

Ardleigh Neighbourhood Plan 2020 - 2033



Prepared by Ardleigh Parish Council

May 2024

Table of Contents

Foreword	4
1. Introduction.....	6
2. Neighbourhood Plan Area.....	7
3. What is a Neighbourhood Plan and why do we need one?	8
4. Planning policy context	10
Section 1.....	10
Section 2.....	12
Local Plan Strategy for Ardleigh	12
5. Background to the Parish.....	15
Socio-economic profile	17
Housing profile.....	24
Landscape & Natural Environment.....	28
History & Conservation	33
Services, facilities & infrastructure.....	37
6. Consultation & evidence base	42
7. Vision	47
8. Objectives.....	49
Neighbourhood Plan Policies.....	50
9. Policy GDP: General Approach to Development	51
10. Policy CFP: Community Facilities.....	56
11. Policy HP: Housing	63
12. Policy EP: Natural, Built & Historic Environment	69
13. Policy LGP: Local Green Spaces	79
14. Policy TP: Transport & Parking.....	92
15. Implementation, Monitoring and Review.....	97
Appendix A: Proposals maps.....	99

Appendices

- Appendix A: Proposals maps

Annexes

- Annex 1: Local Green Spaces Assessment
- Annex 2: Village Design Statement (VDS).

Additional supporting documents

- Basic Conditions Statement
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report
- Ardleigh Community Engagement Report.

For the purposes of this Neighbourhood Plan, the terms “appendix” and “annex” are used as follows:

Appendix - a document or report included at the end of the plan because it is too large for the main body of the plan but needs to be included to provide clarity or understanding.

Annex - a standalone document or report that supports the plan and its policies but that can also be read and used in its own right.

Foreword

Ardleigh comes from two Anglo Saxon words - Ard (High) and Ley (Pasture). Archaeological finds show that the area has been settled since Neolithic times (4,000 to 2,000BC) and it has had continuous settlement ever since. It is also reputed to be one of the largest parishes by area in the Country. The centre of the medieval village of Ardleigh is approximately five miles (8 km) from the City of Colchester and about four and half miles (7.2 km) from Manningtree. As well as the main settlement of the village of Ardleigh, smaller hamlets make up the Parish as a whole.

There is a diverse mix of housing throughout the Parish from small modern estates to historic buildings and farmhouses more than 70 of which are listed buildings. Land surrounding the village and hamlets is predominantly given to agriculture and horticulture, with an industrial area mainly situated along the Old Ipswich Road/A12. Ardleigh is in the district of Tendring and the parliamentary constituency of Harwich and North Essex. The Parish has its own Parish Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been created by the Parish Council and local residents following extensive consultation. The process began in early 2020 when the Neighbourhood Plan area was formally designated by Tendring District Council. The Ardleigh Neighbourhood Plan Working and Steering Groups then met a total of 75 times between June 2020 and August 2022 to develop the Plan and ensure that the appropriate steps were taken and guidance followed.

The Plan sets objectives on key identified themes such as transport, community, the built and historic environment, local green spaces, housing and the general approach to development, including landscape features and design quality of physical structures. It builds on current and future planned activity in the Local Plan and says what the Parish Council and its partners will work towards.

The overwhelming view of the community, who responded to public consultation, is that the Parish of Ardleigh should above all else retain its rural characteristics in relation to the visual quality of its buildings, open spaces, trees, hedges, footpaths and bridleways. The people of the Parish of Ardleigh also feel strongly that their sense of community should be protected and nurtured across the whole Parish, including the village centre, Ardleigh Heath, Burnt Heath, John de Bois Hill, Fox Street, Plains Farm, Crockleford Heath and other outlying areas.



The vision is for the people of Ardleigh to continue to develop its sense of community, retain its rural feel and to enjoy and protect the countryside around them: allowing for strictly controlled housing development and employment growth to maintain a vibrant community.

Thanks go to all of those in the community who have contributed to the production of this Neighbourhood Plan.

August 2022



1. Introduction

- 1.1. Welcome to the Ardleigh Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2033. This plan will deliver our vision for the Parish of Ardleigh over the plan period.
- 1.2. Once made, a Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Development Plan for the defined Neighbourhood Area. Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and allow communities to shape development in their area.
- 1.3. Neighbourhood Plans help with the determination of planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area, setting out where development will go and what it will look like.
- 1.4. This Neighbourhood Plan is for the rural Parish of Ardleigh in the district of Tendring. Ardleigh lies in open countryside between the urban centres of Colchester and Manningtree.
- 1.5. The purpose of this plan is to allow Ardleigh to grow appropriately and organically, whilst protecting its best features for future generations.
- 1.6. In order to produce this plan, the Working Group undertook a survey of views throughout the Parish, commissioned a number of expert studies to produce the evidence base and instructed a local planning consultancy (Planning Direct) to assist with the technical drafting, working closely with the Parish Council and the District Council throughout.
- 1.7. Once adopted, we expect that all planning decisions in Ardleigh will be made in accordance with this Neighbourhood Plan, unless it is in conflict with an up-to-date Local Plan or material planning considerations indicate otherwise.



2. Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 2.1. This Neighbourhood Plan concerns the Parish of Ardleigh. On 08/06/2020, Tendring District Council formally designated the whole Parish as a Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 2.2. The diagram below provides the Neighbourhood Plan Area within which this Neighbourhood Plan applies.

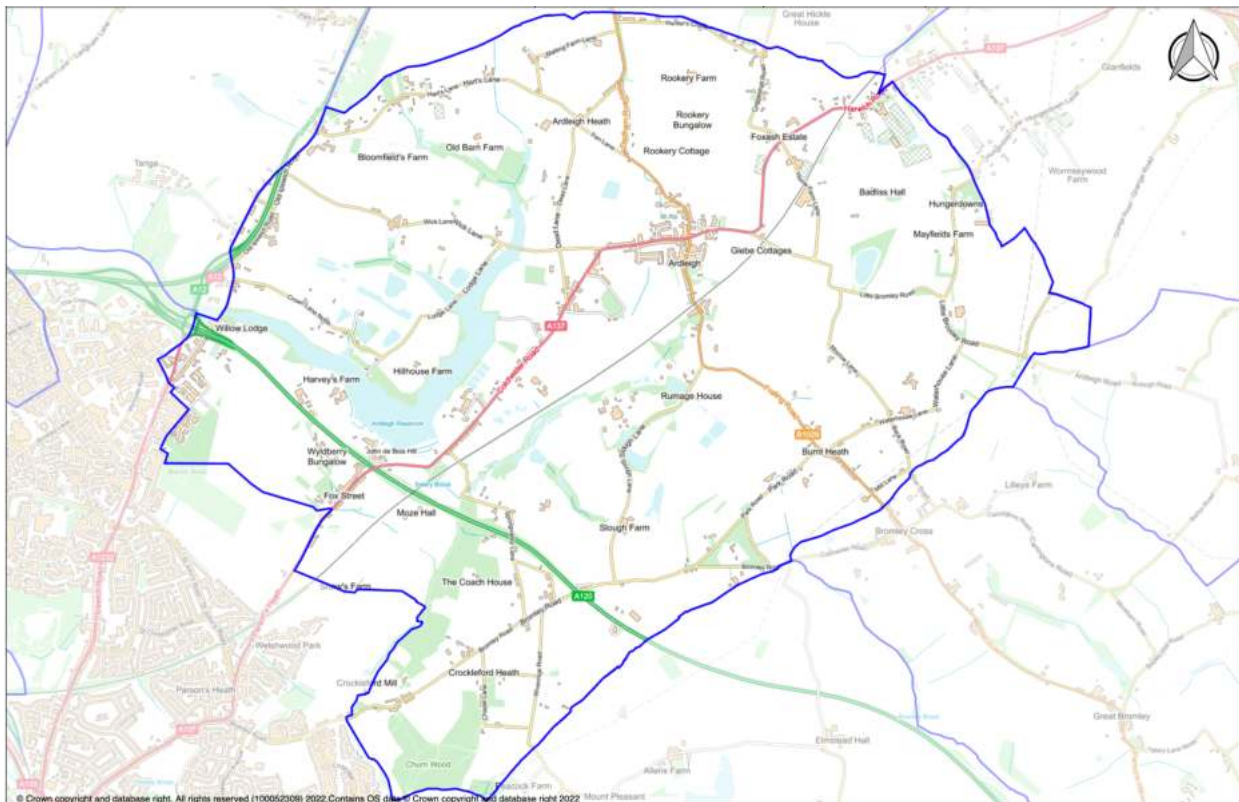


Fig 1. Neighbourhood Plan Area [blue line]



3. What is a Neighbourhood Plan and why do we need one?

- 3.1. Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Communities can shape development in their areas through the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans (often referred to simply as Neighbourhood Plans), Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders.
- 3.2. Once approved, Neighbourhood Plans become part of the Development Plan and the policies contained within them must be used in the determination of planning applications.
- 3.3. Policies in Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. However, they may change more detailed policies (or add further detailed policies) where appropriate to the designated Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 3.4. Fundamentally, Neighbourhood Plans cannot block development already included in the Local Plan. What they can do is shape where that development will go and what it will look like.
- 3.5. A Neighbourhood Plan is developed by a Neighbourhood Forum or a Parish/Town Council. In this case, Ardleigh Parish Council has worked with specialist consultants to develop the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.6. Before a Neighbourhood Plan can be adopted, it must be independently examined to ensure that it meets the basic conditions. It must then be put to a public referendum of all of the registered electors within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 3.7. Only a draft Neighbourhood Plan that meets each of the basic conditions can be put to a referendum and be “made” (in other words, adopted). The basic conditions are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to Neighbourhood Plans by section 38A Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 3.8. The basic conditions are:



- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Plan;
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- The Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations; and
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order.



4. Planning policy context

4.1. The Development Plan for Ardleigh is currently made up of:

- Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond: North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1;
- Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond: Section 2;
- Essex Minerals Local Plan; and
- Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan.

Section 1

4.2. Section 1 of the 2013-2033 Local Plan was jointly prepared by Braintree, Colchester, Essex and Tendring Councils (known collectively as the North Essex authorities) and covers broad strategic matters. It was adopted on 26/01/2021.

4.3. Section 1 of the Local Plan takes bold steps to provide for the housing, employment and social needs of existing and future residents up to and beyond the plan period. A key focus of this part of the Plan is the creation of a new garden community.

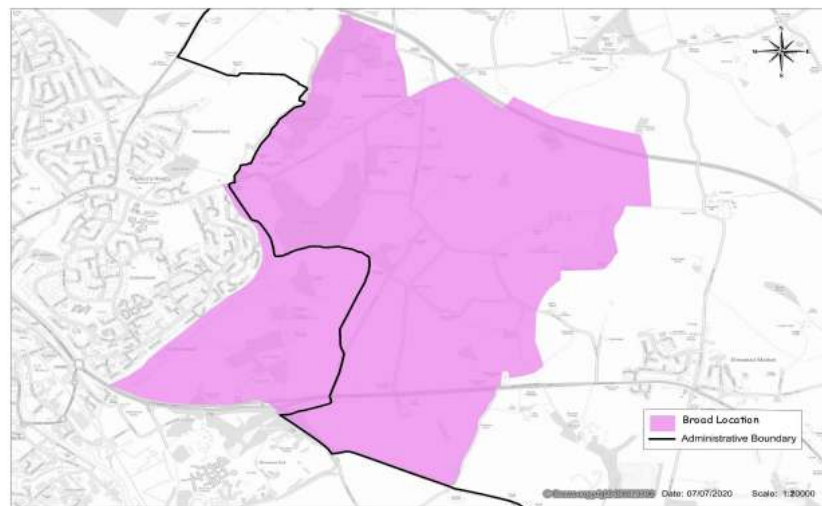


Fig. 2. Broad location of the proposed Tendring/Colchester Garden Community

- 4.4. LP1 Policy SP 3 sets out the spatial strategy for North Essex. Existing settlements are the focus for growth and development is accommodated within and adjoining settlements depending on their scale, role and sustainability. It is this policy which contains the new Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community (GC) proposal.
- 4.5. LP1 Policy SP 4 indicates that Tendring has a minimum housing requirement of 11,000 over the plan period of LP1 to 2033. LP1 Policy SP 5 supports a strong, sustainable and diverse economy with at least 12 hectares of employment land sought in Tendring.
- 4.6. LP1 Policy SP 6 sets out the requirement for a Development Plan Document (DPD) for the GC and identifies the strategic transport infrastructure that requires planning permission and funding before any permission is granted for the GC.
- 4.7. LP1 Policy SP 8 identifies 2,200 – 2,500 homes, seven hectares of employment land and provision of Gypsies and Travellers that are to be provided within the permission for the GC within this Plan period (as part of the expected overall total of 7,000 – 9,000 new homes, 25 hectares of employment land to be delivered beyond 2033. It identifies what the DPD will cover and indicates that no part of the GC will obtain permission before the DPD is adopted. It sets out principles for the GC.
- 4.8. LP1 Policy SP 9 sets out further details for the DPD including the definition of the boundary and the amount of development.
- 4.9. The new community is proposed to be sited on the Tendring/Colchester border, extending into the southernmost portion of Ardleigh Parish where the small historic hamlet of Crockleford Heath¹ is located.
- 4.10. The DPD has now been prepared by TDC and Colchester City Council. The draft DPD includes the identification of an “Area of Special Character” at and around the settlement of Crockleford Heath, aimed at safeguarding its distinctive rural character.
- 4.11. The DPD has been subject to two formal periods of consultation. The DPD, and other accompanying documents, was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 21 September 2023. Hearing sessions are, at the time of writing, currently being held.”

¹ LP2 page 35



Section 2

- 4.12. Section 2 of the 2013-2033 Local Plan contains policies relating solely to Tendring District. It was adopted on 25/01/2022. Section 2 allocates the homes and jobs required for the plan period. It also contains place-shaping policies. These policies steer and guide development to ensure that Tendring's natural and built assets are enhanced and protected, its communities are well connected both by broadband and travel choices, and new development is designed to promote healthy living, adaptability of homes and safety from flood risk.
- 4.13. The Vision includes reference to the GC. LP2 helpfully sets out which policies are regarded as 'strategic' in nature². LP Policy SPL1 states that the GC is at the top of the settlement hierarchy alongside Clacton-on-Sea and Harwich and Dovercourt. It identifies Ardleigh as a Smaller Rural Settlement.
- 4.14. LP2 Policy LP1 identifies 1000 homes to be delivered at the GC by 31 March 2033. This aligns with the plan period for this Plan which is to 2033.

Local Plan Strategy for Ardleigh

- 4.15. Ardleigh village is defined as a Smaller Rural Settlement. It sits at the lowest tier of the settlement hierarchy.
- 4.16. The Smaller Rural Settlements are considered to be the least sustainable locations for growth. Nevertheless these villages are under pressure to grow and some small-scale development, sympathetic to the rural and often historic character of the settlement, can help to sustain these communities.
- 4.17. To plan for this, Settlement Development Boundaries have been drawn flexibly to accommodate a range of sites within and on the edge of the villages enabling them to be considered for small-scale residential infill development.
- 4.18. LP2 Policy SPL 2 identifies settlement development boundaries including one for Ardleigh village. It is clear that the GC sits outside this and will be subject to a

² LP2 page 35



separate DPD containing its own policies designed to guide the location of development in the broad location identified on Diagram 10.2 in LP 1 and Map B.7.

- 4.19. This is important because some of the policies in this Plan refer to the settlement development boundary. As yet the GC is not a settlement with a settlement development boundary and is treated as a discreet location in LP2 Policy SPL 2. Therefore it is important for those policies, or elements of those policies, in this Plan which do not apply to the GC, that this is made explicit on a policy by policy basis.
- 4.20. LP2 Policy SPL 2 states there is a general presumption in favour of new development subject to detail consideration within the Settlement Development Boundary.
- 4.21. Outside the Settlement Development Boundary, planning applications will be considered in relation to the pattern and scales of growth in the settlement hierarchy and relevant policies. For instance LP2 Policy PP 13 sets out a number of specific circumstances where, in the interest of supporting growth in the rural economy, planning permission may be granted in the countryside.
- 4.22. Development over 10 dwellings is only permitted where there is support from a Parish Council or an approved neighbourhood plan advocates additional growth or there is an identified local need for affordable housing that could be addressed on a rural exception site, subject of Policy LP 6 (section 3.3.1.4.4).
- 4.23. Rural Exception Sites will be permitted on sites adjoining Ardleigh's defined Settlement Boundary provided:
 - i. Sufficient evidence is provided of a shortage of council/affordable housing within the Parish; and
 - ii. The scheme is supported by Ardleigh Parish Council.
- 4.24. The Plan also provides a flexible policy for self-build houses. These schemes may be permitted in the countryside subject to meeting specific criteria (policy LP 7).
- 4.25. The development of new care homes and extra care housing is also promoted by the Plan (policy LP 10).
- 4.26. Retail growth in Ardleigh is expected to be limited to small-scale developments



intended to serve the day-to-day needs of the local community only (policy PP3).

- 4.27. In terms of employment growth, the Plan encourages sustainable development proposals for farm and other land-based diversification schemes that would benefit the rural area. Further support for rural-based enterprises is provided by local policy PP 13.
- 4.28. Tourism-related proposals of the right kind are also strongly encouraged, including the provision of appropriate outdoor recreational facilities that would strengthen the function and protection of the undeveloped countryside (policy PP 8).
- 4.29. In terms of visitor accommodation, any growth in hotels or guesthouses should be limited to established sites or to ancillary accommodation at appropriate venues such as public houses (upper floors), residential health and beauty facilities and function/conference centres (policy PP 9). New or extended camping and touring caravan sites are also encouraged but will be subject to holiday occupancy restrictions (policy PP 10).
- 4.30. The policies of this Neighbourhood Plan are intended to support and complement the general spatial strategy outlined above.
- 4.31. Not all policies or some elements of policies will apply to the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community. Where this is the case, it has been made clear in the policy itself. Ardleigh Parish Council intends to work closely and proactively with the partner councils to progress the design and development of the GC.



