

COLLATION OF RESPONSES FOR PARISH CONSULTATION as of 1242 22/09/2017

POLICY	SUPPORT	SUPPORT WITH CHANGES	DO NOT SUPPORT
S1	19	1 -CBC see P Gilding 2- NG see NG LCC	
E1	19	1 JP Flood risk not mentioned for current developments, priority should be given to reducing flood risk by any means that respects landscape/env 2- NG see NG LCC	
E1a	18	1 – EA: greenfield run off rate 5 litres per second per hectare 2- NG see NG LCC	
E2	20	1- NG see NG LCC	
E3	20	1- NG see NG LCC	
E4	16	1 – ECG- Query view from Regent st , add view from Hobby? 2- CBC see P Gilding 3- NG see NG LCC 4-JAH Vista 7 on map 2 Regent St not a vista	
E4a	15	1-New development should not exceed ht of church roof 2- NG see NG LCC	
B1	18	1- NG see NG LCC	
B2	16	1. EA- cross ref to policy E1 2 - CBC see P Gilding – 2 comments 3- NG see NG LCC	1
H1	17	1-CBC see P Gilding – 2 comments 2- NG see NG LCC	
H2	17	1-CBC see P Gilding 2- NG see NG LCC	
T1	18	1- NG see NG LCC	
T1a	15	1-NG see NG LCC 2-JAH Only if land avail. in village centre	3
T2	16	1-CBC see P Gilding 2- NG see NG LCC 3-JAH not in favour of gateway views – too “twee”	
T2a	18	1- NG see NG LCC	
T2b	17	1-AS Will this still allow local farms access with hay and straw 2- NG see NG LCC	
T3	18	1- NG see NG LCC	
T4	18	1- NG see NG LCC	1
T4a	17	1 DC and JC. Map 3 incorrect	1
L1	17	1- NG see NG LCC	1
L2	18	1NG see NG LCC 2NV – not commented	
L2a	14	1NG see NG LCC 2NV – not commented	1-JAH In 47y no suitable area found, cost 2
L3	15	1- NG see NG LCC	1
L4	18	1ECG – Add green space at top of Ferneley 2- NG see NG LCC	
D1	16	1-CBC see P Gilding 2 comments	

		2- NG see NG LCC 3- JAHwhy list school and pentland?	
D1a	19	1- NG see NG LCC	1
D1b	19	1-BK 2- NG see NG LCC	
D2	16	1 CBC see P Gilding 2- LN Para 2 "may also be supported" change to "shall also be supported" 3- NG see NG LCC	
OTHER			
ADDITIONAL			
<p>MT: Footpath map has incorrect cycle route MT: Do we need demographics? 36 RAT: Road has become single lane due to parked cars. Severn Trent: Look at guidance notes</p> <p>Melton: 'Addition of a policy allowing review of the plan every [circa] 5 years to ensure the plan is functioning and/or to respond to strategic changes brought through any of the following scenarios;</p> <p>A change of Charnwood's development plan, or supporting evidence such as Housing Requirement.</p> <p>Adoption of the Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Growth plan and any impact this may bring.</p> <p>The delivery of proposed 'Six Hills Garden Village', promoted by Gladman which borders the Parish.</p> <p>An example of this can be found in the nearby Broughton and Dalby Neighbourhood Plan, page 94 at the following link - https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/d246bd_3ce07c8936e04192ab40519cacac8749.pdf '</p> <p>Telephone comment ECG 16/8: Would like to protect two green areas on Ferneley Rise– will add to response form. Note typing error somewhere in next should be the plot</p> <p>Verbal comment: P Wilcox: Can't add axle weight to foot bridge! Also highlight settlement boundaries</p> <p>LN Vision and objectives: School and village Hall mentioned. Church is equally important.</p> <p>VM T1a Public car park no good unless near green – I don't think space exists. Would like to see further action to use vacant residential properties falling into disrepair eg property next to Gingers – compulsory purchase?</p> <p>CBC Paul Gilding Appendix B Site 10 typo "area" + two locally listed buildings Thrussington Mill and Homestead Farm ... plus....Para 1.3 (pg8) – ". . . alongside the Charnwood Local Plan, and . . ."</p> <p>As this is the first reference to the Charnwood plan in the document it may be worth using the full title which is the "Charnwood Local Plan 2011 to 2028 Core Strategy".</p> <p>Para 1.5 (pg8) – "Thrussington is the most easterly Parish within the Borough of Charnwood." Thrussington is "one of" the most easterly parishes, South Croxton is the most easterly parish in the Borough</p> <p>see CBC comments below. CBC assumed and counted as supports if no other comment.</p> <p>NH Star inn is aspiration D2a not D2b. there is no justification for changing settlement boundary. If feasible would support car park between old gate and seagrave roads in medium term</p> <p>NGreen LCC assumed support with changes on all, full comments attached below – ref climate change and equality</p>			

