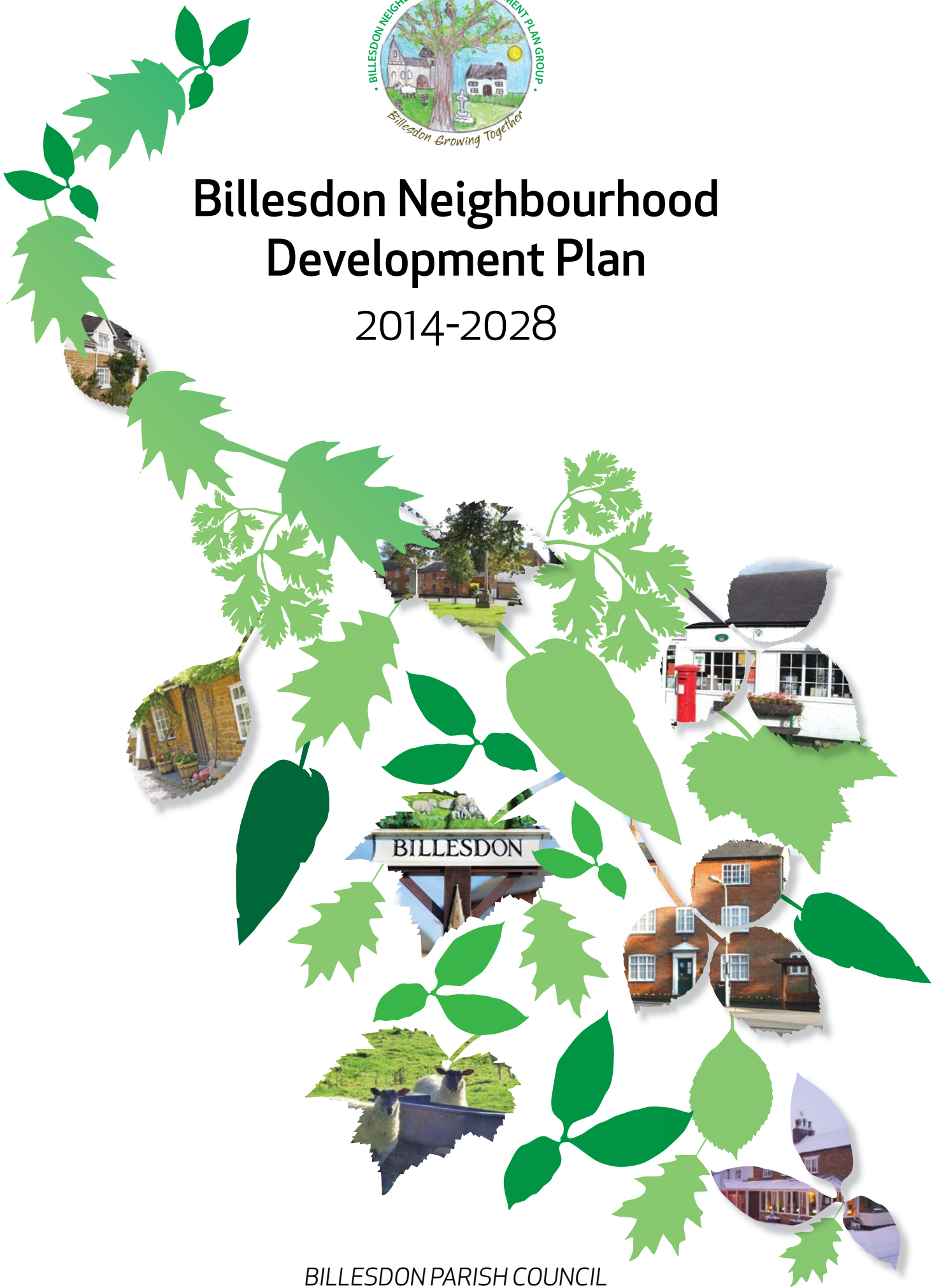




# Billesdon Neighbourhood Development Plan

2014-2028



BILLESDON PARISH COUNCIL

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**NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