5. Background to the Parish

- 5.1. The Parish lies within the Ardleigh & Little Bromley Ward, part of the District of Tendring situated within the County of Essex.
- 5.2. Ardleigh is a small rural Parish which comprises largely of good quality agricultural land, supported by dispersed farmsteads. The main point of settlement is the historic nucleated village of Ardleigh which lies at the heart of the Parish. Other smaller hamlets, including Ardleigh Heath, Burnt Heath and Crockleford Heath intersperse the wider rural area. It is believed that the Parish has been settled in excess of 3000 years.
- 5.3. The 2011 Census recorded 849 households and 2058 usual residents throughout the Parish³.
- 5.4. Ardleigh village is defined as a smaller rural settlement in the Local Plan. It comprises a nucleated village which has grown around the crossroads of Station Road, Dedham Road, Colchester Road and Harwich Road. These key arterial routes extend throughout and beyond the Parish, connecting Ardleigh to various lower and higher-level settlements including Colchester, Manningtree and Brightlingsea.
- 5.5. The Parish lies in very close proximity of the historic city of Colchester⁴, being directly adjoined to the defined town settlement boundary in places. The heart of Ardleigh village lies approximately 7km, or a 12-minute drive, from the city centre.
- 5.6. Since 1981, a substantial proportion of Ardleigh village has been formally designated as a Conservation Area. Significantly, the Parish also contains the remains of a later Bronze Age urnfield cemetery which was designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument in 1976 (list entry no. 1002146).
- 5.7. Ardleigh Reservoir lies to the south-west of Ardleigh village and covers an

³ Unless otherwise stated, all statistics in this document are derived from 2011 census data.

⁴ Colchester was awarded city status in May 2022 to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.



expansive 48.5 hectares. The reservoir supplies over 14 million litres of drinking water every day to 133,000 customers in the Colchester area. It also supports various recreational activities.



Socio-economic profile

- 5.8. The rural Parish is sparsely populated, with a density (number of persons per hectare) of 1 by contrast to 4.1 for the district, 4 for the county and 4.1 for the country as a whole.
- 5.9. As indicated by the below charts, the age profile of the Parish is more closely in line with findings for the county and the country than with the age structure of its host district.
- 5.10. Significantly, the Parish contains proportionately fewer very old persons (85+) than the national population which is rather unusual for a small rural locality such as this. It may be the case that the Parish's close proximity to the urban centre of Colchester has supported more younger residents to remain than is the norm.



Fig. 3.

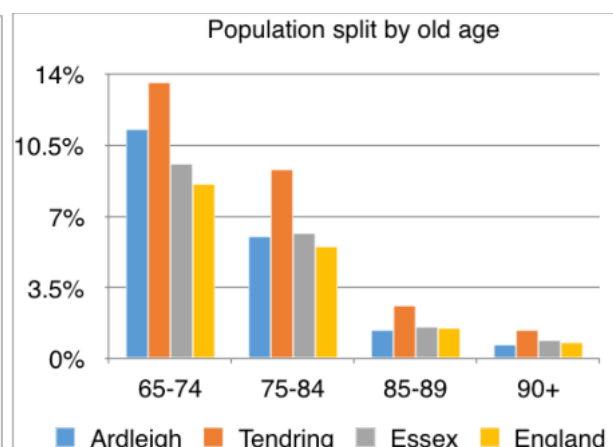


Fig. 4.

- 5.11. The vast majority of Ardeleigh's residents are self-reported as of white British origin (95%). This indicates the Parish to be very slightly more ethnically diverse than its host district, where 95.4% of residents are self-reported as of white British origin. As is usual in more sparsely populated rural areas, Ardeleigh contains considerably less ethnic diversity than the country as a whole (where 79.8% of the population self-reports to be of white British origin).
- 5.12. Approximately 69.1% of Ardeleigh's working age (16-74) population is



economically active⁵, compared to 61.7% for the district, 71.1% for the county and 69.9% for the country as a whole. The below chart provides a break down of economically active residents by activity. As indicated, Ardleigh contains a statistically significant number of self-employed workers and proportionately fewer short-term unemployed residents than the district, county or country as a whole.

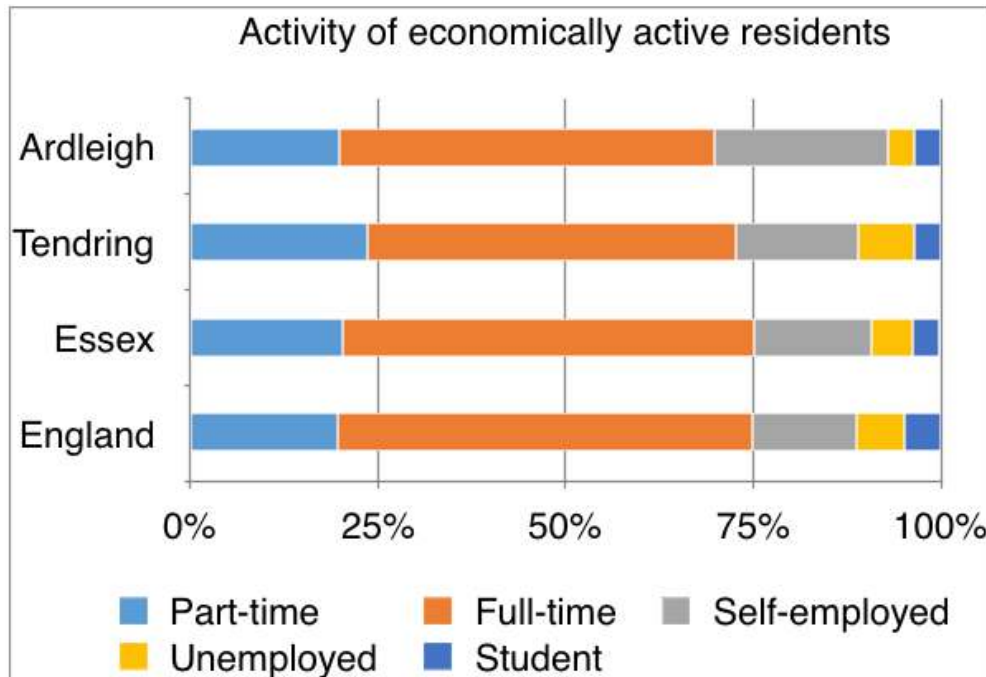


Fig. 5.

5.13. Following from the above, approximately 30.9% of Ardleigh’s population is economically inactive⁶, compared to 38.3% for the district, 28.9% for the county and 30.1% for the country as a whole. The below chart provides a break down of economically inactive residents by activity. As indicated, Ardleigh contains proportionately fewer retired residents than its host district, although this remains above the county and national findings.

⁵ “economically active” is a term used in the 2011 Census to refer to those persons either in employment or unemployed but available and actively seeking work.

⁶ “economically inactive” is a term used in the 2011 Census to refer to those persons not in employment or actively seeking and available for work due to being retired, looking after home or family, long-term sick or disabled, students or other reasons.



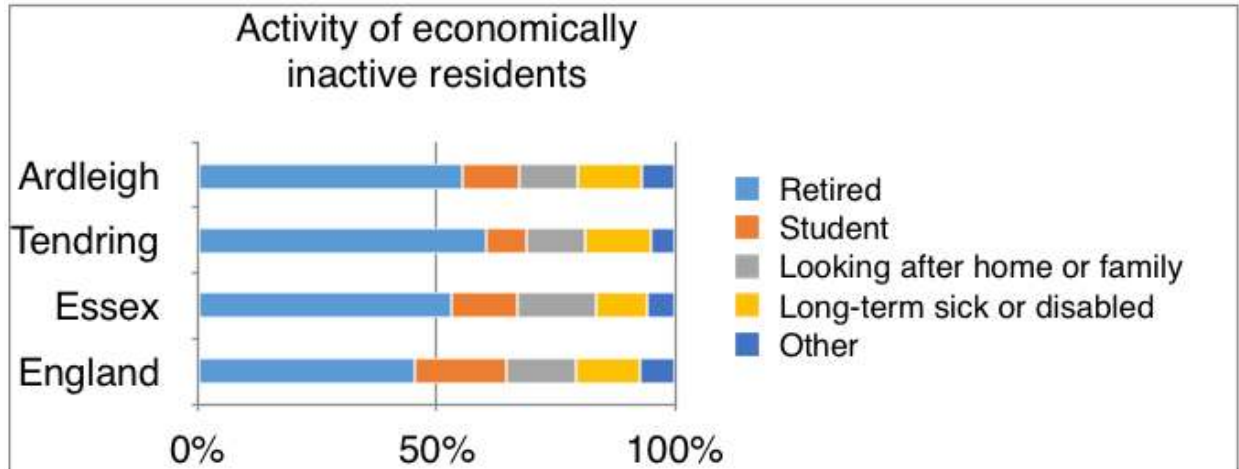


Fig. 6.

- 5.14. The Parish of Ardleigh is predominantly occupied by agricultural land uses and this is reflected in the statistically significant proportion of working residents employed in the industries of agriculture, forestry and fishing.
- 5.15. Ardleigh also contains a statistically significant proportion of working residents employed in administrative, professional, scientific and technical industries.
- 5.16. Compared to findings for the host district, Ardleigh contains proportionately fewer residents employed in the industries of wholesale, retail, vehicle repair, health care or social work. This is indicated by the below chart which provides a break down of the main industries in which the working residents of Ardleigh are employed⁷.

⁷ For the purposes of this chart, only industries employing more than 4% of the total working population of Ardleigh have been individually noted. All other industries are grouped into the “other” category.



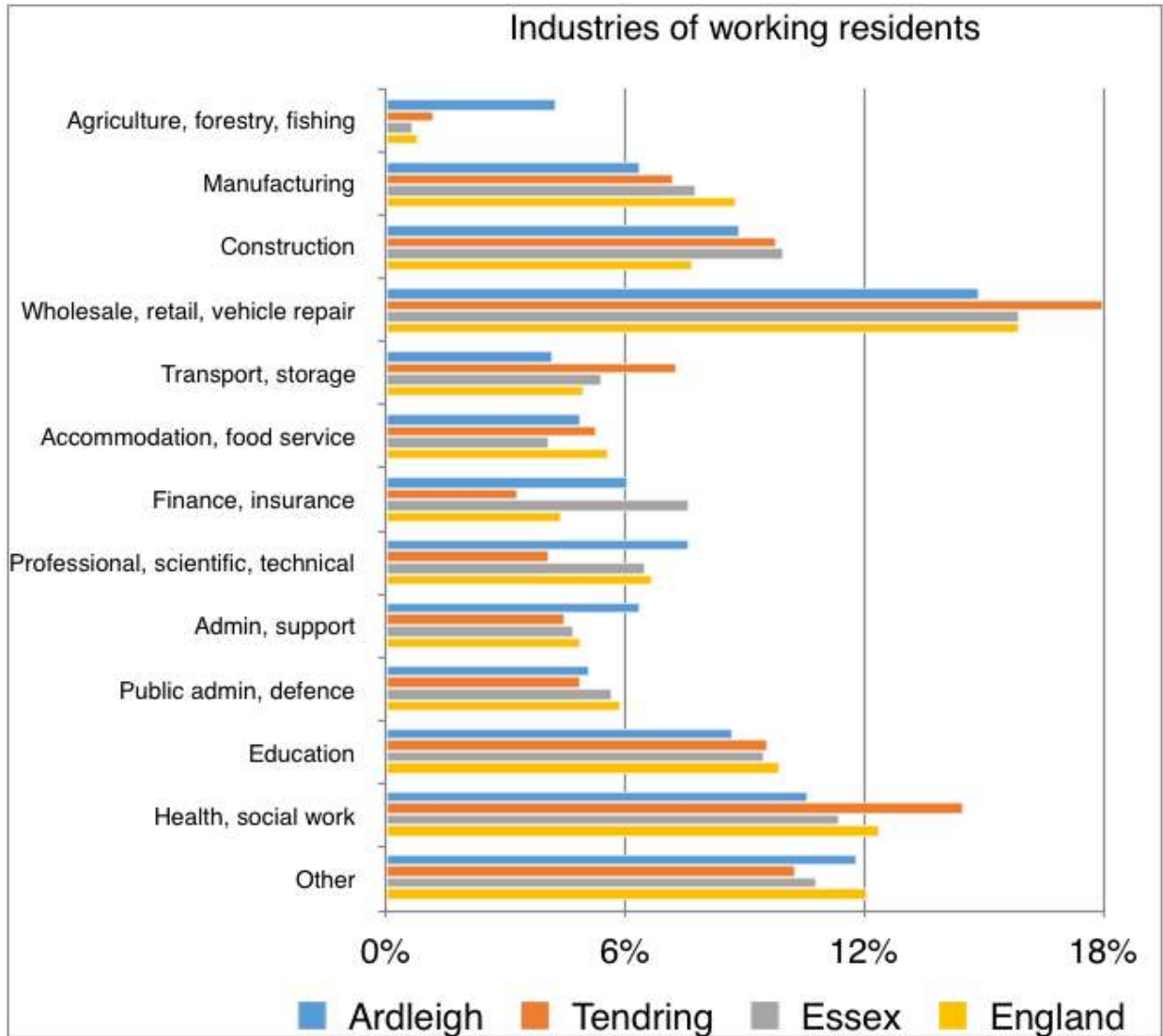


Fig. 7.

5.17. At 35.3% of its total working population, Ardleigh also contains a very significant number of residents employed in directorial, managerial, senior or other professional roles. This compares especially favourably to findings for the host district, where only 21.6% of the total working population occupies such high level roles.



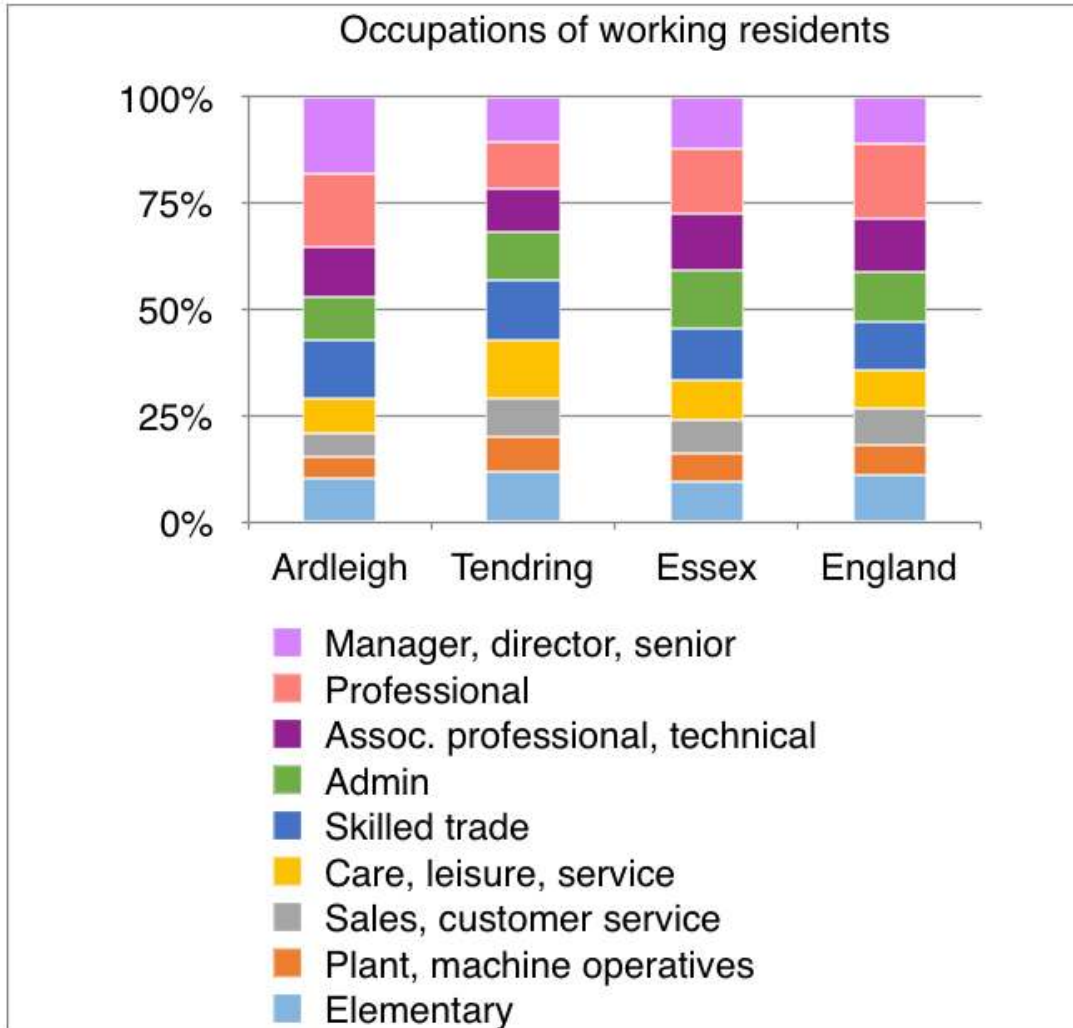
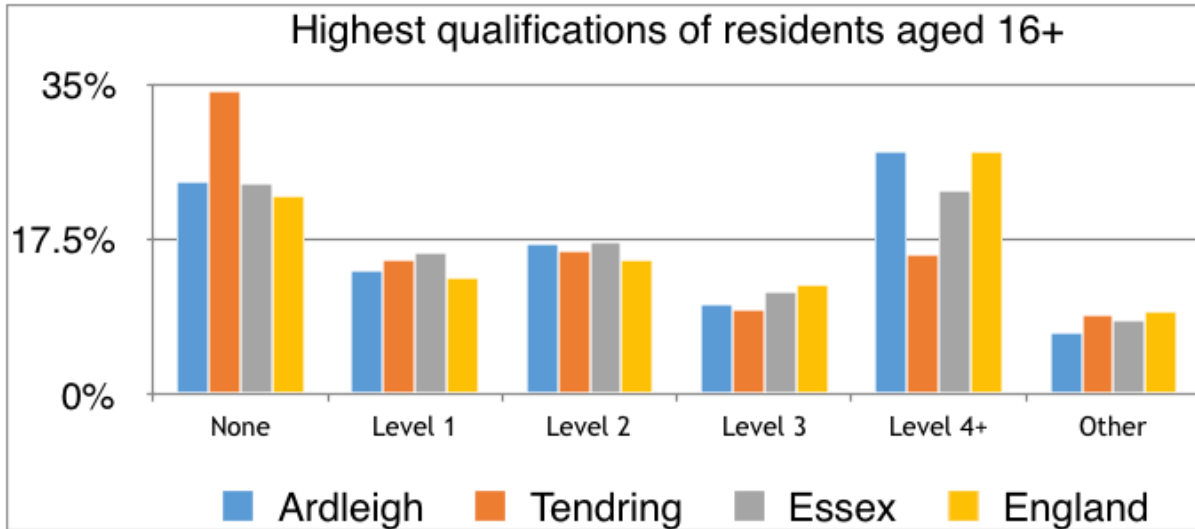


Fig. 8.

