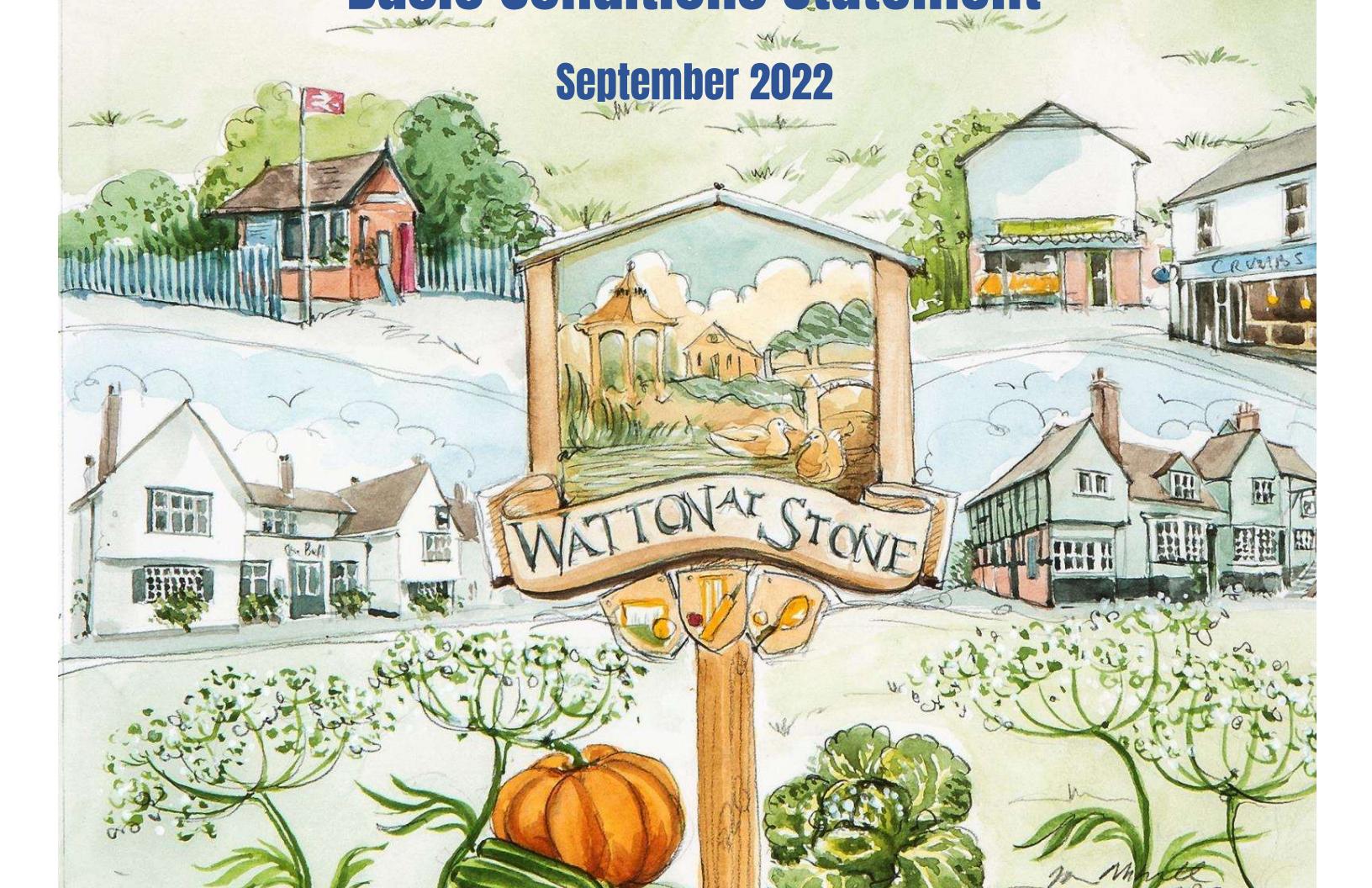


# **Watton-at-Stone**

## **Neighbourhood Plan**

### **Basic Conditions Statement**

**September 2022**



Front cover: Thanks to Jane Abbott for her beautiful bespoke illustration

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# **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Draft Basic Conditions Statement**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 This statement has been prepared by Watton-at-Stone Area Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to accompany the submission to the local planning authority, East Hertfordshire District Council.

