



**Suffolk County Council (20041323)**

**Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (20041302)**

**Local Impact Report Appendix 15: Little Cornard  
Neighbourhood Plan**

**Bramford to Twinstead (EN020002)**

Deadline 1

25 September 2023

## **15 Little Cornard Neighbourhood Plan**

**Little Cornard Parish Council**



**Little Cornard  
Neighbourhood Plan  
2020 - 2037**

**Referendum Version  
Published May 2022**

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Figure 1: Little Cornard neighbourhood plan area



### **Local Impact Report Extract**

The Little Cornard Neighbourhood Plan identifies Views to be preserved in Policy LCO3: Views. It also has a policy on Dark Skies. Policy LCO2: Access Into The Countryside seeks opportunities to enhance the local PRow network.

## Access to the countryside

- 4.10 In a rural community such as Little Cornard which lacks a range of public green spaces or community facilities at its heart, access into the countryside is particularly important. The need for access as a means of exercise, to walk dogs and for general wellbeing is vital. Without this, the community becomes reliant on use of the private car to access leisure opportunities elsewhere, which creates lots of short distance car trips that do not contribute positively to sustainability.

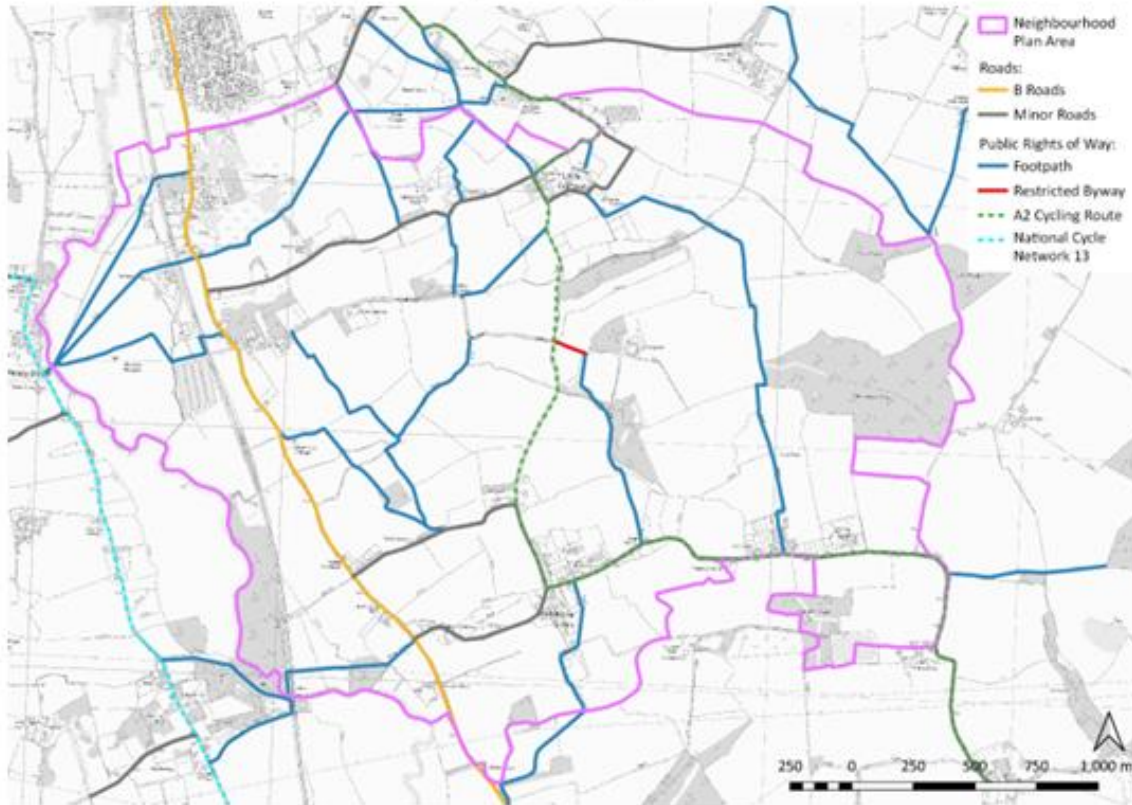


- 4.11 The NPPF states that 'planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks' (paragraph 100).