5.18. Ardleigh’s residents are also relatively well-educated, especially compared to district-wide trends. Indeed, only 24% of Ardleigh’s adult residents are without any qualification, compared to 34.3% of Tendring’s total adult population. Similarly, 27.4% of Ardleigh’s adult population is educated to degree-level or above, compared to only 15.9% for Tendring as a whole. As indicated by the below chart, the residents of Ardleigh’s qualification levels are more closely in line with findings for the county and the country than its host district.





Qualification Levels
 None = no academic or professional qualifications
 Level 1 = 1-4 GCSEs or equivalent (any grades)
 Level 2 = 5+ GCSEs or equivalent (grades A*-C)
 Level 3 = 4+ AS Levels/2+ A Levels or equivalent
 Level 4+ = Degree level or above (e.g. BA, BSc)
 Other = Vocational, work-related, foreign, apprenticeships

Fig. 9.

- 5.19. The health of Ardleigh’s residents is generally very good, particularly compared to findings for its host district. This may be explained, at least in part, by Ardleigh village’s well-located GP Surgery in the context of a rural district where many of the smaller rural communities are somewhat remote from vital health services.
- 5.20. As indicated by the below chart, approximately 81.9% of Ardleigh’s residents report their health to be either “good” or “very good”, compared to just 74.2% throughout Tendring. This finding is largely in keeping with the national figure, with 81.4% of England’s total population reporting to be in either “good” or “very good” health.
- 5.21. Similarly, only 3.7% of Ardleigh’s population report their health to be either “bad” or “very bad”, compared to 7.6% throughout Tendring and 5.4% throughout England.



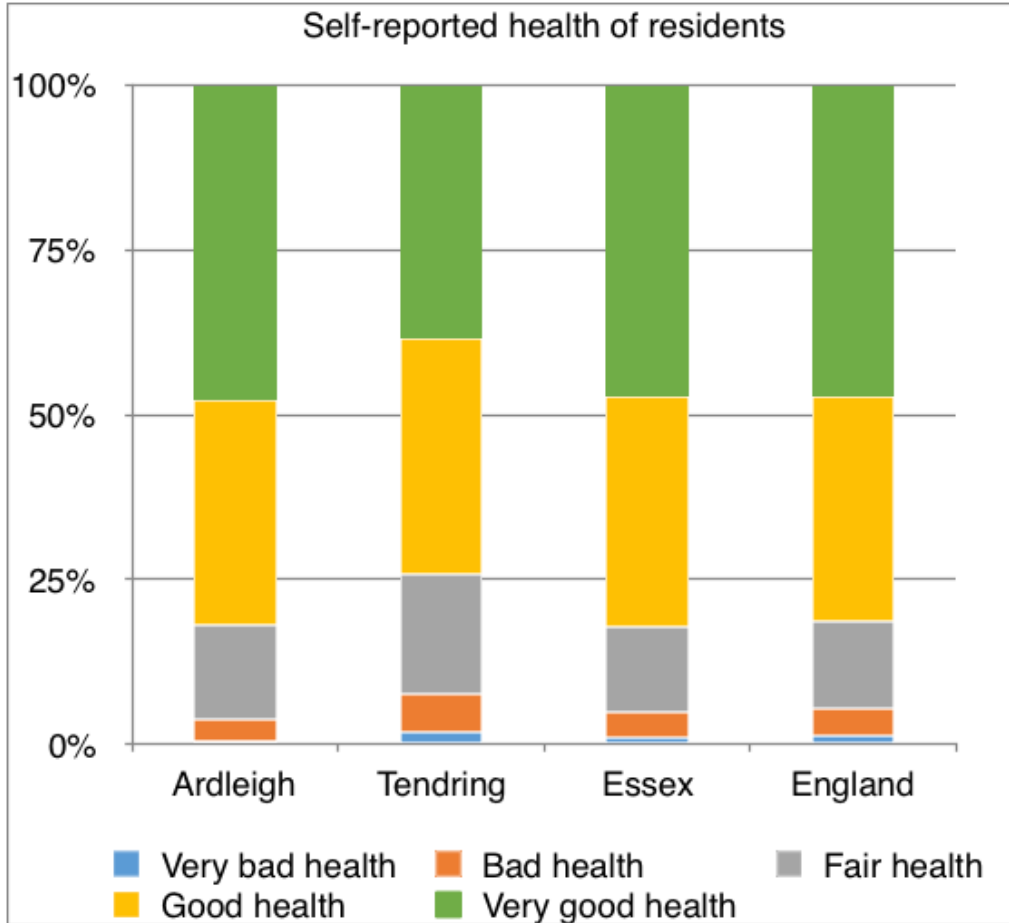


Fig.10.

5.22. Taken together, the above statistics paint a picture of a Parish that has:

- a low population density;
- a fairly well-balanced age profile;
- limited ethnic diversity;
- typical levels of employment;
- a notable agricultural economy; and
- a well-educated and healthy population.



Housing profile

- 5.23. The 2011 census recorded 849 households and 2058 usual residents in the Parish⁸.
- 5.24. The average household size of the Parish stands at 2.5 persons which is only very slightly greater than the averages for the district (2.2), county and country (both at 2.4).
- 5.25. There are high levels of home ownership throughout the Parish. 80.9% of all Ardleigh's households own their homes, with approximately 54% of these owned outright and 46% owned with a mortgage (or loan). This compares very favourably to statistics for the county and the country where, respectively, 71.3% and 63% of all households own their homes. It also exceeds levels of home ownership throughout Tendring (at 73.7%).

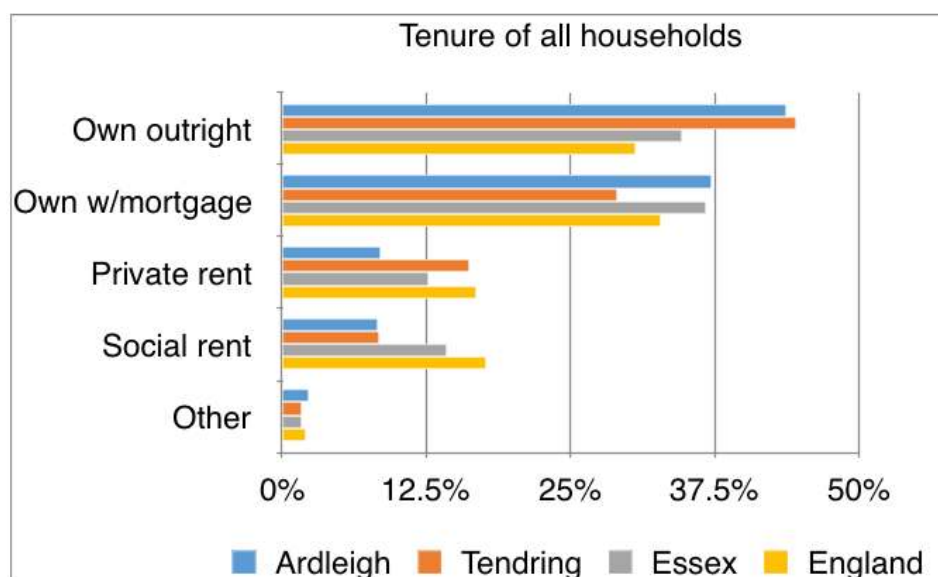


Fig.11.

- 5.26. As is fairly usual in rural areas, only a small proportion of Ardleigh's housing stock is rented (16.8%). The number of socially-rented properties in Ardleigh (at

⁸ In April 2020, Tendring District Council estimated that there were approximately 1000 dwellings in the Parish (taking account of recent development), with a further 230 dwellings expected on sites with planning permission. This suggests a rather significant increase in housing stock since 2011

8.3% of its total stock) is closely aligned with the figure for the district (at 8.4%), however there are substantially fewer privately-rented properties in Ardleigh (at 8.5% of its total stock) than are found throughout Tendring as a whole (at 16.2%).

5.27. Ardleigh’s housing stock is very much dominated by detached property types, these comprising a significant 57% of its total provision. Compared to findings for the district, county and the country as a whole, Ardleigh contains relatively few flats, maisonettes and terraced homes.

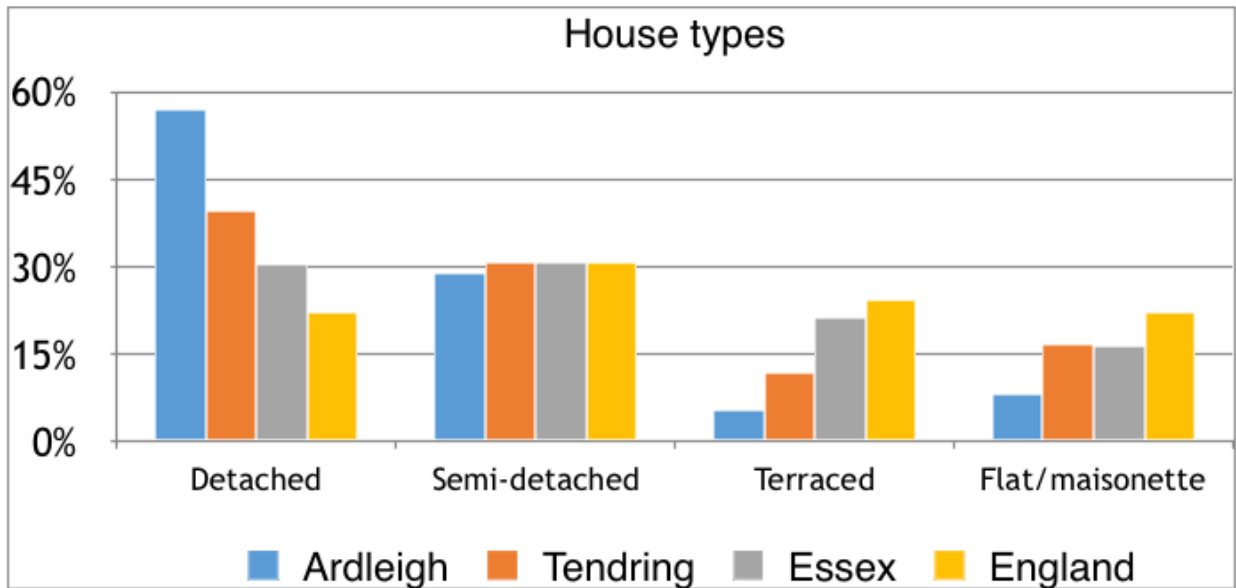


Fig.12.

5.28. In terms of household composition, the vast majority of all Ardleigh’s households are occupied by single families (70.2%). This stands in relative contrast to the numbers of single family households found throughout the district (62%), the county (66%) and the country as a whole (61.8%).



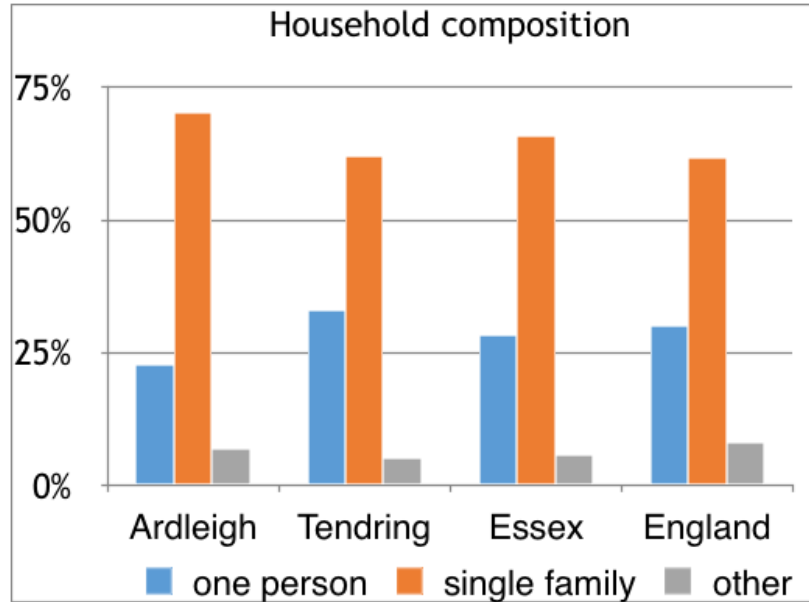


Fig.13.

5.29. Ardleigh contains a fair range of local services and facilities for a Parish of its size. Its residents nonetheless remain largely dependent on private car use for access to main shopping, employment and educational facilities. This is reflected in the Parish's high levels of car (and van) ownership, as indicated by the below chart.

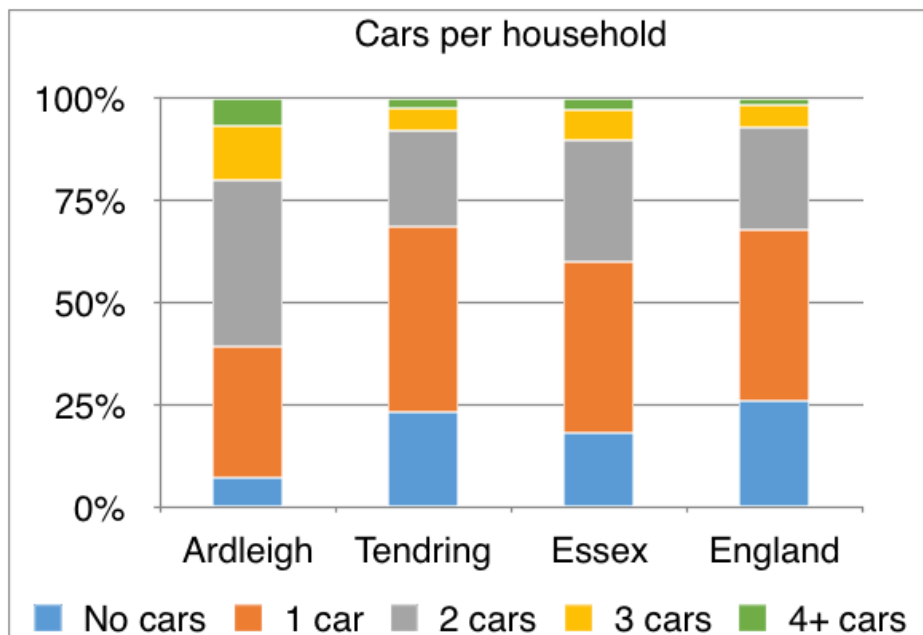


Fig.14.



5.30. Taken together, the above statistics suggest that Ardleigh's population is composed mainly of families that own their detached homes and have 1 or more cars.



Landscape & Natural Environment

- 5.31. The Parish of Ardleigh stands on a flat gravel plain in open countryside. It comprises predominantly of agricultural land and retains a distinctly pastoral character and quality in spite of its close proximity to the urban centre of Colchester.
- 5.32. Dedham Vale National Landscape is located immediately to the north of the Parish, just outside of its confines.
- 5.33. Part of the A120, a major regional trunk road, passes through the southern portion of the Parish, close to its boundary with Colchester City. This presents a marked urban intrusion into an otherwise rural landscape.
- 5.34. The nucleated Ardleigh village provides the main point of settlement at the heart of the Parish, with other smaller hamlets and farmsteads dispersed throughout.
- 5.35. Here, the landscape character is truly emblematic of the host National Character Area (NCA), Suffolk Coast and Heaths. Indeed, the 2015 NCA Profile found that:

“The majority of the character area is sparsely settled with small isolated, nucleated medieval hamlets and villages complementing a scatter of isolated farmsteads, traditional barns and cottages throughout the rural area.”

- 5.36. Ardleigh is one such nucleated medieval village, tucked into an otherwise rural landscape where it is complemented by scatterings of isolated farmsteads, barns and cottages.
- 5.37. A valley system lies to the west and south of Ardleigh village but is barely perceptible, with one of the valleys being largely filled by Ardleigh Reservoir.
- 5.38. Ardleigh Reservoir is a notable landscape feature, spanning almost 50 total hectares to the south-west of Ardleigh village. The reservoir was created in the 1970s and supplies the area with potable drinking water as well as supporting various recreational activities.





Fig. 15. Ardleigh Reservoir from Wick Lane

Glyn Baker / Ardleigh Reservoir from Wick Lane / [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

- 5.39. There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest⁹ (SSSIs) in Ardleigh.
- 5.40. The first is Ardleigh Gravel Pit which sits just south of the village and is split over 2 units, occupying 1.22 total hectares. This site is considered to be of major geological importance, with deposits exposed here being of international significance. Ardleigh Gravel Pit is classified as being in “favourable condition”¹⁰ by Natural England.

⁹SSSIs are areas designated for special protection by Natural England due to their features of special interest, including their wildlife, geology and/or landform.