1.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the Watton-at-Stone Area Neighbourhood Plan must satisfy six “basic conditions” before it can come into force. The plan must:

- Have appropriate regard to national planning policy
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area
- Not breach or otherwise be incompatible with European Union (EU) Regulations, including human rights requirements and not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site or European offshore marine site, or UK equivalent
- Meet the prescribed legal requirements
- Not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

1.3 This statement confirms that the Watton-at-Stone Area Neighbourhood Plan, 2019 – 2033, meets all the necessary requirements.

### **2. Legal Requirements**

2.1 The Watton-at-Stone Area Neighbourhood Plan ('the Neighbourhood Plan') is submitted by Watton-at-Stone Parish Council, the qualifying body, which is entitled to submit a neighbourhood plan for the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Area.

2.2 The Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for the future development and growth of the parish. It has been compiled on behalf of the Parish Council by the Watton-at-Stone Community Steering Group, which was set up in January 2016 for the purpose of managing the process and drafting the document. This Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by thoroughly researching the topics of interest and issues raised by the community and consultation with residents and other stakeholders in Watton-at-Stone. It has been informed by an extensive evidence base which includes the results of public consultations, mapping, and data from public records.

2.3 Within both the national and local frameworks, the Neighbourhood Plan is concerned with the development and use of land. The policies laid out in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to planning matters and have been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 (as amended). They provide a practical framework for the guidance of the Local Planning Authority in making decisions on planning applications in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

2.4 The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is shown in Figure 1. This was formally designated by East Herts Council on 5 April 2016. The Neighbourhood Plan relates to the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Area. There are no other neighbourhood plans in place within the area and the area does not overlap any other neighbourhood plan area.

