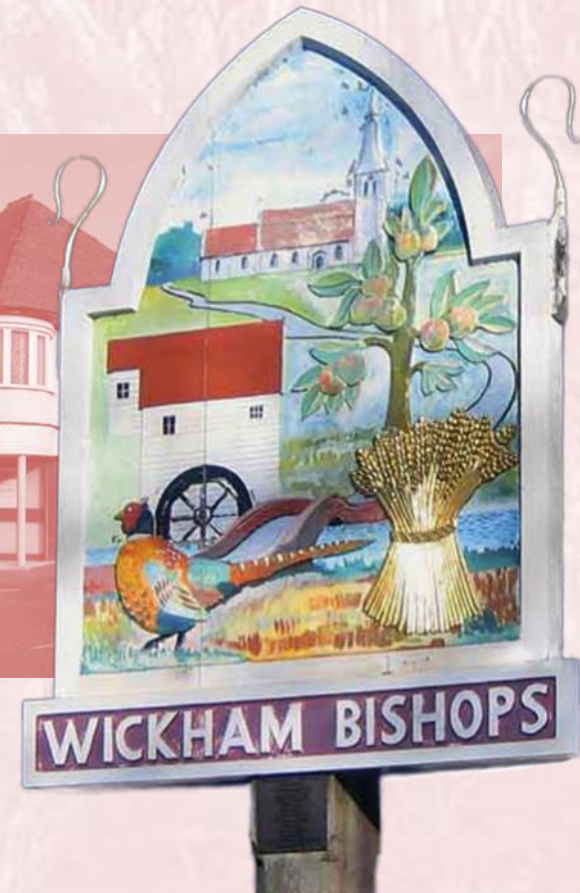


Wickham Bishops

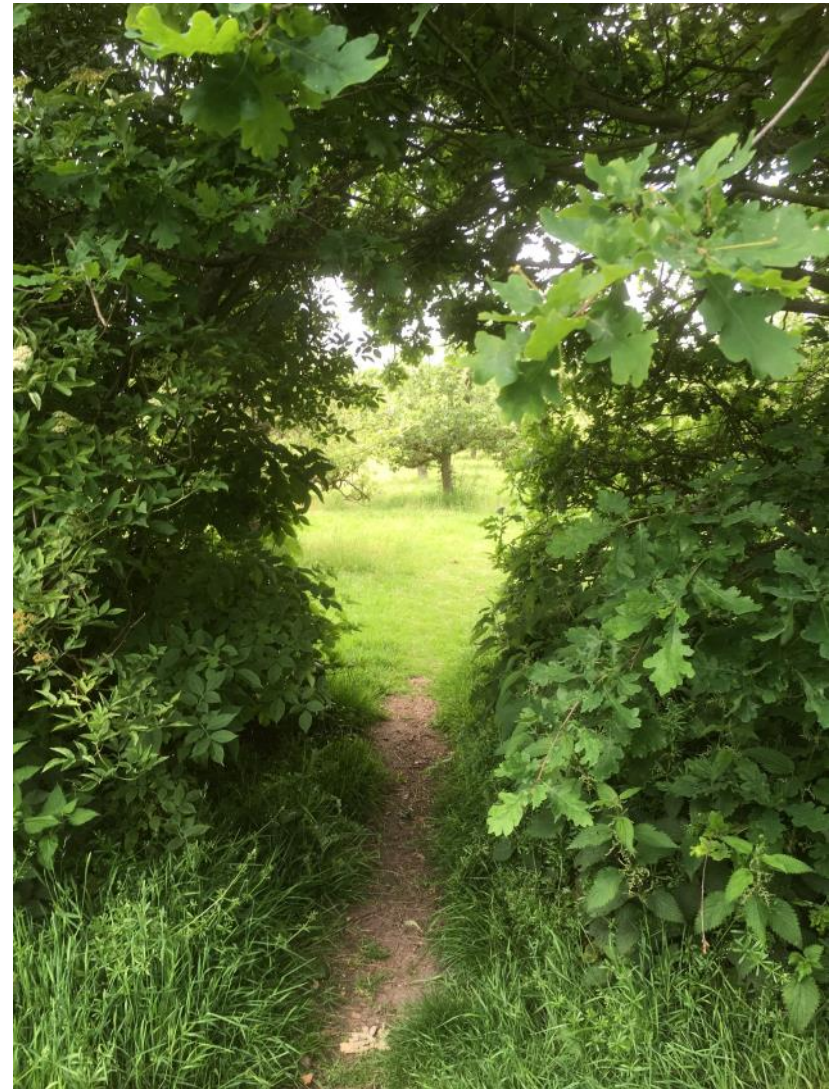
Neighbourhood Plan 2016–2029



Referendum Version



Sunset over the village 2019



Footpath into the old orchard



Content

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1 Introduction

1.1 Neighbourhood Planning

1.1.1 Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. There are communities all over the UK that have successfully developed a Neighbourhood Development Plan as a tool to influence planning decisions in their area.

“Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead.” (Gov.uk definition)

1.1.2 The Plan must meet a number of Basic Conditions and other statutory requirements set out in Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). A Basic Conditions Statement accompanies this Plan outlining how it meets these requirements.

1.1.3 The basic conditions that the Plan must meet are that it:

- has regard to National Policies and Guidance
- contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
- is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the Maldon District
- does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations
- is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site.

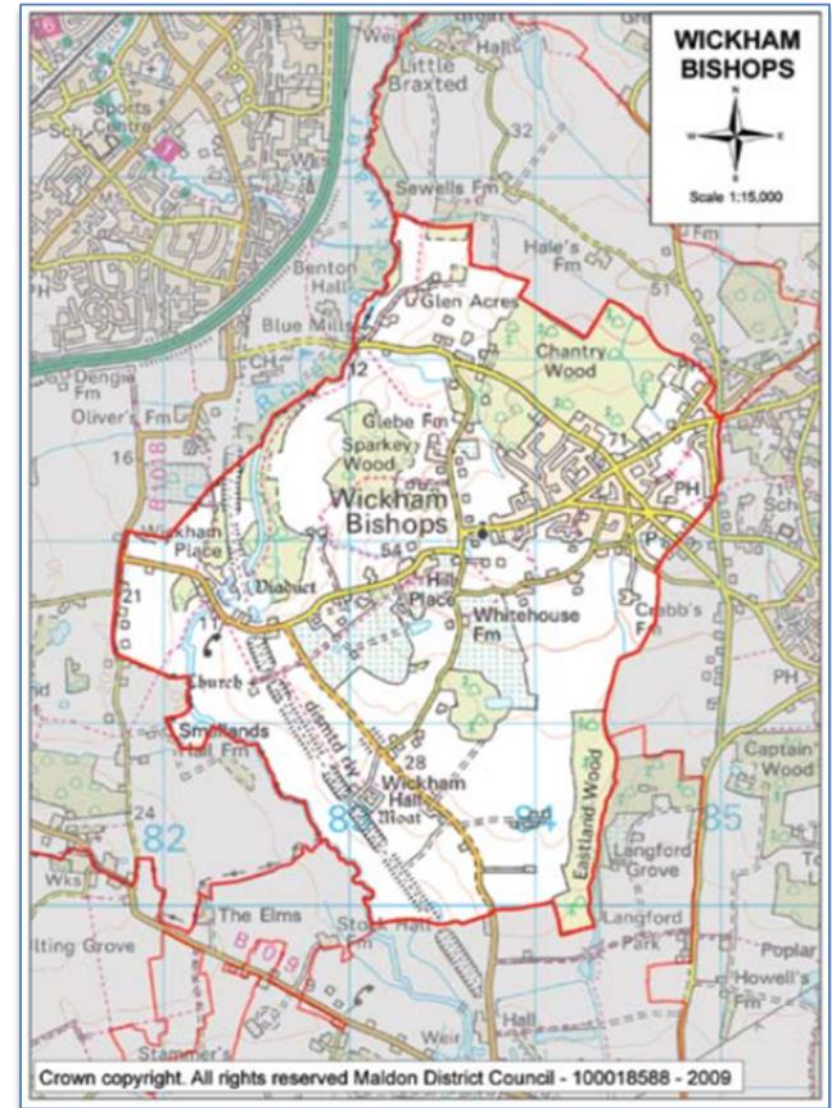
1.1.4 Once adopted the Plan will be a statutory document which forms part of the Maldon District Development Plan for the Parish. It will be used alongside National Policy and Maldon’s Local Development Plan, the Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014 and Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan 2017 to determine planning applications in the Parish.

1.1.5 Wickham Bishops Parish Council applied for the Neighbourhood Area designation². The Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Area includes the entire area of the Parish of Wickham Bishops (see Map 1). Following changes in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations on 1 October 2016, consultation on the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Area (NA) application was not required, as the NA was proposed by the Parish Council and the NA covers the whole of the parish area¹⁴. The Plan period is 2016 to 2029.



1.1.6 The area for Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan was designated in November 2016. The Neighbourhood Plan can set out land use policies, which seek to address local issues. It can identify sites for development, including for community led housing and rural exception sites, the scale of development and local impact of the development. Because the Plans are prepared by local people, it is not development allocated by the Council or imposed through speculative development. Maldon District Council is encouraging Neighbourhood Planning as a key method of engaging local people in the Plan making process and giving them a real say in shaping their own areas. In considering subsequent planning applications, the Neighbourhood Plan is given considerable weight, by both the Council and the Planning Inspectorate.

1.1.7 The historic environment includes the trestle railway bridge which is listed as an historic monument and is the oldest wooden bridge of its type in England. The Churches of St. Bartholomew’s and St. Peter’s represent significant historic buildings within the parish. The air raid shelter and the War Memorial (which is on the boundary just within Little Braxted) are seen as valuable to local residents in terms of more recent history and local contributions and sacrifices made in more recent conflicts. Over 85% of respondents identified the War Memorial and St. Bartholomew’s as important heritage and community assets. National and local planning policies safeguard the historic environment of the parish.



