

An overview of the Swaffham Bulbeck Neighbourhood Plan



What is the neighbourhood plan?

A neighbourhood plan is a document containing planning policies which will be used by the local planning authority (in our case this is East Cambridgeshire District Council, ECDC) when planning applications are being considered.

To be valid, it must first be examined and approved by ECDC, but before this it must be offered for comments from members of the parish. The present version of the Swaffham Bulbeck neighbourhood plan has been prepared by the Swaffham Bulbeck neighbourhood plan steering group, a group of people comprising residents and parish councillors. We are now consulting all parishioners about its content.

Once approved the plan will apply to planning applications coming forward in the Swaffham Bulbeck parish, the designated neighbourhood plan area.

Consultation on the draft neighbourhood plan

The consultation period runs from 14th September to 2nd November 2021. You are invited to give us your feedback during this period using one of the methods below:

- Completing an online form via this interactive website <http://swaffhambulbeckpc.org.uk/np-documents/>
- Sending an email to: clerk@swaffhambulbeckpc.org.uk
- Sending a completed paper form by post to: Swaffham Bulbeck Parish Clerk, 41 Stow Road, Stow-cum-Quy, CB25 9AD

The proposed Swaffham Bulbeck neighbourhood plan can be viewed in full at our website <http://swaffhambulbeckpc.org.uk/np-documents/>. Paper copies of the plan are available on request from: 1 Station Road, 23 Heath Road, St Mary's Church or the phone box in Commercial End.

Will there be further opportunity to have your say?

Yes. Following this round of consultation, we will revise this draft neighbourhood plan and submit it to East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC). ECDC will then publish it for a further consultation period and appoint an examiner. Importantly, a required and final step in the production of a neighbourhood plan is a parish-wide referendum where you will have the opportunity to support or oppose the plan.

How did we get here?

With your help! The neighbourhood plan steering group first consulted the community in 2019 in order to find out about people's priorities with regard to new development and the future of the parish. This was followed up with a further consultation in July 2020 when we sought your views on a draft vision and a set of objectives for the neighbourhood plan. Since this consultation we have been preparing the plan which we present to you now.

The plan is supported by the Swaffham Bulbeck Landscape Study completed in January 2020. This is available to view at <http://swaffhambulbeckpc.org.uk/np-documents/>.

Tell me about the SwaffhamBulbeck Neighbourhood Plan

The Swaffham Bulbeck Neighbourhood Plan includes a vision, three objectives, five themes and 16 planning policies.

The SwaffhamBulbeck Neighbourhood Plan vision:

To ensure that Swaffham Bulbeck, set in a parish of varied rural landscapes, remains a village whose diversity, community spirit, distinctive and attractive built heritage and green spaces can be enjoyed, protected and enhanced whilst seeking to achieve carbon-neutrality, promote biodiversity and enable proportionate development to meet local needs.

The Swaffham Bulbeck Neighbourhood Plan objectives:

Objective 1: Retain the existing and distinctive village character by:

- a) Maintaining a dispersed but cohesive settlement with open, green spaces and corridors.
- b) Protecting the Cambridge Green Belt and village conservation areas.
- c) Protecting the wider landscape character and setting of the village.
- d) Securing a diverse stock of housing.
- e) Ensuring that the density of any new dwellings is appropriate to its context and proportionate to site and location.

Objective 2: Promote a positive approach to growth delivery which provides at least the minimum number of dwellings required by East Cambridgeshire District Council by:

- f) Increasing housing stock which is accessible to younger families by building affordable houses and low-cost market houses.
- g) Ensuring that new development takes into account size, affordability, design, layout and tenure to meet local needs.
- h) Ensuring that new development is proportionate to the size of the village.

Objective 3: Encourage a thriving village which retains a diverse range of age groups within a community which promotes sustainability by:

- i) Supporting Swaffham Bulbeck primary school as a key element of the social structure of the community.
- j) Retaining and enhancing facilities, services and employment opportunities as required.
- k) Active promotion of low carbon emission strategies with an aim of achieving carbon neutrality through, for example, building construction, retrofitting existing housing stock, generating heat and power through solar or other community energy schemes, provision of car charging points and enhanced cycling and walking routes.
- l) Conservation initiatives and the active promotion of new biodiversity schemes to enhance the parish's natural habitat, for example by tree planting, restoring hedgerows, protecting peatlands, and encouraging wildflower areas.

