



# Westerfield Neighbourhood Development Plan

## Decision Statement

(The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 18)

### Date of Publication:

#### 1. Summary

- 1.1 Following an independent examination, East Suffolk Council now confirm that the Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan will proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum, subject to the modifications set out in section 3.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 Westerfield Parish Council, as the Qualifying Body, successfully applied for the Westerfield Parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area under The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Area was designated by East Suffolk Council on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
- 2.2 The Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan was published by Westerfield Parish Council for pre-submission consultation (Regulation 14) between 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
- 2.3 Following the submission of the Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan to East Suffolk Council the Plan was publicised, and comments invited over a seven-week period from 21<sup>st</sup> August to 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024.
- 2.4 East Suffolk Council, with the agreement of Westerfield Parish Council appointed an independent examiner, Andrew Ashcroft to examine the Plan and consider whether it met the Basic Conditions required by legislation and whether it should proceed to Referendum.
- 2.5 The Examiner's Report received on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025 concluded that subject to modifications identified in the Report, the Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions.

- 2.6 The Examiner recommends that subject to the modifications listed in the Report, the Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum. He further recommends that the referendum area should be the same as the designated neighbourhood area, with there being no substantive evidence to demonstrate otherwise.
- 2.7 Information on the Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan can be found at: [Westerfield neighbourhood area » East Suffolk Council](#)
- 2.8 Following receipt of the Examiner's Report, legislation requires that East Suffolk Council considers the modifications recommended, the reasons for them, and decide what action to take. This is set out in the table below. Ahead of this consideration, the Examiner's Report and its findings have been subject to discussion between East Suffolk Council and Westerfield Parish Council

### **3. Decision and Reasons**

- 3.1 East Suffolk Council (using powers delegated to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management) has considered each of the modifications recommended and concur with the reasoning provided by the Examiner in his Report dated 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2025. With the Examiner's recommended modifications, East Suffolk Council has decided that the Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, is compatible with the Convention rights and complies with provision made by or under Sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 3.2 As a consequence, the submission version of the Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan will be modified as recommended for it then to proceed to referendum.
- 3.3 East Suffolk Council has considered the referendum area as recommended by the Examiner and has decided there is no reason to extend the neighbourhood area for the purposes of referendum. The Referendum area will be the same as the designated Neighbourhood Area for the Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.4 The list of modifications and actions required are set out in the following table. As a consequence of these changes the Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan will be re-published and titled the Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version).



Ben Woolnough BSc, MSc, MRTPI  
Head of Planning, Building Control and Coastal Management

Dated: 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Examiner's recommended modification	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
<p><b>WFD1 – Landscape Green Buffer</b></p> <p>Replace the first part of the policy with: 'A Green Buffer is identified on Map 5 4. The open and undeveloped nature of the area will be maintained to prevent the coalescence of Westerfield to the south and the group of historic buildings to the north.'</p> <p>In the second part of the policy replace '<del>permitted</del>' with '<b>supported</b>' and in the first and second criteria replace '<del>landscape buffer</del>' with '<b>green buffer</b>.'</p>	<p>To ensure that the wording prevents coalescence rather than requiring landscaping or equivalent works in the identified area.</p> <p>To bring clarity required by the NPPF and acknowledge the role of the neighbourhood plan in the development management process.</p>	<p>Agreed. Policy WFD1 has been amended as recommended.</p> <p>Agreed. Policy WFD1 has been amended as recommended.</p>
<p><b>WFD2 – Sensitive Landscape</b></p> <p>Replace the policy with:</p> <p>'The open and undeveloped nature of the Sensitive Landscape as shown on Map 5 Map 4 will be protected to safeguard the setting of the designated heritage assets. Development proposals located in the Sensitive Landscape which are otherwise in conformity with Policy SCLP3.3 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan will only be supported where, through a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and a Heritage Impact Assessment proportionate to their scale and nature, it can be demonstrated that they would not cause unacceptable harm to the landscape and setting of the heritage assets.'</p>	<p>To introduce a proportionate element to the policy and ensure that it relates to the sensitive landscape and its intentions. This will bring the clarity required by the NPPF.</p>	<p>Agreed. Policy WFD2 has been amended as recommended.</p>
<p><b>WFD3 – Local Green Spaces</b></p> <p>Delete local green spaces</p> <p><del>3. Open area west of B1077 and south west of Fairlands</del></p> <p><del>4. Open area east of B1077 between Ash House and The Lodge</del></p> <p>from the policy.</p>	<p>To ensure that the policy has regard with Section 8 of the NPPF and meets the basic conditions.</p>	<p>Agreed. The policy and Map 6 have both been amended as recommended.</p>