**Background**

- ✿ A Neighbourhood Development Plan is a new type of planning document. It is part of the Government’s new approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. However, all Plans must be in line with higher level planning policy, namely the 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework* and the 2011 *Harborough Core Strategy*. The overall requirement is that a Neighbourhood Plan has a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- ✿ The *Billesdon Neighbourhood Development Plan* (the Plan) relates to the whole of the Parish of Billesdon. An important part of the Plan concerns where new housing and new employment should go, but it is about much more than this. The Plan includes a wider range of topics, such as services and facilities, traffic and transport, and environment and climate change.
- ✿ The Plan has been prepared by the accountable body – Billesdon Parish Council – and covers the period to 2028. The Parish Council has been assisted by the Billesdon Neighbourhood Development Plan Group (BNDPG), comprising some 15 volunteers drawn from the residents of the Parish. The BNDPG has undertaken extensive consultations with the people of Billesdon, including others with an interest in the Parish, and has considered their views in preparing the Plan. The consultations have included: a public meeting; several community consultation events; questionnaire surveys with young people, formally constituted groups, the owners of businesses and managers of services; and meetings with interested landowners and developers.

**Community Vision**

The Community was consulted on its Vision for the Parish in 2028 with the following results:

- ✿ **Maintaining the character of Billesdon:** the Community places value on a village whose rural character and sense of community have been maintained. Value is also attached to preserving the appearance of the village by the managed integration of new housing built to high standards of design. Protection and enhancement of the countryside landscape, wildlife habitats and biodiversity also form part of the Community Vision, as well as containing through traffic and parking problems at manageable proportions.
- ✿ **Developing a sustainable community:** the Community wants to maintain an integrated mix of people across a range of personal characteristics, as well as meeting their housing needs through the development of a mixture of housing types built on a restricted number of sites integral to the village. The Community also values meeting its varied educational, medical, recreational, leisure and retail needs by a range of sustainable services and facilities, underpinned by a strong local economy.

**Key Issues**

Through further consultation and questionnaire surveys, the Community focussed its Vision into five groups of Key Issues:

- ✿ **Housing:** the number of new houses to be successfully absorbed into the existing village community and infrastructure; the number of sites to be used for new houses; the methodology to be employed to identify the sites for new houses; ensuring that housing developers address the concerns of the community as regards the types and sizes of new housing; and updating the existing “Village Design Statement” and incorporating it into the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- ✿ **Employment:** improving the speed and quality of the broadband network in the Parish; providing additional floor space for office or light industrial use by the redevelopment of existing buildings; and providing additional capacity for office or light industrial uses by suitable, new-build floor space.

- 🌿 **Services and Facilities:** providing additional recreational facilities for teenagers and younger children; meeting any growth in demand for recreational facilities from the population of the Parish by increasing the capacity of The Coplow Centre; increasing the retail capacity in the Parish by the redevelopment of existing buildings; developing the Primary School to accommodate those children from new houses who wish to attend.
- 🌿 **Traffic and Transport:** managing the traffic passing through the village, including the additional traffic flows that will be generated by new housing, and addressing the parking problems of cars in the village centre and outside the Primary School.
- 🌿 **Environment and Climate Change:** ensuring that the distinctive rural landscape, settlement pattern, historical assets, natural environment and biodiversity of the Parish are protected and enhanced; providing improved green open spaces, sport and recreation facilities to promote healthy lifestyles; and mitigating the impact of development on climate change by the design of new buildings.