**Map 1: The designated Neighbourhood Plan area:
The Parish**



Photo 1: The Trestle Bridge

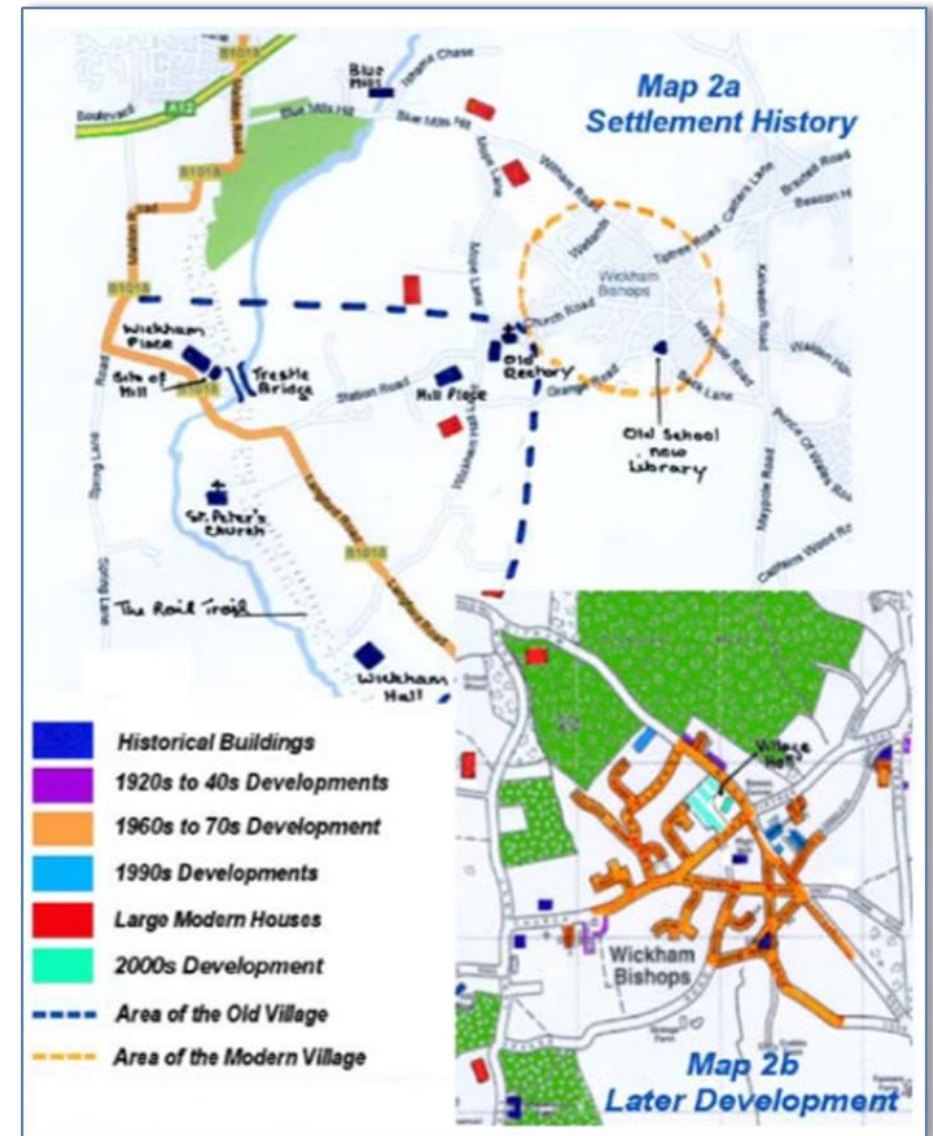
1 Introduction

1.2 Wickham Bishops

1.2.1 There is little evidence about our village from Saxon times until around the Norman Conquest. The first mention comes from William the Conqueror's Domesday Book of 1086 as one of 24 manors belonging to the Bishop of London. The original parish church, St Peter's, dates from the late 11thC. It was poorly constructed and over the years was continually repaired, so in 1850 our present St. Bartholomew's Church was built as was the Village School. A railway branch line was opened in 1848 between Braintree and Maldon, which was finally closed in 1966¹.

1.2.2 The first public building in the village was the Church Room, built around 1912. By 1995 it had become too small and was demolished. The new Church Hall extension is now the focus for many church and village events. The War Memorial is Grade II listed. It commemorates the 17 fallen in WW1, was built in 1919 and was updated after WW2 to include 3 more fallen. Our first village hall, surrounded by playing fields, was built by volunteer labour and opened in 1929. The Beacon Hill Sports Association (BHSA) was formed in 1945 to administer the village hall and its grounds.¹

1.2.3 The present day Parish Boundary as recorded by Maldon District Council in 2009 is defined in Map 1 (page 5). The Parish Boundary recorded in Map 1 is consistent with the boundary reflected in the Maldon District Rural Facilities Survey of February 2011 and the designation of the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Area as advised to the Parish Council in November 2016. The boundary and total area of the Parish are considered stable.² The Wickham Bishops Village Design Statement of 2010 states that the total area of the parish is approximately 762 hectares.



Map 2: History of development in the Parish



1.2.4 The western boundary roughly follows the Blackwater River. East of the river the land rises quite steeply to a height of 77m, where the main part of the village is situated. The local road network links Witham, which is 2.5 miles NW of the village, to Maldon which is 3 miles to the SE.

1.2.5 The Maldon District Rural Facilities Survey of 2011 states that the measured population within the Parish was 1,829 in 2011, and that it was projected to grow to 2,348 by the year 2033.^{4,5} The residential area of the village is fairly densely developed as a result of infill expansion in the 1960/70's, thereby affording relatively few open areas in the centre of population. The areas involved in the infill expansion of the 1960/70's are indicated in Map 2 (page 6). The infill expansion is shown in context with both earlier development from the 1920's and later development to about 2010.

1.2.6 The infill expansion was facilitated by the introduction of mains sewerage in 1963. The planning during this expansion was well considered. Several new roads were built. They are wide and the houses are well set back with decent sized plots featuring an open plan front garden giving a pleasant, spacious feel. The house designs are varied in each road and different in each area, avoiding the appearance of a large housing estate.

1.2.7 The infill expansion which took place is a key driver for local opinion that future housing development in this area should not further increase the existing density^{1,6}. Table 1 (P36) showing existing low housing densities, illustrates how the Arcadian character and maintenance of the open, rural character of the village has been created and maintained.

1.2.8 Since 2010 the most significant development in terms of number of dwellings has been the site off Tiptree Road, near Snow's Corner. This site comprised (a) 15 dwellings offered on the open market including four reserved for local people for a fixed period, and (b) 12 dwellings built by the English Rural Housing Association offered on an affordable rent, shared ownership or discounted sale basis. The Parish Council proactively engaged with the landowner to progress the site's development to ensure the provision of housing to meet the needs of the local community, which had been identified following the Parish Plan Housing Needs Study (2011).

1.2.9 The development boundary of Wickham Bishops for the purpose of planning additional dwellings has been established by the Maldon District Local Development Plan (LDP). The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is one of several technical reports and background documents that underpin and provide the evidence base for the LDP (approved July 2017). The SHLAA identifies sites for 256 potential dwellings within the parish of Wickham Bishops but all of these are considered to be 'subject to policy.' In order for these sites to come forward for development there would need to be a change in development plan policy through either the Maldon District Local Development Plan or the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan^{7,8,9}.

1.2.10 The population of Wickham Bishops is largely stable, with 39% of residents responding to the Residents' Survey (2018) being resident for 25 or more years and 47% of the respondents being 65+ years of age. The gender profile of respondents was 44% male: 56% female. 94% of respondents want to retain the open countryside bordering the village to prevent merging with other settlements. The features which residents value highly and wish to retain within their parish include: Village feel and community spirit, open green spaces and wooded areas, size of the village (no more housing developments / restrict new housing developments), village amenities such as pub, post office, village hall, playing fields and shop, village services such as bus, doctors and primary school, not having street lights, maintenance of footpaths through village and countryside.

1 Introduction

1.3 Community Engagement

1.3.1 In 2010 the Wickham Bishops Village Design Statement (VDS) was published which had involved over 300 people, who attended meetings, a photo fun day, exhibitions and filled in the questionnaire for the VDS. The VDS was subsequently adopted by Maldon District Council as a material planning consideration in July 2011. The purpose of Village Design Statements is to improve and encourage better quality design, to respect local identity and to manage change in a settlement, rather than preventing it.

1.3.2 A Parish Plan (2011) was produced following the publication of the VDS. The Parish Plan explored social, economic and environmental issues and assessed current and future potential issues for the parish and proposed a plan of action. This further engaged people who were involved and contributed towards the production of the VDS with an additional 80+ people who attended open gardens and the village fete events.

1.3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan production commenced in 2016. It differs from the VDS and Parish Plan as it gives the opportunity for the Parish to play a greater role in determining the future by influencing the planning of the area. A Neighbourhood Plan includes policies on the future development and use of land in a parish or neighbourhood area.

1.3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan took the engagement work from the VDS and Parish Plan and involved the residents further. Residents overwhelmingly (97% of respondents) want to retain the local rural character, historic setting and natural assets of the surrounding area (Residents Survey 2018). Some of the features which residents would like to see develop include improved infrastructure such as better access to medical services, improved broadband and mobile phone coverage, safer roads and pedestrian access throughout the Parish.

1.3.5 The various means by which residents were involved or consulted include:

Articles in the Village Magazine

Parish Council Website

Parish Council Facebook Page

Vision and Objectives Consultation (July 2016)

Housing Needs Survey (November 2016)

Displays at village events – Church and Village fetes, Christmas Fayre

Library display with comments board

Beavers and Guides drew what children would like to see in their village

Residents Survey (November 2017)

Business Survey (March 2018)

Village Hall usage survey (September 2017)

Estate agent information (January 2018)

Housing Densities data (September 2017)

Pre-regulation 14 consultation draft review by Maldon and consultant (started May 2018)

Share draft Plan with residents (June 2018)



2 Vision and Objectives

2.1 Vision

2.1.1 In 2029 Wickham Bishops will continue to be a thriving village with its distinctive rural appearance that is characterised by the prevailing dominance of trees, with focus centred on the church, sporting facilities, the village hall and the local retail area and with improved access to open green spaces. Sustainable development promoting social, economic and environmental aims will be consistent and compatible with the character and appearance of the village and will have ensured the provision of an appropriate housing mix, retention of local businesses and community facilities, enhanced communications and sustainable transport provision to meet the needs of the parish.

2.2 Objectives



Photo 2: Village sign at Snow's Corner

- To promote better connectivity with improved mobile phone signal and broadband to support home working.
- To encourage business growth and tourism of an appropriate scale and form to suit the character and size of the village; providing sustainable opportunities for local businesses and to support the rural economy.
- To provide enhanced access to open / green spaces and promote a diversity of sustainable linked habitats for wildlife.
- To retain the village as a distinctive settlement that does not further coalesce with surrounding areas.
- To retain and improve the village's open spaces and protect significantly special spaces and views.
- To provide enhancements to transport infrastructure including a network of linked public footpaths, bridleways, cycle paths and access to public transport providing pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders with opportunities for safe movement within the parish and reducing reliance on the car.
- To retain and improve the village's existing high standard of sports and community facilities, including a cricket pitch, football field, tennis courts, village hall, library and children's playground.
- To promote high quality development that reflects local distinctiveness and the character and appearance of the local area.
- To provide an appropriate mix and type of dwellings to meet local, current and future needs.

Wickham Bishops



Wickham Bishops Parish Wildlife Sightings recorded on Facebook as 'WickiWatch' since 2019.
Clockwise from top left—Little Owl, Red kite, Barn Owl, Badger, Kingfisher, Greater Spotted Woodpecker

Photographs : Paula Wiseman



3 Policies

Economy

- WBEc 01 HOME WORKING
- WBEc 02 BUSINESS RETAIL AND TOURISM

Environment

- WBEh 01 RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION
- WBEh 02 BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL HABITATS
- WBEh 03 SPECIAL VIEWS AND VISTAS
- WBEh 04 OPEN SPACES
- WBEh 05 LOCAL GREEN SPACE
- WBEh 06 NEW DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK

Facilities

- WBF 01 BURIAL GROUNDS/CEMETERY PROPOSED EXTENSION
- WBF 02 SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF TRAVEL
- WBF 03 HIGHWAYS SAFETY
- WBF 04 COMMUNITY FACILITIES
- WBF 05 COMMUNITY ASSETS

Housing

- WBH 01 DESIGN AND CHARACTER
- WBH 02 LIFETIME HOMES



Photo 3 : Footpath towards the Blackwater



Photo 4 : Footpath 12

3. Policies

3.1 Economy

3.1.1 The Neighbourhood Plan is for all those who live, work and do business in the Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies about:

Home working and encouraging business growth.

