

# Houghton on the Hill

## Neighbourhood Plan and Village Design Statement (VDS)

### 2017 – 2031



Houghton Parish Council  
Houghton on the Hill  
Leicestershire

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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Neighbourhood Plan (NP) applies to an area larger than the present boundaries of the Houghton on the Hill Parish. The planned area includes land In Hungarton Parish to the North of the A47 and immediately west of Houghton village with the agreement and cooperation of Hungarton Parish Council and Harborough District Council.

The Vision Statement of the Neighbourhood Plan is that “In 15 years’ time Houghton on the Hill will continue to be a neighbourly, rural community. It will value its community spirit and sense of belonging and provide people with a safe, sustainable environment. It will continue to be a friendly, stimulating and vibrant place.”

The Plan defines eight objectives:

1. to preserve and nurture social cohesion;
2. to manage the sustainable development of new housing to provide dwellings meeting the requirements of the changing demography;
3. to direct the location of new housing to minimise the impact of increased traffic flows on the core of the village;
4. to initiate new footpaths and cycleways to encourage less reliance on vehicles;
5. to preserve the rural aspect of the area;
6. to enhance services and facilities;
7. to conserve and enhance biodiversity; and
8. to conserve the built heritage of the village.

These objectives will be addressed through a total of 9 policies:

- three on village design (D1 to D3);
- two on housing location and types (H1 and H2);
- three dealing with services and facilities (S1 to S3); and
- one on the environment (E1).

Throughout the text reference is made to factual material in Part II of the document. In electronic versions of the document these are hyperlinks which will take the reader directly to the reference material. Such linked text appears as blue text in the electronic version.

Appendix 1 is a detailed Village Design Statement (VDS) providing guidance on the local layout and construction details to which all development proposals should have regard.

Appendix 2 provides an overview listing and description of current Houghton services and community facilities.

Appendix 3 is a contents list for the on-line document which forms Part II of this Plan. Part II contains the large volume of information and factual data which provides the evidence base for the vision, objectives and policies listed in this document.

Appendix 4 contains a listing of projects which do not fall within the remit of the NP policies but are regarded as interesting options for the community which have emerged during the consultations and discussions of the NP.

## 2 HOUGHTON ON THE HILL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (NP)

### 2.1 Houghton on the Hill Neighbourhood Area Designation

To promote positive planning the Neighbourhood Area includes land within both Houghton and Hungarton parishes as shown in Figure 2-1. Following the Annual Parish Council meetings of Hungarton on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015 and Houghton on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015, both Parish Councils have confirmed the agreed boundary shown below in red in Figure 2-1. The Neighbourhood Area was approved by Harborough District Council (HDC) on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015. Since the Neighbourhood Area includes part of Hungarton Parish, there is a necessity for the two Parish Councils to work together in consultation.

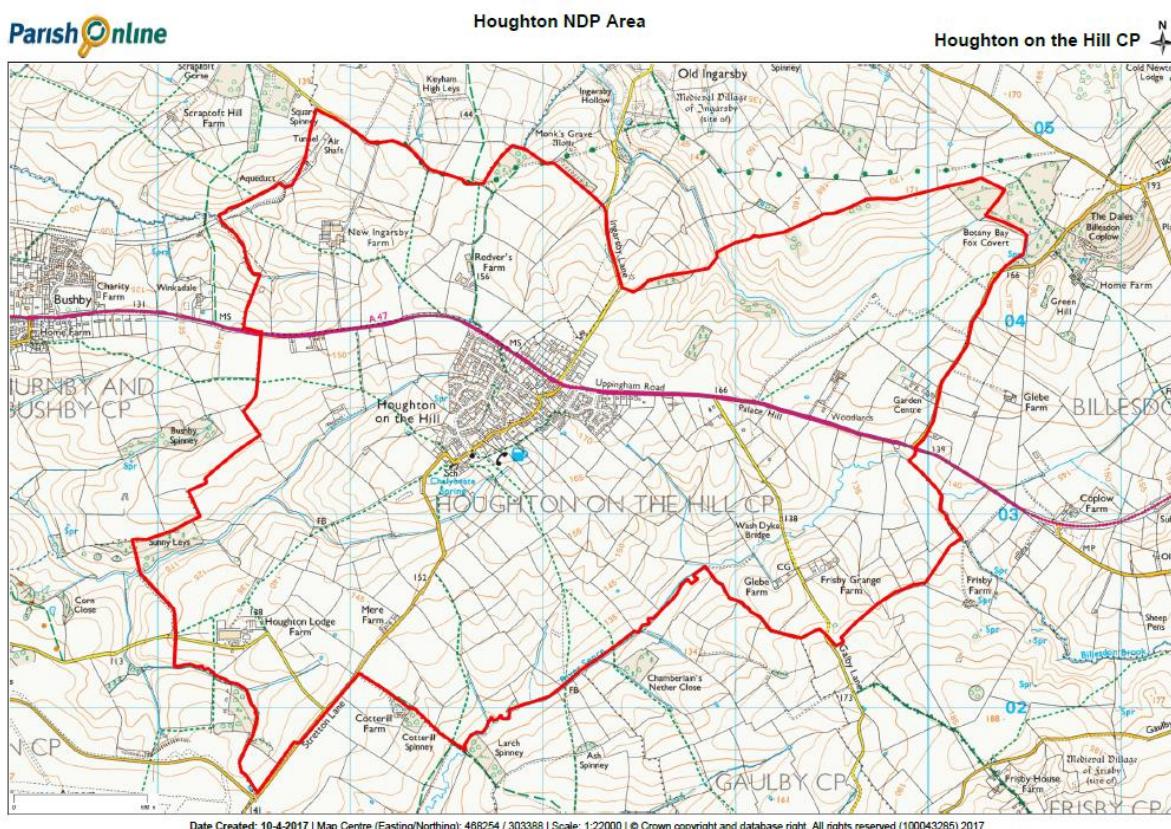


Figure 2-1 Map of the Houghton on the Hill Neighbourhood Area outlined in red.

### 2.2 The Qualifying Body

Houghton Parish Council, as the Qualifying Body, established a Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (NPWP) to produce a plan, involving data collation and consultation with residents and other stakeholders, and drafting and submission of the draft plan. The working party consists of the 5 members currently serving on the Houghton Parish Council, and additional volunteers from the community. The NPWP has its own website pages

<http://www.houghtononthehillpc.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html>

with details of its Constitution and Terms of Reference, the names of members, minutes of meetings, and associated information.

## 2.3 Neighbourhood Area Profile

Houghton is an outstanding community from several perspectives. It has been highly placed in national surveys of quality of life. It has a vibrant community with a large number of social groups and activities from the Art Circle to the Yoga class. Harborough District Council compiled the detailed '[Settlement Profile: Houghton on the Hill \(2015\)](#)' as part of their work in preparing the emerging [Local Plan](#). It also has challenges some of which the NP seeks to address:

- It has the highest percentage of ageing residents (41% over 55 years) in the HDC area ([HDC Settlement Profile: Houghton on the Hill \(2015\) - based on 2011 census](#)).
- Approximately 20% of dwellings are in single occupancy, one third of which have 3, 4 or 5 bedrooms ([Q2, Q5, Q6](#) and [Q2, Q5, Q6 Single Occupancy Analysis](#) and [HDC Settlement Profile: Houghton on the Hill \(2015\) - based on 2011 census](#)).
- There is a shortage of small homes for first-time buyers or for downsizing.
- The village street-plan is winding and narrow and generates problems with traffic flow and parking.
- It offers little employment and has poor public transport connections with the nearby city of Leicester, such that it is very difficult to have a regular paid employment outside the village without owning private transport.

The sizeable more elderly and retired element of the community brings many benefits which contribute to Houghton being an outstanding community. There are at least 40 groups, societies and facilities in the village as set out in the local magazine - Houghton News. Very nearly all of those are run by or depend upon the support of older people in the village.

Also, within the older element of the community there is a great deal of mutual help and support available. The more able older people are helping the less able with transport to facilities, shopping and assorted tasks about their houses that they are no longer able to do. This is activity over and above that supplied by the Houghton Help-Line voluntary organisation. This leads to an unusual level of self-sufficiency for the community and reduces dependency on Council provided welfare services.

## 3 COMMUNITY VISION, KEY ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

### 3.1 The Houghton Vision Statement

"In 15 years' time Houghton on the Hill will continue to be a neighbourly, rural community. It will value its community spirit and sense of belonging and provide people with a safe, sustainable environment. It will continue to be a friendly, stimulating and vibrant place."

The first question of the [NP Community Questionnaire](#) asked respondents to choose key words that best describe their feelings about Houghton. From the 431 responses from 630

households the top 6 words were “community, being rural, friendliness, neighbourliness, safety and belonging” each having over 200 responses ([Q1](#)).

## 3.2 Houghton Community Key Issues

The Key Issues derive from, or are supported by, the results of the [Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire](#) (Q) and the Young People’s Questionnaire (YPQ), which were distributed to all households in the village in January 2016, a [Stakeholders’ Consultation Meeting](#) held in the village on March 16<sup>th</sup> 2016 and the [Pre-submission Consultations](#). Questionnaire analysis is provided in Part II of the Plan and hyperlinks to the relevant parts of that analysis are included below for convenience.

### 3.2.1 Maintaining the Character of Houghton

Maintaining the character of Houghton is a key aspiration embedded in the vision statement. The parish is viewed as a desirable and safe place to live by most of its inhabitants ([Q1](#)).

In order to realise this aspiration it will be necessary to:

- Preserve and enhance the strengths of the community and its heritage (free-form comments [Q36](#) & [Q37](#)).
- Value and protect Houghton as a hill-top village in the “High Leicestershire” landscape area ([Q32](#), [Q33](#) and free-form comments [Q34](#) & [Q35](#)).
- Embrace inevitable change, new technologies and opportunities and use them to develop forward-looking initiatives to enhance the quality of life in the community, and its environmental sustainability ([Q38](#) & [Q39](#)).

### 3.2.2 Developing a sustainable community

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) advises that “the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.” Sustainability is described as having three dimensions: economic, social and environmental.

- Economic** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that local businesses, including those residents working from home, have the requisite infrastructure and services ([Q40](#) to [Q48](#) and free-form comments [Q43](#) & [Q46](#)).
- Social** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and which support its health, social and cultural well-being ([Q7](#) to [Q18](#) and free-form comments [Q11](#) & [Q14](#)).
- Environmental** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change including moving to a low carbon economy ([Q49](#)).

### 3.2.3 Housing Provision

- The Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) published in January 2017 updated the housing requirement for Harborough District. From that, Local Plan trajectories for Houghton as a rural centre suggest a minimum of 152 new dwellings over the Plan period to 2031;
- During the preparation of this Plan planning consents for a total of 135 dwellings have been granted; the final Plan is therefore no longer intent on identifying significant sites;
- All development will need to show appropriate regard for the guidance in the Village Design Statement (VDS) in Appendix 1.

### 3.2.4 Traffic Management and Transport

In 2012 the Parish Council produced a report on parking and traffic management in the village ([Houghton Parish Council, 2012](#)). Conclusions from that report, supplemented by responses from the NP Community Questionnaire and Pre-submission Consultation highlighted the following issues:

- Speed and volume of traffic in and through the village is a continuing worry. Speed limits both within and close to the existing village and along the A47 should be reviewed and revised as necessary ([Q23, Q25](#) and free-form comments [Q23, Q25, Q26 & Q28](#)).
- Consideration of a possible by-pass scheme to route traffic from the A47 to Stretton Lane is suggested by some villagers in the Pre-submission Consultation, the NP Community Questionnaire and at other consultation events.
- Lack of off-street parking, particularly on and adjacent to Main Street, is at times acute and leads to serious congestion (free-form comments [Q24 & Q27](#)).
- Cycling and walking will be encouraged to reduce traffic along Main Street and near the school ([Q29](#) and free-form comment [Q30](#)).
- New housing developments could lead to an increase in traffic problems, particularly on Main Street and adjacent roads.
- There is evidence of a need for better public transport to nearby population centres and facilities ([YPQ8](#) and free-form comments [Q22, YPQ4](#)); a result of the poor current public service is that the majority of journeys are made by private car ([Q21](#)).

