



2015 – 2030



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1 Background

1.1 Introduction

Neighbourhood planning is part of the Government's new approach to give local people more say about how their area is developed. Neighbourhood plans are intended to give communities, such as Mulbarton, more control over the type, location, size, pace and design of development in their area.

The Mulbarton Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) aims to capture the views of our local community as well as the evidence on the village's housing, natural environment, landscape setting, heritage assets, economy, and community facilities. It comprises part of the Development Plan for the area, and so planning application decisions will be made taking into account the policies set out in the MNP. The MNP has a 15-year time span of 2015 to 2030.

Neighbourhood plans such as the MNP cannot, however, propose less residential or economic development than set out in the more strategic Development Plans for the area (for Mulbarton, this is the *Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk*, and the *South Norfolk Local Plan*, both of which run up to 2026), but the MNP can propose more homes or businesses, alternative sites, locational criteria, or specific design standards for buildings.

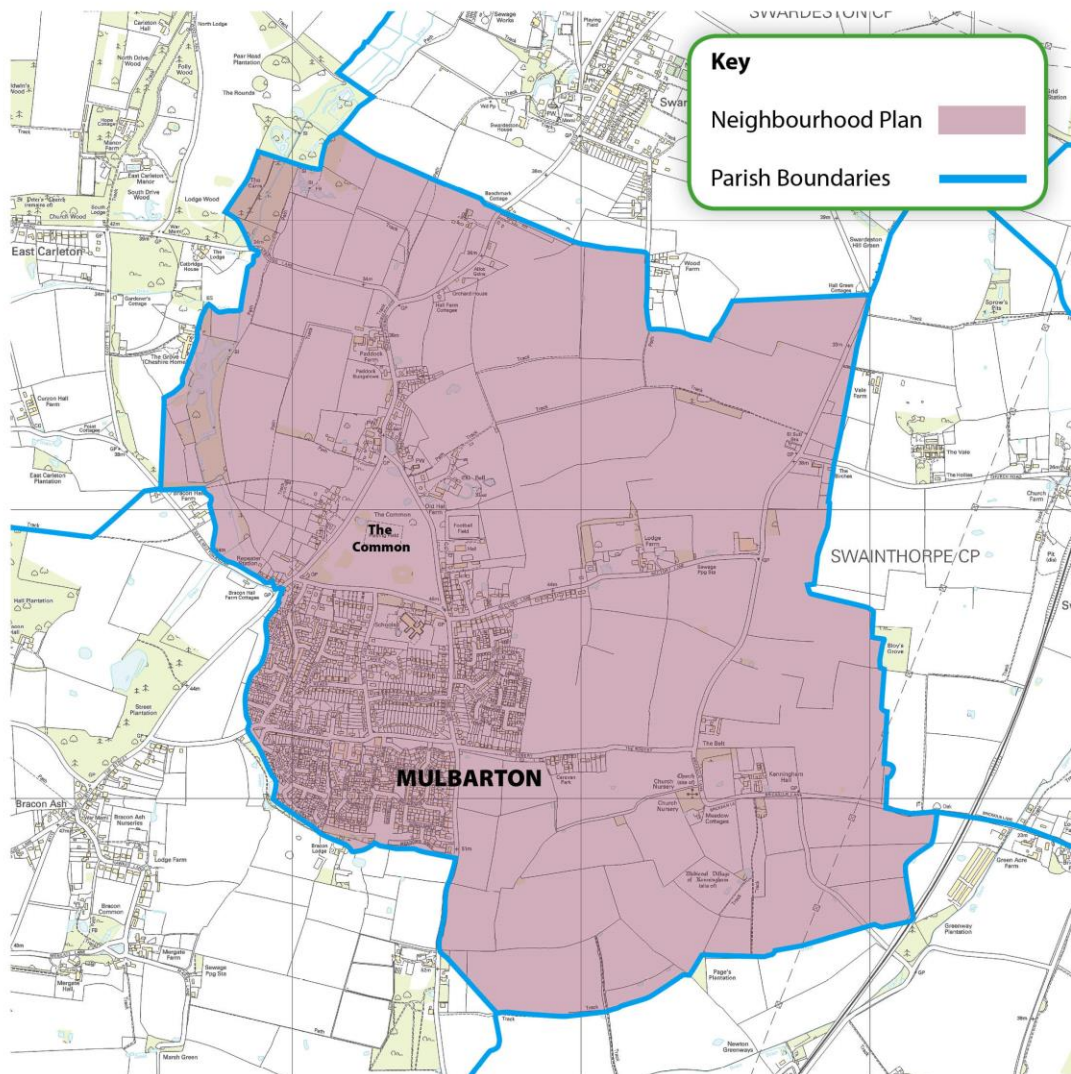
1.2 Mulbarton in Context

Mulbarton is a village in South Norfolk with a population in 2011 of 3,521. It is situated on the B1113 to the west of the A140 and to the east of the A11. Norwich is approximately 10km to the north, with Wymondham 10km to the west and Long Stratton 10km to the south. **Map 1** overleaf shows the area covered by the MNP, which is the extent of the parish.

Most notably, Mulbarton has a large triangular area known as The Common, often considered to be the heart of the village. This is an unusual, well managed feature which boasts a large village pond and a number of smaller ponds. As well as being a home to much biodiversity, The Common provides recreational space for residents and visitors alike and forms the focus of the Mulbarton conservation area. Mulbarton is home to fifteen listed buildings, most of which are contained within the conservation area. The two most significant buildings are the Church of St Mary Magdalen (grade II* listed) whose fine 14th century west tower stands proudly beside The Common, and the great 17th century tithe barn (grade II listed) of the Old Hall dominating the view over The Common from the south. In general, the area is uncluttered by street furniture and signs, and there are no street lights. This helps to conserve the essentially rural character of The Common.

Map 1

Mulbarton Neighbourhood Plan Area

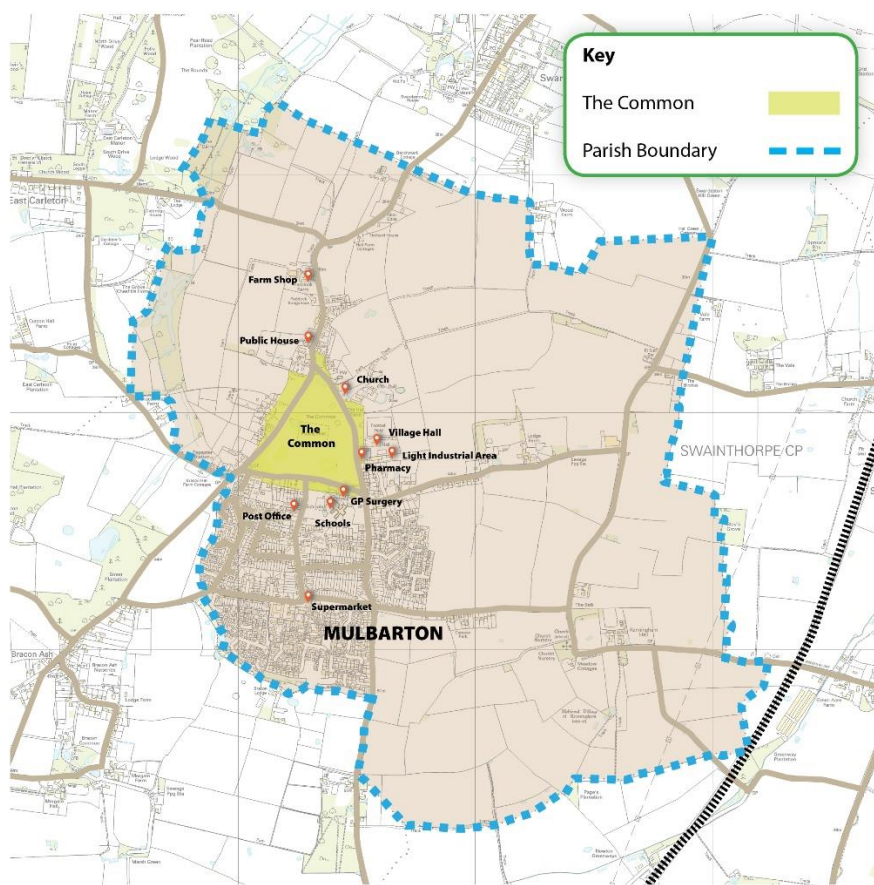


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Mulbarton has a high proportion of brick-built residences. Historically, it developed with cottages and individual properties fronting the three roads around The Common. More recently, estate development has taken place on a large scale to the south of the village which has altered the village's form and character, but **Map 2** of Mulbarton suggests that the natural centre or heart of the village is The Common with its array of services and facilities, as well as recreational opportunities on The Common itself.