¹⁰ Natural England’s objective is to achieve “favourable condition” status for all SSSIs. This means the habitats and features of the site are in a healthy state and being conserved by appropriate management.

5.41. The second is Bullock Wood, an ancient woodland¹¹ which straddles the Parish's boundary with Colchester. Only a small part of this 23.3 hectare SSSI is located in Ardleigh. This site is noted to contain a wide range of trees, including a number of nationally rare species. Bullock Wood benefits from "favourable condition" status.

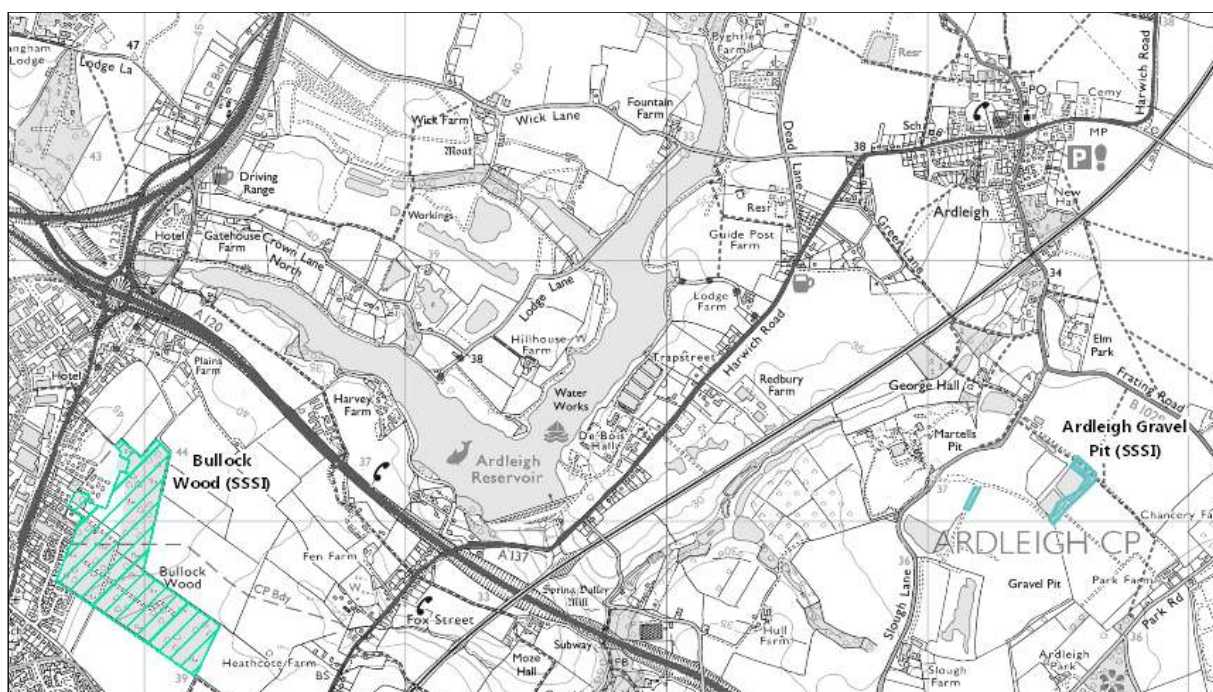


Fig. 16. The two SSSIs in the south of the Parish: Bullock Wood & Ardleigh Gravel Pit

5.42. In conjunction with Essex Wildlife Trust, the District Council has identified over 100 Local Wildlife Sites¹² (LoWS) in Tendring, 11 of which are in the Parish of Ardleigh.

¹¹ Ancient Woodlands are areas of woodland identified by Natural England as having had continuous woodland cover since 1600 AD resulting in the survival of certain rare plants and animals and are thereby afforded special protection. Ancient Woodland is a form of Irreplaceable Habitat.

¹² LoWS are areas of land with significant wildlife value which provide important wildlife refuges and a green infrastructure network. They are worthy of nature conservation and protected by the Local Plan.

Local Wildlife Sites			
<u>Code</u>	<u>Site Name</u>	<u>Area (ha)</u>	<u>Grid Ref.</u>
Te1	Ardleigh Reservoir Wood, Ardleigh	2.1	TM 026287
Te2	Birch Wood, Ardleigh	0.7	TM 028303
Te3	Ardleigh Reservoir Grassland, Ardleigh	3.1	TM 032284
Te4	Churn Wood Meadow, Ardleigh	1.3	TM 033256
Te5	Churn Wood, Ardleigh	26.3	TM 036259
Te6	Wall's Wood, Ardleigh	14.3	TM 037271
Te7*	Chapel Lane Verge, Ardleigh	0.03	TM 043254
Te9	Manor House Meadow, Ardleigh	1.6	TM 052288
Te10	Springhead Corner Meadow, Ardleigh	2	TM 053286
*Protected Verges			
Local Wildlife Sites: Ancient Woodlands			
<u>Name</u>		<u>Grid Ref.</u>	
Churn Wood, Ardleigh		TM 036258	
Walls Wood, Ardleigh		TM 038274	

Table 1.

5.43. The Local Plan also identifies a number of Safeguarded Open Spaces¹³ throughout Ardleigh and affords these additional protection against development (see local policy HP 4).

5.44. Safeguarded Open Spaces designated in the Local Plan include Ardleigh's:

- The Ardleigh Recreation Ground;
- Millennium Green;
- churchyard;
- allotments; and
- cemetery.

¹³ Safeguarded Open Spaces comprise of open spaces (including parks, churchyards, allotments and playing pitches) which make a considerable contribution to the quality of life of residents and visitors and which promote sustainable communities.



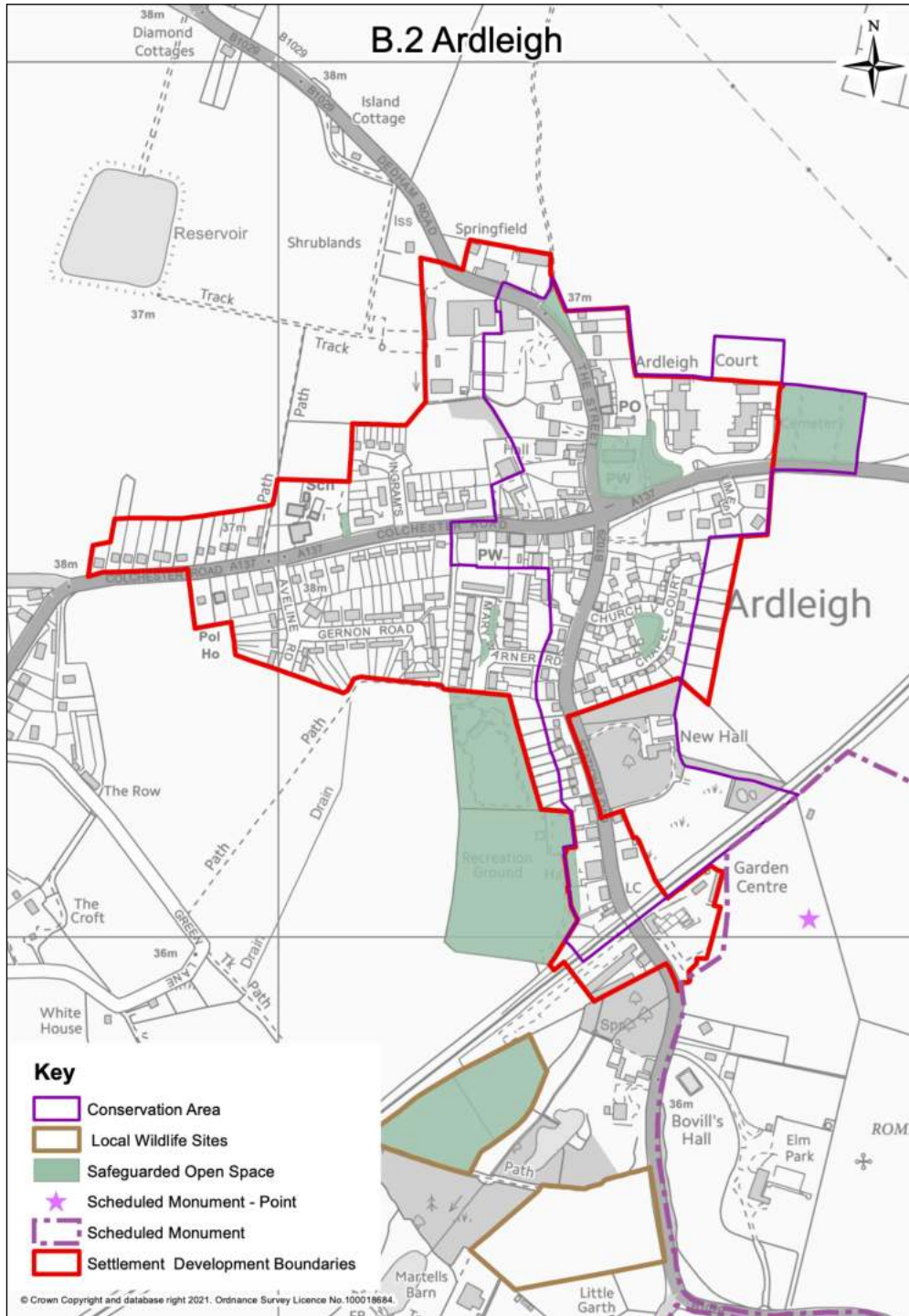


Fig. 17. Ardleigh's Safeguarded Open Spaces in green (Local Plan)

5.45. Local Green Spaces are identified in this Neighbourhood Plan.



History & Conservation

- 5.46. A defining feature of Ardleigh is its rich historical and archaeological character.
- 5.47. It is believed that the Parish has been settled in excess of 3000 years. Ardleigh appeared in the 1086 Domesday Book, with its population of 38 households placing it in the largest 20% of all settlements recorded at this time.
- 5.48. The Parish currently boasts 75 listed buildings, of which one is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, two are Grade II* listed, and the remainder Grade II listed.
- 5.49. There is a notably high concentration of Grade II listed buildings at the historic core of Ardleigh village along Colchester Road and The Street.
- 5.50. The Grade II* listed St Mary's Church, parts of which date to the 14th century, is also prominently located here.



Fig. 18. The Grade II listed St Mary's Church*

- 5.51. In recognition of its clear heritage value, the heart of Ardleigh village has been a designated Conservation Area since 1981. The Conservation Area Appraisal adopted by the District Council in 2006 summarises the special interest of the Conservation Area as follows:

“Ardleigh is a small medieval village at an important road junction, and retains its fine church and sequences of attractive vernacular buildings. The well-treed approaches to the north and the east are essential to the character of the village and are also included in the Area. The village expanded southwards in the 19th century, resulting in further groups of distinctive buildings, which with their settings are also recognised by Area designation.”

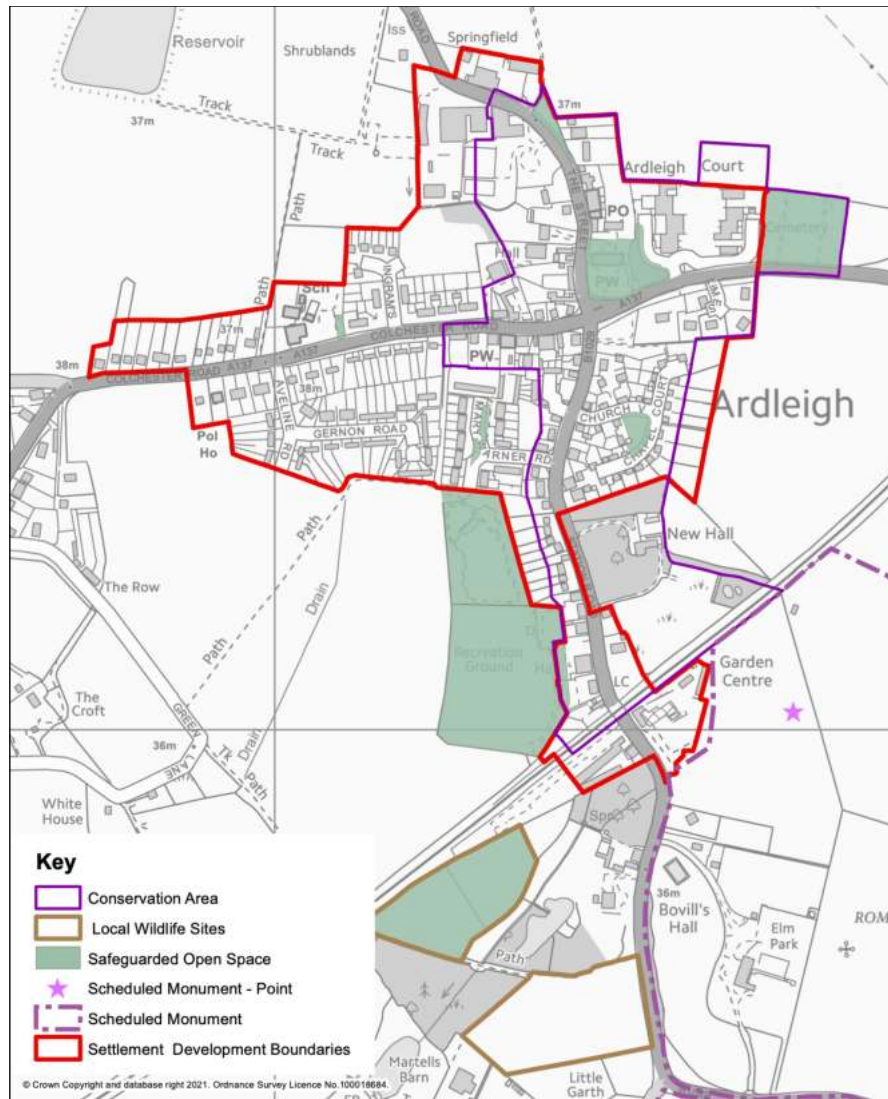


Fig. 19. Ardleigh Conservation Area in purple



Notable Assets

- 5.52. To the south of the Parish and just north of the A120 is the Grade II* listed Spring Valley Mill, a water mill which was later adapted to steam and now sits vacant. This late 18th century timber-framed and weatherboarded structure sits in a prominent position adjacent Spring Valley Lane, an historic route which is protected in its own right. The mill is the setting of Malcolm Saville's 1956 children's novel "Treasure at the Mill" and the filming location of its subsequent 1957 adaptation.
- 5.53. Spring Valley Mill is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk (HAR) Register. Its condition is "very bad" and it has priority B status; "B - immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; solution agreed but not yet implemented". It is believed that some urgent repair works have already been carried out following the receipt of a Repair Grant for Heritage at Risk. However, as of 2021, the mill remained to be supported by temporary scaffolding.



Fig. 20. The Grade II listed Spring Valley Mill*

- 5.54. Ardleigh's only Scheduled Ancient Monument is the crop mark site just south of Ardleigh village which was first designated in 1976. This site contains a later bronze age cemetery comprising both barrows and urnfield. Fragments of urn

were first unearthed during a 1955 scheme of deep ploughing on Vince's Farm.

- 5.55. Other archaeological finds have since been uncovered here, including multi-period remains in 1995-96 as the successful result of a watching brief placed on the stripping of a new access road.

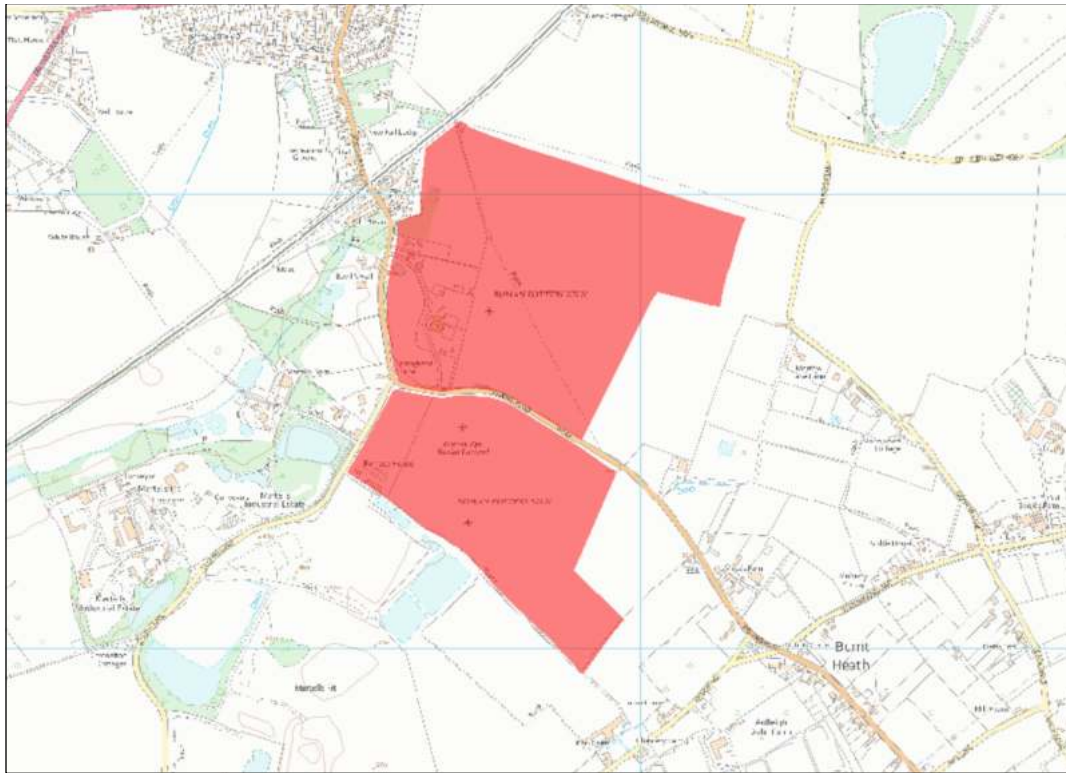


Fig. 21. Scheduled Ancient Monument located just south of the railway line

- 5.56. There are 9 Protected Lanes¹⁴ throughout Tendring district and two of these - Lodge Lane/Crown Lane North and Spring Valley Lane - can be found in Ardleigh.