CBC P GILDING COMMENTS IN FULL

Thrussington Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 14 Consultation Draft) Charnwood Borough Council Comments – June 2017

Thank you for providing an opportunity for Charnwood Borough Council to comment on the Regulation 14 consultation draft of the Thrussington Neighbourhood Plan (June 2017). Overall, we feel that the Plan is positively written and provides a sound basis for developing a final version of the Thrussington Neighbourhood Plan. This paper provides the response by the Council and comprises potential conformity issues we wish to raise and a separate section which provides comments only which are intended to be helpful to the plan making process.

Charnwood Local Plan Conformity Issues

The Thrussington Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan if it is to meet the basic condition test. The Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy was adopted on the 9th November 2015 and provides the strategic policies for delivering growth in the Borough. The Neighbourhood Plan should be in general conformity with this document, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance (NPPF).

The following points have been identified as areas where this general conformity may not be met.

S1 – Strategic Policy

The final paragraph of the policy seeks to control development which is outside the parish of Thrussington, *“Schemes which propose development outside of the Parish . . .”* Therefore, the policy is considered to relate to the development and use of land outside the designated Neighbourhood Area and, on that basis, is considered contrary to the requirements of Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

PROPOSED ACTION: Remove reference to development located outside the parish.

H2 – Housing Mix

The policy states that *“Affordable housing (specifically shared-ownership schemes) will be supported in line with Charnwood’s Local Plan . . .”* and in the supporting text continues *“Affordable housing will be considered favourably however, a specific type is preferred”*. The basis for this focus upon shared-ownership affordable housing has not been explained by way of evidence, or the policy to support shared ownership to the detriment of other types of affordable housing (such as affordable and social rented accommodation) justified. As a result the policy is contrary to Policy CS3: Strategic Housing Needs of the Charnwood Core Strategy which seeks *“an appropriate mix of types, tenures and sizes of homes, having regard to identified housing needs and the character of the area”* to meet the needs of the entire community. Further advice on planning for affordable housing tenures is provided in the Charnwood Housing Supplementary Planning Document. As worded, the policy lacks the flexibility needed to ensure that identified housing needs will be met now and in the future.

PROPOSED ACTION: Revise policy wording and supporting text to enable provision of all types of affordable housing, in accordance with CS3, where need is identified.

Policy B2 – New Employment Development

The policy states *“Small scale or rural developments which create new employment uses, (use classes A2 and B1 only) will only be considered on appropriate sites . . .”* Policy CS10: Rural Economic Development of the Charnwood Core Strategy makes no explicit restrictions in the rural areas of the Borough but rather requires a judgement to be made regarding scale, character and any detriment to the countryside. The NPPF says planning should encourage and not act as an impediment to economic growth. Limiting development to use classes A2 and B1 may be considered too restrictive as other uses may also be acceptable, for example small scale B2 or B8 uses.

PROPOSED ACTION: Remove restriction on use classes to provide support for economic development and businesses in the parish, provided the relevant criteria are met.

Policy D1 – Protection of Heritage Assets

The policy does not accord with paragraphs 133 and 134 of the NPPF which make provision for development which causes harm or loss of a heritage asset, provided this can be demonstrated to be outweighed by the public benefits. The first paragraph seeks to ensure that *“All new development must take account of its impact on heritage assets, both designated and non-designated – seeking to protect and enhance them”*. This is overly restrictive on development which demonstrates public benefits, when taken in the context of national guidance.

PROPOSED ACTION: Revise the policy wording to meet the provisions of the NPPF by not placing undue restrictions upon development of public benefit.