Map 2

The Common and location of services and facilities



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There has been little development on the edges of The Common¹ in order to preserve its impressive open appearance and allow views out over the surrounding countryside, drawing the countryside into the 'heart of the village'. There is also a good buffer of open farmland between the B1113 and the western edge of new residential areas south of The Common

¹ The Common itself is privately owned and subject to strict planning laws.

which contributes to the setting of the village. The view of the church, north of The Common, is prominent from all parts of The Common. The special character of this area has been recognised by the designation of a Conservation Area in 1977, which was extended in 1994. More detail on the Conservation Area and policies for protecting its special features can be found in **Section 7.1**.

Mulbarton hosts 1,473 households, the most common of which (43%) are detached houses, followed closely by semi-detached houses (35%), with 12% of households living in terraced houses and a further 10% living in flats. The majority of dwellings are privately owned, and private ownership is above average for the South Norfolk district. Conversely relatively few dwellings are rented. Although the most common type of dwelling is 3 bedroomed, Mulbarton has a high proportion of 4 bedroomed houses, and a low proportion of one and two bedroomed dwellings.



Church of St Mary Magdalen. Picture courtesy of 'Butterfly Effect photography and design'
<http://www.realitypaused.com/>

As well as the church, the village has its own infant and junior schools, playgroups and a choice of pre-school provision, a sheltered housing complex, farm shop, GP surgery, dentist, chemist, social club, village hall and scout/guide HQ, Post office and convenience stores, hot food take-aways, motor vehicle workshop, a pub, allotments and recreation areas.

Compared to the rest of Norfolk, the region and indeed England as a whole, a high proportion of Mulbarton's residents are economically active, such as in full or part time work, whilst there is a low unemployment rate. A large number work in Norwich, although significant numbers also work locally, primarily at the Hethel Engineering Centre and Lotus. Compared to elsewhere there is a low proportion of retired people, and especially relatively

few aged 75-84 years old. Conversely, the village has a large proportion of children under 4 years of age.

The village has rather a good and safe environment for walking and although walking within the village is relatively popular, few people walk to work, principally because of the distance. There is a reasonable bus service to Norwich which collects passengers at stops around the village, and indeed a relatively high proportion of residents use the bus to get to work, principally in Norwich. However, by far the preferred method of getting to work is by car.

The landscape around the village is flat or gently rolling and, due to its relatively elevated position and predominantly arable land cover, is open with good long range views. The general area is characterised by well contained dispersed settlements and there are few hedgerows. The area, including Mulbarton, is vulnerable to losing some character as a result of sprawl and insensitive development not respecting the historic built character, and there is the risk that future loss of vegetation such as hedgerows would open up the landscape further.

In terms of biodiversity, Carrs Woodland lies to the north-west of the village, and The Common itself has a large and interesting range of flora and fauna, including some protected species such as great crested newts. There is some risk of fluvial and surface water flooding in and around the village, with this risk being more significant and serving as a planning constraint to the north-west.

Policy 15 of the *Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2014* (hereafter referred to as the *Joint Core Strategy*) identifies Mulbarton as a Service Village in which land will be allocated for small-scale housing growth in the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2026, within the range of 10-20 dwellings. Settlements identified in this policy that are also within the Norwich Policy Area, including Mulbarton, may be considered for additional development, if necessary, to help deliver further housing need. South Norfolk Council therefore made allowance for a larger allocation within the village, with a 13.7ha site off Flordon Long Lane for 150 dwellings, which now has planning permission for 180 homes. Given Mulbarton's position in the settlement hierarchy set out in the *Joint Core Strategy*, this is a very high number. Assuming homes with planning permission will be built by March 2016, the 15-year housing growth in the village between 2001 and 2016 will be 47%, which is a high growth rate and in the opinion of the community is not sustainable in the medium to long term, and ultimately is not entirely consistent with the underlying aim of *Joint Core Strategy* Policy 15 to limit growth in Service Villages to a scale that is proportionate to their function and size.

1.3 Development of the MNP and Community Feedback

The MNP has been developed by a small Neighbourhood Plan Committee of residents under the auspices of the Parish Council, supported where necessary by professional consultants. Progress on the MNP has been reported regularly to the Parish Council at their monthly meetings and to villagers via reports in the Free Quarterly Parish Magazines delivered to every home, posters in the Parish Council Notice Boards around village, on the village website, and via information e-mails sent out to a large number of residents. The work has

also involved developing an Evidence Base, reviewing national and local planning policies, and carrying out extensive public consultation in December 2013, June 2014, and November/ December 2014. The Evidence Base is available as a separate document. Further detail on consultations can be found in the separate report '*Mulbarton Neighbourhood Plan: Statement of Community Involvement*'.

The MNP sets out a Vision for Mulbarton together with a set of policies. These were developed by taking into account the following:

- The Evidence Base which includes the social, economic and environmental characteristics of Mulbarton;
- The policy context, in particular The National Planning Policy Framework, the Joint Core Strategy, and the South Norfolk Local Plan;
- The responses of the residents, particularly to the summer 2014 Consultation, which involved a questionnaire being delivered to all 1,473 Mulbarton households; and
- Planning law and legislation, including EU legislation.

The MNP Committee has from the outset been very keen to reflect the views of residents. There was an excellent response at the village Christmas Fayre in December 2013 when well

over 200 residents visited the display. A more extensive Consultation to inform the drafting of the MNP took place in June 2014, which proved especially important and useful. There was a very large number of responses with over 400 completed questionnaires, or around 30% of households.



The MNP Committee analysed the responses from the various rounds of consultation and found the following highlights that reflect the preferences of the Mulbarton residents:

- Starter homes were seen as the most important housing type needed, followed by family homes and then affordable homes, with little desire for apartments or flats. There was a general preference for small scale development, up to 20 homes, rather than larger scale.
- The need to minimise traffic from new developments, particularly through the Heart of the Village. Increased traffic from new development was the strongest felt concern, followed by the scale of development and the impact on green spaces. The provision of adequate new local facilities was also a concern.
- With regard to new employment development, the preference was for it to be near to existing employment. Smaller businesses were preferred over larger ones, with

strong support especially for micro-businesses. Indeed, the scale of employment provision was the greatest concern here. This was likely to be because of the perceived adverse impacts, such as noise and over-spill car parking.

