

Drayton Neighbourhood Plan

Drayton's Key Views



March 2026

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Purpose of the Key Views Document

The Steering Group's Key Views document is an important part of Drayton's Neighbourhood Plan. The purpose of this document is to list and protect the views that matter most to the local community, specifically those that help to define the parish's unique charm, heritage, and natural beauty. The views included are all within the Drayton parish boundary, which is the designated area for the Neighbourhood Plan.

From views across open countryside to glimpses of the church tower from the roads approaching Drayton, each view adds to what makes the place we live in unique. The listing of 'Key Views' helps guide future development so that it respects the special character of Drayton.

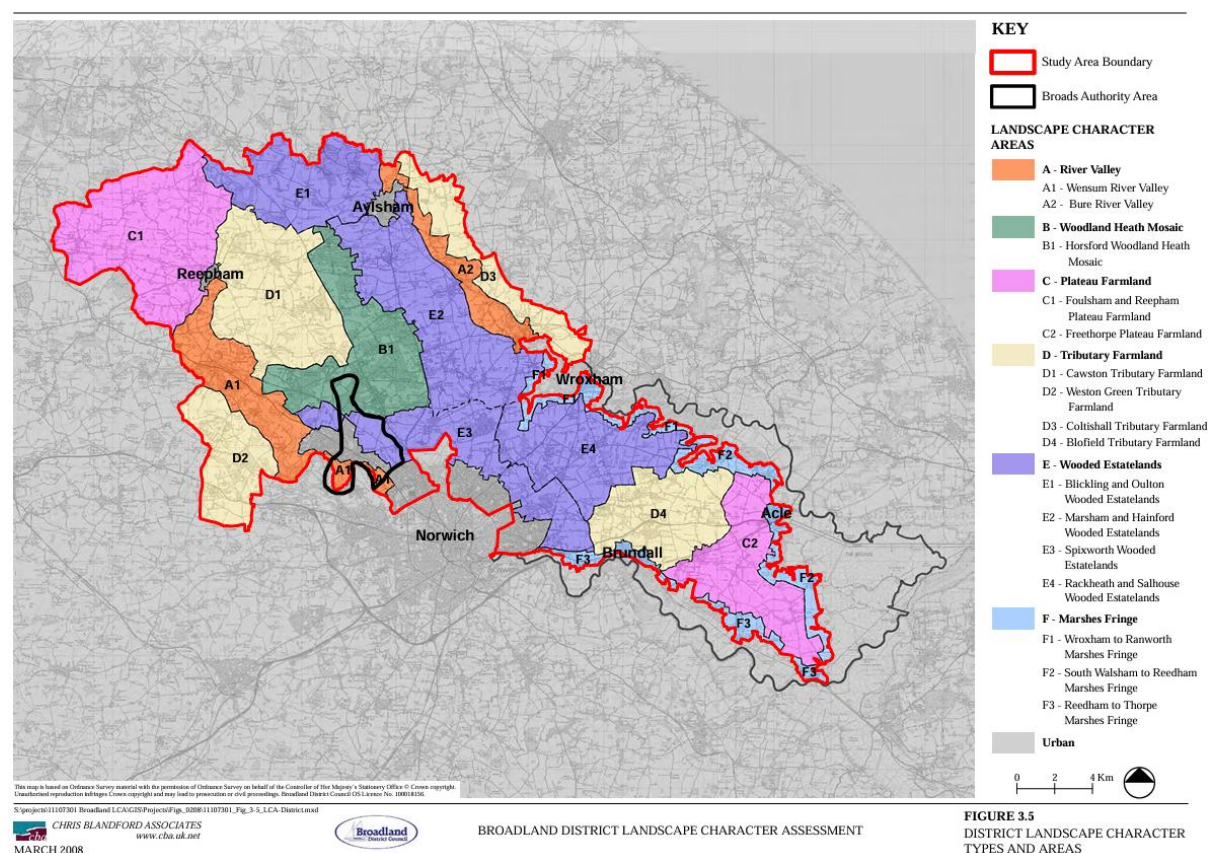
Background Context: Landscape Character

The Broadland District Council Landscape Character Assessment¹ identifies that the Drayton Neighbourhood Plan area falls into several landscape character areas including:

