it seeks to ensure that development coming forward is well designed, reflects local character, and responds to the parish's environmental and infrastructure constraints.
12. The housing requirement for the parish is currently expected to be met through existing commitments rather than through new allocations in this Neighbourhood Plan, and the policies in the Plan are intended to guide development rather than reduce its scale.
13. A key purpose of the Local Plan is to set out the strategic distribution of development. Determining how much, and where, development is allocated is essential in delivering sustainable development and essential community

infrastructure. Policy GEN03- Settlement Hierarchy sets out the broad approach to development within the district. Sporle is designated as a Local Service Centre under Policy GEN03- Settlement Hierarchy. Areas which are identified as local service centres must satisfy qualifying criteria including access to public transport, community facilities, employment, shop/post office and a school.

14. The Local Plan allocated one site in the parish known as land to the north-east of Essex Farm. This site was allocated for residential development of at least 35 dwellings and the provision of open space. Since then, reserved matters permission has been granted for the site.
15. A NDP contains non-strategic policies to support and add further detail to policy matters already adopted in the Local Plan which are specifically relevant to Sporle with Palgrave. This includes the mix of housing, design principles for new development, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, protecting local green spaces from development, and setting out other development management policies which are not addressed at a district level. Importantly, the NDP will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
16. A broad range of evidence has been reviewed to determine issues and develop Policies for the NDP. This includes population data from the Office of National Statistics, housing data, a review of environmental designations and historical records. Further work to gather new evidence has also been undertaken, including an assessment of local green spaces and key views all supported by consultation activities with the community. AECOM produced a Design Code and Guidance Document and Housing Needs Assessments for the parish.
17. Some of the policies in the following sections are not strictly 'planning' related, but it was felt that they were important enough to include in the NDP and designate as 'Community Actions'; something on which the local community and Parish Council will lead the initiative.
18. The Policies are intended to meet the Vision and Objectives set out in the following section. They are aimed at guiding decision makers and applicants to address the needs and wants of the community. Development proposals should have regard to all the relevant planning policies in this NDP, and of course those in the Local Plan and national policy.
19. The Plan has been prepared with regard to the need to contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. The Plan supports action on climate change by encouraging energy-efficient design, low-carbon technologies, sustainable drainage, and the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure. Together, these measures are intended to ensure that development in the parish is both environmentally sustainable and resilient to the effects of climate change.
20. Once a NDP has been 'made', following consultation with residents, examination, and a successful local referendum, it becomes part of the statutory development plan for the Parish and will be used by the District Council when considering relevant planning applications in the Parish.

21. The Parish Council is keen to ensure that the Plan remains up to date and topical. It is also aware BDC are working on a replacement Local Plan 2022-2042. The Parish Council will assess the need or otherwise of a full or partial review of the Neighbourhood Plan, in due course if policies within the NDP become out of date with the emerging Local Plans content.

Figure 1- Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area





Vision and Objectives

22. The vision and objectives are set out below which Sporle with Palgrave Parish Council and the community wish to address in this NDP.

Vision Statement

Sporle with Palgrave will remain a distinct, self-contained rural parish, with development that is of high quality, sensitively designed, and appropriate to its location. Growth will be carefully managed to maintain the village's linear form, protect its agricultural surroundings, and preserve separation from Swaffham.

New housing will deliver a balanced mix of types and tenures to meet the needs of all age groups, encouraging families and younger residents while enabling older people to remain in the parish. Development will safeguard valued views, heritage assets, green spaces, and areas prone to flooding.

Community facilities, infrastructure, and open spaces will be enhanced to support a thriving, socially sustainable community where residents feel connected, engaged, and proud to live.

Supporting Objectives

1. **High Quality and Locally Appropriate Design:** Ensure all development is of a high standard, reflects the varied character and rural setting of the parish, and maintains the village's linear form and separation from Swaffham.
2. **Planned Housing Growth:** Ensure future housing developments meet identified local needs, deliver a balanced mix of homes in locations that respect the scale, character, and infrastructure capacity of the village.
3. **Heritage, Landscape, and Views:** Protect and enhance heritage assets, the agricultural surroundings, key rural views, and distinctive features such as Sporle Wood.
4. **Flood Risk, Climate Change and Environmental Protection:** Ensure that development helps mitigate climate change and is resilient to its effects, including through energy efficiency, low-carbon and renewable energy, sustainable drainage, water efficiency, and enhanced green infrastructure and biodiversity. Avoid development in areas prone to flooding and incorporate measures to manage flood risk and protect the natural environment.
5. **Community Facilities and Infrastructure:** Support improvements to local facilities, green spaces, and infrastructure to meet the needs of residents of all ages and keep pace with development.
6. **A Thriving and Cohesive Community:** Encourage development and uses that strengthen community life, support local events, and provide opportunities and activities for young people.



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Consultation and Community Engagement

23. A community survey was carried out in April–May 2024, with 111 responses. The results showed strong support for protecting the parish’s rural character, improving walking routes and local facilities, and ensuring new development is well designed and in keeping with the area. Respondents were able to skip any question they didn’t want to answer and all responses were anonymised. A summary of the responses are shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2- Summary table of the initial consultation results (May 2024)

Survey Topic	Summary Response
About the Parish	Residents value the rural character, community spirit, village facilities (shop, pub, school, church), countryside views, and good transport links. Improvements suggested include better drainage, more green spaces, improved footpaths, support for local businesses, and enhanced village appearance.
Housing and Design	Majority support design guidance for new homes. Key priorities include off-street parking, trees and planting, and height in keeping with surroundings. Strong preference for 2–3 bed homes, first homes, affordable housing, and bungalows. Flats and large homes (5+ beds) ranked lowest. Respondents were also asked if they would support allocating a small site in the neighbourhood plan which 75% said yes.
Natural Environment	97% agree it's important to protect habitats. Suggestions on improving the natural environment included better management of green spaces, tree planting, wildlife-friendly features in new developments, and improved drainage. Popular green spaces include the playing field, wildflower meadow, church grounds, and Sporle Woods. 71 people gave different examples of views they would like to protect in the area including approaching the village and the historic centre.
Heritage	95% support protecting heritage. Important buildings identified include St Mary’s Church, village hall, old cottages, war memorial, and historic bridges.
Community Facilities & Services	Priorities for funding include improved footpaths (81%), play areas (63%), and dog/litter bins (55%). Facilities to protect include the shop, pub (since closed), school, church, playing field, and community centre. Desired new services include a café, better bus routes, and activities for all ages.
Transport and Access	Concerns about speeding, poor road conditions, and lack of safe walking/cycling routes. Suggestions include better

Survey Topic	Summary Response
	signage, circular routes, and improved footpaths linking key areas.
Flooding and Water Management	51 respondents reported flooding issues, mostly affecting property access. 94% of respondents support water management in new developments that benefits the environment.
Employment and Business Growth	76% of respondents would support small-scale business growth in the parish. Ideas include craft workshops, food outlets, co-working spaces, dog grooming, and solar farms. Emphasis on maintaining village character and avoiding traffic/parking issues.
Demographics and Lifestyle	Most respondents were aged 50+, with 46% retired. Most are residents, with a few landowners and business owners. Popular leisure activities include walking, cycling, and socialising. 60% of younger respondents wish to stay in Sporle/Palgrave when leaving home.

24. After the initial consultation in mid-2024 the NDP Steering Group discussed the results and agreed to explore ideas mentioned by the community further. Agreement was made to explore and identify local green spaces and important local views. Another topic which resulted in further consultation was around allocating a site for development in the parish.
25. Since there was general support in the May 2024 community consultation for the allocation of new housing in the Plan, the Parish Council initially explored whether the Neighbourhood Plan should allocate a site. As part of this early work, Breckland District Council was asked to provide an indicative housing requirement figure.
26. As part of that earlier work, the Parish Council and Steering Group undertook proportionate site assessment and consultation work to consider whether a site allocation through the Neighbourhood Plan would be appropriate. This included a call for sites and a review of sites previously promoted through the Breckland Local Plan process, and contact with relevant landowners to confirm whether land could be considered further.
27. In March and April 2025, the community were consulted on the sites under consideration and invited to comment on whether any site, or part of a site, should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. Views were mixed and no clear consensus emerged in favour of allocating a site.
28. Since then, the position has changed. The housing requirement for Sporle with Palgrave is currently expected to be met through existing commitments rather than through new allocations in this Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, Government funding that could have supported the technical work needed for a

site allocation was no longer available. For these reasons, this version of the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate a site, although the matter will be kept under review.



Design

O1. High Quality and Locally Appropriate Design: Ensure all development is of a high standard, reflects the varied character and rural setting of the parish, and maintains the village's linear form and separation from Swaffham.

29. Design is a key area where the Neighbourhood Plan can exert significant influence and is central to achieving sustainable development. It plays a critical role in shaping better places where people can live, work, and thrive. While design encompasses more than just appearance, also including how a place functions, appearance remains a vital element within national policy. As stated in paragraph 131 of the NPPF (December 2024), "The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve." This section also supports the Plan's approach to climate change mitigation through energy efficient design and the use of low-carbon technologies.
30. The National Design Guide explains that well-designed places depend on getting the right choices at every level, including layout, form, scale, appearance, landscape and materials. It also recognises the importance of local climate, local character and community context. The ten characteristics of a well-designed place are shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3-The Ten Characteristics of a Well-designed Place (National Design Guide, 2021).



31. Chapter 12 of the NPPF (December 2024) requires Local Plans to include design policies that have strong community support and reflect the defining characteristics of the area. National policy gives strong support to high-quality design and recognises that poor design can be a reason for refusing development. It also encourages neighbourhood plans to use design policies and codes to reflect the distinctive qualities of local places. In Sporle with Palgrave, this provides a clear basis for setting local design expectations that respond to village character while also supporting sustainable and low-carbon development

32. At district level, the adopted Breckland Local Plan includes strategic design policies, particularly Policy GEN01 on sustainable development and Policy GEN02 on high quality design. The emerging Local Plan and the Breckland Design Guide 2024¹ also place strong emphasis on local character, landscape, active travel, parking design and climate-responsive development. Together, these documents provide the wider design framework within which this Neighbourhood Plan sits.
33. In the initial consultation survey (April 2024) with residents there were mixed views on the design of recent development in Sporle and Palgrave. Around half of respondents felt the design was good and generally in keeping with the village character, while others expressed concerns about certain properties being too large or out of scale with their surroundings. Some praised efforts to retain trees and include green spaces, particularly in the Essex Farm development, but there were calls for future schemes to be more environmentally friendly and incorporate features such as sustainable drainage, planting, and wildlife enhancements.
34. When asked about design priorities for new housing or extensions, respondents placed strong emphasis on practical and aesthetic considerations. Off-street parking was seen as essential, alongside the inclusion of trees and planting, and ensuring building heights remain in keeping with existing properties. Many supported the use of local materials and renewable energy features such as solar panels, while also encouraging rainwater harvesting and wildlife-friendly measures like bat boxes and hedgehog tunnels. Respondents highlighted the importance of soft boundaries such as hedges rather than fencing to maintain the rural character and support biodiversity.
35. Respondents stressed in the initial survey that development should allow for sustainable travel, with pathways integrated throughout the village, and should include decent-sized gardens to preserve the sense of space. Overall, the feedback reflects a desire for design that respects the village's character, promotes sustainability, and meets the practical needs of residents.
36. In late 2024, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to the Parish Council. This work focused on developing design guidelines and codes intended to inform the design of future planning applications and developments in Sporle with Palgrave. This work led to the preparation of a design codes and guidance document for Sporle with Palgrave, informed by a site visit, analysis of the neighbourhood area and discussions with the Steering Group.
37. **Policy 1** in the Neighbourhood Plan is based on the Sporle with Palgrave Design Guidance and Codes Document (2025) and sets clear expectations for the area. The design code document groups the parish-wide design codes under two main themes: Rural Village and Sustainable Design. Together, these themes reflect the priorities identified through local consultation and the character analysis of the parish. The detailed codes are intended to guide the design of new development and to help decision-makers assess planning applications.

¹ [Breckland Design Guide \(webpage\)](#)

Figure 4- Parish Wide Design Codes set out in the AECOM Design Guidance and Codes Document (2025)

Parish Wide Design Codes	Sections of the Parish Wide Design Codes
A- Rural Village	• A1: Countryside views and vistas • A2: Tree planting • A3: Rural streets • A4: Landscape setting and settlement edge • A5: Housing variety • A6: Architectural details and materials • A7: Parking
B- Sustainable Design	• B1: Permeable paving • B2: SuDS • B3: Eco Design

38. In terms of context, Sporle with Palgrave is a rural parish with a strong sense of identity, shaped by its historic origins and relationship with the surrounding countryside. The settlement pattern is predominantly linear along The Street, interspersed with farmsteads and later cul-de-sac developments. This arrangement creates a varied townscape where subtle changes in building setbacks and plot sizes add visual interest. The village core feels more enclosed, while the edges of the settlement open out to green gaps and long views across arable farmland, reinforcing its rural character.