- The main way of travelling within the village is walking, followed by driving. For journeys elsewhere outside the village, especially journeys to places other than Norwich, driving is the preferred method, followed by the bus. The vast majority use the bus service to Norwich at least occasionally. Although this is likely to be less than once a month, a significant proportion uses it more often, particularly once or twice a week, with some using it most days. Better pavements or routes could increase walking and cycling activity in and around the village.
- The main transport improvement residents suggested was a reduction in traffic through the village. Better maintenance, improved parking enforcement around the schools and GP surgery, and an improved junction near Harford Bridges were also seen as important. More street lighting was the only one where a clear majority rated it as unimportant.
- The introduction of a coffee shop was a very popular suggestion, followed by facilities for young people. In terms of facilities related to housing growth, the improvements thought most necessary were to medical facilities, mobile phone signal and broadband.
- There was very strong agreement concerning the importance of The Common and other green spaces, and the need to avoid adverse impacts on these, as well as protecting landscape/hedgerows and footpaths. An overwhelming majority were in favour of having no street lights.

The following policies in this Plan are especially important. The policies are statements of what will need to be taken into account by the Parish Council in commenting on planning applications, and by South Norfolk Council when determining planning applications and deciding whether or not to grant planning permission. Only the policies have any weight when determining planning applications; the supporting text is just for explanation.

2 Vision

This Plan for Mulbarton aims to allow residents to make real choices about how they would like to see their village change and develop by:

- Understanding at a local level the housing needs for residents today and in the future;
- Providing and supporting clubs and facilities that offer opportunities for enhancing the wellbeing of residents through exercise and social contact;
- Providing a safe and flexible place for people to live and work;
- Protecting and improving the amenity value of the environment for residents in both the local and wider community;
- Nurturing and encouraging an environment that allows social enterprise to flourish through volunteering and giving, to enhance the lives of all residents; and
- Promoting residents' aspirations of remaining a walkable village with The Common at its heart and providing an environment in which children, adults and the elderly can flourish and develop.



3 Housing Policies

3.1 Scale and location of new residential development

The MNP supports *Joint Core Strategy* Policy 15, which sets out that small scale housing growth of 10-20 dwellings is the most suitable and appropriate scale of housing development for a Service Village such as Mulbarton. The MNP also recognises that there is a national and local housing need and that *Joint Core Strategy* 15 also sets out that those service villages within the Norwich Policy Area, such as Mulbarton, could be required to accommodate additional housing. Indeed, this has been the case. The MNP recognises that the village will need to provide for a level of housing growth that is proportionate and sustainable in view of its size, its function in the settlement hierarchy, and its proximity to Norwich, as well as the level of services and facilities it has and which need to be maintained and enhanced.

The Consultation carried out in June 2014 found that residents have a general preference for small scale development, including in-fill, which is reflected in this plan. During the same consultation a number of considerations emerged that should influence the location of new development, especially larger scale development should it happen.

Given the popularity of The Common as the ‘Heart of the Village’, and the considerable growth that has happened to the south, Policy HOU1 aims to redress some of the imbalance of the village by supporting The Common as the focal point of much of village life, and building on its role of providing a ‘sense of place’, which is a key feature of the *National Planning Policy Framework*. The ‘Heart of the Village’ is defined as the area shown on **Map 6 at Appendix A**. It is contiguous with the Conservation Area and so includes The Common, and a range of services and facilities that are adjacent to or close to The Common.

New development of whatever scale should aim to contribute towards strengthening The Common as being at the ‘Heart of the Village’ and a focal point for village life and interaction. South Norfolk Council’s Landscape Character Assessment identified that Mulbarton and other villages are vulnerable to edge of settlement sprawl as a result of new development which will change the character of the area. Policy HOU1 therefore aims to address the need to maintain the character of the village and limit further edge sprawl out into the adjacent landscape, especially to the south which has already been subject to considerable expansion. Well-planned infill and limited edge development may be acceptable, and so therefore reduce sprawl ever further away from the nucleus of the village.

Policy HOU1: Location of New Residential Development

Permission will be granted for new residential development of five or more dwellings provided it is located where it will rebalance the development pattern of the village by improving the focus on The Common and adjacent facilities in the 'Heart of the Village' which is defined on Map 6. Proposals for five or more dwellings that result in the growth of the village further southward will not generally be acceptable. Any new development should also respect the character and appearance of the Mulbarton Conservation Area and the setting of listed buildings in the Parish.

This policy applies to all proposals and sites that individually or cumulatively as part of a larger, but contiguous site are for five or more dwellings.

The **Policies Map (MAP 6) at Appendix A** shows the extent of the area defined in this policy as the "Heart of the Village".

3.2 Housing Types

Mulbarton hosts 1,473 households, the most common of which (43%) are detached houses, followed closely by 35% semi-detached houses, with 12% of households comprised of terraced houses and a further 10% living in flats.² These figures include bungalows as houses.

The majority of housing in Mulbarton is privately owned (77%), which is significantly higher than the 63% national level of home ownership. Social rented accommodation accounts for only 11% of housing stock in Mulbarton, compared to 18% nationally. Private renting is also less popular in Mulbarton than nationwide, at a rate of 10% compared to 17%.

In terms of housing type, the most common of Mulbarton's housing stock is three bedroom properties, followed by two bedroom properties. The area has a higher than average proportion of four bedroomed properties at 20%, compared with 14% nationally. However, the proportion of one bedroom properties is half that of national levels of 12%, and the proportion of two bedroom properties is also slightly lower than national levels of 28%.³

Policy HOU2: Type of Housing

The majority of dwellings proposed for any new development should provide starter/late life homes and family homes, whilst recognising the need for a mix of other property types in accordance with Policy 4 of the *Joint Core Strategy*.

Consultation exercises identified a need for family homes (3-4 bedrooms), starter homes (2 bedrooms), and affordable housing to be prioritised. New residential development in

² Census 2011

³ Census 2011

Mulbarton will therefore be encouraged to provide the mix and tenure of housing required within the parish.

Bungalows, which have the ability to provide housing for older people as well as those with disabilities, will be strongly encouraged given the growing need for housing suitable for older people, as well as in-fill developments which provide self-building opportunities.

One or two bedroom bungalows or houses will be preferred to flats, whether for open market or affordable housing purposes, which are more in keeping with the existing character and vernacular of Mulbarton. Where flats are proposed, it will be expected that they will have the outward appearance of cottages or houses.

3.3 Density

Mulbarton's existing housing density is low, although relatively higher densities are present within the residential estates built in the village over the past 40 years. Nevertheless, it still has, especially around The Common, a rural feeling typified by open spaces between buildings and an irregularity of built structures interspersed with trees and mature hedgerows. It is therefore important to retain the rural feel of the village as it develops, by ensuring that new development respects the existing built density of the village.

Policy HOU3: Density

To conserve the open, spacious and green character of Mulbarton, new development should reflect the overall character of Mulbarton and take account of its rural setting. Densities for new housing development on any given site should be consistent and compatible with the existing and prevailing density in that local context and reflect the locally distinctive character of the locality in which the new development is proposed so that the village feel is retained

The MNP is not prescribing specific minimum or maximum densities. However, there will be an onus on developers to show within planning applications for residential developments that the proposed housing density is consistent with the character and spacing of the existing residential development densities within Mulbarton. Furthermore, it will be necessary to show that it is appropriate to the proposed development site and retains the rural feel of the village. For example, lower housing densities might be more appropriate in and around the Heart of the Village.

3.4 Design

Mulbarton is a historic village full of character and has its own representative vernacular in terms of the design style of the village. As such, there is a need to ensure that future developments contribute to a cohesive design, feel and pattern in Mulbarton.

Planning can also play a key role in helping places to secure reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy.

Per capita domestic (i.e. residential) carbon dioxide (the most common greenhouse gas) emissions are higher in South Norfolk than in Broadland and Norwich, and are also higher than county and national averages. There is therefore a need to reduce carbon emissions generated from domestic energy use in order to contribute to carbon dioxide reduction targets and help to mitigate climate change.