The 16 planning policies in the Swaffham Bulbeck Neighbourhood Plan:

Spatial Strategy (Theme 1)

Planning Policy SWB 1 – Swaffham Bulbeck development envelope

This policy provides an up-to-date development envelope which will replace the development envelope provided in the 2015 Local Plan. During the plan period, development will in principle be supported inside the development envelope (subject to being compliant with other policies in this plan and the Local Plan) and resisted outside it (excluding the exceptions set out in this policy).

Parish Character (Theme 2)

Planning Policy SWB 2 – Swaffham Bulbeck village landscape character

This policy ensures existing important landscape characteristics in Swaffham Bulbeck Village are fully recognised, protected accordingly and where appropriate enhanced when new development proposals come forward. The policy is accompanied by maps identifying views in the village centre to be protected.

Planning Policy SWB 3 – Swaffham Bulbeck parish-wide landscape character

This policy applies parish-wide. As well as protecting key landscape features, the policy seeks opportunities to enhance landscape character when development proposals come forward. The policy is informed by the evidence set out in the Swaffham Bulbeck Landscape Character Assessment.

Planning Policy SWB 4 – Swaffham Bulbeck built environment character

This policy requires a design-led approach to be taken for all development proposals. This will require applicants to be guided by the existing Swaffham Bulbeck built environment and to deliver high quality schemes allowing residents to live healthy lives. The policy also emphasises the importance of protecting and enhancing the principal gateways into the village.

Planning Policy SWB 5 – Swaffham Bulbeck local green spaces

This policy gives strong protection to existing valued open spaces in the parish.

Housing (Theme 3)

Planning Policy SWB 6 - Swaffham Bulbeck housing mix

This policy seeks a mix of housing types to help facilitate a vibrant and mixed community. This will reflect existing needs of a growing older population but also the needs of new households seeking to find their first home.

Planning Policy SWB 7 – Swaffham Bulbeck community-led development

This policy supports in principle (but also subject to a series of criteria) small scale community-led residential development for people with a Swaffham Bulbeck connection on the edge of the existing settlement. The policy also supports other non-residential and small-scale community-led development schemes.

Development sites (Theme 4)

Planning Policy SWB 8 – Cemetery/pony field site

This policy allocates land for development on the cemetery/pony field site on the proviso that the community benefits of the scheme will be significantly greater than what would be delivered on an equivalent open market site. This includes the delivery of affordable housing that meets parish needs. In addition, it is essential that any scheme is design- and landscape-led.

A cohesive and environmentally friendly community (Theme 5)

Planning Policy SWB 9 – Swaffham Bulbeck primary school

This policy supports in principle development proposals which will help facilitate the continued success of the school as both a primary school and as a community meeting space.

Planning Policy SWB 10 – Community Pavilion

This policy allocates the site of the community pavilion for the provision of an improved building which delivers enhanced facilities to support the current outdoor sports uses and which delivers a purpose-built community meeting space.

Planning Policy SWB 11 – Swaffham Bulbeck community infrastructure priorities

This policy identifies priorities in the parish for the delivery of community infrastructure improvements. The policy seeks contributions towards infrastructure from new development.

Planning Policy SWB 12 – Delivering sustainable design

This policy seeks innovative approaches to the construction of low carbon homes and buildings which demonstrate sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency levels.

Planning Policy SWB 13 – Electric vehicle charging points

This policy expects development proposals which include car parking provision to install charging points for the purpose of charging electric vehicles.

Planning Policy SWB 14 – Protecting and improving walking and cycling connectivity in our parish

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the existing footpath and cycle networks are not adversely affected when new development comes forward and that opportunities are utilised to improve the network.

Planning Policy SWB 15 - The rural footpath network

The intent of this policy is to ensure the existing rural footpath network is not adversely affected when new development proposals come forward and that opportunities are utilised to improve the network.

Planning Policy SWB 16 – Development proposals and biodiversity

This policy expects all development proposals to deliver net gains in biodiversity. The policy seeks protection and enhancement of the existing networks of habitats in the parish including woodland, waterways and droves.

Non planning community aspirations

To complement the 16 planning policies, the draft neighbourhood plan includes a set of aspirations for Swaffham Bulbeck Parish Council which can be actioned even without new development coming forward. These are set out in Chapter 6 of the neighbourhood plan.