These support the Plan objectives to:

- promote better connectivity with improved mobile phone signal and broadband to support home working.
- encourage business growth and tourism of an appropriate scale and form to suit the character and size of the village; providing sustainable opportunities for local businesses and to support the rural economy.

3.1.2 Currently, 35% of residents employed in the most senior and highly skilled occupations (officially classified as 'managers, directors and senior officials') commute out of the District to work¹⁰. Wickham Bishops has a high level of people in managerial posts. People have longer than average commuter distances¹⁰.



Photo 5: Snow's Corner Businesses

WBEc 01 HOME WORKING

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposed development that enables home working and is compatible with the scale, form and character of its surroundings and is not detrimental to neighbouring amenity will be supported.

All new dwellings shall allow for the provision of ultrafast broadband connectivity and other communication networks infrastructure where possible.

3.1.3 JUSTIFICATION

Commuters in the Parish often work from home as part of their employment. 8.1% of the population work from home, higher than the national average of 3.5%¹⁰. There are several small local businesses based at residents' homes within the Parish. The Parish has a higher than average percentage of self employed people (13.2% self employed compared to English average of 9.8%¹⁰). The Residents' Survey (2018) showed support for home working as it reduces the need for transport to work, car journeys at peak times and supports local residents in being present within the community during the working week which promotes use of local facilities. 77% of respondents were in favour of the provision for a home office to be accommodated.

3.1.4 The Parish Plan (2011) highlighted the need from both residents and businesses to have improved mobile signals and faster broadband. Mobile Phone signal is variable depending on the network with many areas having limited signal when inside¹¹. A new mobile phone mast sited at Beacon Hill Sports Fields became operational in February 2018 and has improved signal for Vodafone and O2. Openreach have installed some High Speed Fibre broadband access in the Parish, which will improve connectivity for most residents.

3.1.5 This policy generally conforms with Maldon District Council's Prosperity Strategy 2013-2029 (para 7.2.1) which supports home working; Maldon Local Development Plan 2014-2029 S7 Prosperous Rural Communities; D2 Climate Change, Environmental Impact of Development. This policy has regard to National Planning Policy Framework 2019 paragraph 81 D which promotes live work accommodation.



Photo 6: Shops in village centre

WBEc 02 BUSINESS RETAIL AND TOURISM

The Snow's Corner and The Street retail and business areas (as shown on Map 3) will be retained. Proposals to enhance individual premises within the retail and business areas will be supported.

Development proposals which would result in the loss of business uses (Class E) or of local community uses (Class F2) will only be supported where:

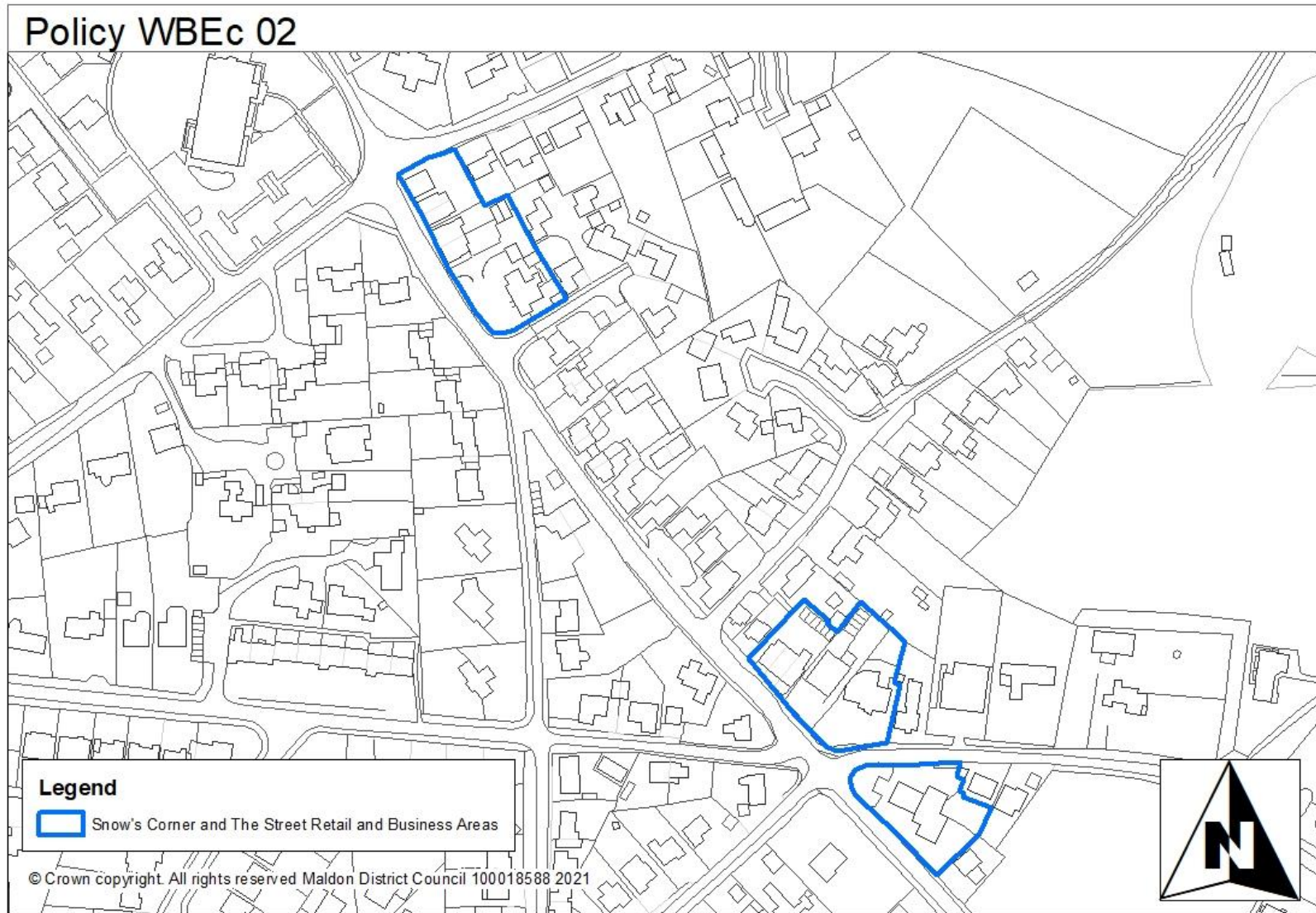
- The existing business/service is not and cannot be viable.
- Effective marketing has been undertaken to demonstrate there is no viable alternative community use.

Development proposals within the identified business and retail areas should safeguard the existing car parking and cycle parking provision. Proposals which would involve the loss of some or all of the existing parking facilities in the relevant business and retail area will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the spaces concerned are not used on a regular basis and/or that alternative and accessible parking facilities are incorporated within the wider development.

Development proposals for tourist accommodation will be supported where they are compatible with the scale, form and character of their surroundings and would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of residential properties in the immediate locality of the site concerned.

3.1.6 JUSTIFICATION

76% of respondents use the One Stop local convenience store at least once a week. There was support indicated for additional retail provision of benefit to residents including: restaurant/take away, pharmacy, baker, butcher, tea room, community shop selling fresh products. 82% of respondents valued Snow's Corner (which currently provides a toy shop and two hairdressers) as a business area. 89% of respondents valued The Street (which currently provides a retail kitchen unit, health food store and beautician salon and the One Stop Convenience Shop) as a business area. The findings of the survey also indicated that provision of visitor information to the area should be provided e.g. through notice boards indicating local footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes. Respondents also commented they would support a small hotel or guest house with a maximum of five guest rooms. The Business Survey (2018) had a positive response from businesses with a full response from Snow's Corner and The Street business areas. The main issues identified included: better internet and mobile coverage, parking spaces and a better road network. 80% of respondents felt having a number of other local businesses in the Parish was important to them.



Map 3: Policy WBEc02 Snow's Corner and The Street Retail and Business Areas



3.1.7 Tourism is an important component of the Maldon District economy. The Maldon District has an excellent reputation for hospitality and there is a host of restaurants, inns, and cafes, together with a range of quality assured accommodation providers. In the Parish, the former public house, The Chequers has recently been converted to a restaurant and bar. A former public house, The Mitre has been converted to a bar / tearoom and to a spa/beauty parlour. The final part of Policy WBEc 02 offers support to further such uses. This part of the policy applies throughout the Neighbourhood Area.

3.1.8 RCCE Rural Facilities Survey (2011) identifies these areas as key services to the village. This policy generally conforms with Essex County Council Local Transport Plan (2011); Essex Vehicle Parking Standards (2009); Maldon District Council Economic Prosperity Strategy 2013-2029 (para 2.2.0, 4.4.3); Maldon Local Development Plan 2014-2029 S7 Prosperous Rural Communities; E3 Community Services and Facilities, E5 Tourism. This policy has regard to the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 paragraph 83, 84, 92.

3. Policies

3.2 Environment

3.2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies about:

- Mandatory regulations and assessments regarding habitats, disturbance avoidance and mitigation
- Maintaining a distinctive, rural, tree-filled feel and character in the Parish
- Enhancing access to open green spaces
- Protection of habitats for wildlife
- Better connectivity (for movement without use of motor vehicles) with enhanced public footpath, bridleway, cycle path networks
- Protecting views that are valued

These support the plan objectives to:

- provide enhanced access to open / green spaces and promote a diversity of sustainable linked habitats for wildlife. To retain the village as a distinctive settlement that does not further coalesce with surrounding areas.
- retain and improve the village's open spaces and protect significantly special spaces and views.

3.2.2 The Village Design Statement (2010) identified “an overwhelming wish amongst parishioners for greater access to the woods, fields and open spaces which geographically dominate the parish.” It highlighted the desire for “the formation of conservation areas to protect the remaining rural aspect of the village and its surrounding area” and “to encourage the retention and management of historic, or visually important, hedgerows in the parish.” The green, leafy streets and roads were of particular value to residents in both the 2010 survey and the 2018 NHP survey, often cited as the most significant reason for wanting to live in the village.

WBE01 RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION

All residential development within the zones of influence of European Sites should make an appropriate financial contribution towards mitigation measures, as detailed in the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Supplementary Planning Document, to avoid adverse in-combination recreational disturbance effects on European Sites.

All residential development within the zones of influence should deliver all measures identified (including strategic measures) through project level Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRAs), or otherwise, to mitigate any recreational disturbance impacts in compliance with the Habitat Regulations and Habitats Directive.

3.2.3 JUSTIFICATION

A Habitat Regulations Assessment has been completed for the Maldon District Local Development Plan. That assessment, together with the emerging Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) for the Essex Coast identify that the in-combination effects of the Plan, together with neighbouring local planning authorities Local Plans and neighbourhood plans are likely to adversely affect the integrity of European designated nature conservation sites ('European Sites').

