


Agenda Item No:	13	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	22 May 2023	
Report Title:	Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 For Council to formally adopt the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan as a part of the Development Plan for Fenland.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Following the successful referendum on 23rd February 2023, the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan needs to be formally 'made' by Fenland District Council and thereby be formalised as part of the Development Plan (alongside the 2014 Local Plan) for Fenland.
- 2.2 Please note that the word 'made' is the word used in legislation when referring to Neighbourhood Plans and means to all intents and purposes 'adopted'.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 For Council to formally adopt the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan (Appendix 1) as a part of the Development Plan for Fenland and to note the draft Decision Statement (Appendix 2) which confirms the Council's decision.

Wards Affected	Bassenhally; Benwick, Coates and Eastrea; Lattersey; St Andrews; Stonald
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/10JUN22/01
Portfolio Holder(s)	Leader of the Council
Report Originator(s)	Gareth Martin – Senior Development Officer (Policy)
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Background Papers	<p>Appendix 1 – Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version)</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Draft Decision Statement (Regulation 19)</p>
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Report:

1 Reasons for Exemption

1.1 None

2 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 2.1 The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Area was designated by Fenland District Council (FDC / the Council) in April 2015. This includes the villages of Coates, Eastrea, Pondersbridge and Turves as well as Whittlesey itself.
- 2.2 The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) and supporting evidence documents were submitted to FDC by Whittlesey Town Council in June 2022.
- 2.3 The Council published the Plan for a period of eight weeks in July and September 2022. Following this publication period, the Council submitted the Plan for independent examination.
- 2.3 An independent examination was held in September to November 2022. The Plan was examined by Mr David Kaiserman BA DipTP MRTPI of Penny O'Shea Consulting. The examination was carried out through written representations. No public hearing session was required.
- 2.4 The examiner considered that, subject to applying his recommended modifications, the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan makes appropriate provision for sustainable development, has appropriate regard to national policy, and is in general conformity with the strategic policies in Fenland's development plan. In addition, the examiner concluded that there is no evidence to suggest the Plan is not compatible with EU obligations, including human rights requirements.
- 2.5 Where modified in accordance with his recommendations, the examiner concluded that the Plan meets the basic conditions and recommended it proceed to referendum.
- 2.6 In January 2023, the Council published its Regulation 18 decision statement explaining the actions which would be taken in response to the recommendations of the examiner, including the modifications which would be applied to the draft plan.
- 2.7 Based on the examiner's findings and recommendations, the Council is satisfied that the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version), meets the basic conditions and is otherwise legally compliant.
- 2.8 The Council held a referendum on Thursday, 23rd February 2023. As recommended by the Independent Examiner, the boundary of the Whittlesey

Neighbourhood Area (i.e. Whittlesey parish) formed the referendum area. The referendum ballot asked the following question:

“Do you want Fenland District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Whittlesey to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

- 2.9 The turnout was 14.95%. Of the 2,035 votes cast the majority were in support, with 1,577 in favour and 458 against. There were 7 rejected ballots.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Following the successful referendum result, the Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017) automatically gives the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan the same legal status as a plan which has been made (or ‘adopted’) by the applicable District Council. Accordingly, since the referendum result, the Council has treated the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Development Plan for the purposes of decision-making on planning applications.
- 3.2 However, despite this automatic post-referendum legal position, Fenland District Council is required to formally ‘make’ the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for the district.
- 3.3 The making of the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan contributes to delivering the Council's corporate priorities, namely to:
- Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses
 - Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration
 - Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements
- 3.4 Forming a part of Fenland's Development Plan, the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan will shape development proposals and planning decisions in Whittlesey Parish.
- 3.5 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Whittlesey Town Council and has been supported by the wider community through its preparation and at the referendum stage.
- 3.6 Planning law requires that development proposals which accord with the Development Plan should normally be approved and those which conflict be refused. Making the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan a part of Fenland's Development Plan provides the local community greater influence over planning decisions affecting Whittlesey Parish.
- 3.7 The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan received majority support at a duly held referendum of 23rd February 2023. Council is therefore required to formally ‘make’ the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for Fenland, as per the will of the majority of voters in Whittlesey Parish. In doing so, the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan has the same status in law as the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

4 CONSULTATION

The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to extensive consultation both during its preparation and through the referendum process.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 No alternatives have been considered or are relevant in this case.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Legal Implications

6.1.1 The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Development Plan for Fenland which is the legal basis for making planning decisions.

6.2 Financial Implications

6.2.1 None

6.3 Equality Implications

N/A

6.4 Any Other Relevant Implications

6.4.1 The making of the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan would be in accordance with FDC's priorities in its Business Plan 2023/24 to:

- Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses
- Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration
- Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements

7 SCHEDULES

N/A

Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan 2021- 2040

Referendum Version





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1. Introduction

1.1 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

1.1.1

The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document that will help guide development in Whittlesey in the period up to 2040. This timescale has been chosen to align with the lifespan of the emerging Fenland Local Plan. Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan Group has produced it in consultation with the community. The ability to make a Neighbourhood Plan was introduced by the Localism Act 2012, which aimed to give communities more power to create a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape development in their local area.

1.1.2

The Plan provides a vision for the community's future and sets out clear policies to help realise this vision. The Localism Act says that policies in a Neighbourhood Plan shouldn't conflict with higher-level planning policy. Those policies are the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Fenland District Council's adopted Local Plan (FLP) for Whittlesey. Because of this rule, there are certain things that a Neighbourhood Plan can and can't do. This is explained in more detail on page 7.

1.1.3

This Neighbourhood Plan doesn't include policies from these higher-level planning documents. Instead, it supports them by providing more clarity on several topics that the community thinks are important. These important local topics were captured in a series of consultation events. Page 6 offers some more details about these events.

1. Introduction

1.3 Understanding the Area

1.3.1

The Parish of Whittlesey is located in the East of England and sits inside the boundary of Fenland District Council.

1.3.2

The nearest city is Peterborough, which sits just to the west of Whittlesey Parish. The towns of Wisbech, March and Chatteris also sit inside the Fenland District Council Boundary.

1.3.3

The Neighbourhood Area contains the town of Whittlesey, the villages of Coates, Eastrea, Pondersbridge, Turves and settlements at Kings Dyke and Kings Delph.

1.3.4

Whittlesey Parish sits within a distinctive, historic wetland landscape which contributes to its beauty and biodiversity but also causes flooding issues.

1.3.5

It has a unique cultural heritage, with Bronze Age history, historic conservation areas, listed buildings, the unique mud walls and the popular tradition of the Straw Bear festival.

1.3.6

Whittlesey town is the largest settlement with a range of shops and services. Road and public transport connectivity is reasonable for a rural area but could be improved.

1.3.7

More information about the area can be found in the Baseline Report.



*Straw Bear
Photo © Kev747 via Wikimedia*

1. Introduction

1.4 Understanding the Community

1.4.1

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan has been produced in collaboration with the local community of Whittlesey Parish.

1.4.2

The process started with a scoping questionnaire mailed out to every household in the Parish in March 2017 to understand the key issues. This received 2,582 responses including 678 responses to a special children's questionnaire and 746 responses from young people at Sir Harry Smith College. The responses helped to guide and shape the topics that this Neighbourhood Plan covers.

1.4.3

The next step was to hold a Vision and Objectives workshop in October 2017 where residents thought about what the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to achieve and develop a vision for the future of the Parish. The findings of the workshop were used to develop the Vision and Objectives on pages 9 and 10.

1.4.4

Finally we held a Policy Development workshop in February 2018, where residents worked in groups to develop policy ideas on a range of topics including housing, design, landscape, employment, conservation and leisure. The work from this session has been used in addition to the questionnaire and previous workshop to develop the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan.



1. Introduction

1.5 Understanding the Policy

1.5.1

An important thing to understand about a Neighbourhood Plan is that it can only deal with issues relating to the development and use of land. The document will only be used in two main ways. By developers preparing applications for a particular site or piece of land. They will look at the Neighbourhood Plan to see which policies their proposed development must comply with. By decision makers to assess applications for a particular piece of land against the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. It will help them to decide whether to approve or refuse permission for the development.

1.5.2

A Neighbourhood Plan or Order must not constrain the delivery of important national policy objectives. The National Planning Policy Framework is the main document setting out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

1.5.3

Paragraph 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies in local plans and spatial development strategies. Qualifying bodies should plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside these strategic policies. More specifically, paragraph 29 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.

1.5.4


Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4 to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and paragraph 065 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) set out basic conditions that all Neighbourhood Plans have to meet in order to proceed to referendum and be 'made'.

1.5.5

Basic condition e) requires the Neighbourhood Plan to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area. The following policies of the adopted Fenland Local Plan (in particular) have informed the Neighbourhood Plan's approach:



1. Introduction

- 
- LP1 - A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - LP2 - Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents
 - LP3 - Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside
 - LP4 - Housing
 - LP5 - Meeting Housing Need
 - LP6 - Employment, Tourism, Community Facilities and Retail
 - LP7 - Urban Extensions
 - LP11 - Whittlesey
 - LP12 - Rural Areas Development Policy
 - LP13 - Supporting and Mitigating the Impact of a Growing District
 - LP14 - Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland
 - LP15 - Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland
 - LP16 - Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments Across the District
 - LP17 - Community Safety
 - LP18 - The Historic Environment
 - LP19 - The Natural Environment

2. Vision and Objectives

2.1. The Vision

2.1.1

The Vision for Whittlesey Parish was developed based on the responses from the Vision and Objectives Public Workshop held on the 13th October 2017. It imagines what a future visit to the Parish might be like:

“It’s the year 2037 and a visitor has arrived in Whittlesey Parish. It’s their first visit to the area - they were attracted by the fascinating heritage and are particularly keen to see the mud walls and explore the Bronze Age settlement at Must Farm.

Our visitor strolls down Market Street admiring the thriving town centre. There are many different shops and businesses and they don’t seem to be short of customers! On rounding the corner they encounter a bustling market. The stalls are bursting with unique local produce and the visitor gets chatting to a friendly stallholder while sampling a local ale.

The stallholder has lived in the area all his life, as have several generations of his family. He’s seen the area change over the years; new people have moved into the community, attracted by well - designed new housing in sustainable locations, great public transport access and excellent local services. New residents feel welcome and part of a strong community, and the population is now a sustainable mix of both younger and older people. The population growth has helped to support local businesses, which is why the town centre and market are doing so well.”

2. Vision and Objectives

2.2. The Objectives

The following Objectives have emerged from the consultation process:

- 2.2.1** Provide new high-quality homes in appropriate sustainable locations that meet the need of the Neighbourhood Area without compromising the distinctive and attractive setting of the Town and Villages, or their natural environment, securing high-quality development in all new schemes.
- 2.2.2** The Neighbourhood Area maintains its vibrant community through proportionate growth, which delivers a range of housing, retains or enhances employment opportunities whilst protecting the rural setting of the settlements within. Local people will have opportunities to live and work in the area they have grown up in and remain essential and thriving within the community.
- 2.2.3** Promote new high quality economic and employment opportunities in appropriate locations and encourage the retention of existing employers in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.2.4** Secure the appropriate regeneration of the town centre, tackling long-standing issues around traffic, parking, and retail offer, to give an improved shopping experience.
- 2.2.5** Seek ongoing improvements to transport, specifically east-west connectivity and access to industrial areas, and to remove the designated HGV route from residential areas. To encourage a southern relief road or bypass, which local people have said that they support.
- 2.2.6** Seek ongoing improvement to flood defences, utility infrastructure, and digital connectivity, especially mobile phone reception and broadband.
- 2.2.7** Seek improvements to public transport (mainly the frequency and span of operation) walking and cycling.
- 2.2.8** Promote the health and well-being of residents and visitors, creating a place which supports a high quality of life.

Section 3: Policies

3.1 Policy 1: Spatial Strategy - Justification

3.1.1

Whittlesey Parish (the Neighbourhood Area) includes the vibrant Market Town of Whittlesey, the villages of Coates, Eastrea, Pondersbridge, Turves and settlements at Kings Dyke and Kings Delph. The town of Whittlesey is a strategic location for growth in the Fenland Local Plan. In recent years, Whittlesey has made a positive contribution to meeting the areas' housing requirement. The supply of new dwellings, either built, allocated or with planning permission, has significantly surpassed the housing requirement set out in the Fenland Local Plan.

3.1.2

The Fenland Local Plan is currently under review and a draft plan was published for consultation from August to October 2022. However, this is only an emerging plan which may attract increasing weight in decision making the further advanced it becomes in the plan making process. For this Neighbourhood Plan, all references to the Local Plan are to the adopted version only (May 2014).

3.1.3

Whittlesey parish is located within The Fens, a distinctive historic, low-lying and flat, wetland landscape. The majority of land within the parish is at risk from fluvial and tidal flooding, as illustrated on the government's Flood Map for Planning, and is unsuitable for many forms of development.

3.1.4

As shown on the Flood Map (Maps 1A and 1B at Appendix A), the town of Whittlesey and villages of Coates and Eastrea are located in Flood Zone 1, but with areas of Flood Zone 3 running close to the edge of the built area. The villages of Pondersbridge and Turves, and most of the open countryside in the Parish, are located in Flood Zone 3 and therefore have little opportunity for development.

3.1.5

An extensive area in the north of the parish, and adjacent to the built area of Whittlesey, forms part of the Whittlesey Washes Flood Storage Reservoir which protects Peterborough, Whittlesey and other settlements and Fenland areas from flooding.

3.1.6

The edges of settlements are particularly visually sensitive due to the open character of the landscape. In addition, the Neighbourhood Area experiences infrastructure constraints particularly in terms of transport and access, at least in part due to the historic street patterns within Whittlesey and the presence of rail line and level crossings.

Section 3: Policies

3.1.7

Opportunities for new development within the Neighbourhood Area are therefore constrained. However, the Fenland Local Plan identifies a strategic allocation to the East of Whittlesey, located north and south of Eastrea Road which is shown on the Key Diagram for Whittlesey (replicated on page 14). This Neighbourhood Plan supports the provision of new development to the East of Whittlesey. Such development will be accompanied by infrastructure and facilities, and will be expected to support the delivery of a new country park (see Policy 6 – Country Park).

3.1.8

The different settlements within the Parish have their own unique character and identity. New development should not result in the coalescence (i.e. merging) of these settlements.

3.1.9

This policy sets out a spatial strategy for the location of new development within the Neighbourhood Area. The purpose of the policy is to provide certainty about future growth and ensure new development is sustainable.