¹⁴ Protected Lanes are lanes designated by the County Council and afforded additional protection as a result of their heritage value (indicating ancient road patterns) and contribution to local character

Services, facilities & infrastructure

5.57. The services and facilities in Ardleigh are relatively diverse for a Parish of its small size and rural nature.

Overview

5.58. Currently available at the heart of Ardleigh village is a post office, Primary School, GP surgery, two churches, takeaway, convenience store and public car park. Just south-west of the village, along Colchester Road, is a service station and public house.



Fig. 22. The Lion Inn, a Grade II listed public house at the heart of Ardleigh village, currently shut

5.59. The longstanding village pub permanently closed its doors during the COVID-19 pandemic and it is not yet known whether it will re-open in the future.

5.60. Ardleigh Parish also contains a number of more specialised services and facilities.

Employment

- 5.61. In terms of key employment sites, these are generally agricultural or industrial in nature and include a steel fabricator, plant & machinery hire shops, fruit & vegetable wholesalers, an industrial estate, a construction company, a horse breeder, a timber merchant, a sand & gravel supplier, a vineyard and various working farms.
- 5.62. There are several business parks, notably around the Old Ipswich Road area offering units for small and medium sized enterprises of various sorts.

Leisure & Community Facilities

- 5.63. Ardleigh's main recreational facility is Ardleigh Reservoir which hosts a fishery and a sailing club. Colchester Bowling Club is also located in close proximity. Ardleigh Fly Fishing Club operates from a private site at Hull Farm.



Fig. 23. Ardleigh Fly Fishing Club

- 5.64. Ardleigh's Village Hall is located towards the southernmost extremity of the village, adjacent to the Ardleigh Recreation Ground and Millennium Green. The recently refurbished Village Hall is fully accessible and available for public hire.
- 5.65. The recreation ground and green provides a cricket pitch, a children's play park and exercise equipment. It previously offered a football pitch and has potential to

be used for a wide range of sports and recreation. It is also home to Ardleigh Cricket Club.



Fig. 24. Children's play equipment

5.66. A mobile library visits Ardleigh village every three weeks.

Tourism

5.67. Ardleigh's dedicated tourism facilities are mostly in the form of accommodation. The Parish contains a small number of holiday lettings, B&Bs and a Caravan & Camping Park.

Transport

5.68. There are a number of bus stops located throughout Ardleigh village and some of the smaller hamlets. At the present time, buses are fairly regular and provide parishioners with access to Colchester, Manningtree, Harwich and elsewhere.



Fig. 25. Bus stop & shelter at the heart of Ardleigh village

- 5.69. Historically, the Parish was served by a dedicated railway station on the Great Eastern Main Line. The station was permanently closed in 1967 but the railway line remains a prominent landscape feature, bisecting Ardleigh village to the south.
- 5.70. The nearest train stations are now in Manningtree (approximately 4.2 km north-east of the Parish boundary) and Colchester North (approximately 3.6 km south-west of the Parish boundary).

New A120/A133 link road

- 5.71. Public consultation on a new link road for the A120/A133 closed in December 2019. The new link road is proposed to adjoin with a section of the A120 located within the south-easternmost extremity of Ardleigh Parish. The new road is proposed in order to reduce congestion, improve connectivity and facilitate planned housing and business growth in the area. In particular, it will form part of the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community, creating access into and from it.

5.72. Planning permission for the new link road was granted by Essex County Council in November 2021 (ref. CC/TEN/31/21). It is anticipated that construction of the road will commence in 2022 and complete in 2024. The proposed location of the new link road is indicated on the below diagram.

5.73. The new link road is likely to improve parishioners' ease of access into the urban centre of Colchester but may also increase pressures for future development. It will be important to ensure that Colchester's urban sprawl remains reasonably well-contained and Ardleigh's rural character is safeguarded.

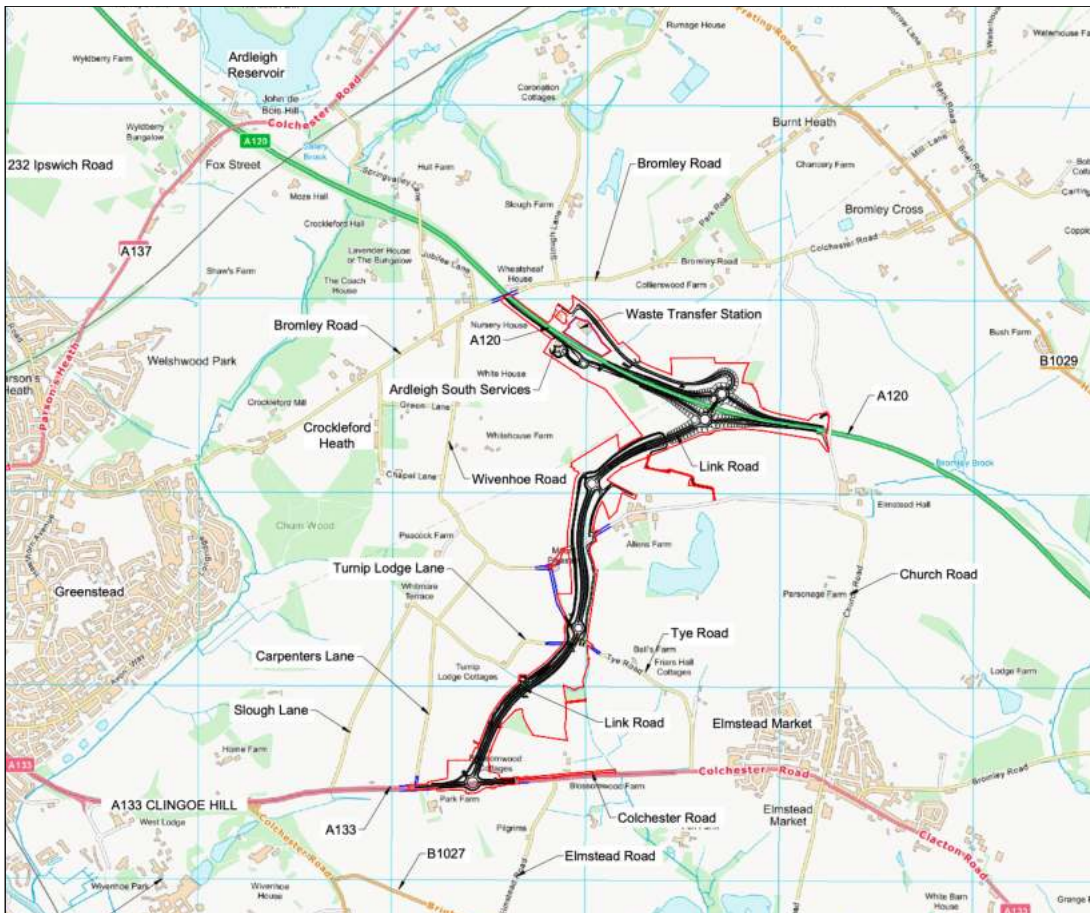


Fig. 26. Approved new link road & waste transfer station

6. Consultation & evidence base

6.1. National planning guidance requires that the local community is actively involved in the shaping of a Neighbourhood Plan, with their views relied upon to inform the purpose, direction and contents of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Summary

6.2. In 2020/21, local consultation took the form of two questionnaires:

1. a Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) Questionnaire called “Your Chance to Have Your Say” to establish the broad areas of concern and key opportunities for new development; and
2. a more detailed Consultation Questionnaire reflecting the results from the SWOT.

6.3. Due to the unprecedented circumstances of a global pandemic and associated Government imposed restrictions, consultation could not be conducted face-to-face. There was no opportunity for Village Hall events or visits to clubs and groups.

6.4. Instead, both consultations were carried out through online and hard copy questionnaires. These were distributed electronically via a dedicated page on Ardleigh Parish Council’s website and other social media sites.

6.5. Details of the consultation exercises (and updates) were also included in the Ardleigh Advertiser (Parish magazine) which is available online, with a hard copy also delivered to every household in the Parish.

6.6. Hard copies were also distributed to accessible community sites, such as the local shop, Post Office, garage, garden centres and Ardleigh Surgery. Every effort was made to be as inclusive as possible.

6.7. Both questionnaires were aimed at all age groups and suitable for both householders and businesses.



First steps

- 6.8. The Neighbourhood Planning Team is made up of a Steering Group (with a project management role) and a larger Working Group. Both were established in April 2020. The Chair of the Steering Group reported regularly to the Parish Council.
- 6.9. The Steering Group was made up of 3 Parish Councillors (one of whom acted in a secretarial role), plus the Parish Council Clerk. The Working Group was made up of 9 Parish Councillors, the Parish Council Clerk and 4 members of the public. The members of the public include one young person, two who have lived in the Parish for many years and another who recently moved to the village. Of the Parish Council members, two are new; one having become a Parish Councillor after joining the Working Group.
- 6.10. Both Groups were set up during April 2020 at which time a Terms of Reference (ToR) was agreed and sanctioned by the Parish Council as well as a project plan and a communications and engagement strategy.
- 6.11. All meetings were conducted via an online video conferencing service. A shared online database was created for all documents and a dedicated page was created on the Ardleigh Parish Council website to record progress and communicate with the local community.
- 6.12. Communication with the local community has been key throughout the plan preparation process. Articles have regularly been posted in the Ardleigh Advertiser, supplemented by other social media posts and updates on the Parish Council website.
- 6.13. Progress was regularly reported at the Parish Council's monthly meeting, with the Minutes published on their website and summarised within the Ardleigh Advertiser.

First 'SWOT' Questionnaire

- 6.14. The first questionnaire was entitled "Your Chance to Have Your Say" (see Appendix 1).



- 6.15. This consultation tool was developed and designed by the Working Group to gain insight into the key issues affecting the local community. It was intended to steer and inform a more detailed questionnaire.
- 6.16. It was also agreed, due to the pandemic restrictions, that it would be of benefit to engage with the local community as early as possible in order to better raise awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.17. The SWOT Questionnaire was available on the Parish Council's website, under the Neighbourhood Plan heading. It was also available in hard copies at the local Post Office, shops, garage and garden centres.
- 6.18. It was launched at the beginning of July 2020 and ran until the end of August 2020.
- 6.19. Posters designed to raise local awareness of the ongoing consultation exercise were placed on all of the Parish Notice Boards, including at the following locations:
- Village playing field
 - Village Hall
 - Village Centre
 - Village School
 - Coggleshall Road
 - Fox Street
 - Plains Farm
 - Burnt Heath
 - Crockleford Heath.
- 6.20. Posters were additionally displayed in the two garden centres, local shops, Spar petrol station, Post Office and Ardleigh Surgery. The Ardleigh Advertiser (Parish magazine) included information about the survey throughout the campaign.
- 6.21. A database of businesses and local community groups was also compiled using a variety of local directories (and local knowledge) and contacted by email.
- 6.22. 130 total responses to the SWOT Questionnaire were received and analysed by members of the Working Group. The results were published in the Ardleigh Advertiser and on various social media platforms.



6.28. The responses to the Consultation Questionnaire have been used to inform the Vision, Objectives and Policies of this Neighbourhood Plan.

Outcome of the consultation

6.29. It is the overwhelming view of the people who live and work in the Parish of Ardleigh that it should above all else retain its rural characteristics, including the visual quality of its buildings, open spaces, trees, hedges, footpaths and bridleways.

6.30. There is also a strong sense of community in Ardleigh which should be protected and nurtured throughout all parts of the Parish, including its outlying hamlets such as Crockleford Heath (which is impacted by the proposed Garden Community).

6.31. Local residents would like to see the community spirit of the Parish strengthened by encouraging the development of leisure, sport and other recreational facilities including, if possible, a community hub.

6.32. Local people have clearly stated that they feel the greatest threat to the rural characteristics and community spirit of the Parish is the overdevelopment of housing. It appears to be widely agreed amongst local residents that Ardleigh has taken “more than its fair share” of new housebuilding in recent years and should not be the focus of major/strategic housing growth.

6.33. This local opinion appears to be largely in line with the view taken by Tendring District Council and the housing strategy contained within their Local Plan.

6.34. The responses from the Consultation Questionnaire have been used to inform the Vision and Policies of this Neighbourhood Plan.

Evidence Base

6.35. To inform the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan, the following documents have also been produced:

Annex 1: Local Green Spaces Assessment; and

Annex 2: Updated Village Design Statement (2021).



7. Vision

- 7.1. In 2033, the Parish of Ardleigh remains in possession of its distinctive rural character and qualities.
- 7.2. The village's longstanding nucleated format continues to be preserved, whilst the rest of the Parish continues to provide a complementary offering of scattered farmsteads, barns, cottages and other appropriate rural land-based development.
- 7.3. The agricultural economy continues to thrive and there has been no significant loss of best and most versatile agricultural land to non-compatible uses. Appropriate and well-located rural land-based businesses have been supported to expand and flourish.
- 7.4. Positive features of the built, natural and historic environment have been protected and, wherever possible, enhanced. Ideally, Spring Valley Mill no longer appears on the Heritage at Risk register.
- 7.5. Some small-scale housing development has taken place within the defined Settlement Development Boundaries. This has been built to a very high standard, showing due regard for the local vernacular, the surrounding built context and the contents of the Village Design Statement. Sustainable design and construction techniques abound.
- 7.6. Existing community facilities, including Safeguarded Open Spaces and Local Green Spaces, have been retained and new leisure facilities intended to improve community cohesion and the health and wellness of residents have been introduced.
- 7.7. Where tourism, retail or employment-related development has taken place, it demonstrates due regard to the needs of residents and constraints of the Parish, including its landscape character and highways capacity.
- 7.8. Whilst efforts have been made to reduce the Parish's high levels of out-commuting for employment purposes (including support for home working proposals), efforts have equally been made to avoid any significant influx of in-commuting to Ardleigh.



7.9. Ardleigh remains a pleasant and tranquil place to live and work, providing a high standard of life to all of its residents.

7.10. The policies of this Neighbourhood Plan will ensure that the Vision is achieved.



8. Objectives

8.1. The objectives of this Neighbourhood Plan are simple:

- To achieve the Vision; and
- To achieve sustainable development in Ardleigh in accordance with the three overarching objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), namely:
 - c) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - d) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - e) **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.



Neighbourhood Plan Policies



9. Policy GDP: General Approach to Development



Explanatory text

- 9.1. Once made, this Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan for the Neighbourhood Plan Area. In accordance with national planning legislation, all applications for development within the Ardleigh Neighbourhood Plan Area must comply with both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan (and any other documents forming the Development Plan) unless material considerations indicate that a departure from one or more of their policies is justified.
- 9.2. Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan sets no target or allocations for development within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, it does recognise that there will be a small amount of new development within the settlement on a windfall basis (per paragraph 3.3.1.4.2 of the Local Plan Part 2).
- 9.3. A range of small scale new development can be accommodated on a limited basis in Ardleigh where it falls within the Settlement Development Boundaries and complies with all other relevant Development Plan policies.
- 9.4. Outside Settlement Development Boundaries and outside of the Tendring Colchester Border Garden Community, opportunities for new development are more constrained. All parts of the Parish outside of the defined Settlement Development Boundaries and outside of the Tendring Colchester Border Garden Community comprise open countryside where national and local policies of restraint apply.
- 9.5. The Local Plan approach to development in the open countryside seeks to:
 - Encourage the sustainable growth and development of farm and other rural land based businesses, including the construction of essential new buildings and rural workers' dwellings (policy PP 13);
 - Support the re-use of redundant rural buildings for sustainable employment, leisure or tourism purposes (policy PP 13);
 - Support the provision of compatible outdoor recreational activities (policy PP 8);
 - Enable the provision of new or extended camping and caravan sites, provided there is no adverse effect on local biodiversity or geodiversity (policy PP 10); and
 - Allow for the delivery of a modest amount of specialist new homes only, namely:
 - Rural workers' dwellings (in accordance with policy PP 13);



- Affordable housing on Rural Exception Sites (in accordance with policy LP 6); and
 - Certain types of self-build and custom-built homes (in accordance with policy LP 7).
- 9.6. All of the above types of open countryside development permitted by the Local Plan are considered to be modest in scale and impact. Policy GDP provides additional support for similarly modest developments, provided specific criteria are met.
- 9.7. This Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to prevent or discourage any development that is permitted by the Local Plan.
- 9.8. Policy GDP reinforces the Local Plan approach to development within Ardleigh's Settlement Development Boundaries. It provides some additional flexibility outside of Settlement Development Boundaries in order to:
- support the retention, growth and new provision of a wide array of small businesses provided that these are compatible with their countryside settings; and
 - encourage the provision of replacement dwellings that would benefit local character and improve energy-efficiency/sustainability.



Policy GDP - General Approach to Development

Within the Settlement Development Boundary, small scale development for no more than 10 dwellings or for community and employment uses will be supported in line with policies in the development plan.

Outside the Settlement Development Boundary and outside of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, new development will not generally be permitted unless it is consistent with all other relevant Development Plan policies and:

Housing development

- a. It is a Rural Exception Site in full accordance with local plan policy LP 6;
- b. It is a small development of Self/Custom Build Homes in full accordance with local plan policy LP 7; or
- c. It is for the 1:1 replacement of an existing dwelling that would both enhance local character and improve the site's overall energy efficiency and/or sustainability.

All other development

- d. The proposal is appropriate in scale and impact to its location and context; and
- e. It would provide necessary support for a new or existing business that is appropriate to the rural area; or
- f. It would directly provide for the conservation, enhancement or appropriate enjoyment of the countryside.

All new residential development should also accord with any requirements specified in the Essex RAMS Supplementary Planning Document and local plan policy PPL 4.



