

Harborough District Council

Settlement Profile: Swinford



May 2015

General Introduction

This settlement profile has been prepared as part of the evidence base for the preparation of the new Local Plan. The new Local Plan, which will cover the period 2011 – 2031, will review and replace existing Core Strategy policies.

New evidence in the [Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#) (2014) shows that the number of new homes needed annually across the District to 2031 is substantially higher than the figure set out in the Core Strategy. The new Local Plan will set out a strategy to meet these higher housing numbers, whilst ensuring that sustainable economic development is supported, infrastructure is delivered, local communities are protected, environmental capacity is respected, the quality of the built environment and heritage assets are protected and the level of development is not disproportionate to the size of the settlement and the level of services.

This profile seeks to summarise currently available evidence in relation to the settlement which, along with other evidence, will be used in determining the appropriate amount of development to be directed to the settlement to 2031. The profile does not seek to set out future policy as this will be done through the new Local Plan and any reference to Core Strategy policies is to provide context only.

Section D of the profile sets out the findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) for the settlement. It should be noted that the sites shown are not allocations and their inclusion in no way implies that planning permission for housing will be granted. Information in the SHLAA regarding potential sites will be part of a range of evidence used in deciding the appropriate scale of housing development for the settlement.

It is important to note that the profile only provides a snapshot of the evidence available for the settlement at a point in time. Every effort will be made to incorporate new evidence as it becomes available.

The settlement profile is split into the following sections:

- Introduction
- A) Transport and Communications
- B) Local Services and Facilities
- C) Natural Environment
- D) Built Environment
- E) Local Employment and Economic Activity
- Emerging Findings
- Appendix 1 (Maps)

Swinford Profile

Introduction

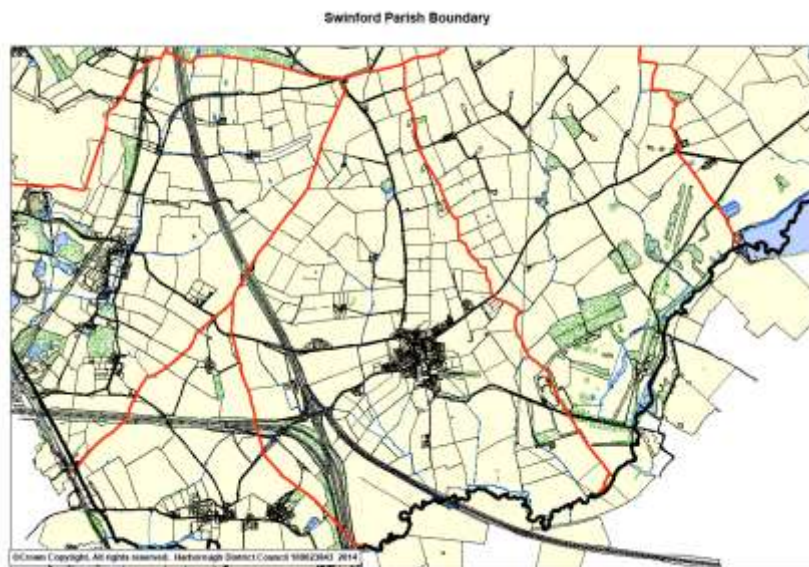
General Location: Swinford is located within the most south-westerly point of the Harborough District, no more than half a mile from the busy junction of the M1/M6 and A14, with the A5 passing approximately 1 mile to the west. Although this means the village benefits from good access to the highway network, the junction is a divisive topic within the village; residents cite excessive noise, air and light pollution, littering and motorway-bound through-traffic as some of their greatest concerns. The M1 Junction 19 Improvement Scheme currently underway will remove local access to the M1/M6 and A14 from September 2015.

Swinford's character is that of a classic nucleated village, whereby dwellings are clustered around a centrally located church, making up the Conservation Area which covers 85% of the village, accommodating 14 Grade II listed buildings. Due to Swinford's occupation of the District's most south-westerly point, the southern border of the parish with Daventry District is determined by the course of the River Avon as it flows from the east towards Rugby. Neighbours from within the Harborough District include Catthorpe and Shawell to the west, Misterton with Walcote to the north, with Westrill and Starmore parish towards the east.

Historically, Swinford may have been one of the more significant settlements in Leicestershire, as the Domesday survey recorded seven manorial estates in the parish – more than anywhere else in the county (including Leicester). As is consistent with similar settlements, Swinford's population decreased at the turn of the 20th century from its peak several decades before. Nonetheless, the village has maintained a healthy, sustainable increase now for many years.

More recently the development of the Swinford wind farm has impacted on the parish. With 11 turbines it is the largest windfarm in Leicestershire and has been operating since 2012.

