



FOXTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Submission Version

ABSTRACT

The Foxtton Neighbourhood Plan offers the chance for all residents and businesses to have their say on future development within the parish and influence how their neighbourhood evolves. By working together, we can ensure that the area develops in a way that meets the needs of everyone.

June 2016

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1. Introduction

Neighbourhood Plans

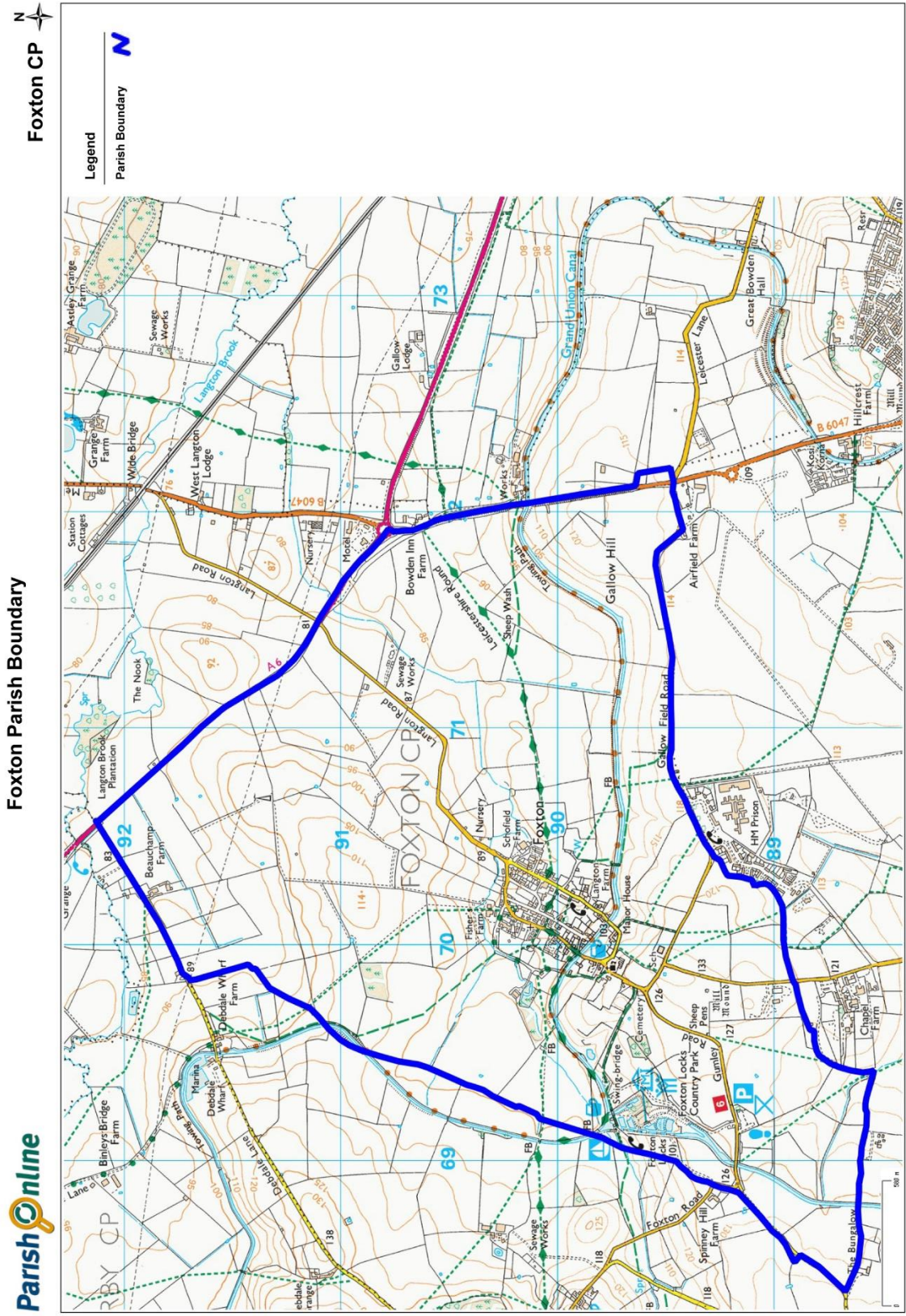
- 1.1 The 2011 Localism Act has given communities the right to draw up a Neighbourhood Development Plan. This right is aimed at giving local communities genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live. Decisions on planning applications must take account of neighbourhood plans.

The Foxton Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 1.2 The Foxton Neighbourhood Development Plan area comprises the parish of Foxton which is situated to the north-west of the town of Market Harborough in Harborough District, Leicestershire. The parish amounts to 663 hectares.
- 1.3 Foxton lies to the south-west side of the A6 on the Grand Union Canal. The resident population is 478 and there are 192 households (2011 Census).
- 1.4 Foxton was designated as a Neighbourhood Area on 29 October 2012. The Plan is being prepared by Foxton Parish Council. The Plan covers the period to 2031.
- 1.5 The Foxton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) website (<http://foxtonndp.weebly.com>) provides information and updates about the NDP preparation and its progress.

What we have done so far

- 1.6 In June 2014 the Foxton Neighbourhood Development Planning Committee staged a mini-exhibition to ask residents whether a Neighbourhood Development Plan should be prepared. In July 2014 a referendum was carried out with a turn-out of 28% of residents. Of those who responded, 75% voted 'yes' to continuing with the NDP.



Foxton Parish Boundary

Parish Online

Foxton CP

Legend
Parish Boundary

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- 1.7 Initial Consultation on key issues was undertaken in October 2014 in the form of a public exhibition.

Feedback from this event has helped identify the key issues that need to be addressed by the Neighbourhood Plan, development options and potential areas for protection.



Following the identification of additional development sites, this consultation was 'topped-up' in February 2015 with a short questionnaire survey of local residents.

- 1.8 Following this consultation, a questionnaire was designed to clarify residents' views on aspects of the previous feedback. Questionnaires were distributed in April 2015 to local households and all residents were encouraged to respond. There was a separate questionnaire for children aged 12 to 15 years old. 170 questionnaires were returned.
- 1.9 The questionnaire results helped us prepare a Pre-Submission Draft version of the Foxton Neighbourhood Development Plan. A summary of the Draft Plan was delivered to all premises within the Parish and 'drop in' session concerning the Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan took place in February 2016. A six-week pre-submission consultation period on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan ended on Monday 21 March 2016.
- 1.10 The comments received have been considered by Foxton Parish Council and used to amend the draft Neighbourhood Plan. A Consultation Statement, including a summary of all comments received and how these were considered, is available on the Neighbourhood Plan website: <http://foxtonndp.weebly.com>.

What happens next?

- 1.11 The Plan has now been submitted to Harborough District Council for publication and a further six-week public consultation will take place before it is sent to an Independent Examiner.
- 1.12 The Examiner will recommend that the Plan is submitted to a local referendum, is modified to meet the 'Basic Conditions' and then submitted to a referendum, or that the Plan is refused. Harborough District Council will arrange a referendum and, if the Plan is passed by a simple majority of those voting, the District Council will adopt it.
- 1.13 When the Plan is adopted, it will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. Harborough District Council will continue to be responsible for determining most planning applications, but in Foxton parish the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will be the basis for those decisions.

Sustainable Development

- 1.14 Our Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:
 - an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
 - a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

1.15 This Plan, taken as a whole, constitutes our view of what sustainable development in Foxton means in practice.

Key Issues

1.16 Feedback from community consultation has identified the key issues that the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan needs to address:

- The retention of Foxton's rural character
- Meeting housing needs
- Retaining key services and facilities
- The impact of vehicular traffic on village life
- The development of Foxton Locks

1.17 These are explored in greater detail in the following chapters.

Vision

1.18 In setting out our aims for the Neighbourhood Plan it is vital to consider how the area should be at the end of the plan period. Our plan needs to be aspirational, but realistic.



Objectives

1.19 Below are the objectives that have provided the framework for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. They are derived from our vision:

- To conserve Foxton's character, history and local surroundings
- To protect the intrinsic character and beauty of Foxton's countryside

- To conserve and enhance Foxton's natural environment
- To conserve heritage assets
- To secure high quality design in new development
- To retain community facilities and services
- To make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and reduce the impact of vehicular traffic on resident's quality of life
- To support sustainable tourism within the parish

Implementation

- 1.20 There is no point in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan which cannot be delivered. To help implement the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan we have engaged key stakeholders at an early stage and identified what infrastructure is needed to support the plan.
- 1.21 Almost all development has some impact on the existing, and the need for new, infrastructure, services and amenities. Sometimes these impacts are detrimental and so it is only fair that new development pays a share of the cost of providing additional infrastructure.
- 1.22 Foxton will also contribute. Having drawn up this Neighbourhood Plan, if Harborough District Council adopts a Community Infrastructure Levy, Foxton Parish Council will receive 25% of any planning levy charged on new developments in the area and this will be used to help implement our proposals.

2. Rural Character

2.1 The village of Foxton is set in attractive farmland south of the A6, 3 miles north-west of Market Harborough and 3 miles south of the Kibworths. The village slopes down from the church in the south to a small brook that skirts the north of the village. The Grand Union Canal cuts across the southern part of the village.



2.2 The main part of the village lies to the north of the canal and is broadly comprised of three parallel

streets, Swingbridge Street, Middle Street and Main Street with cross connecting roads, tracks and paths.

2.3 One of the parish's key features is the Grand Union Canal which cuts through the village east-west (the Market Harborough line) and north-south (the Leicester line), with the two intersecting at Foxton Junction which lies to the south-west of the village and is the site of both Foxton Locks and the remains of Foxton Inclined Plane.

Countryside

2.4 The parish lies within the Laughton Hills Landscape Character Area which is one of the most sensitive landscapes in the Harborough district. The landscape is characterised by high hills predominantly used for grazing, which flatten out to arable areas towards the south. Medium sized fields are divided by mature hedgerows with boundary trees throughout the area. In places some ridge and furrow fields are still apparent. Views are open but limited in extent across the area due to the rolling topography. In general terms it is an area that is unlikely to be able to accommodate development without degradation of the existing landscape.

- 2.5 The rural setting to Foxton is highly valued by local people so, to prevent the sprawl of development into the countryside and to protect the landscape setting of the village, we have identified Limits to Development. Land outside Limits to Development will be protected from housing development. In the Countryside development will be limited to agriculture, forestry, recreation, tourism and other developments that require a rural location.

Policy F1: Countryside

The Countryside (land outside the Foxton Limits to Development as defined on the Policies Map) will be protected for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and to ensure it may be enjoyed by all. Development in the Countryside will be limited to that which requires a rural location.