39. Buildings within the parish are generally low-rise, with most properties being one or two storeys. This modest scale is complemented by traditional architectural forms and materials that reflect Norfolk's vernacular. Older properties often feature red brick or flint walls, clay pantiles or grey slate roofs, and timber detailing, while painted render is also common. Boundary treatments such as hedgerows, low brick walls, and soft landscaping contribute to the leafy streetscape, alongside grass verges and mature trees. The stream running parallel to The Street is a distinctive feature that enhances the sense of place and adds to the tranquil setting.

40. Modern development, including bungalows and 20th-century detached houses, has introduced more contemporary styles, but newer development should respond positively to the established vernacular. Pitched and gabled roofs dominate, with brick chimneys and sash or casement windows providing traditional character. Weatherboarding and tile hanging appear in some properties, adding subtle variation without detracting from the overall rural feel. The integration of greenery, through front gardens, verges, and tree planting, remains a defining element of the village's identity.

41. Future development should respect these qualities by maintaining the generally low-rise scale of the village, using locally distinctive materials, and retaining the green infrastructure that helps frame the settlement. Development can also incorporate sustainable features, such as permeable surfaces and renewable

energy, provided these are integrated in a way that responds positively to local character. **Policy 1** should be read alongside the Sporle with Palgrave Design Guidance and Codes Document (2025).

Policy 1: Design

Development proposals must be of a high standard. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals should be consistent with the parish-wide design codes set out in the Sporle with Palgrave Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance and Codes Document (2025). These parish wide themes include:

- A. Rural Village (A1- A7)
- B. Sustainable Design (B1-B3)

Development proposals within Sporle with Palgrave should demonstrate, in a proportionate way, how they have taken account of the relevant design codes in the Sporle with Palgrave Design Codes Document (2025) as well as the Breckland Design Guide 2024. This may be through a Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement or other supporting material, where appropriate. The 10 Design Codes will help inform the assessment of planning applications in the parish.

Criteria to consider in the Design Codes are set out below:

1. New development proposals should ensure that the scale and design of a scheme is not visually intrusive and that they respond positively to the landscape setting and settlement edge, including through appropriate landscape screening, in line with Design Codes A1 and A4. Proposals should have regard to existing notable features, views and visual connections to the surrounding countryside.
2. New development proposals should consider both new tree planting and the retention of existing trees, in line with Design Code A2. Trees should be integrated into the design of development from the outset so that they do not conflict with above- or below-ground utilities. Where appropriate, proposals should include gateway or landmark trees that contribute to local distinctiveness and be informed by relevant arboricultural and ecological assessments.
3. New development proposals should ensure that new streets are integrated, safe and accessible for all users, and should give consideration to the character of existing rural streets, in line with Design Code A3.
4. New development should respond positively to its surroundings through the use of appropriate materials and by taking account of building height,

Policy 1: Design

street width, sense of enclosure, topography and mature vegetation, in line with Design Codes A5 and A6

5. Development proposals that include car parking should respond positively to their surroundings and ensure that parking provision avoids a cluttered streetscape, in line with Design Code A7.
6. New development proposals should incorporate sustainable design measures that support efficient use of resources and effective water management, in line with Design Codes B1 to B3.

In general, buildings should be designed to front onto streets and ensure that streets and public spaces benefit from good levels of natural surveillance from adjacent buildings.



Housing

Housing Type & Mix

O2. Planned Housing Growth: Ensure future housing developments meet identified local needs, deliver a balanced mix of homes in locations that respect the scale, character, and infrastructure capacity of the village.

42. The NPPF expects plans to address the housing needs of different groups in the community, including older people, disabled people, families and people wishing to build their own homes². This provides a basis for including a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan on the type and mix of new housing expected in Sporle with Palgrave.
43. Census 2021 data shows that the parish population remains at around 1,000 people, similar to 2011. The age profile suggests a mixed community, with 47% of residents aged 25 to 64 and 33% aged 65 or over. The most noticeable change between 2011 and 2021 is the increase in older age groups, alongside a decline in the proportion of younger people aged 0 to 24 (**Figure 5**). This suggests that future housing should respond to a range of needs, including those of older residents, younger households and families.

Figure 5-Age Structure of Sporle with Palgrave population in the Census 2011 and 2021

Age group (years)	Census 2011 %	Census 2021 %
0-15	16	12
16-24	9	8
25-64	49	47
65-74	16	17
75+	10	16

44. Census 2021 data, the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) (2025) and the Evidence Base Paper provide a detailed picture of housing in the parish. As noted earlier in this Plan, the adopted Breckland Local Plan allocates land to the north-east of Essex Farm for residential development and open space. Reserved matters permission has since been granted for that site.
45. Data from Breckland District Council obtained in February 2024 shows that 44 new dwellings were completed in the parish between 2013 and 2023, although this figure may now be higher. The adopted Local Plan identifies Sporle as a Local Service Centre and expects around 10% growth by 2036, equivalent to 72 dwellings, including the Essex Farm allocation, completions and commitments.

² National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

46. The current housing position in the parish is shaped by both existing commitments and emerging proposals. As of 2024, outstanding commitments total around 77 dwellings, the majority of which relate to the Essex Farm development. In addition, the emerging Breckland Local Plan (2024–2042), at Regulation 18 stage, proposes two further housing allocations in Sporle: Bunkers Hill (Left) and Land off the Street. Together these are expected to deliver around 60 dwellings, although they remain subject to consultation and may change as the Local Plan progresses.
47. Taken together, existing commitments and emerging allocations suggest that the parish's housing requirement is expected to be met through the development plan process. The role of this Neighbourhood Plan is therefore not to allocate additional sites, but to guide the type, mix, design and location of development so that it responds to local needs and protects the character of Sporle with Palgrave.
48. The emerging Local Plan's HOU 03 windfall housing policy states that the scale of any single windfall development should reflect the relative sustainability of the parish. For Secondary Parishes such as Sporle, this means schemes of less than 30 dwellings.
49. The HNA (2025) shows that detached homes make up the largest share of the parish's housing stock (58.3%), followed by semi-detached homes (34.1%) and terraced homes (6.9%). As shown in Figure 6, the most common dwelling size in Sporle with Palgrave is three bedrooms (43.3%).

Figure 6: Sporle with Palgrave Housing Profile Overview (Census 2021)

Number of households

- In 2021 there were approximately 471 households in the parish which were usual residents at the time when answering the Census survey.

Number of bedrooms

- 43.3% of households are 3 beds
- 20.4% are 4 or more bedrooms
- 33.1% are 2 bedrooms and 3.1% are 1 bedrooms
- The occupancy rate for bedrooms show that in Sporle 92.8% of households have at least 1 or 2+ bedrooms unoccupied.

Tenure of household

- 70.9% own their house outright/mortgage
- 11.9% Private rent and 16.1% Social rent
- 1.1% are shared ownership

Household composition

- 66% of the population in Sporle with Palgrave are single family households with 19.9% being couples with no children and 18.7% being aged 66 years+.
- 29.4% of Sporle with Palgrave were one person households with 16.6% being made up of aged 66 years+
- 4.6% other types.

50. Census 2021 data show that single family households make up around 66% of households in the parish, followed by one person households (29.4%) and other household types (4.6%). Single family households can include couples or families with dependent or non-dependent children. The HNA (2025) also shows that the parish has relatively high proportions of older one person households and older family households. Family households with no children (19.9%) are more common than households with dependent children (14.5%) or non-dependent children (12.8%). This suggests that the population of younger families is relatively low in Sporle with Palgrave, and that there may be a need for smaller homes, particularly for older residents wishing to downsize and for young adults wanting to move out to their first home.
51. The HNA (2025) identifies that 82.8% of households in Sporle with Palgrave are under-occupied, with one or two extra bedrooms in relation to household size. This is particularly common among families under 66 with no children, where all such households are under-occupied. The proportion of family households aged 66 and over (98.8%), single person households aged 66 and over (96.2%) and single person households under 66 (86.9%) is also very high. This reflects a common pattern in which larger homes are not always occupied by the largest households, but are often occupied by smaller households either by choice (extra rooms are often required to facilitate home working arrangements) or through lack of alternatives. There is also some over-occupation in Sporle with Palgrave, with 2.9% of families with dependent children and 5.1% of families with adult non-dependent children living in homes with too few bedrooms for their size.
52. The Sporle with Palgrave Housing Needs Assessment (2025) uses a recognised life-stage modelling process to estimate likely future dwelling mix. The HNA projects that the number of households with a household reference person aged 65 and over is likely to nearly double between 2011 and 2046, while younger age groups are expected to see very limited growth. The HNA therefore suggests that, if current trends continue, future housing delivery should respond to an ageing population. Its dwelling mix exercise indicates that new housing should be focused particularly on mid-sized 3-bedroom homes, alongside continued provision of both smaller and larger dwellings, as shown in **Figure 7**.
53. The Sporle with Palgrave Housing Needs Assessment (2025) uses a life-stage modelling process to determine likely dwelling mix needed for the future. The life stage (age) of households is strongly correlated with the size of home they tend to occupy. The occupation data is only available at the Local Authority level rather than parish specific, so there could be different preferences, but this is a recognised approach. The projected distributions of households by age in the parish is considered to increase the most for age groups 65 years and higher moving forward to 2046 rather than younger age groups. The modelling exercise recommends a suggested mix of dwelling sizes to 2046 to meet projected population requirements as shown in **Figure 7**. The result of this exercise is presented in Table 5-9. It suggests that future housing delivery should be particularly focused on mid-sized 3-bedroom dwellings, with continued provision of both smaller and larger dwellings.

Figure 7-Suggested dwelling size mix to 2046 in Sporle with Palgrave (AECOM Calculations, HNA, 2025)

Number of bedrooms	Current mix (2021)	Suggested mix (end of Plan period)	Balance of new housing to reach suggested mix	Indicative policy range
1	3.1%	7.1%	18.7%	10-20%
2	33.1%	28.8%	16.2%	10-20%
3	43.3%	43.9%	45.5%	40-50%
4+	20.4%	20.2%	19.6%	15-25%

54. It is important for housing policy to allow some flexibility, rather than be overly rigid about the size of new homes. The HNA (2025) notes that other factors should also be considered when deciding the most appropriate mix, including the characteristics of the existing stock, the role of the parish within the wider housing market area, and site-specific factors. The initial community survey in April 2024 also asked residents what types and sizes of homes they thought were needed if new development came forward. In response to Q6, first homes and affordable housing were ranked as the highest priorities, while flats and self-build homes ranked lowest. In Q7, 3-bedroom and 2-bedroom homes were ranked highest, while homes with 5 or more bedrooms were ranked lowest, as shown in **Figure 8**.

Figure 8- Q7 results of the initial community survey (April 2024)

If new houses are to be built in the parish, what size of homes do you think are needed? Please score between 1 and 5, with 1 being the lowest priority and 5 being the highest priority.							
Answer Choice		1	2	3	4	5	Response Total
1	1 bed	28	25	21	14	10	98
2	2 bed	10	6	29	22	36	103
3	3 bed	5	6	20	27	45	103
4	4 bed	23	15	24	25	10	97
5	5 bed or larger	52	20	9	3	14	98
answered							105
skipped							6

55. It is notable that, although many households in the parish are small, respondents did not identify one-bedroom homes as a high priority. This suggests that, while smaller homes are needed, many residents see 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom homes as more practical and flexible for local circumstances. This broadly aligns with the HNA (2025), which identifies a particular need for mid-sized homes while also supporting continued provision of smaller and larger dwellings.

56. Putting these findings together would suggest a Housing Policy that aims to provide more homes with three bedrooms or fewer, would be a way forward. Figures from the HNA (2025) suggest that such smaller homes should comprise around 75% of new homes (if you minus the 25% policy range for 4+ bedrooms). Whilst it is not good practice to be too precise or restrictive as there may be a strong justification to build larger homes for growing families, the policy approach in Policy 2 aims to prioritise smaller homes, with at least 75% of homes as three bedrooms or fewer. This would provide for families, households downsizing or needing to access more affordable dwelling types and sizes.

Affordable Housing

57. Affordable housing, as defined in the NPPF, is housing for sale or rent for people whose needs are not met by the market, including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership³. In Sporle with Palgrave, the balance between home ownership, renting and affordable housing is an important part of understanding local housing need and affordability.