### 3.2.5 Environment

Guided by the NP Vision Statement, the Harborough District Core Strategy and the [National Planning Policy Framework, 2012](#) (NPPF), the Plan aims for the environment are:

- Protect and enhance the Parish's rural landscape, settlement pattern, historic assets, and biodiversity ([Q32 to Q37](#), free-form comments [Q34, Q35, Q36, Q37](#) and [National Heritage – Listed Buildings](#)).

- Reduce the environmental impacts of road traffic, both private and commercial, and lessen the need for car use by encouraging the use of public transport, cycling and walking ([Q23](#), [Q29](#) and free-form comment [Q30](#)).
- Minimise energy demand and maximise the use of renewable energy ([Q49](#)).

### 3.2.6 Services and Facilities

- Houghton on the Hill has a scheduled bus service and four of the six key services of a Rural Centre, namely food shop/general store, post office, primary school and two public houses and these are all used by the community ([Q38](#)). It should be noted however that the bus service is under threat (see Section 4.4).
- The primary school provides for 4 to 11 year olds. There is a single class for each year group and demand for places is high with about half the pupils coming into the village from outside the catchment area.
- The village also has a filling station, car repair business, a pharmacy, a hairdresser, a chip-shop and a beauty salon all of which are used to varying degrees ([Q38](#)).
- The level of provision of services and community facilities (see Appendix 2) is important for the long-term sustainability of the village and new developments will help to provide new customers.

## 3.3 Houghton Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

The objectives stem from the overall vision statement.

- Objective 1 – To preserve and nurture the social cohesion of the village and its outlying settlements.
- Objective 2 – To manage the development of new housing to provide dwellings, which will meet the requirements of the village’s demographic profile while conforming to the principles of sustainability, and to meet the emerging [Local Plan](#) requirement.
- Objective 3 – To direct the location of new housing development so as to minimise the impact of increased traffic flows on the core part of the village.
- Objective 4 – To include in new development layouts, footpaths and cycleways to encourage less reliance on vehicles within the village.
- Objective 5 – To preserve the rural aspect of the village, its green spaces and its separation from adjacent villages.
- Objective 6 – To enhance village services and facilities to provide for the needs of an increasing population through times of changing lifestyles and evolving technology.
- Objective 7 – To reduce the environmental impact of additional housing by conserving and enhancing biodiversity and encouraging the adoption of sustainable technologies and lifestyles.

- Objective 8 - To conserve the built heritage of the village by ensuring that all new development and any alterations to existing buildings are sensitive to their setting and have appropriate regard for the guidance in the Village Design Statement (VDS).



Figure 3-1 Main Street in the heart of Houghton Village.

## 4 THE POLICIES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### 4.1 Houghton Village Design Statement - Summary

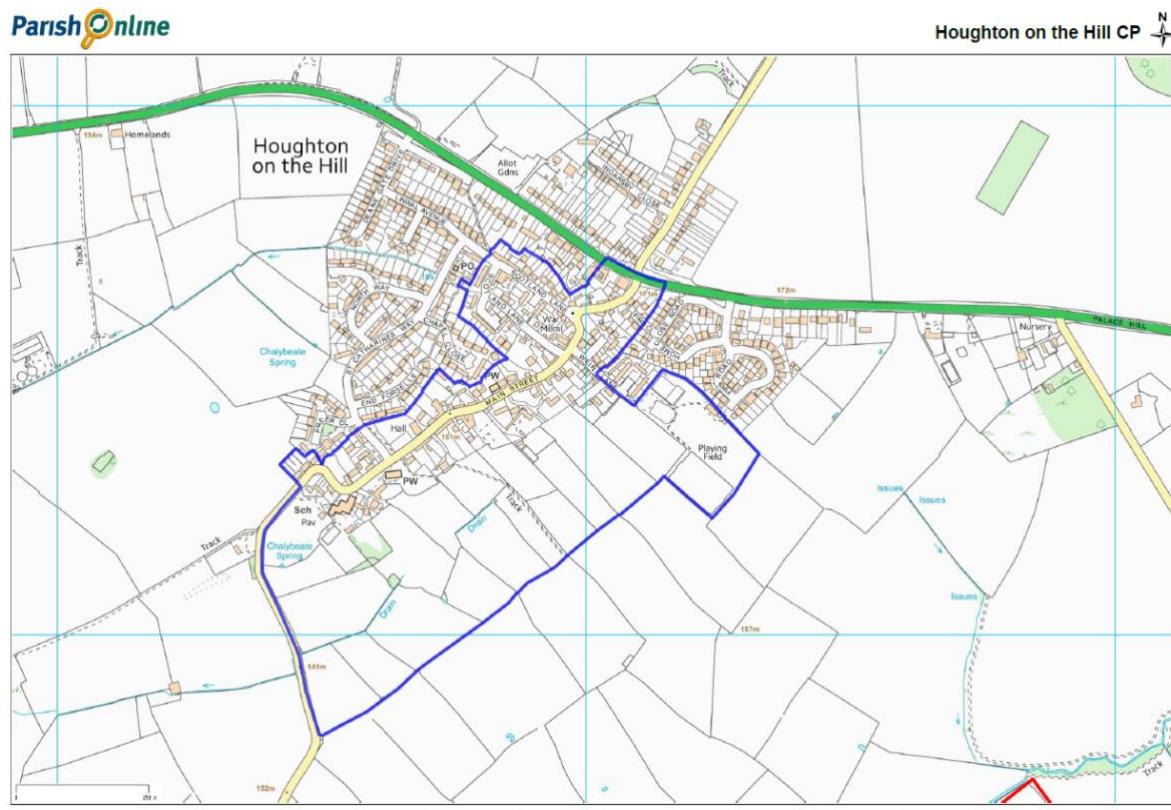


Figure 4-1 Map of the existing village showing Conservation Area outlined in blue.

4.1.1 The Village Design Statement (VDS) sets out the design and layout principles that all new and infill development should follow. The full VDS is included as Appendix 1 and here its main points are presented:

- The Conservation Area (Figure 4-1 above) defines the character of Houghton. Without it Houghton would be less distinctive and less attractive. All development proposals will have to address the relevant statutory obligations ([Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#)) to preserve the character of the Conservation Area.
- In addition, Policy D1 ensures that local guidance is specified within the Plan.

**POLICY D1: SUSTAINING THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

Any proposed developments or changes to existing buildings within the Conservation Area must have appropriate regard for the VDS, in particular the section ‘Building in the Conservation Area’ (see Appendix 1).

**4.1.2 Related Objective 8**

To conserve and enhance the character of the village the VDS uses the guidelines in [Building for Life 12](#). [The sign of a good place to live](#) to provide guidelines for the layout and design of all new developments. The twelve aspects are grouped into

- Integrating into the neighbourhood
- Creating a place
- Street and home

**POLICY D2: SUSTAINING THE CHARACTER OF HOUGHTON OUTSIDE THE CONSERVATION AREA**

Even with its diverse more modern developments Houghton has maintained a pleasant and particularly non-urban aspect. This is due to the spaciousness and non-uniformity of layouts within the individual developments. Development proposals must have appropriate regard for the content of the VDS so as to sustain the essential character and avoid the urbanisation of Houghton.

New additions to or alterations of farmsteads and agricultural buildings beyond the village should respect their rural setting and must have appropriate regard for the content of the VDS, in particular the section relating to new construction or alterations of existing buildings beyond the village (see Appendix 1).

**4.1.3 Related Objectives 5 & 8**

The design guidance in the VDS helps to ensure that the much-loved rural aspect of the village is sustained.

- When asked in the village-wide consultation survey “What best describes your family’s feelings about living in Houghton?” 327 respondent families cited “being rural” ([Q1](#)).
- Houghton’s young people were consulted via a separate questionnaire and in response to the question “What do you most like about living in Houghton?” ([YPQ3](#)) the following answer reflects the view of many “Quiet Village, Friendly People, Semi-Rural so more open space and greenery.”

**POLICY D3: SUSTAINING THE RURAL CHARACTER OF HOUGHTON THROUGH THE USE OF GREEN SPACES**

Incidental green spaces, as identified in Figure 4-2, are an essential part of the rural character of Houghton as is recognised within the VDS. Development proposals within the village must ensure that this green aspect is sustained by incorporating new green spaces and having appropriate regard for the related VDS guidance (Appendix 1).

#### 4.1.4 Related Objective 5

- The VDS recognises the contribution that open spaces, including the many small open spaces, make to the village by linking it to its rural setting and mitigating against urban/sub-urbanisation. Figure 4-2 shows the extent and variety of Houghton's open spaces.

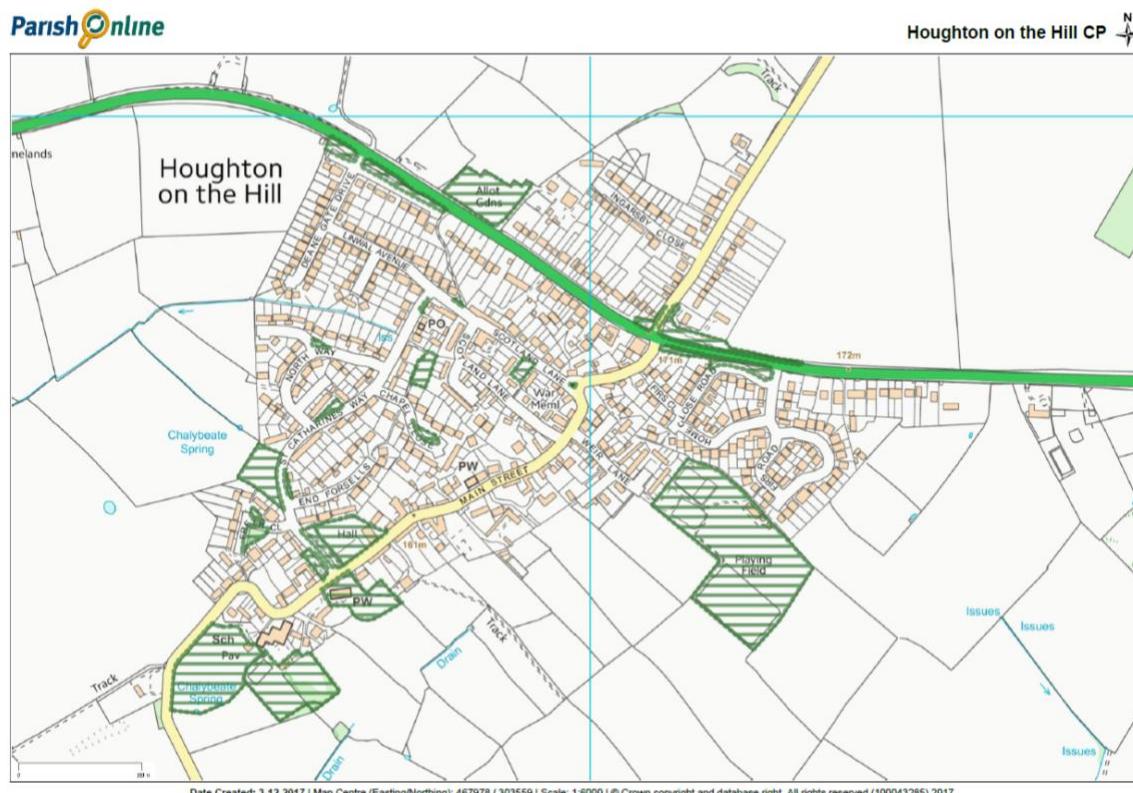


Figure 4-2 Green Spaces in Houghton.