3.2.4 In view of that, Maldon District Council is working with twelve other Greater Essex local planning authorities, and Natural England, on a RAMS for the Essex Coast. RAMS is a strategic solution to protect the Essex coast from the recreational pressures of a growing population. A RAMS is usually driven by challenges and opportunities arising from planning issues. RAMS generally applies more broadly than at a single designated European site, provides strategic scale mitigation and enables the development of a generic approach to evidence collection and use.

3.2.5 Financial contributions will be sought for all residential development, which falls within the zones of influence, towards a package of measures to avoid and mitigate likely significant adverse effects in accordance with Maldon District Council policy N2 Natural Environment, Geodiversity and Biodiversity. This includes development allocated in Neighbourhood Plans within the District. Details of the zones of influence and the necessary measures will be included in the Essex Coast RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

3.2.6 In the interim period, before the Essex Coast RAMS is completed, proposals within the zones of influence for recreational disturbance to European sites will need to carry out a project level Habitat Regulations Assessment and implement bespoke mitigation measures to ensure that in-combination recreational disturbance effects are avoided and/or mitigated.



3. Policies

3.2 Environment



Photo 7: Sparkey Wood



Photo 8: View of St. Bartholomew's

WBen 02 BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL HABITATS

All development proposals should protect, retain and enhance existing trees, including veteran trees and ancient woodlands which are identified as irreplaceable habitat, new woodlands, hedgerows and habitats which are important for their historic, visual or biodiversity value.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:

- retain existing (including veteran) trees, woodlands and hedgerows of good arboricultural and amenity value;
- retain existing natural boundary treatments;
- have regard to and respect the character of the landscape and its sensitivity to change;
- enhance the Arcadian green nature of the Parish through appropriate landscaping;
- maintain and enhance green corridors through additional planting of locally native species of trees and hedgerows to improve ecological networks across the Parish;
- create opportunities for habitats.

If in exceptional circumstances there is loss of trees, hedgerows, ancient woodlands, new woodlands, hedgerows and habitats as part of development, then appropriate new provision (planting of native species) as mitigation shall be provided.

Proposals to develop a network of wildlife corridors alongside public rights of way and through links between ancient woodlands, local wildlife sites and the Blackwater Rail Trail will be supported and encouraged. Proposals that include appropriately designed and surfaced footpaths through landscaped areas will be supported.

Proposals to reinstate or manage orchards will be supported.



Photo 9: Blue Mills Bridge over the River Blackwater



Photo 10: Church Road

3.2.7 JUSTIFICATION

The Parish Council commissioned a 'Landscape Character Analysis' (November 2019) for the Parish. The report recognised there are a number of ancient woodlands within the Parish: Chantry Woods (42.7ha), Mope Wood (14ha), Sparkey Wood (16.6ha), Likely Wood (8.7ha) and Eastland Wood (31.3ha). The report identifies the woodland in the Parish as a key component of the character of this area which distinguishes it from other landscapes in Essex.

3.2.8 The NHP Residents' survey 2017 identified that 94-98% of respondents recognised that hedgerows, native trees, grassland and woodland are important for wildlife and local people. More than 50% of respondents identified the following species of trees in the Parish; Ash, Beech, Birch, Blackthorn, Hazel, Hawthorn, Hornbeam, Oak, Rowan, Willow and Yew. There is a very wide variety of trees and shrubs within the Parish, including those in gardens; Buckthorn, Holly, Lime, Poplar, Sycamore, Silver Birch, Walnut, fruit trees (apple, pear, plum, cherry). Horse Chestnut was also identified in addition to those stated on the survey. The audit indicates a number of significant species, the habitats for which need to be protected in the event of future developments.

3.2.9 The Parish Council commissioned a 'Biodiversity Audit' by Essex Ecology Services in May 2019. There are 6 Local Wildlife Sites in the Parish, largely ancient woodland, with some additional recent woodland. The audit identified amongst the wild plants of the Parish, rare examples, the most significant being Rustyback Fern, located along the River Blackwater. This comprises one of only two Essex locations for this particular wild plant. There were several records of bat species recorded in the Parish with records around the village and to the west, close to Wickham Place. It recognised that new development should create opportunities to promote habitats for bats.

3.2.10 The audit identified the importance of the network of hedgerows in the Parish which provide wildlife corridors, particularly for dormice which have been recorded in ancient woodlands beyond the eastern boundary of the Parish. Butcher's Broom, an indicator of mixed hedgerow species has been identified e.g. in Wickham Hall Lane. Midland Hawthorn, alongside the usual Hawthorn species, can be seen in Mope Lane —an indicator of ancient hedgerows.

3.2.11 The diverse and rich wildlife along the Blackwater Valley was noted, with the audit identifying the presence of both Otter and Water Voles along the River Blackwater. Kingfisher and Cetti Warbler are notable birds also recorded in the Blackwater Valley. The audit identified the old orchards within the Parish and encouraged their future management. The audit also identified an opportunity to promote a New Local Wildlife Site at Mope Grove.



3. Policies

3.2 Environment

3.2.12 Local residents of Wickham Bishops have identified and recorded wildlife seen within the parish through ‘WickiWatch’ (a social media platform for local residents to report sightings and upload photos). The NHP Survey 2018, also asked residents for wildlife seen regularly and commonly in gardens, fields and woods. Over 50% of respondents responded with sightings of fox, bat species, hare, rabbit, hedgehog, muntjac deer, frog/ toad, grey squirrels and pheasants. Fewer residents recorded sightings of sparrows, blue tits, great tits, coal tits, long-tailed tits, robins, blackbirds, thrushes and buzzards. Feral pigeons, crows, magpies and jays are common birds. Commonly heard migrants include cuckoos. Residents recorded sightings of badger, otter, newt, slow worm, although less commonly seen, along with grass snakes, owls, herons, nightingales and birds of prey including kestrels and sparrowhawks. Stoats and weasels are seen occasionally on the Blackwater Valley. Woodpeckers (Green, Greater and Lesser Spotted), goldfinches, greenfinches, siskins, wrens and pied wagtails are less common visitors, along with fieldfares and swans. Canada and Greylag geese are becoming more common e.g. on the golf course, and are seen flying over as migrants. Occasional sightings of common lizards and adders have also reported. Red kites are now commonly seen.

3.2.13 The NHP Survey 2017 showed overwhelming support (94-98% of respondents) for the maintenance of existing features important to wildlife as habitats. Around 70% of respondents would like to see accessible wildlife and conservation areas, together with wildlife and habitat corridors developed and extended within the village.

3.2.14 Map 4 shows Protected Ancient Woodlands and Map 5 Local Wildlife sites which were easily identified by local residents. Local Nature Reserves exist near the River Blackwater, and a very large proportion of the Parish is identified as a living landscape by Essex Wildlife Trust (from Chantry Wood, across Sparkey Wood, through to Eastland Wood and Langford Grove). The Blackwater Rail Trail adjacent to the River Blackwater is a linear wildlife-rich trail which comprises of a range of habitats along the former Maldon to Witham railway line. It is an important wildlife corridor.

3.2.15 This policy generally conforms to Maldon District Historic Environment Characterisation Project 2008 Maldon District Local Wildlife Sites Review Maldon Local Development Plan 2014 – 2029 N1 Green Infrastructure Network Policy N3 Open Space, Sport, Recreation. It has regard to National Planning Policy Framework 170,175, 198 It is supported by the Landscape Character Analysis (The Landscape Partnership 2019) and Wickham Bishops Parish Biodiversity Audit (ECCOS 2019).