- A1- Wensum River Valley (to the south of the parish)
- B1- Horsford Woodland Heath Mosaic (to the north of the parish)
- E3- Spixworth Wooded Estatelands (to the east/centre of the parish)

¹ <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/lca-spd-adopted-final-part-1.pdf> and <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/lca-spd-adopted-final-part-2.pdf>

Figure 1: Rough Black Mark of the location of the Parish on the Broadland District Landscape Character Assessment Map (Chris Blanford 2008)



The key features and management objectives of these landscape areas are set out below:

A1 - Wensum River Valley (south of the parish)

Key Characteristics

The River Wensum flows through a narrow, shallow valley with wooded slopes, open meadows, marshes and small fields, creating a peaceful and scenic landscape. Large blocks of woodland, lakes, and ponds add variety and support wildlife, while historic houses, churches and mills sit on higher ground as visual highlights. Small villages and narrow lanes are scattered across the area, and the mix of woods, fields and water gives the valley a strong sense of character and tranquillity.

Management Strategy

To conserve its rural character, riverside trees, and varied mix of habitats. There are also opportunities to enhance the area by protecting and managing woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands.

Relevant Management Objectives

- Seek to enhance the corridor of the River Wensum through creation of wetland habitats, such as wet meadows and wet woodland.
- Seek to enhance the River Wensum valley sides through the creation and expansion of all types of grassland and

woodland; especially mixed habitats of grassland, heath and scrub/woodland.

- Seek strategies to minimise the risk of eutrophication of rivers and waterways because of run-off from adjacent agricultural farmland e.g. catchment sensitive farming techniques.
- Seek strategies to create and manage urban fringe greenspace in areas that border the Norwich settlement fringe, as well as the maintenance and enhancement of green corridors through built up areas.
- Seek opportunities for the enhancement of the Bure and associated tributary wetland habitats.

B1 - Horsford Woodland Heath Mosaic (north of the parish)

Key Characteristics	This area is a mostly flat plateau running north through the District. A gently sloping landscape of farmland, old and new woodlands, with small patches of protected heath and fen. Woodland areas create distinctive horizons, while open edges provide wide views to the Bure valley. The area is crossed by footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes, and woodlands offer valuable recreational spaces.
Management Strategy	Focus on conserving and enhancing the large woodlands and remaining heathland, which are important for wildlife and define the landscape. There are also opportunities to restore hedgerows and replace lost mature trees.
Relevant Management Objectives	• Seek to conserve and enhance woodland, wood pasture and heathland and associated wetland habitats, which represent areas of high biodiversity importance with a wide range of habitats. • Conserve remnant areas of heathland and take opportunities to extend these. • Seek opportunities for the creation of larger areas of heathland. • Encourage sustainable woodland management of the varied woodlands using traditional techniques such as coppicing where appropriate to maintain historic and ecological interest. • Encourage new woodland edge planting of native deciduous broadleaved to reduce the visual and ecological impact of the coniferous plantations. • Encourage the use of native tree species in new planting, which reflects the underlying soil conditions and maintaining regional character. • Seek to conserve and enhance existing mature landscape structure and related high landscape and ecological value. • Seek to conserve remnant patches of heathland and fen within interior parts of the woodland, which are of high

ecological value and contribute to a sense of time-depth within the landscape.

E3 - Spixworth Wooded Estate lands (east/centre of the parish)

Key Characteristics	This narrow area north of Norwich has a semi-rural character, with gently rising land mainly used for arable farming. Urban fringe uses, including golf courses, business parks, and Norwich Airport, have fragmented the landscape and reduced its rural feel. Woodland, tree belts, hedgerows, and small copses provide some enclosure and scenic interest, while medium-sized estates add parkland features. Settlements have expanded, and busy roads bring noise and movement. Overall, the area is a mix of open farmland, woodland, and urban influence, giving it a diluted sense of rural identity.
Management Strategy	Conserve the intricate pattern of woodland clumps, small copses, and historic halls, while maintaining the area's strong character and clear sense of place.
Relevant Management Objectives	• Seek opportunities for the creation of woodland and wood pasture. • Seek opportunities to promote catchment sensitive farming. • Seek to conserve and restore declining hedgerows and field trees. • Seek opportunities for the management and creation of urban and urban fringe greenspace, as well as the maintenance and enhancement of green corridors through the built areas. • Seek to conserve and enhance the landscape structure within the area, including blocks and belts of woodland, copses of mature trees, mature parkland trees and intact hedgerows. • Conserve and enhance existing woodland belts to buffer potential new housing development. • Seek to retain and conserve parkland landscapes and character to provide green space between potential new housing development.