## 4.2 Housing Provision

The Neighbourhood Plan has been overtaken by events in relation to its intent to allocate land for additional housing. Three sites, shown on Figure 4-3 as sites 1, 2 and Z, have planning consents for a total of 135 dwellings. The [Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment \(HEDNA\)](#) published in January 2017 updated the housing requirement for Harborough District and, from that, [Local Plan](#) trajectories for Houghton as a rural centre suggest a minimum of 152 new dwellings over the Plan period to 2031; therefore there is a small balance of a minimum of 17 dwellings yet to be met.

There is a preference for this additional housing to be provided within the existing built-up area (delineated in the Harborough Core Strategy as the ‘Limits to Development’) but, in line with best practice, the Plan accommodates the potential for assessed housing demand to increase in the emerging [Local Plan](#) or subsequent documents. The community has indicated a strong preference for any additional housing requirement to be accommodated to the north of the A47 ([Q19](#)) and therefore the boundary of the reviewed and extended Limits to Development (shown in Figure 4-3) encompasses, at that location, land for future expansion.

### POLICY H1: GENERAL HOUSING PROVISION

Housing development within the Houghton Limits to Development, as delineated in Figure 4-3, will be supported provided that each proposal addresses the following criteria:

- a) it does not, cumulatively with other proposals, significantly exceed the target for the delivery of new homes in Houghton set from time to time by the Local Planning Authority; and
- b) it reflects the size of the current settlement, its road infrastructure and its level of service provision; and
- c) it is physically and visually connected to and respects the form and character of the existing settlement; and
- d) safe and convenient access is provided for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians; and
- e) the mix of dwellings proposed is informed by up to date evidence of housing need; and
- f) affordable housing is provided where required by the policies of the Local Planning Authority and, where provided, this is fully integrated within the development; and
- g) appropriate regard is demonstrated for the other relevant Policies within this Neighbourhood Plan.

This policy addresses objectives 2 and 3.

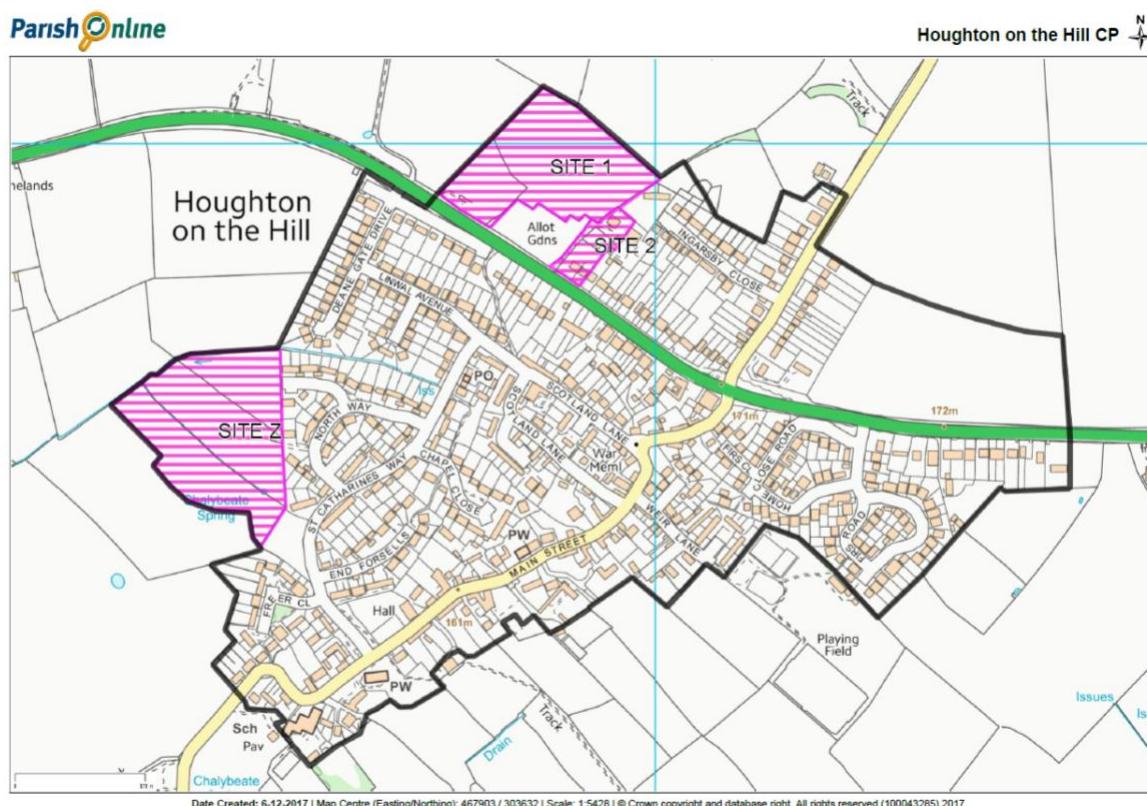


Figure 4-3. Map showing consented housing sites (sites 1, 2 and Z, hatched) and the boundary of the Extended Houghton Limits to Development (bold black line).

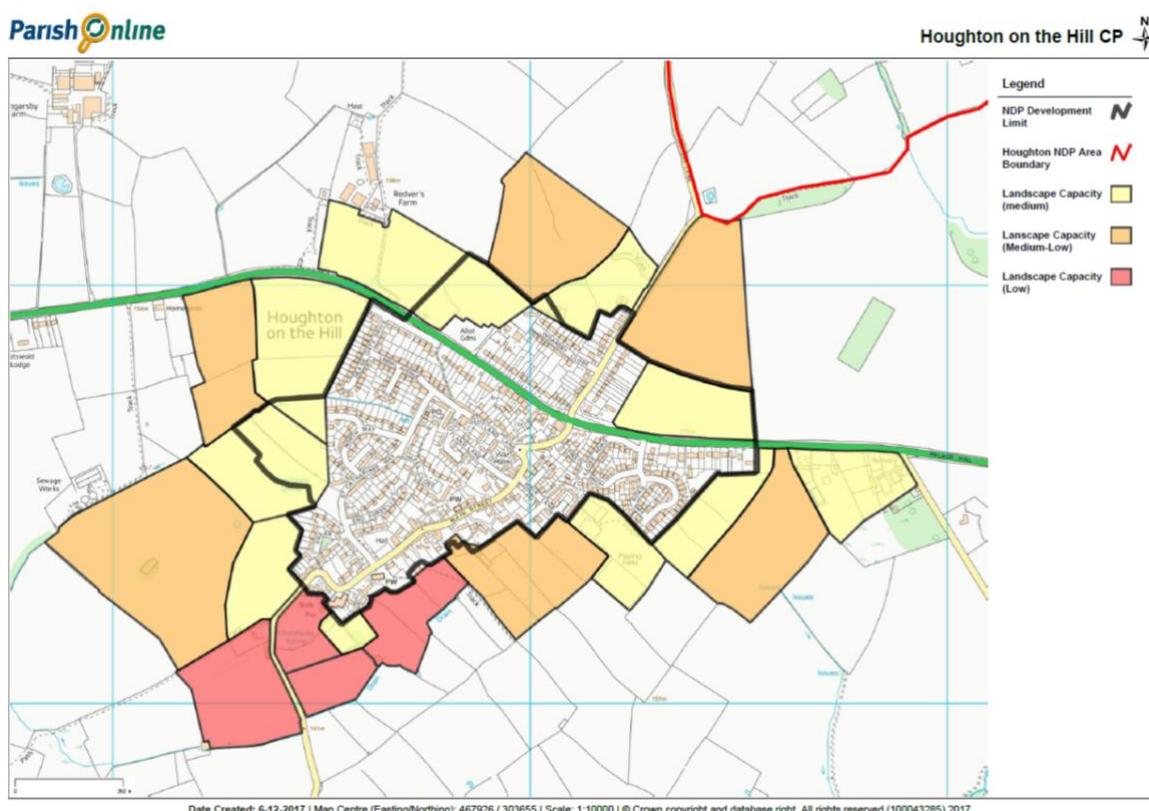


Figure 4-4 Extended Limits to Development superimposed on the HDC Landscape Capacity values.

#### 4.2.1 Housing development site provision

The extended boundary of the Limits to Development incorporates the 2 consented developments that are beyond the boundary shown in the Harborough Core Strategy. It also includes additional land to the north of the A47 that is contiguous with the existing settlement boundary and defined in the HDC Landscape Capacity Assessment (2016) as ‘Medium’, as shown in Figure 4-4. There are no locations within the Plan area identified lower on the landscape scale (i.e. where the visual intrusion would be low and hence there would be a higher capacity for development).

Policy GD2 in the emerging [Harborough Local Plan](#) will permit new housing provided that, inter alia, “it does not, cumulatively with other proposals, significantly exceed the [specified] target for the delivery of new homes in the Rural Centres and Selected Rural Villages”.

National Planning Practice Guidance (ref: [41-009-20160211](#)) says: “Neighbourhood plans should consider...allocating reserve sites to ensure that emerging evidence of housing need is addressed. This can help minimise potential conflicts and ensure that policies in the neighbourhood plan are not overridden by a new Local Plan”.

The [Housing & Planning Act 2016](#) defines Affordable Housing as including rental, shared ownership and starter homes.

Midlands Rural Housing produced a detailed investigation into the housing needs of Houghton on the Hill for HDC and identified a need for 11 open market homes and 14 affordable rented homes in Houghton over the next 5 years for people with a local connection ([Midlands Rural Housing: A Detailed Investigation into the Housing Needs of Houghton on the Hill, September 2015](#)). A number of indicators of current local housing requirements emerged from the community responses to [Q8](#) and [Q12](#) in Housing and Use of Land. Whilst not required to rank their responses, respondents consistently selected bungalows and houses in almost equal measure and showed preference for 2 and 3 bedroom properties, which is in line with the [Harborough District Council’s Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, January 2017](#). Evidence comes from both the number of ticks awarded to each category and the additional comments expressed by respondents.

**POLICY H2: SPECIALIST HOUSING FOR PEOPLE IN LATER LIFE**

Development proposals that comprise or include housing specifically designed for people in their later years, which might include bungalows, sheltered housing and residential care, will be supported provided that each proposal addresses the following criteria:

- a) it is sited within the Houghton Limits to Development; and
- b) its size and configuration are justified by a detailed assessment of the special housing needs to be met; and
- c) where appropriate, both open market and affordable housing are included; and
- d) where appropriate, some dwellings designed to the whole-life standard are included; and
- e) if the reuse or redevelopment of existing buildings are involved, the demands of integrating the new use within the existing built form are addressed; and
- f) appropriate regard is demonstrated for the other relevant Policies within this Neighbourhood Plan.

This policy addresses objectives 1, 2 and 3. A number of indicators emerged from the NP Community Questionnaire demonstrating a requirement in Houghton for the provision of suitable dwellings for people in later life, or those who have mobility issues. This covers a wider age range than would be the case if provision was solely for what would commonly be referred to as 'retirement homes'. Many residents of Houghton, even when past their prime in terms of age or mobility continue to contribute very actively to managing, belonging to, and ensuring the continuity of clubs and societies in the village. Without the provision of adequate accommodation for people to move to as their needs change there is a risk that an increasing number will join those who have already left the village for more appropriate accommodation. This is detrimental to the future wellbeing of the community of Houghton and new developments should seek to provide a broad mix of suitable housing stock and accommodation to discourage further migration.