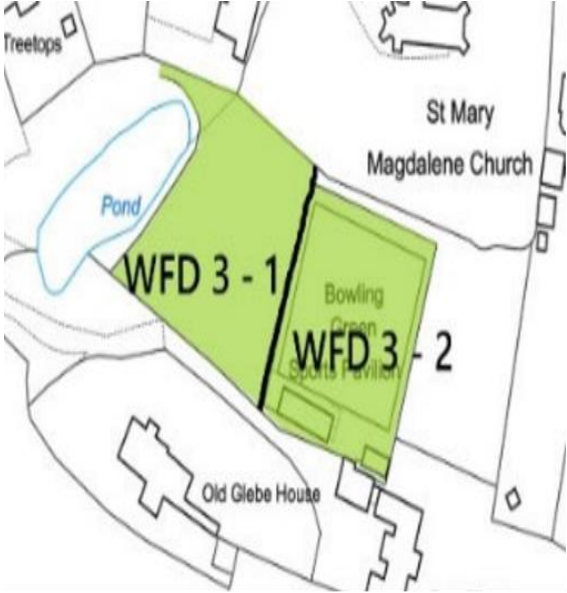
Examiner's recommended modification	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
Delete <b>WFD3.3</b> and <b>WFD3.4</b> from Map 6.	To correct an error.	
<b>WFD4 – Protection of Important Views</b> Replace the second sentence of the policy with: 'The scale, nature, layout, and height of development proposals should respond positively to the key landscape and built development features of any affected Important Views as identified in the Landscape Appraisal.'	To provide a positive approach (setting out what a developer needs to achieve) rather than a negative one (commenting about a development proposal not having a detrimental visual impact on the character of an affected view).	Agreed. Policy WFD4 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Design Guidance and Codes, section 2.3</b> Include a note at the of the section to read: 'The views in this document have been prepared based on local knowledge and information. There are overlaps between the identified views and those included in the Landscape Appraisal (Lucy Batchelor-Wylam, November 2023). However, for clarity, the identification of Important Views in the Plan (Policy WFD4) is based on the details in the submitted Landscape Appraisal.'	To clarify that that the views identified in Map 7 of the neighbourhood plan were taken from the Landscape Appraisal, not the Design Guidance and Codes document.	Agreed. Section 2.3 of the Design Guidance and Codes will be amended as recommended.
<b>WFD 5 – Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and other Natural Features</b> Replace the opening element of the third part of the policy with: 'Development proposals which otherwise comply with development plan policies will be supported where they provide a net gain in biodiversity through, for example:'	To bring the clarity required by the NPPF.	Agreed. Policy WFD5 will be amended as recommended.

Examiner's recommended modification	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
In the final part of the policy replace <del>'shall'</del> with 'should.'		
<p><b>Paragraph 6.22</b></p> <p>At the end of paragraph 6.22 add: 'Policy WFD 5 does not seek to replicate this important aspect of national legislation and policy. However, the third part of the policy sets out examples of local measures to provide advice for developers and landowners on how to achieve biodiversity net gain.'</p>	To provide extra clarity about biodiversity net gain.	Agreed. Paragraph 6.22 will be amended as recommended.
<p><b>WFD6 – Design Considerations</b></p> <p>In first part replace <del>'must'</del> with 'should'</p> <p>Replace criterion e. with: 'they do not result in water run-off, or add-to or create surface water flooding, through the incorporation of above ground open Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) that are multifunctional and provide amenity and biodiversity, in accordance with the Suffolk Flood Risk SuDS Local Design Guide 2023 and the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Policy SCLP9.6 Sustainable Drainage Systems; and'</p> <p>Delete criterion g.</p>	<p>To bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to recognise the role played by neighbourhood plans in the development management system.</p> <p>To bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to recognise the role played by neighbourhood plans in the development management system.</p>	<p>Agreed. Policy WFD6 will be amended as recommended.</p> <p>Agreed. Policy WFD6 will be amended as recommended.</p>