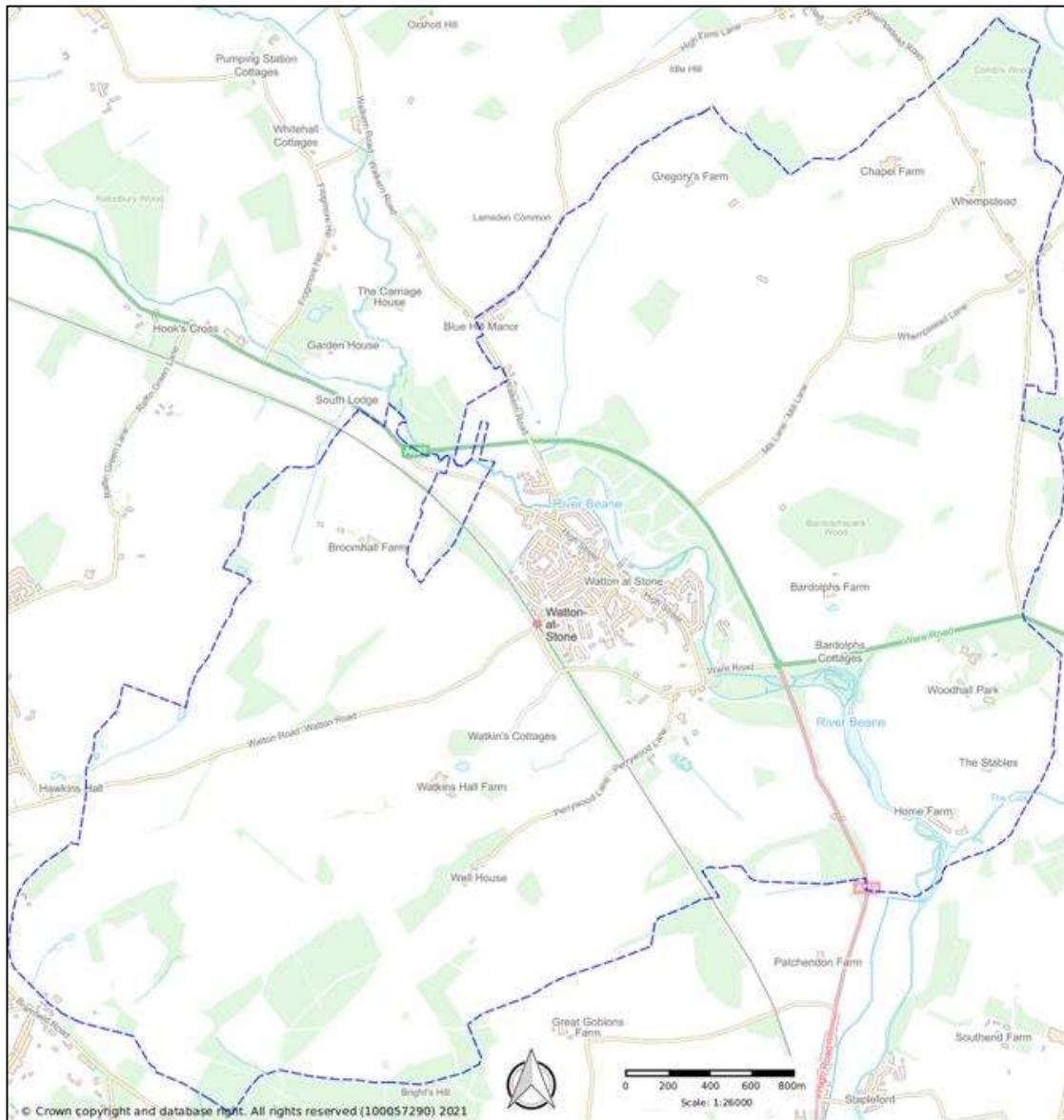


Figure 1 Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Area

2.5 To ensure that the last of the Basic Conditions above in paragraph 1.2 has been met, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report was submitted to East Herts Council. Following consultation with the three prescribed statutory bodies, on the Screening Report, East Herts Council issued a Screening Determination. The report of the determination is attached at Appendix A – SEA Screening Determination. The screening determination concluded that there were likely to be significant environmental effects from implementing the Neighbourhood Plan. In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programs Regulations 2004, an Environmental Report on the Plan was produced by AECOM. The full Environmental Report is available on the [Neighbourhood Plan page of the Parish Council website](#).

### **3. Key Requirements**

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) calls for neighbourhood plans to support the delivery of strategic policies (Paragraph 13) and apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 11). In accordance with national policy, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to promote sustainable development and embraces a range of social, economic, and environmental issues. It sets out a vision for the designated area, coupled to a range of planning objectives, policies, and proposals.

3.2 The Neighbourhood Plan includes a vision for the future, objectives, planning policies and a set of actions, which aim to ensure that Watton-at-Stone will grow sustainably and thrive over time. This means that the Neighbourhood Plan provides for new housing and prevents development that would have a negative impact on the area, while seeking to protect the environment and to provide facilities that will support and enhance cater for the wellbeing of the community.

3.3 In accordance with the NPPF, it is important that neighbourhood plans have three overarching objectives that are both interdependent and dependent. These are economic, social and environmental objectives (Paragraph 8).

3.4 The economic objective refers to building a 'strong responsive and competitive economy' through supporting growth and innovation, identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure, and ensuring that there is sufficient land of the right types in the right places (Paragraph 8a).

3.5 The social objective is 'to build and support a strong, vibrant and healthy community, by ensuring that the number of homes is sufficient in terms of quantity and is able to meet the needs of the current and future generations; and fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces which reflect the present and future needs; as well as supporting communities' health, social and cultural well-being (Paragraph 8b).

3.6 The environmental objective ensures that the natural, built and historic environment is protected and enhanced, a process which includes 'making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy' (Paragraph 8c).

3.7 While preparing the Neighbourhood Plan the Steering Group ensured that the policies satisfy the criteria that the NPPF provides as laid out below.

#### **Economic Policies**

3.8 There are very few opportunities to work in the village other than in the small number of retail units of the pubs/restaurants, so the emphasis is on preserving local employment opportunities for residents (Policy WAS 24). The ability to be able to work from home has become very important through the Covid-19 pandemic and proposals which enable homeworking, such as improved digital connectivity will be supported (WAS 25).

#### **Social Policies**

3.9 Social policies include providing the right mix of new homes (WAS 1 – WAS 8). Valued community facilities have been identified (WAS 11) along with taking the opportunity to improve leisure, health and sports facilities (WAS 12 – WAS 16). Use of sustainable modes of transport are also encouraged (WAS 9 – WAS 10).

#### **Environmental Policies**

3.10 Protecting the environment has also featured strongly with the designation of Local Green Spaces, identification of Protected Views, protection of wildlife habitats, corridors and the

river environment (WAS 17 – WAS 20) and policies for Archaeology and heritage assets (WAS 21 – WAS 23).

## **4. Contributing to Achieving Sustainable Development**

4.1 The NPPF affirms, “the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development” (Paragraph 7). Neighbourhood plans should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The policies in the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Area Plan support sustainable development by:

- Providing a framework containing policies allocated sites for and guide new sustainable housing developments in the Parish up to 2033
- Ensuring that new building meets high sustainability and design standards through the Design Codes
- Promoting the use of sustainable modes of transport, connectivity, new pedestrian and cycle routes, and protection of the rights of way network
- Proposing improved leisure facilities and retention of health facilities
- Protecting the historic fabric, character, rural identify and landscape setting of the parish
- Maintaining and enhancing wildlife and biodiversity
- Encouraging appropriate local enterprise

4.2 The NPPF also states that planning policies should be prepared with the active involvement of local highway authorities so that strategies and investment for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned (paragraph 104b). Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan 2018 – 2031 (the LTP) is guided by four principles: the application of technology, cost effectiveness, integrating land use and transport planning, and encouraging modal shift and active travel. Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have been prepared having regard to these principles, considering the village location and the lack of sustainable public transport available to residents.