Further Comments

Alongside the issues of general conformity raised above, the following points have been identified which may assist in the preparation of the plan. In this respect, they are intended to be helpful in the spirit of cooperation and are not made as objections to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

General Care should be taken to ensure that policies are precisely worded and easily understandable to guarantee that the policy’s intent is understood and translated into the development which occurs on the ground.

Some of the policy requirements appear to lack flexibility; for example, Policy E2 – Green Infrastructure states that *“Any development proposal must demonstrate through a comprehensive landscape plan how existing hedgerows, trees and vegetation have been retained and protected.”* This may prove an unreasonable requirement for some development proposals, such as first floor extensions above an existing ground floor.

Specific

Para 1.3 (pg8) – *“. . . alongside the Charnwood Local Plan, and . . .”*

As this is the first reference to the Charnwood plan in the document it may be worth using the full title which is the “Charnwood Local Plan 2011 to 2028 Core Strategy”.

Para 1.5 (pg8) – *“Thrussington is the most easterly Parish within the Borough of Charnwood.”* Thrussington is “one of” the most easterly parishes, South Croxton is the most easterly parish in the Borough.

Policy E4 – Landscape, Views and Conservation (pg16) – The first sentence in the policy refers to a list of views but this is currently absent from the text.

Policy B2 – New Employment Development (pg18) – The policy uses the phrase *“not impact negatively”* which lacks flexibility as a small negative impact may not always justify a refusal of a planning application. In relation to transport, for example, the NPPF (para 32) advises that *“Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.”* On this basis the lack of flexibility is contrary to the NPPF as it promotes refusal of an application whose impacts are less than severe.

Policy H1 – Infill Development (pg19) – The Borough Council is currently undertaking a review of the Limits to Development for settlements across the Borough, including Thrussington. To inform the process and ensure consistency a set of guidance was produced and circulated to parish councils for their comment. This is now being used to assist the Borough Council in the review of the boundaries. If the Neighbourhood Plan is intending a review of the settlement limits it would be useful if it was similarly informed; a copy of the guidance will be supplied with these comments.

Policy H1 – 3rd bullet – the wording *“for conversions of existing buildings (for example former farm buildings), not require substantial extension and/or alteration (where these are not already permitted development)”* – may unintentionally have the effect of meaning that a building couldn’t be converted if it needed a significant extension, which would otherwise be in keeping in scale and character; whilst demolition and erection of a new dwelling would meet the other three bullet points.

Policy T2 – Traffic Calming (pg20) – The policy states “Where required planning permission will be granted for the delivery of new public realm works”. The wording as it stands implies that all works will be permitted, even those which are contrary to other policies or material considerations.

Policy D1 – Protection of Heritage Assets (pg25) – The policy requires that “Development must seek to preserve and enhance the conservation area . . .” It will not be possible in all instances for development to enhance the conservation area. To recognise this fact the policy wording should be adapted to read “and where possible enhance”.

The Borough Council has also identified two locally listed buildings, Thrussington Mill and Homestead Farm buildings, and it may be worth referring to these in the supporting Explanatory text to the Design, Heritage and Character section.

Policy D2 – Design and Development Character (pg26) – The policy refers to “the relevant section of the Character Assessment”; it would be useful to identify where the Character Assessment can be found.

Appendix B – Site 10 – Description – Typo – “Area”

COMMENTS END

We would be more than happy to explain further any of the comments made above and consider alternative wording to overcome the conformity issues r

SPORT ENGLAND COMMENTS IN FULL

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above neighbourhood plan.

Government planning policy, within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), identifies how the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Encouraging communities to become more physically active through walking, cycling, informal recreation and formal sport plays an important part in this process. Providing enough sports facilities of the right quality and type in the right places is vital to achieving this aim. This means that positive planning for sport, protection from the unnecessary loss of sports facilities, along with an integrated approach to providing new housing and employment land with community facilities is important.

It is essential therefore that the neighbourhood plan reflects and complies with national planning policy for sport as set out in the NPPF with particular reference to Pars 73 and 74. It is also important to be aware of Sport England’s statutory consultee role in protecting playing fields and the presumption against the loss of playing field land. Sport England’s playing fields policy is set out in our Planning Policy Statement: ‘A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England’.