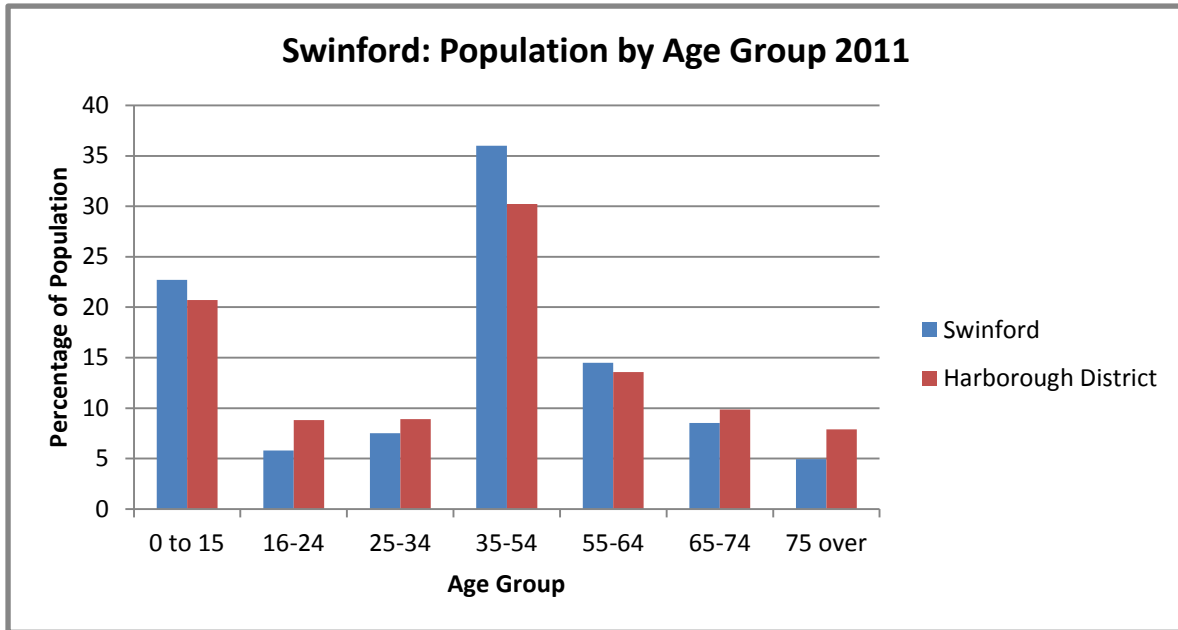
The village is identified as a Selected Rural Village in the Core Strategy for the District and as such, is outlined as a settlement that could accommodate further limited development such as rural housing. It is therefore important to understand the function, key characteristics, role, form, issues, problems and ultimately sustainability of the settlement, in order to determine the appropriate level of development to be directed towards the settlement and to understand the local community's aspirations for their village.



Key Statistics for Swinford Parish (Census 2011):

- Population of 586 (an increase of 90 or 18% since 2001 compared to an increase of 11.5% across the District over the same period);
- 23% of the population is in 0 – 15 age group whilst 14% of population is 65 or over;
- Number of dwellings is 233, an increase of 32 or 16% since 2001;
- Number of households is 227, an increase of 45 or 25% since 2001;
- 72% of households have 2 or more cars/vans, whereas only 4 of households have no access to a car or van;
- 63% of households live in detached dwellings (compared to 48% across the District);
- 81% of dwellings are owner occupied, 5% are shared ownership/social rented and 13% are private rented;
- 2.6% of the population is in bad or very bad health;
- Long term health problems and/or disability: 3.8% of the population said day to day activities are limited a lot and a further 8.2% said day to day activities are limited a little;
- 2.2% of the population is black and minority ethnic (BME); and
- 64% of the population is Christian and 2.2% is other religions (including Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh).

Age Structure: The age structure of the population, compared to the District, is set out below. The distribution of Swinford's population shows some consistency with other Selected Rural Villages, in that there is a greater proportion of those aged 0 – 15 and 35 – 54 with a below-average representation of those aged 16 – 34. However, unlike a number of villages, Swinford has a relatively low proportion in the 65 and over age groups when compared to the District.



Source: ONS Census 2011

Swinford Parish Council

- Swinford is served by the Swinford Parish Council, consisting of 5 parish council seats. All seats are filled.
- Parish council meetings take place monthly in the Village Hall.
- Representation on Windfarm Grants sub committee.
- Swinford has produced a Parish Plan for their village with the original publication being produced in 2005, describing how Swinford and its residents were going to tackle the issues arising within the village. A subsequent report was then published in 2008 to document progress.
- The Parish Council has decided to lead on the preparation of a neighbourhood plan for the village and the District Council has publicised the application for the whole parish to be designated a Neighbourhood Area.
- The following section details the main points extracted from the Parish Plan. However, it should be noted this was prepared in 2005:
 - Environmental Issues:
 - Swinford's proximity to the major M1/M6/A14 junction means there is a great support for quieter road surfaces, trees to be planted and conserved, as well as carriageway noise barriers – The proposed redevelopment of this junction (currently underway) is a key issue to the area.
 - There are local concerns about air quality; therefore there is great interest in maintaining and creating green areas (trees, hedgerows, gardens).
 - Community Facilities:
 - There is a reasonable desire for small commercial development that could provide local facilities and employment.
 - Traffic:

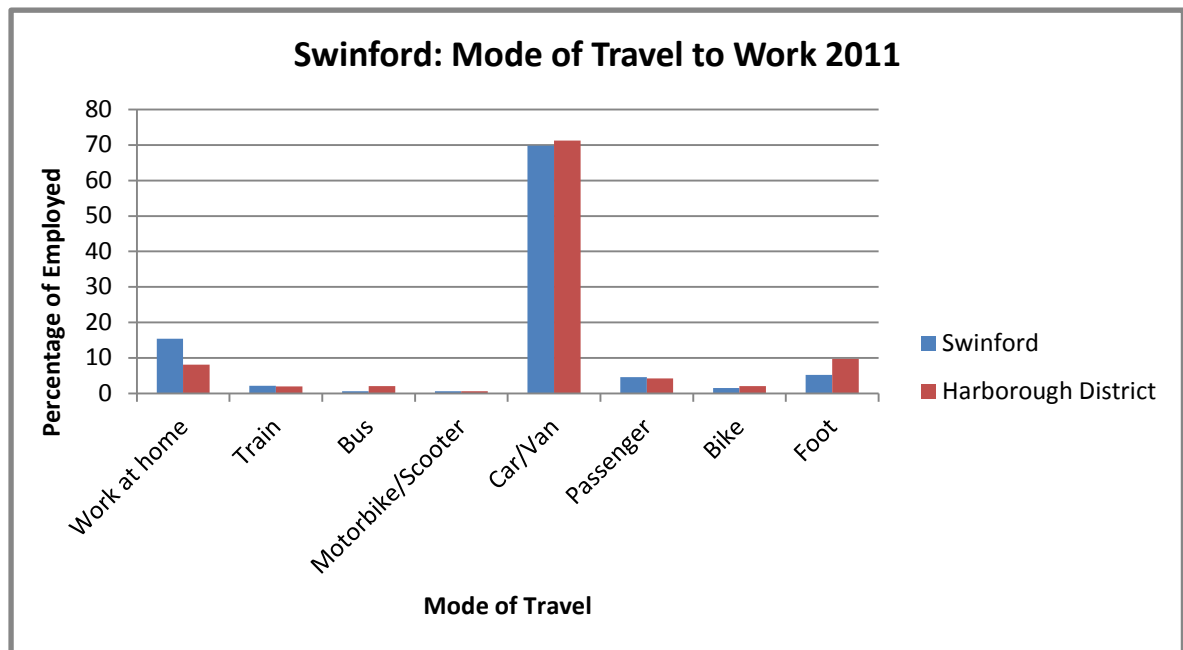
- Unanimous opinion for measures to be carried out to reduce noise, air and light pollution emanating from M1/M6/A14 junction.
 - Traffic calming measures to be introduced across the village – especially after cessation of local access to Junction 19.
 - One-way system to be established to ease congestion in the concentrated village centre.
- Transport:
 - Improvement of the bus provision to the area is unanimously supported.
- Community Safety and Well-Being:
 - High support for a neighbourhood watch scheme.
 - Concerns on the high amount of litter at M1/M6/A14 junction.
- Overall, the village's greatest needs are the re-instating of a Post Office and a village shop. A bus service is also considered essential.
- Swinford is the host to an 11 turbine wind farm creating enough power for 14,000 homes. The developer has also made available an annual fund of £44,000 for residents to invest in their community facilities.
- Assets of Community Value: The Chequers Inn is listed as an Asset of Community Value.

For more information: <http://www.leicestershirevillages.com/swinford/>
<http://swinford.leicestershireparishcouncils.org/>

The next sections consider Swinford's:

A) Transport and Communications

- **Transport:**
 - Rail: Swinford's nearest railway stations are Rugby (5 miles), Long Buckby (10 miles), Market Harborough (12 miles), Narborough (12 miles), Hinckley (13 miles) and Leicester (18 miles).
 - Bus Services/Frequency: Swinford no longer has a bus service.
 - Travel to Work: Around 70% of people drive a car or van to work, a figure similar to the District average of 71%. A further 5% are passengers. Just over 15% work from home, much higher than the District figure (8%).