58. Census 2021 data show that 70.9% of households in Sporle with Palgrave own their home outright or with a mortgage. Around 16.1% of households rent socially and 11.9% rent privately. Shared ownership is very limited. The HNA (2025) notes that this pattern is broadly similar to the district in terms of home ownership, but that private renting is less common locally.

59. Data supplied by Breckland District Council in early 2024 indicate that no new affordable homes have been built in the parish since 2016. However, affordable housing may come forward over the plan period through the Essex Farm site and, if adopted, through future allocations in the updated Local Plan

60. The emerging Breckland Local Plan (2024–2042), at Regulation 18 stage, proposes two housing allocations in Sporle: SPL1 Bunkers Hill (Left) and SPL2 West of the Street, each expected to deliver around 30 dwellings. The current draft policy wording indicates that qualifying development should provide 25% affordable housing, with a 90/10 split between rented affordable housing and low-cost affordable home ownership products. If these allocations were taken forward as currently drafted, they could together deliver around 15 affordable homes in Sporle.

61. Data from 2022 indicate that Sporle with Palgrave has 91 affordable rented homes, the majority of which are 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom properties. There are also 3 shared ownership homes in the parish. The Steering Group has identified that 12 affordable homes may have been sold out of the stock over the last 5 years, although it is unclear whether this is fully reflected in the data supplied by the planning authority. Even so, the possible loss of affordable stock is a local concern.

62. House prices provide a useful indication of housing demand and affordability in the parish. The HNA (2025) shows that median house prices in Sporle with Palgrave increased by 74.5% between 2015 and 2024, rising from £174,750 to

³ National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

£305,000. In 2024, the median house price in the parish was also higher than the Breckland median of £250,000.

63. The HNA (2025) found that local households on average incomes are generally unable to afford entry-level homes in the open market unless they have a very large deposit. It also found that even households with above-average incomes may struggle to buy locally. This points to a continuing need for affordable housing products that are genuinely accessible to local people.
64. The NPPF (December 2024) in paragraph 66 sets out a policy approach to affordable housing for major development (housing schemes above 10 dwellings or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more)⁴. Policies and decisions should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs, across social rent, other affordable housing for rent and affordable housing ownership tenures.
65. First Homes are a form of affordable home ownership available to first-time buyers at a discount below market value. The HNA (2025) recommends that, if First Homes are delivered in Sporle with Palgrave, they should be offered at a 40% discount in order to be affordable to households on average incomes. Shared ownership may also be an important option locally, as the HNA suggests it is likely to be affordable to a wider range of households.
66. Where Breckland District Council supports the use of First Homes to meet local affordable home ownership needs, Sporle with Palgrave supports a 40% discount, in line with the HNA (2025). This would help improve affordability for local households on average incomes. First Homes should remain subject to the national legal requirements that secure the discount for future eligible buyers, and the local connection criteria set out in Policy 2 would apply for the first 3 months of marketing before reverting to the national approach if no eligible buyer is found.
67. The NPPF and the Local Plan already provide the main policy framework for affordable housing in Breckland. In the adopted Local Plan, Policy HOU 07 requires a tenure split of 70% affordable rented housing and 30% shared ownership or other intermediate products. In the emerging Local Plan, Policy HOU 21 proposes that 25% of qualifying housing development should be provided as affordable housing. The size, mix, type and tenure of that affordable housing would be expected to reflect identified needs across the district, as informed by the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) 2024. The HEDNA identifies a district-wide need for 90% social and affordable rented housing and 10% affordable home ownership. This proposed approach is also reflected in the criteria for the draft Sporle allocations in the emerging Local Plan.
68. Policy 2 does not replace the strategic affordable housing policies in the development plan. Instead, it adds local detail for Sporle with Palgrave, particularly in relation to First Homes and the use of a local connection test if these homes are delivered in the parish.

⁴ [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

Policy 2: Housing

Housing Mix

Housing proposals will need to reflect local housing need using the best available and proportionate evidence. The Sporle with Palgrave Housing Needs Assessment (2025) will be acceptable evidence unless more up to date evidence becomes available.

New residential open market housing only should offer a housing mix whereby at least 75% of homes are three bedrooms or fewer, unless evidence is provided either showing there is no longer such a local need for smaller dwellings, or the scheme is made unviable.

Affordable Housing

Where First Homes are delivered in Sporle with Palgrave, they should be provided at a 40% discount from market value unless evidence clearly demonstrates that this would make the scheme unviable.

First Homes should have regard to the following local connection criteria:

- A. Current residents of the Parish who are renting or living with other family members;
- B. Ex-residents of the Parish who are renting or living with other family members and who moved away within the last three years; or
- C. People who are renting or living with other family members outside the Parish but who have caring responsibilities in the Parish; or
- D. People who are working in local employment within Sporle with Palgrave.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that they meet at least one of the above local connection criteria, for example through proof of address or evidence of local employment.

This local connection requirement does not apply to active members of the Armed Forces, divorced/ separated spouses or civil partners of current members of the Armed Forces, spouses or civil partners of a deceased member of the Armed Forces (if their death was wholly or partly caused by their service) or veterans within 5 years of leaving the Armed Forces.





Natural Environment

03. Heritage, Landscape, and Views: Protect and enhance heritage assets, the agricultural surroundings, key rural views, and distinctive features such as Sporle Wood.

04. Flood Risk and Environmental Protection: Avoid development in areas prone to flooding and incorporate measures to manage flood risk and protect the natural environment.

69. There are no Natural England statutory designated sites in the neighbourhood plan area. However, the parish contains one county wildlife site known as Sporle Wood which is also an ancient woodland and a number of sites contain deciduous woodland which is a priority habitat. Priority habitats or habitats of principle importance for biodiversity conservation are habitats which Natural England deems most threatened, in greatest decline, or where the UK holds a significant proportion of the world's total population. There are areas outside of the parish but close by which are all Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) including Castle Acre Common, River Nar and Breckland Forest. The Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) is also within 20km of the plan area as shown on Figure 9.

70. The parish has a wealth of ecological assets including mature trees, hedgerows, and waterbodies that contribute to its natural character and biodiversity. The NPPF (December 2024) affords considerable support for protecting and enhancing the natural environment, key landscapes, and areas of value in terms of biodiversity. Examples include:

- NPPF paragraphs 103-107 emphasize protecting existing local green spaces and promoting the creation of new high-quality open spaces.
- Paragraph 136 states that all new streets should include trees, with planning policies ensuring streets are tree-lined, opportunities for additional tree planting in developments are maximized, existing trees are preserved wherever possible, and long-term maintenance of newly planted trees is secured.
- Paragraph 180 highlights the requirement for biodiversity net gains in new developments.
- Paragraph 185 encourages the mapping of ecological assets and networks to support their enhancement or creation.

71. The protection and enhancement of the natural environment also supports climate change mitigation and adaptation through carbon storage, biodiversity resilience and green infrastructure.

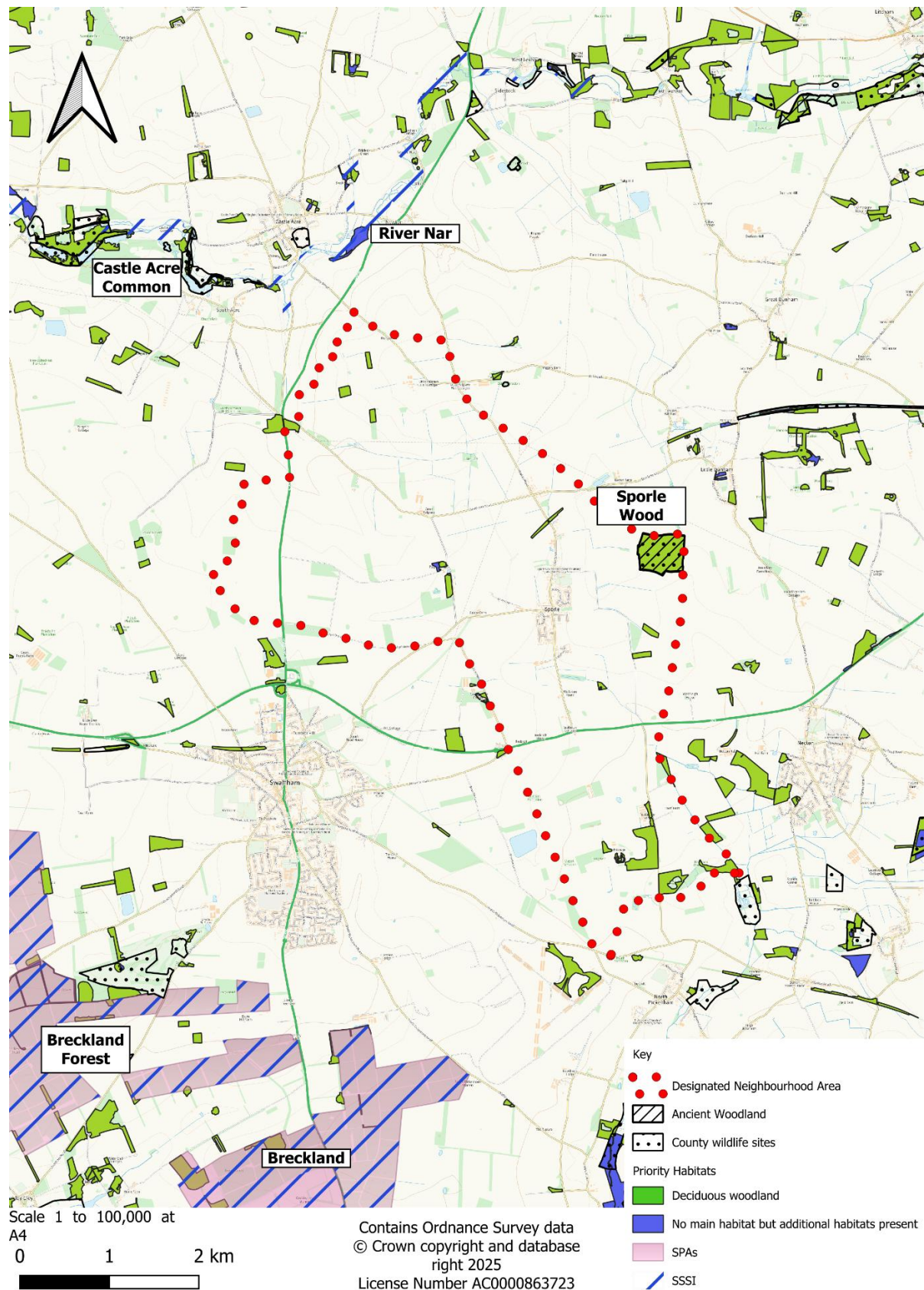
72. Schedule 14 of the Environment Act (2021) mandates that all development schemes deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), maintained for at least 30 years. This requirement aims to achieve measurable improvements in biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats alongside development, ensuring

that proposals “leave biodiversity in a better state than before.” In England, BNG became compulsory on 12 February 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. There are three ways to achieve BNG: onsite within the development boundary, offsite locally through collaboration with nearby landowners to enhance biodiversity, or by purchasing statutory credits. This BNG obligation is additional to the standard mitigation hierarchy, which prioritizes avoiding, mitigating, or compensating for biodiversity losses.

73. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) clarifies that local plan policies must align with the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain (BNG), which establishes the national standard and benchmark. It also states that policies should not mandate BNG for development types that are exempt. However, local plans may include additional biodiversity policies that require specific enhancements to support biodiversity where appropriate⁵.
74. The adopted Breckland Local Plan (2023) includes a number of policies on environmental protection (Policies ENV01 to ENV10) focusing on green infrastructure, biodiversity protection and enhancement, protected habitats and species, open space, enhancing and protecting the landscape, trees and hedgerows, designated and non-designated heritage assets, flood risk and surface water design and renewable energy development. In the emerging Breckland Local Plan (2024-2042) further environmental policies have been added regarding nutrient sensitive areas, local green spaces, regenerative farming, agricultural intensification and climate responsive design.
75. The NDP includes a few policies aimed at protecting Sporle and Palgrave’s environment as set out in the next sections adding further detail to what is already set out in the national and local policies.
76. The Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been taken into account in preparing this Plan. The LNRS identifies priorities and opportunities for the protection, enhancement and recovery of habitats and biodiversity across the county.
77. The policies in this Plan support these aims at a local level by seeking to protect and enhance existing habitats, maintain and strengthen ecological networks, and secure biodiversity improvements through new development. This includes the protection of locally important green spaces, the enhancement of landscape character, and the incorporation of biodiversity features and green infrastructure within development proposals.
78. Where relevant, development proposals should have regard to the priorities and opportunities identified in the LNRS, particularly in relation to habitat connectivity, nature recovery and the wider environmental network.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>

Figure 9: Wildlife Designations





Landscape Character

79. Sporle with Palgrave is set within the gently undulating agricultural landscape of mid-Norfolk, characterised by wide open skies, arable fields, and scattered blocks of woodland. The village core lies in a shallow valley, creating a sense of enclosure while allowing long views across farmland from the settlement edges. This relationship between built form and open countryside is a defining feature of the parish.
80. The historic heart of Sporle is arranged along The Street, a linear route where buildings vary in setback and style, creating a visually interesting streetscape. Grass verges, hedgerows, and mature trees soften the built environment and reinforce its rural identity. A distinctive element of the village is the stream running parallel to The Street, crossed by small bridges to individual properties, which adds to the sense of place and biodiversity value.
81. Beyond the village, the landscape is dominated by arable farmland interspersed with hedgerows and pockets of deciduous woodland, including an area of ancient woodland known as Sporle Wood on the eastern edge of the parish. These green features provide habitat for wildlife and contribute to the tranquil character of the area. Historic landmarks such as St Mary's Church act as focal points within the landscape, visible in long views and forming part of the parish's cultural heritage.
82. The settlement edges are generally soft and well-integrated with the countryside, aided by generous gardens and tree planting. Green gaps between clusters of development maintain visual connections to open land and should be preserved. The design codes emphasise avoiding abrupt boundaries and promoting planting that blends new development into its rural setting.
83. The adopted Breckland Local Plan (2023) does not have a specific policy focused on agriculture. In Policy ENV05 it states that the landscape of the district is valued for its benefit to the rural character and in the interests of biodiversity, geodiversity and historic conservation. Development proposals will be expected to contribute and where possible enhance the local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
84. In the emerging Breckland Local Plan (2024-2042) the contribution and enhancement of the local environment is set out in Policy ENV04 with development proposals needing to have regard to the Council's Landscape Character Assessment. As set out in the Sporle with Palgrave Evidence Base our Parish falls within two distinct landscape character types: plateau farmland⁶ and settled tributary farmland and identifies Sporle with Palgrave as having the origin settlement type of 'agricultural village' of the 'continuous rural row' morphological type⁷.
85. In the emerging Local Plan, there is a new policy on agricultural intensification. Breckland is a predominately a rural district and agriculture plays, not only a significant role in the nation's food supply and security, but also an integral part to

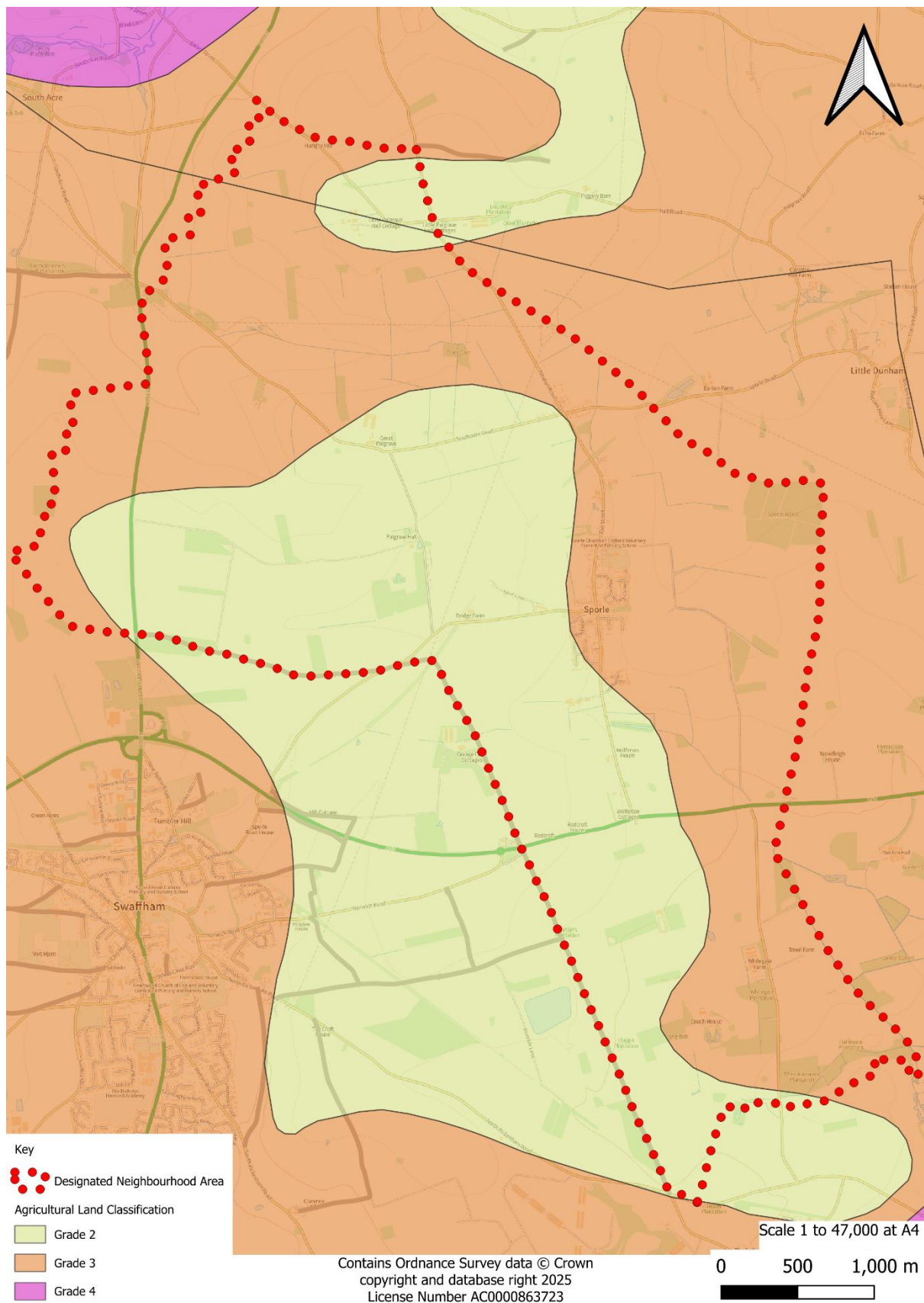
⁶ Settlement comprising individual farmsteads, hamlets and small scale villages – the latter often centred around a green or pond. There are some larger scale settlements on the edges of the plateau.

⁷ Settled character, with dispersed farmsteads and nucleated villages.

the district's landscape character, ecology, and economy. Planning policies at national and local levels recognise the importance of the agricultural sector. The NPPF (December 2024) seeks to promote strong rural economies through the support of sustainable growth and expansion of businesses in rural areas and the promotion of development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. Policy ENV11 sets out that proposals that involve major agricultural development or intensification must give consideration to issues including residential amenity, noise, odour, light pollution, landscape and visual impact, designated sites, air pollution, water quality and consumption, flood risk, highways safety and access and the historic environment.

86. As well as this there is Policy on Regenerative Farming ENV14. Planning permission for development which would lead to the loss of Grade 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land will only be permitted where it meets the criteria in the Local Plan policy. The Local Plan has regard to Breckland's land use being dominated by arable agriculture, with over two-thirds of the area under cultivation, historically favoured by its light, workable soil, making it a significant area for food production.
87. Within the parish, much of the farmland is identified as best and most versatile agricultural land, including Grades 2 and 3 as shown in Figure 10.. National planning policy states that where significant development of agricultural land is shown to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality. In Sporle with Palgrave, this means that, where a choice exists, lower quality agricultural land should be favoured over land of a higher grade.
88. Where development proposals would result in the loss of agricultural land, applicants may be required to provide proportionate and up-to-date agricultural land classification information where the quality of the land is uncertain, disputed, or likely to be material to the planning decision. This is to ensure that the grade of land affected is properly understood and that national policy on the protection of best and most versatile agricultural land can be applied.

Figure 10- Agricultural Land Classification (Source Natural England)



89. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes, recognising the

intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Within the Sporle with Palgrave Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) area, there are several specific views and vistas that hold particular importance to the local community. In line with both national and local planning policy, the Sporle with Palgrave NDP identifies these key views, provides justification for their significance through a supporting assessment, and seeks to protect them for the benefit of current and future generations.

90. As part of the initial community survey (April 2024), residents were asked to share their views on the natural environment. Within Q10, the majority of respondents (97% or 104 people) stated in they felt it was important to protect existing habitats including trees and hedgerows and 71 people in Q12 put forward ideas of their favourite views within the parish they would like to see protected in the NDP for future enjoyment. This includes views around the historic centre, towards open green spaces and along rural roads. Further details and a full list of the views identified by the community can be found in the Sporle with Palgrave Views Assessment document.
91. All views submitted by the community were carefully reviewed by the Steering Group. A site visit was undertaken to gather further evidence, including photographs, to assess the significance and suitability of the suggested views for protection. Some of the proposed views were not included in the list of protected views, as they are already safeguarded through designation as Local Green Spaces within the NDP - such as the playing field, church grounds and wildflower meadow.
92. Overall, the NDP seeks to protect 11 public locally important views, many of which include local features of the landscape, landmark buildings and natural and historic designations in the Parish. As well as this a number of views are from the Peddars Way National Trail which is a long-distance walking trail following a Roman Road built along the line of an even older trackway. This walking trail is popular for residents and visitors. Justification for each of the views is provided in Sporle with Palgrave NDP Views Assessment document.
93. The intention is not to stop development within these views, but to ensure that their distinct character is retained. Development within the views listed in Policy 3 that are overly intrusive or prominent will not be supported. Any proposals within these views will need to demonstrate that they are sited, designed and of a scale that does not significantly harm them.

View

Photos

View 1:
Procession
lane looking
towards St
Mary's View
and Necton
Road



View 2:
Procession
lane East
towards Village



View 3:
Looking north
along Palgrave
Rd from Sporle
Rd



View 4:
Looking
northwest
along Peddars
Way/Palgrave
Rd



View 5:
Peddars
Way.Palgrave
Rd towards Gt
Palgrave



View 6: View
looking west
from
Southacre
Road



Looking North



Looking West



View 7: 360
Degree Views
along Newton
Road

Looking South



Looking Southeast



Towards Sporle Wood



Towards Newton Road



View 8:
Dunham
Bridge looking
towards Sporle
Wood and
Newton Road

View 9: View looking east towards the Church



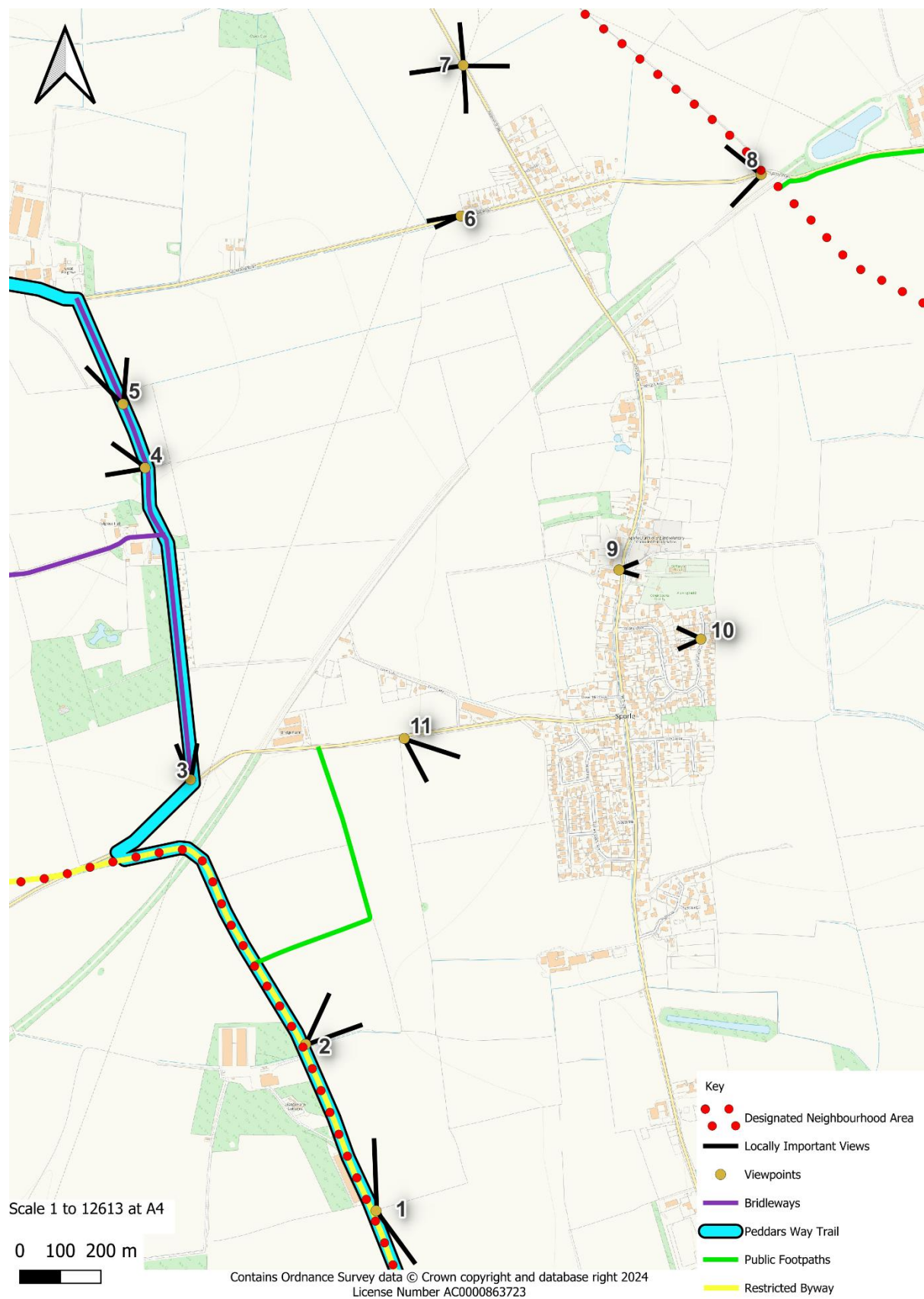
View 10: View looking west from Priory Close



View 11:
Looking Southeast from Sporle Rd/Bunkers Hill towards Necton



Figure 11: Important Key Views in Sporle



Policy 3: Landscape Character

Development proposals are required to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the landscape character, appearance and setting of the parish. Consideration should be given to Design Codes A1 to A4 in the Sporle with Palgrave Design Codes and Guidance Document (2025) in regard to this Policy.