- 4.12 Little Cornard parish is currently well served with Public Rights of Way (PROWs) which cross the parish and provide good access to Great Cornard, the Country Park and the Mere (see Figure 7). In addition, there are good access routes to and from Henny, Middleton and Assington parishes, Little Cornard's closest neighbours. The parish has several equestrian centres and horse riding is commonplace, despite the absence of bridleways in the parish.



**Figure 7: Public Rights of Way and other types of access across Little Cornard**



- 4.13 The development of the Gainsborough Trail is welcomed and one objective of the Neighbourhood Plan is to encourage and enable development of more extensive PROWs better linking parts of Little Cornard with surrounding parishes. In particular it is important to improve pedestrian access to Bures, which for those in Workhouse Green is the nearest settlement providing services. Whilst the southern parts of the two identified route options are outside the Neighbourhood Plan boundary, improvements to these routes within the parish will help to make access easier. It is recognised that adopting new footpaths is a statutory process and that appropriate consultation with landowners and Bures Parish Council must take place before any applications can be made.
- 4.14 Figure 8 shows the potential routes in question in their entirety and Figure 9 shows the individual parts that are within the Neighbourhood Area in more detail.

**Figure 8: Potential public right of way routes between Workhouse Green and Bures**



**Figure 9: Potential public right of way routes between Workhouse Green and Bures - sections within Little Cornard Neighbourhood Area**





#### POLICY LCO2: ACCESS INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE

- A. Access to the countryside will be promoted through protection and maintenance of the existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) network (see Figure 7), its enhancement where possible, provision of bridleways and the safety of users of rural roads and lanes.
- B. Any developments which leads to the loss or degradation of any PROW will not be permitted in other than very special circumstances. Proposals to divert PROWs or cycleways should provide clear and demonstrable benefits for the wider community. Where possible, development should enhance PROWs by improving existing routes and improving connectivity through the creation of new routes.
- C. Proposals to create a pedestrian route between Workhouse Green and Bures and to secure this as a PROW will be strongly encouraged.

- 4.15 Through the Neighbourhood Plan, a series of five circular walks have been identified (see Appendix A). These routes connect up existing footpaths using some on-road sections. Whilst not ideal to have on-road route sections, this does help to create some attractive walking routes. Proposals to enhance these routes through improved signage and by making them more accessible for a greater part of the year would be welcomed. Again, a number of parts of these routes are in neighbouring parishes, therefore it will be necessary to work with those parishes to deliver improvements along their entire routes.