In addition to flood risk from rivers in small areas of Mulbarton, there is a more widespread risk of surface water flooding, and this risk may increase in the face of climate change. Surface water flooding happens when rainwater does not soak into the ground or drain away through the normal drainage systems, which locally have a limited capacity, but lies on or flows over the ground instead, and is particularly problematic during heavy rainfall events, the frequency of which has been on the rise in recent years.

Policy HOU4: Design

Development will be designed and sited so as to reinforce the local distinctiveness and existing vernacular architectural traditions of the village.

All new development will be expected to meet current Government standards for sustainable design and construction, and should exploit any opportunities to reduce surface water run-off.

In order to understand better the Mulbarton vernacular and design developments accordingly, developers should consult the Mulbarton Conservation Area Appraisal and also the South Norfolk Place Making Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

The current Government standard used to ensure the sustainability of new residential development is governed by Building Regulations. In particular however, all new development should exploit opportunities to reduce surface water run-off such as through the use of permeable surfacing materials, green roofs, grey water recycling systems and grey water storage and/or irrigation systems for gardening, and give adequate consideration to the use and installation of sustainable drainage systems. Although this falls under the Building Regulations, there are clearly important planning considerations as well in terms of the appearance of new development and the need to mitigate surface water flood risk in the village.

All new residential developments must also be designed in accordance with Norfolk County Council's parking standards, and should include sufficient car parking in the form of off-street garage space and/or driveway space.

4 Economic Growth Policies

4.1 New employment development

The village provides a small number of local job opportunities, with most of the businesses and services being located around The Common, although there are a couple to the south. However, levels of out-commuting are high, mainly to Norwich but also to other centres of employment such as Hethel Engineering and Lotus. Modest local economic development that provides local jobs should therefore be encouraged, in accordance with Policy 15 of the *Joint Core Strategy*.

The *Joint Core Strategy* does not plan for any land for economic/employment development within the Mulbarton area, although small-scale employment or service development appropriate to the scale and needs of the village and its immediate surroundings will be encouraged. Existing local shops and services, although relatively small in terms of employment numbers, will be protected through the *Joint Core Strategy*. The *National Planning Policy Framework* requires neighbourhood plans in rural areas like Mulbarton to support sustainable development of new and existing businesses, as well as promote the retention of existing employment activities such as local shops and services.

This was generally supported by the MNP Consultation in June 2014. Smaller business development is preferred, especially micro-businesses of fewer than 10 employees. Indeed, for economic development, the scale was the greatest concern. This is likely to be because of the feared adverse impact; related noise and parking impacts were of considerable concern.

Policy ECN1: New Economic Development

New economic development that comprises a micro or small business will be encouraged and supported in principle, conditional on appropriate mitigation and design. Any proposal for an employment-generating use will need to demonstrate that:

- it will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity;
- it will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the transport network;
- it can accommodate all parking within its site; and
- it will not have any other unacceptable environmental impacts, including impacts on the historic environment.

The aim of Policy ECN1 is to promote economic development that is of a scale proportionate to the size and function of Mulbarton and its place in the settlement hierarchy, and to make any adverse impacts of economic development acceptable in planning terms.

Integral to any such development should be sufficient land to provide for all vehicle parking needs of staff and visitors, so as to eliminate any adverse impact of over-spill parking on surrounding residential streets or lanes.

5 Transport Policies

5.1 Access to Services and Road Safety

The *National Planning Policy Framework* requires new development to facilitate the use of sustainable transport modes, especially development generating significant travel demand, and to ensure that safe and suitable access can be provided for all people. Currently the most common mode of transport within the village is walking. The *National Planning Policy Framework* aims to promote walking as a way of improving health and social interaction. The *Joint Core Strategy* is also supportive of walking, cycling and public transport use, and promotes significant improvement to the bus, cycling and walking network. Nevertheless, it also recognises that in rural areas the private car will remain an important and necessary means of travel.

Walking is known to promote neighbourliness and community spirit. National policy sets out that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. This means promoting opportunities for people to meet in the street, and actively use public spaces. The *Joint Core Strategy* supports the concentration of development close to essential services and facilities to encourage walking and cycling as the primary means of travel, with public transport for wider access.

Furthermore, not everybody has ready use of a car, which is especially true for older and younger residents. It was therefore unsurprising that locating new development which enables easy access by walking to local services was a popular suggestion in the June 2014 Consultation.



A number of local roads in and around the village benefit from 20mph speed limits and, coupled with a relatively good footway network and low traffic flows, makes the village itself a relatively safe walking environment.

The Evidence Base and the Consultation suggest that the bus service is well used for trips outside of the village. There seems to be good support for the bus service, and retaining its viability and developing an evening service. This will help people who do not have ready access to a car, including young adults.

From the June 2014 Consultation, the main transport improvement should be to reduce, or reduce the impact of, traffic through the village. Better highway maintenance, improved parking enforcement around

the schools/GP surgery and an improved junction near Harford Bridges, where the B1113 meets the A140, were also seen as important. Measures to reduce traffic speed or speed limits on village roads were also considered important. Interestingly, there was very strong opposition to the idea of introducing street lighting.

Policy TRA1: Access to services and road safety

New development should take every opportunity available to provide safe and convenient pedestrian access and connections to the existing pedestrian network and create new networks.

Mulbarton prides itself on its walkability. Development that is well located and can provide safe and convenient walking access to The Common and local services and facilities and to bus stops will be particularly encouraged.

As part of this promotion of sustainable transport, developments should incorporate natural surveillance of pedestrian routes and public open spaces.

New development schemes should be designed to facilitate traffic speeds of 20mph or lower on residential streets or lanes where appropriate, and a satisfactory amount of off-street car parking must be provided in a well-designed and convenient way in accordance with the applicable car parking standards.

The MNP aims to preserve Mulbarton as a very walkable village that enables residents to choose walking as the most popular means of getting about within the village. Whilst it may be necessary in certain circumstances to improve footways or build new ones, the MNP does not wish to see the urbanisation of Mulbarton with over-engineered solutions. In many parts of the village there are no formal footways with kerbing. Improvements therefore will need to reflect the existing character of the village. Similarly, new residential streets should be designed with a view to facilitate traffic speeds of 20mph or lower and with the overall village character and nature of Mulbarton in mind.

Many recent developments have not provided adequate or convenient car parking, and this has resulted in on-street car parking. Policies TRA1 and ECN1 set out that new housing and economic development will need to demonstrate that sufficient well-designed off-street car parking provision is being made that will be used in preference to on-street parking.

5.2 Traffic

Whilst it is standard practice to expect new development to mitigate adverse impacts on the transport network, such as to ensure road safety, a key aim of the MNP is to reinforce the walkability of the village so as to support social interaction and community well-being. This is especially relevant in the Heart of the Village.

A key concern from the Consultation is the traffic generated by new development and its potential adverse impacts, especially in relation to the Heart of the Village around The Common. Development proposals which have direct access to the B1113 will be particularly effective in addressing this issue.

The overall aim of Policy TRA2 is to foster village social interaction and ensure that Mulbarton remains a walkable community, particularly around the Heart of the Village, and hence the focus on those roads within the Heart of the Village.

Policy TRA2: Traffic in a walkable village

All residential or economic development proposals in Mulbarton that would generate a significant amount of movement in the Heart of the Village as identified on **Map 6** will only be supported if they are accompanied by evidence that the transport issues relating to the development, including details of any measures to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme, are satisfactory and that any opportunities for improving the walking and cycling environment, including improving opportunities for walking and cycling connectivity, are taken.