Source: ONS Census 2011

- Road Connections: A14 east (<1 mile), A5 north/south (<1 mile), A4304 to Market Harborough (2 miles), A426 to Rugby and Lutterworth (2 miles), M1 north and M6 west (<1 mile). These road connections will change significantly from September 2015 when local access to the M1/M6 and A14 will be removed.
- Swinford is covered by the Lutterworth Community Transport initiative which can provide transport for shopping, visiting friends & relatives, social activities and health appointments for the elderly, the mobility impaired/disabled, the rurally isolated and those that find it difficult to use public transport.
- Additionally, there is a Swinford Community Minibus; an initiative to provide a minibus for hire by community groups and local residents owned and operated by the community group 'Swinford 2000' – a volunteer service that raises funds in Swinford from numerous annual events in the village – The Windfarm Community Fund also made donations to the cause.
- **Car Ownership:** Whilst the vast majority of households have access to at least one car or van, 4% do not have any access to their own private transport; this is down on the 2001 figure of 7% and far below the District percentage of 12%. During this same period the percentage of households with 3 or more cars has increased from 15% to 18%. Over the past 10 years the number of cars in the parish increased from 321 to 447, an increase of 39%.
- **Connectivity: Broadband Coverage:**
 - Swinford is now connected to superfast broadband (Jan 2015).

B) Local Services and Facilities

Swinford currently has Selected Rural Village status in the Harborough District Core Strategy (2011). This means that any development will be on a small and limited

scale, which reflects the size and character of the settlement. Selected Rural Villages have been identified on the basis of the presence of at least two of six relevant services (food shop, GP surgery, library, post office, primary school and pub). This section is concerned with the range of services and facilities in Swinford to ascertain whether the village can function as a Selected Rural Village going forward.

- **Key Services Present:**

- Pub (The Chequers, High Street);
- School (Swinford Church of England Primary School, School Lane).

- **Other Services/Community Facilities Present:**

- Village Hall (Chapel Street);
- Church (High Street);
- Playing Field and Clubhouse (Lutterworth Road);
 - Home of Swinford's Rowland United Cricket Club and Football Club.
- Children's Play Area (Stanford Road);
- Numerous Club and Societies (Pub Skittles, The Chequers; Swinford Operatic and Dramatic Society, Village Hall; Mother's Union, Women's Institute, Friendly Three Club of Swinford, Catthorpe and Shawell, Youth Club)
- Mobile Library 2nd week of the month every Wednesday: 2:00 – 3:00 (School), 3:05 – 3:30 (Rugby Road).

Infrastructure Capacity Issues:

Early consultation with infrastructure providers identifies specific issues regarding:

- Impact on Lutterworth GP practices. S106 contributions would be sought towards the provision of required new equipment for GP surgeries;
- Capacity of primary school. S106 contributions towards primary school extension would be sought;
- Shortfall in types of open space. Appropriate S106 contributions would be sought where a shortfall in certain types of open space is identified.

Swinford has 2 out of the 6 key services identified in the Core Strategy. Based on the current Core Strategy definition, the range of services and facilities in Swinford supports its continued designation as a Selected Rural Village. Section 106 contributions would be sought towards for additional equipment for the Lutterworth GP practices and towards a primary school extension.

C) Natural Environment

Natural Environment Constraints in and around Swinford

Issue/Constraint	Commentary
Landscape: District Landscape Character Assessment (2007)	Located within the Laughton Hills Landscape Character Area which has low-medium capacity to accommodate development (in general terms it is an area which is unlikely to be able to accommodate development or change without some degradation of the existing landscape character – mitigation measures would be unlikely to be able to address adverse landscape impacts). Laughton Hills is one of the most sensitive landscapes in the District.
Area of Separation	No separation or potential coalescence issues identified.
Tree Preservation Orders	Several individual TPOs at cemetery
SSSI	Stanford Park is closest SSSI to Swinford (1.3k away)
Local Wildlife Sites	None identified.
Protected Species and Wildlife Corridors	Bats Badgers Great Crested Newt
Areas at risk of flooding	None identified close to or within the village.
Footpaths and Bridleways	The village is well served by a number of RoWs leading into open countryside.
Other settlement/local features	

D) Built Environment

Number of Dwellings: The Census 2011 found that there were 233 dwellings in Swinford, representing an increase of 32 dwellings or almost 16% since the 2001 Census, compared to an increase of 12% across the District.

The number of properties in the parish liable for council tax is 237 (2014).

Completions, Commencements and Planning Permissions: From 2011 to March 2014 the Council has recorded no house completions. As of March 2014 there was 1 dwelling under construction and 3 outstanding planning permissions for residential units.

Housing Land Supply: The recently completed 2014 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment forms part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan and supports the delivery of sufficient land for housing across the District. The study

identifies sites with potential for housing, assesses their housing potential and assesses when they are likely to be developed (next 5 years, 6-10 years, 11 -15 years and 16+ years). It should be noted that the sites identified are not allocations and sites still need to be taken through the normal planning application process for full consideration.

