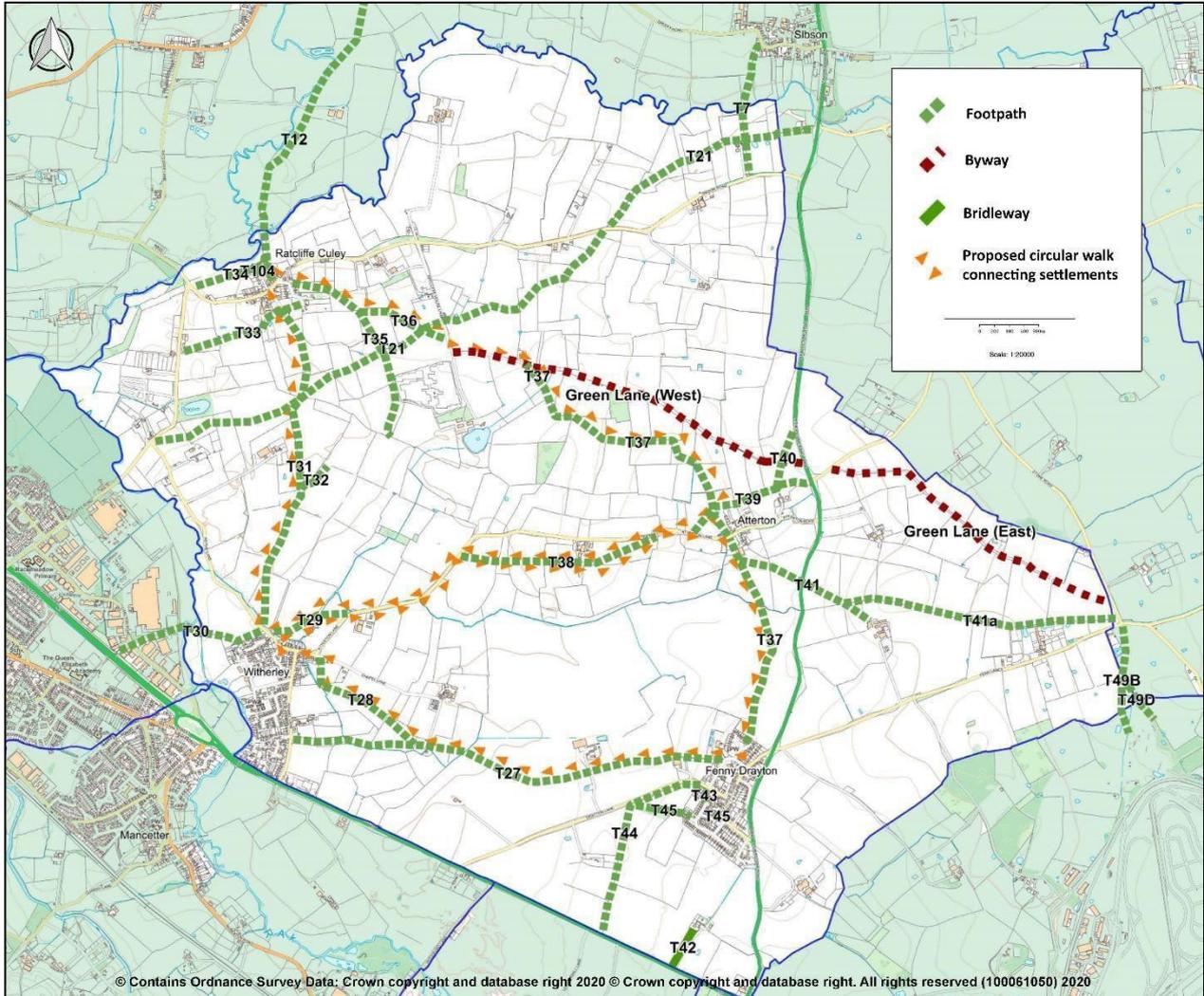


Development proposals should consider improvement of existing and, where possible, creation of new footpaths and cycleways to provide off-road connections to village services including the school.

Figure 16: Footpaths, bridleways and other walking routes



## Renewable energy generation infrastructure

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 paragraphs 156-158 make it clear that all communities are responsible for reducing emissions as part of the necessary approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change. Residents of Witherley Parish wish to play their part, but at a scale appropriate to the landscape of the Plan Area. The impact of wind generation projects on communities has been recognised by the government: A Ministerial statement made on the 18th June 2015, notes that while suitable areas for wind energy development must be identified in local plans (as has been done in *HBBC Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2016*), any such developments must have the support

of affected local communities. This policy provides that support, subject to specific conditions about location, scale and impact.