As well as addressing the transport impacts of new development, a range of measures can be used actually to reduce the traffic generated by new development. The following measures will therefore be considered favourably:

- Travel planning⁴;
- Improvements to sustainable transport infrastructure, such as better and more convenient bus stops and cycle parking.

5.3 Street Lighting

The absence of street lighting in Mulbarton is a key characteristic of the village and is appreciated by most residents who feel that the prevailing ‘dark skies’ help make Mulbarton what it is, and there was strong, although not universal, opposition to introducing street lighting in the consultations.

Key statements 1 and 2 below reflect key community priorities which should ideally be taken into account by potential developers and decision makers.

Key Statement 1: Street Lighting

It will be essential to maintain the “dark skies” and the strong rural feel in Mulbarton by avoiding the introduction of street lighting as part of new development. New street lighting will therefore not be encouraged.

Although this cannot be managed through the planning system and so does not have the status of a policy, the MNP strongly advocates that new development should preferably not include street lights. However, this does not prevent premises or householders from using outside lighting to improve localised amenity or safety.

⁴ Travel planning, such as School Travel Plans, is a set of promotional and educational activities that enable and encourage people to choose sustainable transport options, such as walking more often where reasonable to do so. Travel plans are sometimes, but not always, accompanied by physical measures such as improved walking routes

5.4 Transport Infrastructure

The consultations identified a number of transport issues and needs affecting the village that people felt, to varying degrees, rather strongly about. Some of these are general such as excessive traffic speeds on residential streets, whilst others are specific localised issues such as the parking around the GP Surgery and schools. Residents also felt that there were a number of issues which, although beyond the area covered by the MNP, still had an impact on the residents. These manifested as either specific problems that are evident, such as peak time congestion at the junction of the B1113 and A140 at Harford Bridges, whilst others were aspirations to improve sustainable transport routes, such as a cycle route to Norwich.

Key Statement 2: Transport Infrastructure and Services

When making decisions on growth/development related transport or highways investment that affects Mulbarton, the relevant decision making bodies should take into account the following priorities, in order of priority:

1. Improved car parking management around the schools/ GP surgery;
2. An improvement at the B1113/ A140 Harford Bridges junction;
3. Improved footway and road maintenance in the village;
4. Reduced traffic speeds on existing residential streets and lanes in the village;
5. Cycle routes to Hethel Engineering Centre/ Lotus and Norwich;
6. An improved bus service.

New development might not, for a number of reasons, contribute towards or fund all of the improvements set out in Key Statement 2. In bringing forward development, consideration will need to be given to the extent to which any given development relates in any way to a particular improvement, and whether the viability of a development is undermined, bearing in mind other contributions that may be sought.

Nevertheless, the prioritisation set out in Key Statement 2 should ideally be taken into account. Furthermore, the cumulative impact of different developments (rather than each individually) will need to be considered in decision making, including development not within the village itself. In addition to Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy, there are a number of other growth related funding sources. Relevant investment plans should take into account the priorities set out in Key Statement 2.



Picture courtesy of 'Butterfly Effect photography and design' <http://www.realitypaused.com/>

6 Community Facilities and Services

6.1 Provision of Facilities and Services

As shown in **Map 2**, Mulbarton is fortunate to host a number of useful everyday services and facilities, including:

- A public house (which is a registered Asset of Community Value);
- A social club, village hall, and scout/guide headquarters;
- Church;
- Post Office;
- Infant and junior schools, as well as a choice of pre-school provision;
- A farm shop, supermarket and convenience stores, and café on the B1113;
- A GP surgery, dentist, and chemist;
- Sheltered Housing Complex;
- Skate park, floodlit football ground, floodlit hard court, and several play areas (some equipped) throughout the village;
- Allotments and open recreational spaces;
- Hairdressers, and mobile library;
- Vehicle MoT and service garage; and
- Hot food takeaway outlets.

As Mulbarton grows, so too will the demand for these facilities and services. It is therefore very important to ensure that existing facilities are safeguarded from development that would lead to their loss, and also that new or expanded services and facilities are encouraged.

Policy COM1: Provision of Facilities and Services

All new development will be expected to contribute to the need for additional facilities and services in Mulbarton, particularly if that need is created or increased by the development. In particular, any proposal for an improved or new GP surgery, ideally somewhere around The Common, will be supported and encouraged. There is a desire for additional leisure services and/or social facilities within the village, with particular reference to a café or coffee shop. Applications for these facilities will be encouraged, particularly where they front onto The Common.

Where applications for change of use are submitted involving a potential loss of existing facilities they will be permitted where the developer can demonstrate:

- 1) They will be satisfactorily relocated to elsewhere in the Heart of the Village; or
- 2) Adequate other facilities of the same service offering exist within a reasonable walking distance of the majority of Mulbarton residents to meet local needs; or
- 3) No reasonable prospect of continued viable use which can be demonstrated through:
 - a) Six months of marketing for the permitted and similar uses, using an appropriate agent; and
 - b) Confirmation that it has been offered on a range of terms (including price) agreed to be reasonable on the advice of an independent qualified assessor.

The policy above ensures that existing facilities are protected and are expanded where necessary to meet the needs of all residents, including those of new developments, by ensuring that their existing uses are maintained, provided they remain viable in accordance with South Norfolk Local Plan policies.

In terms of essential needs, public consultation exercises highlighted the importance for medical facilities, schools, mobile telephone and broadband services (see Policy COM2 below) to be protected and expanded in the area. Furthermore, it was identified that a coffee shop and the promotion of more facilities for young people would be highly desirable, from a social perspective. Developers will be encouraged to speak with the local parish and district councils at an early stage regarding what their proposals can offer by way of community services and facilities and the Councils, where appropriate, may seek to use planning mechanisms, such as Section 106 agreements, to secure such contributions.

6.2 Telecommunications

Policy COM2: Telecommunications

The provision of essential infrastructure for telecommunications will be supported where it is of a scale and design appropriate to Mulbarton and would not cause undue visual intrusion, or have an unacceptable impact on the landscape setting and character of Mulbarton. In line with Policy 6 of the *Joint Core Strategy*, all new development must demonstrate how it will contribute to the achievement of fast broadband connections in the area.

In general, Mulbarton residents support new communications infrastructure and the associated improvements these would bring to the area. This will need to be of a scale and design appropriate to Mulbarton. It will largely be a matter of planning judgement, although this could be informed by the assessment required for such proposals. This assessment requirement sets out that in order to ensure the potential impacts of such proposals are adequately mitigated, proposals for the erection of telecommunications masts, equipment and associated development will be assessed to ensure that:

- Opportunities for undergrounding are fully explored;
- There is no unacceptable adverse impact on the character of the locality, the wider landscape and the amenity of residents;
- Full consideration is given to the opportunities for sharing a site, mast or facility with telecommunications infrastructure already in the area, and demonstrate that the least environmentally intrusive option has been selected;
- The proposal is in conformity with the latest national guidelines on radiation protection;
- Full consideration is given to the impact of masts on skyline views and sense of openness, particularly on views to the plateau skyline from the surrounding lower tributary farmland; and
- It would not adversely affect protected species or habitats.

7 The Environment

7.1 Heritage Assets

As shown on **Map 3**, Mulbarton is home to a Conservation Area and fifteen Listed Buildings. Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings are already subject to special planning controls through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Conservation Area protection extends to all buildings and trees within a Conservation Area. By law, Historic England (the Government's statutory adviser on the historic environment) must be notified by a local planning authority when a planning application affects the setting of a Grade I or II* listed building and/or the character or appearance of a Conservation Area (developments over a certain size or height).