Renewable Energy

- 2.6 Increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to make sure the UK has a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change and stimulate investment in new jobs and businesses. Planning has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in locations where the local environmental impact is acceptable.
- 2.7 The landscape in Foxton parish is one of the most sensitive landscapes in Harborough district and is unable to accommodate wind turbines without degradation of the existing landscape. Large-scale solar farms can also have a negative impact on the local landscape. Large-scale renewable energy development is also unsuitable as we do not believe that people will want to visit and spend their money in an area they regard as spoiled by wind or solar farms.
- 2.8 Many microgeneration technologies projects, such as solar photovoltaic and air source heat pumps are often permitted development which means they do not require planning permission providing certain limits and conditions are met.

Policy F2: Renewable Energy

Foxton parish is an unsuitable location for wind turbine developments.

Solar farms will be permitted where:

- A. They are on previously developed and non-agricultural land;
- B. They are located outside the Foxton Green Zone;
- C. There is no significant adverse visual impact on the landscape. Particular consideration will be given to the following key viewpoints: Foxton Locks, Foxton village, Grand Union Canal, public roads and footpaths; and
- D. The installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use.

Tranquillity

- 2.9 Tranquillity is a critical part of local quality of life. Tranquillity is important for our mental and physical well-being but it is also important to the local economy – because one of the main reasons why people visit Foxton is to head out of towns and cities to ‘get away from it all’.
- 2.10 But getting away from it all is becoming harder and harder to do. Aircraft, cars, roads and major building developments are all eroding the tranquillity which means so much to residents and visitors alike.
- 2.11 Tranquillity is not just about noise – it also covers light. Dark, star-filled night skies are an important part of tranquillity, but light pollution is an increasing problem. With the exception of Park Close and Swedish Close there is no street lighting within the village but security lights and floodlights all break into the darkness, lighting up the surrounding area. Some of this light is necessary, in order to keep people safe – but much of it is wasting energy, increasing light pollution and disrupting local people’s sleep. Our quality of life is being reduced by light pollution.

Policy F3: Tranquillity

Development that reduces local tranquillity will not be supported. In particular the following will be discouraged:

- A. Developments that generate significant levels of traffic;
- B. Industrial, commercial, leisure, recreation and sporting developments that introduce new sources of noise, particularly night-time noise;
- C. Developments requiring floodlights, security lights and streetlights. Planning conditions will be applied to ensure that such installations do not form part of new developments.

Foxton Green Zone

- 2.12 The character of the local countryside is under threat. Just one mile to the south-east of Foxton Village there is a proposal to build nearly 1,500 dwellings at Airfield Farm and adjoining land, Market Harborough. To the west of the village, Foxton Locks is a growing tourist destination.
- 2.13 The countryside between these places is particularly vulnerable and we are keen to ensure that its undeveloped character and beauty is maintained. The Foxton Green Zone aims to check the unrestricted sprawl of Market Harborough and the expansion of tourism development associated with Foxton Locks towards the village of Foxton. It will also safeguard the countryside from encroachment and preserve the setting and special character of Foxton village.

Policy F4: Foxton Green Zone

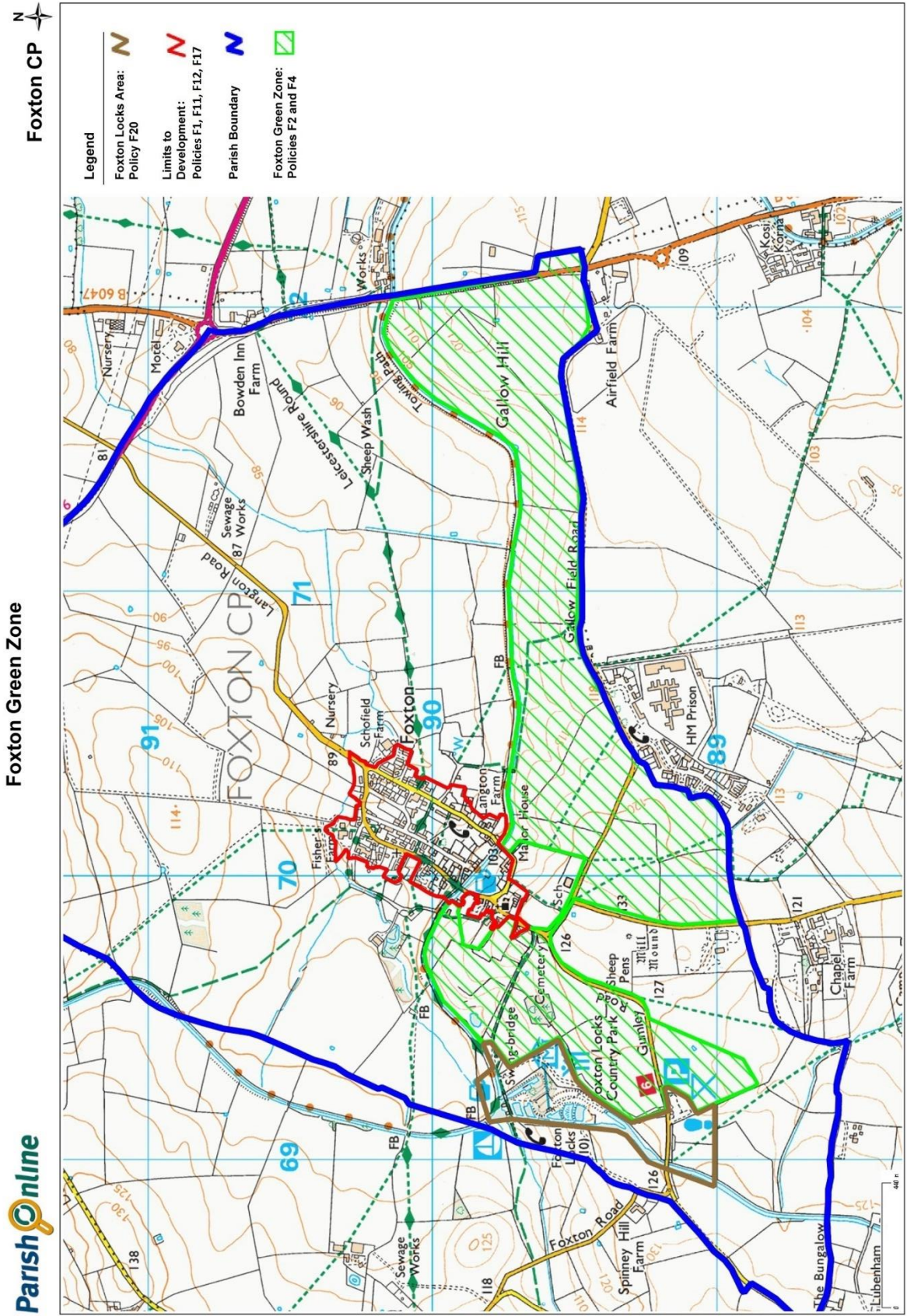
The open and undeveloped character of the Foxton Green Zone, as defined on the Policies Map, will be retained. The construction of new buildings and the development of new caravan (including lodges) sites will not be supported unless it preserves the openness of the Green Zone and does not conflict with its purposes.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 2.14 Although there are no nationally designated ecology sites, the canal along with the side ponds at Foxton Locks are Local Wildlife sites. Local Wildlife Sites are important reservoirs of rare, local and declining native species and are the best examples of typical Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland habitats. The mature hedgerows and woodland areas in the area are likely to be of at least local ecological value due to the species they can support, including ground flora and bird species.
- 2.15 Protected/ notable species that may be found in the Foxton area include birds, badgers, bats, otters, reptiles and amphibians.


Policy F5: Ecology and Biodiversity

Development should not harm the network of local ecological features and habitats. New development will be expected to maintain and enhance existing ecological corridors and landscape features (such as watercourses, hedgerows and tree-lines) for biodiversity.



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The Canal

- 2.16 The Grand Union Canal north from London eventually reaches Norton Junction, some 2 miles to the east of Braunston Tunnel, where the main line of the canal continues west towards Birmingham.
- 
- 2.17 At Norton Junction the 'Leicester Line' of the Grand Union branches off right and commences its journey northwards towards Leicester and Loughborough. Ultimately this branch of the Grand Union connects to the River Trent at Trent Lock.
- 2.18 The link from Norton Junction to Foxton opened in 1814, providing a direct route from the East Midlands coalfield and industrial towns to London.
- 2.19 Foxton Locks are ten canal locks consisting of two "staircases" each of five locks. The Grade II* listed Locks are the largest flight of staircase locks on the English canal system. In 1900 an inclined plane was built to bypass the ten locks and speed the passage of the boats. Traffic grew slightly, but not by enough to make working the Foxton incline economic, and in 1910 it was closed and traffic reverted to using the locks.
- 2.20 The Locks and Inclined Plane are now a very popular tourist attraction. The future development of Foxton Locks is looked at more closely in Section 6.
- 2.21 The Grand Union Canal is identified in the 6c's (Derby, Derbyshire, Leicester, Leicestershire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire) Green Infrastructure Strategy as an important component in the network of natural spaces which links Market Harborough to south Leicester, Narborough, Earl Shilton and Barwell. The canal is also highly valued by local people as a recreation route, heritage asset and as a wildlife corridor. The canal is an integral part of the character of the village.

2.22 The Grand Union Canal from Welford to Aylestone Bridge in Leicester was designated as a Conservation Area by Leicestershire County Council in October 2000. In general the Canal Conservation Area follows the hedge/ boundary line of the towpath on one side of the canal and a nominal five metre strip on the other side. The area widens to include canal related features such as side ponds, ramps and bridges and associated earthworks. It also includes areas of economic activity as wharves and lime kilns. At Foxton Locks it widens substantially.