### Plan Policies

To meet the Key Issues, the Plan adopts the policies of the *Harborough Core Strategy* and applies them to the whole of the Parish. In addition, there are more specific Plan policies:

- 🌿 **Housing:** a target of a minimum of 45 new houses over the period to 2028. Using an objective, evidence-based method, two sites are proposed for new housing – on land to the north of High Acres, off Uppingham Road, and on land east of Rolleston Road. The former lorry park will act as a reserve site. At least 40% of new houses will be ‘affordable’. Some houses will be built to higher standards of energy efficiency. The design of the new houses is expected to meet the standards set by the revised Village Design Statement and green spaces will be incorporated into the design of the new housing sites.
- 🌿 **Employment:** enable the development of home working; permit the development of the redundant LCC Depot on Gaulby Road for business use; and permit the conversion or re-use of buildings for business use. New housing will be required to be ready for superfast broadband.
- 🌿 **Services and Facilities:** protect existing services and facilities when approving development; increase the capacity of the Primary School, Billesdon Surgery and The Coplow Centre to meet the increase in housing; and enable the conversion or extension of rural buildings, existing shops and leisure buildings, to provide new services or to improve their viability. The Plan will also enable the provision of a playing field for the village.
- 🌿 **Traffic and Transport:** new housing sites have been identified that minimise the volume of additional traffic using Brook Lane, Church Street and Gaulby Road. However, the Community does not support a traffic management plan for the Village. New housing will provide necessary off-street car parking.
- 🌿 **Environment and Climate Change:** take account of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside of the Parish. Development that would have an adverse impact will not be approved. Defined Local Green Spaces will be protected and enhanced, while new development will be expected to maintain and enhance existing ecological corridors and landscape features for biodiversity. To mitigate the impact on climate change, new development will be expected to incorporate energy conservation features and have regard to the standards of *Building for Life 12*.

### Next Steps

- 🌿 In May 2014, an Independent Examiner recommended that the Plan is modified to meet ‘Basic Conditions’ and then submitted to a referendum. The modification have been incorporated into this document.

- 🌿 The District Council will arrange a referendum and, if the Plan is passed by a simple majority of those voting, the Council will adopt it as part of the *Harborough Development Plan*. The Plan will provide part of the framework for the determination of planning applications.

## 1 BACKGROUND TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 1.1 A Neighbourhood Development Plan is a new type of planning document. It is part of the Government’s new approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. This is set out in the *Localism Act* that came into force in April 2012. Although the Government’s intention is for local people to decide what goes on in their area, the *Localism Act* sets out some important requirements. One of these is that all Neighbourhood Plans must be in line with higher level planning policy, namely the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, 2012) and the *Harborough Core Strategy* (2011).
- 1.2 The NPPF retains the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’, as defined by five principles: (1) living within the planet’s environmental limits; (2) ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; (3) achieving a sustainable economy; (4) promoting good governance; and (5) using sound science responsibly.
- 1.3 In addition the NPPF embraces three critical roles for sustainable development: (1) an economic role, contributing to a strong, responsive, competitive economy; (2) a social role, supporting vibrant and healthy communities and (3) an environmental role, protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.
- 1.4 The NPPF also recognises twelve core planning principles. Summarising, they: (1) are led by local plans which set out a vision for the future of the area; (2) enhance and improve the places where people live; (3) drive sustainable development; (4) secure a high quality of design and a good standard of amenity; (5) protect the diversity of different areas; (6) support the transition to a low-carbon future; (7) help conserve and enhance the natural environment; (8) encourage the re-use of land; (9) promote mixed use developments; (10) conserve heritage assets; (11) make full use of public transport, walking and cycling; and (12) improve health, social and cultural wellbeing.
- 1.5 The Billesdon Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) is designed to embrace these principles and roles of sustainable development and the twelve core planning principles, in so far as they can be applied to the Parish of Billesdon.