Mulbarton is a significant settlement, again with a high proportion of vernacular brick-built residences. It has a large triangular area known as The Common, which is a significant feature. It also has a large village pond as well as a number of smaller ponds on The Common⁵. Of Mulbarton's fifteen listed buildings, none are on the Buildings at Risk register. The two most significant buildings are the Church of St Mary Magdalen, whose fine tower stands proudly beside The Common, and the great 17th century tithe barn of the Old Hall (see picture below), its expanse of brick and tile dominating the view over The Common from the south.



Tithe Barn

Picture courtesy of 'Butterfly Effect photography and design' <http://www.realitypaused.com/>

In general, the area is uncluttered by street furniture and signs, and there are virtually no street lights. This helps to conserve the essentially rural character of The Common and village. Attractive and interesting features include the village sign at the north end of The Common, an old pump on the east side of the village pond, a mile stone beside the former

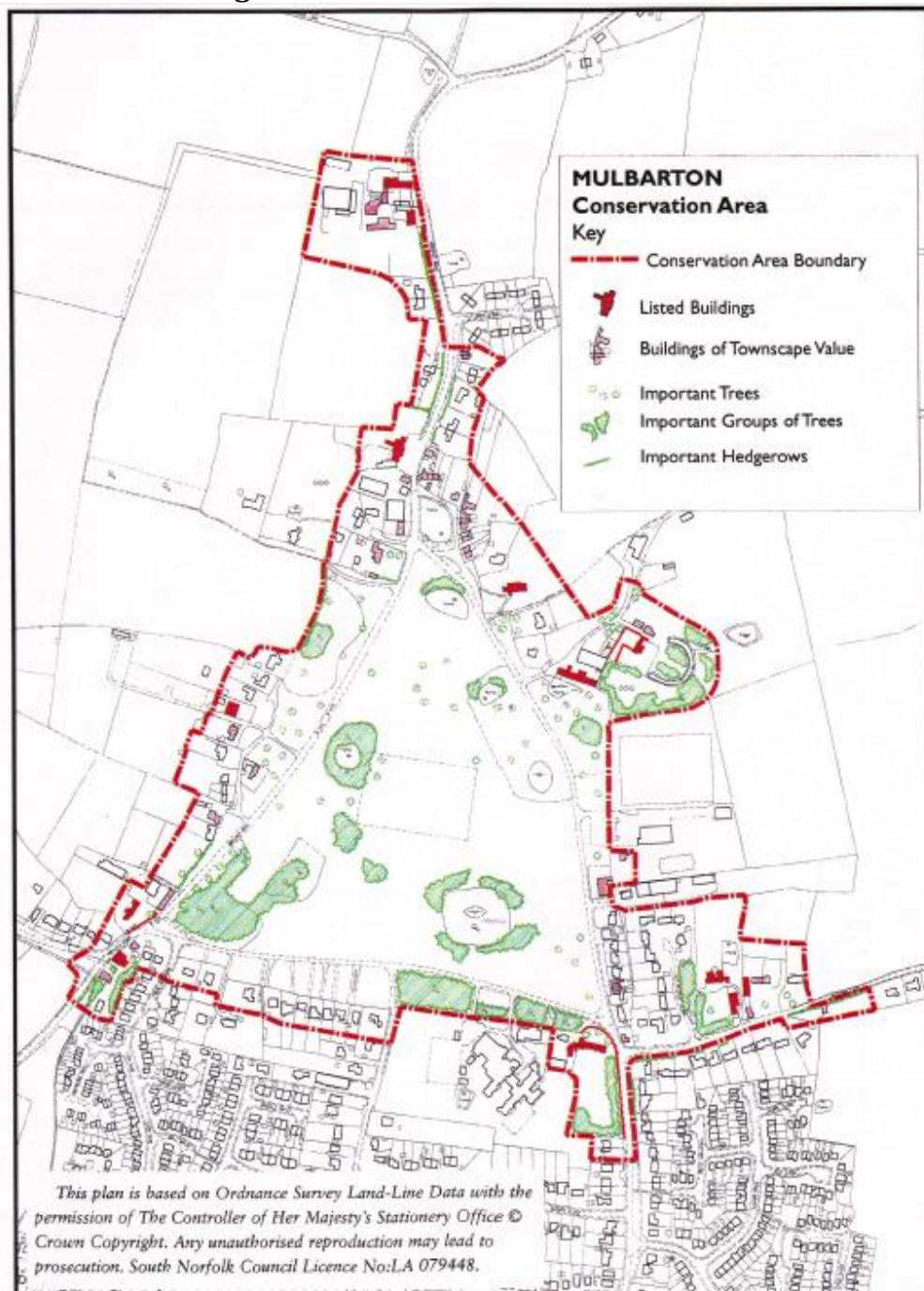
⁵ South Norfolk Council, Landscape Character Assessment.

Methodist Chapel, and a traditional “K6” telephone kiosk to the north of the World’s End public house. These should all be preserved.

Clay pantiles are the prevalent roofing material, mostly red, but occasionally blue/black. Red bricks dominate wall structures, though white galt bricks are used on the front garden wall of Mulbarton Hall.

Map 3 below shows most of Mulbarton’s heritage assets.

Map 3: Mulbarton Heritage Assets



Source: South Norfolk Council, Mulbarton Conservation Area Appraisal, 2002.

Policy ENV1: Conservation Area and Heritage Assets

In addition to Listed Buildings, the Mulbarton Conservation Area Appraisal identified Buildings of Townscape Value, Important Trees and Important Groups of Trees and Important Hedgerows, all of which contribute further to the character of the Mulbarton Conservation Area. These features will also be protected and enhanced under this policy.

New development in or adjacent to the Conservation Area and near important features shown on **Map 3** should take account of the historic fabric of the area and should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

A statement should be provided in support of all development proposals within or adjacent to the Conservation Area and other designated heritage assets. Such statements should outline the significance of any heritage assets affected and any adverse impacts that the development may have on heritage assets. It should also include any proposed mitigation measures, as well as how the proposed development will contribute to the character and setting of the relevant heritage asset(s).

The *Mulbarton Conservation Area Character Appraisal* was last published in 2002. Clearly, there has been a significant amount of change in Mulbarton since then, and the appraisal is considered out of date as it does not comply with Historic England guidelines. A new Conservation Area Appraisal will be carried out as soon as possible, but in the meantime, development proposals should make reference to the 2002 Appraisal.

A Heritage Statement should set out details of the history and development of the asset, using photographic, map, archival and fabric evidence. It should be accompanied by a photographic record, showing the site context and spaces and features which might be affected by the proposal. Most importantly, it should include an assessment of the archaeological, architectural, historical or other significance of the asset and of the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the asset. If an impact is predicted on a heritage asset, the Heritage Statement should also include a justification for those works, together with details of any mitigation measures proposed.