<http://www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy>

Sport England provides guidance on developing planning policy for sport and further information can be found via the link below. Vital to the development and implementation of planning policy is the evidence base on which it is founded.

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/forward-planning/>

Sport England works with local authorities to ensure their Local Plan is underpinned by robust and up to date evidence. In line with Par 74 of the NPPF, this takes the form of assessments of need and strategies for indoor and outdoor sports facilities. A neighbourhood planning body should look to see if the relevant local authority has prepared a playing pitch strategy or other indoor/outdoor sports facility strategy. If it has then this could provide useful evidence for the neighbourhood plan and save the neighbourhood planning body time and resources gathering their own evidence. It is important that a neighbourhood plan reflects the recommendations and actions set out in any such strategies, including those which may specifically relate to the neighbourhood area, and that any local investment opportunities, such as the Community Infrastructure Levy, are utilised to support their delivery.

Where such evidence does not already exist then relevant planning policies in a neighbourhood plan should be based on a proportionate assessment of the need for sporting provision in its area. Developed in consultation with the local sporting and wider community any assessment should be used to provide key recommendations and deliverable actions. These should set out what provision is required to ensure the current and future needs of the community for sport can be met and, in turn, be able to support the development and implementation of planning policies. Sport England’s guidance on assessing needs may help with such work.

<http://www.sportengland.org/planningtoolsandguidance>

If new or improved sports facilities are proposed Sport England recommend you ensure they are fit for purpose and designed in accordance with our design guidance notes.

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/>

Any new housing developments will generate additional demand for sport. If existing sports facilities do not have the capacity to absorb the additional demand, then planning policies should look to ensure that new sports facilities, or improvements to existing sports facilities, are secured and delivered. Proposed actions to meet the demand should accord with any approved local plan or neighbourhood plan policy for social infrastructure, along with priorities resulting from any assessment of need, or set out in any playing pitch or other indoor and/or outdoor sports facility strategy that the local authority has in place.

In line with the Government’s NPPF (including Section 8) and its Planning Practice Guidance (Health and wellbeing section), links below, consideration should also be given to how any new development, especially for new housing, will provide opportunities for people to lead healthy lifestyles and create healthy communities. Sport England’s Active Design guidance can be used to help with this when developing planning policies and developing or assessing individual proposals.

Active Design, which includes a model planning policy, provides ten principles to help ensure the design and layout of development encourages and promotes participation in sport and physical activity. The guidance, and its accompanying checklist, could also be used at the evidence gathering stage of developing a neighbourhood plan to help undertake an assessment of how the design and layout of the area currently enables people to lead active lifestyles and what could be improved.

NPPF Section 8: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/8-promoting-healthy-communities>

PPG Health and wellbeing section: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing>

Sport England's Active Design Guidance: <https://www.sportengland.org/activedesign>

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND SELECTED COMMENT

Highways England has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). It is our role to maintain the safe and efficient operation of the SRN whilst acting as a delivery partner to national economic growth. In relation to the Thruslington Neighbourhood Plan, Highways England's principal interest is safeguarding the operation of the A46 which routes approximately 1 mile to the west of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

We understand that a Neighbourhood Plan is required to be in conformity with relevant national and Borough-wide planning policies. Accordingly, the Neighbourhood Plan for Thruslington is required to be in conformity with the adopted Charnwood Local Plan (CLP) and this is acknowledged within the document.

We note that the Thruslington Parish is defined in the CLP as an "other settlement" with only small scale development planned to come forward across the Neighbourhood Plan area. Whilst a specific housing figure for Thruslington is not set out, it is expected that the small scale nature of planned development growth will have no significant impacts on the operation of the A46.

N GREEN LCC Full comments

Leicestershire County Council is supportive of the Neighbourhood plan process and welcome being included in this consultation.

Overall Comments

No reference is made to housing allocation numbers, although the Local Plan will identify proposed housing numbers, is the community open to more housing providing it meets their requirements?

Highways

General Comments

The County Council recognises that residents may have concerns about traffic conditions in their local area, which they feel may be exacerbated by increased traffic due to population, economic and development growth.