Why Views Matter in Drayton

Drayton's views are an important part of its landscape and heritage. They link the parish to familiar landmarks such as the church, open countryside, the river and woodland, helping to reinforce a clear sense of place and local identity. These views have value beyond their visual appeal, reflecting the village's history, ecology and everyday character.

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of protecting these views, particularly where they frame or include heritage assets such as the Grade II listed church. Some are long-distance views, while others are more contained, but all are valued by the local community.

Protecting them also supports national policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights the need to conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment. For example, Paragraph 174 of the NPPF describes how recognising the beauty of the countryside is a key element of good planning.

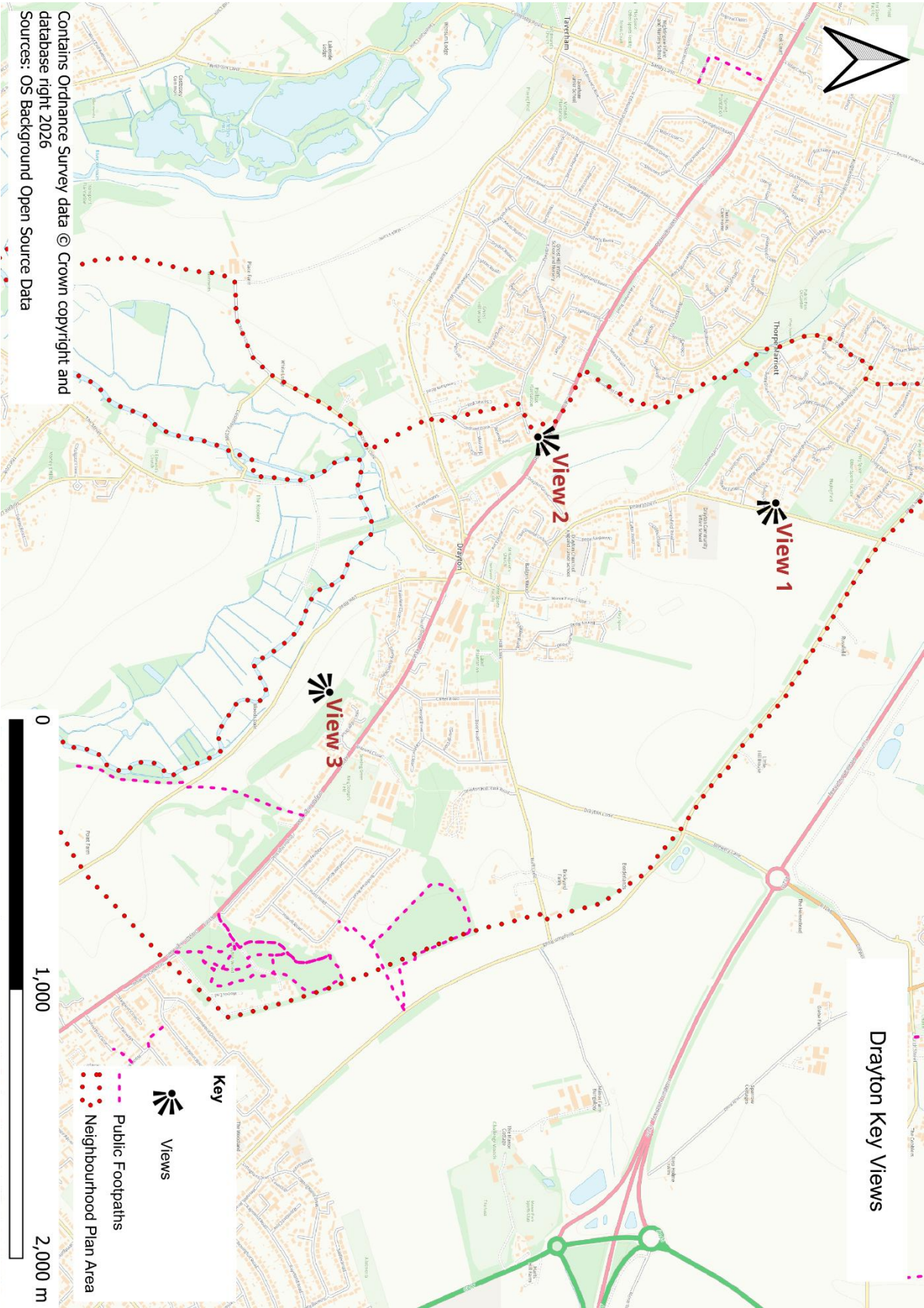
These views also serve a wider function, helping to protect habitats, reflect historic land use, and support recreation and wellbeing. Their preservation helps ensure that Drayton remains a distinctive and valued place for current and future generations.