## Solar

An audit undertaken in 2019 (by the Environment Theme Group) shows only 27 properties across the Parish had solar panels. However, the presence of the existing solar farm at Ratcliffe Culey (6.5ha), which is well screened by a deciduous woodland, 1.2ha in size and whose operator works with the Parish Council to support the local community, is supported by a majority of respondents to the Neighbourhood Development Plan questionnaire; this suggests a wider acceptance of solar generation as a contribution to a greener Parish.

## Turbines

Evidence obtained during the community consultation for this Plan, including public drop-in sessions and the questionnaire, confirmed that the community would support renewable energy infrastructure development of appropriate scale in suitable areas of the Parish. The Plan Area falls entirely within HBBC Landscape Sensitivity Area G *Fen Lanes* (HBBC *Renewable Energy Capacity Study* 2014), meaning that, subject to community agreement to individual proposals, small (up to 25m tip height) and medium (to 80m) turbines would be acceptable in the area indicated in Figure

17. Because of the visibility of any large infrastructure across the relatively flat topography of the Plan Area, larger (80-135m) turbines would be regarded as unacceptably intrusive and would not be supported.

Sensitivity of Landscape Character Area G Sense Lowlands to turbines of various sizes (HBBC 2014)

Landscape Character Area	Small scale wind turbines (25-40m)	Medium scale wind turbines (40-80m)	Large scale wind turbines (80-135m)
G: Fen Lanes Character Area	Low	Low-moderate	Moderate

Within the areas of high social, landscape, historic and biodiversity value indicated in blue in Figure 17, the community's opinion is that only small, domestic or agricultural, privately initiated proposals would be supported.

This policy is in conformity with or supported by NPPF (2021) paragraphs 156-158 and Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council *Settlement Site Allocations* 2016 Policies DM2, DM11, DM12, and *Core Strategy* 2009 Spatial Objective 10.

**POLICY ENV 12: – RENEWABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE:** Proposals in the Plan Area for turbines of 80m or greater tip height will not be supported. Individual, small-scale, domestic or small business (up to 25m) proposals will be supported subject to compliance with other conditions in this policy, and with the approval of residents.

Subject to the above paragraph in respect of turbine size, renewable energy Infrastructure of all types in the Plan Area (including solar, ground source heat pumps and aerobic digesters)

will only be supported if the proposal demonstrates that it will not adversely impact on:

- a) Health and wellbeing of the community by virtue of noise, visual impact, reflections/glare, water pollution, smell, air quality, gaseous or noxious emissions or/and the biodiversity of ~~Policy Env 13 describes~~ the surrounding area.
- b) The character of the surrounding area including protected views and vistas.

Any proposal must be of an appropriate scale and supported by relevant documentation, for example impact assessments covering archaeology, landscape, visual impact, environmental impact, flood impact, ecological mitigation, arboriculture (impact & method) tree reference and protection.

## Flood risk resilience

Even if international cooperation and national strategies and policies eventually succeed in halting the human and industrial contributions towards climate change, the effects of recent and current warming on weather events will likely persist for decades. It is therefore desirable to plan for at least a medium-term future, in which weather events will continue to become more extreme, by putting in place measures that mitigate the challenge of climate change for the lifetime of this Plan and beyond. This objective is explicitly supported by the Environment Agency (EA) draft *National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England* (2019), in which the strategic emphasis for the EA shifts from mitigation to resilience; in other words, from requiring new development to reduce its adverse effects on flood risk and to avoiding creating or adding to flood risk at all.



Because of the way the floodplains of the Anker and its tributaries border and extend into the Plan Area, parts of the Parish have flooded frequently in the past: in Witherley itself, for example, Cottager's Piece and other riverside fields took the pressure off the village at times of heavy rainfall, while the Mythe Lane area had a duckpond and withy bed that held excess water from further upstream. These were features of the Parish that were accepted as 'normal' before building on

floodplains and other 20 century development in inappropriate places made these traditional mitigations inadequate. A combination of topography, geology (see Figure 4), changes in agricultural practice and new infrastructure across the Parish and upstream in the Anker catchment now makes the Plan Area vulnerable to flooding events, both from the rivers and watercourses and from surface water. Local experience in recent years, including during the time of preparation of this Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019-2020), is that these types of flooding, together with that caused by flow from an over-capacity water table, have increased in extent, duration and severity.