Like very many local authorities, the County Council's budgets are under severe pressure. It must therefore prioritise where it focuses its reducing resources and increasingly limited funds. In practice, this means that the County Highway Authority (CHA), in general, prioritises its resources on measures that deliver the greatest benefit to Leicestershire's residents, businesses and road users in terms of road safety, network management and maintenance. Given this, it is likely that highway measures associated with any new development would need to be fully funded from third party funding, such as via Section 278 or 106 (S106) developer contributions. I should emphasise that the CHA is generally no longer in a position to accept any financial risk relating to/make good any possible shortfall in developer funding.

To be eligible for S106 contributions proposals must fulfil various legal criteria. Measures must also directly mitigate the impact of the development e.g. they should ensure that the development does not make the existing highway conditions any worse if considered to have a severe residual impact. They cannot unfortunately be sought to address existing problems.

Where potential S106 measures would require future maintenance, which would be paid for from the County Council's funds, the measures would also need to be assessed against the County Council's other priorities and as such may not be maintained by the County Council or will require maintenance funding to be provided as a commuted sum.

With regard to public transport, securing S106 contributions for public transport services will normally focus on larger developments, where there is a more realistic

prospect of services being commercially viable once the contributions have stopped i.e. they would be able to operate without being supported from public funding.

The current financial climate means that the CHA has extremely limited funding available to undertake minor highway improvements. Where there may be the prospect of third party funding to deliver a scheme, the County Council will still normally expect the scheme to comply with prevailing relevant national and local policies and guidance, both in terms of its justification and its design; the Council will also expect future maintenance costs to be covered by the third party funding. Where any measures are proposed that would affect speed limits, on-street parking restrictions or other Traffic Regulation Orders (be that to address existing problems or in connection with a development proposal), their implementation would be subject to available resources, the availability of full funding and the satisfactory completion of all necessary Statutory Procedures.

Flood Risk Management

The County Council are fully aware of flooding that has occurred within Leicestershire and its impact on residential properties resulting in concerns relating to new developments. LCC in our role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) undertake investigations into flooding, review consent applications to undertake works on ordinary watercourses and carry out enforcement where lack of maintenance or

unconsented works has resulted in a flood risk. In April 2015 the LLFA also became a statutory consultee on major planning applications in relation to surface water drainage and have a duty to review planning applications to ensure that the onsite drainage systems are designed in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The LLFA also ensures that flood risk to the site is accounted for when designing a drainage solution.

The LLFA is not able to:

- Prevent development where development sites are at low risk of flooding or can demonstrate appropriate flood risk mitigation.
- Use existing flood risk to adjacent land to prevent development.
- Require development to resolve existing flood risk.

When considering flood risk within the development of a neighbourhood plan, the LLFA would recommend consideration of the following points:

- Locating development outside of river (fluvial) flood risk (Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea)).
- Locating development outside of surface water (pluvial) flood risk (Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map).
- Locating development outside of any groundwater flood risk by considering any local knowledge of groundwater flooding.
- How potential SuDS features may be incorporated into the development to enhance the local amenity, water quality and biodiversity of the site as well as manage surface water runoff.

- Watercourses and land drainage should be protected within new developments to prevent an increase in flood risk.

All development will be required to restrict the discharge and retain surface water on site in line with current government policies. This should be undertaken through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Appropriate space allocation for SuDS features should be included within development sites when considering the housing density to ensure that the potential site will not limit the ability for good SuDS design to be carried out. Consideration should also be given to blue green corridors and how they could be used to improve the biodiversity and amenity of new developments, including benefits to surrounding areas.

Often ordinary watercourses and land drainage features (including streams, culverts and ditches) form part of development sites. The LLFA recommend that existing watercourses and land drainage (including watercourses that form the site boundary) are retained as open features along their original flow path, and are retained in public open space to ensure that access for maintenance can be achieved. This should also be considered when looking at housing densities within the plan to ensure that these features can be retained.

LCC in our role as LLFA will object to anything contrary to LCC policies.

For further information it is suggested reference is made to the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), Sustainable drainage systems: Written statement - HCWS161 (December 2014) and the Planning Practice Guidance webpage.