The village sign at the heart of the community

### HARBOROUGH CORE STRATEGY

- 1.6 The Plan is written in conjunction with, and to conform to, the *Harborough Core Strategy*. The *Core Strategy* contains a range of policies relevant to the Plan, including: Policy 2 - Delivering new housing; Policy 3 - Delivering housing choice and affordability; Policy 5 - Providing sustainable transport; Policy 6 - Improving town centres and retailing; Policy 7 - Enabling employment and business development; Policy 8 - Protecting and enhancing green infrastructure; Policy 9 - Addressing climate change; Policy 11 - Promoting design and our built environment; Policy 12 - Delivering development and supporting infrastructure. The *Core Strategy* also contains one of the relevant Policies for Places: Policy 17 - Countryside, rural centres and rural villages.
- 1.7 The Plan is designed to be in general conformity with the policies of the *Core Strategy*, in so far as they can be applied to the Parish of Billesdon. Once the Plan is brought into force, the policies of the Plan, where they are in conflict, take precedence over existing policies in the *Harborough Core Strategy*.

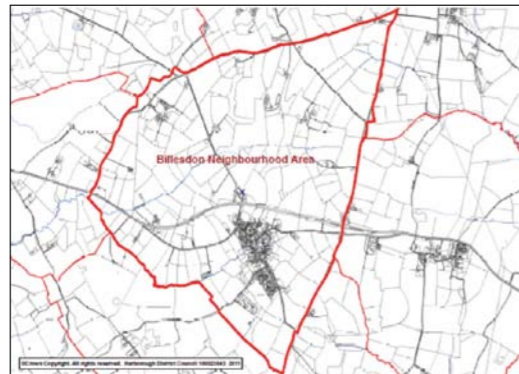
**POLICY BP1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Where there are no policies in the Billesdon Neighbourhood Development Plan relevant to a planning application, the provisions of the *National Planning Policy Framework* and the *Harborough Core Strategy* apply.

**BILLESDON NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA DESIGNATION**

1.8 The Plan relates to the Parish of Billesdon and the Qualified Body to create the Plan is Billesdon Parish Council. The Plan Area was formally designated by Harborough District Council on 29 October 2012. The majority of the evidence and policies in the Plan concern the village of Billesdon, but there is a significant area with agricultural land uses and dispersed individual dwellings outside the village.

Map of the Billesdon Neighbourhood Plan Area



**BILLESDON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

- 1.9 The objectives of the Plan are to identify a Community Vision for the future of the Parish of Billesdon as a whole and set out clear planning policies to realise that Vision.
- 1.10 An important part of the Plan is deciding where new housing and new employment should go, but it is about much more than this. The Plan looks at a wide range of Key Issues (objectives) and sets out policies for: housing; employment; services and facilities; traffic and transport; and environment and climate change.
- 1.11 The Plan must be in line with European Regulations on strategic environmental assessment and habitat regulations. In the case of the Plan, neither a Sustainability Assessment nor a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. However, a Sustainability Audit of the Plan has been undertaken and has helped to shape the Plan (Supporting Document G).
- 1.12 A large amount of information has been gathered to help ensure the Plan is robust (Supporting Document D).

**PARISH PROFILE**

- 1.13 A Parish Profile has been prepared to inform the development of the Plan (Supporting Document H). The key points arising from the Parish Profile are:
  - The 2011 Census shows the resident population to be 901, with 420 households in the Parish;
  - The age profile of residents is reasonably similar to Britain as a whole, with a slightly higher proportion of people between the ages of 60 and 84;
  - There is a higher proportion of white British residents compared to the whole country, but similar to the rest of Harborough District;
  - There is a higher proportion of married couples with no dependent children;
  - The Parish is relatively prosperous, with higher proportions of people employed as managers and in professions, higher average incomes and fewer people in receipt of welfare benefits; and

- The Parish has a higher proportion of larger homes compared with the whole of the country and comparable house prices are higher than the rest of Harborough District and much higher than the whole of the country.

**WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR**

- 1.14 The Plan has been prepared by the accountable body – Billesdon Parish Council – and covers the period to 2028. The Parish Council has been assisted by the Neighbourhood Development Plan Group (BNDPG), comprising some 15 volunteers drawn from the residents of the Parish. The BNDPG has undertaken extensive consultation with the people of Billesdon and others with an interest in the Parish and has considered their views in preparing this Plan.
- 1.15 The Parish of Billesdon has strong community cohesion and has previously produced documents to influence the development of the area, including a Parish Plan (2006) and a Village Design Statement (2001). This level of community involvement has been a sound basis for the development of the Plan. A Statement of Consultation (Supporting Document A) shows how the community has been kept well informed about progress on the development of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and how residents, employees and the owners/managers of businesses in the Parish could engage with the Plan process. Communication has been through monthly articles in the Parish newsletter, which goes free into every household and business in the Parish, an updated page on the *Leicestershirevillages* website, and a display board at the annual church fete.
- 1.16 Extensive consultation has been the foundation for the development of the Plan. An open public meeting with residents and owners/managers of businesses was held on 10 January 2012 to test support for a Neighbourhood Development Plan, gather opinion on objectives and recruit members for the BNDPG. Over 100 people attended and expressed unanimous support for the development of the Plan. Residents and owners/managers of businesses in the Parish were invited to three community consultation events held on 17 April 2012, 15 May 2012, and 7/9 February 2013. These events aimed, successively, to develop the Community Vision, identify Key Issues (objectives), and gather opinions on Plan options, especially for housing development. Interested landowners and developers were involved in these consultations and presentations.
- 1.17 Four questionnaire surveys were conducted in 2012 with: clubs, societies and other formally constituted groups within the Parish; young people (under 18 years of age); owners of businesses and managers of services located in the Parish; and the whole Parish community (Supporting Document D). Information from the questionnaires was used in shaping the Community Vision, Key Issues and Plan policies.
- 1.18 The Billesdon Parochial Primary School (the Primary School) has been involved in designing the logo for the Plan and the Primary School completed a whole-day project on 'Planning and Village Design'. Information from the views of the pupils was used in developing the Plan.
- 1.19 There have been considerable, periodic consultations and meetings with other stakeholders: land owners and developers of potential housing sites; Harborough District Council; Leicestershire County Council; and representatives of Public sector agencies.
- 1.20 A Pre-Submission version of the Plan was the subject of a six-week period of consultation, from 12 August to 23 September 2013. All households and stakeholders in the Parish,



The distinctive Billesdon Coplow to the north of the Parish

including employees and the owners of businesses, were informed of an open community consultation event for residents and business owners/managers.

- 1.21 Following the Pre-Submission consultation, Billesdon Parish Council considered the representations and decided on amendments to the Plan. The draft Plan was then submitted to Harborough District Council, who made the Plan available for comment during the period between 9 December 2013 and 24 January 2014.
- 1.22 The District Council then appointed an Independent Examiner to consider if the proposed Plan met 'Basic Conditions'. The Examiner recommended in May 2014 that the Plan is modified to meet the 'Basic Conditions' and then submitted to a referendum.

## 2 COMMUNITY VISION

2.1 The Community Vision for Billesdon was developed from a Community Consultation event and questionnaire surveys of young people and the formally constituted groups, societies and organisations in the Parish. Two broad themes emerged: maintaining the character of Billesdon and developing a sustainable community.

### MAINTAINING THE CHARACTER OF BILLESDON

2.2 *A village whose rural character and sense of 'community' have been maintained.* The overwhelming view of local people is that the strengths of Billesdon lie in a strong sense of community and an identity as a rural village. The overall vision for the Billesdon Neighbourhood Plan is to conserve this rural village character.