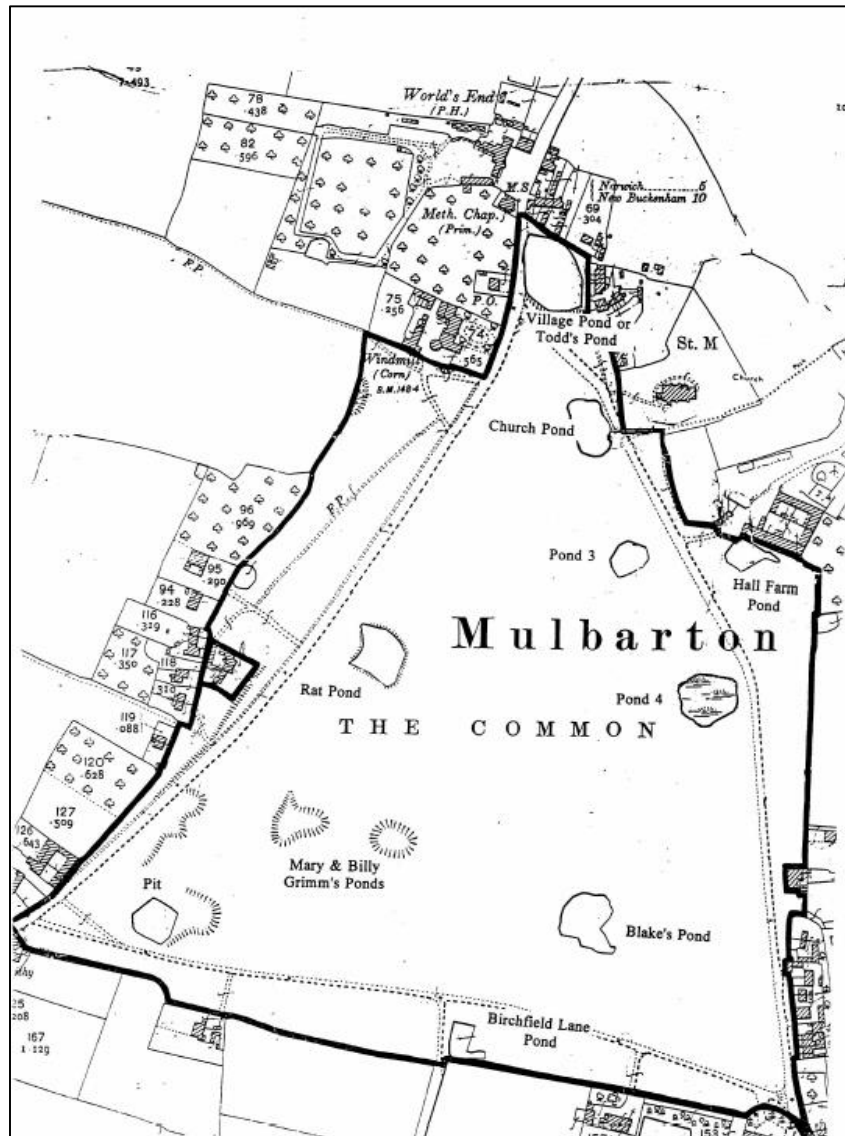
Statutory bodies and developers, in undertaking improvements within the Conservation Area, should be mindful of the historic status of the area, and should use historically appropriate materials that will enhance the look and feel of the Conservation Area. Street furniture and surfacing materials installed within the Conservation Area should be of a classic and enduring design, made of long-lasting materials so as to become an architectural feature rather than detracting from the street scene.

7.2 Local Environmental Assets

At the core of the village is Mulbarton Common (as shown on **Map 4** overleaf), a registered common comprising 19 hectares of open land, used for sports and recreational activities. The Commons Act 2006 aims to protect areas of common land in a sustainable manner delivering benefits for farming, public access and biodiversity. The Act prohibits the

severance of common rights, preventing commoners from selling, leasing or letting their rights away from the property to which rights are attached, and therefore registered commons typically cannot be built upon for private use.

Map 4: Mulbarton Common



South Norfolk Council manages The Common in partnership with the Parish Council on behalf of the owners. It is likely that Mulbarton Common has been maintained as open grassland since the Middle Ages, with the grassland managed then by livestock rather than arable farming.

In addition to its public amenity uses, The Common is home to an abundance of wildlife. The habitats found within The Common include the grassland, which has natural history and scenic value, ponds and young woodland. The woodland provides habitat for many creatures and is largely left to develop, with the brambles cut back to prevent them spreading onto the rest of The Common. There are many grasses recorded on The Common, including perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), sheep's fescue (*Festuca ovina*), spring wild oats (*Avena fatua*) and meadow fox-tail (*Alopecurus pratensis*).



Picture courtesy of 'Butterfly Effect photography and design' <http://www.realitypaused.com/>

In terms of fauna, in spring the Moss Bladder snail (*Aplexa hypnorum*) can be found on The Common followed by Long Tailed Tits (*Aegithalos caudatus*) and Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) in the summer. In autumn, the Blackcap warbler (*Sylvia atricapilla*) can be seen and in winter both water vole and snipe are present within the common. Some of these species are protected through legislation, making it a criminal offence to kill, injure or disturb them.

Policy ENV2: The Common

The Common will be conserved and enhanced as a managed environment, adequately balancing its landscape and biodiversity value with its value as a space for amenity use and public enjoyment. All development proposals will need to demonstrate that this balance is not disturbed.

Development proposals near to The Common must therefore demonstrate that local biodiversity will not be adversely impacted, nor any habitats fragmented. Habitat corridors to and from The Common should be enhanced and integrated into proposals wherever possible.

The public amenity value of The Common must also not be disturbed by development proposals. Applications around and near to The Common will therefore be required to show that there will be no adverse amenity impacts on The Common, and cover issues such as noise, loss of light, traffic, air pollution (including that arising from increased traffic) and waste management/litter.

Policy ENV3: The Local Environment

In order to minimise further opening up of the landscape, all road fronting hedgerows in Mulbarton affected by development requiring consent should be protected and, wherever possible, enhanced. Any hedgerow lost as a result of such development will be expected to be compensated elsewhere within the site, if possible, or elsewhere in the vicinity.

Proposals that would lead to the enhancement of ecological network will be encouraged, particularly where they would further support the management of the County Wildlife Site and improve habitat connectivity. Supplementary planting which strengthens the existing network of hedgerows will also be encouraged.

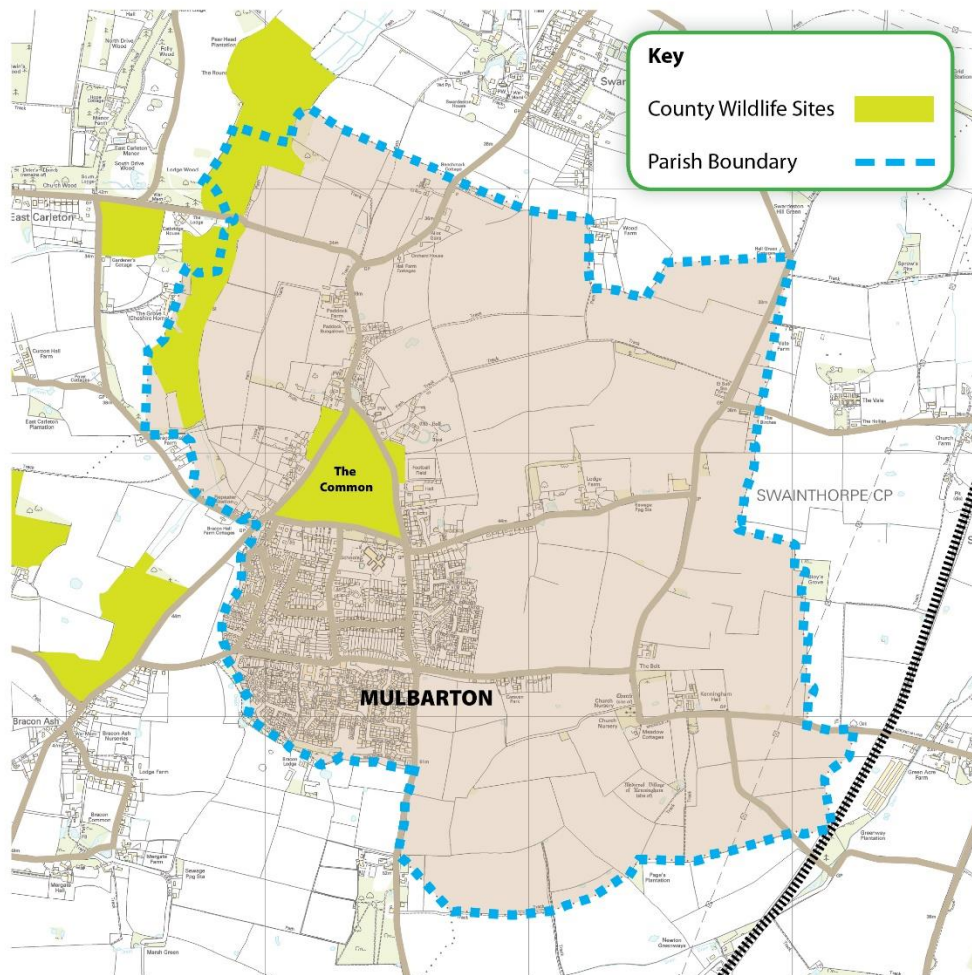
In recent years the Parish Council has pursued a policy of increasing and augmenting hedgerows. As a minimum, all hedgerows in Mulbarton should therefore be retained in situ within development proposals wherever possible. In certain circumstances, it is understood that some hedgerow realignment may be necessary in order to ensure safe and suitable access. However, in such cases there will be an expectation that any hedgerow lost is replanted with a native species mix to promote local biodiversity and also that new or realigned hedgerows are reintegrated into any existing adjacent hedgerows.