Policy 1: Spatial Strategy

a. The Market Town of Whittlesey is the main centre for growth in the Neighbourhood Area.

b. Significant new housing development should be located predominantly east of the town, adjacent to the built area and strategic allocation North and South of Eastrea Road. Development at this location will support the delivery of new and enhanced infrastructure, including a new Country Park.

c. Other complementary uses in this area, such as employment, leisure and retail, will be supported where it will not harm the vitality and viability of the town centre or existing employment areas.

d. Retail development will principally be located in Whittlesey's town centre. Employment development should be located at existing employment areas. The Town Centre and Employment Areas are indicated on Map 2A, 2B and 2C in Appendix A.

e. The villages of Coates and Eastrea are markedly smaller in scale and offer fewer facilities than Whittlesey, but are likely to provide some limited opportunities for new development. Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan provides further detail on the settlement hierarchy and appropriate levels of development within it.

Section 3: Policies

Policy 1: Spatial Strategy (Continued)

f. Development proposals adjoining the built area of Whittlesey, Coates and Eastrea should demonstrate that the development will:

- i.** Reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, minimise flood risk and be resilient to flooding, in accordance with national and strategic policies for flooding;
- ii.** Be designed to minimise visual impacts upon the landscape; and
- iii.** Be supported by necessary infrastructure and facilities.

g. In addition to their relatively small scale and isolation from services and facilities, opportunities for housing development at Pondersbridge and Turves are likely to be limited due to flood risk. In addition, many areas to the North and South of Whittlesey, Eastrea and Coates are also constrained by flood risk.

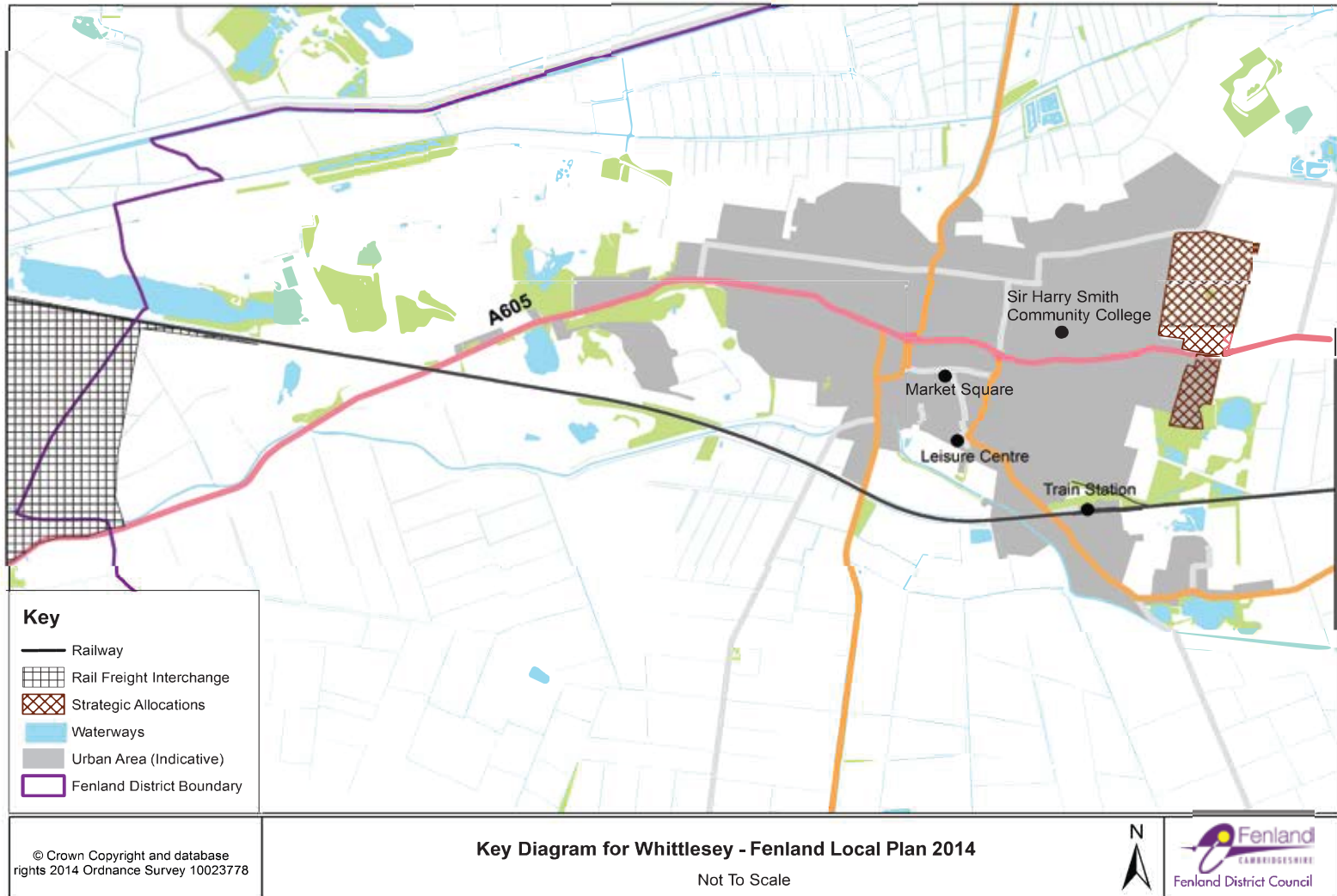
h. Development in the open countryside, and physically separate from the built area of Whittlesey, Coates and Eastrea will be limited to uses which justifiably require a countryside location, such as agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and access to natural greenspace.

3.2 Policy 2: Local Housing Need - Justification

3.2.1

The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by a Housing Needs Assessment (July 2017) (HNA). The HNA identifies several key issues affecting housing in Whittlesey, including:

- Increasing house prices resulting in homes being unaffordable for households;
- The declining stock of affordable housing;
- Increasing demand for single-person dwellings, reflecting the number of older residents and an ageing population;
- Demand for smaller house types; and
- Providing housing suitable for families.



Section 3: Policies

3.2.2

Whittlesey is a popular place for family life and retirement, and many of the issues identified by the HNA relate to the needs of families and older residents. Whittlesey Town Council believes that sustainable development will only be achieved if all community sectors are catered for – families should have access to suitable housing. Homes should enable older people to live independently for as long as possible.

3.2.3

To meet the needs of a diverse community, this Neighbourhood Plan supports providing a range of house types, tenures and models for delivery, including starter homes, family homes, executive homes, self-build homes and affordable tenures.

3.2.4

In particular, increasing the provision of affordable housing is a crucial aim of this Neighbourhood Plan. New development should provide opportunities for young people to access the housing market.

3.2.5

Where developers are required to provide affordable housing by the Fenland Local Plan, the Town Council's preferred approach is to deliver on-site, with off-site provision permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

Policy 2: Local Housing Need

a. Development proposals will be supported where they contribute towards meeting the housing needs of the local community. Applicants should have regard to the Whittlesey Town Council Housing Needs Assessment (2017) (HNA) when preparing development proposals.

b. Delivering affordable housing

This Neighbourhood Plan places great importance on the delivery of Affordable Housing.

Section 3: Policies

Policy 2: Local Housing Need (Continued)

Developers are required to provide affordable housing by the Fenland Local Plan. The Town Council's preferred approach is to deliver on-site, with off-site provision permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

c. Meeting the demand for homes

Development proposals should provide a mix of house types, which reflects the findings of the HNA. In particular, the HNA identifies a need for smaller homes, particularly for older residents, and housing that is suitable and affordable for families.

d. Accessing home ownership

House prices in Whittlesey are increasing, and homeownership may be inaccessible to many families and households. Development proposals that increase homeownership opportunities will be supported.

e. Meeting changing needs

New homes should be accessible and adaptable to meet people's needs, which may change over time.

New dwellings should make reasonable provision for most people to access them and incorporate features that make them suitable for a wide range of occupants, including older people, those with reduced mobility, and some wheelchair users.

Proposals should strive to achieve Building Regulations Part M4(2), unless there are exceptional design reasons why this is not possible.

Development proposals that include dwellings designed explicitly for a wheelchair user to live in will be supported. Such homes should conform to Building Regulations Part M4(3).

Section 3: Policies

Policy 2: Local Housing Need (Continued)

f. Meeting Wider Needs

Development proposals which make provision for self-build and custom build housing will be supported. Schemes which provide 'executive homes', as part of a wider housing mix will also be supported.

g. Residential care and supported housing

Housing proposals which are designed to meet the needs of those who require care, such as residential care homes and supported housing schemes, will be supported where located in a sustainable location with good access to local services and facilities.

3.3 Policy 3: Primary Shopping Frontages - Justification

3.3.1

Whittlesey Town Centre has traditionally been the focus for shopping and community, cultural and entertainment activities within the Neighbourhood Area. Whilst the role of town centres is changing, Whittlesey Town Council wishes to ensure the future vitality and viability of the town centre, recognising the importance of providing residents with shops and associated facilities as an essential contribution towards sustainable development objectives.

3.3.2

We have considered responses from our initial survey (April 2017) that provided valuable feedback regarding what residents wanted to (and did not wish to) experience. With the right blend of traditional and niche businesses, Whittlesey Town centre can retain trade within the town and attract visitors. This will benefit the local economy, reduce travel to other locations, and reduce emissions whilst enhancing the community.

3.3.3

Map 3 at Appendix A illustrates the places within Whittlesey Town centre that residents and visitors consider to be the Primary Shopping Frontages. Although there is some convergence of retail and other commercial activities in these locations, the Primary Shopping Frontages indicate the main areas for shopping in the town centre.



Section 3: Policies



3.3.4

Defining a Primary Shopping Frontage provides a focus on a described area to help businesses (new and current) plan their location and logistics associated with their trade, and can help support future investment such as the provision of modern and integrated parking and other transport solutions.

3.3.5

The NPPF defines retail uses as a ‘main town centre use’ and requires plans to provide a positive strategy for the future of town centres and primary shopping areas ¹. Planning law enables retail uses ² the ability to change to a range of other commercial, business and service uses without the need for planning permission. Policy 3 aims to provide a positive strategy which supports flexibility, whilst supporting the Primary Shopping Frontages as a vibrant and attractive location for retail uses.

¹ *Para. 86*

² *As described by Class E of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended)*

Policy 3: Primary Retail Frontages

Proposals for new retail development will be required to give priority, first to the primary shopping frontages shown on Map 3, and then to town centre locations generally, in accordance with the detailed requirements of Local Plan Policy LP6. Where planning permission is required, changes of use of retail floorspace to non-retail uses within the primary shopping frontages will only be supported where the proposal, including any extant planning permissions, would retain the predominant retail element within the frontage; where there is no impact on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole; and where all other relevant policies in the plan are satisfactorily addressed.

Section 3: Policies

3.4 Policy 4: Open Space- Justification

3.4.1

There is a significant under-provision of accessible open space in Whittlesey and its villages. In 2006 Fenland District Council carried out an open-space audit of the District, which revealed that (based on the standards set by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA)) an overall shortage in provision of 1.82 Hectares in Whittlesey, 0.89 Hectares in Eastrea, but a surplus of 0.13 Hectares in Coates. The study revealed that there was a deficit in outdoor sports provision of 1.42 Hectares in Whittlesey, 1.38 Hectares in Eastrea, and 1.96 Hectares in Coates. The study also revealed that children's play provision has a deficit of 0.40 Hectares in Whittlesey. It showed a surplus of 0.50 Hectares in Eastrea and a surplus of 2.10 Hectares in Coates. It also predicted that the situation would worsen by 2021, with the deficit in outdoor sports provision increasing to 2.76 Hectares in Whittlesey and the deficiency in children's play provision increasing to 0.95 Hectares. (No prediction was made for Eastrea or Coates). These figures were predicated on an anticipated population increase in Whittlesey of 800 in the period 2006-2021. However, as the Fenland Local Plan identifies a housing land requirement in Whittlesey of 1000 dwellings in the period 2011-2031, these projections are conservative at best.

3.4.2

The community recognise the extent of the problem. They have highlighted this as one of its main concerns in early engagement work, with current open space provision regarded as one of its most precious assets. It is therefore vital that both formal and informal open space is safeguarded from development pressure, and in particular, land in use or which has is for outdoor sports.

Policy 4: Open Space

a. Proposals for development that would result in the loss of formal and informal public open space will not be permitted unless replacement provision is secured of equivalent or greater quality and quantity in a sustainable location, and is brought into use prior to the loss of existing provision.

b. All proposals for new dwellings will be required to provide open space in accordance with the criteria set out in Appendix B to the Fenland Local Plan.

Section 3: Policies

Policy 4: Open Space (Continued)

c. Where appropriate and safe, public access should be encouraged onto existing and new wildlife habitats, which should be integrated with public open space provision.

3.5 Policy 5: Local Green Spaces- Justification

3.4.2

Local Green Space is a national designation that aims to protect green areas or spaces which are demonstrably unique to a local community and hold a particular local significance. Designation of Local Green Space can happen where the green space is:

- In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; and
- Demonstrably unique to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including playing fields), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and
- Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

3.4.3

Local communities have the opportunity through Neighbourhood Plans to identify Local Green Spaces for designation. This gives the green space protection equivalent to Green Belt status.

3.4.4

Whittlesey Town Council has assessed Local Green Spaces, as set out in the Local Green Spaces Assessment, which accompanies this Neighbourhood Plan.

Section 3: Policies

Policy 5: Local Green Spaces

a. This Neighbourhood Plan designates the following Local Green Spaces, as illustrated on Map 4A to 4D at Appendix A:

Bass 1: Teal Road
Bass 2: Pinewood Avenue
Bass 3: Feldale Field
Bass 4: Viking Way
Bass 7: Crescent Close
Bass 8: Eastrea Road/ Guildenburgh Crescent
Bass 10: Larkfleet (Sorrel Avenue)
Bass 11: Hemmerley Drive
Bass 12: Otago Road/Close
Bass 13: Roman Close
Bass 14: Whittlesey Town Bowls Club
Coates 1: North Green
Coates 2: South Green
Coates 4: Barnfield Gardens
Coates 5: Grounds Way/Nobles Close
Coates 6: Nobles Close North
Eastrea 1: Springfields
Eastrea 2: Thornham Way
Latt 1: Burdett Grove
Latt 2: Sycamore Road
Latt 3: New Road Lattersey Nature Reserve Area
Latt 4: Station Road
Latt 5: New Road Allotments
Latt 7: The Grove
StA 1: Churchfield Way/Priors Road
StA 3: Church Street
StM 1: Manor Playing Fields
StM 2: Briggate River/The Bower (Towing Path)
StM 3: St Mary's Churchyard
StM 4: The Pound, Aliwal Road
Stm 5: Garden of Rest Station Road
Ston 1: Snowley Park
Ston 2: Water Tower
Ston 4: Field of Dreams
Ston 5: Yarwells Headlands
Ston 6: Kings Dyke Nature Reserve
Turves 1: Red Barn South

Section 3: Policies

Policy 5: Local Green Spaces (Continued)

These Local Green Spaces will be protected from development, and will be treated as equivalent in status to 'Green Belt' land. Development on a Local Green Space will be regarded as inappropriate and will not be permitted except in very special circumstances, as set out by national policy.