Policy F6: The Canal

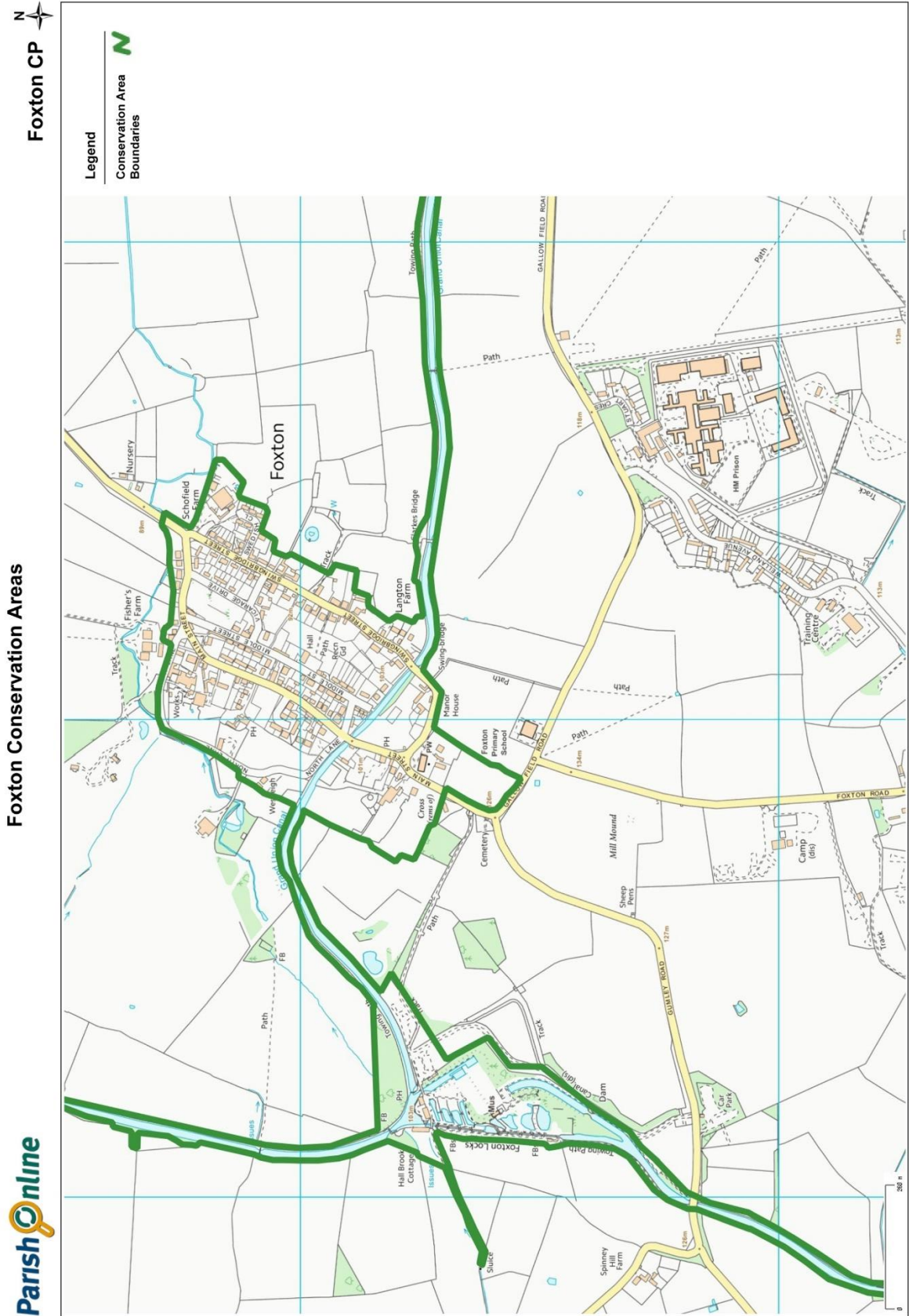
The Grand Union Canal is to be conserved as a heritage asset, a key strategic Green Infrastructure and wildlife corridor, recreation and tourism resource, so that it can be enjoyed for its contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. It is a key feature that contributes to the character of Foxton and the design of new development in the vicinity should not detract from it.

Heritage

2.23 The village has previously been known as Foxestone and Foxtone. It is believed to have developed these names from the large number of foxes which inhabit the area. Foxton was originally a hill-top settlement, thought to have



been founded in Saxon times with a landscape fashioned in the ice-age. The village gradually moved down the valley side as a farming community, working on the open three field system until it was enclosed in 1770. Foxton remained virtually unchanged between Norman times until the end of the 18th century when the canal arrived from Leicester, cutting through the village. Agriculture began to diminish as improved communication and alternative job opportunities meant that people left their village to work and in the bringing of trade and industry via the canal.



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2.24 The village is built almost entirely of red brick and most of the cottages date from the 19th century. There are several older houses in Swingbridge Street including some brick cottages with a date tablet of 1730 and the former manse, an 18th century cottage with later additions. Two substantial 19th-century houses in the same area are the Grange and the Chestnuts, both standing in their own grounds. There are 6 pairs of Council houses dating from before the Second World War, 3 in Middle Street and 3 at the lower end of Swingbridge Street. Near the latter were two pairs of Swedish timber houses, erected in 1946 - although only one remains - and 19 brick Council houses built between 1949 and 1952. Several privately-owned bungalows in the centre of the village were completed in 1959. The village hall and the recreation ground occupy a large site between Middle Street and Swingbridge Street.

2.25 Heritage assets include buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of their heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets, such as conservation areas and listed buildings and assets identified by the neighbourhood plan (including local listed buildings).

Conservation Area

2.26 Foxton Conservation Area was designated in 1975 and updated in 2006. The Conservation Area embraces almost the whole of the village within the oval of roads (Main Street and Swingbridge Street). It also includes all the land between Main Street and North Lane, a back lane completing the village pattern. To the south of the canal, it includes the Manor House and its extensive grounds as well as the Black Horse Public House, which was rebuilt in 1900 on the site of an older inn, the church and churchyard to the far south.

2.27 Main Street and Swingbridge Street cross the canal via a hump-backed bridge and swing-bridge respectively. Land south of the canal is less densely developed than that to the north and rises noticeably. The medieval Church of St. Andrew, standing in its churchyard, overlooks the village from its prominent position near the top of the hill. Between it and the canal are the mature gardens and grounds of the 18th century stone and red brick Manor House and outbuildings. The Manor House itself fronts Swingbridge Street.

2.28 The main part of the village lies to the north of the canal and comprises three parallel streets, Swingbridge Street, Middle Street and Main Street, with cross connecting roads, tracks and footpaths. Swingbridge Street, which crosses the canal by a low Swingbridge, has several older houses and farmsteads. It provides a vivid historical contrast between 17th and 18th century red brick houses to the east of the street and inter and post-war public housing to the west. The older part of this street is enhanced by numerous mature garden trees. The southern end of Middle Street turns abruptly at one end and re-joins Main Street just north of the canal. Middle Street contains some older cottages; whilst Woodgate (the canal end spur off Middle Street) includes the former 19th Century village school and an infill of small-scale housing of 1991. Main Street again is a mix of older buildings, including the former Baptist Chapel and The Old Court House and more contemporary buildings including Farmyard House.

Listed Buildings

2.29 There are 16 structures in Foxton parish listed for their special architectural or historic interest. Six of these relate to Foxton Locks and the canal - they include bridges, Lock Keepers cottages, a milepost and the locks themselves. The inclined plane is a Scheduled Monument. In February 2010, Harborough District Council signed a Heritage Partnership Agreement (HPA) with British Waterways, English Heritage and management of the Foxton Locks site.

2.30 In the village itself, the Church of Saint Andrew is listed along with tombstones and mud wall. Most of the remaining Listed Buildings are on Swingbridge Street- Schofield Farmhouse, Foxton Lodge, Bents Close, the Manor House and Langton Farmhouse. The Old Vicarage, Vicarage Drive and the former Foxton Board School and School Yard on Woodgate are also listed.

Locally Listed Buildings

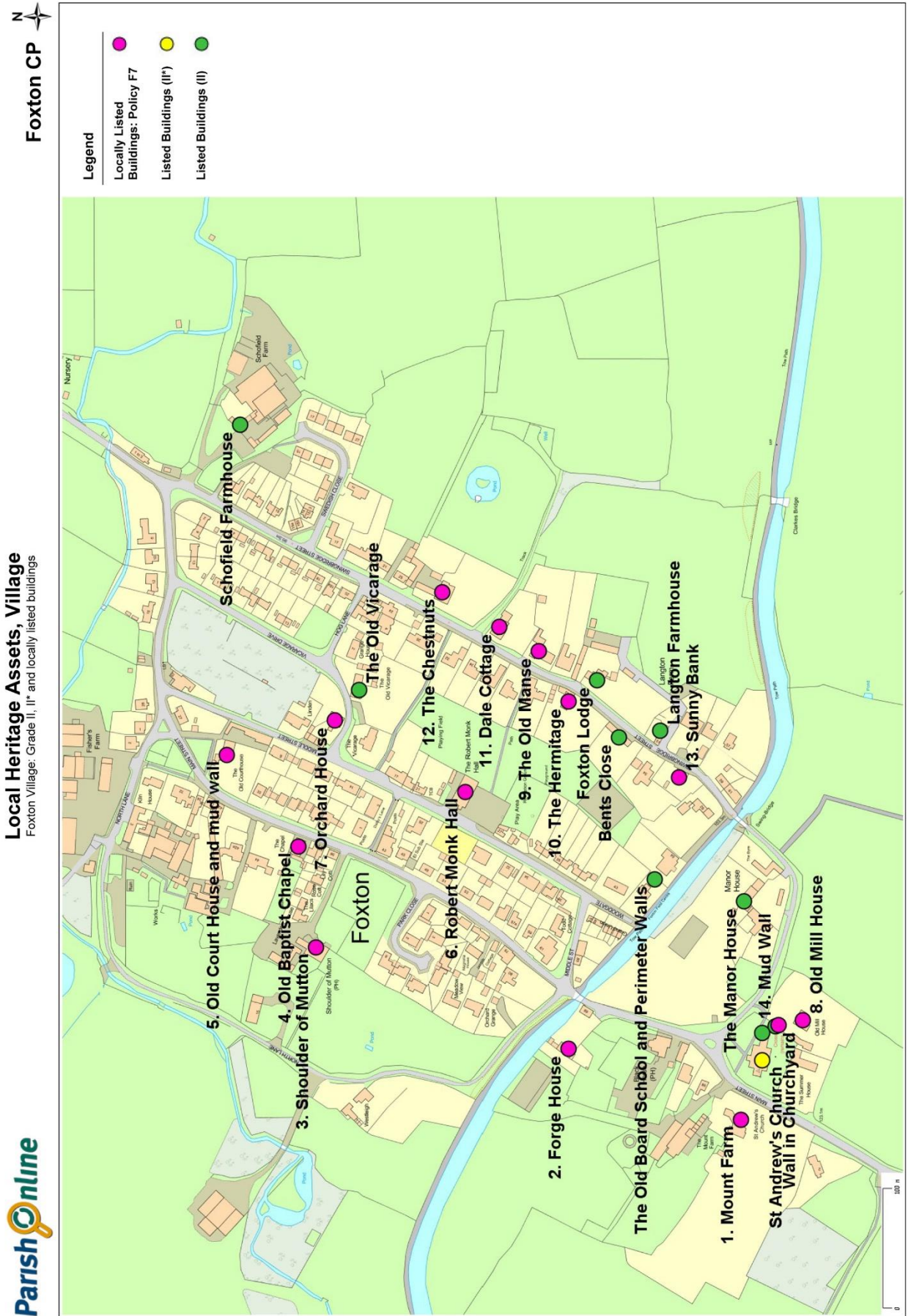
2.31 The Neighbourhood Plan has given local people their chance to give their views on local heritage. In addition to nationally designated heritage assets the previous version of the Village Design Guide identified other buildings and structures of local importance.