Reference should be made to [Supplementary Document H2](#) for evidence obtained from consultations in respect of the following:

The need for providing suitable re-housing opportunities in communities.	<a href="#">Fixing our Broken Housing Market, Department for Communities and Local Government (February 2017)</a>
Current dwelling too large. Need for smaller properties to move into...otherwise forced to leave the village.	NP Community Questionnaire, <a href="#">Q10</a> .

Bungalows, warden assisted accommodation, and an independent complex are the three most favoured types of retirement housing in that order.	NP Community Questionnaire, <a href="#">Q14</a> .
Whole of life homes supported.	NP Community Questionnaire, <a href="#">Q15</a> .
Support for a Residential Care Home.	NP Community Questionnaire, <a href="#">Q16</a> .
A proportion of dwellings in new developments should be built for wheelchair access & mobility.	<a href="#">The Building Regulations 2010 Access and Use of Buildings Part M</a> .

### 4.3 Services and Facilities

#### POLICY S1: RETENTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF KEY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Development proposals that would result in the loss of existing services that are key to Houghton's role as a Rural Centre – specifically the food shop, the post office, the primary school and the public houses – or the loss of key facilities – specifically the Village Hall and the sports and recreation grounds – will only be supported if it can be robustly demonstrated that the relevant service or facility is:

- no longer required, or
- no longer viable, or
- being replaced within the development proposal by a new or improved service or facility that is equivalent or better in terms of quality, quantity and location.

This policy addresses objectives 3, 4 and 6. HDC has identified the village as a potential Rural Centre ([HDC - Harborough Rural Centres - Houghton on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study, §0.1, April 2016](#)). It has a bus service (which is under threat of withdrawal) and at least four of six relevant key services: a food shop, post office, primary school and public houses. Notably it does not have a GP surgery. Appendix 2 provides more details on Houghton's key services and facilities and their value to the community.

**POLICY S2: INFRASTRUCTURE**

Development proposals should consider, assess and address their impact on and potential to benefit:

- a) local traffic congestion and existing on-street and off-street parking problems, particularly those associated with the Primary School and other community buildings, and
- b) pedestrian and cycle movement, and
- c) village community facilities and in particular their value in helping new community members to settle.

This policy addresses objectives 3, 4 and 6. Houghton has a range of community facilities such as the Village Hall, Sports Pavilion and Sports Field, St Catharine's Church and the Methodist Chapel, all of which are used for an array of community activities. A review of the facilities available and their suitability as resources for an expanding village population are considered in Appendix 2.

**POLICY S3: PROVISION OF HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND**

Major developments of more than 10 dwellings or over 0.5 ha must ensure that adequate broadband services are available to all residents and/or users of the development. Development proposals should incorporate a bespoke duct network, designed and implemented in cooperation with a recognised network provider, and where viable, a fibre to the premises (FTTP) solution. Other forms of infrastructure, such as facilities supporting mobile broadband and Wi-Fi, should be included in major developments and designed in a sympathetic and appropriate way in order to reflect the character of the surrounding area.

This policy addresses objective 6. Installation of broadband connections is relatively cheap at the time of house construction relative to retrofitting; hence there is a considerable advantage in economy and efficiency in default installation in all new dwellings. The speed of service should be based on standards being rolled out from the Superfast Leicestershire initiative.

While the existing village is now connected to "Superfast Broadband", the actual broadband speed is usually limited by the length of the copper (or aluminium) cable connection to homes from the BT cabinets. While this is a serious problem for many villagers, especially in the southern and eastern areas of the village, it is not a problem directly addressable by the Neighbourhood Plan.

## 4.4 Traffic and Transport

### 4.4.1 Traffic Management

During consultations many respondents expressed major concern about the volumes of traffic using both the east-west route of the A47 (see section 6.1.4 in Community Projects) and the north-south route along Main Street ([Q26](#)). Free-form comments in the NP Community Questionnaire and the Pre-submission Consultation process identified support from some villagers for the building of a by-pass. This would run from the A47 to Stretton Lane thus relieving Main Street of much of the through traffic.

Without a viable and more convenient route for

- a) motorists currently using Main Street as a through route between A47 and A6, and
- b) those parents from outside the village bringing children to, and collecting from Houghton School

the problems will not be resolved and indeed are likely to worsen.

Further, in order to relieve parking issues in Main Street and around the school and church, a car park at the south end of such a bypass adjacent to Stretton Lane could provide a convenient access to these important facilities (see Appendix 4, section 1.1.4, Table 1).

It could be claimed that in its current form the village layout encourages people to use cars and this is exacerbated by the temptation offered to through traffic to use Main Street as a short cut between the A6 at Oadby and the A47 in Houghton. For example a survey over four days and done at different times of day at the end of August and beginning of September 2015 on Stretton Lane ([Traffic Movements on Stretton Lane](#)) recorded an average of 231 cars in one hour with about half entering the village and half leaving. At school times and in the morning this total can increase to 289.

### 4.4.2 Buses

Houghton is currently served, until early evening Monday to Saturday, by the Centrebus Midlands 747 bus service between Leicester and Uppingham. Since August 2016 this service has been reduced from hourly to 2-hourly during all Monday to Friday off-peak times and on Saturdays (no Sunday or Bank Holiday services). Before 09.50 and after 15.55 buses only serve stops on the A47. Between these times buses serve Main Street, St Catharines Way, Linwal Avenue, and Deane Gate Drive.

Currently this bus service is under threat of closure on an annual basis. The operator (Centrebus) has been supported for the period to January 2019 by subsidy from LCC and Rutland County Council (RCC) to allow time for further negotiations between stakeholders to provide a sustainable public transport option.



**Figure 4-5 Plan of Houghton showing the peak-time (direct) and off-peak (through the village) bus routes.**

Responses to the NP Community Questionnaire which pre-date the reduction of the bus service to 2 hourly, and the threats to its continuation at all, indicate that the community would like to see a continuing and more frequent bus service to Leicester and a new service to Oadby, connecting with services to Market Harborough (Q22). This would provide residents with improved access to employment, retail and leisure opportunities, particularly those who do not have access to private cars.

In answer to YPQ4 of the Young People's Questionnaire, Houghton's young people indicated that public transport is the thing they like least about the village. When asked, "Does the currently available transport meet your needs?" 42% said it did not (YPQ8). Responses requested that the service to and from Leicester needs to be more frequent and a public bus service to Oadby is needed as that is where many attend school and consequently are involved in after-school activities.

## 4.5 Environment

### POLICY E1: CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND BIODIVERSITY

The Neighbourhood Area supports a range of protected and vulnerable species and development proposals should address, with mitigation where appropriate, their impact on these and related habitats. Positive measures to sustain wildlife in Houghton would include the provision or alignment of interconnected open spaces in the form of corridors that would allow unrestricted wildlife movement into and within the settlement.

This policy addresses objective 7. 77% of NP Community Questionnaire respondents chose 'being rural' as one of the most important feelings of living in Houghton ([Q1](#)). Over 75% of Houghton residents value the rural nature of the village with its diverse flora and fauna. They appreciate access to the open countryside and want it conserved and enhanced. This is consistent with [HDC's Core Strategy](#) which includes the encouragement of policies that will enhance the Parish's distinctive rural landscape, settlement pattern, historic assets, natural environment and biodiversity. This policy is also fulfilling the recommendation of point 109, page 25 of the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#).

Outside the village of Houghton, the parish has a population of both skylarks and yellow hammers. Both species are in decline and have overly localised populations nationwide. Their reduction has been caused by habitat changes and destruction (evidence for this is in the British Trust for Ornithology's Bird Trend documents for [skylarks](#) and [yellowhammers](#)).

## 5 PROGRESS, USE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Houghton Parish Council will maintain regular contact with Harborough District Council in order to monitor the implementation of the Plan and consider the need to review the Plan in response to changing National, District and local requirements. The completed plan is only useful if the policies within it are periodically reviewed and their results monitored. This process is the responsibility of the Parish Council.

Periodic review is expected to take place at least every 5 years. Currently there are no Neighbourhood Plans (NP) which have yet been old enough to undergo such a periodic review. Also, government legislation is currently evolving to provide improved clarity on the process for reviewing and updating Neighbourhood Plans.

## 6 APPENDIX 1 – VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

### 1.1 Introduction

The Village Design Statement does not aim to offer advice for the design of buildings. Its purpose is to illustrate the distinctive elements and characteristics of the village that should be considered by developers when designing new buildings or altering existing buildings. It is not concerned with the preferred location of new developments if a number of potential locations exist, nor with the type of dwellings.

The guidance in this Statement recognises that developers will probably have a suite of designs they prefer to offer in particular locations and for a particular mix of different size of properties to achieve their objectives for the site, and also recognises that infill, minor development or redevelopment of existing buildings/structures may bring forward creative proposals. The guidance cannot and does not seek to affect those choices but does seek to improve certain features without destroying the developer's or the individual's designs.

Capturing the essence of the built environment in Houghton is not easy as even within the conservation area building styles and ages are diverse. Just describing buildings does not capture what they mean to residents and each will mean different things to different people. How the built environment influences the behaviour of the people living in the village, in other words their function is the most important factor. Although it will not be possible to avoid traffic problems created by new developments, it should be possible through good design to integrate new houses into the village and make it more attractive for residents to walk or cycle around the village rather than use their cars.

### 1.2 The village context

The original village followed the line of a high ridge running south west to north east formed of sand and gravel on top of Leicestershire clay. Water came from the many local springs formed at the interface between sand and clay. The village pump on Scotland Lane marks one of these water sources. Houghton's Main Street served as the historical centre of the village, lined by numerous 17th, 18th and 19th century buildings that now comprise part of the Conservation Area. The village maintained its concentration around this area until shortly after the Second World War, when the arrival of five consecutive housing developments throughout 1950 – 1980, by different developers, effectively tripled Houghton's population from 600 to over 1500<sup>1</sup>. Despite this, Houghton retains a strong independent village identity with each of the developments, each with their own distinctive styles, contributing individually to the 'whole character' of the village.

Houghton has a population of 1524 in 641 dwellings, (2011 census). This is about 30 people fewer than in the 2001 census. Houghton is identified as a potential Rural Centre in the emerging new [Local Plan](#) for the Harborough District (previously a Selected Rural Village).

Maintaining the rural character of the village, whilst absorbing additional developments is clearly of concern to almost the whole of the residents. When asked: '*When determining*

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<sup>1</sup> 1. Linwal Avenue/Deane Gate Drive - Smarts 1960s; 2. The Heights - Clarksons 1969-1970; 3. St Catharines Way - Wilsons 1972-1974; 4. Hollies Close/Weir Lane - Wilsons 1975-1976; 5. Freer Close - Fletchers 1976.

*Planning Applications how important is it to consider the impact on the overall landscape and setting of the village?* 96% of responses responded with ‘Important’ or ‘Desirable’. Fewer than 1% of responders ticked ‘Not important’ ([Q32](#)).

A number of small local businesses exist, providing valuable, but limited employment opportunities, but there is no dedicated business area with units for commercial or industrial activities in the village. The nearest the village comes to such an area is on the A47 at the junction with Main Street where there is a petrol station, some car servicing operations and a car sales outlet. The majority of the working population commute to other areas. In a survey in 2012 undertaken to support a case for bringing super-fast broadband to the village, a sizeable number of small businesses operating from private dwellings was identified. The NP Community Questionnaire identified in [Q40](#) that there are 41 businesses based in the village. In response to [Q41](#) fifty-two respondents reported that they worked from home either full or part time.