3.6 Policy 6: Country Park - Justification

3.6.1

A Country Park would contribute to the quality of the place and complement the urban environment and the broader public realm. Quality of place is a critical factor in attracting investment, jobs, and growth to an area. It is also vital in making the area an attractive place to live, work, and spend time. A Country Park could bring real economic value to the surrounding area and create community well-being.

3.6.2

The preferred location is a site for a 54.0 acre (22.0 hectare) Country Park previously approved. (*F/YR14/0991/F, Land South And West Of 300 Eastrea Road Whittlesey Cambridgeshire*). The preferred broad location for the site is to the south of the A605 between Whittlesey and Eastrea and north of the mainline railway and shown on Map 9. Whilst the planning permission is not now to be taken forward in full the aspiration for a country park in this location is very much alive and Whittlesey Town Council will seek to work with key partners, including Fenland District Council, to see how the Country Park might be delivered.

3.6.3

Whittlesey Town Council will also support any other suitable site for a country park that might come forward for consideration if it is well located with Whittlesey and is accessible by a range of transport modes. Until an alternative site is located and delivered, Whittlesey Town Council will seek to ensure that the approved site is not developed for any alternative purpose, other than in exceptional circumstances.

Section 3: Policies

Policy 6: Country Park

Proposals for a Country Park on a suitable site and location in relation to Whittlesey will be supported, provided it is accessible to the majority of residents by sustainable methods of transport. The Country Park should:

- Enhance the public realm, where informal social interaction can take place;
- Provide pitches and facilities for sports and supporting physical activities;
- Form part of a network of paths and spaces, enabling movement through an area;
- Provide habitats for wildlife, including water-based habitats and natural corridors and spaces which create opportunities for connectivity between habitats;
- Provide flexible space for recreation, local cultural events and performance;
- Provide children's play areas and play equipment for a range of age groups;
- Add to local amenity, providing an attractive setting and outlook for surrounding residential and commercial properties;
- Form part of the character or setting of buildings and townscape; and
- Provide suitable access, car parking arrangements and foot and cycle links to the surrounding public rights of way, the national cycle route network and nearby residential developments.

3.7 Policy 7: Design Quality - Justification

3.7.1

Good design is about the way a development functions, its appearance and its relationship to its surroundings. National planning policy places great importance on delivering well-designed buildings and places. Well-designed, safe and attractive new development can help raise the quality of the built environment and the quality of life of those who live and work there.



Section 3: Policies

3.7.2

The national policy notes the critical role Neighbourhood plans can play in identifying the unique qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. Policy 7 - Design Quality builds on national policy, providing a specific and relevant policy to the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Area.

3.7.3

The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Area is characterised by its open, low-lying, flat, Fenland, principally used for agriculture. The landscape is typical of The Fens, which due to its topography, provides extensive views of the horizon and huge skies. The Neighbourhood Area interspersed by the market town of Whittlesey and the villages of Eastrea, Coates, Turves and Pondersbridge.

3.7.4

Settlements in the Neighbourhood Area include development from many different periods and have been constructed in a variety of different styles. Some using building materials - from 17th century stone and thatched cottages to fine 18th-century brick buildings and 19th-century civic buildings, along with substantial modern development.

3.7.5

Whittlesey's town centre is historical and is designated as a Conservation Area. The town centre includes many historic buildings and landmarks, such as the Buttercross, and provides shops, services and housing. Shop frontages and signage is an essential feature of the character of the town centre. In addition, a Conservation Area is designated in Coates around the attractive North and South Green area.

3.7.6

The purpose of Policy 7 is to set out clear design expectations for new development, providing applicants with clarity and certainty about what is likely to be acceptable. Applicants are encouraged to engage with the District and Town Council at an early stage of the planning application process.

3.7.7

Poorly designed proposals that fail to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and its functions should be refused. The design of a development accords with clear expectations in the following policy will be supported.

3.7.8

Development within the gardens of existing houses can lead to inappropriate development concerning adverse impacts on neighbouring properties and poor means of access. Unless an adequate land area is available or can be assembled and demonstrated to be accessible and sustainable without causing detrimental harm to the amenity of neighbouring dwellings or the area's character, development will be resisted.

3.7.9

In determining applications, consideration should be given to outstanding or innovative designs that promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with their surroundings' overall form and layout.

Section 3: Policies

Policy 7: Design Quality

The design of new development will respect the character, identity and setting of Whittlesey and its villages. Specifically, where relevant, and in proportion to its scale, nature and specific context, new development will be expected to:

a) Function well and add to the overall quality of the area through proposals which:

- Enable suitable and safe access for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists with sufficient parking and turning space in appropriate circumstances;
- Provide a high standard of amenity for users of new buildings and maintain the existing amenity of neighbours including by avoiding a loss of privacy and daylight, visual intrusion by a building or structure, removal of mature vegetation or landscaping, a loss of car parking and additional traffic movements resulting from the development;
- Maximise energy efficiency and support the provision of renewable energy technologies;
- Provide green areas and other public spaces, and support the provision of local facilities and infrastructure; and
- Include measures for the long-term management and maintenance of assets and services.

b) Be visually attractive, through proposals which:

- Create visual richness through building types, height, layout, scale, form, density, massing, materials and landscape design;
- Provide active ground floor frontages, mainly where located in Whittlesey town centre; and
- Provide attractive, legible, uncluttered streets.

c) Be sympathetic to local character and history, through proposals which:

- Are based on an understanding and respect for Whittlesey and its villages' built, natural and social heritage;
- Complement the layout, form and vernacular materials in the local area;
- Consider the objectives of the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for Whittlesey and Coates where relevant;
- Are of an appropriate scale to the existing settlement; and

Section 3: Policies

Policy 7: Design Quality (Continued)

- Respect the character of, and minimise the visual impact on, the surrounding landscape, conserving and enhancing landscape features such as field patterns, trees and hedgerows, watercourses and valued built features.

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place through proposals which:

- Create welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit that enhance the identity of Whittlesey and its villages;
- Are comprehensively planned or “master-planned”;
- Are located within the town/village or immediately about the existing built-up area;
- Where located at the edge of settlements, form attractive ‘gateways’ along transport routes;
- Protect valuable and more extended distance views and vistas of landmarks, landscapes and townscapes;
- Include public and private spaces that are safe, attractive, easily distinguished, accessible, complement the built form, and foster civic pride.

e) Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development through proposals which:

- Make effective and efficient use of land and buildings; and
- Ensure a sustainable, balanced mix of uses that work together.

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, through proposals which:

- Contribute to the achievement of a sustainable and mixed community;
- Promote healthy lifestyles;
- Are accessible to all users;
- Encourage social interaction between users of the site;
- Reduce fear of crime; and
- Adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Section 3: Policies

3.8 Policy 8: Historic Environment - Justification

3.8.1

The Neighbourhood Area has an extensive history of human settlement. The area includes the site of the recently discovered, 3,000-year-old, Must Farm Bronze Age settlement. Dubbed “Britain’s Pompeii”, Must Farm has transformed our understanding of Bronze Age Britain.

3.8.2

Whittlesey is a rural market town with a Conservation Area (Map 5, Appendix A) covering its historic core. This includes the town’s centre and surrounding residential development, based on an irregular grid pattern of growth.

3.8.3

The conservation area is split into two sections. The northern part of the conservation area is separate from the main body of the conservation area. The historic focal point of the town is Market Place which comprises a group of listed buildings surrounding a public open space focused upon an open 17th-century market building.

3.8.4

The conservation area has two fine parish churches, St Mary’s and St Andrews. However, with its splendid spire, St Mary’s is the church that features most prominently within views through the town and in distance views of the town from the surrounding countryside.

3.8.5

Whittlesey’s historic buildings were built over a range of periods and constructed from various building materials, ranging from 17th century stone property and thatched cottages to fine 18th-century brick buildings and 19th-century civic buildings.

3.8.6

There are 61 listed buildings within the conservation area, of which one, the Church of St Mary, has grade I listed status and six with grade II* listed status. The Whittlesey Butter Cross is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument. An inventory of the designated heritage assets within the Whittlesey Conservation Area is set out in the Whittlesey Conservation Area Appraisal.

3.8.7

The village of Coates also has a designated Conservation Area (Map 6, Appendix A). The open spaces at North Green and South Green are located at the centre of the Conservation Area, with the boundary extending Northwards and Southwards to include adjacent residential areas.

Note: There are designated heritage assets located outside Conservation Areas and Conservation Area Appraisals can fall out of date; for completeness, the Historic England website should be consulted as part of any analysis informing an application.

Section 3: Policies

Mud Walls

3.8.8

A unique and memorable local feature of the Neighbourhood Area is its numerous surviving mud walls in Whittlesey and Eastrea. These are the only settlements in Cambridgeshire where mud walls are found. (See Maps 7A and 7B at Appendix A).

3.8.9

An unpopular 'Brick Tax' was introduced in 1784 to help fight the Thirteen Colonies' revolutionary war. Unfired clay lump blocks were used in the construction of walls and buildings to avoid paying the tax.

3.8.10

Whilst some mud walls are located within Whittlesey's Conservation Area or have listed status. Others are not protected. The preservation of these unique features is a key objective of this Neighbourhood Plan.

3.8.11

Whittlesey Town Council, Whittlesey Mud Walls Group - a group of local volunteers who work to preserve and maintain mud walls, and Fenland District Council are exploring the possibility of designating an 'Article 4 Direction'. This designation could remove permitted development rights, meaning a planning application would be required for any works affecting a mud wall.

3.8.12

The Fenland Local Plan and national planning policy place great value on the historic environment. Policy 8 builds on these strategic policies to protect, conserve and enhance the rich and diverse heritage assets in Whittlesey and its villages.

Policy 8: Historic Environment

All new development will respect and, where possible, enhance local distinctiveness, historic significance, character, and sense of place.

Proposals for development which would affect designated or non-designated historic assets and their settings must ensure that these assets are conserved and enhanced, in accordance with Fenland Local Plan Policy LP18 and national planning policy.

Section 3: Policies

Policy 8: Historic Environment (Continued)

The historic Mud Walls of Whittlesey and Eastrea are of great importance and will be preserved. Development proposals on land containing, or adjacent to, Mud Walls must:

- Demonstrate that the proposal will not result in harm to the Mud Wall;
- Describe how the proposal will conserve the Mud Wall, including how the Mud Wall will be maintained throughout the lifetime of the development;
- Explore opportunities to enhance the setting and views of the Mud Wall, and improve public understanding of the Mud Wall's significance;
- Have regard to the information presented in the Mud Walls Survey Report.

All development proposals within or adjacent to the Coates and Whittlesey Conservation Areas, as shown on Maps 5 and 6, must demonstrate how the proposal supports the aims and objectives of the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

3.9 Policy 9: Coalescence of Villages - Justification

3.9.1

Whittlesey is a rural parish. All undeveloped areas around its villages have importance in retaining this characteristic. Several areas are more sensitive concerning maintaining separation with neighbouring settlements and avoiding coalescence.

3.9.2

At present, there is a sense of separation as you travel between these neighbouring settlements. In many cases, development has occurred in these gaps over recent decades, which has somewhat reduced the sense of separation. It is vital to maintain this separation so that the distinctive identities of each village can be maintained.

Section 3: Policies

Policy 9: Coalescence of Villages

It is intended that the Villages of Eastrea and Coates, and the Village of Eastrea with Whittlesey should have a distinct separation. This is to ensure that there is a distinct separation between the villages and Whittlesey Town.

Development proposals should respect the individual and distinct identities of the villages in the parish.

The development will not be permitted if individually, or cumulatively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation of the villages which would harm the setting and identity of these distinct areas or lead to their coalescence. See Map 8 - Green Buffers in the Appendix.

Any development proposals in these gaps should be accompanied by evidence of the visual impact of the proposed scheme concerning the gap, including any impact on nearby heritage assets.

3.10 Policy 10: Delivering Sustainable Transport - Justification

3.10.1

Traffic, congestion and the effects of Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCVs) on amenity are key concerns for Whittlesey's residents and businesses.

3.10.2

The Market Town Transport Strategy for Whittlesey forms part of Cambridgeshire's Local Transport Plan and is an essential source of evidence for this Neighbourhood Plan. The transport strategy attempts to address the existing shortcomings of the transport network within Whittlesey. It sets out a policy basis for the district and county councils to negotiate developer contributions and secure funding.

Section 3: Policies

Heavy Commercial Vehicle movements

3.10.3

The A605 bisects Whittlesey through the centre. It forms part of Cambridgeshire's Strategic Advisory Freight route and as such, traffic from Heavy Commercial Vehicle's (HCV) is quite heavy through the town. The transport strategy suggests that, on average, 5% of vehicles entering and leaving Whittlesey are HCVs, and in some locations, HCVs make up an even more significant proportion of traffic (e.g. 10% of traffic on Station Road near the station). Whittlesey experiences greater proportions of HCV traffic compared with other market towns in Cambridgeshire.

3.10.4

There is a 7.5 tonne HCV ban which broadly covers the central area of the town to the south of the A605 between High Causeway and Broad Street and London Street and the A605, which helps reduce the effects of HCVs in those areas.

3.10.5

From the A605, large vehicles are signposted locally to the industrial area via the B1093 along Inhams Road, which passes through a residential area. Large vehicles have difficulty turning from Eastgate into Inhams Road and need to pass into the path of oncoming traffic to negotiate the corner, causing conflict with other road users. This route to the Station Road industrial area is viewed locally as one of the biggest barriers to attracting further business to the town.

King's Dyke and other level crossings

3.10.6

There are a number of level crossings within the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Area, including: at King's Dyke on the A605; at Funthams Lane accessing the brickworks to the west of the town; at the B1040 on Ramsey Road; at the B1093 on Station Road; at Wype Road, Eastrea; and three crossings in the village of Turves.

3.10.7

Although the frequency with which trains stop at Whittlesea Station is quite low, the volume of rail traffic (especially freight) along this line is high. In peak periods, the level crossing barrier can be down for between 12 and 23 minutes per hour, resulting in significant delays to traffic. Plans by the rail industry to increase the number of trains travelling along the route are also set to increase traffic delays further. Cambridgeshire County Council is building a scheme to bypass the existing Kings Dyke level crossing, which will help reduce congestion in this area. This was completed in July 2022.