Policy F7: Local Heritage Assets

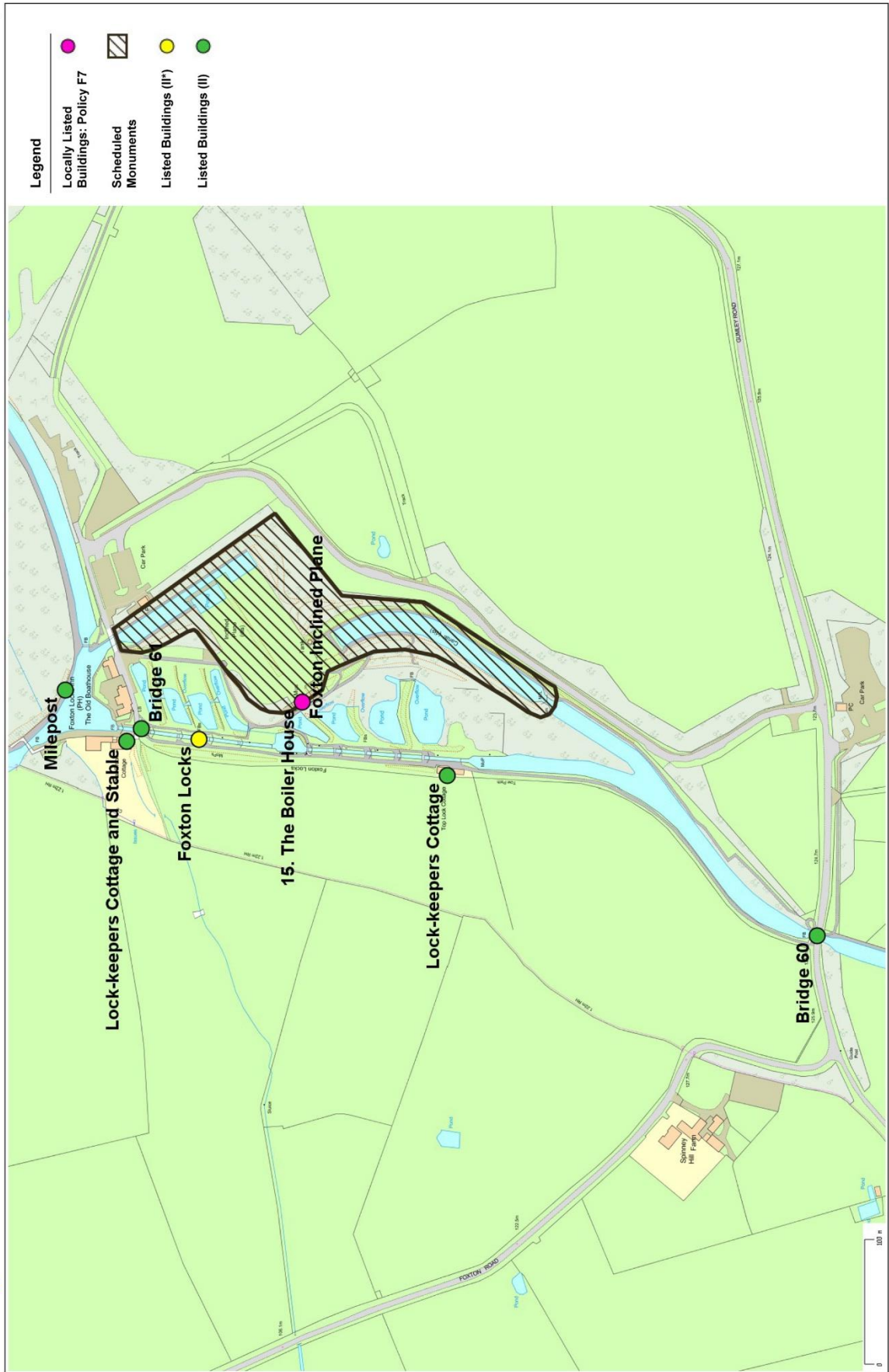
The following Local Heritage Assets (identified on the Policies Map) should be conserved and enhanced:

1. Mount Farm, Main Street
2. Forge House, Main Street
3. The Shoulder of Mutton Inn, Main Street
4. Old Baptist Chapel, Main Street
5. Old Court House and mud wall, Main Street
6. Robert Monk Hall, Middle Street
7. Orchard House, Vicarage Drive
8. Old Mill House, Swingbridge Street
9. The Old Manse, Swingbridge Street
10. The Hermitage, Swingbridge Street
11. Dale Cottage, Swingbridge Street
12. The Chestnuts, Swingbridge Street
13. Sunny Bank, Swingbridge Street
14. Mud Wall near St Andrew's Church
15. The Boiler House, Foxton Locks



Local Heritage Assets, Locks

Foxton Locks: Grade II, II* scheduled monuments and locally listed buildings



Design

- 2.32 We expect all development to contribute positively to the creation of well-designed buildings and spaces. Through good design we want to maintain and enhance the unique character of Foxton and create places that work well for both occupants and users, and are built to last.
- 2.33 The Foxton Village Design Statement (VDS), first published in 2007, has now been updated and is set out at Appendix 1. The revised VDS describes the distinctive character of Foxton and highlights the qualities valued by its residents. From these qualities, design principles, based on the distinctive local character of the village, have been drawn up to guide development.

Policy F8: Design

All new developments should reflect the distinctive character of Foxton and meet the requirements of the Foxton Village Design statement (Appendix 1).

Local Green Spaces

- 2.34 Within the village, buildings are interspersed by open areas that contribute positively to Foxton's character. These spaces consist of recreation areas, allotments, large garden areas and paddocks. The latter are notably between Main Street and North Lane. Another significant open area lies between Main Street and The Shoulder of Mutton Public House which is set back from Main Street and at the edge of the fringe of paddocks. This space provides a setting for the Shoulder of Mutton and links it to the rest of the village as well as providing views of the open countryside beyond. It is also used for events such as Guy Fawkes bonfire nights and fetes.
- 2.35 By designating these spaces as Local Green Space, we will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.

Policy F9: Local Green Spaces

The Local Green Spaces identified on the Policies Map will be protected and enhanced. Development which is harmful to these Local Green Spaces will not be supported.

Trees

- 2.36 Foxton has long had a tradition of tree planting dating from early times when many of the village enclosures were planted as

orchards. A planting of oak trees for the Royal Navy took place in the late 18th century as part of a national campaign instigated by Admiral Rodney. Several of these survive in the village as mature specimens, particularly on the Swingbridge Street side.

The tradition was continued in more recent times by plantings in 1973 and an avenue of oaks along the Langton Road was planted to mark the beginning of the new millennium.

- 2.37 Most of the village lies within a Conservation area and as a consequence, any tree over 75mm in diameter at 1.5m above ground level is given automatic protection. No cutting, removal, wilful damage or destruction of such trees is allowed without giving prior notification to Harborough District Council. There are also a number of Tree Preservation orders covering trees in the village.

Policy F10: Trees

Planning permission will not be supported for developments which directly or indirectly threaten trees that make a significant contribution to the appearance of Foxton, the local street-scene or local amenity. Developments which have inadequate or inappropriate landscape proposals will not be supported. Trees to be retained on development sites must be appropriately protected during construction works. Where trees are to be felled, replacement tree planting will be required.

3. Housing

Housing Supply

- 3.1 The Foxton Neighbourhood Plan must support the strategic development needs set out in the Harborough Core Strategy, including policies for housing development. The Core Strategy identifies Foxton as a Selected Rural Village where development will be on a lesser scale and reflects the size and character of the village. The amount of housing development should also take account of the level of service provision, recent development and existing commitments.
- 3.2 Harborough District Council is currently preparing a new local plan to replace the Core Strategy and this may require more housing growth. The new Local Plan is likely to cover the period to 2031. Harborough District Council will take our Neighbourhood Plan into account in preparing the new local plan.
- 3.3 In spring 2015, we consulted local people on the appropriate level of housing development for Foxton. The Foxton Neighbourhood Development Planning Committee suggested that approximately 27 houses should be built over the Neighbourhood plan period up to 2031. This level of growth was supported by 81 (59%) of respondents. In setting this level of growth we have had regard to local build rates, the Harborough Core Strategy, the emerging Local Plan and local infrastructure capacity.
- 3.4 We have also been mindful of the proposal to build around 1,500 dwellings at Airfield Farm and adjoining land. The Airfield Farm sites lie to the north-west of Market Harborough adjacent to the main urban area, to the west of the B6047 Harborough Road to Leicester. Foxton village is just a mile to the north-west. The Airfield Farm development will give rise to significant changes to the area for years to come.

Table 1: Foxton Housing Commitments at 2015

Planning Application Reference	Address	Dwellings (net)	Status at 31 March 2015
08/01657/FUL (25/03/09), Revised Scheme 10/01274/FUL (11/11/10)	Land Adj 20 Vicarage Drive	1	Commenced
14/00241/FUL (16.04.2014)	The Old School	1	Commenced

Planning Application Reference	Address	Dwellings (net)	Status at 31 March 2015
14/00242/LBC (16.04.2014)	House, Woodgate		
13/01556/FUL (20.12.2013)	28 Middle Street	1	Commenced
10/00167/ETF (01/04/10), 11/01185/FUL (14/10/11)	The Manor House, Swingbridge Street	1	Not started
10/00155/FUL (11/03/10)	43 Main Street	1	Not started
14/00761/FUL (25.07.2014)	27 Main street	1	Not started

- 3.5 Of the 27 new homes we are planning for, there are already six houses in the pipeline as infill sites with planning permission (see above). This means we need to find sites for about 20 more.