Planning

Developer Contributions

If there is no specific policy on Section 106 developer contributions/planning obligations within the draft Neighbourhood Plan, it would be prudent to consider the inclusion of a developer contributions/planning obligations policy, along similar lines to those shown for example in the Draft North Kilworth NP and the draft Great Glen NP albeit adapted to the circumstances of your community. This would in general be consistent with the relevant District Council's local plan or its policy on planning obligations in order to mitigate the impacts of new development and enable appropriate local infrastructure and service provision in accordance with the relevant legislation and regulations, where applicable.

www.northkilworth.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/nk-draft-low-resolution-1.pdf

www.greatglen.leicestershireparishcouncils.org/uploads/175670305aeaf48650823074.pdf

Mineral & Waste Planning

The County Council is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority; this means the council prepares the planning policy for minerals and waste development and also makes decisions on mineral and waste development.

Although neighbourhood plans cannot include policies that cover minerals and waste development, it may be the case that your neighbourhood contains an existing or planned minerals or waste site. The County Council can provide information on these operations or any future development planned for your neighbourhood.

You should also be aware of Mineral Consultation Areas, contained within the adopted Minerals Local Plan and Mineral and Waste Safeguarding proposed in the new Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Plan. These proposed safeguarding areas and existing Mineral Consultation Areas are there to ensure that non-waste and non-minerals development takes place in a way that does not negatively affect mineral resources or waste operations. The County Council can provide guidance on this if your neighbourhood plan is allocating development in these areas or if any proposed neighbourhood plan policies may impact on minerals and waste provision.

Education

Whereby housing allocations or preferred housing developments form part of a Neighbourhood Plan the Local Authority will look to the availability of school places within a two mile (primary) and three mile (secondary) distance from the development. If there are not sufficient places then a claim for Section 106 funding will be requested to provide those places.

It is recognised that it may not always be possible or appropriate to extend a local school to meet the needs of a development, or the size of a development would yield a new school. However, in the changing educational landscape, the Council retains a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient places are available in good schools within its area, for every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one.

Property

Strategic Property Services

No comment at this time.

Adult Social Care

It is suggested that reference is made to recognising a significant growth in the older population and that development seeks to include bungalows etc of differing tenures to accommodate the increase. This would be in line with the draft Adult Social Care Accommodation Strategy for older people which promotes that people should plan ahead for their later life, including considering downsizing, but recognising that people's choices are often limited by the lack of suitable local options.

Environment

With regard to the environment and in line with the Government's advice, Leicestershire County Council (LCC) would like to see Neighbourhood Plans cover all aspects of the natural environment including climate change, the landscape, biodiversity, ecosystems, green infrastructure as well as soils, brownfield sites and agricultural land.

Climate Change

The County Council through its Environment Strategy and Carbon Reduction Strategy is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Leicestershire and increasing Leicestershire's resilience to the predicted changes in climate. Neighbourhood Plans should in as far as possible seek to contribute to and support a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the county's resilience to climate change.

Landscape

The County Council would like to see the inclusion of a local landscape assessment taking into account Natural England's Landscape character areas; LCC's Landscape and Woodland Strategy and the Local District/Borough Council landscape character assessments. We would recommend that Neighbourhood Plans should also consider the street scene and public realm within their communities, further advice can be found in the latest 'Streets for All East Midlands' Advisory Document (2006) published by English Heritage.

Biodiversity

The Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006 places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their duties, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) clearly outlines the importance of sustainable development alongside the core principle that planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Neighbourhood Plans should therefore seek to work in partnership with other agencies to develop and deliver a strategic approach to protecting and improving the natural environment based on local evidence and priorities. Each Neighbourhood Plan should consider the impact of potential development on enhancing biodiversity and habitat connectivity such as hedgerows and greenways.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) can provide a summary of wildlife information for your Neighbourhood Plan area. This will include a map showing nationally important sites (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest); locally designated Wildlife Sites; locations of badger setts, great crested newt breeding ponds and bat roosts; and a list of records of protected and priority Biodiversity Action Plan species. These are all a material consideration in the planning process. If there has been a recent Habitat Survey of your plan area, this will also be included. LRERC is unable to carry out habitat surveys on request from a Parish Council, although it may be possible to add it into a future survey programme.