Growing Fenland masterplan

3.10.8

In January 2020, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CA) approved the 'Growing Fenland' market town plan for Whittlesey. This masterplan was developed by a 'town team', consisting of a broad range of representatives from business, local government, schools, and others.

Section 3: Policies

3.10.9

The masterplan seeks to enable Whittlesey's economy to continue to grow sustainably, encourage more people to visit and enjoy the town's rich heritage and cultural offer, and enable residents to access opportunities to improve their CV and boost their career. The masterplan will be used to bid for funding from the Combined Authority and other funding providers.

3.10.10

To deliver this vision, the Plan for Whittlesey identifies a package of necessary transport improvements. These include improvements to bus and train services, provision of a park and ride scheme, a new bridge over the King's Dyke level crossing, and delivery of a new relief road South of Whittlesey.

3.10.11

Similarly, the Fenland Local Plan aims to create a sustainable transport network in Fenland. Through Policy LP15, the Local Plan seeks to deliver new transport-related infrastructure. It requires all development proposals to contribute to a range of transport objectives, including improving and better managing road infrastructure.

3.10.12

The relief road identified by the Growing Fenland master-plan would ensure HCVs can access industrial sites from the East instead of adding to the congestion of residential routes, mainly along Inhams Road and Station Road. It has been a long-held aspiration to see a bypass (or relief road) to Whittlesey for many local people, providing access to the industrial area to the south of the town.

3.10.13

This Plan aims to deliver the transport improvements identified by the master plan to facilitate Whittlesey's sustainable growth.

3.10.14

Policy 10 is intended to complement the Growing Fenland master plan, Fenland Local Plan and Whittlesey Market Town Transport Strategy, through transport improvements.

Policy 10: Delivering Sustainable Transport

Where appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals should contribute towards the delivery of the transport objectives of the Fenland Local Plan, Local Transport Plan (including the Whittlesey Market Town Transport Strategy), and Growing Fenland masterplan for Whittlesey. The precise nature and scale of such contributions will be the subject of negotiations as part of the consideration of planning applications for development.

Section 3: Policies

3.11 Policy 11: Adapting to and Mitigating Climate Change - Justification

Why this Neighbourhood Plan must address climate change

3.11.1

Climate change is the biggest threat to the future of our area and dealing with its implications is at the heart of this neighbourhood plan.

3.11.2

The effects of a changing climate are already being felt and are expected to continue in the future, as illustrated in the following key points ⁴:

- Globally, atmospheric CO₂ has reached the highest levels in human history.
- Human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels and it is predicted that on the current trajectory, warming will likely increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels between 2030 and 2052.
- Extreme weather events have been seen around the world. The UK's winter floods of 2013-14 and the European summer heatwaves of 2018 and 2003, where heat-related deaths ran into tens of thousands, were all made more likely by climate change.
- The UK Met Office predicts that Britain could experience summers as much as 5°C hotter by 2070. Winters could be up to 4.2C warmer.
- Sea levels could rise by up to 1.15 metres by 2100, leaving the UK coastline unrecognisable.
- Average summer rainfall could decrease by up to 47% by 2070, while there could be up to 35% more precipitation in winter.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that a global temperature rise of 2°C will “significantly increase” the risk of “drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people”.

3.11.3

The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Area is especially vulnerable to climate change. The area is characteristic of its fen landscape, with much of the Neighbourhood Area low lying and vulnerable to flooding. Located in the East of England, the area is an area of “serious water stress” ⁵ and is therefore at risk of drought. The majority of the land in the Neighbourhood Area is in agricultural use, providing high quality soils for food production which could be threatened by drought, flooding and changing temperatures. The area's fenland peat soils provide important carbon sinks, requiring protection.

⁴ *Neighbourhood planning in a climate emergency*, Centre for Sustainable Energy

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification>

Section 3: Policies

3.11.4

The Climate Change Act 2008 commits the UK to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Planning law requires plans to help meet this target and contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change⁶. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out government's planning policies for England, says

“plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures, in line with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008”⁷.

3.11.5

This Neighbourhood Plan therefore has both a moral and legal responsibility to support a reduction in carbon emissions and address climate change.

How is climate change addressed through this Neighbourhood Plan?

3.11.6

Mitigating and adapting to climate change is not an isolated topic. Rather, it is a key theme which is reflected in many different policies within this plan. Many of the measures relevant to addressing climate change, also support wider sustainability objectives – for example:

- *Policy 1: Spatial Strategy* directs new development to the town of Whittlesey, a sustainable location offering employment, education, retail, services and public transport, and directs new development away from the open countryside and areas at risk from flooding.
- *Policy 7: Design Quality* sets out design principles for new development, which includes maximising energy efficiency, supporting the provision of renewable energy technologies, and adapting to and mitigating climate change.
- *Policy 10: Flood Risk* requires development proposals to assess flood risk, taking into account the likely effects of climate change, and provide sustainable drainage on-site.
- *Policy 12: Delivering Sustainable Transport* seeks to deliver new and improvements to existing infrastructure to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport, and reduce congestion.

⁶ Section 19 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/19, as amended by section 182 of the 2008 Planning Act www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/section/182

⁷ Para. 153, NPPF

Section 3: Policies

3.11.7

Policy 13: Adapting to and Mitigating Climate Change includes measures to tackle the root causes of and adapt to living in a changing climate. The measures seek to enhance the environmental sustainability of development proposals and are intended to complement other policies in this plan.

Policy 11: Adapting to and Mitigating Climate Change

a. Sustainable construction

All new developments should be built to sustainable construction standards, as set out in Policy 7: Design Quality.

New dwellings should satisfy the sustainability and energy efficiency requirements set out in Building Regulations.

Non-residential buildings should meet the BREEAM technical standard and achieve at least a “very good” rating.

b. Sustainable water management

To minimise impact on the water environment all new dwellings should achieve the Optional Technical Housing Standard for water efficiency of no more than 110 litres per day as described by the Building Regulations (part G2).

Meeting the standard is not expected to adversely affect development viability. The government’s assessment of the cost of meeting the standard is approximately £9 per dwelling ⁸.

⁸ Table 26 – Water standards costs summary, ‘DCLG publication *Housing Standards Review – Cost Impacts*’ (EC Harris, September 2014)

Section 3: Policies

Policy 11: Adapting to and Mitigating Climate Change (continued)

c. Renewable and low carbon energy and heat technologies

Proposals which include renewable, low carbon and decentralised energy or heat technologies are encouraged and will generally be supported provided they do not conflict with other policies in the development plan.

d. Transition to Electric Vehicles

All new development proposals which include car parking provision should provide charging points for electric vehicles.

e. Peat soils and carbon sinks

Proposals for new development on peat soils must demonstrate how peat soils will be conserved through the scheme and that the development will not result in desiccation or carbon loss.

Where appropriate to their scale and nature proposals should explain how opportunities to create 'carbon sinks' through on-site planting, landscaping schemes, and wetland features have been maximised.

f. Local food production

Larger scale proposals should seek opportunities for on-site food production, such as community orchards and allotments, as part of the scheme's on-site recreation provision.

g. Biodiversity

All development proposals should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Proposals should seek to avoid impacts on biodiversity, or minimise impacts where avoidance isn't possible.

Where practicable development proposals should provide measurable net gains for biodiversity.



Section 4: Supporting Information



The following documents have informed the production of the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan:

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework - July 2021

Sets out the government's planning policies for England.

4.2 Fenland Local Plan - 2014

Contains the policies and broad locations for growth and regeneration of Fenland over a 20 year period.

4.3 Fenland Open Spaces Audit - 2006

An analysis of the amount and quality of open space in Fenland.

4.4 Whittlesey Housing Needs Assessment - 2017

An assessment of the housing need within Whittlesey Parish prepared by Aecom.

4.5 Whittlesey Baseline Report

An analysis of the Parish of Whittlesey looking at the population and the place.



4.6 Whittlesey Consultation Reports

Summary reports detailing the findings of each stage of the consultation process.

4.7 Whittlesey Local Green Space Assessment

An analysis of the location, type and quality of green space within the Parish.

4.8 Whittlesey and Coates Conservation Area Appraisals

A description of the history and features of the conservation areas contained within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary.

4.9 Survey of Mud Walls in Whittlesey and Eastrea

An analysis of the location and character of the mud walls within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary.

4.10 Cambridge Flood and Water SPD - 2016

A document giving guidance on how to manage flood risk and the water environment as part of new development proposals.

4.11 Anglian River Basin Management Plan - 2018

A document setting out the environmental objectives for protecting and improving the water environment.



Appendix A: Policy Maps



Maps 1A and 1B - Flood Risk and Flood Zones

Map 2A, 2B and 2C - Town Centre and Employment Areas

Map 3 - Primary Retail Frontages

Map 4A, 4B, 4C and 4D - Local Green Spaces

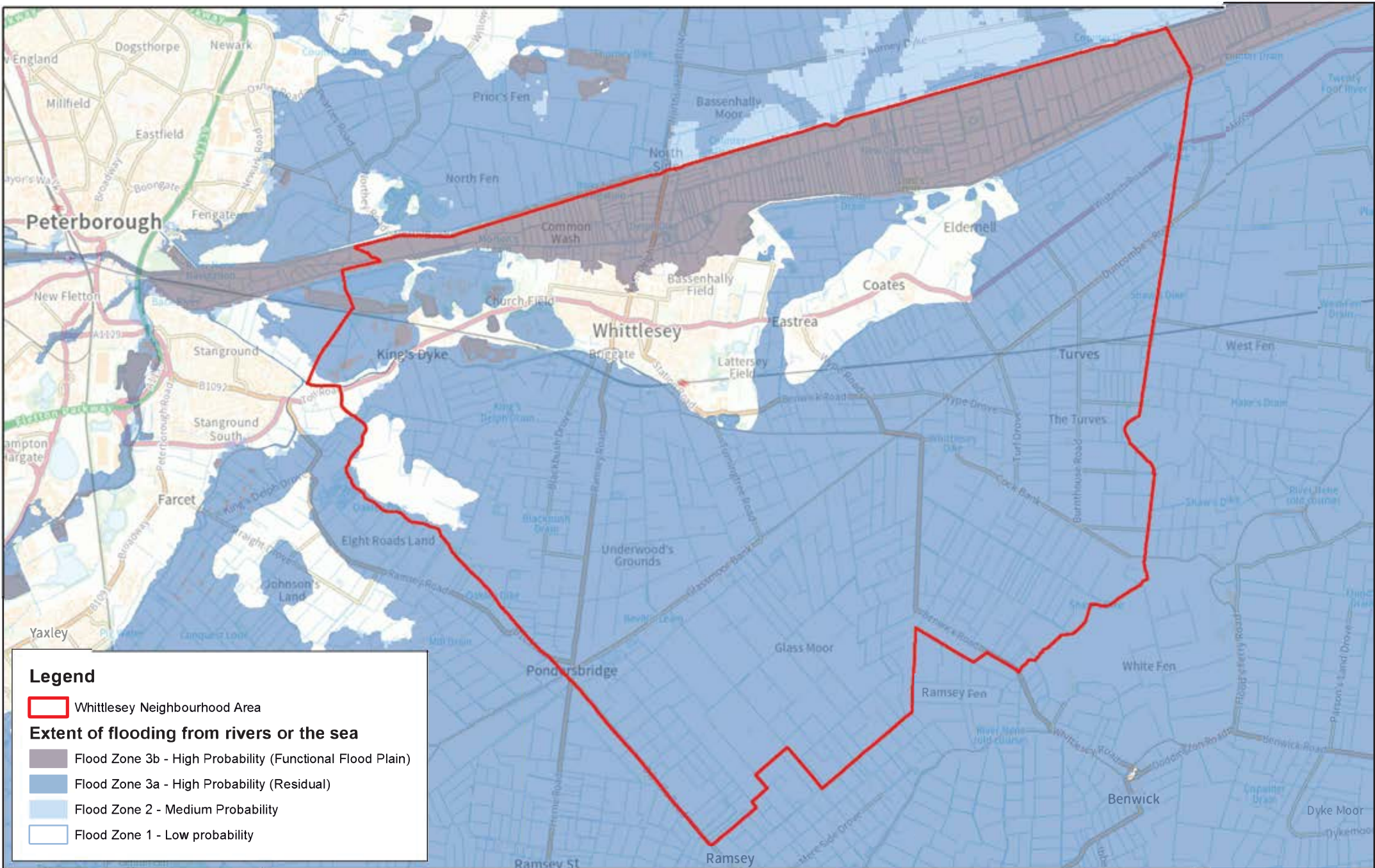
Map 5 - Whittlesey Conservation Area

Map 6 - Coates Conservation Area

Map 7A and 7B - Mud Walls

Map 8 - Green Buffers

Map 9 - Country Park



Legend

- Whittlesey Neighbourhood Area
- Extent of flooding from rivers or the sea**
- Flood Zone 3b - High Probability (Functional Flood Plain)
- Flood Zone 3a - High Probability (Residual)
- Flood Zone 2 - Medium Probability
- Flood Zone 1 - Low probability

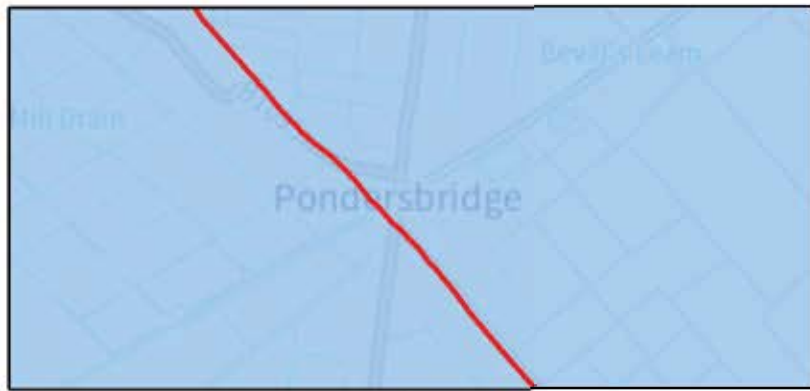
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Map 1A : Flood Risk (gov.uk Long Term Flood Risk Map)