Agreeing on the views

The Drayton Neighbourhood Plan proposes to afford protection to 3 special views. During 2025 the community were asked which views they feel are particularly special within the parish. This document provides the evidence to support these views being included within the neighbourhood plan. A set of criteria was used to identify the views:

- a) Accessible from a public space;
- b) A good reason for its inclusion within the Neighbourhood Plan which may relate to its recreational value, conservation interest, scenic quality, rarity or planning history; and
- c) Have a specific reason for being important to the community.

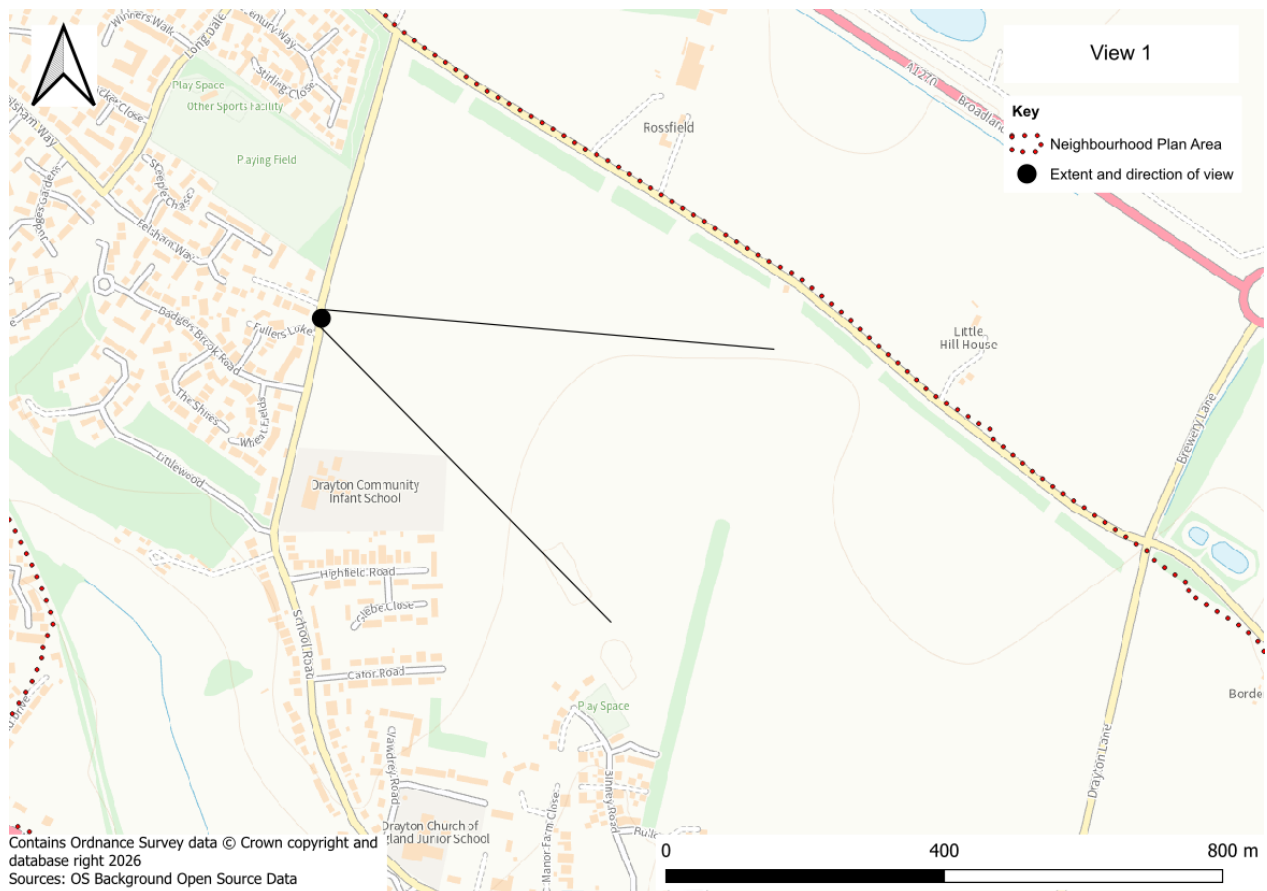
Mapping the views



Views Assessment

View 1: views across open fields from the top of School Road towards Hall Lane





Location of photographer	What3Words
On School Road opposite Fuller's Loke, looking south west towards Hall Lane.	decks.rural.cheered
Description and character	
The view is defined by a wide, open agricultural landscape with long views across softly contoured land. The simple pattern of fields, together with the open sky and distant tree