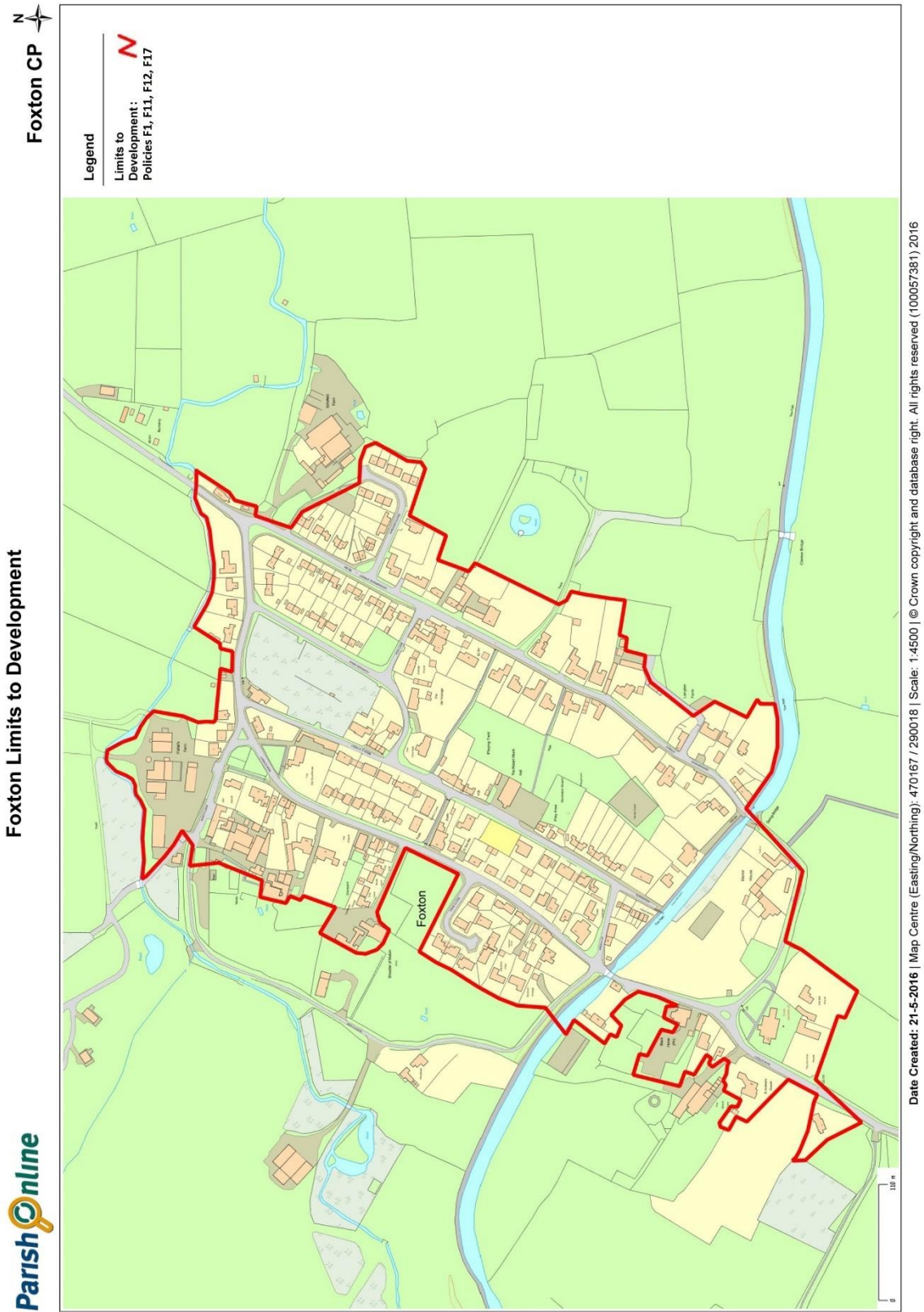
Policy F11: Housing Provision

The minimum housing provision for Foxton for the period to 2031 is 27 dwellings. This will be met by:

- A. Existing commitments;
- B. Development within the Foxton Limits to Development in accordance with Policy F12;
- C. The allocation of a housing site at Fisher's Farm, North Lane in accordance with Policy F13;
- D. The allocation of a housing site between Middle Street and Vicarage Drive in accordance with Policy F14; and
- E. The allocation of a housing site at the junction of Vicarage Drive and Hog Lane in accordance with Policy F15.

Infill Housing

- 3.6 There are concerns that continued 'garden grabbing' is having an adverse effect on the character of Foxton by reducing open spaces between buildings, robbing the community of green breathing space, safe places for children to play and havens for wildlife.
- 3.7 Local housing needs will be met by allocating land for housing, therefore we can place stricter controls on infill development to prevent the unwanted development of gardens.



Policy F12: Infill

Permission for housing development within the Foxton Limits to Development, as defined on the Policies Map, will be supported if the development:

- A. Is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings;
- B. Protects important features such as traditional walls, hedgerows and trees;
- C. Does not result in the loss of garden space;
- D. Does not significantly adversely affect the amenities of residents in the area, including daylight/sunlight, privacy, air quality, noise and light pollution; and
- E. Has safe and suitable access to the site for all people.

Fisher's Farm, North Lane

3.8 In spring 2015, we asked local residents their views on new housing site options. The redevelopment of the Fisher's Farm site had the support of 63 residents with 16 against and 56 having no strong opinion.

3.9 The redevelopment of the farm buildings means that new housing can be provided without the loss of open spaces within the village or the extension of the settlement into the surrounding countryside.

Redevelopment offers the opportunity to replace utilitarian farm buildings with well-designed housing which meets local needs and will remove farm traffic, noise and dust from the village.

3.10 The site is bounded to the north by Foxton Brook which is a 'main river'. Any development in, on, over or within 9 metres from the top of the bank of this watercourse will require the Environment Agency's prior written consent. The north-west area of the site is impacted by Flood Zones 2 and 3, therefore the site will be subject to passing the sequential test. The development of this site may require improvements to the existing foul sewerage network.



Policy F13: Fisher's Farm, North Lane

Some 0.83 hectares of land at Fisher's Farm, to the north of North Lane, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for housing development. Housing development will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- A. The development provides for around 10-12 dwellings;
- B. At least 40% of these shall be Affordable Houses unless it can be demonstrated that this requirement would make the development undeliverable;
- C. The layout and design of the site should incorporate the construction of a row of terraced and/or semi-detached, two and three bedroom houses along the southern frontage to the site;
- D. A new footway is constructed along the north side of North Lane along the full frontage of the development providing a safe, continuous pedestrian route to the village shop;
- E. The existing footpath shall be retained;
- F. Improvements to the junction of North Lane and Main Street;
- G. A landscaping scheme should be implemented to provide for an improvement in biodiversity and include the retention or replacement of the hedge along the southern boundary of the site;
- H. The site is to be completely cleared before development commences and any contamination present should be safely remediated prior to any development of the site;
- I. A Flood Risk Assessment will be required to address flood risk and surface water disposal from the site; and
- J. A surface water drainage solution will need to be identified and implemented prior to the construction of hard standing areas this should incorporate an appropriately designed, constructed and maintained sustainable drainage system.

Land at Middle Street and Vicarage Drive

- 3.11 The land between Middle Street and Vicarage Drive is an important open feature within the Conservation Area. The development of a considerable part of this site would be damaging to the character of the village. However, when we consulted local residents, there was some support for limited development. 86 residents supported a small amount of

development while 55 were against. 22 residents had no strong opinion.

- 3.12 As a result, we have allocated a small part of the site for housing development. The larger, remaining part of the area shall be planted and managed as a community orchard with a collection of fruit trees planted among grass full of wild flowers. The community orchard will be a link to Foxton's past when local orchards were known to grow the local apple variety "Foxton Pride".

Policy F14: Land at Middle Street and Vicarage Drive

Some 0.38 hectares of land between Middle Street and Vicarage Drive, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for housing development. Housing development will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- A. The development provides for around six dwellings. At least 40% of these shall be Affordable Houses unless it can be demonstrated that this requirement would make the development undeliverable;
- B. The layout and design of the site should incorporate:
 - 1. The construction of two and three bedroom, single-storey dwellings along the Middle Street frontage of the site. The design of these buildings should reflect the design of the range of farm buildings on the west side of Middle Street; and
 - 2. The construction of two and three bedroom dwellings along the Vicarage Drive frontage of the site.
- C. Highway improvements at the junctions of Vicarage Drive/Main Street and Middle Street/Main Street;
- D. A new footpath is constructed along the north side of the site linking Middle Street and Vicarage Drive;
- E. Land to the north of the site, as shown on the Policies Map, is to be planted and managed as a community orchard and designated as Local Green Space; and
- F. A landscaping scheme should be implemented to provide for an improvement in biodiversity and include the retention or replacement of trees and hedges of native species along the boundary of the site.

Land at the Junction of Vicarage Drive and Hog Lane

- 3.13 The overgrown site on the corner of Vicarage Drive and Hog Lane is currently identified as Important Open Land in the Harborough

Local Plan. However, when we consulted local people there was little support for its continued protection (33 responses - 20%). Indeed 94 responses favoured its development and 36 had no strong opinion.

- 3.14 As a small corner-plot with boundary trees and hedgerows that need protecting, the site will make a small but important contribution to meeting housing needs.

Policy F15: Land at Junction of Vicarage Drive and Hog Lane

Some 0.08 hectares of land at the junction of Vicarage Drive and Hog Lane, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for housing development. Housing development will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- A. The development provides for no more than three dwellings. At least one of these shall be an Affordable House unless it can be demonstrated that this requirement would make the development undeliverable;
- B. The layout and design of the site should incorporate the construction of two and three bedroom, two-storey dwellings along the Vicarage Drive frontage of the site. Buildings shall be set back so that they are no further forward than the building line established by nos. 11 and 13 Vicarage Drive; and
- C. A landscaping scheme should be implemented to include the retention or replacement of trees and hedges of native species along the boundary of the site.

Meeting Local Housing Needs

- 3.15 In planning for new homes, we want to see a mix of housing to meet the needs of people living locally. Using data from the 2011 Census we know that compared to Harborough district, Foxton has a smaller proportion of young householders (under 35) but more households over the age of 55. We also know that local house prices are high compared to Market Harborough, a high proportion of homes are detached and there are high levels of under-occupancy.
- 3.16 In the summer of 2015, a local Housing Needs Survey was undertaken by Midlands Rural Housing. The survey identified a need for affordable and open market properties in the next five years for those with a connection to Foxton. Seven were assessed

as being in need of open market housing (for local people) to purchase:

- 1 x 2 bed house
- 1 x 3 bed house
- 1 x 4 bed house
- 1 x 5 bed house
- 2 x 2 bed bungalows
- 1 x 3 bed bungalow

3.17 Three were assessed as being in need of affordable housing:

- 1 x 1 bed house
- 1 x 2 bed house
- 1 x 3 bed house

3.18 The overall need for ten new homes over the five-year period relates well to our plans for at least 27 houses over the period to 2031.