The following table summarises the SHLAA findings in relation to developable sites in Swinford. The full document is available at:

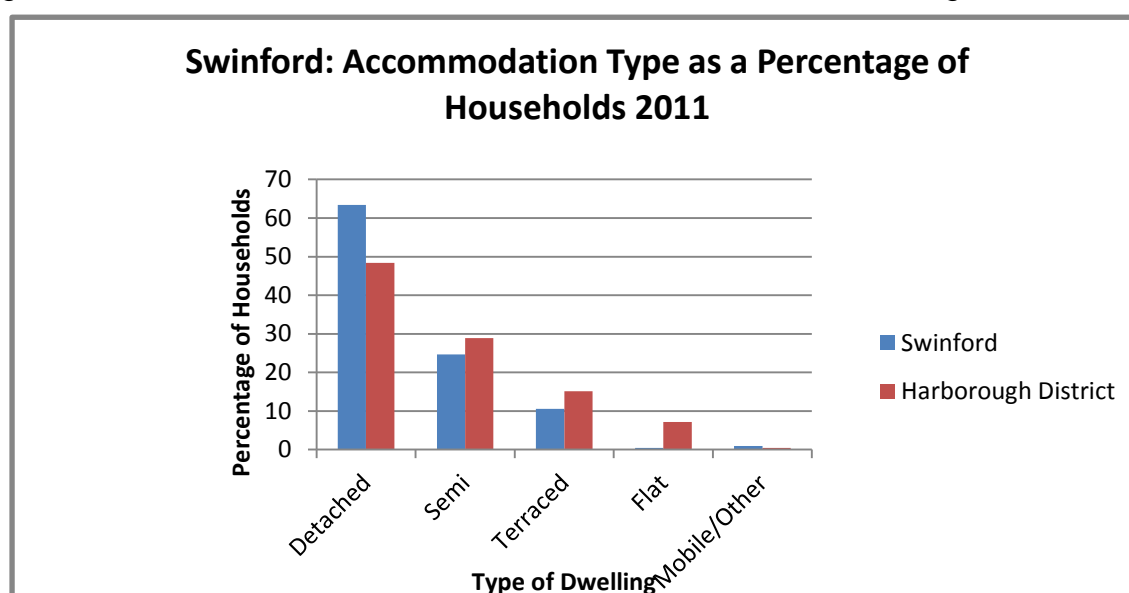
http://www.harborough.gov.uk/directory_record/571/strategic_housing_land_availability_assessment_20132014

No. developable sites identified in SHLAA 2014	Total area of developable sites	Estimated yield of developable sites (dwellings)	Estimated timeframe for development of developable sites (no. of dwellings)			
			0 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	11 – 15 years	16+ years
3	2.62ha	50	-	15	-	35

A new call for sites for potential development took place early in 2015 and a SHLAA update is underway.

Tenure: In 2011, 81% of dwellings were owner occupied, a little above the District figure of 78% and down a little from 2001 when 83% of dwellings were owner occupied. 5% are social rented/ shared ownership and 13% are private rented (up from 7% in 2001).

Accommodation Type: In terms of housing type, the percentage of households living in detached dwellings at just over 63% in 2011 was well above the District level of 48%. Both semi detached and terraced accommodation is down on the District figure, and flatted accommodation is rare as is the case in most villages.



Source: ONS Census 2011

Under Occupancy: The 2011 Census found that 63% of households had at least 2 more bedrooms than required well above the District figure of 49%.

Households: Of the 227 households in Swinford:

- 17% are one person households (compared to 26% across the District);
- 15% are pensioner only households (compared to 23% across the District);
- 9% are single pensioner households (compared to 13% across the District);
- 36% have dependent children (compared to 30% across the District).

Built Environment Features/Heritage Assets/Designations

Issue/Constraint	Commentary
Conservation Area	Swinford Conservation Area was first designated in 1975. The boundary was revised in 2006 and covers much of the village.
Scheduled Monuments	None
Listed Buildings:	
Grade I	None
Grade II*	Church of All Saints
Grade II	16
Registered Park and Garden	Stanford Hall – part of park area is within Swinford Parish
Ridge and Furrow	There are a significant number of fields around the village where the ridge and furrow pattern can be seen.
Archaeological Sites	There is evidence of an original village settlement near to the river Avon in fields to the south west of the village. The site can be found by following the bridle path to Lilbourne. There is evidence of a further Medieval settlement site to the north east of the village off the Kilworth road. This was identified in the Windfarm Environmental Assessment report.
Recreation Grounds/Play Areas	Play area
Open Space, Sport and Recreation	See map
Proposed Local Green Space	The following are proposed Local Green Space designations which will be taken forward as part of the New Local Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glebe Land behind Play Area Swinford