lines, gives a clear sense of space and a gradual transition from the edge of the settlement into the surrounding countryside. The lack of prominent vertical structures helps to maintain the rural character of the scene.	
Location and public accessibility	
This view is seen from publicly accessible routes within the residential part pf Drayton including the public road and pavements, looking across open agricultural land to the east/south-east. It is easily accessible to view by residents walking, cycling or travelling along the nearby streets.	
Planning justification for inclusion	
This view is important because it shows the clear physical and visual gap between Drayton and neighbouring settlements. The retention of this undeveloped gap is essential to maintaining Drayton's separate identity and preventing the settlements from merging (coalescence). Development in this area would be prominent and would weaken the sense of Drayton as a distinct place. It would conflict with the spatial strategy and the aim of	

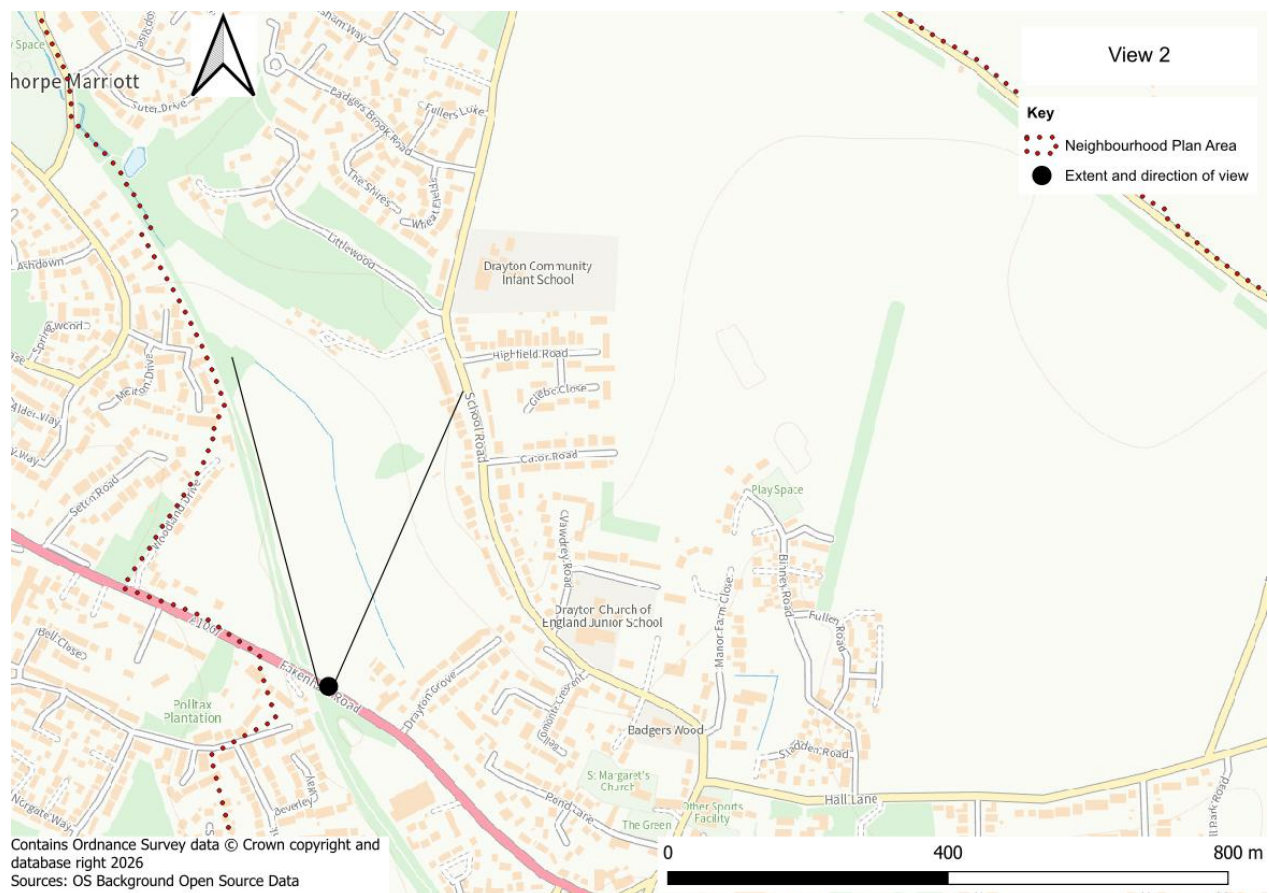
maintaining a balanced relationship between built development and the surrounding countryside.