10. Policy CFP: Community Facilities



Explanatory text

10.1. The Local Plan seeks to retain and enhance community facilities including, where relevant, supporting their new provision. The loss of community facilities is generally only permissible where replacement facilities are provided in an appropriate location or there is evidence of a lack of community need for the existing facility or a different community facility on the same site. Developments are also expected to meet any need(s) for new or enhanced community facilities that arise from the delivery of the development (policy HP 2).

Community consultation

10.2. In response to the local consultation exercises, the local community has expressed a very strong desire to see the re-introduction of gym, swimming and tennis/squash/badminton facilities to the area.

10.3. The overwhelming local opinion is that the recent permanent loss of Ardleigh's well-located Squash and Leisure Club (previously a Safeguarded Open Space and Asset of Community Value) to market housing in c. 2016 (application ref. 16/00878/FUL) - contrary to the Development Plan in place at that time - was unjustified and unfortunate.

10.4. Tendring District Council approved the loss of this community facility in spite of this being strongly objected by the following parties:

- The District Council's Regeneration Team;
- The District Council's Leisure Services Team;
- Sport England;
- England Squash;
- Ardleigh Parish Council;
- Ardleigh Hall Fall Outs Group; and
- around 69 individual members of the public.

10.5. The local community is consequently very keen to see the delivery of new similarly well-located leisure facilities that would appropriately mitigate for the unfortunate loss of the above highly valued community facility.

10.6. The introduction of other outdoor facilities and activities, such as walking/cycling routes, a BMX track, an enclosed dog walking space and easy access to



recycling facilities and new allotments, would also be welcomed by the community.

- 10.7. The Parish Council advises that The Ardleigh Recreation Ground recently contained a football pitch but this is no longer the case. The Parish Council would be keen to see this facility reinstated.
- 10.8. In addition, a significant number of local people wanted to see a 'community hub' of sorts introduced to Ardleigh, with perhaps another cafe, more restaurants and a greater variety of retail shops available too.
- 10.9. There was a feeling that young children were well catered for in relation to play areas, but that there were insufficient leisure/recreational facilities for older young people.
- 10.10. Overall, people were satisfied with the school and GP Surgery but some were concerned that both were under pressure from recent housing development.
- 10.11. This section of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to provide clear encouragement for the retention and new development of community facilities in line with the expressed desires of the local community.
- 10.12. Further work would need to be done to explore options for the development of certain community facilities in the Parish, particularly in relation to a Community Hub and improved leisure/recreational facilities for young people.
- 10.13. It is known that there is currently a deficit of around 1.70 hectares of equipped play/open space in Ardleigh.
- 10.14. Based on statutory consultation responses to recent applications for new housing in Ardleigh¹⁵, it is also understood that:
 - Ardleigh's GP Surgery is overcapacity¹⁶; and

¹⁵ see, for example, the consultation response to refused application 20/00592/OUT (appeal reference APP/P1560/W/20/3260443) for up to 50 dwellings on Land North of Wick Lane

¹⁶ In June 2020, the NHS (North East Essex) reported that The Ardleigh Surgery (including its Branch The Dedham Surgery) has a "Spare Capacity (NIA m2)" of -207.29



- Ardleigh’s Primary School is overcapacity¹⁷ and likely to remain at or close to capacity in the near future.

10.15. It is important that these community facilities can be retained for the benefit of current and future generations in Ardleigh. The local community is concerned that too much housing development is likely to lead to these highly valued local facilities being relocated away from Ardleigh, notwithstanding any financial contributions. This would be likely to have serious negative implications for all of the following:

- The general health and wellbeing of residents - reported in the most recent census to be very good;
- Community cohesion - with fewer opportunities for residents to meet and engage with one another;
- Children’s socialisation - with the Primary School offering various extra-curricular activities which are especially valuable given the local play/open space deficit;
- The overall sustainability of Ardleigh - in spite of having both a GP Surgery and Primary School, Ardleigh sits at the lowest possible tier of the Settlement Hierarchy. Loss of the Primary School and GP Surgery could cause it to lose its settlement status entirely; and
- Community reliance on the private car - the GP Surgery and Primary School are located in safe and convenient walking distance of most village residents. If these facilities were relocated out of the Parish confines, it is highly likely that all residents of Ardleigh would be reliant on the private car to access them.

10.16. This Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to prevent any development that is permitted or encouraged by the Local Plan.

10.17. Policy CFP reinforces the Local Plan approach to community facilities. It provides strong support for the new provision of certain community facilities for which there is an established local need¹⁸. All of these preferred facilities would make welcome contributions towards the Local Plan’s ambitious goals to improve

¹⁷ In January 2020, there were 113 pupils on roll, compared to an indicated capacity of 105 places

¹⁸ not precluding the delivery of other community facilities in Ardleigh, provided local need can be established



community health and wellbeing (policy HP 1).

10.18. The policy also provided necessary acknowledgement of the recent evidence concerning the total lack of capacity at Ardleigh's GP Surgery and Primary School. As a result of these vital facilities' evidenced lack of current capacity¹⁹, it is clear that any new housing development in Ardleigh of any size will need to make a proportionate contribution towards their expansion in line with part a. of local policy HP 2.

¹⁹ *and in the absence of any more recent evidence to suggest new capacity has been found*



Policy CFP - Community Facilities

1. Applications for new or enhanced community facilities will be supported in appropriate locations where the proposal:
 - a. Provides a gym, swimming pool, squash/tennis/badminton courts and/or exercise related or leisure facilities; or
 - b. Provides on site enhancement of the Village Hall that would develop its role as a Community Hub; or
 - c. Is for a business with a clear community role or function such as meeting rooms, restaurant or café, shop, pub, dog training facility/walking area; or
 - d. Would contribute to meeting any identified deficiency in Ardleigh's equipped play/ open space.
2. New or improved community facilities should be designed to be accessible to all, including those with mobility restrictions. Community facilities that are intended or able to meet the needs of young people are particularly welcomed.
3. Proposals that would cause the loss or closure of existing community facilities will be refused unless they are in full accordance with local plan policy HP 2. In order to meet this policy, it will be expected that:
 - a. In relation to part b. of local plan policy HP 2, any existing community facility located within the Settlement Development Boundaries should be replaced by a facility also located within or within convenient walking distance of the Settlement Development Boundaries;
 - b. In relation to part c. of local plan policy HP 2, evidence provided by the Parish Council and/or members of the local community demonstrating that regular community use is made of a facility and/or the facility meets a clear community need, will be taken into account.
4. All housing applications outside of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community that would result in a net addition of housing must be accompanied by:
 - a. Evidence that there is sufficient capacity at the GP Surgery and Primary School to meet the needs arising from the new household(s); or



- b. A proportionate financial contribution towards the enhancement or new provision of appropriate medical and primary education facilities within the parish confines.
5. Development (including cumulatively) that would lead to the closure or relocation of Ardleigh's GP Surgery or Primary School outside of the parish confines will be resisted unless satisfactory replacement or improved provision is provided.



11. Policy HP: Housing



Explanatory text

- 11.1. In order to achieve a sustainable increase in housing stock over the plan period, the Local Plan anticipates delivery from the following key sources only:
- Existing permissions;
 - Housing site allocations; and
 - Other suitable sites within Settlement Development Boundaries (Section 3.3.2).
- 11.2. The Local Plan does not allocate any housing sites in Ardleigh or set any minimum housing figure for the Parish. The adopted housing strategy is such that Ardleigh could deliver 0 additional homes over the plan period and the District would still meet or exceed its minimum housing requirements.
- 11.3. Furthermore, the District Council's projections for small sites and windfall development (based on past trends for the whole District) assumes that a total of 122 new dwellings will be delivered throughout the Smaller Rural Settlements between 2021 and 2033. For argument's sake, this equates to only approximately 10 - 11 dwellings per year. Split equally amongst the 18 Smaller Rural Settlements, this equates to an approximate annual housing projection per Smaller Rural Settlement of just 0.5 - 1 dwelling(s).
- 11.4. Notwithstanding the above provisions, the Local Plan adopts a positive and proactive approach to the delivery of new housing in line with the national objective to significantly boost the housing land supply.
- 11.5. To this end, the Local Plan provides "in principle" support for all of the following types of new housing in Ardleigh:
- Developments of 10 or fewer infill dwellings located within the Settlement Development Boundaries of the village (see paragraphs 3.3.1.4.3 & 3.3.1.4.4);
 - Developments of affordable housing on sites physically adjoining the village's Settlement Development Boundaries provided the development meets an identified affordable housing need in Ardleigh that could not otherwise be met and is supported by the Parish Council; and
 - Developments of self-build and custom-built housing anywhere in the Parish if it comprises a 1:1 replacement of an existing dwelling OR it would redevelop vacant or redundant brownfield land that is evidenced to be unviable for employment use.



- 11.6. Ardleigh Parish Council is supportive of the District's ambition to exceed minimum housing requirements. However, this must be balanced against other important planning considerations, including the capacity of infrastructure/facilities and the retention of Ardleigh's built/landscape character and rural identity.
- 11.7. Ardleigh has already seen a considerable amount of housing growth in recent years, far in excess of previous Local Plan predictions. Since 2011, this modest and historic rural settlement has seen a c. 20% increase in its total housing stock. Prior to this, growth had occurred more gradually over many years.
- 11.8. The Parish Council believes that better use can be made of existing residential plots to meet the changing/growing accommodation needs of local households, including the rise in multigenerational living. This approach is far preferred to the new residential development of previously green and open sites, especially in the rural areas. To this end, policy HP provides express support for the creation of ancillary residential accommodation (such as "granny annexes") throughout the Parish.
- 11.9. Although it is acknowledged that parts of the Parish lie in proximity of the more sustainable Colchester, there is legitimate concern that allowing housing growth in these areas will cause the rural Parish of Ardleigh and urban City of Colchester to coalesce. It is of vital importance that the sense of physical and functional separation between the City of Colchester and the rural Parish of Ardleigh is preserved throughout and beyond the current plan period. Great importance will be attached to this matter in the consideration of any relevant planning applications.
- 11.10. Additionally, the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community (part of which is located in Ardleigh) is expected to deliver a very substantial number of new homes throughout and beyond the current plan period²⁰. No matter where these new houses are delivered in Ardleigh, they will have considerable impacts on the Parish's rural character, infrastructure, sense of community and, of course, its overall housing stock.

Community consultation

- 11.11. The community consultation exercises underpinning the preparation of this

²⁰ 2000 total homes up to 2033 and a further 5500 homes post 2033



Neighbourhood Plan have made it clear that an overwhelming majority of local residents strongly object to any further housing development taking place over the plan period.

- 11.12. Many expressed concern in response to the Consultation Questionnaire that recent housing development has threatened the community. Concerns were specifically raised about harm to the rural environment arising from developments taking place away from the village confines and about impacts on the school and GP surgery which were widely agreed to be at breaking point.
- 11.13. There is clearly little community support for any form of housing development. However, in terms of size, 4+ bed dwellings were felt to be the least needed whilst 2 and 3-bed dwellings were the most needed, with 1-beds not far behind.
- 11.14. In terms of residential design, a small community preference was indicated for the inclusion of sustainable/eco-friendly design and construction techniques. Policy HP therefore provides support for housing schemes that achieve high levels of sustainability. This could include houses that achieve zero carbon status or meet the Living Building Challenge.
- 11.15. Also preferred were infill schemes²¹ and designs that harmonise with the traditional architectural character of the area. There was clear consensus that if new residential development is to be allowed, it should only be within the Settlement Development Boundaries.
- 11.16. Whilst there was some limited local support for affordable housing in the Parish, any affordable housing needs are likely to be met in full by development already planned for and/or approved (such as the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community). It is also the case that the existing number of socially-rented properties in Ardleigh is closely aligned with the figure for the district as a whole which includes the urban localities of Clacton, Harwich and Manningtree.
- 11.17. In the event that additional need arises, Local Plan policy LP 6 already provides scope for the delivery of suitable affordable housing schemes in the Parish over the plan period.
- 11.18. Where the Parish Council is satisfied that:

²¹ “infill” meaning small plots with development on both sides, usually forming part of an otherwise continually built-up road frontage of buildings



1. a Parish need for an affordable housing scheme put forward under policy LP 6 has been demonstrated (with evidence); and
2. the application complies with all other provisions of policy LP 6 and any other relevant development plan policies;

they will provide their formal support for the application, as required by policy LP 6.

11.19. Per the above discussion, there is currently no established need or local community support for any additional housebuilding in Ardleigh over and above that already permitted by the Local Plan.

11.20. This Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to prevent or discourage any development that is permitted by the Local Plan.

11.21. Policy HP reinforces the Local Plan approach to housing development within and without Ardleigh's Settlement Development Boundaries. It identifies a number of specific design features that applications for new housing in Ardleigh should seek to incorporate in order to increase their chances of approval. It also provides additional scope for the creation of ancillary residential accommodation throughout all parts of the Parish in order to better support local residents to meet their changing housing needs.



Policy HP - Housing

1. Housing development will be supported within the Settlement Development Boundary where:

a. The proposal is for limited infilling* of no more than 10 dwellings.

*For the purposes of this policy, infilling means the development of a plot with buildings on both sides, usually a plot in an otherwise continuously built up road frontage.

2. New housing development outside the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, is encouraged to incorporate:

- a. Smaller units of 1 – 3 bedrooms to address local need;
- b. Sustainable design and construction features; and
- c. Accessibility features which would allow occupiers to remain in their homes over their lifetimes.

3. The creation of ancillary residential accommodation (e.g. granny annexes) within the curtilage of existing dwellings will be supported throughout the parish but outside the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community provided:

- a. Evidence is supplied that the accommodation is required to provide necessary care and/or support to a member of the site's immediate family or household; and
- b. A restrictive condition to prevent the future use of the ancillary accommodation as a separate or self-contained dwelling is applied to any grant of planning permission.

4. For developments that include the provision of affordable housing, it will be expected that affordable homes are interspersed appropriately throughout the market housing and are indistinguishable from the market housing in terms of their external appearance, design, standards and build quality.



12. Policy EP: Natural, Built & Historic Environment



Explanatory Text

- 12.1. At the highest level of planning, the achievement of “sustainable development” requires the protection and enhancement of the country’s natural, built and historic environments (paragraph 8 of the NPPF).
- 12.2. The Local Plan contains various detailed policies concerned with the conservation and enhancement of Tendring’s natural, built and historic environments, including:

Built

- Policy SPL 3 which expects all new development to make a positive contribution to the quality of the local environment and protect or enhance local character. In particular:
 - new buildings and building alterations should be well-designed and maintain or enhance local character;
 - development should relate well to its surroundings by way of its siting, height, scale, massing, form, design and materials;
 - Development should respect or enhance local landscape character, views, skylines, street patterns and open spaces;
 - Boundary treatments and hard/soft landscaping should be designed as an integral part of the development and use locally distinctive materials and local/native species;

Natural

- Policy PPL 3 which seeks to protect the rural landscape and to refuse permission for any development that would cause overriding harm to its character or appearance, including to its estuaries, rivers, skylines, traditional buildings, settlement settings, native hedgerows, trees and woodlands, rural lanes, footpaths/bridleways and heritage assets;
- Policy PPL 4 which requires that new development avoids significant impacts on any protected species and is supported by appropriate ecological assessments. This policy also resists development that would have an adverse impact on designated wildlife sites (including Local Wildlife Sites) or aged/veteran trees;



Historic

- Policy PPL 7 which requires new development with the potential to affect designated or non-designated archaeological remains to be accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment and which resists development that would cause harm to the significance of an archaeological heritage asset or its setting;
- Policy PPL 8 which expects new development to preserve or enhance Conservation Areas and their settings, especially in terms of scale and design, materials, finishes and boundary treatments, landscaping, trees and spaces and important views;
- Policy PPL 9 which states that permission will be refused for proposals that fail to protect the special architectural or historic interest of an affected listed building unless approval is justified by the provisions of the NPPF.

12.3. The Ardleigh environment has a pleasant and modest rural character that derives from a variety of factors, including (but not limited to) its:

- Visual qualities, including the architectural styles of buildings and the way manmade features (such as buildings and lanes) relate to natural features (such as trees and hedgerows) in the landscape;
- Use(s) of buildings and land, especially agricultural and other rural land-based uses which are a long-preserved and defining feature of the Ardleigh landscape;
- Wide array of natural and biodiverse landscape features including woodlands, ancient hedgerows, water bodies, meadows and orchards;
- Heritage assets, including the Conservation Area, the significant number of impressive old farmhouses and the medieval village church;
- Noises, including a lack of noise. For example, there are remote areas of the Parish (including parts of Crockleford Heath) where there is a lack of any road or traffic noise and birdsong dominates. Elsewhere, the noise of agricultural vehicles and machinery can be prominent throughout the working landscape;
- Smells. For example, in woodlands compared to agricultural areas;
- Lack of development, especially how this assists places and spaces to relate to one another. This includes: soft green spaces (formal or otherwise) that provide visual relief in built-up environments; gaps between buildings; open fields, especially where these are “hard-up” against the village’s built-up areas; and
- Type/amount of activity. For example, parts of the village and surrounding working agricultural landscape have a vibrant and bustling character, whereas other areas in the Parish are notably quiet and tranquil.



- 12.4. The defining character of the Parish is as a working agricultural settlement. The historic settlement's origins reside firmly in the agricultural working of its surrounding landscape and many of its statutory heritage assets reflect the critical social, economic and environmental importance of this local industry throughout the many thousands of years of the settlement's existence. Although (in common with all other parts of the country) agriculture is no longer as significant a local industry as it was historically, it does continue to employ a statistically significant number of local residents.
- 12.5. Furthermore, arable agricultural fields continue to strongly define the Parish's rural landscape character and a good deal of its field boundaries (and hedgerows) are many hundreds of years old. Ardleigh also retains a generous amount of "best and most versatile" agricultural land which should be permanently retained in agricultural use wherever possible.
- 12.6. The need to retain "best and most versatile" agricultural land is rendered all the more significant by the ongoing coastal erosion that continues to reduce agricultural land supply in this eastern region of the country. Local residents are also conscious of contemporary concerns surrounding food insecurities (arising from economic recession, Brexit, the pandemic and international conflicts).
- 12.7. A Conservation Area encompasses the heart of the historic Ardleigh village. The Conservation Area Appraisal prepared by Tendring District Council (2006) summarises its special interest as follows:

"Ardleigh is a small medieval village at an important road junction, and retains its fine church and sequences of attractive vernacular buildings. The well-treed approaches to the north and the east are essential to the character of the village and are also included in the Area. The village expanded southwards in the 19th century, resulting in further groups of distinctive buildings, which with their settings are also recognised by Area designation."