3.19 The provision of market housing units which cater for older households is a key supply gap which urgently needs to be addressed. While 'land hungry' bungalows are not attractive for developers, it is important that efforts are made within new developments to provide for older households.

3.20 The majority of older households in Foxton are owner-occupiers and so are most likely to require market solutions to housing problems. Based on household projections, demand from this age group is expected to increase substantially over coming years.

Policy F16: Housing Mix

New housing development shall provide for a mix of housing types that will be informed by the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment and local evidence of housing need. In particular, applicants will need to demonstrate how the housing needs of older households and the need for smaller, low-cost homes will be met.

Affordable Housing

3.21 Affordable housing is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable homes also have to remain affordable for future eligible households. New affordable housing will be allocated initially to people with a local

connection, including those living, working or with close family ties in Foxton.

- 3.22 The Housing and Planning Bill includes a new legal duty to be placed on councils to guarantee the delivery of Starter Homes on all reasonably sized new development sites, and to promote the scheme to first-time buyers in their area. This requirement has the potential to squeeze out other types of affordable housing.
- 3.23 The Harborough Core Strategy requires 40% of new dwellings to be Affordable housing. The development of Fisher's Farm and the land between Middle Street and Vicarage Drive will provide up to six affordable homes. It is likely that this will be sufficient to provide for the local need for affordable housing. Housing sites that come forward which have not been specifically identified in the Neighbourhood Plan (windfall sites) will also be expected to contribute to affordable housing provision.
- 3.24 If there were to be a proven local need for additional affordable homes our Plan makes provision to allow planning permission to be granted for affordable housing on 'Rural Exception Sites', i.e. sites that would not normally be released for private market housing.

Policy F17: Affordable Housing

The need for affordable housing will be largely met by the housing allocations identified in Policies F13, F14 and F15. On windfall housing developments of three dwellings or more, the minimum affordable housing provision is 40%.

Affordable housing may also be permitted on rural exception sites within or adjoining Limits to Development where:

- A. The housing is demonstrated to meet an identified local need for affordable housing that will not be met by the housing allocations identified in Policies F13, F14, F15 and windfall development;
- B. The development is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings;
- C. The development does not significantly adversely affect the amenities of residents in the area; and
- D. Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people.

All affordable housing will be subject to conditions, or a planning obligation will be sought, to ensure that when homes are allocated, priority is given to people with a local connection to

Foxton Parish (i.e. including living, working or with close family ties in the Parish).

4. Services and Facilities

- 4.1 Foxton has a range of basic services and facilities. There is a primary school on the edge of the village, two pubs (there are more pubs at Foxton Locks), a village hall (Robert Monk Hall), Church of St. Andrew, allotments, a recreation ground and a shop which has recently opened on North Lane.



- 4.2 The retention of key local services and community facilities is important for the long-term sustainability of Foxton and the new development proposed in the Plan should help their viability.

Policy F18: Retention of Key Services and Facilities

Development that fails to protect existing facilities providing for people's day-to-day needs will not be supported, unless the facility is replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.

Foxton Primary School

- 4.3 Foxton Primary School is located on Gallow Field Road and offers primary education to around 90 children aged four to eleven. The school catchment area includes Foxton and Gumley. Although the school lies outside the main village, there is a footpath to the school from Swingbridge Street.
- 4.4 The primary school was built in the 1960s. The site is constrained and there is limited scope to extend to accommodate a growing population.

Foxton Village Hall

- 4.5 Foxton Village Hall was built using a bequest from Robert Monk, who was born in Foxton and wanted to leave the village a legacy from which all residents would benefit. The hall lies in the middle of Foxton on Middle Street and is set within its own grounds, which includes tennis courts, children's playground, football and basketball pitches.

- 4.6 The hall is available for hire for clubs, societies and special occasions and is regularly booked for coffee mornings, fitness sessions etc.



Water

Management

- 4.7 Most of Foxton village lies within Flood Zone 1, as defined by the Technical Guide to the National Planning Policy Framework as having a low probability of flooding. However, during periods of prolonged rainfall events and sudden intense downpours, surface water runoff may exceed the capacity of existing drainage systems or combine as overland flow from adjacent higher ground, subsequently 'ponding' in low-lying areas of land (without draining into watercourses). In January 2008, a period of intense rainfall on already saturated land caused flooding in the village in this way. Therefore, developments should seek to reduce flood risk and incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- 4.8 In Foxton, the water supplier is Severn Trent and the waste water collection handler is Anglian Water. Both have been consulted during the preparation of this plan. Anglian Water advises that development sites will require a local connection to the existing sewerage network which may require network upgrades. This is not an objection as Anglian Water will work with Harborough District Council to ensure development is brought online at the correct time. Under no circumstances will surface water be permitted to discharge to the public foul sewerage network.

Policy F19: Water Management

New development should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) with attenuation, storage and treatment capacities incorporated.

Infrastructure

- 4.9 New development will have some impact on the existing, and require the need for new, infrastructure, services and amenities. Sometimes these impacts can be detrimental and so developers must expect to contribute towards the cost of providing additional or improved infrastructure.
- 4.10 To enable the level of housing development set out in this plan to take place, there may need to be infrastructure improvements, including to Foxton Primary School and GP surgery capacity in Market Harborough. However, the plan must be deliverable. Therefore, the developments identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and burdens that their viable implementation is threatened.

Employment

- 4.11 Other than Carter Design Group, which designs, makes, and installs 'Point of Sale' displays from its base at North Lane there are no significant employers within the village. However, a range of businesses operate from Foxton Locks (see section 6).
- 4.12 Otherwise, the main employment is based around agriculture, the school and a number of small businesses. With very few employment opportunities in Foxton, many residents commute to work in Market Harborough, Leicester and elsewhere. Around 70% of residents travel to work by car or van but a relatively high proportion of residents – 13% – work from home.
- 4.13 While working from home may not be a suitable option for every employee in every business, using home as a working base for at least part of the week offers a number of benefits for business. For example, home working can help working parents with childcare responsibilities. Working from home does not normally need planning permission. Whatever business is carried out from home, the key test is: is the property still mainly a home, or is it used primarily for business?
- 4.14 In 2012, planning permission was granted for a bird of prey breeding and rehabilitation business (Foxton Falconry Centre) in North Lane. The permission included the erection of a temporary mobile home which was due to be removed in September 2015. The site remains outside the Foxton Limits to Development and so it remains an unsuitable location for a permanent dwelling unless an essential need can be demonstrated.

5. Transport

Walking, Horse-riding and Cycling

- 5.1 Footpaths and bridleways, both within the village itself and those providing access to the surrounding open countryside, are an important feature of Foxton.

Jitties

- 5.2 The village is criss-crossed with jitties, the old term for little pedestrian footpaths running between roads. This network of paths allows residents to get around and it is important that these routes are protected and enhanced. Historically the lines of the majority of these pathways were confirmed by the Enclosure Commissioners

in 1770 and follow routes taken from earliest times by foot and horse traffic when these were the only forms of transport.



- 5.3 Of particular interest within the village is Holmes Lane jitty from Middle Street to North Lane passing in front of the Old Court House. At its commencement in Middle Street can be seen one of the last mud, or cob, walls in Foxton. The section from Main Street to North Lane has been known as Jubilee Walk since the days of Queen Victoria.
- 5.4 The Leicestershire Round long-distance footpath passes through the village using ancient paths between Swingbridge Street and Main Street known as Ghost Lane and Dalby's Lane. The former is named for a presumed ghost once said to inhabit an upstairs room of the Old Vicarage, and the latter from a family of millers and bakers who had their bakehouse and shop adjacent to the lane.

- 5.5 Another historic footpath leads from Swingbridge Street to the recreation grounds of Robert Monk Village Hall. These grounds are part of an earlier “Play Close” traditionally used by villagers for sports and pastimes during festivals and public holidays.
- 5.6 Two further footpaths from earlier days lead from the Shoulder of Mutton Inn across paddocks and into North Lane, part of the Back Lane of the ‘Ring Towne of Foxton’, and then continue over the fields as ancient foot roads to Gumley and Smeeton.
- 5.7 On the eastern side of the village is a section of bridleway, also forming part of the ancient back lane linking the Softwell Lane, off Swingbridge Street, to Gallowfield Road, crossing the canal at Clarke’s Bridge. It joins up with several other footpaths leading from Foxton towards Market Harborough.
- 5.8 The Canal Towpath also forms a very important pedestrian and cycle route across the parish and the section through the village and on to Foxton Locks, in particular, sees a considerable number of walkers and cyclists making use of this amenity.

National Cycle Route 6

- 5.9 Foxton is on National Cycle Route 6, which passes through Watford, Luton, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Market Harborough, Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, Worksop, Sheffield, Manchester, Blackburn, Preston, Lancaster, Kendal and Windermere, and will connect London and Threlkeld (near Keswick) in Cumbria when complete.
- 5.10 In Foxton, National Cycle Route 6 travels alongside the canal from Market Harborough in an east-west direction. At the swingbridge it travels southwards along Swingbridge Street to Main Street and then onto Gumley Road where it continues in a westerly direction.



Bus Service

- 5.11 The Centrebus 44 service links the village with Market Harborough, Fleckney, the Kibworths and Great Bowden. At peak times, it is an

hourly, Monday to Saturday service and the village bus stop is near Vicarage Drive. There is no Sunday service. The bus route will pass through the proposed Airfield Farm development and it is intended that developer contribution will be used to increase bus frequency to half-hourly.

Roads

5.12 Foxton is connected to the A6 by the Langton Road, to the B6047 by Gallow Field Road and to the A4304 at Lubenham by the Foxton Road.

5.13 The Langton Road/Harborough Road (A6) junction has been the scene of four incidents over the last 10 years. While a sharp bend in the Langton Road has been the site of three accidents- one serious. To the south of the village, there have been several accidents along the length of Gallow Field Road.

5.14 The Gallow Field Road/Foxton Road junction has poor visibility for vehicles exiting Foxton Road. Furthermore, farm vehicles and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) have restricted space to negotiate the right turn from Foxton Road and therefore use most of the carriageway to undertake this manoeuvre. There are also concerns relating to vehicle speeds along Gallow Field Road in the vicinity of Foxton Primary School.

5.15 Within Foxton itself, the roads are not well suited to modern traffic. The roads are narrow, there are few footways and there are junctions and bends which many local people consider to be dangerous. Many vehicles negotiating the bends on Main Street near the church cross over to the opposite side of the road at points where visibility is severely restricted causing on-coming cars to brake suddenly and frequent 'near-miss' incidents.