Community importance

Feedback received through the neighbourhood plan process has highlighted the importance to residents of retaining green gaps around Drayton. This view represents more than open land; it contributes strongly to local identity and character. It provides reassurance that, despite proximity to Norwich, Drayton retains a separate and semi-rural setting.

View 2: views over the green gap between Drayton and Taverham from the Fakenham Road looking to the north and east.





Location of photographer	What3Words
On Fakenham Road near to bus stop NFOAMJMJ looking back to the north east over the green gap.	decks.rural.cheered
Description and character	
The view comprises a broad expanse of open land framed by mature tree belts and hedgerows. The openness of the landform and the absence of built development creates a clear visual break between the built form of Drayton and that of Taverham. The field pattern and tree structure reinforce the semi-rural setting of the settlement edge.	
Location and public accessibility	
This view is seen from the public highway along Fakenham Road (A1067), looking north/north-east across the open land that separates Drayton from Taverham. The viewpoint is fully accessible, including from the pavement and roadside verge, and is experienced daily by residents, commuters and visitors entering and leaving the village.	
Planning justification for inclusion	
This view is important because it clearly shows the open land separating Drayton and Taverham. Keeping this gap undeveloped is essential to maintaining the separate identity of each settlement and preventing them from merging. Development in this area would be clearly visible from Fakenham Road and would reduce the sense of separation between the two settlements. It would weaken the semi-rural setting of Drayton's edge and conflict	