- 12.8. In December 2011, the Parish Council published a Village Design Statement (VDS). This document was prepared in consultation with Tendring District Council and seeks to describe the distinctive characteristics of the various parts of the Parish (including the village, the Conservation Area and some of the outlying hamlets) and provide design guidance for new development in these areas. Since its publication, the VDS has been a material planning consideration for all



relevant planning applications in the Parish.

12.9. The VDS (see Annex 2) has been updated as part of the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan. The update is based on detailed desk- and field- based assessments. It seeks primarily to identify and assess developments undertaken in the Parish since 2011. For example, it evaluates the design success of these recent developments, including the extent to which they have complied with the former VDS and its design requirements. Where relevant, the guidance of the VDS has been updated to describe changes to local character, to clarify design expectations and/or to provide necessary additional protection against the design shortcomings of developments implemented in the Parish since 2011.

12.10. The desirable and undesirable design features for new development in Ardleigh outside the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community are set out in the tables below.

Roofs	
Desirable	Undesirable
45 degree pitch	Shallow pitch
Natural slate	Sheet roofing
Handmade plain clay tiles or modern equivalent	Clay or concrete pantiles
Traditional small dormer windows	Large, unrelieved expanses of roof
“Laced” valleys and “bonneted” hips	Large, disproportionate and flat-topped dormer windows
Chimneys	Absence of chimneys
Green and blue roofs, where appropriate	

Table 2.

Walls	
Desirable	Undesirable
Red, handmade brick to match local “soft” red bricks	Large expanses of unrelieved render with bland glossy or semi-matte paints



Rendered walls, ideally finished with traditional limewash or other truly matte finish	“Shiplap” style weatherboarding (machined with face profiles or bevels)
Sawn or feathered weatherboarding with black stain or matte paint finish	
White “Suffolk” handmade bricks	
Pebbledash render, ideally finished with traditional limewash or other truly matte finish	
Any arches or decorative features to use fine joints	

Table 3.

Windows	
Desirable	Undesirable
Windows in extensions to match windows of existing building	Large unrelieved areas of glazing
Glazing bars, if added for effect, to be no wider than 25mm	UPVC windows
In semi-detached and terraced housing, unity in window style should be achieved throughout the building	Obscure glazing with large-pattern designs
Honest, simple glazing in wood (or metal) frames based on traditional sizes	
Cottage' pattern side-hung, multi-pane windows ('landscape' format) based on traditional sizes, without small fanlights and with glazing bars no wider than 25mm	



Where double or secondary glazing is proposed, narrow glazing bars should be added as an applied grid to the exterior and not inserted between double-glazing OR incorporated as a functional part of traditional single-glazed windows alongside internal secondary glazing.	
---	--

Table 4.

Doors	
Desirable	Undesirable
Doors in extensions to match doors of existing building	Non-vernacular design, especially where visible from the public realm
In semi-detached and terraced housing, unity in door style should be achieved throughout the building	UPVC doors
Solid timber	
Where metal windows are provided (and appropriate), matching metal doors may be considered	
Ideally, the door colour should take its cues from the historic local usage of traditional mineral or vegetable paint colours (which characterise many of the houses in the village).	

Table 5.



Landscaping & boundary treatments	
Desirable	Undesirable
For hardstandings, clay (brick), stone or concrete individual 'setts' of square or rounded non-geometric design (if brick or concrete, batches should be well-mixed to avoid colour patches), gravel	For hardstandings, large unrelieved areas of tarmac, monolithic concrete, or geometric pavers
Hedges using native species such as hawthorn, especially in country lanes	Patterned concrete (e.g. monolithic concrete with surface designs to mimic real stone finishes)
Low brick walls as for buildings, with brick copings	'Suburbanisation' of country lanes with expansive sections of close-boarded fencing and overly elaborate or ornate tall brick walls and metal fences
Timber picket and post-and-rail fencing (again stained, not painted)	Hedges of non-native or generic species such as laurel
Simple modern or genuinely traditional light fittings	Poorly sited, intrusive or excessive exterior lights
Traditional timber joinery gates	
Traditional low iron fences and gates in simple styles, without too much ornamentation	
New housing developments that include electric vehicle charging points within the residential curtilage(s) will be looked on more favourably than those that do not	

Table 6.

12.11. This Neighbourhood Plan now requires all new development in the Parish to pay due regard to the relevant contents of the updated VDS. The VDS comprises an annex to the Neighbourhood Plan.



Community consultation

- 12.12. In response to the community consultation exercises, an overwhelming majority of local residents reported that they value and wish to preserve the Parish's rural character, including its open spaces, trees, hedgerows and the visual qualities of its buildings. Respondents did not wish to see the Parish's cherished footpaths, bridleways or rural lanes adversely affected by any new development. Some concern was also expressed about the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community, particularly the harm this might cause to the rural environment of Crockleford Heath.
- 12.13. This Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to prevent or discourage any development that is permitted by the Local Plan.
- 12.14. Policy EP reinforces the Local Plan approach to the natural, built and historic environments of the District. It provides valuable guidance to enable applicants to understand Ardleigh's specific character and identify how new development can be designed to maintain or enhance this. Given the considerable importance of working agricultural land to the character and appearance of Ardleigh's historic rural landscape, it directly resists any unnecessary loss of best and most versatile agricultural land to non-compatible uses.



Policy EP - Natural, Built & Historic Environment

1. Outside of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, development will be supported provided:
 - a. Its design is of a high quality and takes account of the Village Design Statement or any successor document, paying particular attention to appropriate:
 - i. Siting;
 - ii. Layout;
 - iii. Form and scale;
 - iv. Architectural style
 - v. Materials;
 - vi. Relationship to surrounding development;
 - vii. Impact on important built and landscape features;
 - viii. Landscaping and boundary treatments;
 - ix. Car parking provision; and
 - x. Accessibility.
 - b. It does not result in a harmful urbanising effect on a rural lane or street (for example, as a result of hedgerow removal or loss of an open view);
 - c. There is no urban intrusion (including as a result of light or noise pollution or increased vehicular traffic) into currently tranquil rural areas;
 - d. There is no net loss of good quality green landscape features (including trees, hedges and shrubs) and all new green landscape features are of appropriate local or native species;
 - e. Appropriate opportunities are incorporated to support local biodiversity and wildlife including net gain;
 - f. There is no unnecessary loss of best and most versatile agricultural land to non compatible uses (the onus will be on the developer to establish the quality of any agricultural land proposed for other uses);
 - g. Development in the Conservation Area or within its setting preserves or enhances its character or appearance and takes the Conservation Area Appraisal into account; and
 - h. Development affecting a Listed Building or its setting preserves or enhances its significance and is supported by a proportionate Heritage Impact Assessment.



13. Policy LGP: Local Green Spaces



Explanatory Text

- 13.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports the designation of land as Local Green Space through both local and neighbourhood plans (paragraph 101).
- 13.2. Designated Local Green Spaces are considered to be “areas or assets of particular importance” (per paragraph 11 and its supporting footnote) and are consequently given additional protection against inappropriate development.
- 13.3. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
 - a) In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - b) Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance,
for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity
or richness of wildlife; and
 - c) Local in character and not an extensive tract of land (paragraph 102).
- 13.4. Further guidance on Local Green Space designation is provided in National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), including:
 - Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion;
 - Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented;
 - “Reasonably close proximity” depends on local circumstances including why the green area is seen as special. If public access is a key factor, then the site should normally be within walking distance;
 - Land can be considered for designation even if there is no public access (e.g. green areas which are valued because of their wildlife, historic significance and/or beauty);
 - Designation of a site does not confer any rights of public access over what exists at present;
 - There is no need to designate linear corridors simply to protect public rights of way (as they are already protected by other legislation);



- A site does not need to be in public ownership, however landowners should be contacted and provided the opportunity to make representations in respect of proposals in a draft plan; and
- Designating a green area as Local Green Space would give it protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt, but otherwise there are no new restrictions or obligations on landowners.

13.5. This Neighbourhood Plan is able to designate Local Green Spaces (LGS) provided the national criteria are met.

13.6. Locality²² has also published a toolkit for neighbourhood planners entitled “Neighbourhood Planning Local Green Spaces”. This contains more detailed guidance concerning the identification and designation of LGSs as well as the drafting of relevant neighbourhood plan policies for their protection.

Locality toolkit

Some of the most relevant advice provided by the Locality toolkit is extracted below:

Some of the community and environmental benefits of green spaces are:

- *Being part of the public realm, where informal social interaction can take place*
- *Forming part of a network of paths and spaces, enabling movement through an area*
- *Providing habitats for wildlife and a natural corridors and spaces through urban areas*
- *Adding to local amenity, providing an attractive setting and outlook for surrounding residential and commercial properties*
- *Forming part of the character or setting of historic areas, buildings and townscape*
- *Providing areas and opportunities for growing local food.*

Community and Stakeholder engagement:

Where Local Green Space designations are being considered, it is also advisable to engage with those controlling the land.

Policy themes:

Purposes and themes for policies addressing green space and infrastructure could

²² *Locality is an organisation providing support to neighbourhood planning groups on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. They provide both grant (financial) and technical (assistance and advice) support*



include -

- *Ensuring the space remains open and its community value is maintained*
- *Protecting the character of the area, including historic areas*
- *Ensuring adjacent development complements its setting*
- *Setting out design requirements for new development around green space, including providing access into the space, where appropriate*
- *Enabling changes of use to allow a wider range of activities to take place*

A policy specific to Local Green Space could make clear that development should not compromise the open character and community value of spaces or set out where limited development may be allowed to enhance the community use of the space.

Design policies could ensure that development adjacent to Local Green Space provide active frontages, to provide natural surveillance. Such policies could also deal with scale and character of development. Open Green Spaces could provide an ideal setting for creative modern buildings on adjacent sites.

- 13.7. The LGSs of this Neighbourhood Plan and the related LG policy have been identified and prepared in accordance with the national criteria, the NPPG and the Locality toolkit.
- 13.8. A comprehensive LGS Assessment was carried out as part of the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan and comprises an important aspect of its evidence base²³. A total of 24 spaces were nominated for consideration by the local community. Each of these spaces was then subject to a desk-based assessment, leading to 6 of the nominations being discounted from further consideration.
- 13.9. Field assessments were then conducted of the 18 remaining spaces to enable a more detailed appraisal of their accordance with the national criteria. The field assessments led to more sites being discounted or amended, with a total of 7 LGSs carried forward for nomination in the Neighbourhood Plan.

²³ *This section of the Neighbourhood Plan provides an overview of its key contents. However, for a detailed understanding of the assessment process and public consultation responses, regard should be had to the separate LGS Assessment at Annex 1*



13.10. The 7 LGSs carried forward for nomination in the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- 1. Fishing lake north of Colchester Road
- 2. Manor House meadow
- 3. Woodlands attached to Birch Wood
- 4. Hart's Lane orchard
- 5. Car park land
- 6. Glebe Corner land
- 7. Harwich Road allotments.

13.11. A brief summary of the special community value and local significance (e.g. beauty, historic significance, recreation value, tranquility, richness of wildlife) of each LGS appears below²⁴. These are the qualities which any new development in or adjacent to the space should seek to preserve or enhance. Development that would cause material harm to these features will be considered “inappropriate” in relation to policy LGP.

1. Fishing lake north of Colchester Road



Fig. 28. Space 1

²⁴ these summaries are not exhaustive - for full descriptions, reference should always be made to the separate LGS Assessment at Annex 1



13.12. The site comprises a fishing lake. Parts of the site support beautiful, far-reaching public views to be had both across the arable landscape and back towards the settlement edge. These views are genuinely representative of the Landscape Character Area and largely unchanged since historic times. The space is emblematic of the historic (and, in other places, eroded) abrupt spatial relationship between the medieval nuclear village of Ardleigh and the surrounding working countryside. It has been used for recreational walking by villagers for hundreds of years. It provides the only glimpse of open countryside available from Colchester Road (within the built-up area of the village). The fishing lake is replete with local wildlife, including a variety of birds and bats. Given its close proximity to the village centre, it is a surprisingly tranquil place with a perceptible sense of being far away from people and settlement. It is subject to regular recreational use by a local fishing club.

Space 2 Manor House meadow



Fig. 29. Space 2

13.13. The site is long-preserved amenity land enclosed by public footpaths and containing ancient woodlands. It is subject to daily recreational use by villagers. Part of the site is designated Local Wildlife Site Te10 in recognition of its significant value to wildlife. Salary Brook also passes through the area, supporting a wide variety of habitats. It has visual presence on the approach to



Ardleigh village along the B1029.

Space 3 Woodlands attached to Birch Wood



Fig. 30. Space 3

13.14. Space 3 comprises two small but dense sections of woodland located along the historic and picturesque Hart's Lane. The woodlands appear as natural extensions of the adjacent Birch Wood which is a designated Local Wildlife Site. Their trees appear to be of some maturity and good quality. In common with the adjacent Birch Wood, the space supports a wide variety of wildlife. Birch Wood is identified to be suffering from piecemeal conversion to residential garden. Given this ongoing threat, the retention of these sections of adjoining woodland is considered to be all the more important for both landscape and biodiversity reasons. The sites also make a notable positive contribution towards the special rural and sylvan qualities of the historic Hart's Lane and the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Space 4 Hart's Lane orchard



Fig. 31. Space 4

13.15. The space is a working apple orchard with a public footpath running along its boundary. Previously, the public footpath ran through the centre of the orchard but part of the orchard was recently lost to residential use. Historically and for many generations, the surrounding area (Hart's Lane) was replete with working fruit orchards, however these uses have nearly all been lost. This space now comprises the last remaining veteran fruit orchard on Hart's Lane. It consequently provides an evocative and highly valuable reminder of the specific agricultural origins of this part of the Parish. The Woodland Trust also recognises that fruit orchards of this scale and nature are "biodiverse hotspots" - given the modern loss of all other fruit orchards on Hart's Lane, this last remaining space is likely to provide a highly valuable refuge for local wildlife and its retention is important.

Space 5 Car park land



Fig. 32. Space 5

13.16. This space comprises a small section of public amenity land that sits adjacent to the village's central car park. It consists of undulating grassed land containing various trees and a well-used pedestrian pathway. It is located within the Conservation Area, in close proximity and in view of the landmark, Grade II* listed village church. It is also close to and overlooked by the nearby residential estate, providing a well-used informal play area for children living there. The land is considered to make a very valuable contribution towards the landscape qualities of the Conservation Area. In particular, it greatly softens the hard-edged character of the public car park, provides a welcome gap in built form and confers maturity on the adjacent modern housing estate.

Space 6 Glebe Corner land



Fig. 33. Space 6

13.17. This space comprises former glebe land (historically attached to the village church) that now appears as rough grassland, bordered by dense and mature hedgerows of some quality. The space is considered to provide a very important landscape function, marking the unofficial “entrance” to Ardleigh from the east. Its partial treed enclosure clearly distinguishes it from the wider open landscape and serves to signpost the transition from large-scale arable countryside to small-scale rural settlement. In its current state, the site has clear biodiversity value and appears to support an abundance of butterflies and bees. It also assists to preserve the tranquility and landscape qualities of the adjacent allotments and cemetery. Although it is no longer glebe land, it retains many of the undeveloped qualities that it would historically have held as glebe land and it continues to form part of the church’s heritage setting. Its retention provides an evocative reminder of the ecclesiastical origins of this part of the Parish.

Space 7 Harwich Road allotments



Fig. 34. Space 7

- 13.18. The site comprises private allotments that are used by local residents to grow vegetables, flowers and keep poultry. Produce grown here is frequently sold to the local community. It is believed that these are the only allotments in the Parish. Although open to members of the public for a fee, it is understood that the allotments are at capacity. Overall, the allotments appear tidy and well cared for and have a positive visual presence from the road on the approach to the village. Especially given modern concerns over food security and supply issues, these village allotments have considerable value to the local community.
- 13.19. The location and boundary of each LGS is indicated on the proposals maps (appendix A).

Community consultation

- 13.20. The local community and the landowners of the 7 remaining LGSs were provided with an opportunity to submit written representations on the nominations. In total, 9 written representations were received. Of the 6 landowner responses received, only 1 was supportive. A summary of the public/landowner comments, including the Parish Council's responses to objections raised, appears in the LGS Assessment (Annex 1). Ultimately, the Parish Council does not consider that any of the objections received weigh against designation of any of the 7 LGSs. The Parish Council would emphasise that designation of the sites:

- Will not confer any public rights of access over and above those already in

existence and the Parish Council will continue to support landowners to deal with any trespassing issues;

- Will not prevent any development on or around the space. In fact, development that is compatible with the space's established use and/or special community value will be encouraged; and
- Will not place any additional burdens or requirements on landowners other than to continue to maintain the space's special value as they do at present.



Policy LGP - Local Green Spaces

The following spaces are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- Space 1: Fishing lake north of Colchester Road
- Space 2: Manor House meadow
- Space 3: Woodlands attached to Birch Wood
- Space 4: Hart's Lane orchard
- Space 5: Car park land
- Space 6: Glebe Corner land
- Space 7: Harwich Road allotments.

In the LGSs, new development will be managed in a way that is consistent with national policy on Green Belts.

Development adjacent to a LGS will be supported provided it is compatible with the LGS.