The development of best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1,2 and 3a) should be avoided. Proposals affecting such land will only be supported where it is clearly demonstrated that the development is necessary, no reasonable alternative of lower quality exists, and the benefits of the proposal significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harm. In line with the NPPF (footnote 65), areas of poorer quality agricultural land should be preferred to those of higher quality.

Where the loss of agricultural land is proposed, and the quality of that land is uncertain or material to the decision, applicants should provide proportionate and up-to-date agricultural land classification information.

The following 11 views, shown in **Figure 11** and described in Sporle with Palgrave's Views Assessment are identified as important public local views:

- View 1: Procession lane looking towards St Mary's View and Necton Road
- View 2: Procession lane East towards Village
- View 3: Looking north along Palgrave Rd from Sporle Rd
- View 4: Looking northwest along Peddars Way/Palgrave Rd
- View 5: Peddars Way.Palgrave Rd towards Gt Palgrave
- View 6: View looking west from Southacre Road
- View 7: 360 Degree Views along Newton Road
- View 8: Dunham Bridge looking towards Sporle Wood and Newton Road
- View 9: View looking east towards the Church
- View 10: View looking west from Priory Close
- View 11: Looking Southeast from Sporle Rd/Bunkers Hill towards Necton

Proposals are expected to demonstrate that they are sited, and designed to be of a form and scale, that avoids or mitigates any harm to the key views. Development proposals that would unacceptably affect these key views will not be supported.



TO THE
GLORY OF GOD
AND

IN MEMORY OF
THE MEN OF SHORTLEIGH
WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR
1914-1918

ROBERT W. ANDERSON	DENNIS BOND
WILLIAM BISHOP	CHARLES STURMAN
GEORGE BLOWERS	WILLIAM THOMPSON
ARTHUR A. CASHINS	ALBERT F. TYE
EDWARD JOHNSON	LEWIS WALKER
WILLIAM G. JOHNSON	BERTIE WILSON
SYDNEY LANE	GEORGE WOLF
MALICE PALMER	

"THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE"

May they rest in peace



Local Green Spaces

94. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that specific areas of land that are demonstrably special to the local community may be protected against development through designation as Local Green Space (LGS). These areas are typically located within or adjacent to built-up areas and contribute significantly to the character and identity of a settlement. Local Green Spaces can vary in size, shape, location, ownership, and use, but all share a common feature: they hold particular value to the community and help define what makes the settlement distinctive.
95. In the adopted Breckland Local Plan (2023), Policy ENV04 Open Space, Sport & Recreation sets out that applications relating to Local Green Space will be determined in accordance with national policy. The Local Plan sets out that Breckland District Council supports neighbourhood plan groups in identifying Local Green Spaces in their Neighbourhood Plans and the Policies Maps in the Local Plan will be updated in recognition of any Local Green Spaces designated in made neighbourhood plans. The Local Plan itself does not designate any Local Green Spaces in Sporle with Palgrave. In the emerging Local Plan (2024-2042) Policy ENV13 recognition is also given to neighbourhood plans designating Local Green Space.
96. In the community consultation survey (April 2024), initial ideas were suggested by residents and the steering group. In Q16, respondents were asked what areas of green space they value in the parish. 107 people answered this question. All options had support from respondents and the most supported/valued spaces were the playing field and wildflower meadow (102 people), village sign greenspace (101 people), church grounds (96 people) and Sporle woods (92 people). In Q17, respondents were asked if there were any other green spaces they valued. 31 people answered this question, and these are listed in the Sporle with Palgrave Local Green Space Assessment. These spaces were reviewed to consider whether they would meet the national criteria for designation with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.
97. This NDP designates 4 Local Green Spaces for protection; these are identified in Figure 13 and on the Policies Map in Appendix A. These are important not only due to the recreational value they provide but also due to their historic significance in the parish and for the wildlife they support. Justification for each Local Green Space is found in the Sporle with Palgrave NDP Local Green Space Assessment.

Figure 12- Local Green Spaces and Photos

Local Green Space

Photos

LGS1: St Mary's Church Grounds and Jane Palmer Memorial Wildflower Meadow, East of The Street

The green open space is the burial ground for residents of Sporle with Palgrave. There is also an area to the east of the grounds behind the graves which is now a memorial flower meadow. It is designated for historic, recreational and wildlife value.



LGS2: Playing Field, East of The Street

A large, grassed area which includes children's play equipment, football pitch and a pavillion used for recreational purposes by the community. It is designated for its recreational value.



LGS3: Green Space within Newfields Estate

The green space is demonstrably special to the community for its recreational purpose of being a place for the community to rest, play and socialise. Greenspace is designation recreational value.

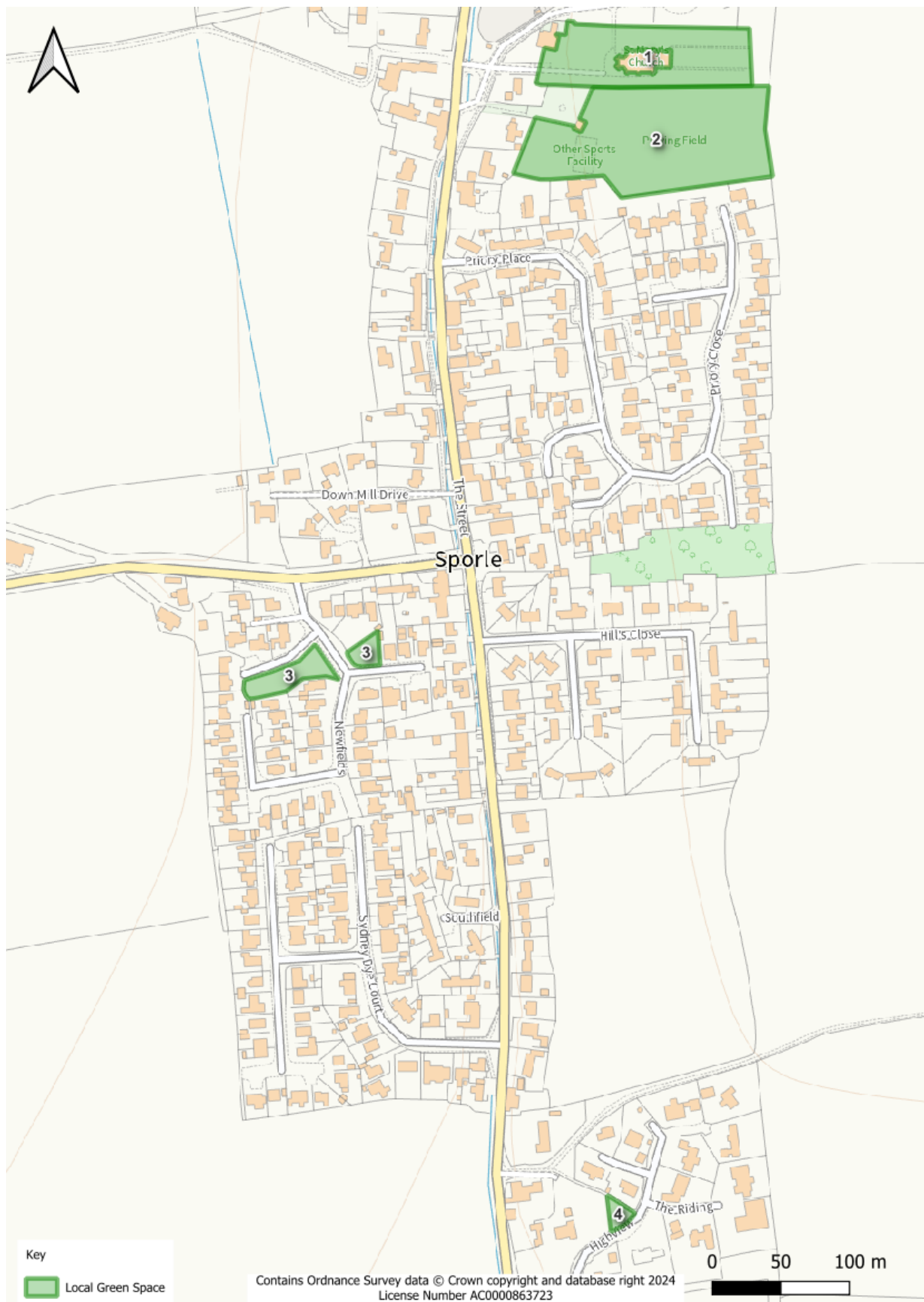


LGS6: Green Space North of Highview

This green space is demonstrably special to the community who live within the recent development built at Highview for its recreational and amenity benefit. Greenspace is designation recreational value.



Figure 13: Local Green Spaces



Policy 4 : Local Green Spaces

The areas listed below and shown in **Figure 13** are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- LGS1 St Mary's Church Grounds and Jane Palmer Memorial Wildflower Meadow, East of The Street
- LGS2 Playing Field, East of The Street
- LGS3 Green Space within Newfields Estate
- LGS4 Green Space North of Highview

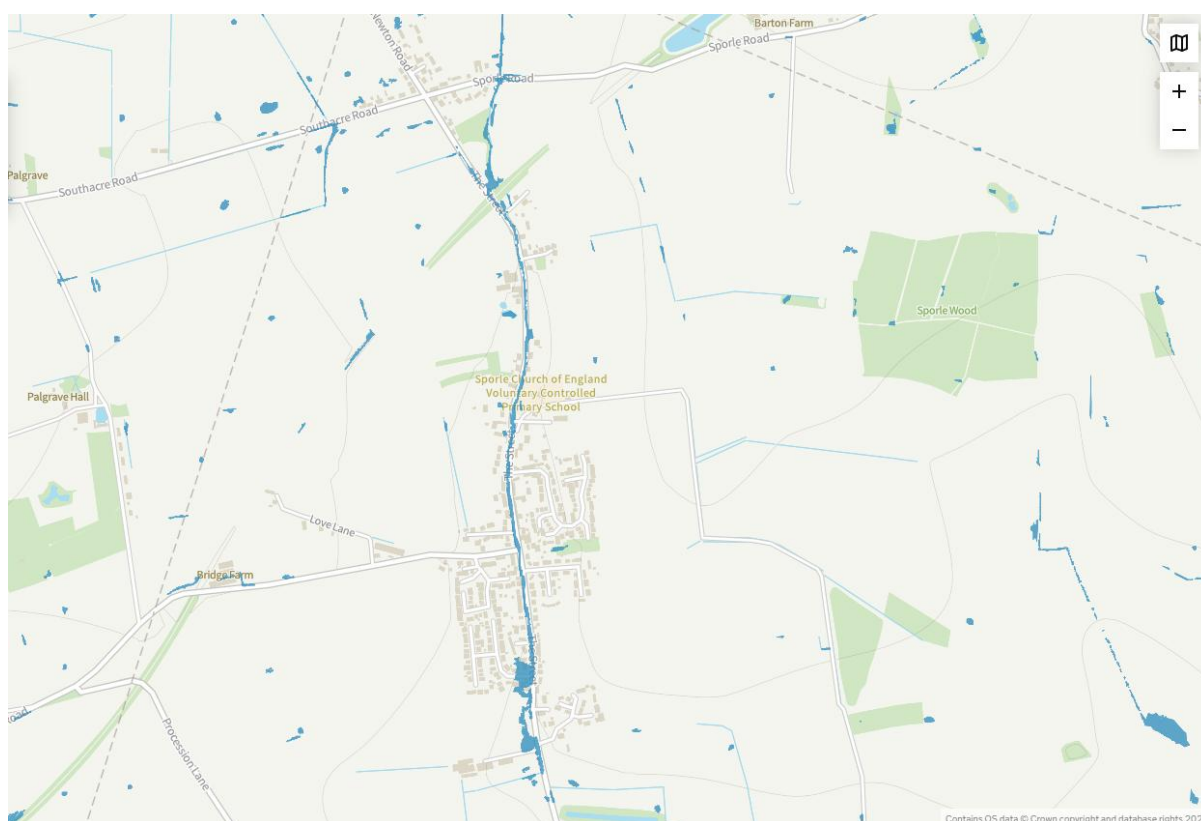
Development proposals in the four designated Local Green Spaces listed above will be managed in accordance with national policy for Green Belts.