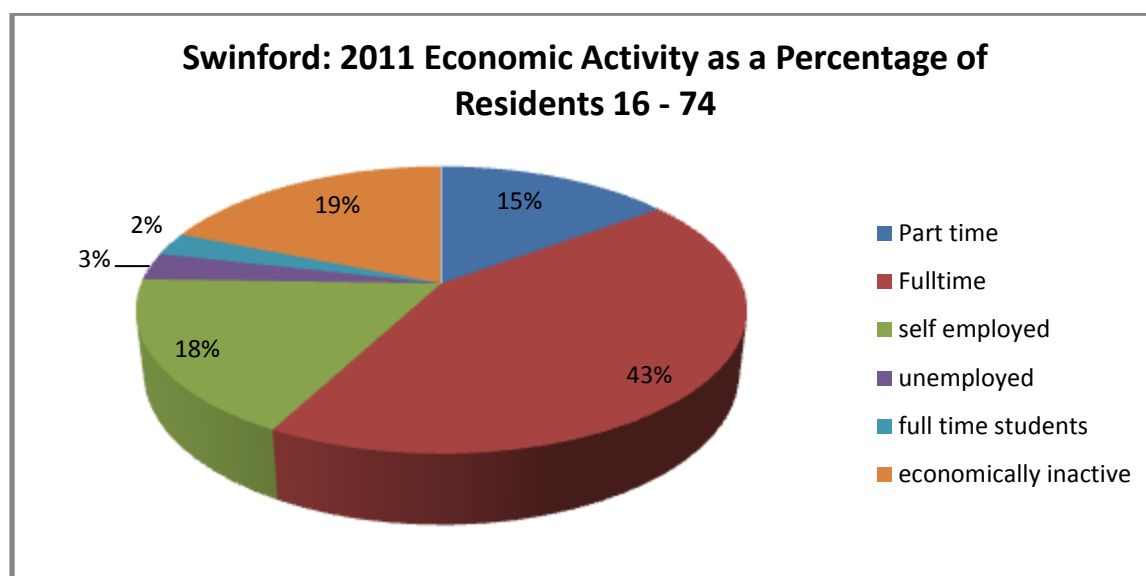
E) Local Employment and Economic Activity

Local Employment:

Not surprisingly, given its rural location and character, there are few employment opportunities in Swinford. This is borne out by Census information showing that few residents (fewer than 7% of those employed) either walk or cycle to work. However,

just over 15% of those in employment work from home or mainly from home, higher than the District figure of 8%.

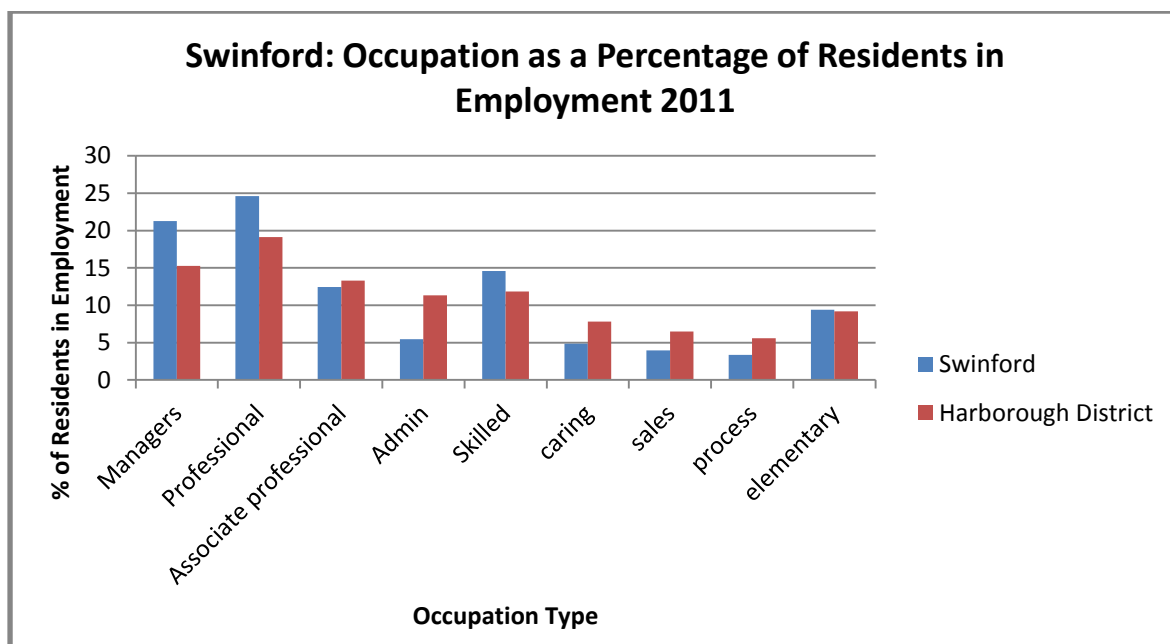
Economic Activity: In 2011, 81% of Swinford's population aged 16-74 (424 persons) was economically active, significantly higher than the District figure of 74% and much higher than the regional and national levels of 69% and 70% respectively. The unemployment rate of 3.1% was slightly higher than the District figure of 2.5%. The rate of self employment (18%) was well above the District level of almost 13%. Of the economically inactive, just over 65% were retired.



Source: ONS Census 2011

Qualifications (16 and over population): In 2011 the percentage without any qualifications was just over 14%, lower than the comparable District figure of 18% and well below the regional and national levels of 23% and 25% respectively. The percentage with a degree or higher degree was 29%, well above the District figure of 19%.