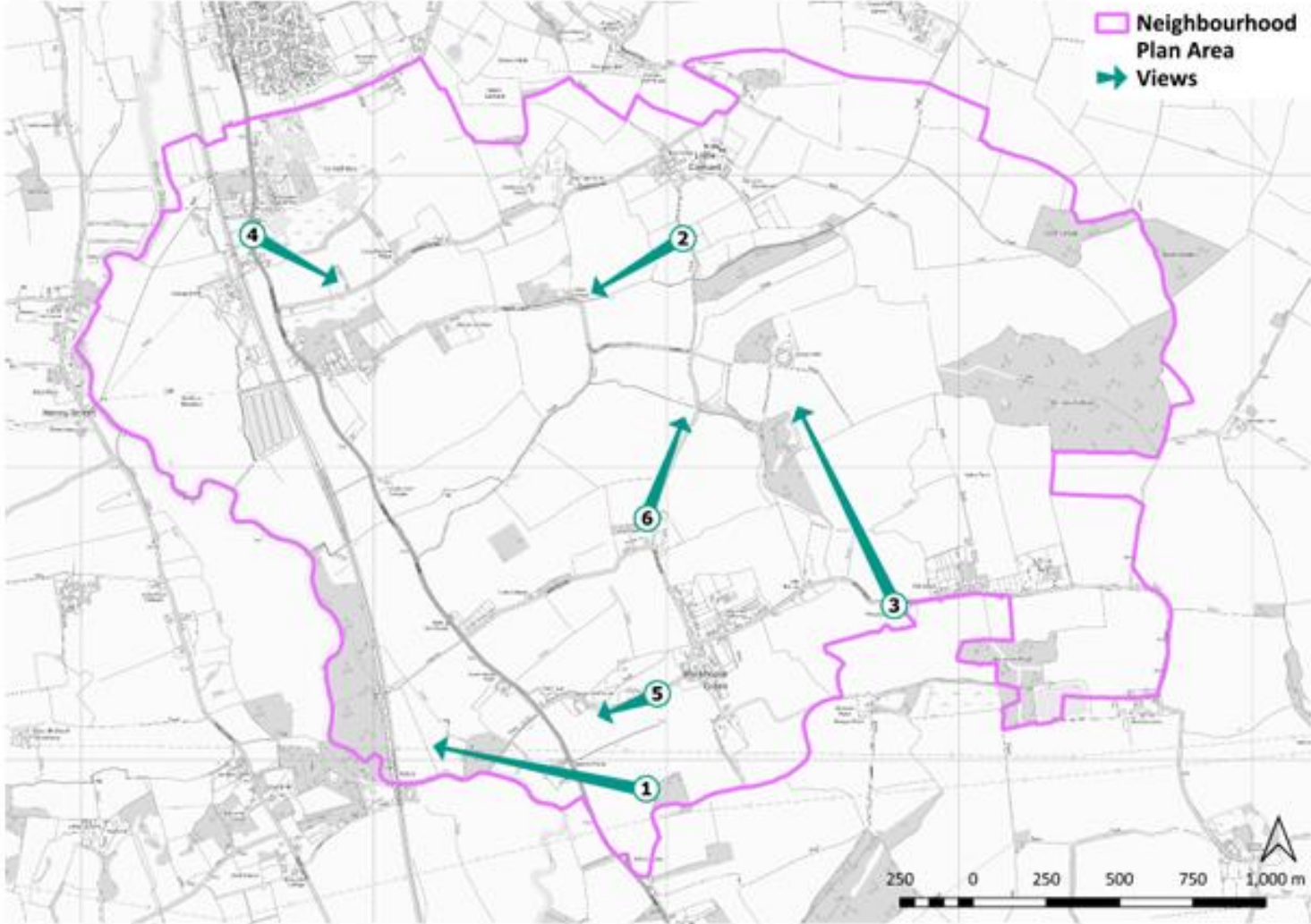
**ACTIONS RELATING TO IMPROVING PEDESTRIAN FOOTPATHS**

- 1. Little Cornard Parish Council to engage relevant landowners and work with Babergh District Council, relevant neighbouring parish councils and Suffolk County Council to improve the public rights of way network and circular walking routes, including through improved signage and year-round accessibility.**
- 2. Little Cornard Parish Council to work with equestrian interests to identify footpaths that may be suitable for upgrading to bridleways. Then to work with landowners to ascertain the feasibility of this on the relevant routes.**

## **Views**

- 4.16 The countryside location of the parish of Little Cornard, nestled into but rising up the side of the Stour Valley, is arguably one of its greatest assets. The combination of ancient countryside, semi-natural habitats, winding lanes and agricultural landscape creates many attractive vistas across the parish.
- 4.17 Due to its nature as a series of rural hamlets, built development will be very limited over the plan period. However, the conversion of barns, commercial activity and potential routes for utilities improvements mean that there could be proposals which will need careful design to ensure they do not have an unacceptable impact on the features that define this landscape.
- 4.18 As part of the evidence collecting process for the Neighbourhood Plan, the community was asked to contribute suggestions and photos which were considered to be important both for the visual impact of the area and also the wellbeing of residents and visitors. The Neighbourhood Plan has reviewed these suggestions and identified a series of views which are considered to be of aesthetic value such that they should be preserved when development proposals come forward. These views are shown in Figure 10 and described below.