Scale = 1:70,000





Legend

- Whittlesey Neighbourhood Area
- Zone 3a and 3b
- Zone 2

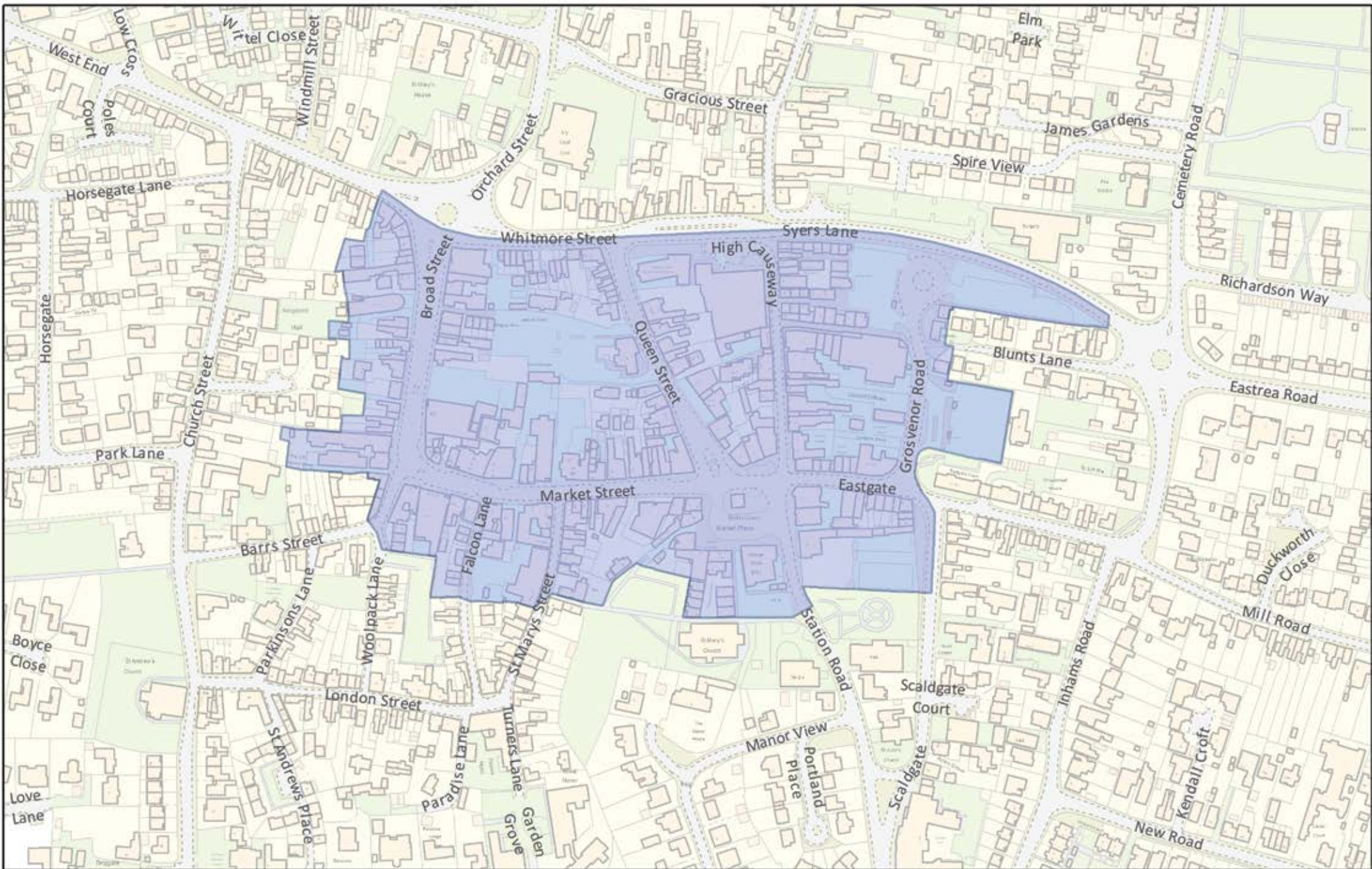


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Map 1B : Flood Zone (Environment Agency Flood Zone Map)





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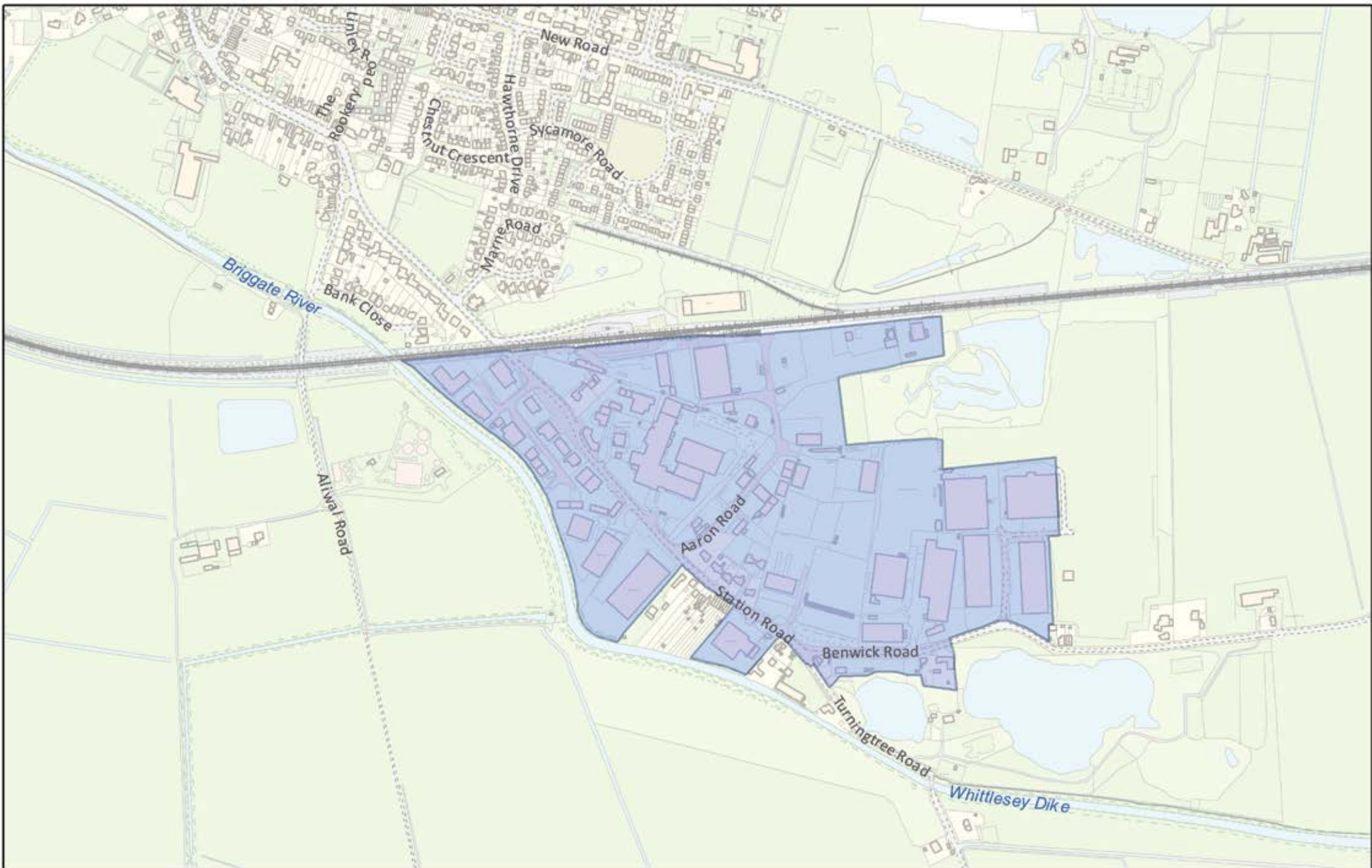
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 Town Centre

Map 2A : Town Centre

Scale = 1:3,000





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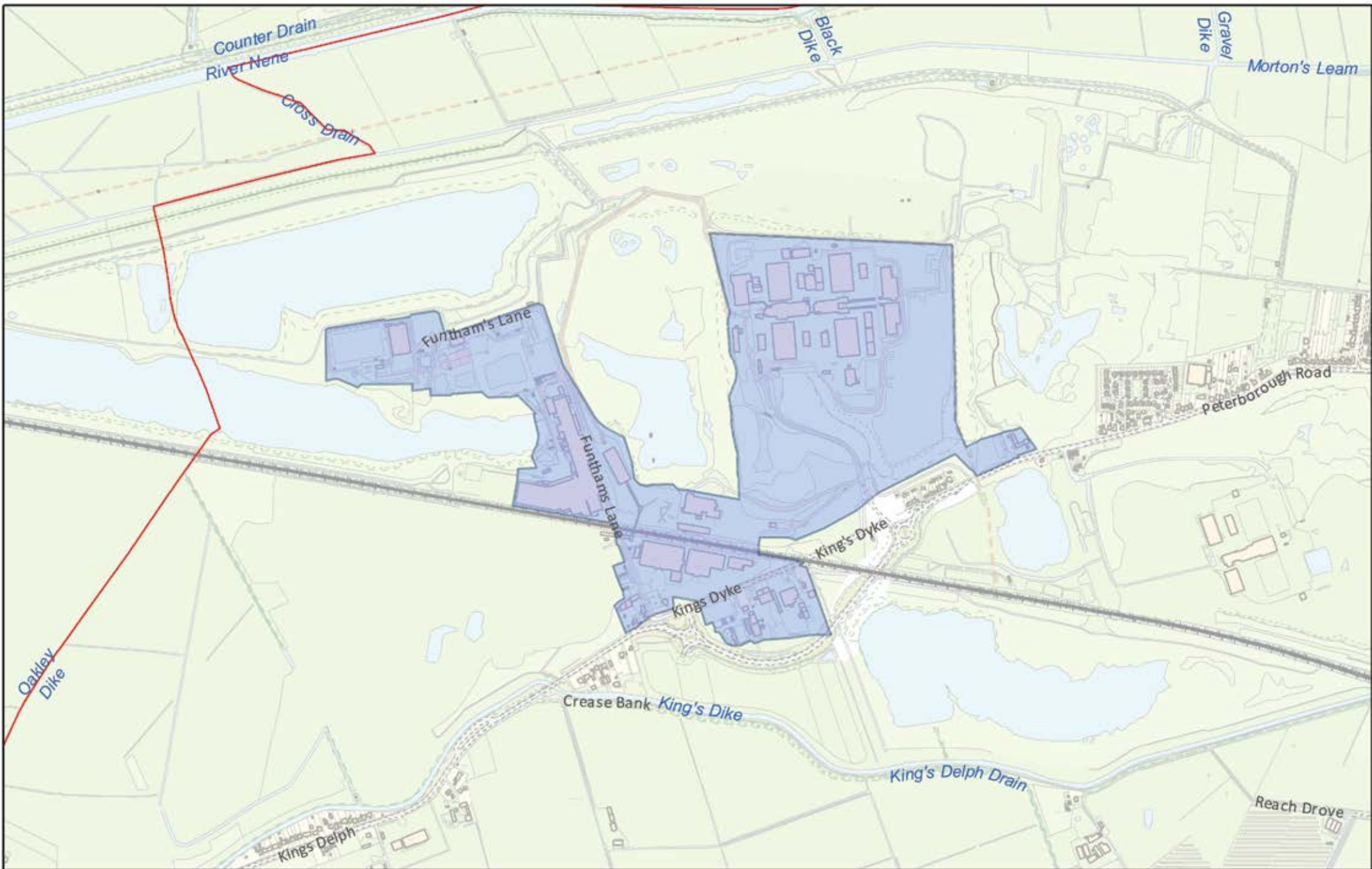
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 Employment Area

Map 2B : Employment Area (East)

Scale = 1:7,000






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 Employment Area

Map 2C : Employment Area (West)

Scale = 1:12,000 

 Fenland
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Fenland District Council



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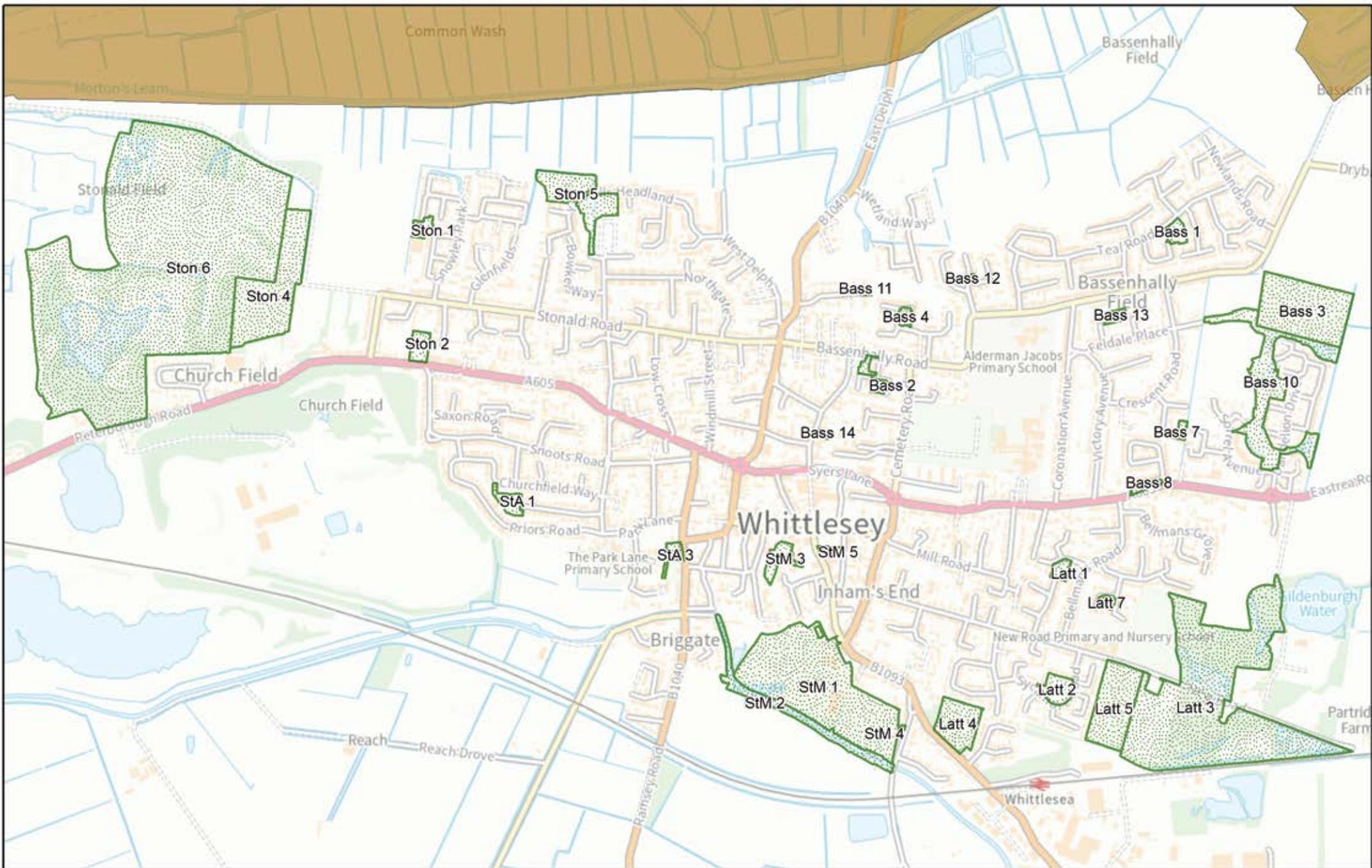
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 Primary Retail Frontages