Where applicable, applications should therefore be accompanied by a landscaping scheme outlining existing and proposed replacement species and planting details. The protection and suitable replacement or enhancement of road fronting hedgerows may also be secured via a planning condition on any grant of planning permission.

Development proposals near to the County Wildlife Site (as shown on **Map 5** overleaf) must demonstrate that local biodiversity will not be adversely impacted, nor any habitats fragmented. Habitat corridors to and from the County Wildlife Site should be enhanced and integrated into proposals wherever possible.

Map 5

County Wildlife Sites



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Data Source: Natural England, 2014

7.3 Flood Risk

The River Mul runs through part of Mulbarton along the western boundary and there are two small pockets of Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 (high risk of fluvial flooding) in this area as shown on the Environment Agency's website⁶. These will serve as a planning constraint in these areas, as the *National Planning Policy Framework* and its associated Technical Guidance provides very strong controls over development within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3.

In addition to flood risk from rivers, there is also a risk of flooding in certain areas of Mulbarton from surface water, as shown on the Environment Agency's website⁷. In prolonged, exceptionally heavy downpours, which are becoming more frequent, the ground may become saturated and the drains and sewers which carry away surface water may not be able to cope, leading to surface water flooding. This flooding may be triggered or made worse in areas where the ground consists of mostly hard surfaces such as concrete or tarmac so the rainwater flows straight off rather than soaks away into the ground.

Policy ENV4: Flood Risk

Development should not increase flood risk from fluvial flooding or any other source of flooding, including surface water flooding. Planning applications for development within the plan area must be accompanied by a site-specific assessment in line with the requirements of national policy and advice, but may also be required on a site by site basis based on locally available evidence. All proposals must demonstrate that flood risk will not be increased elsewhere and that the proposed development is appropriately flood resilient and resistant.

South Norfolk Council has published comprehensive policy guidance dealing with flood risk matters, and developers submitting planning applications in areas of fluvial or surface water flooding should give careful consideration to this guidance.

Where development is subject to a Flood Risk Assessment (on all sites over 1 hectare or within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3, depending on development type), any surface water assessment should be integrated into the Flood Risk Assessment where appropriate.

Assessments of surface water flooding should include consideration of opportunities for the integration of sustainable drainage systems within development sites to reduce the risk of surface water flooding to both new and existing development. These should be incorporated into the layout and form of the development and should be considered in preference to connections to watercourses or sewers.

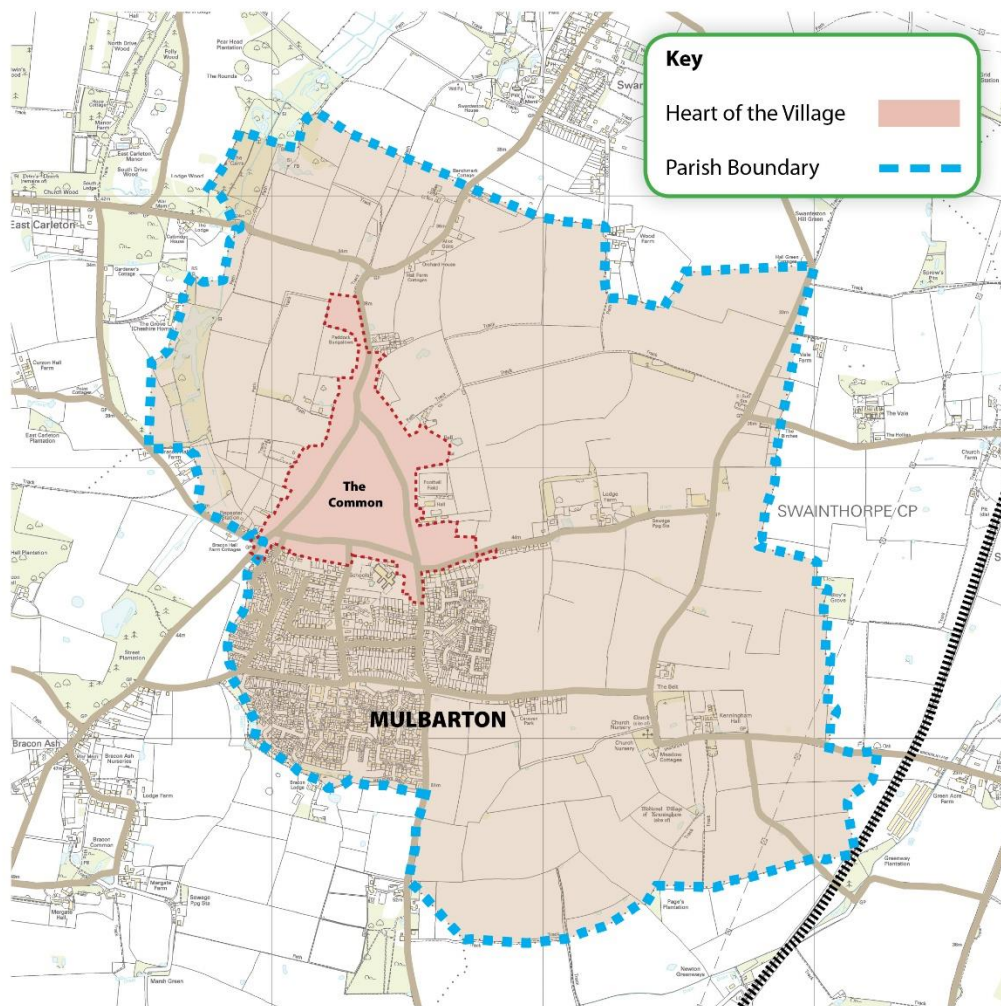
⁶http://watermaps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiyby.aspx?lang=_e&topic=floodmap&layer=0&x=619500&y=300500&scale=10&location=Mulbarton%2c+Norfolk#x=619500&y=300500&scale=10

⁷http://watermaps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiyby.aspx?lang=_e&topic=ufmfsf&layer=0&x=619500&y=300500&scale=10&location=Mulbarton%2c+Norfolk#x=619500&y=300500&scale=10

APPENDIX A: Policies Map – Heart of the Village

Map 6

The Policies Map - Heart of the Village



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Mulbarton Neighbourhood Plan Committee

Marina Carter

Jon Herbert

John Joyce (Chairman)

Geoff Kitchen

Nigel Legg

Steve Sewell

Mark Thompson