## **5. Conformity with Strategic Policies in the Local Plan**

5.1 At the time of preparing this document, the current local plan was the East Herts District Plan October 2018. These policies are referred to in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Strategic Objectives of the District Plan form the basis of the District Plan Policies. Appendix B – District Objectives to Neighbourhood Plan Policies shows how the Neighbourhood Plan policies help to achieve these overarching District objectives.

5.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared having regard to the policies of the East Herts District Plan, adopted in October 2018. It consists of a written statement and a policies map, which is depicted on an Ordnance Survey base.

5.3 The Neighbourhood Plan policies are in accordance with the relevant strategic policies in the East Herts District Plan October 2018. Appendix C – Strategic District Policies to Neighbourhood Plan Policies shows which of the Neighbourhood Plan policies relate to the strategic District Plan policies listed below:

- INT1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
- DPS1 (Housing, Employment and Retail Growth)
- DPS2 (The Development Strategy 2011-2033)
- DPS3 (Housing Supply 2011-2033)
- DPS4 (Infrastructure Requirements)
- DPS5 (Neighbourhood Planning)

GBR1 (Green Belt)  
GBR2 (Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt)  
VILL1 (Group 1 Villages)  
HOU1 (Type and Mix of Housing)  
HOU2 (Housing Density)  
HOU3 (Affordable Housing)  
HOU4 (Rural Exception Affordable Housing Sites)  
ED1 (Employment)  
ED2 (Rural Economy)  
DES2 (Landscape Character)  
TRA1 (Sustainable Transport)  
CFLR1 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation)  
CFLR2 (Local Green Space)  
NE1 (International, National and Locally Designated Nature Conservation Sites)  
NE3 (Species and Habitats)  
HA1 (Designated Heritage Assets)  
CC1 (Climate Change Adaptation)  
CC2 (Climate Change Mitigation)  
WAT1 (Flood Risk Management)  
WAT2 (Source Protection Zones)  
WAT5 (Sustainable Drainage)  
WAT6 (Wastewater Infrastructure)  
EQ4 (Air Quality).

5.4 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in consultation and cooperation with the local planning authority, East Herts Council.

5.5 There is duty and a commitment by the District Council to review its planning policies whenever the need is demonstrated. Accordingly, Watton-at-Stone Parish Council will monitor the Neighbourhood Plan and undertake a review where necessary, to ensure that the policies laid out in the Plan remain in general conformity with the adopted East Herts District Plan October 2018.

## **6. Compatibility with Human Rights and EU Legislation**

6.1 The proposals and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are compatible with the human rights legislation and all the existing requirements of European Law or UK equivalents.

## **7. Summary**

7.1 It is a legal requirement that Watton-at-Stone Parish Council submit this statement. It confirms that the submitted Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Area Plan meets the basic conditions required of a neighbourhood plan as defined in current neighbourhood planning legislation.

## **8. Appendices**

**APPENDIX A:** East Herts Council SEA Screening Determination

**APPENDIX B:** Table indicating how the policies in Watton-at-Stone Area Neighbourhood Plan help to achieve the strategic objectives in the East Herts District Plan 2011 – 2033

**APPENDIX C:** Table indicating how the policies in the Watton-at-Stone Area Neighbourhood Plan are in accordance with the strategic policies in the East Herts District Plan 2011 - 2033

## Appendices

### Appendix A – SEA Screening Determination

#### Decision details

#### Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan October 2020 Draft Pre-Submission SEA Screening Report (NKD21/14)

- [Find out more about this issue](#)

**Decision Maker:** Executive Member for Planning and Growth

**Decision status:** [Recommendations Approved](#)

**Is Key decision?:** No

**Is subject to call in?:** Yes

**Publication date:** 30/07/2021

**Date of decision:** 11/08/2021

**Effective from:** 19/08/2021

#### Accompanying Documents:

- [Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan October 2020 Draft Pre-Submission SEA Screening Report - Decision Sheet](#)  PDF 37 KB
- [Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan October 2020 Draft Pre-Submission SEA Screening Report](#)  PDF 94 KB
- [Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan October 2020 Draft Pre-Submission SEA Screening Report - Appendix A \(SEA Screening Report\)](#)  PDF 10 MB
- [Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan October 2020 Draft Pre-Submission SEA Screening Report - Appendix B \(Consultee Responses\)](#)  PDF 260 KB
- [Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan October 2020 Draft Pre-Submission SEA Screening Report - Appendix C \(Schedule 1\)](#)  PDF 81 KB