Occupation: In common with most of the other villages, the proportion of the working population in managerial and professional occupations is relatively high. Almost 46% work in these occupations, well above the comparable District figure of 34%. Skilled occupations are also well represented in Swinford.



Source: ONS Census 2011

Emerging Findings

Opportunities

Swinford has no bus service and this is of concern to local residents. The village benefits from super fast broadband. It has 2 key services and Rugby and Lutterworth are both within 5 miles of the village, offering a more extensive range of services and facilities and, together with Magna Park, employment opportunities.

The village has a younger age profile than some villages with a relatively high number of households with dependent children. It has low levels in the 16 – 34 age groups in common with most villages. There is a high level of detached dwellings and a high rate of under occupancy.

The economic activity rate among residents is very high reflecting the younger age profile of the village. There is a high percentage of self employment and of working from home.

Developable housing land has been identified through the SHLAA across 3 sites.

Constraints

The village is located within the Laughton Hill landscape character area, one of the most sensitive landscapes in the District.

Development would need to respect the Conservation Area, the numerous listed buildings (including their setting) and the proximity of Stanford Hall and Park

(registered park and garden/SSSI). It would also need to take account of areas in the village identified as open space, sport and recreation sites.

The village primary school, which also serves the neighbouring villages of Shawell and Catthorpe, has limited capacity and an extension may be required. Lutterworth GP surgeries have capacity for increased numbers but would need contributions towards additional equipment.

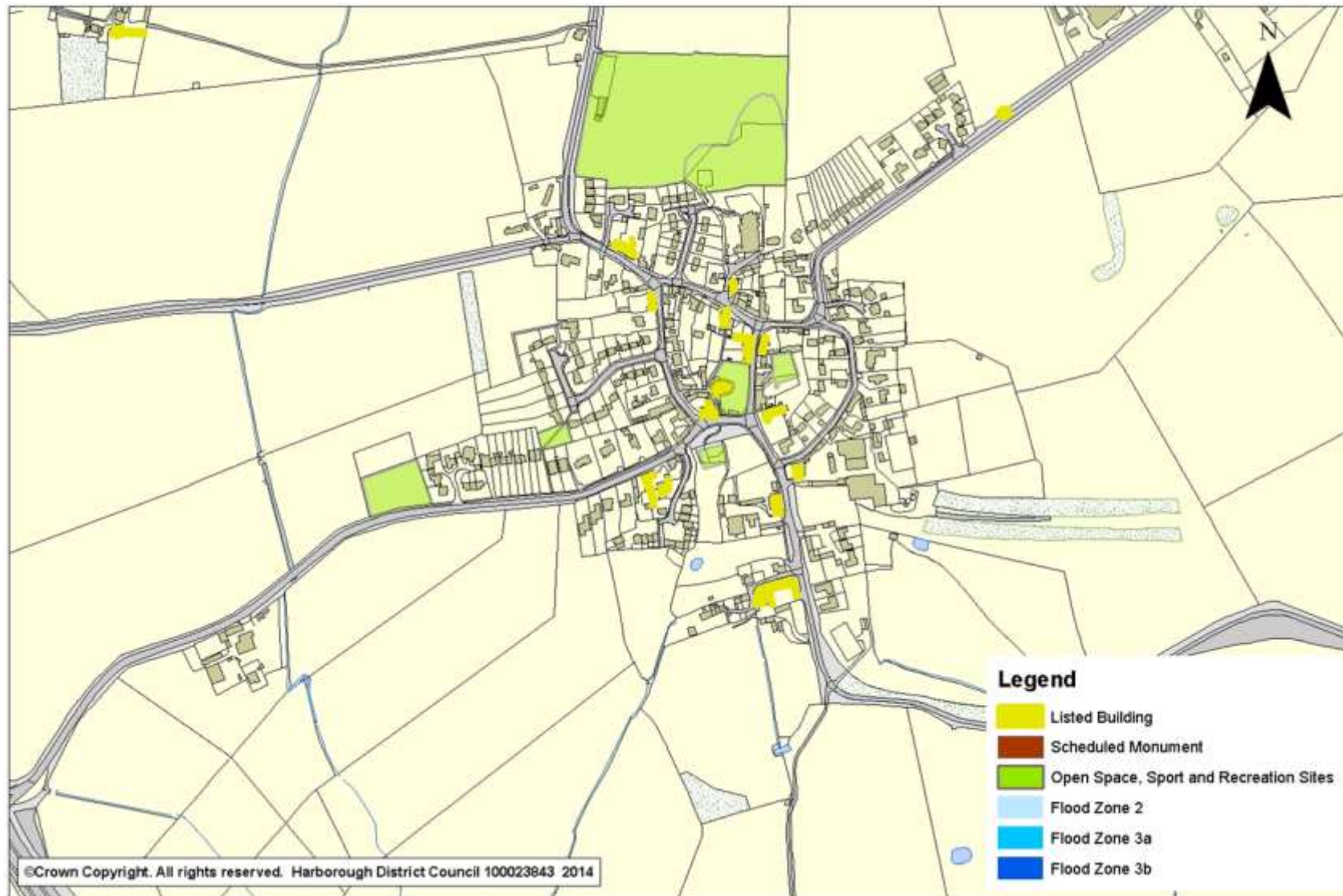
Overall Summary

Swinford has the services to support its continued designation as a Selected Rural Village, but its lack of public transport is noted. The village has the capacity to accommodate limited growth providing development is sympathetic to the existing village form, its heritage assets, the landscape setting, infrastructure requirements and any specific housing needs of the population.