Figure 10: Views to be preserved



- 4.19 **View 1.** A fine view of the River Stour and the meadows from St. Edmunds Hill on the southern boundary of parish. The river provides an attractive, treasured view being both an historic and aesthetic asset to the parish. The river is internationally renowned as part of 'Constable Country'. In fine weather canoeists can often be seen using this stretch on the way towards the estuary at Harwich and Felixstowe.



- 4.20 **View 2.** This view is from the 'Green Road,' an unmetalled ancient trackway, looking south-westerly towards Chapel Lane and the opposite side of the Stour Valley. It shows an example of rolling ancient farmland that is characteristic of the parish. This lane is on the A2 cycle network and together with being used regularly by residents as an access to the church, it is utilised by horse riders and walkers. This brings many visitors to the area.



- 4.21 **View 3.** A view from Upper Road looking in a north-westerly direction towards the Grade II listed outbuildings formerly belonging to Costen's Hall (now demolished) comprising an octagonal building at the west end which is said to be a horse mill and a range of outbuildings extending to the east in the form of a half



octagon. Originally the outbuildings enclosed an octagonal courtyard, but the northern range has been mostly demolished. The octagonal building has a doorway on the north side with a small bulls eye window above. The roofs are of slate and the octagonal building has a weather vane with the date 1844. This historic building is now under development as permission has been granted to change the use from agricultural to residential.

- 4.22 **View 4.** A view from Cornard Mere towards Long Meadow House. This area is a distinctive part of the parish being situated in the lower valley (Bures Road) section of Little Cornard. As a Site of Specific Scientific Interest, the Mere provides a rich diversity of wildlife that can often be seen as part of the view.



- 4.23 **View 5.** A view alongside Spout Lane, an historic high banked lane originally a cart track used by generations of rural workers. Spout Lane is aptly named due to the many springs which have emerged from time to time. The view frames the setting of the Grade II listed Spout Farm, another example of a well-maintained timber framed and plastered house built on an L-shaped plan with wings, with parts of it dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century date.



- 4.24 **View 6.** A view of Chapel Lane going down the hill away from Workhouse Green. This is a good example of one of the many single-track roads that service the majority of the parish. The Workhouse Green area is also on the popular A2 route for cyclists that starts in Great Cornard and finishes near Raydon. The undulating ancient landscape of wooded arable countryside with species rich hedgerows lined in places with mature oak trees rises up from the valley up onto the plateau area.



#### POLICY LCO3: VIEWS

Development proposals are expected to conserve the scenic beauty of the parish. In particular, the cherished views shown in Figure 10 shall be preserved. Development which may impact on any of these views must demonstrate through its layout how vistas from public viewpoints will be preserved.



## Dark skies

- 4.25 CPRE tranquillity mapping<sup>1</sup> shows parts of Suffolk as having some of the most tranquil areas in the East of England. In the area covering Little Cornard this is particularly in relation to a lack of light pollution and the ability to see dark night skies. This is a valuable asset that is important for wildlife, benefits the health and wellbeing of residents and tourists. In the Neighbourhood Plan survey with residents, the peace and tranquillity and the dark skies were identified as an important feature of life in Little Cornard that was particularly highly valued.

### POLICY LCO4: DARK SKIES

While ensuring new developments are secure in terms of occupier and vehicle safety, dark skies are to be preferred over lighting systems that emit unnecessarily high levels of light. Any future outdoor lighting systems should have a minimum impact on the environment, minimising light pollution and adverse effects on wildlife. Low energy lighting technologies should reduce consumption and minimise glare in order to keep night-time skies dark.

- 4.26 Where practical, residents are asked to consider whether any improvements could be made to existing lighting systems to achieve 'Dark Skies.'