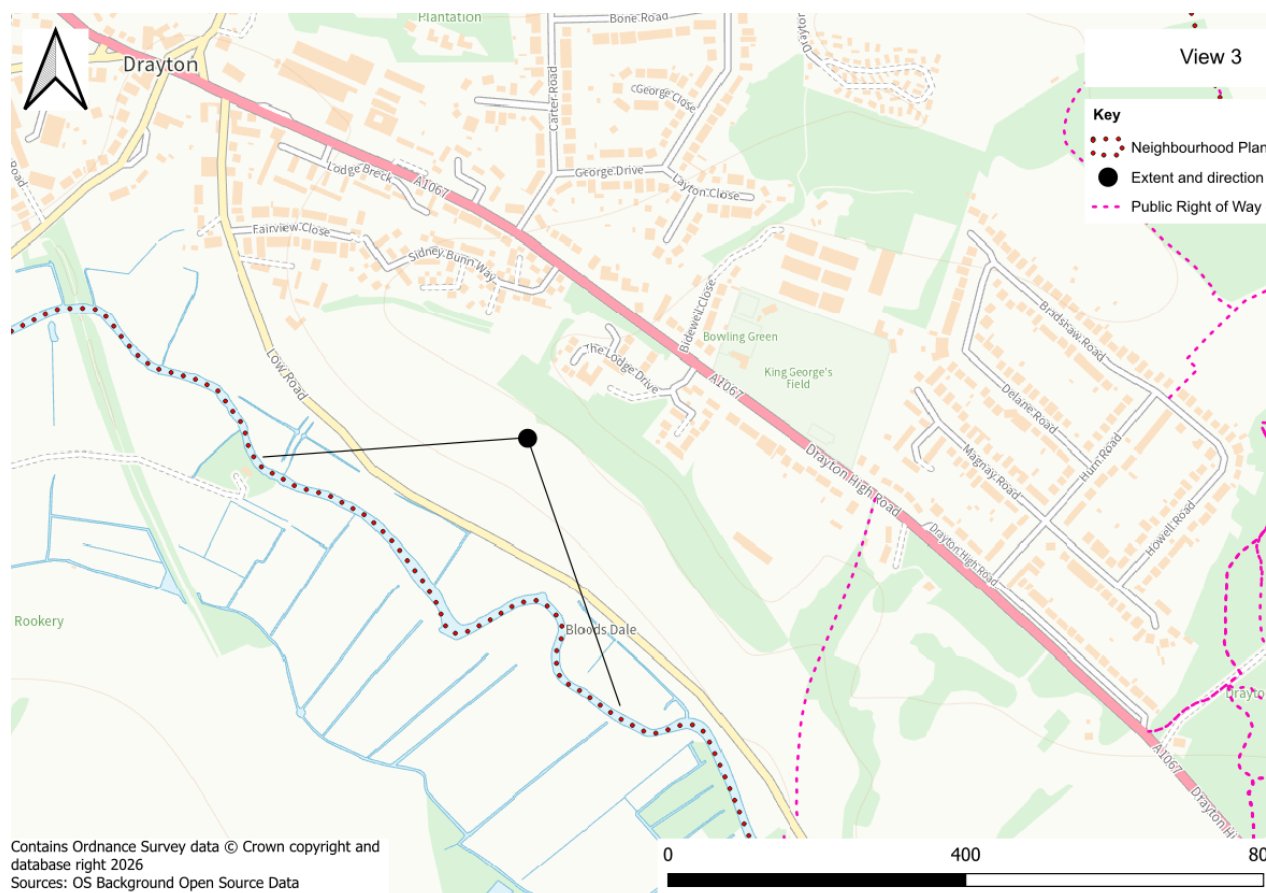
with the aim of maintaining clear boundaries between built-up areas and the surrounding countryside.

Community importance

Feedback received through the neighbourhood plan process has highlighted the importance of keeping clear green gaps between neighbouring settlements. This view helps define Drayton as a distinct place, separate from neighbouring Taverham. For many residents and visitors, this stretch of Fakenham Road forms part of the everyday experience of arriving in or leaving Drayton. The open gap reinforces the sense that Drayton remains separate from Taverham and retains its own identity and setting.

View 3: views of the Wensum Valley from Old Lodge / Southern Edge





Location of photographer	what3words
On the footpath behind The Lodge development, south of Drayton High Road, looking south towards the Wensum river.	guardian.flow.opened
Description and character	
The view looks out across the River Wensum floodplain, with open grazing fields, the winding river, hedgerows and lines of trees, and higher land rising in the distance. The wide valley floor and clearly visible river create a strong and well-defined landscape, with a clear sense of space and distance. The natural, undeveloped feel of the valley stands in clear contrast to the buildings of the settlement on higher ground above.	
Location and public accessibility	
This view is experienced from publicly accessible routes along the southern edge of Drayton, including public highways and footpaths, looking south/south-west across the Wensum Valley. The viewpoint is accessible on foot.	
Planning justification for inclusion	
The Wensum Valley forms a key landscape feature and ecological corridor, including nationally and internationally recognised environmental designations. The visual relationship between the settlement edge and the open valley is a defining characteristic of Drayton's setting. Development that intrudes into this view, or appears prominent on	

the valley edge, would undermine both landscape character and the openness of the floodplain.

Community importance

This view is valued for its scenic quality and its connection to the natural environment. It provides a strong sense of place and reinforces Drayton's historic relationship with the river valley. The view contributes to residents' appreciation of local green spaces and to recreational use of surrounding footpaths and woodland.