The Church fete in the Market Place

- 2.3 *A rural village whose appearance has been preserved by the managed integration of new housing built to high standards of design, including energy conservation features.* The core of Billesdon Village is a conservation area with a wide range of listed buildings (heritage assets) that together create a distinctive village setting. The Village still retains its 'compact' appearance and, at present, the majority of people living in the Village are within 10 minutes walk of its focal point - the Market Place. Although the Village will grow, this compact and attractive character should be conserved, for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.
- 2.4 *A rural community that actively responds to environmental issues and seeks to protect and enhance its countryside landscape, wildlife habitats and biodiversity.* In consultation events, the Community has expressed its commitment to landscape, nature conservation, protection of its local green open spaces and combating climate change. Residents have a close relationship with the open countryside: most live within 5 minutes walk of the surrounding open farmland. Maintaining the compactness of the Village, together with enhanced footpath access, would underpin this close relationship with the open countryside.

2.5 *A rural village whose through-traffic and parking problems have been contained at manageable proportions.* The Community has expressed a clear wish to remain free of urban and suburban traffic management infrastructure. Nevertheless, increasing traffic volumes through and within the Village pose significant problems, including the parking of cars. The Community supports management methods suited to a rural village that may combat these problems, as well as developments that promote public transport, walking and cycling, rather than use of the car.



Market Place with the Market Cross and the War Memorial

### DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

- 2.6 *A rural community containing an integrated mix of people by age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and disability.* Billesdon's strong sense of community rests on the successful integration of people with a wide range of personal characteristics. There is a low crime rate, a high participation rate in community events and a range of volunteer groups that provide care within the community. The community is committed to sustaining and developing these features.
- 2.7 *A rural community whose housing needs have been met mainly through the development of a mixture of house types built on a restricted number of sites integral to the village of Billesdon.* The community recognises that some growth in its stock of housing is needed to underpin population growth for sustainable development. A mixture of housing types would maintain the broad age range of the community, while a phased expansion of new housing would maintain the strong sense of community. A restriction of new housing to a few sites integral to the Village would enable its character to be retained.
- 2.8 *A rural community whose varied educational, medical, recreational, leisure and retail needs are met by a range of sustainable services and facilities.* The Village of Billesdon will continue to act as a centre for the surrounding area, not just its residents. There is a need to ensure the sustainability of a range of different services, including for employment, shopping, recreation, leisure, health and education, through adaptation and development.
- 2.9 *A rural community supported by a strong local economy.* Billesdon supports a wide range of small businesses, although a significant number of residents commute to nearby towns for employment or are retired. The development of local employment opportunities, supported by an improved broadband service, would maintain a strong local economy, reduce the reliance on commuting and retain young people within the community.
- 2.10 *A rural community that plays its part in reducing and mitigating environmental degradation and climate change.* The community will seek to minimise traffic flows within the Village, encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy production (with the aim of reducing the overall carbon footprint of the community) and create new wildlife habitats and corridors around the Village.

### 3 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Billesdon Neighbourhood Development Plan is an opportunity to meet the Parish's immediate future needs and address the longer term Vision of the Community. But what should be the focus of the Plan? What should be its main objectives or 'Key Issues'?
- 3.2 Evidence on 'Key Issues' was gathered from: (a) a Community Consultation event; (b) a questionnaire survey of the formally constituted groups, societies and organisations in the Parish; (c) a questionnaire survey of young people in the Parish; and (d) discussions within the Neighbourhood Development Plan Group.
- 3.3 The following 'Key Issues' (objectives) emerged, set within the overall concerns of the Community that the Neighbourhood Development Plan should maintain the character of Billesdon – the Parish and the Village – and maintain a sustainable community.

#### HOUSING

- 3.4 *The number of new houses:* the Community supports an increase in the housing stock, with the Village as the location for development within the Parish. But the successful integration of new houses, and their families, into the existing village community and infrastructure is a significant Key Issue for the Community, especially when seeking to maintain the character and sense of community of a rural village.

**Key Issue: identify the number of new houses that could be successfully absorbed into the existing village community and infrastructure.**

A view of Church Street



- 3.5 *The number of sites for new houses:* a range of sites for the construction of new houses is available, but the number of sites chosen will alter the shape and structure of the Village. Should the houses be built on one site, or spread between two or more sites? The Community needs to develop a 'vision' for the future, including the number of sites for housing development, so that new housing can be integrated into the existing village structure.