Flood Risk and Water Management

98. Flooding is a key consideration for Sporle with Palgrave given its valley location and the presence of a stream running through the village. While the parish has very little risk of fluvial flooding from rivers or the sea, Environment Agency mapping shows that parts of the built-up area, particularly along The Street, are at medium or high risk of surface water flooding. These areas are most vulnerable during periods of heavy rainfall when drainage systems become overwhelmed, and water flows along natural routes through the village. This policy also plays an important role in supporting climate change adaptation by ensuring development is resilient to increased flood risk and changing weather patterns.

Figure 14- Surface water flood risk in Sporle built up area of 1 in 30 (Source Environment Agency 2025)



99. National planning policy requires development to address flood risk and adapt to climate change. The Government intends to make Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) mandatory in new developments, which aligns with Sporle's need for water-sensitive design. The adopted Breckland Local Plan (2023) sets out detail on flood risk and surface water drainage in Policy ENV09 setting out details including all new development will be located to minimise the risk of flooding, mitigating any such risk through design and implementing SuDS. The emerging Local Plan (2024-2042) also sets out detail on flood risk and surface water drainage in Policy INF03.

100. Sustainable drainage systems can contribute towards sustainable development and improve places where people live and work. The four pillars which should be considered in SuDS design includes water quantity, water

quality, amenity and biodiversity. When SuDs control the quantity of water run off successfully this can help support the management of flood risk and maintain and protect the natural water cycle. For water quality SuDS can manage the quality of the runoff to prevent pollution and reduce sedimentation of more vulnerable waterways, reducing contaminants such as phosphorous, from negatively impacting protected sites. SuDs can improve amenity by creating and sustaining better places for people and help biodiversity by creating and sustaining better places for nature.

101. Traditionally piped drainage networks convey water much more quickly than natural processes. Flooding can occur when housing and other development such as paving increases the volume and speed of run-off. SuDS seek to manage rainfall in a similar way to natural processes, by using the landscape to control the flow and volume of surface water, prevent or reduce pollution downstream of development and promote recharging of groundwater. Natural vegetation, including trees, in SuDS helps attenuate flows, traps silts and pollutants and promotes infiltration.
102. Design solutions should integrate SuDS as part of green infrastructure. Examples include attenuation ponds and swales to store and filter water, permeable paving for driveways and paths, rain gardens and planting to absorb runoff, and rainwater harvesting systems to improve water efficiency. Existing ditches and watercourses should be retained and maintained to support drainage and reduce flood risk.
103. Policy 5 focuses on maximising the use of natural SuDS features which manage flood risk but also provide benefits such as enhancing public open space, contributing to the character of an area, and providing wildlife habitat.
104. Development proposals coming forward in Sporle with Palgrave should have regard to the most up to date version of the Norfolk County Council LLFA Statutory Consultee for Planning: Guidance Document regarding surface water risk and drainage⁸. It also should be noted that from 15 April 2015 Norfolk County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority became a statutory consultee on all planning applications for major developments requiring comment to applications in respect to surface water drainage. From the 6 April 2015 planning policies and decisions relating to major development are required to ensure that SuDS are used for the management of surface water.

⁸Information for developers: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/38642>

Policy 5 : Flood Risk and Water Management

To promote sustainable development and help address vulnerability to the effects of climate change all development proposals should seek to achieve the four pillars of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)⁹ ensuring they are multi-functional and appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. Such measures will be required except where this is not technically feasible or where it can be demonstrated that other factors preclude their use.

Proposals should have regard to Design Codes B1 and B2 in the Sporle with Palgrave Design Guidance and Codes Document (AECOM 2025).

Proposals should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that are appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and designed to be an integral part of the green infrastructure. These may include:

- Attenuation ponds;
- Introduction of permeable driveways or parking areas such as unbound gravel, clay pavers or stone setts.
- Planting;
- Rainwater harvesting/storage features or reusing on-site grey water.

Existing dykes and field ditches should be respected and maintained to continue to assist with water management.

⁹ The SuDS four design objectives/pillars where surface water runoff is managed includes water quantity, water quality, amenity and biodiversity benefits.



Community Facilities and Infrastructure

O4. Community Facilities and Infrastructure: Support improvements to local facilities, green spaces, and infrastructure to meet the needs of residents of all ages and keep pace with development.

O5. A Thriving and Cohesive Community: Encourage development and uses that strengthen community life, support local events, and provide opportunities and activities for young people.

105. Sporle with Palgrave is identified as a Local Service Centre within the adopted Breckland Local Plan (2023), reflecting its role in providing a limited but important range of facilities for residents. The parish benefits from a small selection of local services including a village shop and Post Office, a primary school with an associated playgroup, a public house (closed at the time of writing), a church, and a community centre. These facilities form the heart of village life and are complemented by a playing field, pavilion, and children's playground managed by local trustees and volunteers. A number of community groups and clubs operate within the parish, offering opportunities for social interaction and recreation.
106. Despite these assets, residents must travel to nearby towns such as Swaffham or Dereham for essential services including GP and dental care, secondary education, banking, and hospital facilities. The nearest mainline rail station is located in King's Lynn, approximately 30 minutes by car. Norfolk County Council operates a mobile library service which visits Sporle once a month, making several stops in the village, helping to maintain access to cultural resources.
107. The primary school is currently operating at capacity in the early years and is oversubscribed for the coming academic year. This highlights a potential pressure point on local infrastructure should further housing growth occur. Additional development could, however, help sustain existing services and support the introduction of new ones, ensuring the long-term vitality of the community.
108. When asked in Q32 about the best aspects of living in Sporle, many highlighted the sense of community, proximity to village facilities, and the rural setting with access to countryside walks. Conversely, the main challenges noted in Q33 were poor broadband and mobile signal, limited transport options, flooding issues, and a lack of youth facilities or social spaces. Interestingly, when asked where they would like to live in the future, 60% of younger respondents expressed a preference to remain in Sporle or Palgrave, suggesting a strong local attachment despite infrastructure concerns.
109. In Q30 of the initial community survey (April 2024), those who are at school or college were asked which ones they attend. The results indicated that only a small number of respondents were school or college students, with five people providing details of their institutions, which included locations such as Swaffham, Great Dunham, Dereham Sixth Form College, Norwich, and Necton. Travel to school was mainly by bus or car, with three respondents using each mode.

Community Facilities and Services

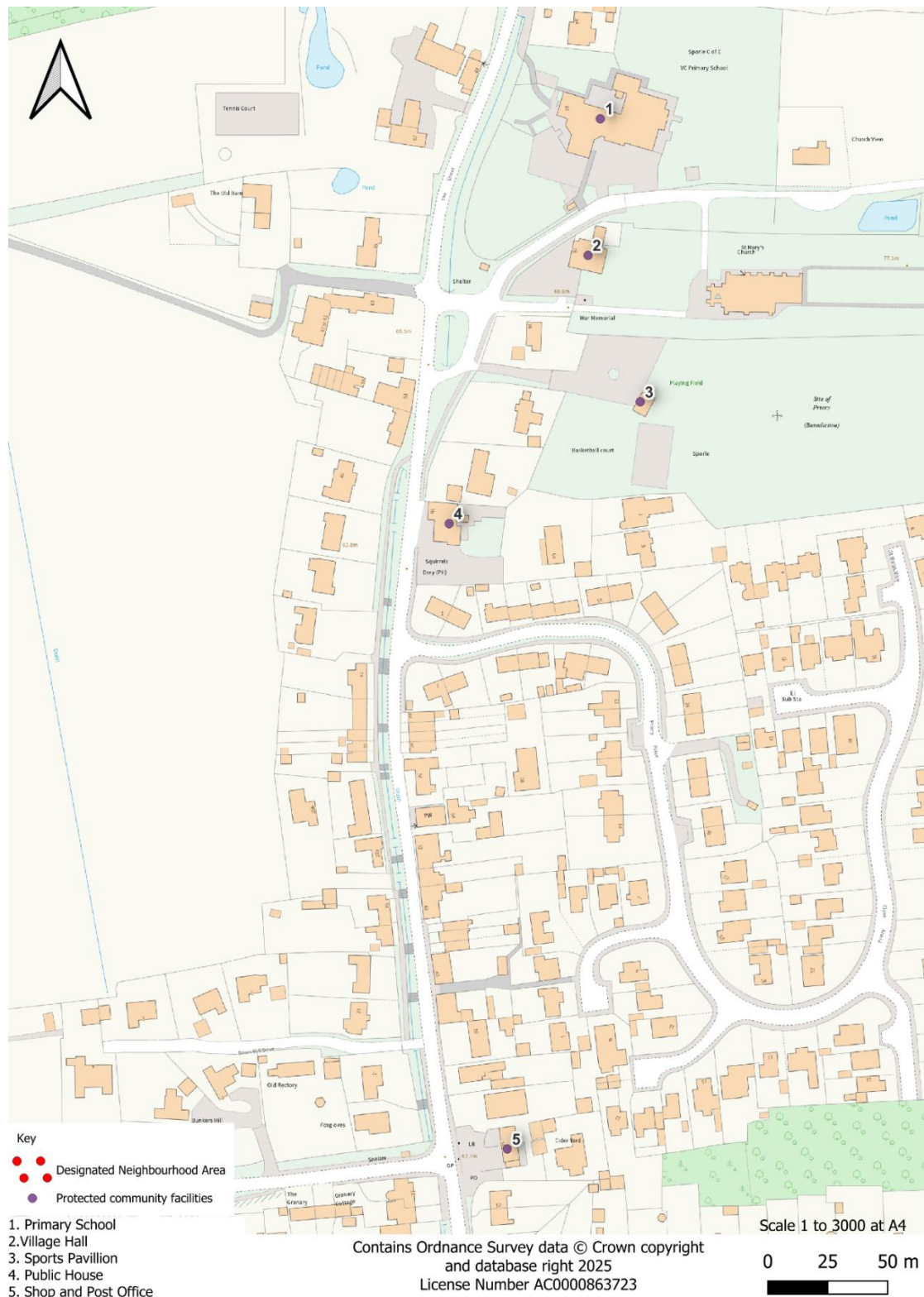
110. In Q21 of the initial community survey (April 2024) residents were asked which existing facilities should be protected. Residents highlighted the importance of retaining the village shop and Post Office, the primary school, the village hall and community centre, and the playing field with its associated play area and pavilion. The church and graveyard, the village pub (since closed), the mobile library, and green spaces such as the wildflower meadow were also considered vital to community life.
111. NPPF (December 2024) paragraph 98 supports the protection of valued existing services and the delivery of new ones to maintain the vitality of rural communities. The adopted Breckland Local Plan (2023) in Policy COM04 states the creation, enhancement and expansion of community facilities will be supported where this would enhance the existing offer, benefit the local economy and be of a suitable scale and type for its location and in locations in close proximity to the area that they will serve. As well as this it states proposals, including change of use (outside permitted development rights), which result in the loss of local community buildings (most recently used for this purpose where the use has ceased), will not be permitted unless it meets set criteria. A number of local community buildings are proposed for protection in Policy 6.