Photo 11: From St Peter’s Church towards the village

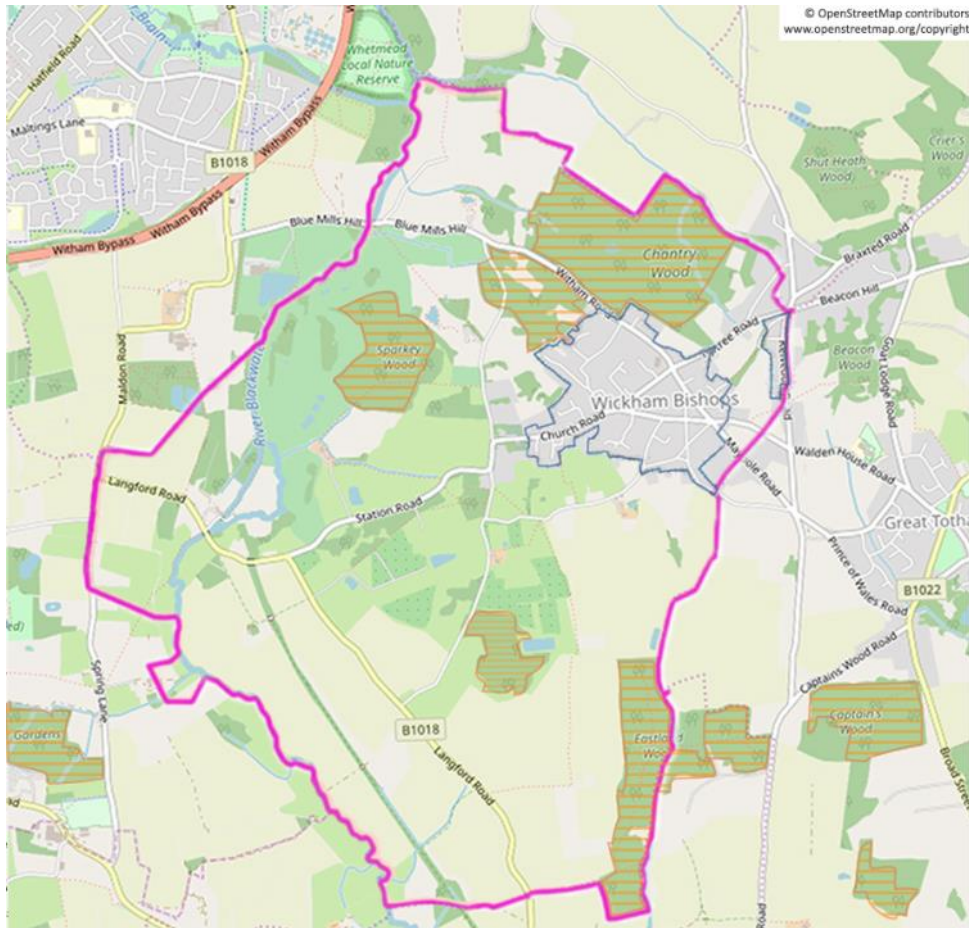
Photograph : Paula Wiseman



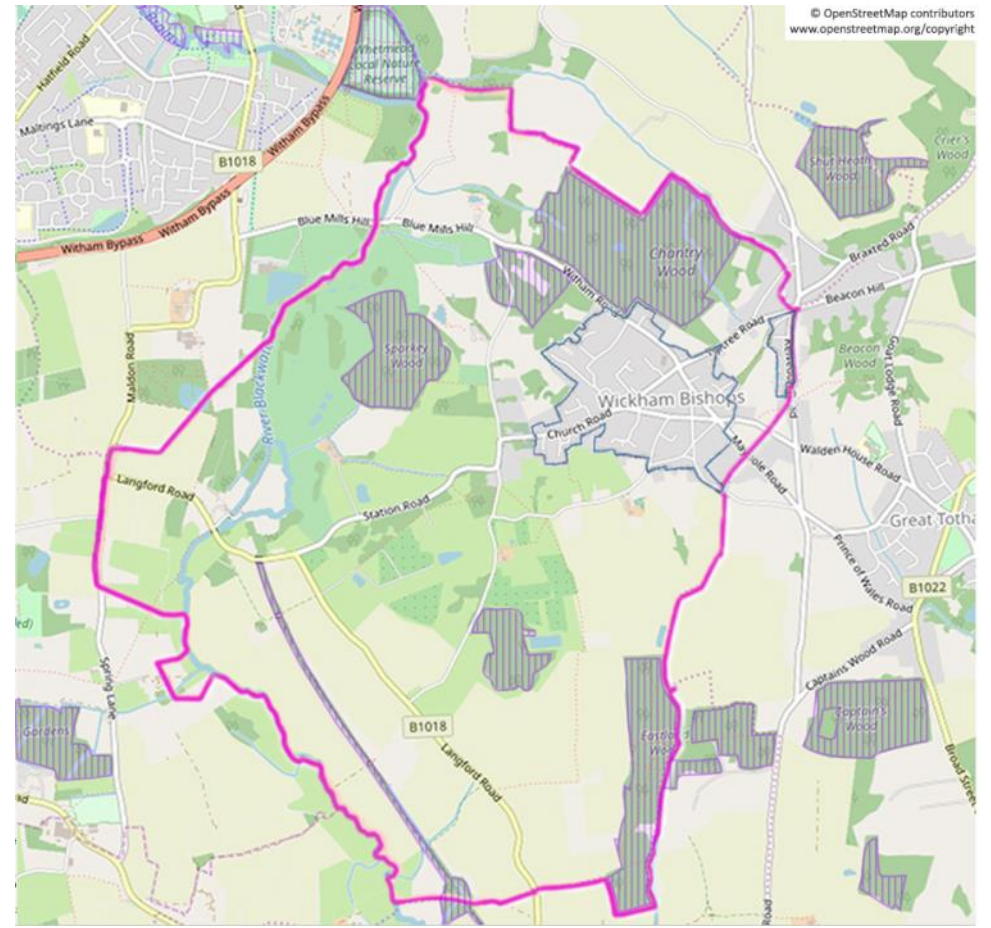
Photo 12: Kingfisher

Photograph : Paula Wiseman

Wickham Bishops



Map 4: Ancient Woodlands



Map 5: Local Wildlife Sites



3. Policies

3.2 Environment

WBen 03 SPECIAL VIEWS AND VISTAS

Development should protect, or where practicable, enhance special views and vistas (as identified within the Parish shown on Map 6) which provide the landscape setting of the village.

Any proposed development should respect the key landscape features of the views identified on Map 6.



Photo 13: View of St Bartholomew’s Church

View	Reasons for retention/value
A – Blackwater Valley View towards St Bartholomew’s Church.	Notable view from footpath along riverbank towards St Bartholomew’s Church which stands on the ridge.
B – Blackwater Valley View to St Peter’s Church and Blackwater from Langford Road and Footpath 22	Views of the tranquil space around St Peter’s and the flood meadows adjacent to the river.
C – Blackwater Valley Views from Langford Road to Blackwater Valley	Glimpsed views from Langford Road to Blackwater Valley
D – Tiptree Ridge View from Grange Road and Footpath 16, 17 to St Bartholomew’s and The Estuary	Iconic spire of St Bartholomew’s is a defining part of the village landscape creating a sense of identity to the community.
E – Tiptree Ridge Views from Station Road to the Blackwater Valley	Long distance views over the Blackwater Valley towards Witham
F – Tiptree Ridge View West from end of Church Road	Across Rectory fields with a sloping view down Station Road towards the Blackwater estuary. The field is an integral part of the rural character near the Church, churchyard and graveyard.
G – Tiptree Ridge View from Handleys Lane	Tranquil pedestrian route through village is much used and appreciated by a large number of residents. Historic views across woodland and grassland.
H - View from Kelvedon Road East to the Estuary	Beauty of the estuary viewed from the highest point in the area allows far reaching vistas.
I – Tiptree Ridge View from Mope Lane and Footpath 2 towards Sparkey Woods and Golf Course	Slope down towards the golf course, views towards Blue Mills and the Blackwater. A well used foot-path.
J – Tiptree Ridge View from Blue Mills Bridge and Footpath 1 towards Village and St Bartholomew’s Church. The view of St Bartholomew’s set within a tree filled skyline.	Trees and the spire of St Bartholomew’s are iconic and can be seen from miles around including from Witham. This feature was taken into account in the current development at Witham at Lodge Farm. It is visible from Hatfield Peverel and the Ulting Parishes, as well as The Mulberries development

Table 2: Special View

3.2.16 JUSTIFICATION

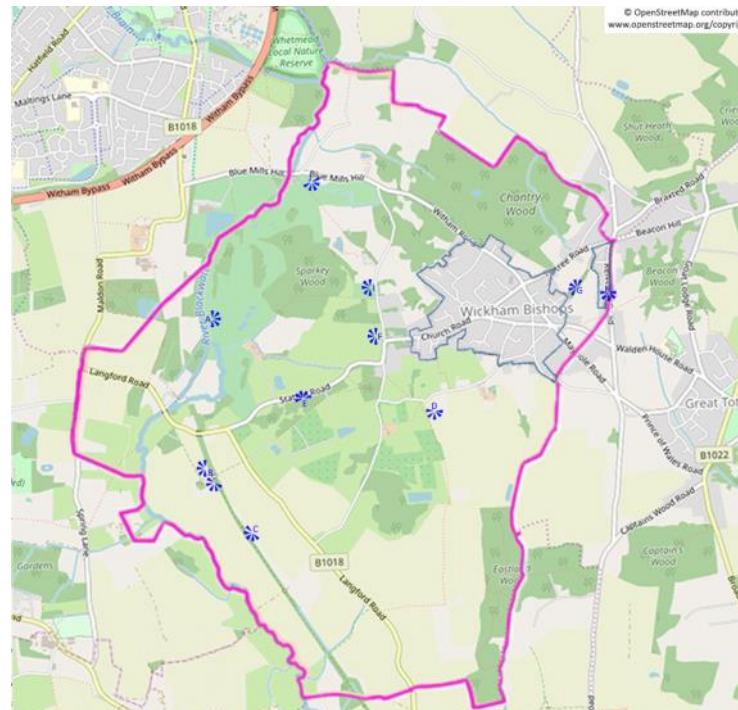
The NHP Survey 2018 identified that 73% of respondents identified special views to and from St Bartholomew’s Church and River Blackwater (with glimpses to features of interest such as St Peters Church, Trestle Bridge, estuary which they felt were worthy of protection.)

3.2.17 The Landscape Character Assessment which forms part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan defines the character of the Parish. It recognises that the village core is situated on the Tiptree Ridge, an elevated broad bridge. There are framed views over the Blackwater Valley and the Blackwater coastal farmlands. The lower parts of the Parish fall within the Blackwater Valley, with views of the ridge and notably the spire of St Bartholomew’s Church. The report refers to the features within the distinguished landscapes, from the watermills within the valley floor which represent the past industrial use and the scheduled ancient monument the trestle bridge viaduct, to the long-distance views across the Blackwater Valley from the ridge, which create a sense of spaciousness. It identifies the need to retain open views from footpaths.

3.2.18 It has regard to National Planning Policy Framework 170 and conforms with Maldon District Environment Characterisation Project 2008 and is supported by The Landscape Character Assessment (The Landscape Partnership 2019)



View point



© OpenStreetMap

Map 6: Special Views



3. Policies

3.2 Environment

WBen 04 OPEN SPACES

Proposed development that provides and enhances open spaces, community woodland and provides opportunities to connect these spaces and provide defined areas for public access will be supported.

Proposed development on the settlement edge of the village should maintain the open character and appearance of its setting and do not result in the coalescence of Wickham Bishops with any other settlement.

3.2.19 JUSTIFICATION

The Village Design Statement (2010) showed overwhelming support for open spaces, greens and verges in retaining the rural character of the Parish. It emphasised the importance of the open agricultural land around the village.

3.2.20 The first part of the policy offers support to proposals which would provide or enhance open spaces or community woodland in the neighbourhood area.

3.2.21 The second part of the policy seeks to ensure that built development on the edge of Wickham Bishops does not result in its coalescence with surrounding settlements. This is particularly important given its proximity to both Beacon Hill and Great Totham.

3.2.22 This policy generally conforms to Maldon Local Development Plan 2014 – 2029 – Policy S8. It is supported by The Landscape Character Analysis (The Landscape Partnership 2019) and has regard to National Planning Policy Framework.



Photo 14: Sparkey Wood

WBE05 LOCAL GREEN SPACE

The recreation areas off Great Totham Road and Handleys Lane (as shown on Map 7) are designated as a local green space.

Development proposals within the designated local green spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.