5.16 The swingbridge crossing the canal at Swingbridge



Street, is narrow and has a three tonne weight limit with insufficient turning space for large vehicles at the bridge. The limit is frequently ignored by heavy vehicles resulting in repeated repairs to the bridge. Larger vehicles unable to get over the bridge are forced to reverse back down Swingbridge Street.

- 5.17 During consultation on this Neighbourhood Plan, local people have expressed concerns about road safety, HGVs, speeding vehicles and inconsiderate parking. A particular concern for villagers has been traffic using Foxton as a cut-through from the A6 to Foxton Locks and Market Harborough. There are fears that the situation could become worse with the Airfield Farm development and growing numbers of people visiting Foxton Locks.
- 5.18 Traffic concerns have been considered in the selection of our development site at Fisher's Farm (Policy F13). This site has good vehicular access to the A6 without needing to pass through the centre of the village.

6. Foxton Locks

6.1 Foxton Locks is situated about half a mile to the west of Foxton Village. The Grade II* listed locks are over 200 years old and demonstrate how 19th century canal engineers solved the problem of getting boats up and down a steep hill.

6.2 This impressive flight of ten locks is the longest set of staircase locks in Britain. It takes an average of 45 minutes for boats to travel the entire flight and on a busy day as many as 40 boats can make the trip. Lock keepers direct the traffic making use of the passing pond in the middle of the flight.



6.3 Alongside the locks, the side ponds provide reserves of water for the locks and prevent wastage. These side ponds are a haven for local wildlife, including ducks, heron and water vole. The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust identify the locks as being a good place for wildlife and are intending to survey the area in 2016.

6.4 At the Locks, the majority of the buildings are gathered around the bottom lock and basin, with the exception of the reconstructed former Boiler House for the Inclined Plane Boat Lift,

now a museum, and the top lock cottage, now a cafe, which are both located further up the lock. All the buildings have historic connections with the canal and are used mainly for business purposes.

- 6.5 Originally, the Boiler House was home to the boiler and mechanical workings which powered the caissons (barge containers) up and down the Inclined Plane. Now after extensive refurbishment, it is the place to explore the history of the lift, Locks and Lives associated with Foxton Locks. Previously called Foxton Canal Museum, the Boiler House retains its museum accreditation but tells the story in exciting new and innovative ways.



- 6.6 Behind the Boiler House is the Inclined Plane Boat Lift. Designed at a time when canals were the mass transport freight system for England the boat lift was built to help improve the capacity of the canal network.
- 6.7 At the base of the locks is a canal-side shop/chandlery and two pubs; Bridge 61 and Foxton Locks Inn.
- 6.8 The locks and surrounding area are open and accessible to the public all year round. The site attracts over 300,000 visitors per year, with most arriving by car. Car parking charges are £1.50 all day in the long-stay or £2.00 for 4 hours in the short-stay car park.

The network of footpaths and towpaths provide ideal walking and cycling opportunities with a choice of many routes.

- 6.9 The Harborough Core Strategy promotes Foxton Locks and the Grand Union Canal as a tourism attraction and key strategic Green Infrastructure corridor in line with a Conservation Plan and Heritage Partnership Agreement. The Canal and River Trust plan to enhance Foxton Locks as a 'honey pot' tourist site.

Foxton Locks Masterplan

- 6.10 The Foxton Locks Masterplan was prepared for East Midland Tourism, British Waterways (now the Canal and River Trust), Foxton Inclined Plane Trust, The Inland Waterways Association and Old Union Canals Society in July 2009. It sets out a vision for the development of Foxton Locks as a regional tourist destination, including the replication of the inclined plane boat lift.
- 6.11 The restoration of Foxton's boat lift was a key project at the heart of the Masterplan, but it is now unlikely to be rebuilt as the Foxton Inclined Plane Trust has decided it will be unable to raise the £11 million needed to complete the project. Neither can it afford the £30,000 a year needed to replace cables and maintain the site.
- 6.12 The Masterplan also proposed:
- The creation of a mooring basin to provide boaters with a stop-off point to experience the range of visitor attractions on offer at Foxton Locks;
 - A cycle hire centre where visitors can hire cycles for the day and use the National Cycle Route;
 - Eco-lodges on the field adjacent to the access road to provide for short-stays in an ecologically sensitive setting;
 - Overnight accommodation units on the site of the old boatyard;
 - A Visitor Centre containing a museum, cafe, toilets and a small shop with a children's play area;
 - An ecology park (Foxton Locks Country Park) which is likely to consist of timber boardwalks, bird hides, interpretation boards and pond dipping areas;
 - A new multi-purpose events space for the performing arts, fun days out and learning experiences, as well as festivals, events and rallies; and

- A camping ground next to the main car park.

6.13 Some of these ideas are supported by the local community, but there are concerns that the full package of proposals would have an adverse impact on the heritage value of Foxton Locks, the quiet enjoyment of the canal and surrounding countryside, and quality of life for local residents. The Canal and River Trust has indicated that the Masterplan will be replaced by a new visitor management strategy.

Policy F20: Foxton Locks

The value of the Foxton Locks Area (as defined on the Foxton Green Zone Map on page 11) will be sustained by giving priority to:

- A. The conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and wildlife;
- B. The quiet enjoyment of the Foxton Locks Area for waterside and countryside recreation; and
- C. Reducing visitor impact on quality of life for Foxton village residents.

Developments which support and maintain the positive management of the Foxton Locks Area through improved conservation, presentation and interpretation will be supported where:

- A. There are no adverse effects on the physical fabric, character, appearance, setting or views into or out of the Foxton Locks Area;
- B. New visitor attractions are directly associated with Foxton Locks;
- C. They do not significantly increase noise, disturbance or light pollution;
- D. They minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible;
- E. They are unlikely to significantly increase the level of vehicular traffic; and
- F. There are measures in place to reduce the impact of traffic on Foxton village. These shall include car parking and traffic management, public transport improvements, road signage and junction improvements.

The creation of new, permanent overnight accommodation other than through the re-use of existing buildings will not be permitted. The provision of residential moorings will not be permitted.



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7. Monitoring

- 7.1 Our Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored, to evaluate the success of its policies and proposals and to identify whether future reviews of the plan are needed. In particular, the following may trigger a review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.2 In December 2015, the Government began consultation on some specific changes to national planning policy. These changes included amendments to the national planning policy definition of affordable housing.

Harborough Local Plan

- 7.3 Harborough District Council is currently preparing a new local plan to replace the Harborough Core Strategy. The new Harborough Local Plan is likely to cover the period to 2031. Harborough District Council will take our Neighbourhood Plan into account in preparing the new local plan but we may need to review our Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that it conforms to the new proposals and requirements.

Appendix 1: Village Design Statement 2015

Introduction

1. The Foxton Village Design Statement (VDS) was first adopted by Harborough District Council in July 2007 as a Supporting Statement to the Harborough Local Plan. The VDS was produced by the residents of Foxton, drawing on local knowledge and residents' views. The Village Design Statement has been reviewed and updated as part of the preparation of the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan.

History

2. Like many villages in south-east Leicestershire, Foxton began as a hilltop settlement. In those very early days hilltops were attractive because they were easy to defend, had a good water supply obtained from wells and were free from flooding.

3. As times became more settled the village gradually moved down the valley to a position where the climate was more favourable.



This explains why the

Parish Church of Saint Andrew's stands above the greater part of the village, close by the site of the earlier settlement where there was almost certainly pagan worship before the coming of Christianity.

4. The Welland valley was settled by the Romans and that some two miles north of Foxton is the site of a Roman Villa. The fragment of preaching cross in the church dates from Saxon times and suggests, as does the "ton" on the end of the name, that Foxton had a Saxon population. The name "Foxton" is thought to be derived from the number of foxes that have always been around the Village.

5. The Norman Conquest of 1066 was important to Foxton, which became one of the villages within the overlordship of William the Conqueror's niece, the Countess Judith. In 1086 Foxton was surveyed and the findings incorporated in the Domesday Book.
6. At the time of the Conquest the village was situated below the site of the church and around the Norman manor house, which is thought to have existed on the site of the present 18th century manor house. Pasture and cultivated land lay to the north and west of the village, while the high plateau to the east (the site of Gartree prison today) formed what was known as Foxton Moor (now Airfield Farm), a wild uncultivated area used for hunting. The village population was heavily involved in agriculture and this remained so until the first half of the 20th century, although a substantial number of the inhabitants were occupied as framework knitters in the latter part of the 18th century.
7. At some time in the 14th century John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, became Lord of the Manor of Foxton and extended the manor house and church.
8. Prior to enclosure in 1770 farming was carried out on the three field system with the parish being divided into Millfield, Gallowfield and Burrowfield. Open fields were divided into strips so all who held land had strips in each field, thus distributing the good and not so good land fairly. Some of this ancient ridge and furrow can still be seen around the village although most of it has now been ploughed out.
9. Few records remain from the medieval and Tudor periods, but during this time the village took on its present shape, known as the "Ring Towne of Foxton". Situated in the valley below the church, the village was surrounded by a "back lane". This was the road on to which the smaller holdings backed. Within and around the ring a number of small fields or "closes" had been enclosed prior to the parliamentary enclosure of 1770 and the present system of three principal roads and interlocking lanes was already in existence. The enclosure award of 1770 mentions several landowners as having "an antient (sic) enclosure within the Ring Towne of Foxton".
10. This pattern is still well preserved on the west by North Lane, whilst on the east side the site of the former back lane can still be traced.

11. A great change to the landscape took place in 1770 when the Parish was enclosed. The open fields were replaced by the familiar parliamentary enclosure pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by quickthorn (hawthorn) hedges. The common land disappeared and subsequently, wherever possible, small pieces of ground on the verges of the highways were annexed by landless villagers for growing vegetables and keeping livestock. These can still be seen in and around the village.
12. In c.1807 the Harbrough arm of the canal cut through Foxton, dividing the village into half. Two streets, Middle Street and North Lane, were truncated and altered to facilitate access to the single brick bridge built over the canal on Main Street. This resulted in some changes to the earlier street pattern.
13. The concentration of housing below the canal, rather than on the high ground around the church and the former manor house, has now endured for some 200 years. The increased trade brought by the canal resulted in the building of the Black Horse Inn in 1820 which also coincided with the closure of the earlier Admiral Rodney Public house. The existing Shoulder of Mutton Inn also benefited as its paddock was also rented out for the grazing of boat horses. In addition, there was a coal wharf and blacksmith's forge at what is now Forge House on Main Street.
14. Beyond the village the staircase of ten locks, which is such a prominent feature of the landscape, was constructed in 1814 and canal side dwellings were built for canal company employees, together with stabling and workshops. Some of these buildings have found new purposes in connection with the leisure use of canals. They make attractive premises for the provision of supplies and refreshments for boat users and other visitors.
15. The canal and the locks are one of the major tourist attractions of the district. The Education Act of 1870 resulted in the building of a board school, now a private house, adjacent to the canal at the top of Middle Street, now renamed Woodgate to commemorate the street's earlier name.
16. The turn of the 20th century saw an impressive feat of engineering at Foxton Locks with the construction of a steam powered inclined plane lift allowing boats to bypass the locks. Around this time (1900) the Black Horse was rebuilt to accommodate an anticipated increase in trade. The boat lift proved uneconomical to operate and was closed in 1911 and later scrapped.