Examiner's recommended modification	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
	To bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to recognise the role played by neighbourhood plans in the development management system.	Agreed. Policy WFD6 will be amended as recommended.
<b>WFD8 – Parish Services and Facilities</b> Replace the second part of the policy with: 'Proposals for the enhancement of the existing services and facilities will be supported where they respond positively to the natural and historic environment, the infrastructure of the parish and the amenity of residents in the immediate locality of the facility concerned.'  Reverse the order of the two elements of the policy.	To ensure that the policy takes a positive approach towards the way in which any such facilities would be incorporated into the parish.  To ensure that the policy has a positive approach.	Agreed. Policy WFD8 will be amended as recommended.  Agreed. Policy WFD8 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Appendix 2</b> Delete from the list of the Identified Green Spaces: <del>3. Open area west of B1077 and south-west of Fairlands</del> <del>4. Open area of east of B1077 between Ash House and the Lodge</del>	To ensure that the policy has regard with Section 8 of the NPPF and meets the basic conditions.	Agreed. Appendix 2 will be amended as recommended.

### Examiners further recommended changes

These are changes which were commended by the Examiner in his report. They are made under section 12(6) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Council considers that the following modifications are also needed in order that the Plan meets the basic conditions or for the correction of errors.

Change	Reason for change	Action by ESC
Renumber maps 4 and 5	To correct a numerical error.	Agreed. Maps 4 and 5 will be amended as recommended.
<p>Map 6 – Amend to ensure that the boundary between local green spaces WFD 3-1 and WFD 3-2 is drawn consistently with the inset map on page 50 of the Local Green Space Appraisal (see extracts below).</p>  <p><b>Map 6 extract</b></p>	To bring the clarity required by the NPPF.	Agreed. Map 6 will be amended as recommended.

## 1. The Paddock




## Local Green Space Appraisal – Map 1

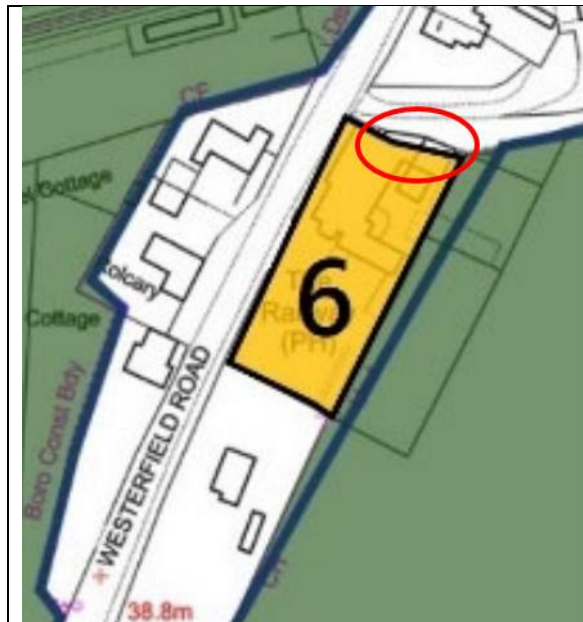
**Map 8** - Revise to show only the network in the parish.

To bring the clarity required by the NPPF.

Agreed. Map 8 will be amended as recommended.
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<p><b>Map 8: Westerfield's Ecological Networks</b></p> <p><b>Map 9:</b> Amend to identify Westerfield Railway Station as a village facility.</p> <p>Amend the norther edge of village facility 6 to include the northern wall of the building (see extract below).</p>	<p>To bring the clarity required by the NPPF.</p> <p>To bring the clarity required by the NPPF.</p>	<p>Agreed. Map 9 will be amended as recommended.</p> <p>Agreed. Map 9 will be amended as recommended.</p>



**Map 9 extract**

Amend the northwestern corner of village facility 2 so that it is consistent with the boundary of WFD3-1, as shown on map 6 (see extracts below).

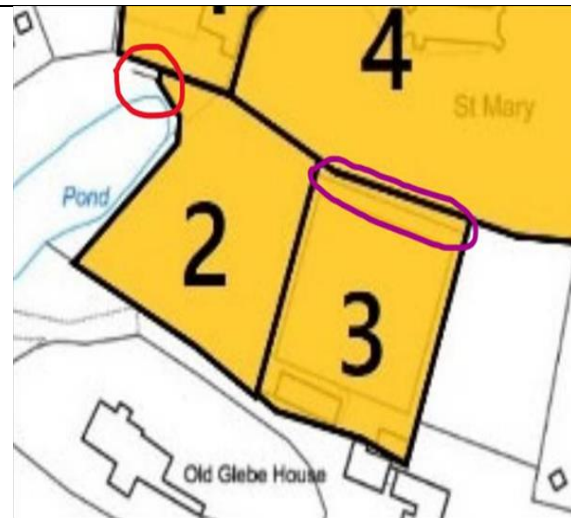
Amend the northern boundary of village facility 3 so that it is consistent with the northern of WFD3-2, as shown on map 6 (see extracts below).