There seems to be little enthusiasm for industrial or retail units to be made available in the village. When asked via the NP Community Questionnaire ‘*Would you welcome a number of small industrial office units being located within or adjacent to the village?*’ only 98 people responded and of these, 73% answered ‘No’ ([Q42](#)). 376 Questionnaire respondents gave a view on the desirability of a business park of which 70% were in the negative ([Q44](#)). When asked for their vision for the village in ten years’ time, Stakeholders suggested that the village would by then have a small business park ([Stakeholder Consultation Workshop p12](#)). This is in strong contrast to the views of residents.

## 1.3 The character of the landscape setting

### 1.3.1 Setting

Although only some 7 miles from the centre of the City of Leicester, Houghton is the first settlement when leaving the city on the east side that has managed to retain its true village character and identity. The village has commanding pastoral views over open countryside. These reinforce its sense of place and history as a once agricultural community. Examples include the views of Quenby Hall (built between 1620 and 1630) to the north across a valley. From the Weir Lane community field there are extensive and unspoilt views across open countryside towards the East and South stretching way beyond the parish boundary. Although not asked specifically about views, 301 NP Community Questionnaire respondents (71.5%) said they regularly used footpaths and public rights of way around the village and 226 respondents or 53.7%, said they valued these rights of way ([Q34](#)). By using these paths villagers will have ready access to long views over the high Leicestershire landscape.

Respondents to the NP Community Questionnaire expressed concern that developments in the nearby villages of Bushby and Thurnby might extend those settlements further to the east such that in the fullness of time Houghton, if developed significantly in a westerly direction might be swallowed up into the environs of the City itself ([Q18](#), [Q19](#) and free-form comment [Q19](#)).

### 1.3.2 Gateways

The A47 running east to west is on the northern boundary of the larger part of Houghton and dividing the village into two unequal parts with the majority to the south of the main road. There are houses adjacent to the A47 itself, which on the north side become linked with the housing developments along Ingarsby Lane and the cul-de-sac Ingarsby Close. Ingarsby Lane enters the village from the north rising steeply from a valley so little of the village is visible on this approach until reaching the A47/Main Street junction.

Similarly, the A47 from the east rises steeply as it approaches Houghton up Palace Hill so again the extent of housing development is not evident from this direction, until one is almost in the village, or hardly evident at all if merely passing through Houghton travelling west towards Leicester. In contrast the westerly approach along the A47 from Leicester sweeps around a wide curve offering a panoramic view across the modern developments of Deane Gate Drive, Linwal Avenue, St Catharines Way and adjacent roads, with the spire of the parish church of St Catharine on the skyline. The approach from the south along Stretton Lane provides an alternative view of the church, though again with little indication of the extent of the various housing developments. Remnants of Medieval ridge and furrow field working, and springs, can be seen in the fields on this approach and also in many other fields around the village.

Most field footpaths in close vicinity of the village, even those where some parts have been lost, can be traced to converge on St Catharine's Church from nearby villages of Gaulby, King's Norton, Little Stretton, Stoughton, Bushby and Thurnby, Scraughton and Keyham. The views from these footpaths when approaching the village provide other vistas of the attractive setting of Houghton within the countryside.

## 1.4 Settlement pattern and character

At the north western end of the village the extent of the built environment has been influenced by the position of the boundary between the parish of Houghton and the parish of Hungarton, where it effectively runs adjacent to the A47. Discussions have recently taken place the outcome of which is mutual consent for the parish boundary to be realigned to the position shown on the Neighbourhood Plan Area map.

### 1.4.1 Principal 20th Century Developments

#### 1.4.1.1 Linwal Avenue/Deane Gate Drive

This development was constructed in the 1960s by then local builder A. Walter Smart. It contains a mixture of houses and bungalows with a variety of sizes of conventional design. The layout benefits from this variety and most properties have both front and rear gardens of reasonable size with low walled boundaries at the front. The cul-de-sacs have narrow roads and the A47 junction with Deane Gate Drive has become very busy as a result of the further developments on St Catharines Way and the increasing traffic loads on both roads at this point.

#### 1.4.1.2 *The Heights*



Figure A1-6-1 Home Close Road on the Heights Estate.

This development was constructed in the early 1970s and comprises mostly houses with a few bungalows. Whilst the house designs are typical of their time, the road layout has been imaginatively constructed with curves and bends which together with the open frontages and individual residents' planting schemes has achieved a spacious and well-ordered appearance. A number of properties enjoy the benefit of open views across the valley of the River Sence towards Gaulby, and there is easy access to the Playing Field and children's play area.

#### 1.4.1.3 *St Catharines Way, Forsells End, North Way, Chapel Close and Winckley Close*



Figure A1-6-2 St Catharines Way looking towards the Church, with many mature trees.

This development followed quickly after The Heights in the later 1970s. The layout incorporated several mature trees, some of which have since been removed, and open green areas some of which were planted with trees, which are now a dominant feature of the area. Examples are in Chapel Close and Freer Close. There are a variety of houses, (but no

bungalows) including some modern terraced and link-detached designs, which has enabled a wider range of house values. The landscaping is arguably the best of the new developments and quite a number of properties benefit from open country views. One or two *cul-de-sacs* end openly probably with further development in mind, but the road widths of these are inadequate for more than a very limited number of vehicles.

#### **1.4.1.4 Freer Close**

This small development was built by Fletchers, a company that is no longer active. Building started in the mid-1970s but was delayed for 2-3 years after the first few houses had been built. The design of the Close is similar to the Wilson development along St Catharines Way with houses built of red brick and having a Georgian flavour. There is an attractive green area in the centre of the development which now has mature trees. The houses on the northwest facing aspect have magnificent views to the west and north, which will be seriously changed by any development to the NW of the village.

The St Catharines Way, North Way, Winckley Close, Chapel Close and Freer Close developments between them comprise 121 dwellings. Set in amongst these are eight significant green spaces. They give a spaciousness to the development which connects with the rural nature of Houghton and contributes a great deal to the character of the settlement by preventing aspects of urbanisation/sub-urbanisation pervading this part of the village. When asked via the village-wide consultation over 50% of respondents indicated they value the St Catharines and Chapel Close accessible green spaces as well as other green spaces around the village ([Q34](#)).

#### **1.4.1.5 Hollies Close**

This group of houses takes its name from, and sits on the former yard of Hollies Farm, a building which remains, and which is within the Main Street Conservation Area. Built in 1975/76 by Wilsons in red brick the houses are a mixture of detached and linked detached styles.

### **1.5 Buildings and spaces in the village**

#### **1.5.1 Desirable features for new housing developments**

Creating a good place to live requires good design that is centred on the needs of people. Many modern developments have produced bleak and unfriendly environments, which alienate residents and create unobserved spaces that can be the site of undesirable behaviour. So that Houghton avoids this dystopian vision, the guidelines in [Building for Life 12. The sign of a good place to live](#) should guide all new developments within the NP area. This document lists 12 principles which should be used to guide the design and layout of new housing and these are divided into three groupings which deal with integrating the new housing into the village, creating an attractive place to live and making sure that homes and streets encourage communication between people and protect against unwanted activity. The twelve points are presented as a series of questions that should be asked about the new development.

**Table 1 The application of the design principles of "Building for Life" to Houghton.**

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Village Design Statement response</b>
<b>Group A. Integrating into the neighbourhood</b>	
<b>A1. Connections</b>  Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?	It is important that any new development has more than one route in and out. There should be easy and safe access for pedestrians and cyclists, which is separate from the access for cars.
<b>A2. Facilities and services</b>  Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?	If the development is not close to community facilities then it should have good connections to them, especially for people on foot or bicycle, to minimise existing traffic congestion in their vicinity.
<b>A3. Public transport</b>  Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?	Any new development should have all its houses within 400m of existing public transport stops.
<b>A4. Meeting local housing requirements</b>  Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?	The general principles of planning for the provision of an appropriate mix of accommodation types to support the community are addressed in section 4.2 of the NP document.

<b>Group B. Creating a place</b>	
<b>B5. Character</b>  Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?	Character can be achieved either by replicating elements of the traditional building style in the village in new houses or by distinctive modern architecture that echoes the themes prevalent in the community.
<b>B6. Working with the site and its context</b>  Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?	Houghton is a rural village and many residents have named this as one of the attractive features that should be preserved. When asked what it was like living in Houghton 77% of respondents said they felt a sense of being rural ( <a href="#">Q1</a> ), and when asked to describe two particular aspects of Houghton which they valued and would like to have preserved, 47% of 305 respondents mentioned the rural feel ( <a href="#">Q37</a> ). 28 of the 75 Young People's responses indicated countryside/rural/peaceful as what they most liked about living in Houghton ( <a href="#">YPQ3</a> ). New developments need to create interesting views out to the open countryside without spoiling existing views and use green space and trees to enhance the rural feel of the development.
<b>B7. Creating well defined streets and spaces</b>  Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?	Development proposals should have streets that create a feeling of space, perspective and security. Views along streets should provide interest through variety. Avoiding straight roads and rows of houses enables there to be surprises revealed as people round turns. Main Street has this aspect along its length, for example the view towards the church from outside the present vicarage.

<p><b>B8. Easy to find your way around</b></p> <p>Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?</p>	<p>Layout of roads should follow a logical pattern through a development making it easy for those unfamiliar with the area to progress in safety for themselves and for residents. Pedestrian and cycleways should be clearly marked and pathways accessible to wheelchairs and pushchairs. Pedestrians and cyclists should be provided with more than one access to all new developments.</p> <p>Road/street signs should be in keeping with existing signage and reflect the character of the village, be of good quality, and adequate to inform visitors and emergency services, but not overbearing.</p>
<p><b>Group C. Street and home</b></p>	
<p><b>C9. Streets for all</b></p> <p>Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?</p>	<p>New developments should have winding roads with broad pavements, which will slow traffic and give pedestrians room to walk two or three abreast.</p>
<p><b>C10. Car parking</b></p> <p>Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?</p>	<p>It is important that there is sufficient parking for each house to provide a sense of space that residents are not tempted to park on public spaces intended for recreation, nor on pavements. Parking of this nature on grassy areas can also cause damage to the ground producing unsightly areas that detract from the visual delights of the area. The use of specialist parking surfaces allowing grass to grow through should be considered in order to maintain safely the visual attraction afforded by grassy surfaces.</p>
<p><b>C11. Public and private spaces</b></p> <p>Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?</p>	<p>All parts of the street should be visible from houses so providing natural street monitoring. There should be no 'dead areas'</p>

	<p>where unwanted activities can be practised unseen. It should be obvious which areas are public and which are private so as to remove the potential for dispute between neighbours.</p> <p>Publicly accessible green spaces should be incorporated into new developments using as guidance the ratio of publicly accessible green space to dwellings found in the developments of St Catharines Way, North Way, Winckley Close, Chapel Close and Freer Close. The opportunity for appropriate arboreal planting is most valuable in this context.</p>
<b>C12. External storage and amenity space</b>	<p>Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles with space for recycling bins and boxes positioned so as not to present an eyesore when viewed from the street?</p> <p>This should be applied consistently throughout all new developments and any changes to existing properties should not compromise these important spaces in the interests of creating more living space.</p>

These principles should be applied to new development within the NP area although it might not be possible to achieve them all every time. As already mentioned Houghton on the Hill has a rural nature much appreciated by residents. The first and sixth principles in the list capture this aspect of development and are the ones that are most likely to change the nature of the village if the process of setting a new development into the current community is not done well. The four developments that have been added to the village since the 1960s have been of this nature. The Heights, St Catharines Way and Freer Close are all composed of one style of house that bears little relation to the original buildings of the village apart from being built of the vernacular red brick in two of the developments. A critical activity that will be encouraged is for developers at an early stage of the design process to survey buildings in the village such as the old brick farmhouses on Main Street, thatched roofed houses and other distinctive buildings and to use elements of these to inspire their own work. This process will not mean copying existing buildings, for example no modern work will use thatch, but to use existing buildings for inspiration so capturing the essence of the current village look and feel.