17. With the Second World War came the building of the airfield (1941/42) on the high plateau to the east of the village. In the early hours of April 5th 1945, a Lancaster bomber was diverted to Foxton from its home base at East Kirkby in Lincolnshire. It crashed near to the Old Vicarage and sadly all the crew members died. A plaque, commemorating the event is set into the wall of the Robert Monk Hall.

18. The post war years saw considerable housing development in Foxton and in 1966 the prison and its estate at Gartree was built.



Settlement Pattern and Layout

19. At some time in the past the village was laid out in the form of a ring with a surrounding back lane enclosing three streets running in a north to south direction and a myriad of lanes and footpaths crossing these from east to west. The current road system remains much as it was in medieval times except that only part of the ancient "ring road" now remains as North Lane.
20. The east Clark's Bridge carries a track to Market Harborough.
21. The main concentration of buildings is to the north of the canal around Main Street, Middle Street, Swingbridge Street and Vicarage Drive with several small closes and linking lanes.
22. The housing is interspersed with a number of open spaces and large gardens that offer views out to open countryside and provide room for the mature trees which are so integral to the character of the village. These are also especially important, as the village green, originally at the north end of the village, was lost due to private enclosures during the 19th century.
23. There are some cul de sac developments in Foxton, Park Close (four houses on the lane leading to the Shoulder of Mutton off Main Street), another development c. 1990 off Main Street and Swedish Close, off Swingbridge Street.

24. The type of social activities associated with a village green are now held either on the Robert Monk Hall recreation ground or on the paddock at the Shoulder of Mutton Inn.
25. There is no single focal point for the village, the Robert Monk Hall, the two public houses in the village as well as the two at the Locks, shop and the Church all playing their part in the daily life of residents and visitors alike.

Building Characteristics

26. There is no single style of Foxton house; however older properties, with very few exceptions, are constructed of local brick and have certain features in common. These tend to include Welsh slate roofs, which terminate at the wall with no overhang of the roof, as shown in the detail below. This is an integral feature of Foxton's built character.



27. Where there are bargeboards or fascia boards these are unobtrusive. The houses are mainly gable ended and are often built close to the road and garages/outhouses are generally attached or detached rather than integral.



28. Increasingly rendering is being used as a finish on new houses. A number of the older properties have now been rendered and old photographs show that a white or cream wash was fairly common in the past.



29. In the 1960/70s a number of houses and bungalows were built with the large picture windows, concrete tiles and roof styles incorporating fascia boards and prominent barge boards which were fashionable at the time. These properties are to be found at the northern ends of Main Street and Middle Street as well as in Park Close and Vicarage Drive.
30. From the 1980s new houses have reverted to using the traditional style of roof and general appearance, which is more in keeping with the built heritage of Foxton.

Building Guidelines

- Foxton buildings are plain in style and ornamentation is to be avoided.
- Except where it is dictated by neighbouring properties the style and pitch of roofs should blend in and be similar to that of traditional houses with slated roofs.
- Bargeboards and fascia boards should either be avoided or be unobtrusive. Flat roofs are not appropriate.
- Slate predominates in the village and will be encouraged. The use of concrete tiles is rarely appropriate and will be discouraged.
- Garages should have slated, pitched roofs and ideally should be detached from the dwelling. They should rarely be integral to the dwellinghouse.
- Traditional buildings usually have garages detached from the dwelling, provided as ancillary buildings within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse. Such an arrangement is preferable to integral garages which are a characteristic of estate development and often out of scale and



keeping with local character.

- All new buildings shall be designed with chimneys and these should be of a simple style as illustrated below.
- Red brick is the traditional material in the Parish but wall rendering is also quite widely used. Anyone considering using rendering should ensure that it fits in with the buildings in the immediate vicinity and blends in with the local character. Bright or vivid masonry paints are to be discouraged.
- Porches should be of a simple design. A plain canopy with a slate roof is likely to be the most appropriate.
- Windows and doors made of wood and with small panes will be encouraged. Other materials such as uPVC should be used with care and every effort should be made to ensure that it is of a similar design to that of the buildings in the immediate vicinity.
- Extensions should be in materials and of a scale and style to match the original building being extended.
- The design of new buildings or extensions must take into account the accommodation of wheelie bins, either by allowing sufficient space for their passage from the front to the rear of the dwelling, or by means of a suitable storage.

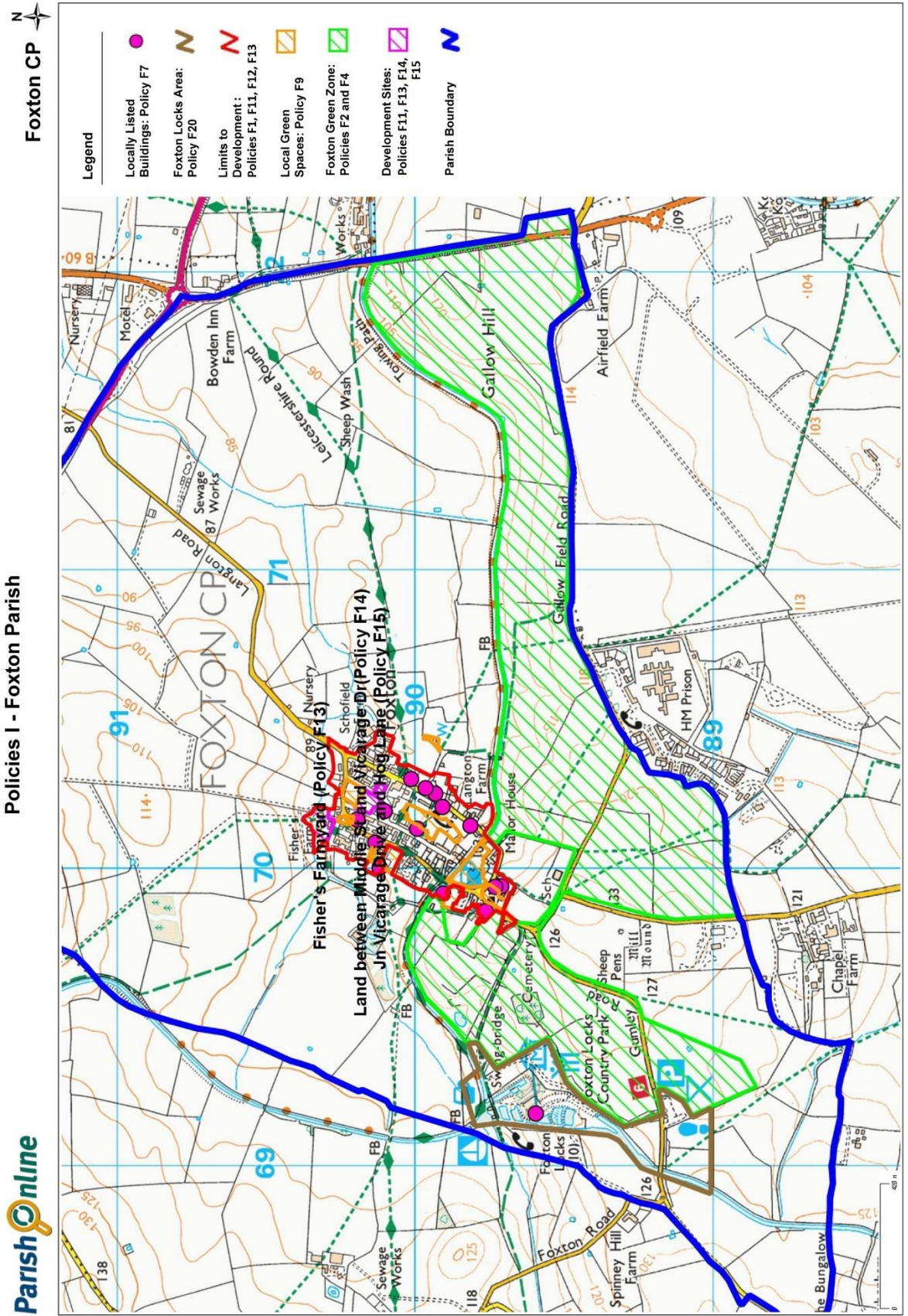
Siting Guidelines

- Both the secluded setting of the settlement and the surrounding undulating farmland is considered intrinsic to the distinctive character of the settlement and are to be protected.
- Open spaces and important views, from within the village and from outside, should be maintained in order to preserve the setting and character of the village. Where appropriate open spaces should be designed and managed for their wildlife potential.
- Existing open spaces, especially those between buildings, contribute significantly to the form and character of the settlement and are to be preserved wherever possible.
- Wherever possible design shall be such that mature trees and hedges can be retained.
- Wherever possible, buildings should not obscure views of the church tower.

Boundary Guidelines

There is no overriding aspect of boundary style in the village. A number of the older properties have little or no frontage, directly abutting the street. However, many properties within the village do have front gardens. Where front garden boundaries do exist they feature hedging, brick walling and wooden fencing.

- Future developments should take note of neighbouring boundary material and where possible avoid creating excessive expanses of the same material. For example, large stretches of plain, regular high brick walling would be inappropriate. Care is needed in the construction of new boundaries in terms of ensuring the height, material etc. are in harmony with surrounding properties.
- When fencing is used, either picket or post-and-rail style will be encouraged, together with either a natural or rustic wood finish or a light coloured paint. Standard close boarded fencing without planting should be avoided.
- Native species hedging is to be encouraged, either free standing or interwoven with fencing. The use of fast growing, potentially tall trees, such as leylandia, as hedging material is to be avoided. Hornbeam, beech, yew or quickthorn are considered far more appropriate for a village setting.
- Old boundaries should be preserved where possible.
- When walls are used these should be brick capped with blue coping stones.



Policies I - Foxton Parish



Foxton CP

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