To bring the clarity required by the NPPF.

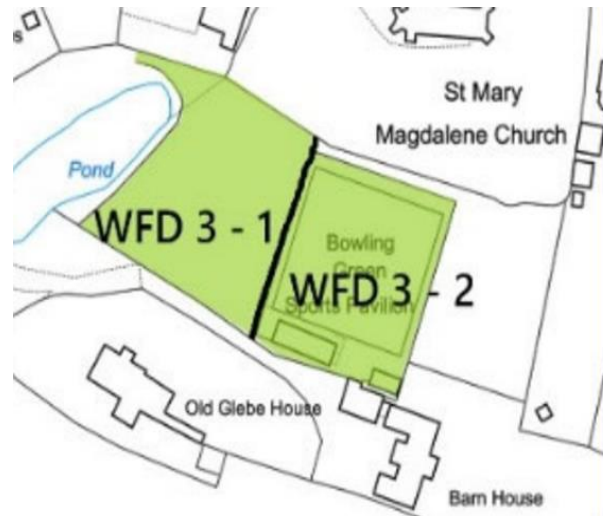
To bring the clarity required by the NPPF.

Agreed. Map 9 will be amended as recommended.

Agreed. Map 9 will be amended as recommended.



Map 9 extract



Map 6 extract

**Council's further modifications**

Under section 12(6)(a) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Council considers that the following modifications are also needed in order that the Plan meets the basic conditions or for the correction of errors.

Policy/Supporting Text	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
<b>Front cover</b> Amend as follows: <del>Submission Draft</del> Referendum Plan  WESTERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL  <del>JULY 2024</del> March 2025	To bring the plan up to date.	Agreed. The front cover will be amended as recommended.
<b>Neighbourhood Planning in a Nutshell</b>  Amend as follows:  3 "Submission" consultation on draft Plan by East Suffolk Council  This <del>is the stage that has now been reached</del> was carried out between 21 August and 9 October 2024.   4 Independent examination of draft Plan  This was carried out between November 2024 and February 2025   5 Parish Referendum	To bring the plan up to date.	Agreed. The Neighbourhood Planning in a Nutshell section will be amended as recommended.

Policy/Supporting Text	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
<p>This is the stage that the Plan has now reached</p> <p>6 Adoption by East Suffolk Council</p> <p><del>These remaining stages are likely to take around 6 months to complete.</del></p>		
<p><b>Contents Page</b></p> <p>Amend as necessary as a result of changes elsewhere.</p> <p>Policy WFD 1 <del>Landscape</del> Green Buffer</p>	<p>To bring the plan up to date.</p> <p>To bring the plan updated.</p>	<p>Agreed. The contents page will be amended as recommended.</p> <p>Agreed. The contents page will be amended as recommended.</p>
<p><b>Paragraph 1.2</b></p> <p>Consultation on the First Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan (the Pre-Submission Consultation) took place in between 25 November 2023 and 19 January 2024. All comments received at the “pre-submission” consultation were considered and reviewed and any necessary amendments to the Plan were made. The Plan, together with supporting documents were then submitted to East Suffolk District Council <del>ahead of this</del> who carried out the “submission” round of consultation. <del>Once the consultation is complete, the Plan will progress through the following stages:</del></p>	<p>To bring the plan up to date.</p>	<p>Agreed. Paragraph 1.2 will be amended as recommended.</p>

Policy/Supporting Text	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
<p>Following that consultation, the Plan was submitted for examination by an independent Neighbourhood Plan Examiner. The Examiner required some amendments to the plan before it could proceed to the Parish Referendum. Those changes have been made, and this is the Referendum version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The diagram below illustrates that stages that the Plan has been through.</p> <p>Amend diagram to place red line around Parish Referendum.</p>	<p>To bring the plan up to date.</p>	<p>Agreed. The diagram will be updated as recommended.</p>
<p><b>Paragraph 3.2</b> Amend first element as follows:</p> <p>The NPPF sets out the Government’s high-level planning policies that must be taken into account in the preparation of development plan documents and when deciding planning applications. <del>In December 2023 the Government published a Revised NPPF which sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development.</del> Although a Revised NPPF was published in December 2024, the transitional arrangements for the new NPPF meant that the Neighbourhood Plan was examined against the December 2023 version and paragraph references in this Plan are to that version. The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of</p>	<p>To bring the plan up to date.</p>	<p>Agreed. Paragraph 3.2 will be amended as recommended.</p>