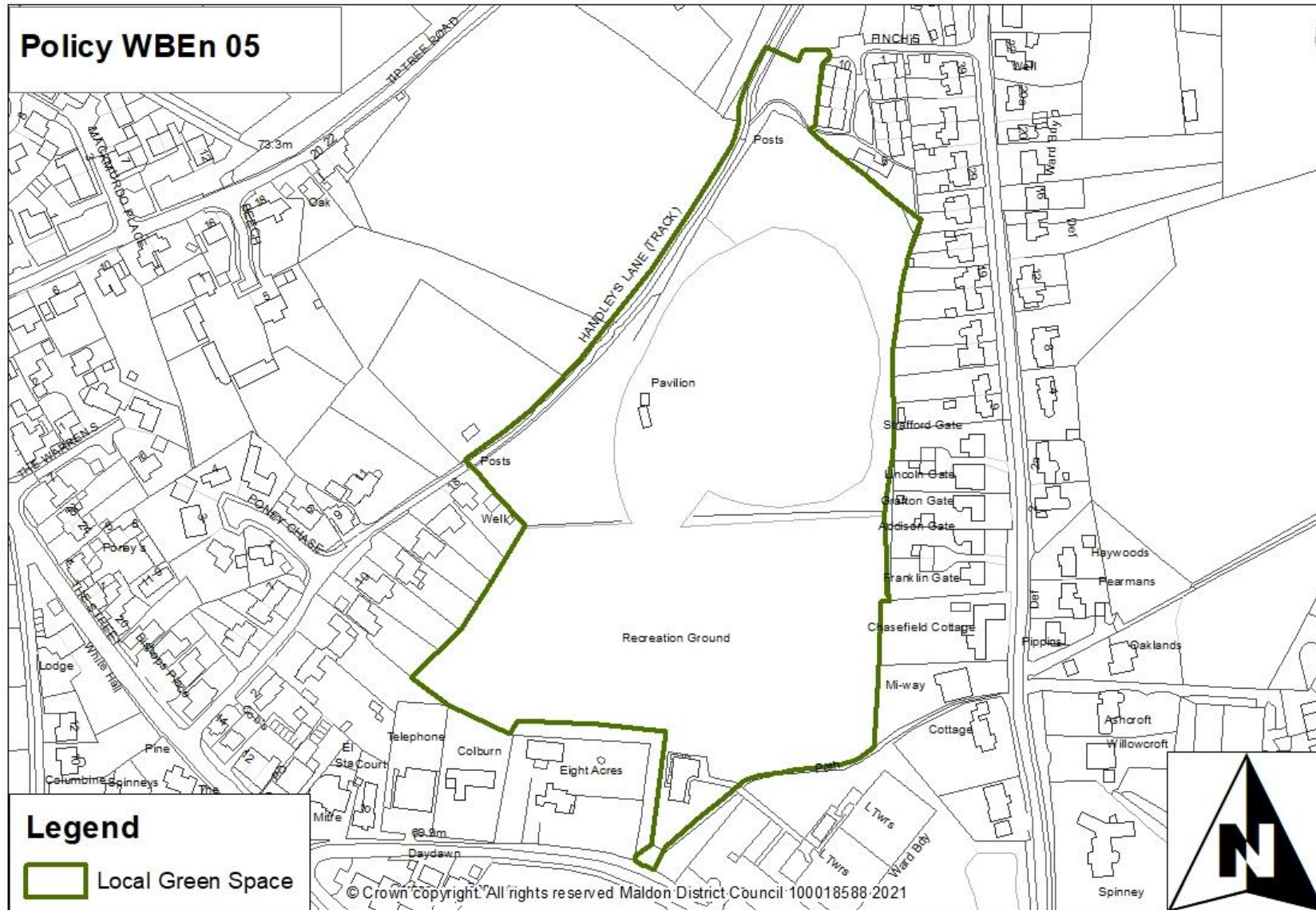
3.2.23 JUSTIFICATION

The quiet, peaceful, friendly nature of the village, combined with its rural character, surrounded by beautiful countryside and green open spaces was cited by many residents in the 2018 survey as an important characteristic of the village. Policy WBE05 seeks to capture this character by designating the recreation areas to the north of Great Totham Road as Local Green Space.

3.2.24 Its designation meets the various criteria for such designations in the NPPF. In particular the land is an attractive open green space on the edge of the village and provides for a range of formal recreational activities. The land is also well-used for informal recreation. There is a well-used footpath running through the southern parcel of land in a SW-NE direction from Great Totham Road to Kelvedon Road. Handleys Lane is an attractive footpath in its own right and provides direct connections to the adjacent recreation areas. It is well-used by local people.

3.2.25 The policy follows the matter-of-fact approach in national planning policy (NPPF paragraph 101). In the event that development proposals come forward on the local green space within the Plan period, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the District Council. In particular it will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the 'very special circumstances' required by the policy. This may be particularly relevant as the local green space is actively used for sport and recreational use.

3.2.26 This policy generally conforms with Maldon Local Development Plan (2014-2029) N1 Green Infrastructure and N2 Natural Environment, Geodiversity and Biodiversity. This policy has regard to National Planning Policy Framework 100.



Map 7: Local Green Space



Photo 15: Handleys Lane byway



WBE06 NEW DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK

Development proposals should take account of the relationship between the site concerned and the drainage and water disposal profile of the neighbourhood area taking into account the current and future impacts of climate change so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property.

Development proposals will not be supported in areas at highest risk from surface water flooding. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should incorporate sustainable drainage principles to ensure that flood risk will not be increased either on or off site.

All new development proposals should be safe and flood resilient for their lifetime. In addition to their role in providing water management measure, and where practicable, sustainable drainage systems should be designed to be multi-functional and deliver benefits for wildlife, amenity and landscape. Surface water runoff from new developments should be discharged in a self-contained fashion and to appropriate standards in place at the time of the determination of the planning application concerned.

3.2.27 JUSTIFICATION

Wickham Bishops forms a highpoint in between a number of surface water catchments, including a Critical Drainage Area (CDA) to the east of the plan area. In order to help manage downstream flood risk any new development within this area should be directed away from areas of existing flood risk where possible. New development within the plan area must ensure that surface water runoff rates are not increased beyond existing rates. Furthermore development within the CDA should, where possible, look to alleviate existing downstream flood risk issues using a range of sustainable drainage and natural flood management techniques.

3.2.28 All development within the plan area should use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage rainfall runoff from the site. These techniques should encompass the four pillars of SuDS, addressing water quantity, water quality, biodiversity and amenity. In order to achieve these results the use of above ground SuDS should be promoted. Where possible, these features should be multifunctional, not only providing flood risk mitigation but also enhancing green infrastructure within the plan area.

3.2.29 All drainage strategies for major development within the plan area should be based on the Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex. It is recommended that developers engage in pre-applications discussions with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to ensure that any recommendations can be incorporated into site design as early into the planning process as possible. While the lead Local Flood Authority is not currently a statutory consultee on minor application it is still recommended that the principles of the Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex are implemented on smaller sites to ensure that the cumulative effect of multiple smaller developments does not have a significant increase downstream flood risk.

3. Policies

3.3 Facilities

3.3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies about:

Transport infrastructure including public footpaths, bridleways, cycle paths and access to public transport. Retention and improvement of the village's existing high standard of sports and community facilities, including cricket pitch, football field, tennis courts, village hall, and children's playground.

These support the Plan objectives to:

- provide enhancements to transport infrastructure including a network of linked public footpaths, bridleways, cycle paths and access to public transport providing pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders with opportunities for safe movement within the parish and reducing reliance on the car.
- retain and improve the village's existing high standard of sports and community facilities, including a cricket pitch, football field, tennis courts, village hall, library and children's playground.

3.3.2 The Parish Plan (2011) identified the need for improved pavements for safer walking to and from the village centre. Pedestrian counts by Essex Highways fall well below the threshold for any crossing points on The Street. There is a higher than average level of car ownership within the Parish¹¹. The need for adequate off-road parking for homes is evidenced in the Wickham Bishops Village Design Statement (2010). The Parish will have input into the reviewed Vehicle Parking Standards for the District (led by Maldon District Council / Essex County Council Highways). Future development should be linked to appropriate improvements in infrastructure to ensure sustainability of the Parish.

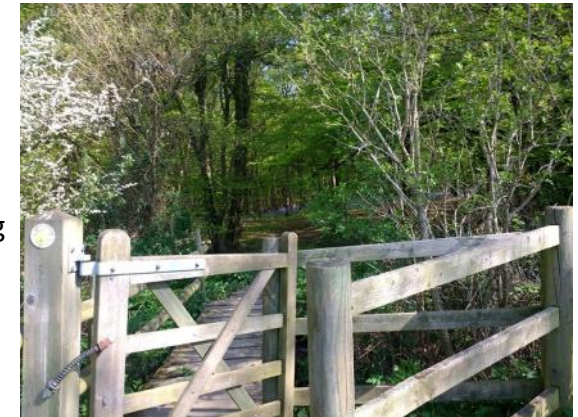


Photo 16: Local Footpath

WBF 01 BURIAL GROUNDS/CEMETERY PROPOSED EXTENSION

Development proposals for the extension of burial grounds/cemeteries will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- they are designed to improve and/or create new biodiversity, habitats and green infrastructure; and
- they will not have an unacceptable impact on controlled waters including groundwater and surface water

3.3.3 JUSTIFICATION

Cemeteries and burial grounds are a much valued and sensitive type of green infrastructure asset. In the Parish the burial ground is situated adjacent to the St Bartholomew's church car park and field (off Church Road) which is currently used for approximately 20 village/church events in a year. St Bartholomew's Church is the only Church car park in the surrounding area that has capacity for holding such events. Whilst there would appear to be sufficient capacity in the burial ground up until 2029 this may result in the partial loss of the Church car park which should be resisted. A proposed extension to the burial ground/cemetery is possible, as there is a nearby open space, and would ensure future burial provision is available. It would retain the car park and associated field so that they can continue to be used for ongoing village/church events.

3.3.4 This policy generally conforms with Maldon Local Development Plan (2014-2029) N1 Green Infrastructure and N3 Sport and Leisure. This policy has regard to National Planning Policy Framework 170.



Photo 17: Blackwater Trail

WBF 02 SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF TRAVEL

Development proposals should give priority to cycle and pedestrian movements and access to public transport.

Development proposals should deliver safe pedestrian and cycle connections within development sites and to the wider area, including key destinations. To ensure a comprehensive approach to movement, connections to both public transport and bridleway connections should also be incorporated where it is practicable to do so.

Development proposals which incorporate improvements to the existing footpath network (as shown on Map 8) will be supported.

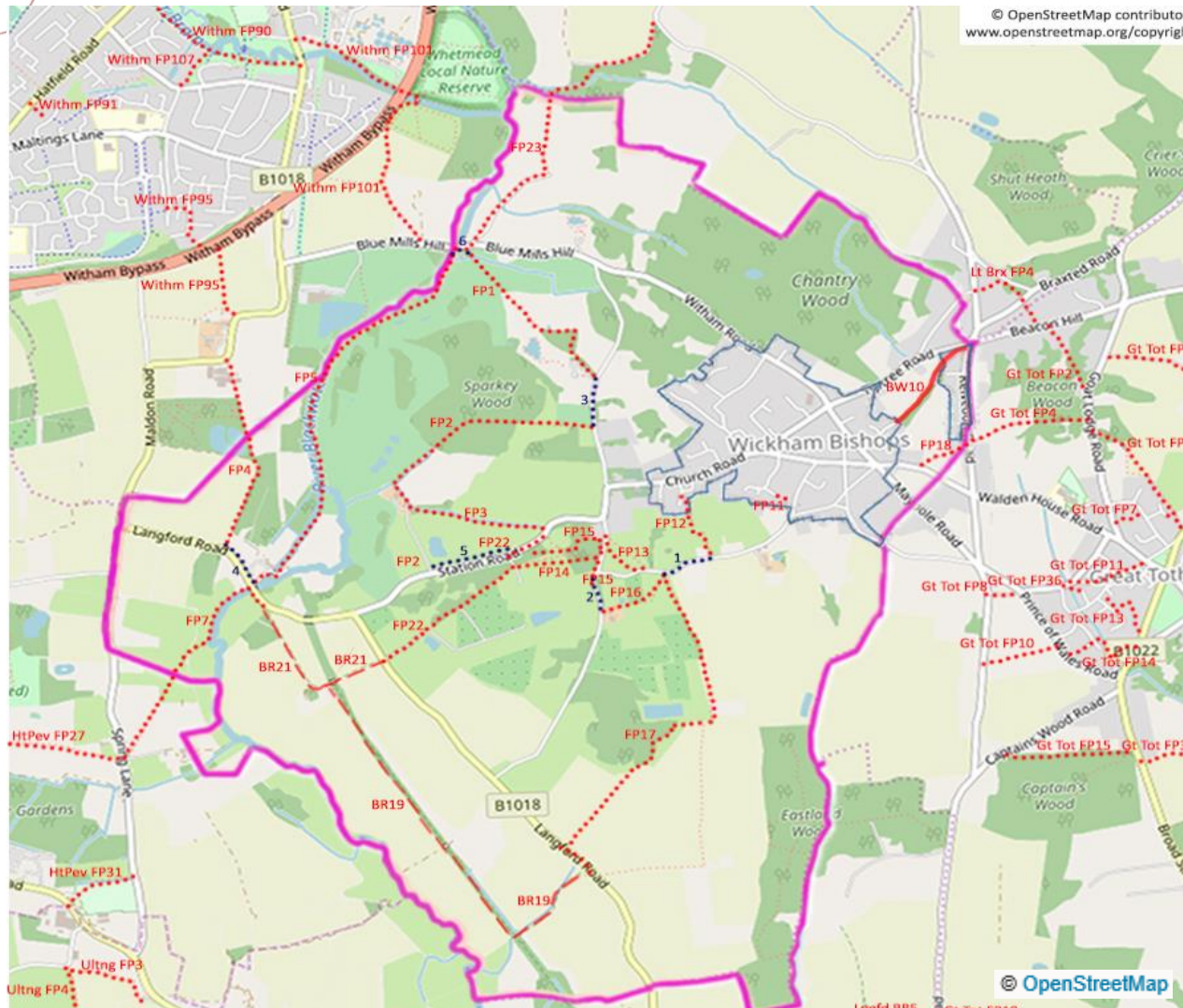
As appropriate to their scale and nature new development proposals should incorporate Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and/or Statements in accordance with the Essex County Council Development Plan Policies (2011) or any successor document .