Employment and Local Economy

112. The parish hosts a modest number of businesses, with 22 registered enterprises according to the Inter-Departmental Business Register. These are primarily small-scale operations, reflecting the rural character of the area. While local employment opportunities exist, most residents commute to larger towns for work, with the majority travelling by private car due to limited public transport options. Sporle's proximity to the A47 provides good road connectivity, but the lack of evening and weekend bus services restricts access for those without private transport.
113. The NPPF (December 2024) states planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. In the Breckland Local Plan (2023) a number of policies are focused on employment development.
114. Respondents also were asked in Q25 of the initial community survey (April 2024) if they would support small scale business growth within the parish. Most respondents support small-scale business growth within the parish, with around three-quarters (76% or 71 people) in favour. Suggestions for suitable enterprises included arts and crafts facilities, cottage industries, food-related businesses such as a café or bakery, co-working spaces, and services like dog grooming or home care.
115. Respondents emphasised that any growth should remain small-scale and sensitive to the village's character, avoiding increased traffic or parking issues. When asked about their own employment status, nearly half of respondents (46% or 48 people) were retired, while 39% (41 people) were employed either full or

part-time. A smaller proportion were students or not working. For those working from home or wishing to do so, better internet connectivity was identified as the most important factor, followed by improved access to walking routes and open spaces, and the availability of local meeting or co-working spaces.

Figure 15- Protected Community Facilities



Policy 6 : Community Facilities and Employment

Local Plan policies for the protection of community facilities should be applied to protect community facilities within Sporle with Palgrave. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Primary School
2. Village Hall
3. Sports Pavillion
4. Public House
5. Shop and Post Office

The Parish Council will support new community or employment facilities coming forward within the parish where they are conforming with the other neighbourhood plan policies and the relevant character areas set out in the Sporle with Palgrave Design Code (2025). Any future facilities should provide for onsite parking provision.

116. In terms of new services, respondents in Q23 expressed a desire for activities and events catering to all age groups, improved public transport including additional bus routes and evening services, and access to core services such as a doctor and dentist. Suggestions also included the introduction of a café or other food and drink establishments, upgraded playground facilities, outdoor gym equipment, and initiatives to support elderly residents. Improved broadband and mobile connectivity were frequently mentioned as essential for modern living. Some of these points will be addressed in Community Action 1.

Community Action 1: Improving Community Facilities/ Services and Infrastructure Provision within the Parish

The parish council will proactively work with the appropriate stakeholders, landowners and community with regards to improving facilities within the parish such as the bus service, maintenance of green spaces, improving current play equipment and encouraging more activities and clubs for all ages.

The Parish Council will work with the relevant stakeholders to enhance infrastructure provision as suggested by residents during consultation activities. This includes improving broadband connectivity and health care services.



Accessibility and Transport

117. Public transport provision in Sporle is limited. Weekday bus services connect the village to Swaffham and Dereham, but these are infrequent and do not operate in the evenings or on Sundays. Saturday services are minimal, and there are no north-south bus routes, only east-west connections along the A47. Consequently, car ownership is high, with 90% of households having access to at least one vehicle, compared to the Norfolk average of 82%. This reliance on private transport underscores the importance of maintaining road infrastructure and parking provision within the village.
118. The parish benefits from access to the countryside via public rights of way, including the nationally significant Peddars Way long-distance trail. Peddars Way follows a Roman road built along the line of an even older trackway. The name, Peddars Way, is said to be derived from the Latin "pedester", which means "on foot". The trail passes through Sporle with Palgrave from North Pickenham heading north along Procession Lane onto Sporle Road then passing Palgrave Hall and along Southacre Road towards Castle Acre Parish. The different public routes provide opportunities for walking, cycling, and horse riding, contributing to the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors alike.
119. As highlighted in Q22 of the initial survey, leisure activities in the parish are currently dominated by walking, which was cited by the majority of respondents (71 people), alongside cycling, running, horse riding, and socialising at local venues. However, many noted a lack of leisure options and poor off-road routes, calling for better-maintained footpaths, safer cycleways, and clearer signage. Respondents suggested in Q24 that to improve footpaths and cycleways in the Parish there should be the creation of circular walks linking existing paths to Peddars Way to enhance recreational opportunities as well as new footpaths within the village centre where these are currently missing.
120. Whilst a number of the issues related to transport and access cannot be directly solved within the NDP, the parish council thought it was important to understand current issues which are felt within the community and to address this where possible in a community action which can be explored throughout the plan period with the appropriate landowners and bodies.
121. The NPPF (December 2024) and the Breckland Local Plan (2023) support the promotion of sustainable transport. Policies TR01 and TR02 in the adopted Breckland Local Plan (2023) sets out details on transport requirements and the sustainable transport network. The emerging Breckland Local Plan (2024-2042) sets out transport policies under INF01 and INF02.

Figure 16- Public Rights of Way (Source Norfolk County Council)

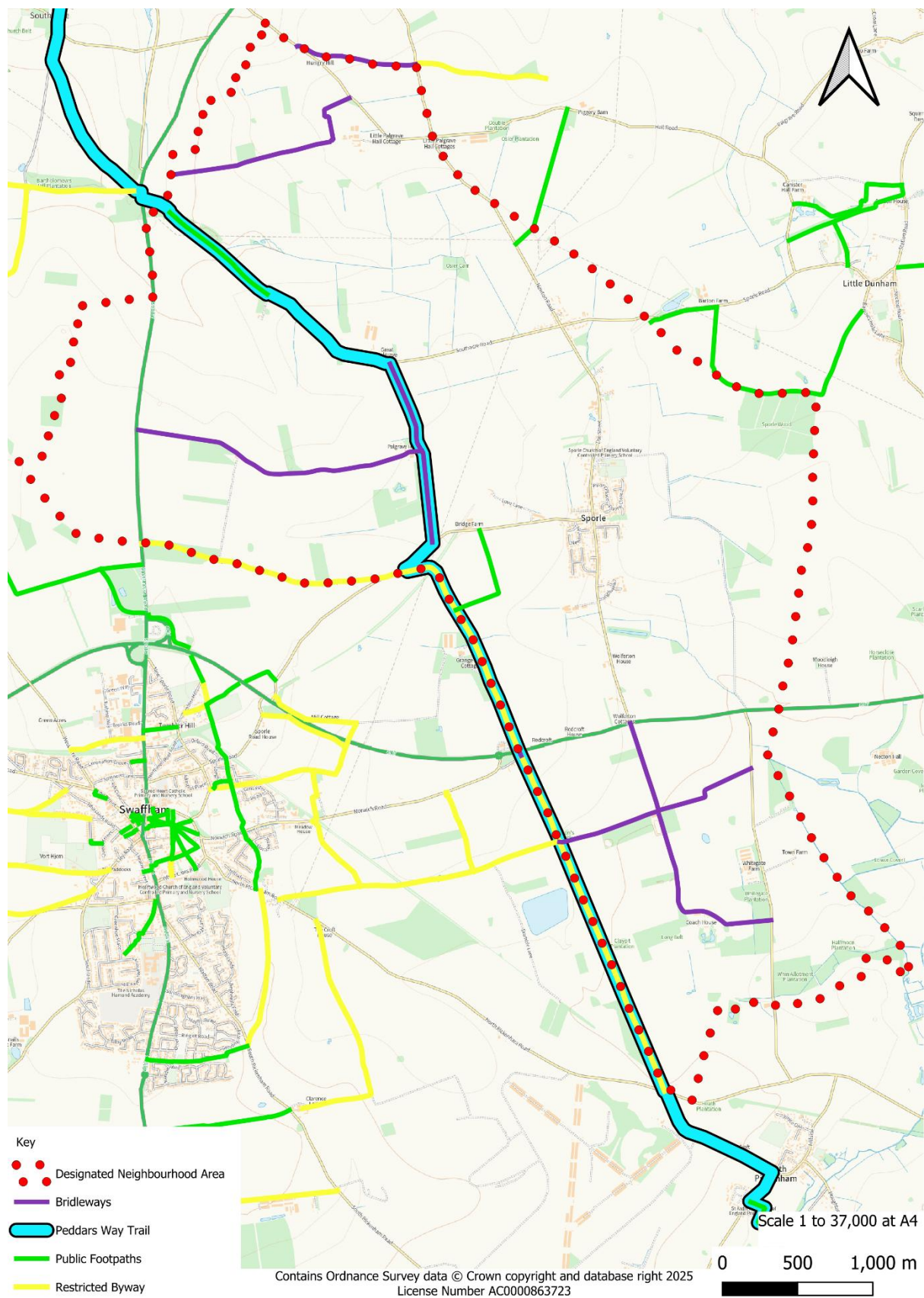
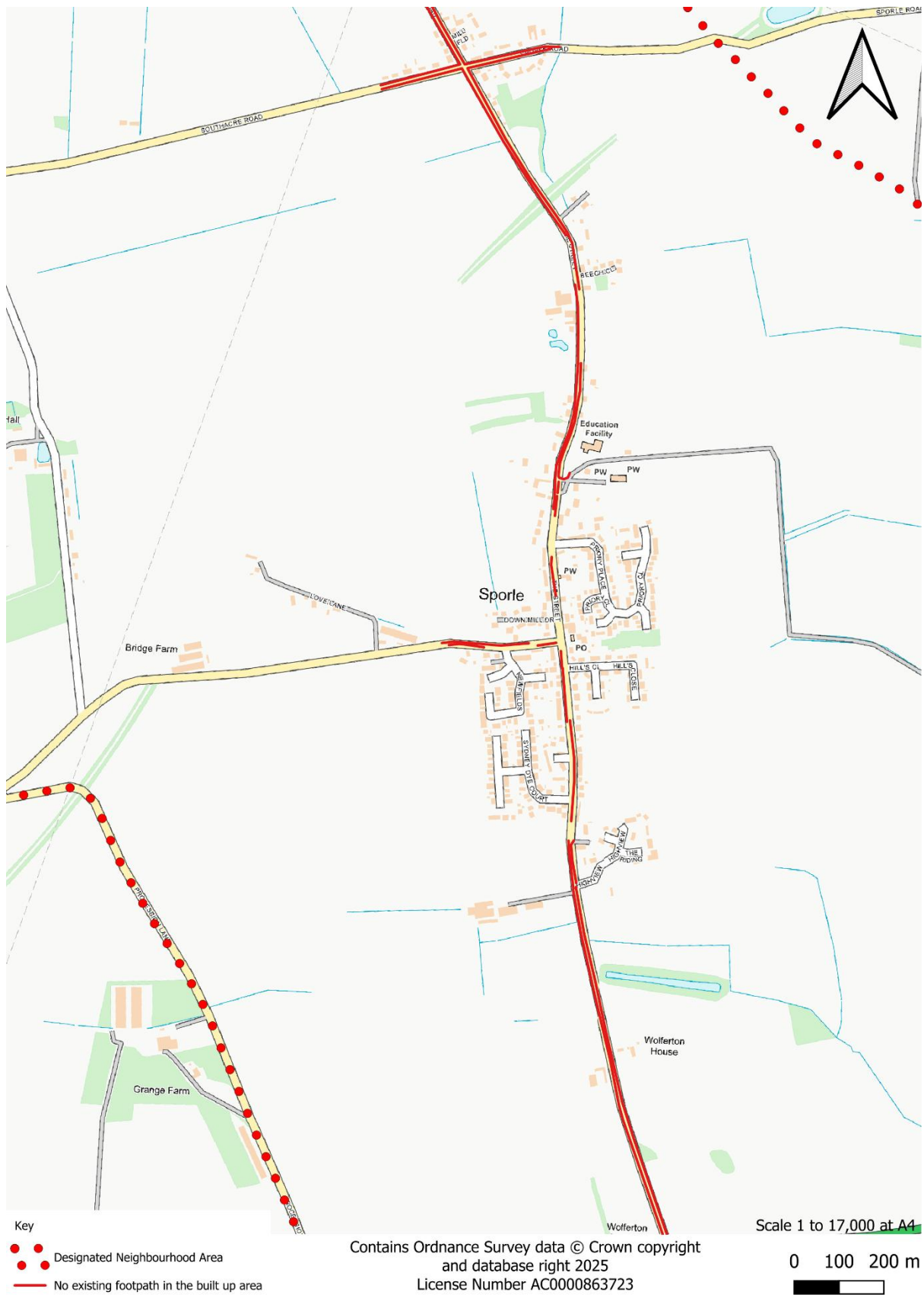


Figure 17 - No existing paths within the built-up settlement



122. Overall, the initial community consultation in April 2024 revealed in Q20 strong community support for improving local infrastructure and amenities. The highest priority identified for future funding was the creation of new and improved footpaths, which 81% (87 people) of respondents considered essential. This was followed by enhancements to children's play areas and equipment, and the provision of dog and litter bins. Other suggestions included better signage for footpaths, communal allotments, improved bus shelters, and countryside amenities. Respondents also proposed additional measures such as flood protection, CCTV, adult exercise equipment, heritage interpretation boards, and improved public transport services.

Community Aspiration 2: Walking and cycling links

The Parish Council will work with local landowners and the County Council to ensure that Public Rights of Way within Sporle with Palgrave are well maintained for the continued enjoyment of residents and visitors.