Figure A1-6-3 St Catharines Green provides an open green space alongside the main route through the development. This is a good example of the use of public open spaces.

## 1.6 Features to be considered in the design of buildings in new developments and for modifications to existing buildings.

The addition of new developments over some 25 or so years introduced into the village a range of different styles, and building materials, bearing little in common with the properties in the older parts of the village. In particular new technologies will create additional opportunities for addressing climate change ([Code for Sustainable Homes, 2010](#)). Although no dominant style exists which can be used as a reference for new developments, the following should be taken into account to encourage high quality outcomes both in design and in creating a better place to live which occupants and others in the village can be proud of.

### 1.6.1 Building design

- a) The height of dwellings should be limited to no more than 2 floors, though some houses having 2½ floors will be acceptable if the design is sympathetic with the surroundings, and provided those dwellings having 2½ floors do not dominate the development.
- b) New developments should include a mix of sympathetic styles avoiding a predominance of a few standardised designs and avoiding monotony. Designs which capture and reflect the distinctiveness of the village will be encouraged.
- c) Building materials should generally and where appropriate be in keeping with the existing materials in the vicinity of the development site. Brick size and colour, mortar colour, and roof materials will all be features to be considered. Roof design is to follow traditional practices avoiding a low pitch. Roof tiles should follow the examples in existing developments such as those in the St Catharines Way area. The use of flat roofs on new build and on extensions to existing dwellings is discouraged unless their

use preserves an established, attractive view of the countryside which might otherwise be lost.

- d) The village-wide consultation identified a desire for means of generating energy to be incorporated into new dwellings. Results from Q49 show more than 55% of responses thought that '*New dwellings in Houghton should have means of generating energy (e.g. Solar tiles)*'. Only 9.5% of respondents disagreed.
- e) Featureless and window-less walls can be made to look more attractive by selective and sympathetic use of bricks to form a pattern. Walls built from traditional block work and finished with painted rendering will also be encouraged in order to break up an otherwise monotonous view from the street, though placed selectively within a development and not repeated too frequently. A varied orientation of dwellings within a development is preferred to a too regimented approach.
- f) Where a chimney is a feature of the design, it should be incorporated into an external chimney breast to break-up the unattractive impression of a slab wall.
- g) Incorporation of some cladding, be that natural timber, tile, or UPVC may benefit a design provided it does not become a dominant/over-bearing feature, is easy to access for maintenance, and is in keeping with the design of buildings close by.
- h) Window design should maintain a visually acceptable proportion of glass to wall when viewed from the street and should encourage solar gain, heat conservation and low maintenance. Where possible, when windows are replaced, the replacements should be in keeping with the originals in terms of design, scale and detail. This applies particularly to the replacement of wooden frames by UPVC.
- i) Garages should be set back from the pavement, not extending forward of the building lines of dwellings and garages in the same street. Garages should not dominate the site, and their design should be sympathetic with that of the dwelling. Garages located totally in rear gardens detract from the social space provided by rear gardens and should be avoided.
- j) Over 60% of responses to the village-wide NP Community Questionnaire agree that new dwellings should be provided with some means of harvesting surface water to water gardens, flush toilets, and/or for washing cars. Only 3% disagreed (Q49). Water conservation inside buildings should be maximised through appropriate specification and installation of water-efficient appliances and fittings combined with good overall plumbing design.
- k) The demographic structure of the village is dynamic so that houses constructed in a conventional way are not always suitable for all stages of life. Recent architectural ideas have proposed the concept of the Whole-Life House which is constructed so as to be readily adapted when required to accommodate the changing physical needs of the occupants over time - see [Adaptive Flexibility in Housing – The Whole Life House, John Brennan \(2010\)](#). Developers in Houghton are encouraged to include a proportion of whole-life dwellings in their housing mix.

### 1.6.2 Boundaries

The style, height and materials used in new boundaries should be in keeping with the property itself and its immediate neighbours, i.e. designed to harmonise with its surroundings, rather than stand out as a landmark.

Walls of any significant height are evident mostly on Main Street. On the west side of the village the 1960s development of Linwal Avenue and Deane Gate Drive introduced low level walls to delineate a boundary, and in subsequent developments open frontages were the norm, though some planting, walls and fences have been added. Where walls feature as the pavement boundary in a new development they should be constructed from natural brick, with height limited to 0.7 metres.

Water courses should not be used as boundaries to properties. For new developments the existence of springs should be established in advance of laying out a site, and appropriate measures taken to ensure the spring water is ducted appropriately in order to avoid future problems for residents.

Fencing, particularly high metal or timber fencing with decorative features, is not in keeping with the styles of pavement boundary found in the village and should be avoided.

Front gardens open to the highway are a regular feature within the newer parts of the village and are encouraged.

Hedging can add to the attractiveness of the street scene, but native box or beech type hedging should be used. Rapid growing hedges such as *Leylandii* should not be planted to delineate or privatise a boundary. There are examples in the village which demonstrate how unsightly and impractical that type of species can become over time as its natural height is far in excess of that appropriate for a boundary to a residential property within the built environment, even when maintenance is practised. Other native species in established hedges should be retained if appropriately maintained to avoid becoming over-bearing or a nuisance to neighbours and those passing by.

Decorative trees can be incorporated into a boundary provided they will not grow beyond seven metres high. Traditional “field trees” such as oak and sycamore, which grow to a substantial height, should not be planted within new developments. Existing trees along the boundary to a development should be retained wherever possible.

### 1.6.3 New building in the Conservation Area.

The conservation area defines the core of the original village. Without it Houghton would simply be a quite pleasant, slightly detached, somewhat bland, dormitory suburb of Leicester. When asked in the NP Community Questionnaire to describe two particular aspects of Houghton “...which you especially value and would like to see preserved,” the character of the Main Street was the fourth most frequent free-form comment (Q37). The conservation area consists of Main Street, the adjacent arms of Scotland Lane, including The Rise and Elizabeth Close, Weir Lane, Hollies Close, School Lane and part of Stretton Lane (see the map in Figure 4-1 of the Neighbourhood Plan).

Whilst all the provisions of the VDS apply to the conservation area, it also requires some additional, detailed, consideration. It is the conservation area, particularly Main Street, which reflects the village's origins as an agricultural settlement. There have been so many alterations, in-fills and redevelopments permitted over the years that this connection should not be broken. This is not to say that there should be no changes at all. Not all works which may be proposed would necessarily detract from the appeal that it has. Indeed, some might enhance it. However, even very limited unsympathetic change could damage it irrevocably.

The conservation area, with the exception of the more modern developments of Elizabeth Close and The Rise, cannot be described as having any particular style other than its historical, agricultural content, as almost no two features of Main Street/Scotland Lane are the same. It is a diverse architectural continuum, and thus has a unique appeal and identity.

This is the particular strength which defines the character of the built village. The aim must be to protect and enhance that continuum.



Figure A1-6-4 Contrasting building styles down Main Street

The influence of any proposed changes to a building or a new site must be considered in their effects on all aspects of the section of street they occupy. To facilitate this consideration a realistic representation, perhaps a computer generation or artist's impression may need to be prepared. The continuum comprises many elements. It isn't practical to attempt to list them all, but some key considerations, which should be addressed when considering changes, are set out below. With the considerable number of large trees and other planting, including that next to the road, adjacent to the road, and visible over and through the spaces between buildings along the road, aspects can differ significantly between the seasons. This seasonal variation must feature in all deliberations.

#### 1.6.4 Key considerations

- a) Considering particularly boundary walls, some of which are also retaining walls, they are largely of traditional and substantial proportions and construction. Any new building should take design and style cues from those adjacent structures.
- b) Roofs are almost exclusively of a fairly steep pitch and traditional materials with thatch, slate and tiles predominating. Where there are changes to roofs this theme should be continued with particular attention being paid to the type and colour of tiles where they are proposed, to give a best visual fit with the surrounding roofs.
- c) Finishes to buildings are very varied in the existing stock, with stone, various renderings and aged brickwork featuring most commonly. The majority of established forms of finish may be appropriate, but again colour and harmony (even if that harmony is at times a pleasing contrast) with the surrounding construction will be the key consideration. Simple modern exposed brickwork is very unlikely to meet the criteria.
- d) Consideration must be given to the architectural interest and detail of proposed changes. Thus, the addition of details to break up otherwise featureless frontages and the provision and style of windows, doors and construction detail should take cues from other similar elements in the continuum. The continuum would be particularly important here as for instance a cottage next to larger or more modern houses might take its cues from other, similar properties in the street, not necessarily those adjacent.
- e) Most importantly spaces around and between individual buildings and all other features, including substantial trees, must be considered. The views and aspects afforded by spaces and the changes in light they cause are fundamental to the cohesion of the continuum. The placing of a building or feature in relation to neighbouring constructions and to its own plot can only be properly considered in the context of the features and the space around it. Here scale is most important. The diminishment of space in the continuum by a proposed construction at an inappropriate scale within its setting, particularly with regard to height, will be seriously detrimental to the whole.
- f) A key objective will be to keep variety in the continuum, as this is the essence of its formation. The gradual conversion of smaller houses to larger ones and the re-building of bungalows to houses is a trend which will not sustain Main Street. It will eventually bring a uniformity that will be seriously detrimental to the whole. This trend also gives rise to houses that overbear their plots, with serious consequences for the balance of the continuum both in terms of diversity and the built/un-built space balance.

## 1.7 Aspects to be considered in the design of new construction or re-development of existing buildings beyond the village

### 1.7.1 Landscape impact

There are a number of farmsteads and other agricultural buildings scattered throughout the parish and recently a solar farm completed off Ingarsby Lane. Any modification to existing, and/or new construction should respect the rural setting, enhance the high-quality landscape, and demonstrate appropriate regard for the much-valued views from the village taking appropriate guidance from the VDS. Where necessary, in order to conform with the above, the height of new buildings should show appropriate regard for the contour and scale of the landscape in which they are set. This will generally infer a preference for single storey construction, but not exclusively so where evidence can be produced.

### 1.7.2 Tall structures

Any incorporation and/or use of features such as towers, masts, floodlights or other features which may intrude upon on the setting and visual impact of the surroundings given should be avoided wherever possible and, where essential, their siting must show careful regard for their impact.

## 1.8 Street Furniture

Street furniture should be carefully located to avoid a feeling of clutter. It should be in keeping with the existing signage and reflect the character of the village, of good quality, and adequate to inform visitors and emergency services but not overbearing. Pedestrian and cycleways should be clearly marked.

Utilities, particularly telephony and power distribution companies, are encouraged to replace their pole mounted overhead wiring with more modern, tidier construction, and take all opportunities to replace it with underground wiring.

Adequate seating should be provided consistent with the initiative stemming from the Parish Plan. Litter bins and notice boards should be provided in new developments, the latter to ensure new residents are well informed and to foster a sense of inclusion into the community.

Energy efficient street lighting should provide safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Lighting should satisfy recognised safety standards but not be brighter than guidelines indicate. Poles to be as sympathetic as possible to the rural nature of the particular road but because of the diversity of developments they do not need to be uniform throughout the whole village. Wall-mounted street lights as evident in the Conservation Area, can be effective and reduce the amount of clutter at street level, and make it easier and safer to pass along pavements.

## 7 APPENDIX 2 – HOUGHTON SERVICES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### 1.1 Community Facilities and Services

#### 1.1.1 Houghton C of E Primary School

The school currently provides for 4 to 11-year-old children. Houghton School feeds into secondary schools based in Oadby with school contract transport provided on school days.



Figure A2-7-1 A view of part of the play areas in the school grounds.

There is a single class for each year group and demand for places is high with about half the pupils coming from outside the school's catchment area. The maximum number of pupils attending the school is 210, seven classes of 30.