14. Policy TP: Transport & Parking



Explanatory Text

- 14.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) expects transport issues to be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making. Amongst other matters, plans should seek to address potential impacts on existing transport networks and identify opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use (paragraph 104).
- 14.2. The NPPF also provides that:
- significant development should be focused on locations that are or can be made sustainable by both limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes (paragraph 105); and
 - development that will generate significant amounts of movement should be accompanied by a Travel Plan and Transport Statement or Transport Assessment (paragraph 113)²⁵.
- 14.3. Due to its position at the lowest possible rung of the Settlement Hierarchy, Ardleigh is only anticipated to deliver “small-scale development” over the plan period (per paragraph 3.3.1.4.2 of the Local Plan Part 2). Consequently, it is not anticipated that any significant/major development likely to generate significant amounts of movement or to have significant transport implications will be delivered anywhere in Ardleigh over the plan period.
- 14.4. Local policy CP 1 requires that all new development is sustainable in terms of transport and accessibility. To achieve this, new development should include and encourage opportunities for access to sustainable transport modes (including walking, cycling and public transport).
- 14.5. Local policy CP 2 provides support for new development that contributes towards the safety and efficiency of the transport network and that offers a range of sustainable transport modes.

Community consultation

- 14.6. In response to consultation, the majority of local people felt that the roads in and around Ardleigh are adequate overall. However, a large number of people

²⁵ *Local policy CP 1 sets similar requirements for “major development likely to have significant transport implications”*



reported concerns about congestion and parking on certain Parish roads, particularly Old Ipswich Road and The Street at the heart of the village.

- 14.7. Since public consultation closed, the Parish Council advises that parking controls have been introduced to The Street in the form of double red lines. It is anticipated that this recent feature will mitigate at least some of the parking pressures and congestion along this street.
- 14.8. There were also concerns about the speed of traffic through the Parish and the general flouting of weight restrictions on the small roads and lanes. It was felt that greater efforts are needed to ensure these restrictions are enforced.
- 14.9. A lot of local people would also like to see the local transport network enhanced by improved cycle and walkways.
- 14.10. It is acknowledged that the Neighbourhood Plan is limited in what it can achieve in relation to certain local concerns. It cannot, for example, introduce policies to require motorists to abide by weight restrictions that are already in place. Essex Highways is the Authority responsible for enforcing Weight Restriction Orders and the Parish Council will continue to liaise with this body directly to address local concerns.
- 14.11. In respect of parking, the Parish Council is concerned that recent development throughout Ardleigh has given insufficient consideration to both the design and quality of car parking facilities. Recently, developers have not been providing parking in accordance with the adopted guidance and the serious harmful implications of this are plain to see. In many of Ardleigh's modern housing estates, the parked car is by far the most dominant feature in the streetscene and this is truly unfortunate.
- 14.12. These recent developments in Ardleigh have failed to provide the parking facilities required to meet the basic needs of their occupants at the point of their construction, let alone into the future. As cars inevitably grow in size and the number of cars per household inevitably increases too, the failure of these recent developments to incorporate sufficient well-designed parking will only become more apparent and the implications for local character and local road networks more severe.
- 14.13. This Neighbourhood Plan therefore seeks to ensure that parking provision is henceforth designed in accordance with the adopted regional guidance and also considered from the earliest stages of a development's design as an integral



feature. The provision of undersized garages, undersized or poorly arranged spaces and/or an inadequate number of in-curtilage spaces will no longer be entertained anywhere in Ardleigh.

14.14. This Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to prevent or discourage any development that is permitted by the Local Plan.

14.15. Policy TP complements the provisions of the NPPF and the policies of the Local Plan. In particular, it reinforces the Local Plan approach of resisting significant and major development in the Smaller Rural Settlement of Ardleigh and its surrounding countryside. It also identifies specific ways in which new development can contribute towards the safety and efficiency of Ardleigh's transport network, in accordance with local policy CP 2. Given the parking inadequacies of a number of recent developments in Ardleigh, it also seeks to reinforce the importance of well-designed parking facilities and the need to comply with established parking guidance.



Policy TP - Transport & Parking

1. Outside the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, new development that has an unacceptable impact on highway safety or have residual cumulative impacts on the local road network will be resisted.
2. Outside the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, development that otherwise complies with the development plan will be supported where it:
 - a. Improves highway safety;
 - b. Takes every available opportunity to improve parking provision including through innovative approaches to parking that contribute to modal shift;
 - c. Retains and enhances the existing footpath and cycleway networks including through the provision of new routes or connections.
3. Outside the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, parking provision should be designed as an integral feature of a development's layout. New development should provide parking in accordance with the Essex Parking Standards and the Essex Design Guide or any successor guidance as well as considering modal shift opportunities.



15. Implementation, Monitoring and Review

Implementation

- 15.1. The Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used by decision takers to determine the outcome of planning applications and appeals in the Parish. The District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, will use it to determine the outcome of planning applications within the Parish.
- 15.2. In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, care has been taken to ensure that all of its policies are achievable.
- 15.3. The Parish Council will rely on the Neighbourhood Plan to inform its representations on submitted planning applications. The Parish Council's formal support will be provided for all applications that are assessed to be in full accordance with all relevant policies in this Plan.
- 15.4. Once 'made', this Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan for the district.

Monitoring

- 15.5. Ardleigh Parish Council will monitor both the implementation and the ongoing relevance of the Neighbourhood Plan on a regular basis.
- 15.6. Subject to available resources, the Parish Council will prepare annual monitoring reports. These reports will be published on the Council's website.

Review

- 15.7. The Plan will be subject to review every five years. As part of the five-year review, the views of residents will be sought and the Neighbourhood Plan will be updated as necessary. As part of its ongoing monitoring of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council will consider undertaking an early review if any of the following circumstances apply:
 - Material change in local circumstances;
 - Monitoring of the plan reveals an issue with policy wording; or
 - There is an update to the Local Plan, the NPPF or a Ministerial Statement (etc.) that affects the Neighbourhood Plan.


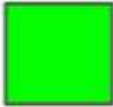


15.8. The Parish Council will also pay close attention to the progress of the Tendring/ Colchester Borders Garden Community. In particular, they will work alongside the partner councils to identify any changes to the Neighbourhood Plan that might be necessary or appropriate in the light of advancements made.



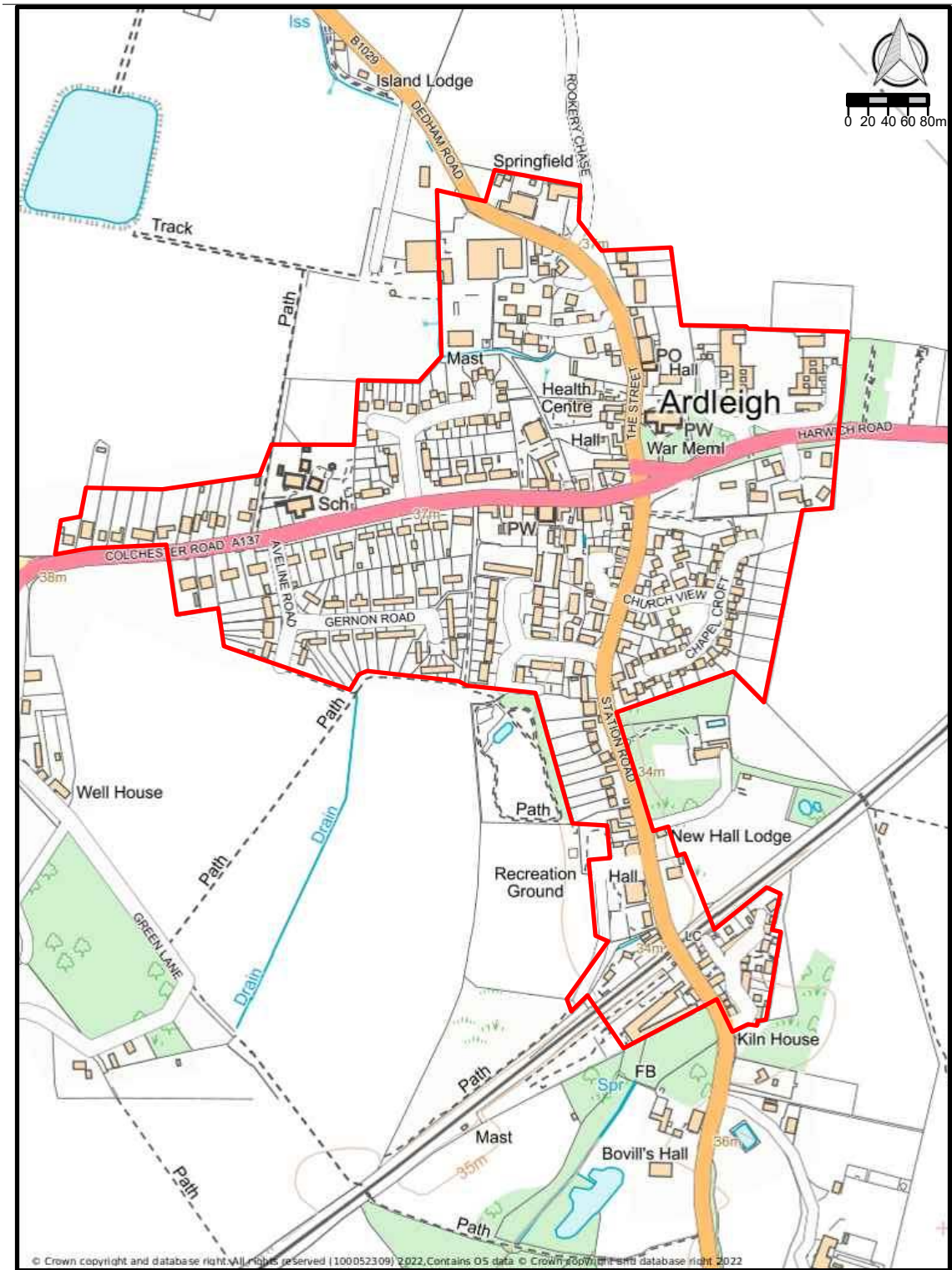
Appendix A: Proposals maps

Key

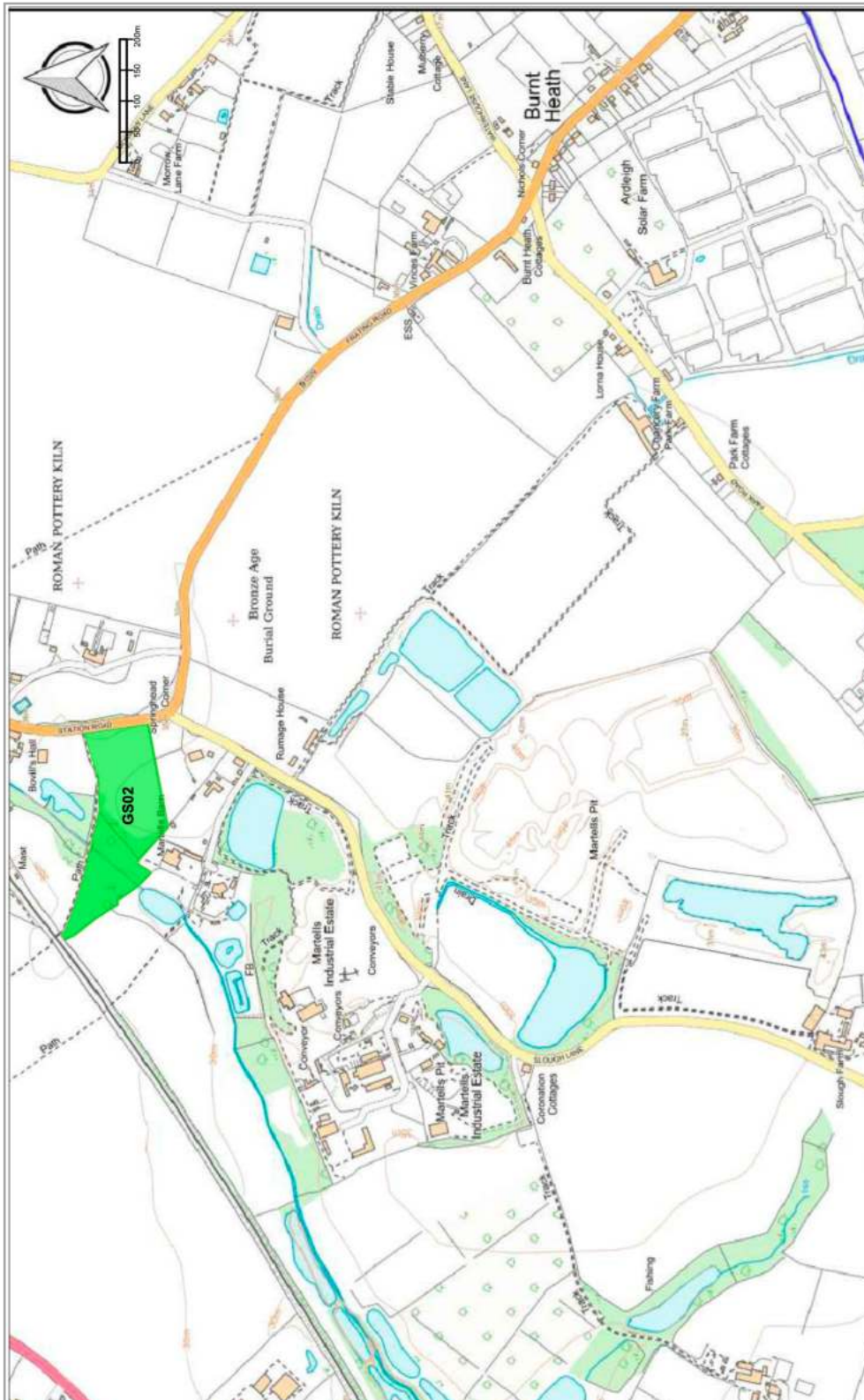
	Settlement Development Boundaries
	Local Green Spaces



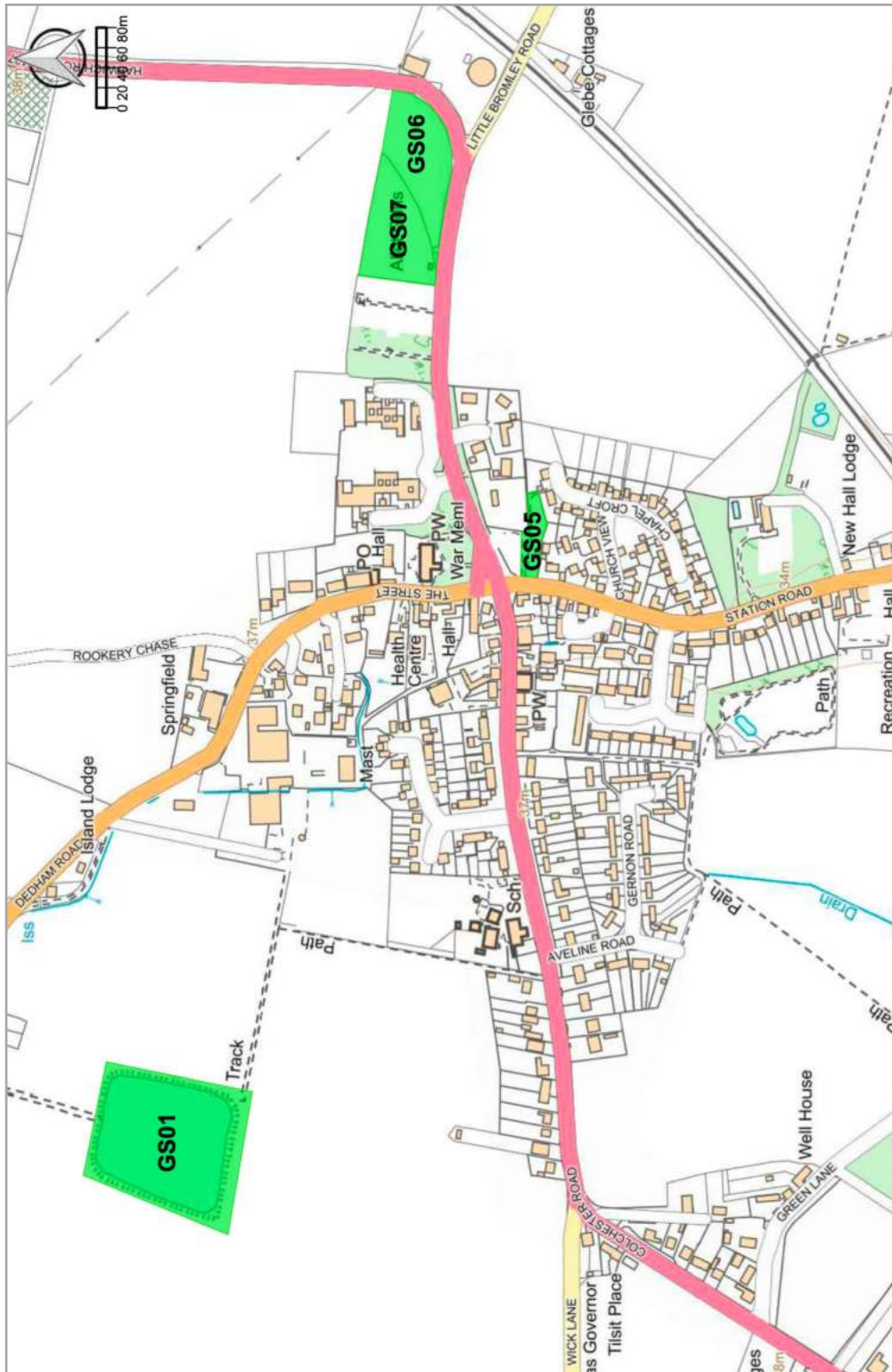
Map 1: Settlement Development Boundary



Map 2: Local Green Space 2



Map 3: Local Green Spaces 1, 5, 6 and 7



Map 4: Local Green Spaces 3 and 4



Page Intentionally Blank.