Map 3 : Primary Retail Frontages

Scale = 1:1,400





Created on: 12/01/2023

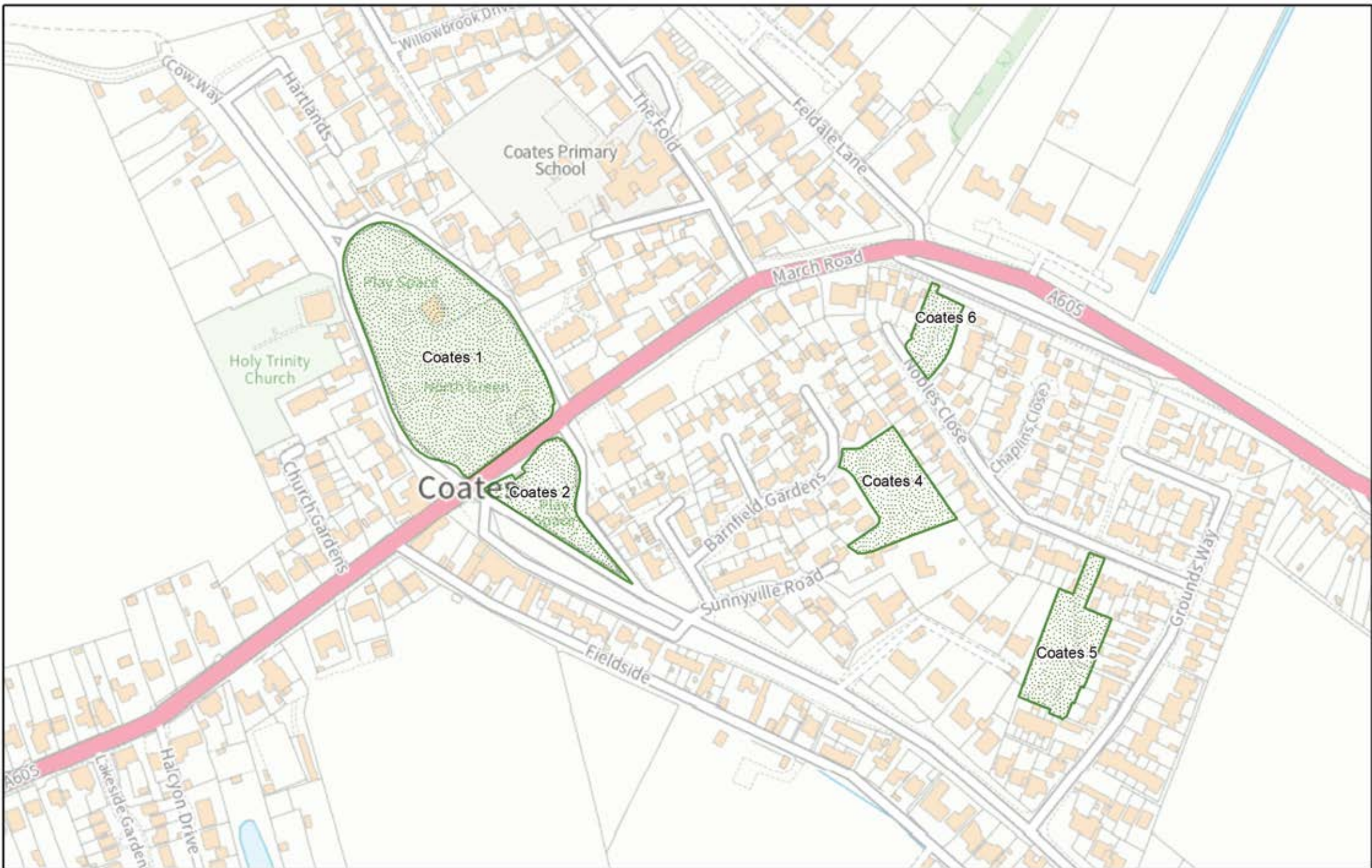
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- Designated Local Green Spaces
- SSSI, Ramsar, SAC

Map 4A : Local Green Spaces - Whittlesey

Scale = 1:14,000





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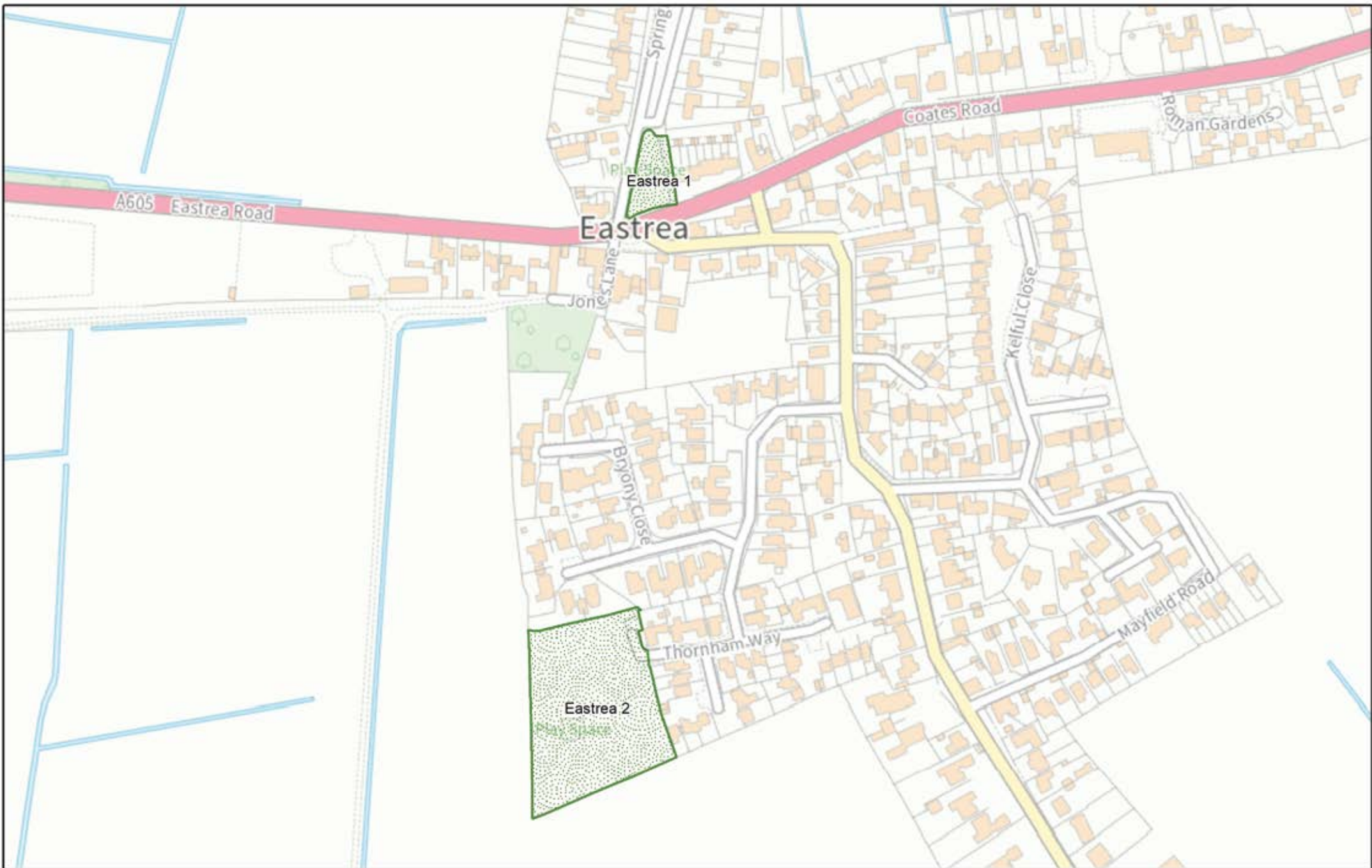
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 Designated Local Green Spaces

Map 4B : Local Green Spaces - Coates

Scale = 1:3,000





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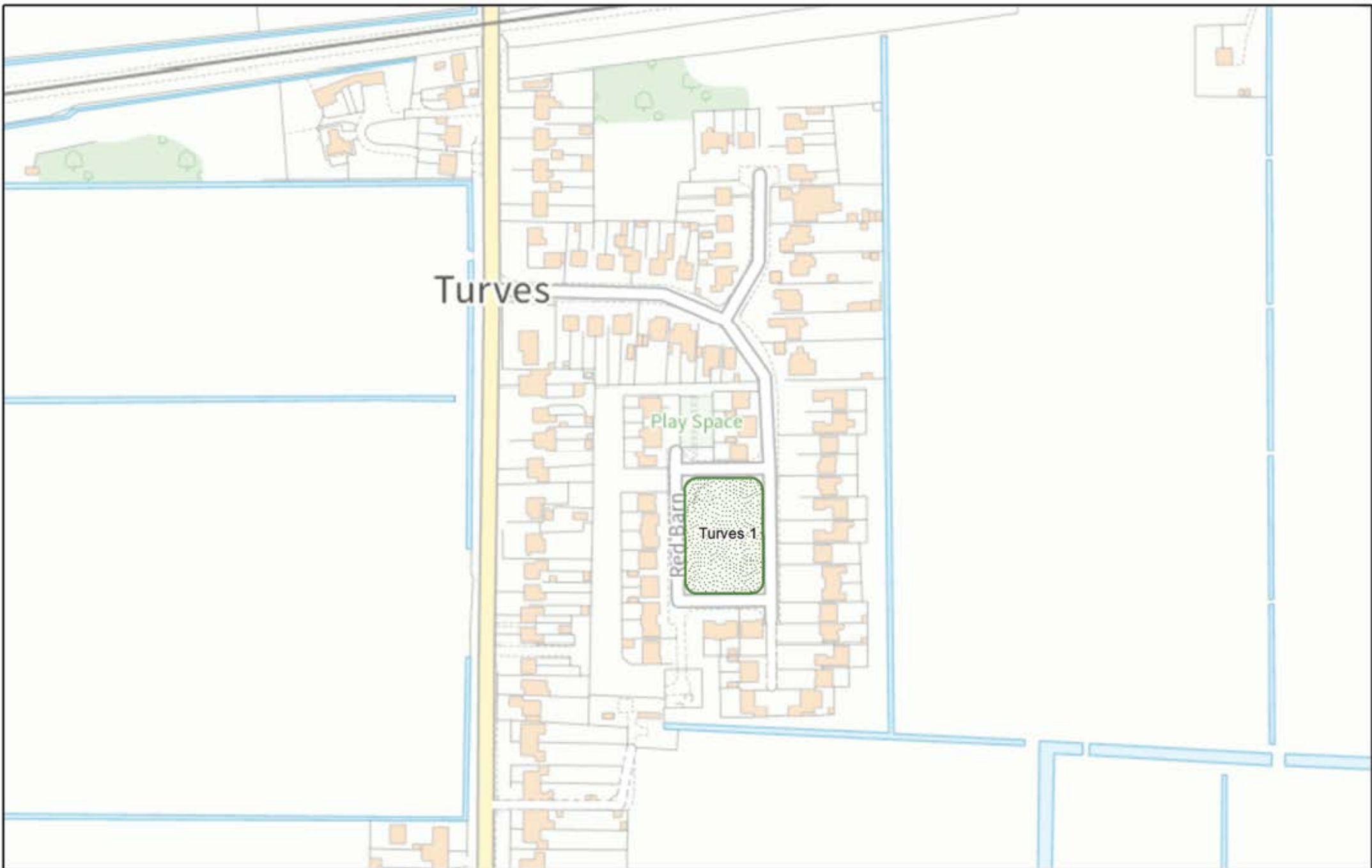
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 Designated Local Green Spaces

Map 4C : Local Green Spaces - Eastrea

Scale = 1:3,000





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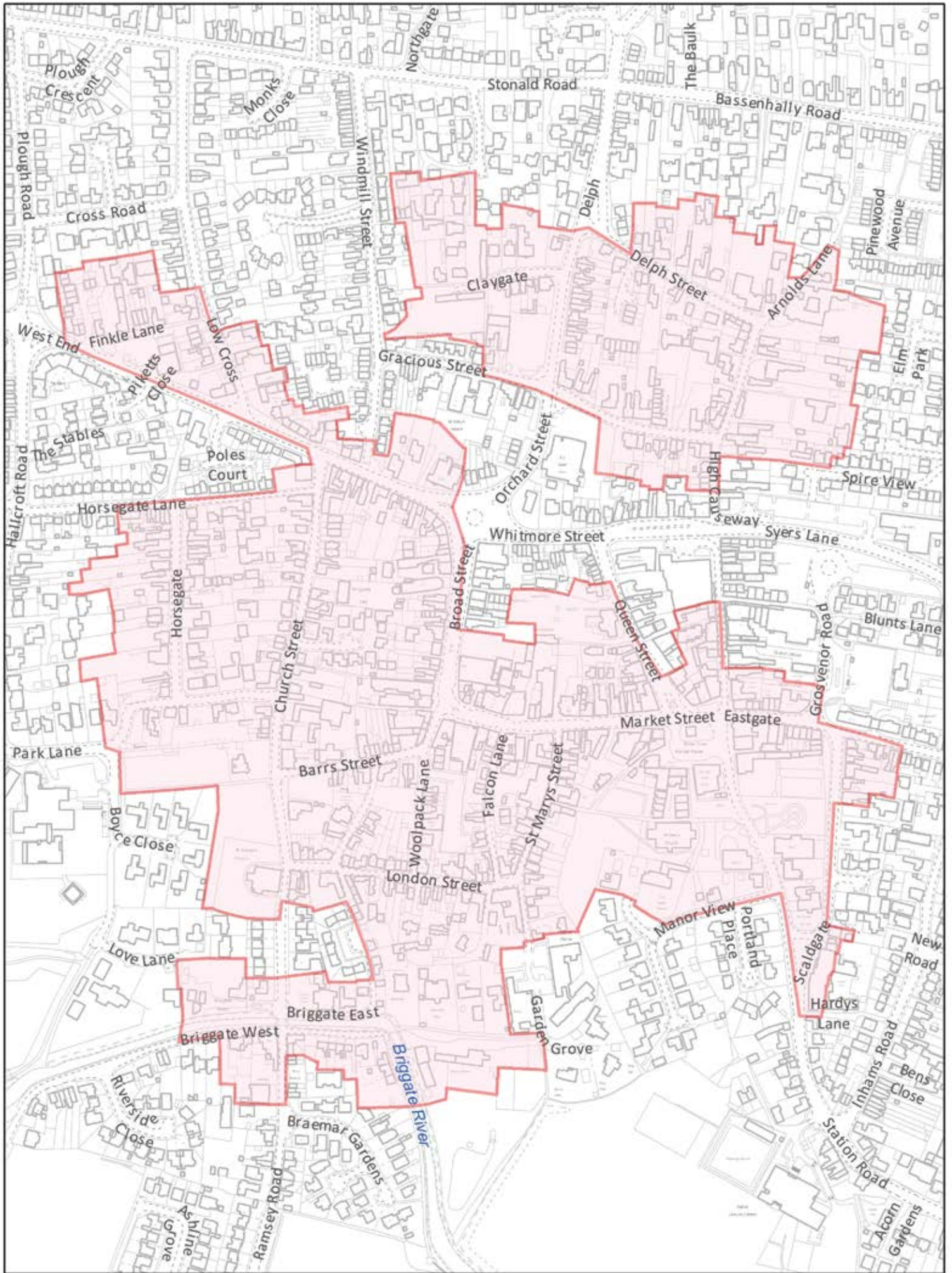
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 Designated Local Green Spaces