## **East Herts Council – Non-Key Decision Record**

**Record of executive decision made by an individual under  
Regulation 13 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)  
(Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012**

**Reference Number: NKD21/16**

**Taken by: Councillor Jan Goodeve – Executive Member for  
Planning and Growth**

**Decision**

Hunsdon Neighbourhood Area Plan 2019-2033 Draft Pre-Submission  
SEA Screening Report

**Date of Decision**

29 September 2021

**Reason(s) for decision**

The purpose of this report is to determine whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the emerging Hunsdon Neighbourhood Plan are required.

**Details of alternative options considered and rejected**

In order for a Neighbourhood Plan to meet the Basic Conditions it must be compatible with relevant legal obligations. Therefore the Local Planning Authority must determine whether the Plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment or Habitats Regulations Assessment. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot proceed through examination without fulfilling the legal requirements of the SEA and HRA process.

## Appendix B – District Objectives to Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Table indicating how the policies in Watton-at-Stone Area Neighbourhood Plan help to achieve the strategic objectives in the East Herts District Plan 2011 – 2033

<b>District Plan Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Plan Policies</b>
Mitigate the effects of climate change	WAS 6
Encourage safe and vibrant mixed communities	WAS 3 to WAS 7, WAS 9, & WAS 10
Balance the housing market	WAS 1 to WAS 8 inclusive
Protect the countryside & historic environment and promote good design	WAS 6, WAS 17 to WAS 23
Foster entrepreneurship	WAS 24 & WAS 25
Improve access and sustainable transport	WAS 3 & WAS 4, WAS 6, WAS 9 & WAS 10
Maintain and improve existing facilities and provide new facilities	WAS 3 & WAS 4, WAS 11 to WAS 17 & WAS 26
Improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities	WAS 11 to WAS 17
Protect and enhance environmental assets including biodiversity	WAS 19 & WAS 20
Provide necessary infrastructure	WAS 3 & WAS 4, WAS 9, WAS 26

## Appendix C – Strategic District Policies to Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Table indicating how the policies in the Watton-at-Stone Area Neighbourhood Plan are in accordance with the strategic policies in the East Herts District Plan 2011 - 2033

<b>District Plan Strategic Policies</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Plan Policies</b>
INT1 Sustainable Development	WAS 1, WAS 6 & WAS 9
DPS1 Housing, Employment and Retail Growth	WAS 1 to WAS 5, WAS 8, WAS 24 & WAS 25
DPS2 Development Strategy	WAS 1 & WAS 2
DPS3 Housing Supply	WAS 3 to WAS 8
DPS4 Infrastructure Requirements	WAS 3 & WAS 4, WAS 9, WAS 26
DPS5 Neighbourhood Planning	All Policies
GBR1 Green Belt	WAS 1 & WAS 2, WAS 6, WAS 17
GBR2 Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt	WAS 6, WAS 9, WAS 25, WAS 26
VILL1 Group 1 Villages	WAS 2, WAS 3, WAS 4, WAS 6
VILL4 Village Employment Areas	Neighbourhood Plan Policies
ED2 Rural Economy	WAS 6 & WAS 8
DES2 Landscape Character	WAS 6, WAS 17 & WAS 18
TRA1 Sustainable Transport	WAS 3 & WAS 4, WAS 9 & WAS 10
CFLR1 Open space, Sport and Recreation	WAS 11 & WAS 12, WAS 15 & WAS 16
CLFR2 Local Green Space	WAS 17
NE1 Designated Nature Conservation	WAS 19 & WAS 20
NE3 Species and Habitats	WAS 19 & WAS 20
HA1 Designated Heritage Assets	WAS 21 to WAS 23
CC1 Climate Change Adaption	WAS 6
CC2 Climate Change Mitigation	WAS 6
WAT1 Flood Risk Management	WAS 6
WAT2 Source Protection Zones	WAS 6
WAT5 Sustainable Drainage	WAS 6
WAT6 Wastewater Infrastructure	WAS 6
EQ4 Air Quality	WAS 6

Watton at Stone



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

<https://watton-pc.org.uk/was-neighbourhood-plan/>