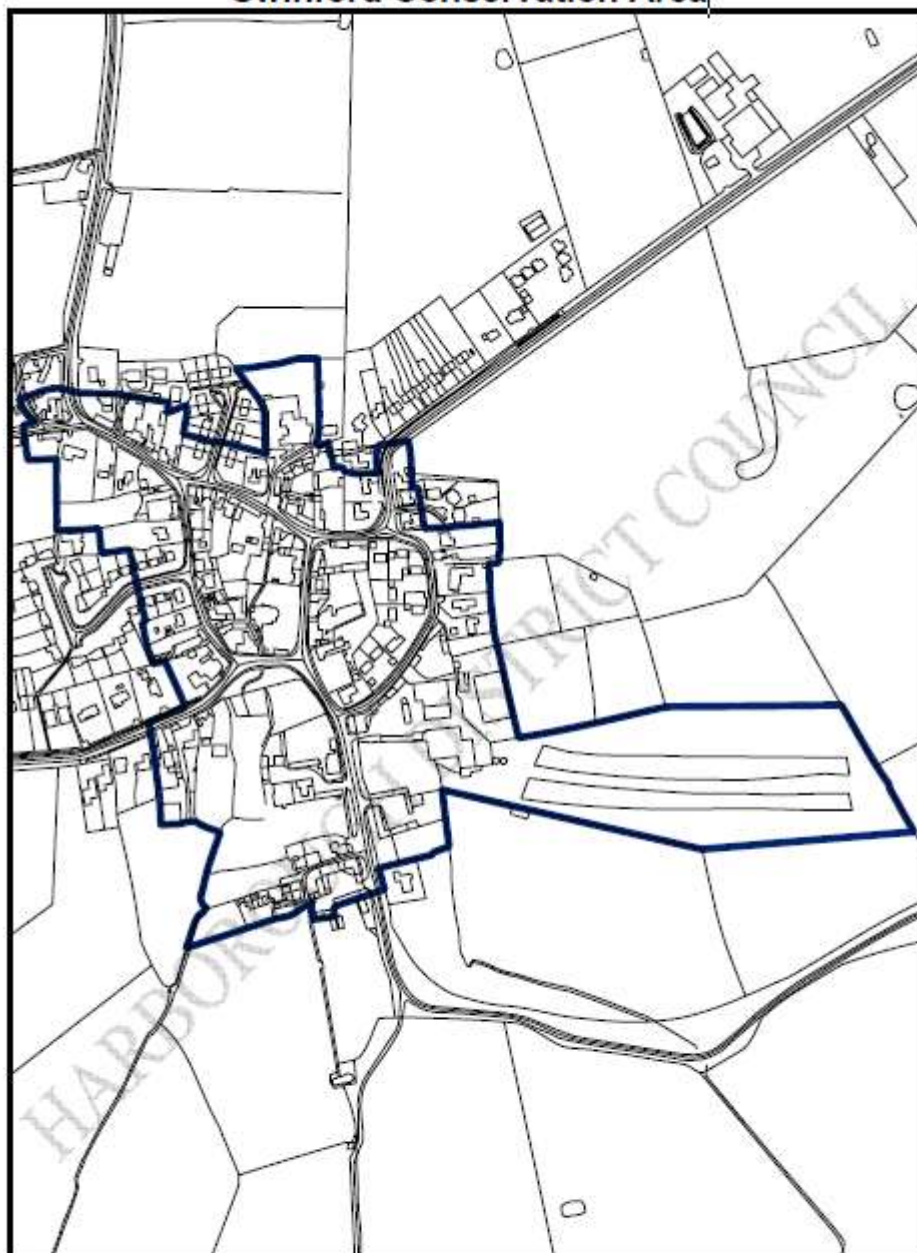
Appendix 1: Maps showing

- **Swinford - Listed buildings/scheduled monuments/open space, sport and recreation sites/flood zones**
- **Swinford Conservation Area**
- **SHLAA 2014 Swinford Sites (please note that the map does not show all commitments – only those on sites submitted for consideration as part of the SHLAA)**

Swinford



Swinford Conservation Area



— Conservation Area Boundary 0 50 100 200 300 400 Meters

Designated 1975
Boundary Revised: 10th July 2006

1:4,353



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SHLAA 2014 Swinford Sites

