Nether Heyford Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2029

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Localism Act 2011 gives Parish Councils and other relevant bodies powers to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) to help guide development in their local areas. Once ‘made’, a Neighbourhood Plan becomes a statutory document forming part of the ‘Development Framework’ and sits alongside the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (adopted in 2014), the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan (adopted 2020), and since 2021, the West Northamptonshire Council policies. This means that any development applications will be determined in accordance with this plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Neighbourhood Area covers the whole of the Nether Heyford parish. It is a long established, well recognised and clearly defined area, entirely within the remit of Nether Heyford Parish Council (as the ‘qualifying body’). The parish incorporates the village of Nether Heyford, where the majority of residents live and which has a clear physical and social identity, together with the surrounding rural area. A steering group comprising Parish Councillors and local residents was established in June 2016 to progress work on the plan.

Public Consultation

In order to ensure that everyone who wanted to had an opportunity to share their thoughts on the aims and content of the Plan, a number of events, maildrops, face to face meetings and questionnaires have been used to maximise community input. Regular updates and feedback have been given via the village Prattler and the Neighbourhood Plan Website. An Open Day drew on the residents’ thoughts about the village, and a subsequent household survey was delivered to every property in the area. A Consultation Event presented results and shared information gathered, and an independent household needs survey and independent site assessments were undertaken. There were some postponements of meetings and communications due to the Covid Pandemic, although work continued to progress the Plan throughout.

Vision

By 2029, Nether Heyford will have retained and celebrated its historic rural village character, by protecting and enhancing the appeal and uniqueness of the Parish of Nether Heyford, and will have ensured that any housing development opportunities have been sustainable and appropriate to the identified housing need of villagers. It is a place where people want to and are enabled to live, work and contribute, now and in future generations.
What Villagers say they want the Neighbourhood Plan to Achieve

- To provide a mix of housing types including smaller homes for elderly villagers wishing to downsize and for young singles, couples or families needing their first home, in line with Nether Heyford’s identified housing needs
- To give preferential access to some new homes for people with a strong local connection
- To ensure that any new development is of the highest design and construction standards, that market and social housing are integrated and indistinguishable, and are of a design which is consistent with the identity, atmosphere, and character of the village
- To ensure a proportion of new housing is adaptable to changing circumstances of occupants, particularly those with challenging needs
- That any new development must be designed in attractive, environmentally friendly and innovative ways; ensuring that new housing is thermally highly efficient and, where possible, includes micro-generation
- To ensure that the design and location of new development both connects to and improves local waste and surface water management and is resilient to the effects of climate change and flooding
- That housing development up to 2029 should meet the needs of the village
- To support village services, shops, home-working, artisans and other businesses providing employment opportunities, including agriculture
- To care for the safety and well-being of all residents by promoting the introduction of traffic management and speed calming measures to reduce speeding and better protect pedestrians and cyclists
- To ensure the historic buildings and environmental heritage of the village are recognised, recorded and protected and that green spaces, green field boundaries and views into and out of the village (by roads, paths and canal) are protected and maintained for the benefit of future residents and the national heritage
- To ensure appropriate parking solutions which are sensitive to Nether Heyford’s unique character and needs (particularly regarding the school and shop access)
- To engage proactively with the regional and local providers in the development of rural health and social care initiatives
- To promote social inclusion throughout the village, with good community engagement and a sense of community identity
- To improve the leisure and recreation opportunities for residents of Nether Heyford of all ages by encouraging provision of open space and children’s play facilities, and protect existing assets such as the village hall and other community buildings and spaces used for community events
- To promote safe walking and cycle routes both within the village and to nearby settlements
- To ensure that development of any size does not have a detrimental impact on the current surface water management system
- To identify potential uses to which community infrastructure levy (C.I.L.) funds could be put
- To maintain, protect and develop existing assets and identify new assets that will benefit the community in the future
The Nether Heyford Neighbourhood Plan includes a range of policies which will have a wellbeing component, or will have an impact on the individual’s as well as the community’s wellbeing. Societal and personal well-being in the village is looking beyond what we produce, to areas such as health, relationships, education and skills, what we do, where we live, our finances and the environment. In order to maintain wellbeing as a theme throughout the plan, it can be used as a framework in decision making for any proposed changes within the NP, or for proposed changes by external parties regarding the village.

*Any proposal or change must demonstrate a positive impact on the wellbeing of villagers and the community of the Parish of Nether Heyford.*

### Housing & Development

Proposals for new dwellings within the Village Confin (Built Up Area Boundary), as defined in Map 1, or on sites allocated within this Neighbourhood Plan, will be supported in principle, subject to being in accordance with other policies in the Development Plan. Areas that are outside the Village Boundary or not designated within this plan are classed as open countryside. New dwellings within the open countryside will be strictly controlled and limited to rural exception dwellings, replacement dwellings, conversion of property, dwellings for rural workers and the construction of houses with exceptional design.

The built-up area boundary encloses potential development sites which have been identified and then assessed both indicatively (local process) and formally (independent process). The local process and evaluation were shared with villagers at the 2018 village fete, and also online, with posters, maps and displays. The formal assessment confirmed findings from the local assessment and discussions with villagers, to conclude three development sites (shown in blue Map 3) and one site (yellow) which is identified as a potential site for relocation of the village school and the creation of additional community facilities. The built up area boundary is shown in red.

