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# Village Planning Strategy

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for  
Lower Halstow



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Adopted by  
Lower Halstow Parish Council

January 2021

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TO CHERISH AND PROTECT



# 1.Statement.

- 1.1. This Planning Strategy is designed to address the increasing pressure for housing development which faces Lower Halstow. Without such a strategy the village would be wholly dependent upon Swale Borough Council and Government planning policies for its protection.
- 1.2. It is clear that Swale will be expected to increase its housing supply further and perhaps significantly. Lower Halstow has escaped, thus far, the large-scale expansions imposed on some other villages in Kent. The parish council wishes to do everything possible to manage these pressures by setting out ways in which small-scale, locally focused development will be supported.
- 1.3. Opposition to every new housing application in principle, does not necessarily prevent developments from proceeding. Indeed, some local sites previously rejected or ruled-out for housing have subsequently been developed for other uses such as Traveller settlements or commercial activities, but without the safeguarding controls that would otherwise have been in place for homes.
- 1.4. The Parish Council investigated the feasibility of producing a 'Neighbourhood Plan' but, like most other villages in Swale, this arduous process was beyond its practical reach and offered very limited gains in return. Rather than remain silent however on such an important subject, this Planning strategy sets out to advise decision makers and developers alike of what is likely to be found acceptable or unacceptable within the parish.
- 1.5. This strategy does not seek to identify any preferred or non-preferred locations either within or outside of the village confines. Instead, it offers a more holistic and balanced approach to ensure that acceptable developments end up in locations best suited to accommodate them.
- 1.6. This strategy demonstrates a reasoned and credible approach to controlling proposed developments within the parish. It is the hope and aspiration that those involved in the planning process, and particularly Parish and Borough Councillors, will take careful note of these requirements and ensure that they are afforded due weight in the decision-making process.
- 1.7. All Parish Councillors fully support this strategy and undertake to consider all planning applications using the assessment and weighting criteria attached when forming their views in response to planning application consultation.
- 1.8. This Strategy will be reviewed by the parish council annually.

## 2.Strategies.

To ensure the protection and improvement of the village's character, community, environment, and its estuary setting.

### 2.1. Housing

- To seek high-quality design to reflect the village character.
- To encourage new homes for the elderly and first-time buyers.
- To accept limited and incremental (minor) new housing on small and appropriately located sites, which minimise disruption.
- To prioritise developments from applicants with local connections.

### 2.2. Environment

- To protect and enhance Biodiversity.
- To seek resilience to the effects of climate change and flooding.
- To seek energy efficient and low carbon homes.
- To seek the re-use of appropriate Brownfield sites.
- To seek to limit light and noise pollution.
- To seek electric car charging points for all new homes.

### 2.3. Transport

- To help reduce and manage the negative impacts of traffic and parking for existing and future homes.
- To help maintain and create new routes for safe walking and cycling.
- To encourage new developments and schemes to make greater use of existing footpaths and to provide new routes to village services and amenities.

### 2.4. Economy

- To help enhance the prospects for local employment and support business growth.
- To support local businesses and employment opportunities including home working.
- To facilitate modern communication services for all.

### 2.5. Community

- To enhance the vitality of the village.
- To support assisted living for the elderly and the vulnerable.
- To support residents seeking to improve their homes.
- To seek contributions where feasible from new developments towards parish priority projects.
- To resist additional mobile home settlements in the parish.
- To protect important village assets; being the Carpark, Church, School, Recreation ground, Memorial hall, Allotments, Village green, Brickfields, The Dock, Conservation area, the Pub, and the Shop.

### 3.Assessment.

Councillors are required to assess all planning applications against the criteria below where appropriate. Additional criteria may be considered in special circumstances.

Councillors will form a view on an application having regard to the ‘weighting’ of each criteria, with any uncertainties discussed at council meetings.

A guidance sheet for councillors accompanies the checklist below and councillors should complete one for each application that they wish to comment and vote on.

Weight	Does the application:	Yes	No	n/a
High	Re-use a Brownfield site?			
	Offer small-scale (minor) incremental development?			
	Provide high quality design?			
	Allow residents to improve/modernise their homes?			
	Assist local elderly, vulnerable, or first-time buyers?			
Medium	Avoid a major increase to traffic flow or a reduction in road safety?			
	Increase local employment opportunities (including homeworking)?			
	Avoid an increase in the number of mobile homes in the parish?			
	Avoid areas liable to flood and manage surface water effectively?			
	Enhance or protect biodiversity?			
	Avoid using good agricultural land?			
	Avoid the loss of amenity for existing residents?			
Low	Offer enhancement or protection to the local landscape?			
	Avoid a significant increase to light or noise pollution?			
	Deliver modern energy efficient and low carbon homes?			
	Contribute to the viability of village services?			
	Contribute to village priority projects?			

The chairman may wish to see completed checklists before a vote is taken.

Councillors will vote on all planning applications and the majority decision will be advised to the Local Planning Authority. The adopted Village planning strategy will be used to justify the reasoning for reaching the decision, which will be expressed as either supporting the application or for objecting to it.

Any conditions required will also be advised.