Contact: planningecology@leics.gov.uk, or phone 0116 305 4108

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure (GI) is a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life

benefits for local communities, (NPPF definition). As a network, GI includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, street trees, cemeteries/churchyards allotments and private gardens as well as streams, rivers, canals and other water bodies and features such as green roofs and living walls.

The NPPF places the duty on local authorities to plan positively for a strategic network of GI which can deliver a range of planning policies including: building a strong, competitive economy; creating a sense of place and promote good design; promoting healthier communities by providing greater opportunities for recreation and mental and physical health benefits; meeting the challenges of climate change and flood risk; increasing biodiversity and conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Looking at the existing provision of GI networks within a community can influence the plan for creating & enhancing new networks and this assessment can then be used to inform CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) schedules, enabling communities to potentially benefit from this source of funding.

Neighbourhood Plan groups have the opportunity to plan GI networks at a local scale to maximise benefits for their community and in doing so they should ensure that their Neighbourhood Plan is reflective of the relevant Local Authority Green Infrastructure strategy. Through the Neighbourhood Plan and discussions with the Local Authority Planning teams and potential Developers communities are well placed to influence the delivery of local scale GI networks.

Brownfield, Soils and Agricultural Land

The NPPF encourages the effective use of brownfield land for development, provided that it is not of high environmental/ecological value. Neighbourhood planning groups should check with DEFRA if their neighbourhood planning area includes brownfield sites. Where information is lacking as to the ecological value of these sites then the Neighbourhood Plan could include policies that ensure such survey work should be carried out to assess the ecological value of a brownfield site before development decisions are taken.

Soils are an essential finite resource on which important ecosystem services such as food production, are dependent on. They therefore should be enhanced in value and protected from adverse effects of unacceptable levels of pollution. Within the government's "Safeguarding our Soils" strategy, DEFRA have produced a code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites which could be helpful to neighbourhood planning groups in preparing environmental policies.

High quality agricultural soils should, where possible be protected from development and where a large area of agricultural land is identified for development then planning should consider using the poorer quality areas in preference to the higher quality areas.

Neighbourhood planning groups should consider mapping agricultural land classification within their plan to enable informed decisions to be made in the future. Natural England can provide further information and Agricultural Land classification.

Impact of Development on Civic Amenity Infrastructure

Neighbourhood planning groups should remain mindful of the interaction between new development applications in a district area and the Leicestershire County Council. The County's Waste Management team considers proposed developments on a case by case basis and when it is identified that a proposed development will have a detrimental effect on the local civic amenity infrastructure then appropriate projects to increase the capacity to off-set the impact have to be initiated. Contributions to fund these projects are requested in accordance with Leicestershire's Planning Obligations Policy and the Community Infrastructure Legislation Regulations.

Communities

Consideration of community facilities in the draft Plan would be welcomed. We would suggest where possible to include a review of community facilities, groups and allotments and their importance with your community. Consideration could also be given to policies that seek to protect and retain these existing facilities more generally, support the independent development of new facilities and relate to the protection of Assets of Community Value and provide support for any existing or future designations.

The identification of potential community projects that could be progressed would be a positive initiative.

Economic Development

We would recommend including economic development aspirations with your Plan, outlining what the community currently values and whether they are open to new development of small businesses etc.

Superfast Broadband

Although Policy E1 mentions Broadband we would recommend the inclusion of a separate policy.

High speed broadband is critical for businesses and for access to services, many of which are now online by default. Having a superfast broadband connection is no longer merely desirable, but is an essential requirement in ordinary daily life.

All new developments (including community facilities) should have access to superfast broadband (of at least 30Mbps) Developers should take active steps to incorporate superfast broadband at the pre-planning phase and should engage with telecoms providers to ensure superfast broadband is available as soon as build on the development is complete. Developers are only responsible for putting in place broadband infrastructure for developments of 30+ properties. Consideration for developers to make provision in all new houses regardless of the size of development should be considered.

Equalities

While we cannot comment in detail on plans, you may wish to ask stakeholders to bear the Council's Equality Strategy 2016-2020 in mind when taking your Neighbourhood Plan forward through the relevant procedures, particularly for engagement and consultation work. A copy of the strategy can be view at:

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2017/1/30/equality-strategy2016-2020.pdf

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