3.3.5 JUSTIFICATION

There are 20 well marked and maintained footpaths, permissive routes and bridleways in the Parish with a total length of approximately 12 kilometres which are held in high regard by the residents. Improving connectivity further with additional footpaths and pavements is seen as a way of alleviating some of the local traffic concerns. Traffic speed is perceived as high and better pedestrian access around the village would help make residents feel safer. 76% of respondents to the residents survey (2018) identified footpaths as important with many using them on a daily basis.

3.3.6 Footpaths signs should be numbered to ensure ease of access and relate to the 6 Walks of Wickham Bishops booklet. Over 60% of respondents reported wanting an increase in the number of footpaths and the creation of a connected footpath network. Improving connectivity and creating a network of footpaths with additional footpaths and walkable verges will improve pedestrian safety and could alleviate some of the local traffic concerns. The footpaths are maintained by ECC supported by local residents through the Parish Paths Partnership (which the Parish Council has joined). The way markers will be numbered so that identification of specific footpaths is easy for users making the network more accessible. The provision of information boards showing a map of the numbered footpaths within the Parish, to be located at the Village Hall and Church is proposed. Public Rights of Way are important to the village and should be maintained and enhanced where possible. There are six walks identified in and around the parish of Wickham Bishops (Parish Council booklet November 2007). They are available in hard copies from the library or downloaded from the internet on the Parish Council site www.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org On these walks some of the most significant rural and heritage features, views and buildings can be seen including the trestle bridge, St Peters and St Bartholomews churches, Grade II listed properties and the River Blackwater.

3.3.7 This policy generally conforms with Essex County Council Local Transport Plan (2011); Essex County Council Development Management Policies (2011); Maldon Local Development Plan (2014-2029) T2 Accessibility. This policy has regard to the Public Rights of Way Definitive Map; National Planning Policy Framework 98, 110.



Map 8: Proposed footpaths and walkable verge network

..... Footpaths Proposed walkable verges



WBF 03 HIGHWAYS SAFETY

Development proposals should take account of the capacity of the local highways network.

Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on the efficiency of the local highways network in general, and on its safety in particular will not be supported.

3.3.8 JUSTIFICATION

In the Residents Survey (2018) concern was raised regarding the speed and volume of traffic through the Parish endangering other drivers, horse riders and people wishing to walk or cycle or cross the roads. The junction of Blacksmiths Lane, School Road and The Street is frequently used as a crossing point by residents to access the retail and business area, the school, playing fields. With further development at Heybridge Garden Suburb proposed in the Maldon Local Development Plan (approximately 1,380 dwellings for the period between 2014 to 2029) the traffic and congestion along The Street through the Parish is likely to increase as residents from the new development travel to access the A12 and railway station at Witham.

3.3.9 At present primary school aged pupils in Wickham Bishops are within the catchment of Great Totham Primary School. Any future development should seek to improve walking and cycling routes from Wickham Bishops to the primary school in Great Totham. At present, the crossing of Kelvedon Road (Great Totham) is a potential issue for children walking from Wickham Bishops to Great Totham.

3.3.10 In many locations the footways running along the roads are very narrow or absent, making it hazardous when walking, especially for the elderly and for parents with young children. This is the main reason for identifying the need to improve the network of walkable verges and footpaths (Map 8). There is also inconsiderate and dangerous parking, especially around the retail and business areas.

3.3.11 The Survey sought comments which might aid future planning. Responses indicated a continuing concern about the volume of traffic through the village with particular reference to the major developments in the nearby town of Maldon which will inevitably increase traffic through the village to Witham with its mainline railway station and access to the A12.

3.3.12 This policy generally conforms with Essex County Council Local Transport Plan (2011); Essex County Council Development Management Policies (2011); Maldon Local Development Plan (2014-2029) T2 Accessibility. This policy has regard to the Public Rights of Way Definitive Map; National Planning Policy Framework 110.

3. Policies

3.3 Facilities

WBF 04 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Plan identifies the following community facilities:

- Olio at The Chequers
- The Mitre
- Library
- St Bartholomew's Church
- St Peter's Church
- Blackwater Rail Trail
- The Air Raid Shelter
- Playing Fields
- Village hall
- Play area
- Doctors surgery

Development proposals which would enhance the community use of the identified community facilities or help to secure their viability will be supported.

Proposals that would result in the loss of the identified community facilities will not be supported unless:

- suitable alternate provision exists in the immediate area to serve the community; or
- suitable alternative provision is included in the development proposal itself; or
- the facility concerned is no longer commercially-viable.



Photo 18: Village Hall



Photos 19 & 20: St Peter's Church and its beautiful stained glass window





3.3.13 JUSTIFICATION

The village is well served with sports and community facilities and these should be retained. Local residents particularly value the following community facilities:

Olio at The Chequers – Grade 2 listed building. Italian restaurant and bar.

The Mitre – Grade 2 listed building. Notable historic building. Mixed views over conversion to beauty room/spa – some people very happy building is being put to good use, others see no need for this type of business. The conversion to tea rooms/ bar at the front of the building was seen as a positive move.

Library – A Registered Community Asset which is an invaluable part of the community providing a service to all ages. Essential for the elderly, people that don't drive and those with young children. Some people felt it wasn't open often enough for it to be useful.

St Bartholomew's Church – The religious centre of the village and historical building. Church hall provides place for clubs. Seen again as heart of the village and provides an important point of focus for the community even from those who state they are not religious.

St Peter's Church— Grade 2* Listed Redundant Consecrated Church used as a stained glass workshop. Landmark in a prominent position on Blackwater Rail Trail.

The Air Raid Shelter – very mixed views. Common responses - should be kept for historical purposes and it should be removed as it's an eyesore. Many were not aware of its existence.

Playing Fields – good place for young and old to exercise, encourages the playing of sport and healthy lifestyle. Could be used for more community events.

Village hall—used for a variety of groups and organisations.

Play area—situated adjacent to the village hall.

Doctors surgery - a satellite surgery linked to Fern House, Witham

3.3.14 RCCE Rural Facilities Survey (2011) identifies these areas as of key service to the village. This policy generally conforms with Maldon District Council Children's Play Strategy (2007-2011); Maldon Local Development Plan (2014-2029) E3 Community Services and Facilities. This policy has regard to National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 92



Photo 21: C G Poney delivered and sold cakes and bread in the village

Photograph : Violet James



Photo 22: Wickham Place Farm in 1945

Photograph : Judith Wilson



Photo 23: Library

WBF 05 COMMUNITY ASSETS

Development proposals to retain and/or to encourage extended local use of the Assets of Community Value will be supported.

Development proposals that will result in the loss of, or unacceptable harm to, an Asset of Community Value will not be supported.

3.3.15 JUSTIFICATION

The Parish Council have obtained the listing of the Library and The Air Raid Shelter as Assets of Community Value. 54% of respondents use the village hall at least once per month and 52% use the library at least once per month. 29% of young people engage with scouts, guides, brownies and beavers groups at least monthly, while sports facilities are used by residents of all ages (53%) at least monthly and 26% of residents visit St Bartholomew's Church at least monthly.

3.3.16 The local library is valued by the residents. From October 2016—September 2017 the local library was open on average 13 days a month, and had on average 580 visitors counted each month with a total of 6959 visitors in that period. Along with book loans it provides internet access on two computers and offers a weekly session 'Rhyme Time' for babies and toddlers. It also hosts the Parish Council surgery monthly.¹³ The local library hosts the Summer Reading Challenge supported by Great Totham Primary School.



Photo 24: Residents with the Neighbourhood Plan Display in the Library

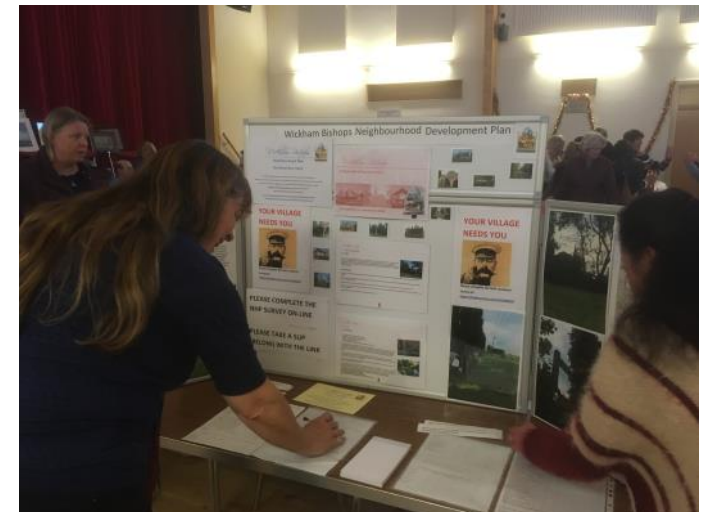


Photo 25: Neighbourhood Plan Display in the Village Hall 2017



3. Policies

3.4 Housing

3.4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies about:

Sustainable development of high quality design that is in character with the local area as defined by the Wickham Bishops Village Design Statement (2010).

An appropriate mix and type of homes to meet local needs as evidenced by the Housing Needs Survey (Nov 2016).

These support the plans objectives to:

- promote high quality development that reflects local distinctiveness and the character and appearance of the local area.
- provide an appropriate mix and type of dwellings to meet local, current and future needs.

WBH 01 DESIGN AND CHARACTER

Proposed development will be supported where it adheres to the design principles laid out by the Wickham Bishops Village Design Statement (2010) and the Maldon District Design Guide (2017).