Map 4D : Local Green Spaces - Turves

Scale = 1:2,500

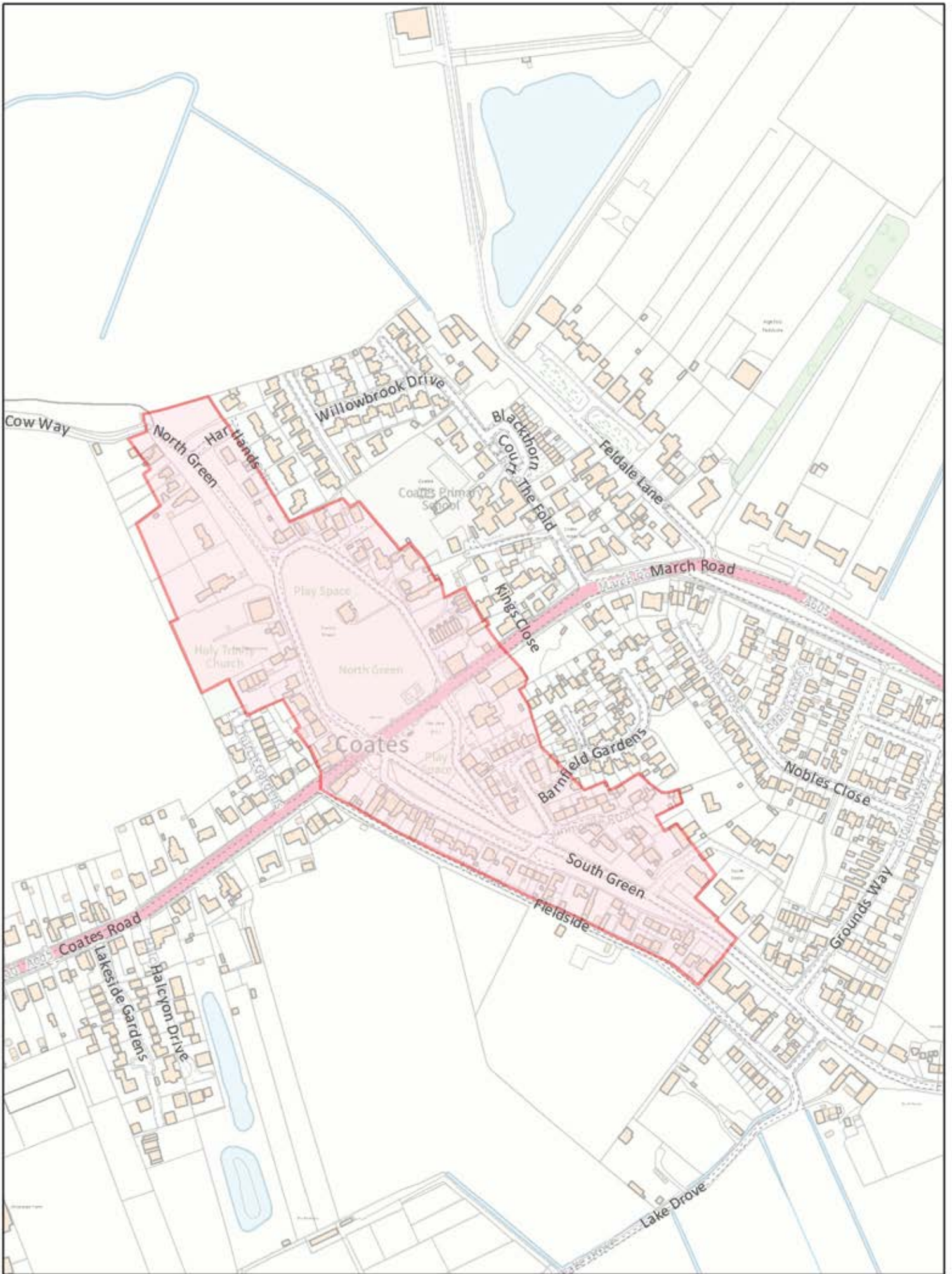




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Map 5 : Whittlesey Conservation Area
 Conservation Area
 Scale = 1:4,000





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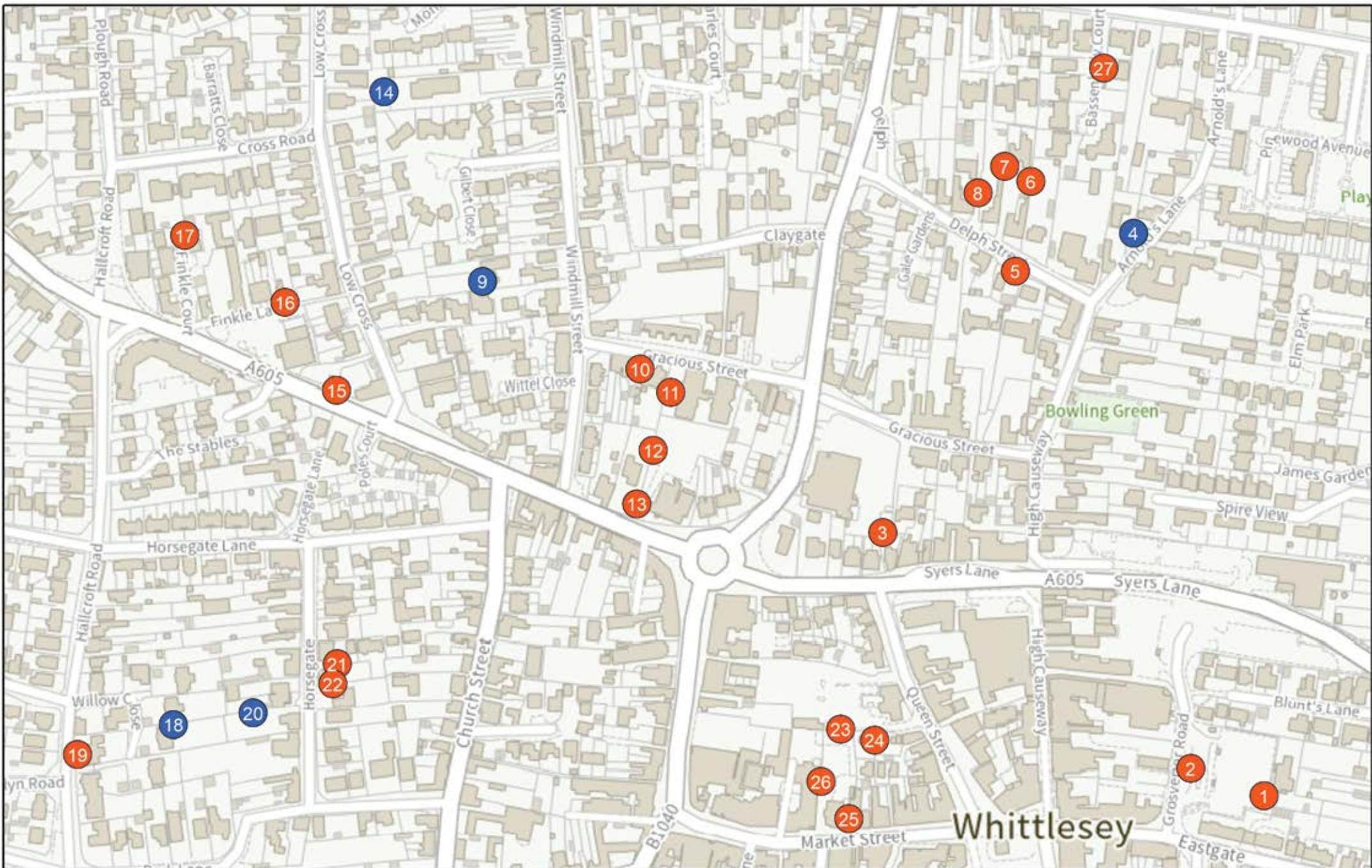
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Map 6 : Coates Conservation Area

 Conservation Area

Scale = 1:4,000





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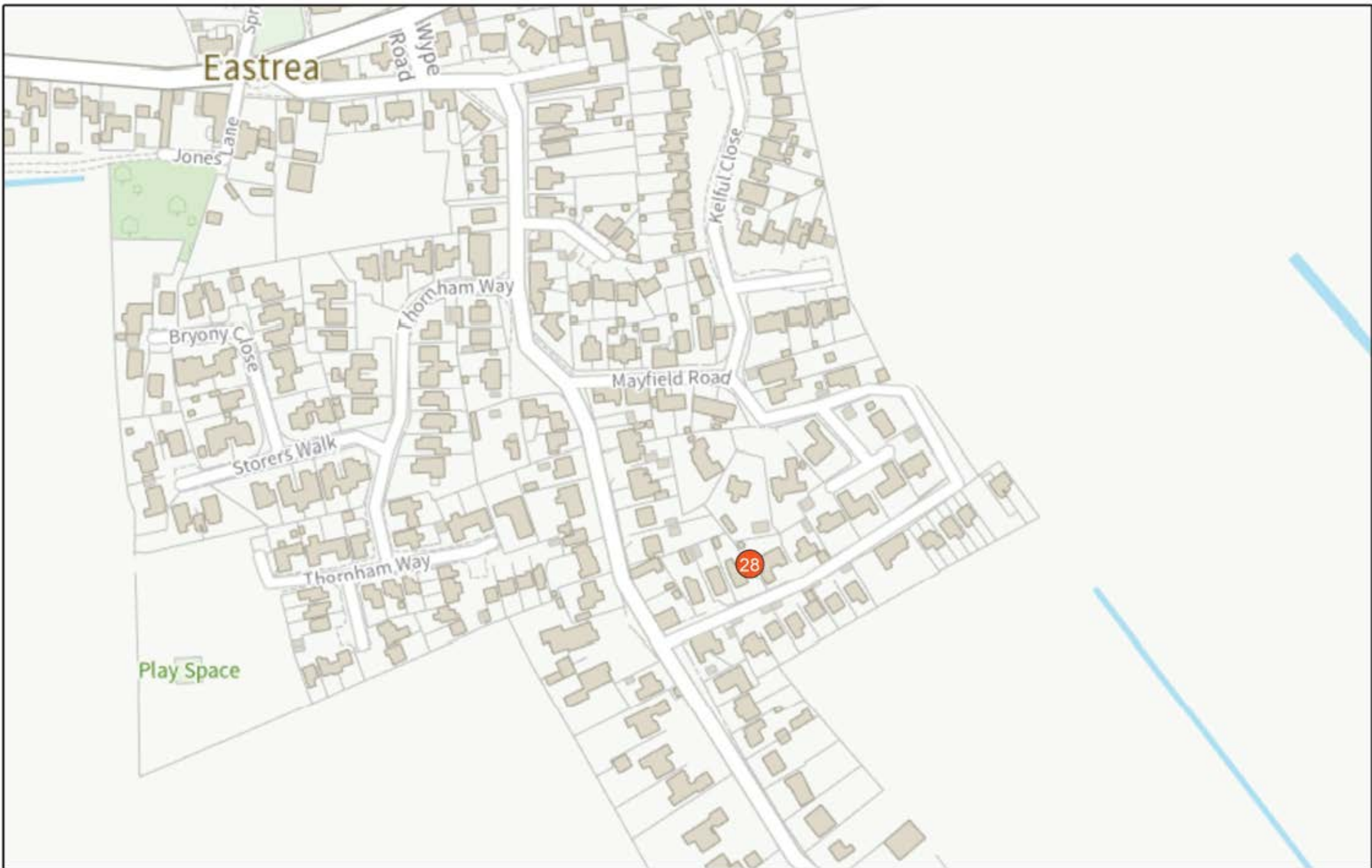
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Map 7A : Whittlesey Mud Walls - details sourced from Whittlesey Mud Walls Group Survey 2016/17

● Visible from highway ● Not visible from highway

Scale = 1:3,000






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Map 7B : Eastrea Mud Walls - details sourced from Whittlesey Mud Walls Group Survey 2016/17