Policy/Supporting Text	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
<a href="#">sustainable development</a> . Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states:		
<b>Local Plan context</b> Add <a href="#">Policy SCLP5.2: Housing Development in Small Villages</a> to the list of relevant policies	In response to East Suffolk Council Comment	Agreed. The Local Plan Context table will be amended as recommended.
<b>Paragraph 6.9</b> The Appraisal provides a more detailed assessment of the landscape of the parish than that in the 2018 Ipswich Fringe study referred to above. It reviewed the landscape areas of the parish in that study and defines them as illustrated in Map <a href="#">4 3</a> .	To correct an error.	Agreed. Paragraph 6.9 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Map 4</b> Amend to Map 3	To correct an error.	Agreed. Map 4 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Paragraph 6.11</b> Amend first sentence as follows:  The lower meadows, identified on Map <a href="#">4 3</a> as WF3, were found to “have an intact historic appearance, they are rarer and more distinctive, they provide important views, and offer natural features with greater wildlife value than the farmland in other parts of the parish.”	To correct an error.	Agreed. Paragraph 6.9 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Map 5</b> Amend to Map 4	To correct an error and a consequential change.	

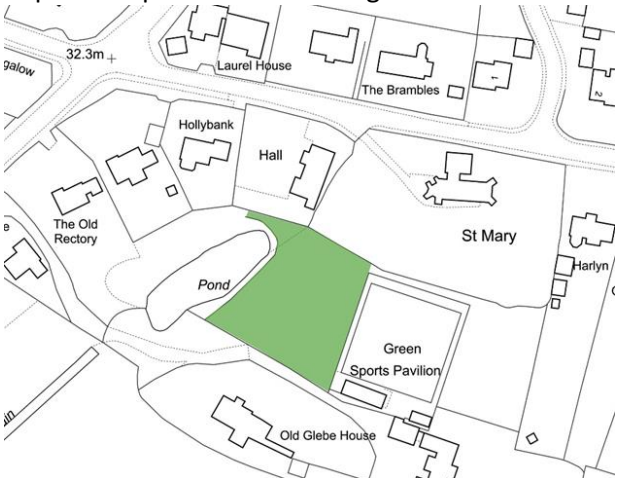
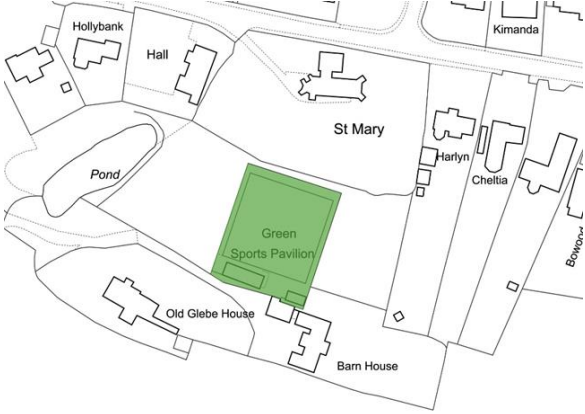
Policy/Supporting Text	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
Amend annotation to <b>Green Buffer</b> instead of <b>Landscape Buffer</b>		Agreed. Map 5 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Paragraph 6.15</b> Amend as follows: A separate Local Green Space Appraisal is set out in Appendix 2, which demonstrates how certain local spaces meet the criteria in paragraph 106 of the NPPF (2023). The spaces that meet the criteria are identified in Policy WFD 3 and are illustrated on Map 6 5.	To correct an error.  Provide clarity on the version of the NPPF used.	Agreed. Paragraph 6.15 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Policy WFD3 – Local Green Spaces</b> Amend Map 6 to Map 5.	To correct and error.	Agreed. Policy WFD3 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Paragraph 6.16</b> Amend second sentence as follows:  The most significant are identified on Map 7 6 and described in the Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Appraisal.	To correct and error.	Agreed. Paragraph 6.16 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Map 7</b> Amend to map 6.	To correct and error.	Agreed. Map 7 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Policy WFD4 – Protection of Important Views</b> Amend Map 7 to Map 6. Changed	To correct an error.	Agreed. Policy WFD4 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Paragraph 6.19</b>		