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:

- Respect the local character, historic setting and natural assets of the surrounding area
- Reinforce local distinctiveness and a create a strong sense of place through design and materials
- Retain open plan frontages and/or original hedging where this already exists
- Use materials on driveways and hard standings which minimise problems of surface water run-off
- Design new boundary treatments to be sympathetic to the surrounding area in their size, height, character, materials and design;
- Where practicable and viable, incorporate features including both energy efficiency measures and green energy generation that improve the environmental performance of the development;
- Avoid the incorporation of street lighting in order to maintain the village character and protect dark skies;
- Use low level lighting on buildings to reduce impact on dark skies;
- Incorporate Building for a Healthy Life 12 principles (or similar such schemes) to allow people to stay in their homes throughout their lifetime

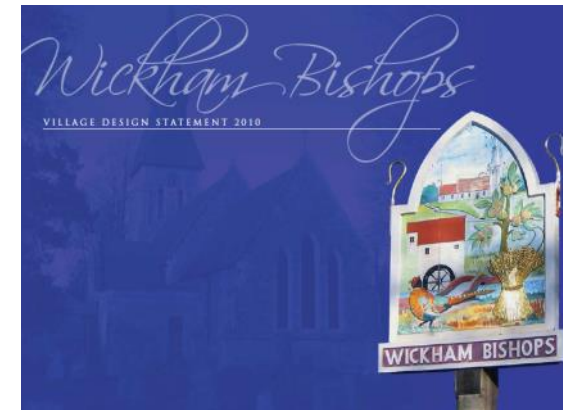


Photo 26: Village Design Statement



Photo 27: HRH The Princess Royal at official opening of Mackmurdo Place

3.4.2 JUSTIFICATION

Wickham Bishops is described by the Maldon District Design Guide (2017) as Arcadian, which is defined as a “dispersed pattern and without a core street or green at their heart. Buildings are within a picturesque or pastoral ideal and in harmony with nature.”

3.4.3 Between January 2014 and March 2018 there were 204 Planning Applications 96 of which, were situated outside the development boundary. 60 of those 96 were approved (63%). 47% of all applications are outside the boundary, and 29% of all approved development is happening outside the boundary (extensions, new builds, replacement dwellings etc.). MDC and WBPC agreed on 162 (or 80% of) planning decisions. There were 18 applications (or 9%) approved by MDC despite objections from the Parish Council. There was better agreement on applications outside the boundary, with MDC and WBPC coming to same decisions on 83% of these applications.

3.4.4 The Residents’ Survey (November 2017) asked for views on new developments and how they should fit in with the way the village is currently laid out. Most responses to specific questions about the local rural character, open plan frontages and local distinctiveness provided a response rate in excess of 90% in favour of maintaining those existing characteristics. Free text comments made clear the lack of support for any further development with some respondents referring to the recent development at Snow’s Corner as being sufficient for the village’s needs. Comments were made that any large scale development would impact adversely on the character of the village and that any development should be by way of infill without expanding the development boundary. Small scale development of less than 5 properties per site would have less of an impact. Whilst the Survey did not specifically ask for suggestions as to where new developments within the village could be sited, no respondent who completed this section identified any specific site; most comments indicated that no further development was needed. One respondent suggested, however, that the development boundary should be extended to allow for lower density housing but did not suggest where.

3.4.5 This policy generally conforms to the Maldon District Local Development Plan Policy D1 Design and Built Environment. This policy has regards to the National Planning Policy Framework Chapter 12 and the Essex Design Guide, Maldon District Design Guide



Photo 28: Leigh Drive meets Church Road

Housing Density = Houses ÷ Hectares

Area	Hectares	No Houses	Density
Byron Drive	3.0	45	15.0
Holt Drive	1.8	32	17.8
Leigh Drive	1.7	28	16.5
Heathgate	2.2	21	9.5
Wellands Close	3.1	32	10.3
Church Green	2.0	24	12.0
School Road	1.2	14	11.6
Maypole Road (West side)	1.9	8	4.2
Malone Field	1.47	14	9.5
Snows Corner	2.06	27	13.1
Arbour Lane (part)	0.8	11	13.75
The Street (central part)	0.8	18	22.5
Village Average			12.9

Table 1: Housing Densities



3. Policies

WBH 02 LIFETIME HOMES

New housing developments should address the local need for older persons' housing allowing people to stay in their homes throughout their lifetime.

3.4.6 JUSTIFICATION

The Housing Needs Survey (November 2016, published January 2017) received a 37% response rate and showed the need for an additional 42 homes in the Parish over a five year period. The response was above the county average of 25%, which suggests that housing needs are an important issue to many residents. There is a higher than average ageing population within the Parish, with pensioners making up 32.9% of the population¹⁰. Specific needs identified 57% of people looking to move required a bungalow⁶. Across Maldon District there is a particular need for homes suitable for elderly people. Housing for elderly people has evolved, and the old style sheltered housing schemes are gradually being re-structured or replaced. Approximately 25% of the existing housing stock is bungalows¹³.

3.4.7 House prices within the parish are high with 73.6% of properties being detached¹³. There is preference for development to be of smaller open market houses.⁶ Church and Hawes estate agents reported that the majority of sales in Wickham Bishops during 2016 were detached properties with an average selling price of £749,429. Semi-detached properties sold for an average of £330,000, with terraced properties fetching £410,000. Wickham Bishops, with an overall average price of £641,893 was more expensive than nearby Great Totham (£394,855), Witham (£257,061) and Hatfield Peverel (£387,132). Overall sold prices in Wickham Bishops over 2017 were 8% up on the previous year and similar to the 2011 level of £638,364.

3.4.8 Respondents were strongly (92% of responses) in favour of the need for housing that would suit older persons by way of provision of bungalows or other suitable housing types incorporating Building for a Healthy Life 12 standards. New development can address the requirements of Policy WBH 02 by being informed by Building for a Healthy Life 12 standards (or equivalent standards which emerge within the Plan period) to enable people to stay in their homes for life (86% of responses in favour). New development should provide a mix of housing types including smaller, two bedroom and starter homes (84% of responses in support) and should be small in scale with a density lower than 10 per hectare (85% in support).

3.4.9 This policy generally conforms with Maldon District Council Older Persons Strategy (2010); Maldon Local Development Plan (2014-2029) H2 Housing Mix. This policy has regard to National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 127.



Photo 29: Arbour Lane

4. Community Aspirations

4.1.1 This section of the Plan addresses a particular Community Action. It arose during the wider preparation of the Plan. Whilst it is not directly a land use matter it has the potential to be delivered within the Plan period.

Community Action WBCA1: Local Application of Community Infrastructure Levy Funding

In the event that MDC implements a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) within the Plan period the Parish Council will apply the local element of CIL funding to the following projects:

- wildlife and habitat corridors;
- accessible wildlife conservation areas;
- increased footpath and footway provision;
- highways safety improvements;
- the delivery of a village pond, community gardens and/or allotments; and
- the delivery of information boards showing the location of footpaths.

4.1.2 JUSTIFICATION WBCA1 sets out the Parish Council’s approach towards the local use of Community Infrastructure Levy funding in the event that Maldon District Council adopts such an approach.

4.1.3 Residents and the Parish Council have identified the need for information boards and a map of the local numbered footpaths for ease of use of local people and visitors. Identification board locations could include the village hall, the church, the playing fields area. In the Residents’ Survey (Autumn 2017) there was comment on the lack of infrastructure generally to support any significant increase in housing.

4.1.4 The Parish Council will monitor the use and effectiveness of the local application of CIL funding both in general, and as it may overlap with the District Council’s strategic application of CIL funding. New priorities may arise within the Plan period.



Photo 30: Path to St Peter’s Church



4. Acknowledgements

The development of this Neighbourhood Plan is the result of considerable effort by a great many people: individuals, groups, local businesses and organisations. Our grateful thanks go to everyone who contributed along the way. It was very clear that there is a strong feeling of community spirit in the village, judging by the high number of responses to questionnaires and input from villagers. In particular, we thank the following:

Residents who completed the Housing Needs Survey; residents who completed the Residents' Survey about the village, many of whom must have wondered how many more surveys they would be asked to complete; local businesses who completed the Business Survey, Residents who took the trouble to give us their views at our stands at various functions and gatherings over the past five years.

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan was initiated by the Parish Council and the steering group has parish councillors and the then parish clerk as members, it has been a community group, not a sub-group of the Parish Council. Nevertheless, we are grateful for the support the Parish Council has given us.

We are grateful to those involved in the following events and organisations who allowed us to set up stalls, stands and displays to publicise and seek community involvement and who provided information on activities, clubs and so on for inclusion in the Plan: Parish Christmas Fete; Summer Fete; Church Fete; Beavers, Brownies and Guides; Great Totham County Primary School; Library – where the Plan display board has been available for residents to view; Beacon Hill Sports Association.

We could not have established the opinions and feelings of the residents without the assistance in analysing the Housing Needs Survey of the Rural Community Council of Essex and our thanks go to them.

The Residents' and Business Surveys information, together with the Regulation 14 Consultation, was designed and collated by Stella Scrivener and Jane Williams – many thanks to them.

Leonie Alpin of Maldon District Council provided helpful advice both at the outset and during the process and we are grateful to her for that advice and for providing her observations on our draft Plan.

We have drawn on earlier work set out in the Village Design Statement of 2010 and the Parish Plan of 2011. That work saved us much time and we should acknowledge with thanks those involved in the preparation of those documents.

We very much appreciated the input and comments provided by those residents who attended our meetings – some of whom found themselves on the steering group!

The draft document was pulled together by Stella Scrivener and we are grateful for her expertise and knowledge of such plans and the time and effort she has put into preparing the draft. Similarly the input from Juliet Kirkaldy has been invaluable in ensuring that the Plan meets statutory requirements.

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6. Accompanying Documents

Consultation Statement	Business Survey	Housing Densities Data
Basic Conditions Statement	HRA and SEA Screening	Village Design Statement 2010
Landscape Character Assessment	Consultee List	Parish Plan 2011
Biodiversity Audit	Regulation 14 Survey documents	Residents' Survey
Housing Needs Survey Report January 2017	Regulation 14 Report	Images and Village Events Attended
Housing Needs Survey	Audit Log of Post-Regulation 14 changes	Meeting Minutes

7. References

1. Wickham Bishops VDSA Committee: *Wickham Bishops Village Design Statement 2010*.
2. Designation letter from Maldon District Council to Wickham Bishops Parish Council: *Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Area*. 7 November 2016.
3. Wickham Bishops Parish Council: *Wickham Bishops Parish Plan 2011*.
4. Maldon District Council: *Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 Final Report*. September 2014.
5. Maldon & Burnham Standard: *Exhibition to be Held on 27 New Homes in Wickham Bishops*.
6. Maldon District Council: *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) September 2015*. Volume 1.
7. Maldon District Council: *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) September 2015*. Volume 2.
8. Maldon District Council: *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) September 2015*. Volume 3.
9. Maldon District Council: *Economic Prosperity Strategy 2013-2029*
10. ACRE/OCSI: *Rural Community Profile for Wickham Bishops 2013*
11. Wickham Bishops NHP Committee: *Mobile Phone signals across the Parish 2017*
12. Essex Libraries: *Library count data 2018*
13. Wickham Bishops NHP Committee: *Wickham Bishops House and Bungalow Count 2017*
14. Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Area Designation Confirmation 071116



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