 Visible from highway

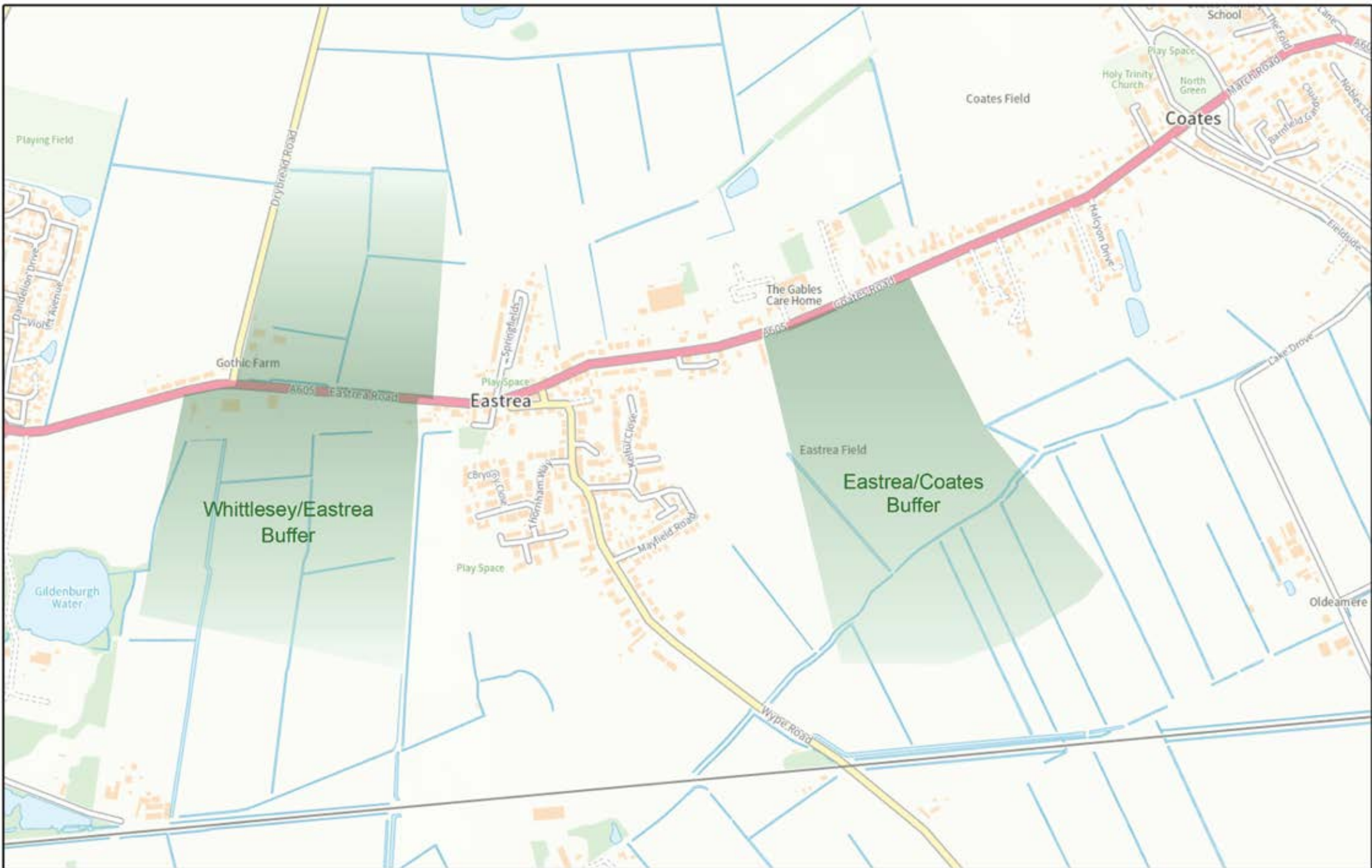
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Whittlesey Mud Walls Numbering

- 1** – Grosvenor Road Eastgate car park
- 2** – Blunts Lane / Grosvenor Road bus stop
- 3** - Old Crown Lane / 24 Syers Lane
- 4** – 7 Arnolds Lane / 25 Arnolds Lane*
- 5** – 5 Delph Street
- 6** – 6c Delph Street / 4 Delph Street
- 7** – 6b Delph Street / 8 Delph Street
- 8** - Delph Court / 8 Delph Street
- 9** – 27c Windmill Street / 20 Low Cross*
- 10** – 87 Gracious Street / 89 Gracious Street
- 11** – 87 Gracious Street / St Mary's House
- 12** - Conservative Club / 36 Whitmore Street
- 13** - Conservative Club / 36 Whitmore Street
- 14** – 50 Low Cross / 46 Low Cross*
- 15** – 4 West End
- 16** - 4 Finkle Lane
- 17** – Finkle Court car park / 12 Finkle Lane / 10 Finkle Court
- 18** – 2 Willow Close / 3 Willow Close*
- 19** – 45 Hallcroft Road
- 20** – 9 Horsegate / 13 Horsegate*
- 21** - 14 Horsegate / Wades Yard
- 22** – 8 Horsegate / 14 Horsegate / Wades Yard parking area
- 23** – Black Bull PH / Queen Street car park
- 24** – Black Bull PH / 7c Queen Street
- 25** – Black Bull PH / 7c Queen Street
- 26** – Black Bull PH / Former Cinema
- 27** – 30 Bassenhally Road / 28a Bassenhally Road / 1 Bassenhally Court
- 28** – 72 Mayfield Road / 78 Mayfield Road, Eastrea

*Not visible from the public highway



Created on: 12/01/2023

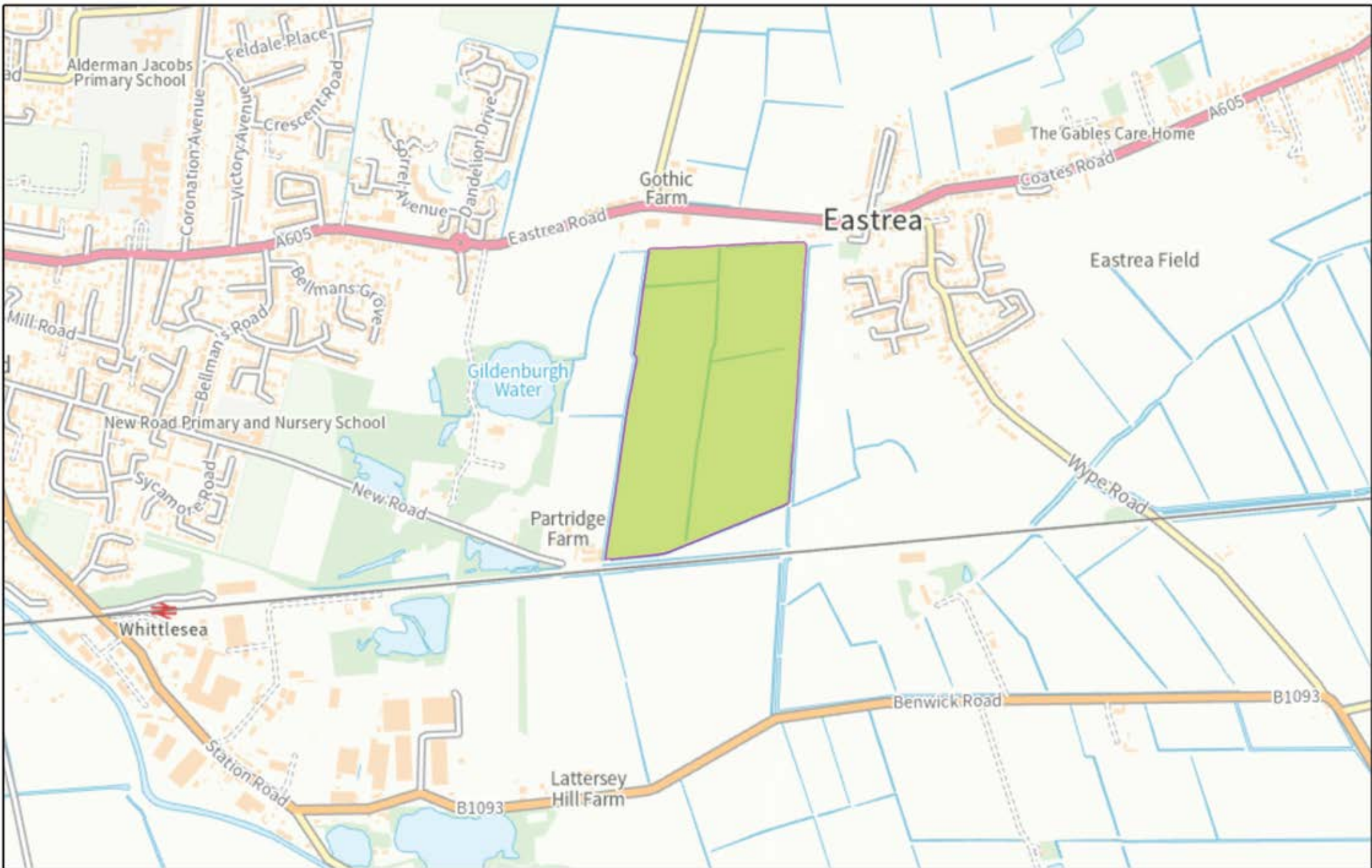
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 Green buffer

Map 8 : Green Buffers


Scale = 1:9,000






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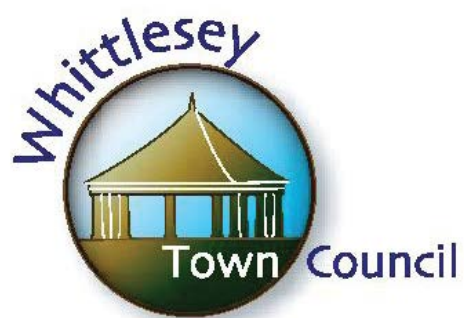
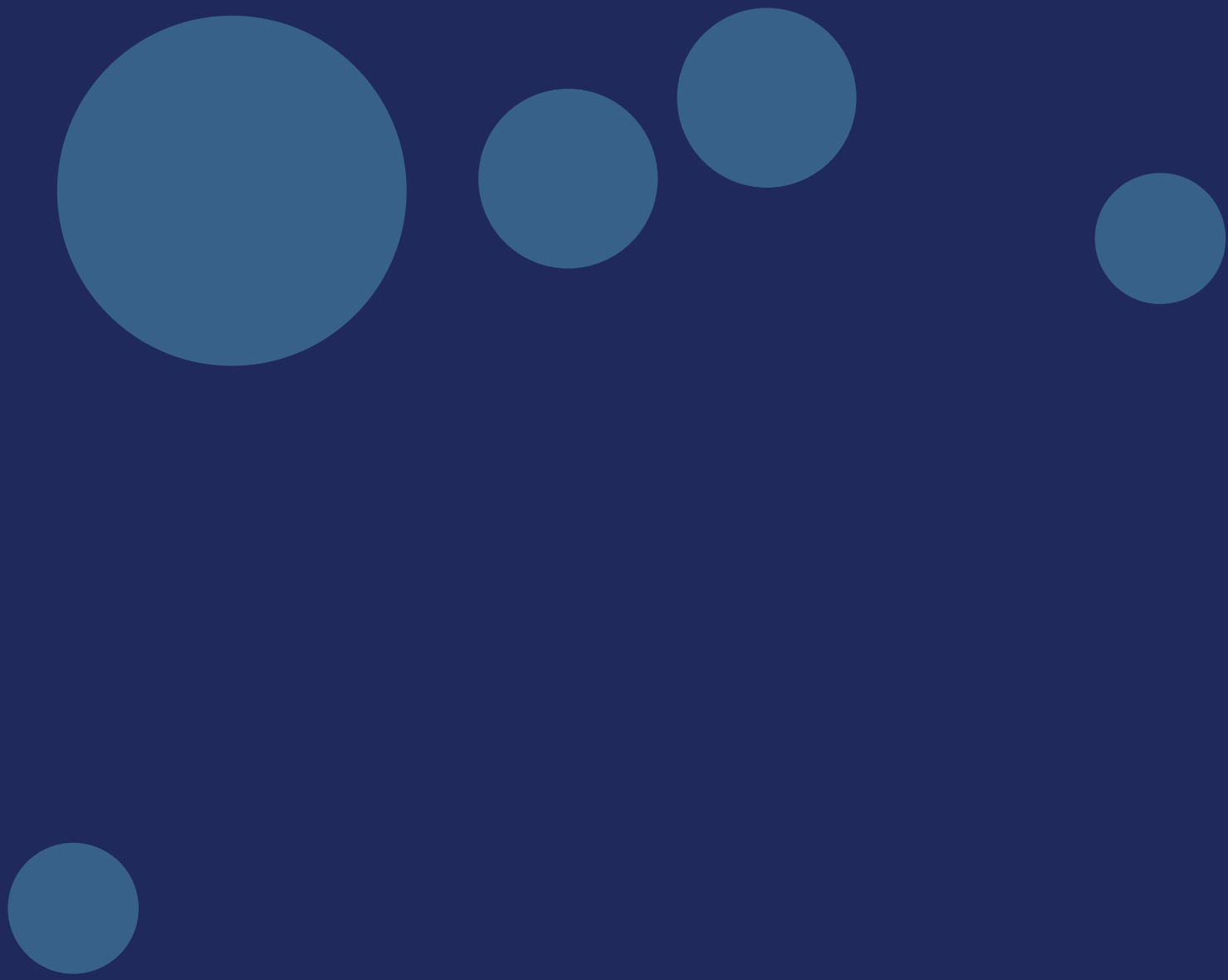
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 Whittlesey Country Park 2023

Map 9 : Country Park

Scale = 1:11,000 

 Fenland
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Fenland District Council



Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan (Draft) Decision Statement (Regulation 19)

22 May 2023

Fenland District Council

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Decision Statement has been prepared and published in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). This statement sets out the Council's decision to formally make the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan, and the reasons for this decision.
- 1.2. This decision has been taken by Council, in accordance with the Council's constitution. The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan, the Decision Statement and Examiner's Report are published on the Council's website.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Area was designated by Fenland District Council (FDC / the Council) in April 2015.
- 2.2. The Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) and supporting evidence documents were submitted to FDC by Whittlesey Town Council in June 2023.
- 2.3. The Council published the Plan for a period of eight weeks from 8th July to 1st September 2022. Following this publication period, the Council submitted the Plan for independent examination.
- 2.4. An independent examination was held in September to November 2022. The Plan was examined by Mr David Kaiserman BA DipTP MRTPI of Penny O'Shea Consulting. The examination was carried out through written representations. No public hearing session was required.
- 2.5. The examiner considered that, subject to applying his recommended modifications, the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan makes appropriate provision for sustainable development, has appropriate regard to national policy, and is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan. In addition, the examiner concluded that there is no evidence to suggest the Plan is not compatible with EU obligations, including human rights requirements.
- 2.6. Where modified in accordance with his recommendations, the examiner concluded that the Plan meets the basic conditions¹ and recommended it proceed to referendum.

3. Decisions and reasons

- 3.1. In January 2023, the Council published its Regulation 18 decision statement explaining the actions which would be taken in response to the recommendations of the examiner, including the modifications which would be applied to the draft plan.

¹ As set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

3.2. Based on the examiner’s findings and recommendations, the Council is satisfied that the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version), meets the basic conditions and is otherwise legally compliant.

3.3. The Council held a referendum on Thursday, 23rd February 2023. As recommended by the Independent Examiner, the boundary of the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Area formed the referendum area. The referendum ballot asked the following question:

“Do you want Fenland District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Whittlesey to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

3.4. The referendum results were:

	Votes recorded	Percentage
Number cast in favour of a Yes	1,577	77.5%
Number cast in favour of a No	458	22.5%
Total	2,035	100.00%

There were 7 rejected ballots.

3.5. As the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan was supported by the majority of voters, the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) (as amended) requires the plan must be formally ‘made’ by Fenland District Council as soon as reasonably practicable after the referendum is held. Consequently, the plan is made by Fenland District Council’s Full Council at its meeting on 22nd May 2023.

3.6. As a made plan, the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan forms a part of the Development Plan for Fenland.

4. Summary

4.1. Fenland District Council considers that the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version) meets the basic conditions and other legal requirements and was supported by the majority of voters at referendum. The plan is now formally made by Fenland District Council and will be used in making planning decisions.