The Parish Council will work with other neighbouring parishes to secure improvements to public footpaths and cycleways that provide access between Sporle with Palgrave, Swaffham and Little Dunham.

The Parish Council will work with local landowners and the County Council to investigate the potential for establishing circular walking routes around the parish and the creation of new footpaths within the village centre where appropriate.



Monitoring, Review, and Implementation

123. Sporle with Palgrave Parish Council will take responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. This will be undertaken annually by capturing the outcome of planning applications determined by the Breckland District Council.
124. A monitoring spreadsheet, similar to that recommended by Locality¹⁰ will be used. This considers how effective each policy has been in both influencing the outcome of decisions and any conditions applied to development that is permitted.
125. The Plan was prepared with reference to the Local Plan 2023 which was adopted in September 2023 and details set out in the emerging Breckland Local Plan (2024-2042) in time of writing this document. The Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed should the adoption of an emerging Local Plan necessitate such a review, in order that the Plan remains in conformity with the relevant strategic policies of the Local Plan. Similarly, the Plan will be reviewed should any changes in national policies necessitate revisions to the Plan's policies. Additionally, the Parish Council will monitor the effectiveness of the policies within the Plan. The monitoring will be undertaken on an annual basis, and a decision can be made whether this requires a review of the Plan.
126. The table below sets out the community actions and relevant partnership/stakeholders for delivery. The community actions and the implementation of these will be reviewed annually as well to monitor working relationships and necessary changes.

Community Action	Relevant Stakeholders/Partners
Community Action 1: Improving Community Facilities/Services and Infrastructure Provision within the Parish The parish council will proactively work with the appropriate stakeholders, landowners and community with regards to improving facilities within the parish such as the bus service, maintenance of green spaces, improving current play equipment and encouraging more activities and clubs for all ages. The Parish Council will work with the relevant stakeholders to enhance infrastructure provision as suggested by residents during consultation activities. This includes improving broadband connectivity and health care services.	• Landowners • Stakeholders • Norfolk County Council • Breckland District Council • Relevant Broadband Providers • Local businesses, community groups and residents

¹⁰ [How to implement, monitor, and review your made neighbourhood plan - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)

Community Action	Relevant Stakeholders/Partners
Community Aspiration 2: Walking and cycling links The Parish Council will work with local landowners and the County Council to ensure that Public Rights of Way within Sporle with Palgrave are well maintained for the continued enjoyment of residents and visitors. The Parish Council will work with other neighbouring parishes to secure improvements to public footpaths and cycleways that provide access between Sporle with Palgrave, Swaffham and Little Dunham. The Parish Council will work with local landowners and the County Council to investigate the potential for establishing circular walking routes around the parish and the creation of new footpaths within the village centre where appropriate.	• Landowners • Stakeholders • Private Bus Companies • Norfolk County Council • Breckland District Council • Neighbouring Parish Councils • Local businesses, community groups and residents

Appendix A: Policies Map

The policies map aids users to see where the protected community facilities, designated local green spaces and important local views are in relation to one another in the designated area.

Figure 18- Policies Map

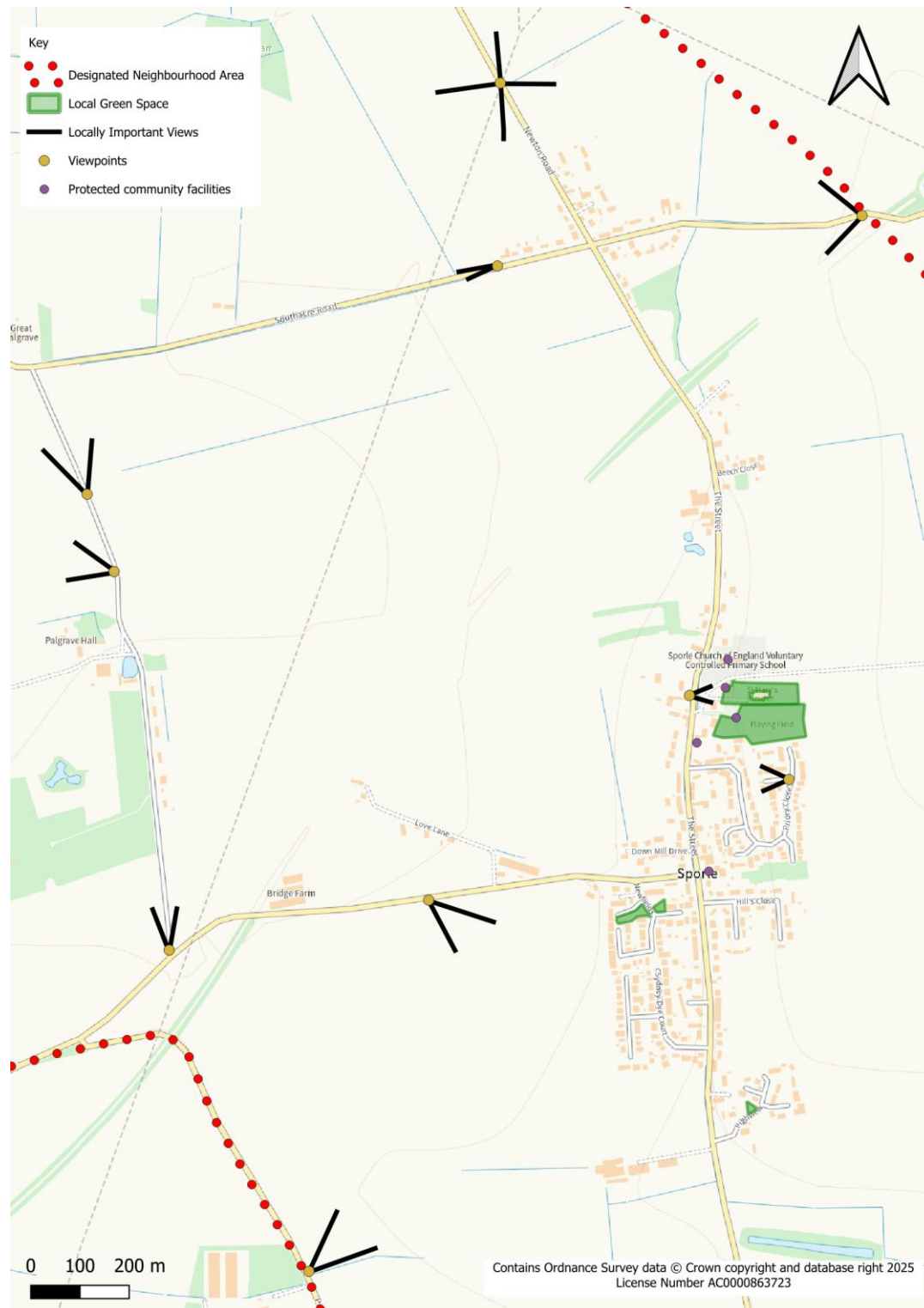
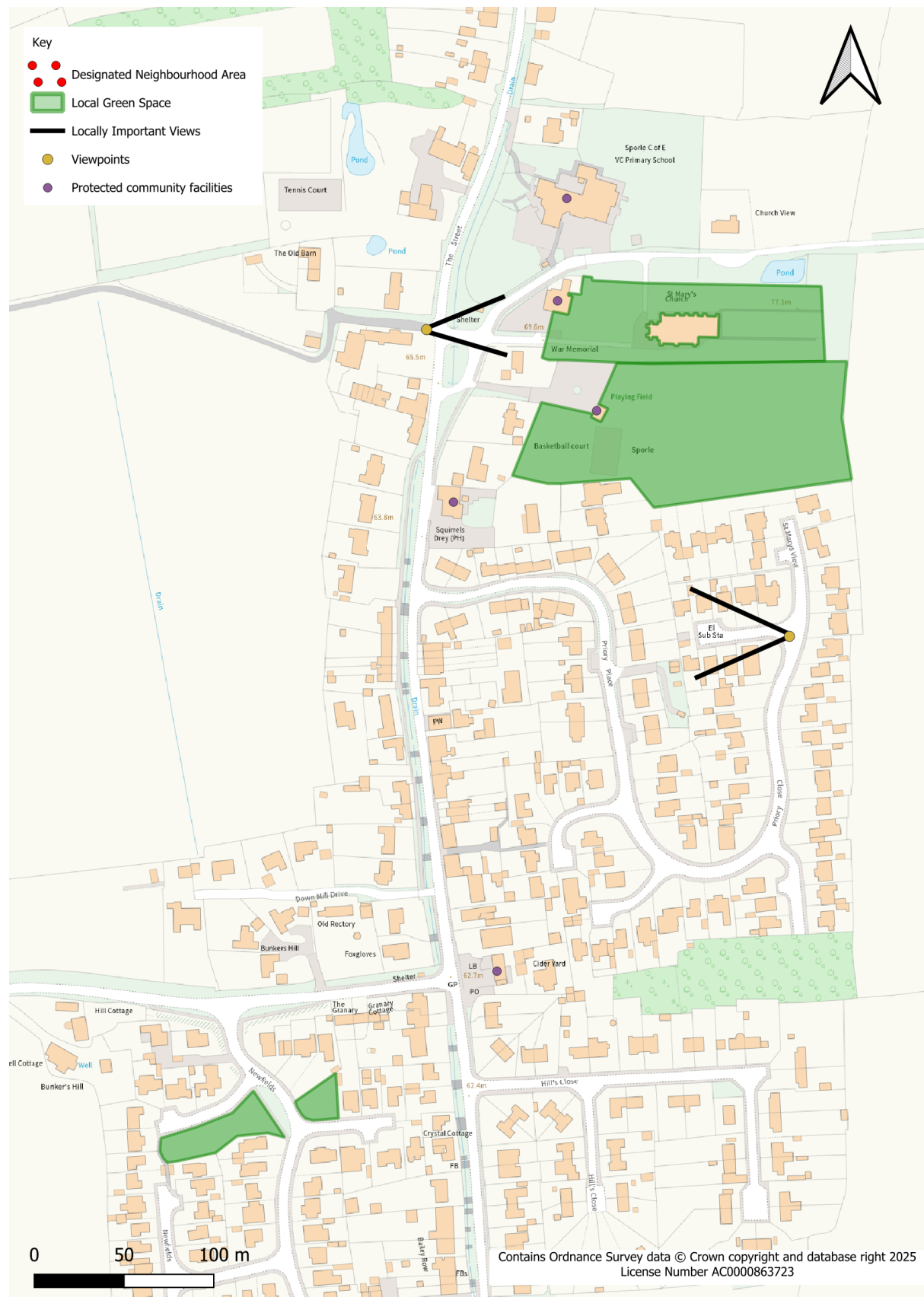


Figure 19- Policies Map in the built-up settlement



Appendix B- Abbreviations and Glossary

Term	Definition
Affordable Housing (NPPF 2024 Definition)	Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions: A. Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent). B. Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used. C. Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households. D. Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing

Term	Definition
	provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.
BNG	Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a way to contribute to the recovery of nature while developing land. It is making sure the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development ¹¹ .
Energy Efficient	The practice of using less energy to perform the same amount of output for a task, service or produce the same result.
Green Infrastructure	A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities, and prosperity.
Local Green Space (LGS)	Local Green Space is a way of designating local green areas, which meet a set of criteria, in order to protect them from inappropriate development.
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Open Market Housing	Open market housing is housing which is built by developers (which may be private companies or housing associations, or Private Registered Providers), for the purposes of sale (or rent) on the open market.
Sheltered Housing	Sheltered housing (also known as retirement housing) means having your own flat or bungalow in a block, or on a small estate, where all the other residents are older people (usually over 55). With a few exceptions, all developments (or 'schemes') provide independent, self-contained homes with their own front doors. There are many different types of scheme, both to rent and to buy. They usually contain between 15 and 40 properties, and range in size from studio flats (or 'bedsits') through to 2 and 3 bedroomed. Properties in most schemes are designed to make life a little easier for older people - with features like raised electric sockets, lowered worktops, walk-in showers, and so on. Some will usually be designed to accommodate wheelchair users. And they are usually linked to an emergency alarm service (sometimes called 'community alarm service') to call help if needed. Many schemes also have their own 'manager' or 'warden', either living on-site or nearby, whose job is to manage the scheme and help arrange any services residents need. Managed schemes will also usually have some shared or communal facilities such as a lounge for residents to meet, a laundry, a guest flat and a garden¹².

¹¹ [Understanding biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain)

¹² 4 See <http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-sheltered-housing.aspx>

Term	Definition
Social rented housing	Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in Section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.). Guideline target rents for this tenure are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with Homes England ¹³
SuDS	Sustainable urban drainage system
Windfall development	Windfall development refers to new building that comes forward on sites which were not specifically identified or allocated for development in a local or neighbourhood plan.

¹³ See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/doc/1980960.doc#Housing>