The school is an integral part of the local community and is committed to fostering in all pupils a strong sense of respect, honesty, co-operation and responsibility. Importance is placed on developing skills in reading, writing and numeracy and the school offers a creative curriculum through which it hopes to see all pupils realise their full academic, creative and personal potential. The school attaches a great importance to its Christian ethos and works closely with the Parish Church of St Catharine to this end, but it welcomes children from all faiths and none.

In 2016 the school was rated “Good” following an OFSTED inspection. It is very likely that the school will convert to an academy school and become part of a Multi-Academy Trust in 2018.

New housing developments in the catchment area will have implications for pupil numbers but it is not expected that this will generate a demand for more than 25 extra places across the seven year groups. Admissions of four-year-old pupils are prioritised in the following order:

- a) Special Educational Needs,
- b) catchment area children,

- c) siblings already at the school, and
- d) distance from Houghton.

Currently approximately half of the pupils are from outside the catchment area. As a result of housing developments in Houghton it is anticipated that the number of pupils from within the school catchment area will increase and it is therefore likely that the number of pupils admitted from Leicester City and its outskirts will reduce. Four year olds from nearby villages will not be affected as they will continue to have priority over those from further afield.

### 1.1.2 Houghton Village Hall



Figure A2-7-2 Houghton Village Hall, Main Street.

The Village Hall was built in 1922 and has benefitted from significant investment and improvement in the last five years. It comprises a main hall which can seat 140, a committee room, a modern kitchen and storage inside and in outbuildings. It still bears a legacy from piecemeal development over nearly 100 years and has particular deficits in energy efficiency and space for the present, let alone increasing, village population. It is used for a very diverse range of activities, including dances and social functions, indoor bowls, committee meetings, mums and toddlers group, exercise group, Brownies, Circuit training, Community Meetings, Guides, Karate, Lunch Break for senior citizens, Messy Church, Polling Station, Scouts, Singing Sally and Ducks Friends for pre-school children, Yoga and private lettings.

### 1.1.3 Sport & Recreation

Houghton is well provided with facilities insofar as there is a large playing field of some 4 acres on Weir Lane, a cricket pitch on Dixon's Field, a sports field and multipurpose hard court at the school, and a bowling green on the Village Hall field with a good area of surrounding recreation field. Some of the green spaces on St Catharines Way are also enjoyed for informal games.

The children's playground and young people's shelter on the Weir Lane Field were both installed in recent years and are in fairly good condition, but consideration is being given to additional facilities. The tennis courts and tennis pavilion are in very good condition, but the main pavilion has been declared as near the end of its useful life by a structural surveyor and is in need of radical renovation or replacement.

### 1.1.4 Places of Worship

St Catharine's Parish Church commenced building in about 1220 and is well used by its congregation and by villagers for baptisms, weddings and funerals as well as for school use and occasional musical performances and meetings. The Church plans to re-order the interior to enhance the potential for much wider community and Church use complementary to the Village Hall.



Figure A2-7-3 The Methodist Chapel, Main Street.

The Methodist Chapel was built in 1852 and comprises the chapel room and a school room which is let quite regularly. The Chapel plans to open the front approach to create a garden. Both these buildings face continuing maintenance costs that are difficult to afford.

### 1.1.5 Burial Ground

The HDC report on [Provision for Open Space Sport and Recreation \(2015\)](#) includes assessment of adequacy of burial ground facilities. This report highlights Houghton as having a shortfall of both burial and cremation ashes space within the 15-year Plan period. St Catharine's Church owns agricultural land adjacent to the current burial ground and there is potential to expand the burial ground into this area. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) are aware of the need for such expansion and are developing plans to meet the anticipated long-term needs for burial space while respecting the conservation area status of the land involved and providing a positive contribution to the needs of the community.

### 1.1.6 Health Services

There is no medical or dental practice in Houghton. Medical practices at Billesdon, Bushby, and Downing Drive Evington, are highly regarded by their patients; 5 residents (7% of those expressing an opinion) wish for a new Health Centre and Practice in the village ([Q39](#)). Houghton Helpline assists many people who have no car or can no longer drive to access medical or dental services elsewhere, including hospital services. The Pharmacy in Main Street provides an excellent service both for advice and for dispensing with only 2.9% stating they never used the service ([Q38](#)). It is highly valued within the village though it operates from very cramped premises.

### 1.1.7 Voluntary Organisations and Clubs

Houghton is blessed with a large variety of clubs and organisations, all of which welcome new members. They include the following:

After School Clubs	Art	Bird Watching	Bridge
Bowls	Brownies	Church Home Groups	Cricket
Cubs	Duck's Friends	Gardening Club	Guides
Houghton Helpline	Houghton Singers	Karate	Keep Fit
Lunch Break	Mothers' Union	Music Club	Petanque
Photography	Scouts	Soccer	Tennis
Walking Groups	Women's Institute	Yoga	Knitting

There are 4 organisations which have particular roles within the village:

#### Houghton Field Association (HFA)

This is a registered charity which is responsible for the administration of the Houghton Playing Field and the care and maintenance of the pavilion in the field. The field and the pavilion are the home of Houghton Rangers Football Club. HFA is also landlord to the Tennis Club which has its own clubhouse on the field.

#### Houghton Gardeners' Club

Houghton allotments are owned by the Parish Council but day-to-day administration is delegated to Houghton Gardeners' Club.

#### Houghton Helpline

This is a volunteer group which maintains a phone line through which volunteers will provide help within its range of abilities to anyone in need in the village. Most calls involve provision of volunteer drivers for a range of visits e.g. trips to Doctor, Dentist, Hospital, Shopping, Social Event. Help can also be provided for one-off domestic jobs, providing social company, etc. Helpline volunteers do not cover ongoing services (e.g. cleaning, personal care) or technical repairs.

#### Houghton Village Hall Trust

The Village Hall is administered by an independent trust which is a registered charity. It is responsible for the care and maintenance of the Village Hall building and its associated recreation field. The hall and field are the home of Houghton Bowls Club. The hall is heavily used by a many of the village organisations in the table above, averaging about 70 bookings per month.

## 1.2 Commercial Services

### 1.2.1 Co-operative Store



Figure A2-7-4 The Co-operative Store at the junction of Main Street and Weir Lane.

This sells a wide range of products and has an off-licence for wines, beers and spirits. It is a small retail establishment so cannot carry a large stock. It also finds receiving deliveries problematic because of the parking difficulties, largely caused by the customers of the shop itself. Nevertheless, it is highly valued by villagers used extensively by residents. In the village wide consultation 97% of respondent households reported using the store (Q38).

### 1.2.2 Newscentre & Post Office

The Newscentre & Post Office in St Catharines Way provides most post office services as well as banking facilities. It offers newspapers (including a village-wide delivery service), confectionary, and stationery. Apart from the village-wide newspaper delivery service, these extra services compete with other retail services within the village. The establishment is highly valued.

### 1.2.3 The Village Public Houses

There are 2 public houses in the village, the *Rose and Crown* and the *Old Black Horse*. Both provide extensive ranges of food provision as well as drink. They also serve as important social centres within the community. Both have been assigned as community assets.

#### **1.2.4 The Village Motor Services.**

The village motor services are used extensively by residents as evidenced by the responses to [Q38](#). The largest, Houghton Garage, has been in current ownership for the last 40 years providing fuel and motoring related services plus a small convenience store.

#### **1.2.5 Other Facilities.**

The village has a hairdressing salon *Studio Image* and a beauty salon *Annabella*. There is a range of small businesses operating from within the village, including builders and related trades, personal services including hairdressing, aromatherapy and general and technical consultancies such as for IT and design.

#### **1.2.6 Solar Farm**

In 2016 a Solar PV Farm was constructed on agricultural land to the north of the village. This land is part of the area which has been agreed for transfer from Hungarton Parish to Houghton Parish in 2019 as explained in section 2.1. The solar farm is part of the agricultural operations of the Ingarsby Hall farm which is mainly in the Hungarton parish.

While the solar farm is in a location where its visual impact is mitigated by the shape of the immediate local landscape it still forms a prominent feature, visible particularly from the north and east. The essential nature of Houghton on the Hill on the western boundary of the High-Leicestershire landform ensures that any such facility occupying a large area of land almost inevitably becomes prominently visible and will hence form a significant intrusion on the landscape. This effect is evidenced by the [HDC Landscape Capacity Assessment \(2016\)](#) (and see this document section 4.2 and Figure 4-4).

## 8 APPENDIX 3 -INDEX of NP Part II Evidence Base

The Evidence Base component of the Plan is held online on the Houghton Parish Council (PC) website and can be accessed via dynamic links in the NP document, or by visiting the PC website at:

<http://www.houghtononthehillpc.org.uk/evidence-base.html>

In addition, all sources consulted or referred to have been collected together in a single document, which can be downloaded to view at:

<http://www.houghtononthehillpc.org.uk/uploads/evidence-base---listed.pdf>

[Home](#) » [Neighbourhood Plan](#) » [Evidence Base](#)

## Neighbourhood Planning

### Evidence Base

#### Introduction

As set out in §040 of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (updated 2016), "*while there are prescribed documents that must be submitted with a neighbourhood plan[...] there is no 'tick box' list of evidence required for neighbourhood planning. Proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken. The evidence should be drawn upon to explain succinctly the intention and rationale of the policies in the draft neighbourhood plan[...].*"

The evidence presented can be in the form of guidance documents e.g. National Planning Policy Framework, facts and figures e.g. Census data, as well as opinions expressed during consultation with the community and stakeholders. It should be used to support the decisions taken and the policies made during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The following documents, arranged under appropriate sub-headings, have been consulted or referred to during the NPWP's development of a draft Neighbourhood Plan for Houghton and provide evidence to support the policies contained in this. They have also been collected together in a single document, which can be downloaded by [clicking here](#).

- [Neighbourhood Planning - Context](#)
- [Planning Policy](#)
- [Demographics and Profiles](#)
- [Consultation and Engagement](#)

The following sections correspond to those present in the Neighbourhood Development Plan. They contain links to specific documents and evidence referred to in the text.

- [Neighbourhood Area and Profile](#)
- [Community Vision, Key Issues and Objectives](#)
- [Village Design Statement \(VDS\)](#)
- [Housing Provision](#)
- [Services and Facilities](#)
- [Traffic and Transport](#)
- [Environment](#)

## 9 APPENDIX 4 – Community Projects to be Considered

These projects do not fall within the remit of the NP policies but have emerged during the consultations and discussions and are regarded as having merit for further investigation. They could be promoted by Houghton Parish Council (PC).

### 1.1.1. Facilities for young persons

The Young People's Questionnaire indicated a lack of facilities for young people in Houghton ([YPQ11](#)). While Leicester city is not far distant, bus services are infrequent and expensive. The only public transport route to Oadby, where many young people have social connections due to attending schools there, is via Leicester city centre. In the absence of an economic solution to the transport problem, young people have no access to facilities outside Houghton. While sporting clubs (football, cricket, tennis) do exist in Houghton there is limited provision for more casual sports and social meeting.

### 1.1.2. Facilities for older persons

As stated at several relevant points in this document, Houghton has a significantly high proportion of elderly people. Many retired people are deeply involved in voluntary activities which support the many community organisations which form the core of community activity. Indeed, most of our community organisations would collapse without the input from these volunteers.

However, the increasing numbers of less active elderly people do have a requirement for increased community support across the range of community care from befriending and good-neighbour schemes to active support by trained carers. Over the last 2 years a lunch club and an afternoon tea group have become successfully established on a regular basis to encourage both physical and social activity. These are to be encouraged since demand for these can be expected to grow due to demographic trends. Currently these activities are run mostly by voluntary effort by the active-retired cohort described in the paragraph above. Such activities which have great social and personal benefits in keeping individuals actively engaged in the community are likely to need more support in the future.