Policy/Supporting Text	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
Amend final sentence as follows:  Existing ecological networks within Westerfield were identified in the report and are identified on Map <del>8</del> 7	To correct an error.	Agreed. Paragraph 6.19 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Map 8</b> Amend to Map 7.	To correct an error.	Agreed. The Map 8 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Paragraph 7.5</b> Amend as follows:  The NPPF makes it clear, in paragraph <del>128</del> 131, that 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.'  Add (2023) after 'NPPF' to show which version of the NPPF is being referred to.	To reference the correct NPPF paragraph.  To reference the version of the NPPF which was used during the examination.	Agreed. Paragraph 7.5 will be updated as recommended.  Agreed. Paragraph 7.5 will be updated as recommended.
<b>Policy WFD6 – Design Considerations</b>  Delete <del>and</del> from the end of part f).  Add <del>and</del> to the end of part e).	Consequential change.  Consequential change.	Agreed. Policy WFD6 will be amended as recommended.  Agreed. Policy WFD6 will be amended as recommended.

Policy/Supporting Text	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
<p><b>Paragraph 7.17</b> Amend first sentence as follows:</p> <p>Paragraph <del>186</del> 191 (c) of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should “limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation”</p>	To comply with an update to the NPPF.	Agreed. Paragraph 7.17 will be updated as recommended.
<p><b>Paragraph 8.1</b> Amend final sentence as follows:</p> <p>The location of these is illustrated on Map <del>9</del> 8.</p>	To correct an error.	Agreed. Paragraph 8.1 will be amended as recommended.
<p><b>Paragraph 8.2</b> Add at end:</p> <p>Policy SCLP8.2: Open Space, supports the provision of open space and recreational facilities and states that “proposals that would result in the loss of open spaces will only be supported in [specified] exceptional circumstances”.</p>	In response to a comment from East Suffolk Council.	Agreed. Paragraph 8.2 will be amended as recommended.
<p><b>Map 9</b> Amend to Map 8 and amend map to include railway station. Ensure title is on the same page.</p>	To correct errors.	Agreed. Map 9 will be amended as recommended.
<b>Policy WFD8 – Parish Services and Facilities</b>		

Policy/Supporting Text	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
<p>Amend first sentence as follows:</p> <p>Proposals that would result in the loss of the following facilities, as identified on Map 9 8, will be determined in accordance with Policy SCLP8.1 and, as appropriate,</p>	<p>To correct an error.</p>	<p>Agreed. Policy WFD8 will be amended as recommended.</p>
<p><b>Paragraph 9.4</b></p> <p>Amend first sentence as follows:</p> <p>There is a good and well used network of public rights of way in the parish, as illustrated on Map 10 9.</p>	<p>To correct an error.</p>	<p>Agreed. Paragraph 9.4 will be updated as recommended.</p>
<p><b>Map 10</b></p> <p>Amend title to:</p> <p>Map 10 9 – Parish Public Rights of Way network (as at July 2024)</p>	<p>To correct and error and in response to East Suffolk Council comment.</p>	<p>Agreed. Map 10 will be updated as recommended.</p>
<p><b>Appendix 1</b></p> <p>Amend first sentence as follows;</p> <p>Source: Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Appraisal (2023). Areas WF1, WF2 and WF3 are illustrated on Map 4 3</p>	<p>To correct an error.</p>	<p>Agreed. Appendix 1 will be amended as recommended.</p>

Policy/Supporting Text	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
<p><b>Appendix 2</b> Replace map with the following</p> 	<p>To correct an error.</p>	<p>Agreed. The maps in Appendix 2 will be corrected as recommended.</p>
<p>Replace map with the following.</p> 	<p>To ensure consistency of colour.</p>	<p>Agreed. The maps in Appendix 2 will be corrected as recommended.</p>
<p><b>Page 52</b> Delete page</p>	<p>Consequence of deletion of local green space.</p>	<p>Agreed. Delete page 52 as recommended.</p>
<p><b>Page 53</b></p>		

Policy/Supporting Text	Reason for change (summarised)	Action by ESC
Delete page	Consequence of deletion of local green space.	Agreed. Delete page 53 as recommended.
<b>Back page</b> Amend as follows <del>Submission Draft</del> Referendum Plan WESTERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL <del>JULY 2024</del> MARCH 2025	To update the document.	Agreed. Update the back page as recommended.