1. The independent assessors suggest that Site SNC542 (see Map 1) is reduced to create a narrow strip sufficient for a small row of houses in the non-flood plain area of the plot (see Map 2).
2. Site SNC257 (see Map 1) is visually sensitive at this entrance to the village, and it is suggested that the site is reduced to provide a continuity from established homes on the eastern side of the plot, reflecting the density of housing opposite with sensitivity to the views afforded from current homes. This is the most popular site voted for by villagers for development.
3. Site OR317 (Map 1) A small development of new dwellings would appear part of a natural extension and continuation of the built form of Furnace Lane and would assimilate into the settlement pattern and character reasonably well. This site is currently garden land.
4. Site SNC310 (Map 1 and in yellow on Maps 2 and 3) Part site development, which would be an educationally-led allocation, to include community facilities and parking. A cooperative master plan as an overarching planning document defining spatial layout, involving all agencies, would be required to structure the site use and subsequent development.
Map 2 Village Confines and Potential Development Sites
Provision of New Education Facilities

This Plan allocates land off Bugbrooke Road, as shown in Maps 1, 2 and 3, for the following uses:

- Education to include the relocation of Bliss School
- Community Facilities

Limited housing would be supported where it is part of a masterplan agreed with the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority prior to the submission of an application which demonstrates that it would not prejudice the use of the site for educational or community uses.

Bliss School (including the open classroom), is shown at its current site in green, with the potential site for future development shown in yellow, on the map below.

The Assessment of Sites highlighted this site, which is currently leased for agricultural use, owned by the former Northamptonshire CC.

This plan supports the initiative which is led by Bliss School Board of Trustees, to relocate the existing school to provide facilities fit for purpose, to relocate the pre-school and provide integrated community facilities. Plans would include sufficient parking and drop-off space to resolve some of the parking issues identified during the consultation period. Should Bliss School be successful in relocating, development of the existing site will be supported provided that it respects the conservation status of the building and surrounds and contributes to the assessed local need.

Planning for the Future - Village Housing Need

It is not considered necessary to allocate significant tracts of land for housing development. The Local Plan states that development within South Northants has been met in the sustainable urban developments within Brackley and Towcester. Development in the rural areas is focussed on meeting the locally identified need.

There is an increasing ageing population in the village compared to South Northants as a whole. The village has 24.1% of people of 65 years old and above, compared to South Northants at 16.9% (2011). Historically, the village saw considerable expansion between the mid 60’s and the early 80’s, with house numbers...
increasing significantly. Many of the original occupiers of the properties of this period are of retirement age, many have raised families, and continue to live in those properties. Where appropriate, this Plan aims to support the movement of older people into smaller more manageable properties, releasing larger properties for families with people of employable age.

There is an identified need for 12 affordable rented homes, 6 shared ownership homes and some open market homes. 25 households identified that they would like to move home but remain in the village. 11 of these are deemed as suitably housed in their current accommodation, and not in ‘housing need’ as such. 17 of the 25 households would like to relocate to 2-bedroom bungalows in the village.

A number of respondents said they would be like to ‘self-build’ their next home. Site SNC257 (see Map 1) could be an ideal place to do so.

On average, 21 market homes are sold in the village each year. The need identified through the survey for open market housing could be met through these sales without a requirement for new build development. This would of course be dependent upon the type of homes sold, and the type required, e.g., the sale of large family homes would be unsuitable for those wishing to downsize to single storey accommodation and vice versa.

**Actions and Projects within the Village**

The Neighbourhood Plan also includes a range of actions and ideas that villagers have highlighted they would like to see happen or be involved with. These ideas are a great way to help in shaping the future of the village, and improving our facilities for everyone:

- Promote facilities for locals and tourists, e.g., history boards, maps for local walking
- Consider an emergency plan for the village
- Scope viability of access to the canal towpath for users of pushchairs, wheelchairs and varying disabilities
- Scope the possible attenuation of the Heyford Brook just south of the canal culvert with a balancing meadow/lake
- To establish a Community Orchard and Wildlife Area for the Parish of Nether Heyford (completed)
- Review on-street parking in the village
- Develop actions concerning speeding (particularly Furnace Lane)
- Parish Council to consider the formation of a Conservation Sub-Group of the council
- The Parish Council might consider periodically measuring wellbeing across the village, and set up a sub-group to manage the process
- Review the establishment of a bicycle network in the village
- Open a dialogue with health and social care providers about the needs identified in NHNP Survey
- Developing and maintaining support for expectant mothers
The Neighbourhood Plan also has policies that look at Heritage, Business & Employment, Environmentally Sustainable Design, the use of Garden Land, Conversion of Rural Buildings, Roads & Transport, Heritage Assets, Home Working and others.

The full version of the plan can be found online at:

http://netherheyfordneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/

Printed versions of the Neighbourhood Plan will be available to see in the local shop, pubs and at the village hall.

What happens next?

Neighbourhood planning regulations (Regulation 14) require the draft neighbourhood plan proposal to be the subject of a pre-submission consultation before it is submitted to the local authority for independent examination.

The Parish Council now undertake a period of consultation for 6 weeks.

Villagers and businesses around the Parish are invited to read the Plan and if they have any comments or suggestions, submit them to the Parish Clerk:

Mr Guy Ravine, 63 Furnace Lane, Nether Heyford, Northamptonshire, NN7 3JS

Comments can also be sent by email: netherheyfordparishcouncil@gmail.com

A form for comments can be found on the website above, which can be saved and sent electronically, or printed off and posted, or left with any member of the Parish Council. There will be some printed blank forms at all the places where the printed versions of the plan can be found.

The closing date for the Clerk to receive comments is Friday 12th November 2021.

All comments received by the end of the consultation period will be considered conscientiously by the Parish Council. All representations will be considered, but it is legitimate for the neighbourhood plan body to take a different view, and provide a rationale for their judgement to the external examiner.

Thanks everyone who have helped to bring the Neighbourhood Plan to this important stage. In particular, we give thanks for the oversight, vision and creativity that Sue Corner brought to the group before she was sadly lost to us and her family in 2020.