### 1.1.3. Traffic management initiatives

Over several years following from the [Parking and Traffic Management Report \(2012\)](#) Houghton PC have engaged with LCC Highways department to investigate in detail various options for improving traffic flow in the village, mainly by increasing safe parking locations and protecting footpaths from pavement parking.

In view of the comments received via the various consultation processes, a complete review of the traffic management and safety consideration along the part of the A47 that lies within Houghton NP Area (Figure 2-1) should be undertaken as part of the planning process for new developments. In the light of the multiple new access points to the A47 through and adjacent to the village due to proposed developments, this review should include consideration of such measures as:

- a) Light controlled pedestrian crossings allowing safe pedestrian access across the road to facilities on either side.
- b) Adequate ghost lanes in the road centre allowing safe right turns as appropriate.
- c) Traffic calming measures at both east and west portals to the village to slow vehicles entering the speed-limit area, including radar speed signs.
- d) Installation of a phased 40 to 30mph speed limit restriction along the A47 at both ends of the village.

#### **1.1.4. [Parking provision](#)**

Construction of public car parking will be supported where it clearly addresses specific parking problems as identified in the report of the PC working party on [Parking and Traffic Management \(2012\)](#), while minimising adverse effects on the character of the village. Some specific opportunities are identified in Table 1, but this list is intended to be indicative rather than prescriptive.

To mitigate the worst effects of inconsiderate parking the PC should consider in detail the provision of additional bollards in pavements, and Junction Protection Markings at critical locations. When considering applications for changes to existing premises the PC should strive to ensure adequate on-site parking is provided to minimise the need for on-street parking.

There is a clear and longstanding view in the village that there is inadequate parking provision. This was documented in the PC [Parking and Traffic Management Report \(2012\)](#). The combination of the following factors produces specifically acute problems for this community:

- a large proportion of the population being over 55,
- the narrow and winding street layout in the old section of the village,
- the high levels of community activity (particularly for the senior members),
- the poor level of public transport to exit the village,
- the use of the main street as a rat-run between the A47 and A6 arterial routes.

The resulting problems (see Table 1) affect both safety and quality of life and are thus an issue for “sustainability” within a Neighbourhood Plan.

Many respondents to the 2012 PC survey supported measures that might be taken to alleviate parking problems. In the NP consultation ([Q27](#)) 84% of respondents believe parking in the village will be worsened by additional volumes of traffic (implied as a consequence of new developments).

The main areas of parking congestion and resulting traffic obstruction are clearly recognised in the PC [Parking and Traffic Management Report \(2012\)](#) and in the free-form comments to Q27. One solution is to seek out multiple areas where additional safe parking could realistically be provided. This is made difficult by the lack of free space within the village itself. Nevertheless respondents, particularly through the Pre-submission Consultation, did indicate that the NP should address this issue. The particular problem areas are considered in Table 1.

In 2016 the PC invited Leicestershire County Council (LCC) to review possible solutions, and this has led to a series of meetings, consultative walks through the village, and traffic observation exercises carried out by LCC. Their expressed view is that the level of traffic problems is not sufficiently severe to warrant its attention in these times of budget cuts. However, Houghton PC is following up the options listed in Table 1 and considering the effectiveness of each against its cost.

**Table 1 Possible options for construction of additional public parking in the village.**

Problem area/times	Possible solution	Benefits
Schoolchildren arriving at the school in parental cars 08.30 - 09.15 and 14.30 - 16.00.	Build a car park on Stretton Lane opposite the cricket field. This would be nearer to the school than any other parking, linked to the school and Main Street by a footpath through the rear of the cricket field.	Provides safe and convenient access for schoolchildren to the school. (School due to expand with additional Year 6 in August 2017). Would also benefit the Cricket Club, the Church for large events (weddings and funerals) and potentially the Village Hall.
Main Street/Weir Lane junction for customers of the Co-operative Store, Pharmacy and Beauty Salon. Continuous problem while store is open 07.00 - 22.00.	Identify nearby land to create a car park. One possibility is to reconfigure the space off Weir Lane currently bearing lock-up garages. Alternative is to buy up a large house in the area and use the land. Improve the existing car park on Houghton Field at the end of Weir Lane.	Would remove a persistent traffic bottleneck and road safety hazard. Could involve the commercial businesses in an overall improvement of a core area of the village.  Approx. 180 metres from Main Street, but readily available. Would have spin-off for use by visitors to Houghton Field, play areas, Soccer Club and Tennis Club.
Church and Village Hall, central Main Street. Parking congestion on Main Street and St Catharines Way when holding events with many visitors from out of village.	Possible access to parking area via old farm entrances. (Village Hall green unlikely to be used as registered as a community asset)	Reduced risk of obstruction of bus route, which happens occasionally and may lead to withdrawal of bus service through the village.

### 1.1.5. Encouragement of walking and cycling.

Significant numbers of NP Community Questionnaire respondents (~70%) walk or cycle for leisure and to the shops within the village (Q20). A very small number use bicycles to go to work or to shop outside the confines of Houghton (Q21). Making walking more enjoyable in all seasons could be encouraged by a reduction in traffic along Main Street and improvements to the footpath that runs parallel to Main Street between Weir Lane and St Catharine's Church (see 6.1.7). The Parish Council is currently considering implementation of some of these measures.

There was some support for the creation of more cycleways (Q23) both in the village and alongside the A47 to Thurnby. Cycling could be encouraged by the provision of cycle racks, with possible sites for cycle racks in the vicinity of the Co-operative Store and outside the Village Hall. The need for a cycleway from Houghton to Thurnby along the A47 is a longstanding issue. The existing tarmac footpath has not been maintained and is now reduced in width and has an uneven surface. Upgrading this route as a combined cycleway and footpath would provide a safe alternative for cyclists relative to the main A47 carriageway and encourage both environmentally friendly transport and active lifestyles.

Within the Neighbourhood Area the following measures are encouraged:

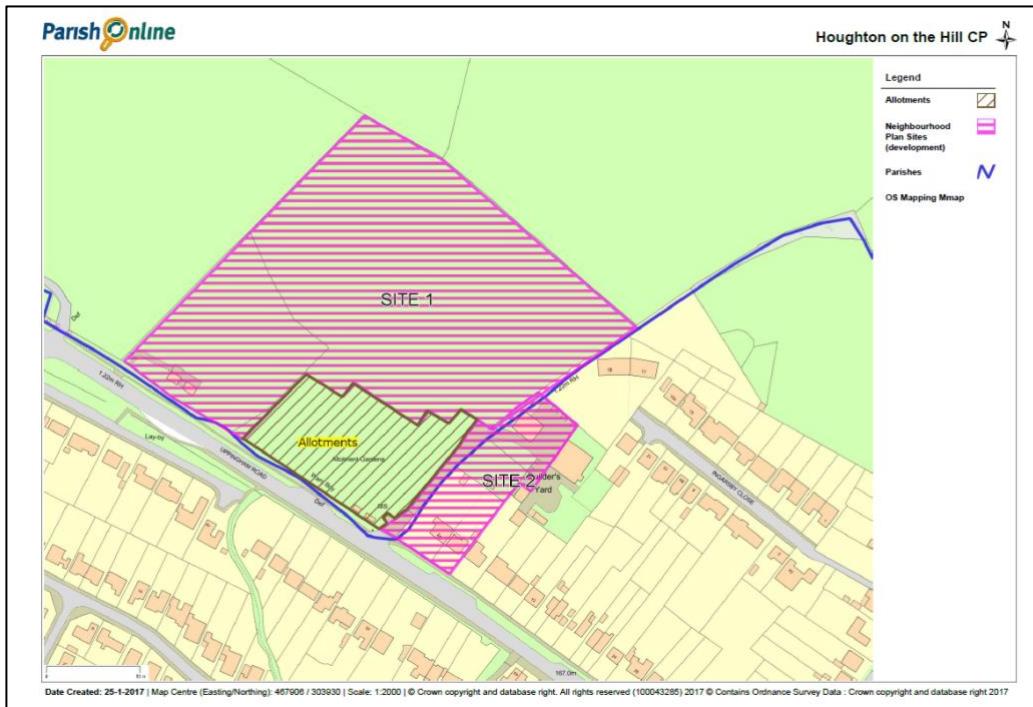
- All new developments should include adequate cycleways and footpaths to link with the rest of the village.
- All existing footpaths within the village should be maintained to make use easier for people with limited walking capacity.
- Additional seating should be installed where appropriate to provide resting places for less-mobile walkers.
- To encourage the use of bicycles, cycle racks should be installed at appropriate points around the village.
- In view of the developments proposed to the north of the A47, and the proposed pedestrian-controlled crossing of the A47, particular attention should be given to improve the footpath from Uppingham Road to Linwal Avenue, the direct route for pedestrians from the new developments to the village centre. Improvements, should include the provision of lighting along the whole length of the path, and might be funded with Section 106 monies generated by those developments.

### 1.1.6. Provision of allotments

The current allotment site lies north of the A47 and to the west of the village and is owned by the Parish Council. Some surplus plots are let to residents of neighbouring parishes. The Houghton Gardeners' Club administers the day-to-day issues of the allotments and refers back to the Parish Council as necessary. Currently the allotments lie on the outskirts of the village, but development of Sites 1 and 2 will change the surrounding environment considerably.

Community allotments will continue to be provided within Houghton so long as there is sufficient demand from Houghton residents. The Parish Council owns the land on which the present allotments lie. The current allotment site is now surrounded by areas which have planning permission for development of new housing (Figure A4-9-1). The Parish Council has been looking, and will continue to look, for land for possible re-location. Subject to an

alternative site being available and subject to laws that govern the sale of an allotment site the Parish Council has resolved that it would offer the allotment land for sale for development. If this were to happen it would potentially impact on the shortfall in the number of new houses required elsewhere in the village.



**Figure A4-9-1 1 Location of the Allotments and their relationship to sites 1 and 2 allocated for residential housing development**

#### 1.1.7. The construction of a golf course to the east of Houghton on the Hill

The proposal to relocate the Scrattoft Golf Club to a new course to be built east of Houghton is included in the [HDC Local Plan](#). Part of the proposed Golf Club area is not in the NP designated area and hence the planning of the course itself is not a matter for the NP. A plan of the proposed course and a summary of comments from the Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Consultation are available from the [Parish Council website](#).

#### 1.1.8. Village welcome/transport information packs

Provision of such packs to incoming residents is to be encouraged. The Parish Council could coordinate the production of such information. This could be extended to include collaboration with Houghton News to encourage new subscribers. Practical effects include the integration of new residents to the community, and encouragement for them to use walking and cycling for movement within the village, and public transport as much as possible. Benefits would relate to health, well-being and exercise, reduction of parking issues and fossil-fuel consumption.

#### 1.1.9. Community wood

The provision of additional green space as a community open-access woodland was supported in the NP Community Questionnaire ([Q35](#)). This could be of benefit to the community in terms of quality of life, health, well-being and exercise. It could support additional activity such as a community orchard, green-waste recycling and/or wood supply

as a carbon-neutral fuel source. This initiative could be supported collaboratively by the Parish Council and several existing community groups.

#### **1.1.10. Community car pool**

While many residents are able to provide for their own personal transport needs, this results in a large number of cars which do relatively low mileages and contribute to the parking issues throughout the village. Many families run 2 or more cars. A car pool may provide an efficient and cost-effective way of catering for the occasional need for a second car, or a different type of car for specific purposes, small (even electric?) car for town shopping trip or larger car for longer-range visits. A feasibility study for such a project could be conducted by Parish Council, collaborating with existing motor traders in the village.