**Key Issue: develop a 'Community Vision' for the development of the Village that identifies the number of sites for new houses.**

- 3.6 *The sites for development:* once the number of sites is agreed, a choice must be made between the available sites. A methodology is required for identifying the criteria on which the Community can base its choice.

**Key Issue: develop a methodology to enable the Community to exercise a choice on the site(s) for new housing.**

- 3.7 *The types and sizes of new housing:* the Community is concerned with: the provision of 2-3 bedroom houses within a mix of new housing (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4+ bedrooms); the need for affordable homes within a mix of market, rented and shared ownership dwellings; the provision of a range of dwelling types, to allow elderly residents of the Parish to 'downsize' without leaving the local area (e.g. bungalow, semi-detached, detached, flats); the density of housing; and the need to integrate services and amenities into the housing development.

**Key Issue: ensure that housing developers address the concerns of the Community as regards the types and sizes of new housing.**

- 3.8 *Housing design:* the Community is sensitive to the potential design features of new housing, such that new housing integrates with the existing architecture and ambiance of the village and is sensitive to sustainable and "green" design features.

**Key Issue: update the existing "Village Design Statement" and incorporate it into the Neighbourhood Development Plan.**

#### EMPLOYMENT

- 3.9 *Broadband:* the Community acknowledges that the present broadband facility in the Parish is not fit for purpose. A substantial upgrade is required to enable home-workers to operate more efficiently and enable local businesses to grow, thereby providing a sustainable increase in local employment opportunities.

**Key Issue: improve the speed and quality of the broadband network in the Parish.**

- 3.10 *Redevelopment of existing buildings for retail, office or light industrial use:* a shortage of floor space exists for new and expanding businesses in the Parish. Opportunities exist for the conversion of suitable buildings, as a way of creating sustainable employment opportunities.

**Key Issue: provide additional floor space for office or light industrial use by the redevelopment of existing buildings, but in a way that is compatible with the sustainable development of the rural environment and community of the Parish.**

- 3.11 *New-build office and light industrial floor space:* a shortage of floor space exists for new and expanding businesses in the Parish. Opportunities exist for the new-build of suitable floor space. Can a small area of land be identified for new-build floor space, as a way of creating sustainable employment opportunities?

**Key Issue: provide additional capacity for office or light industrial uses by suitable, new-build floor space, but in a way that is compatible with the sustainable development of the rural environment and community of the Parish.**

#### SERVICES AND FACILITIES

- 3.12 *Recreational Facilities:* the Parish has a significant number of young people, many of whom are, or will become, teenagers during the life-time of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Community recognises that there are insufficient leisure time facilities in the Parish for these young people.

**Key Issue: provide additional recreational facilities for teenagers and younger children.**

- 3.13 *The Coplow Centre:* faced by an increased demand from families in new housing, the Community is concerned that there is little capacity to increase the use of recreational facilities at The Coplow Centre (i.e. village hall).

**Key Issue: meet any growth in demand for recreational facilities from the population of the Village and Parish by increasing the capacity of The Coplow Centre.**

- 3.14 *Retail opportunities:* the Community is anxious to retain the existing independent retail businesses within the Parish. But an increased population would create opportunities for existing businesses to develop, as well as for the creation of new businesses to extend the range of retail opportunities.

**Key Issue: increase the retail capacity in the Parish, so as to serve the needs of an increasing population, by the redevelopment of existing buildings.**

3.15 *The Primary School*: faced by an increased demand from families in new housing, the Primary School is nearly at full capacity, as is the road outside the Primary School at the start and end of the school day.

**Key Issue: develop the Village Primary School to accommodate those children from new houses who wish to attend; implement measures designed to prevent aggravation of the existing traffic congestion outside the school.**

#### TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

3.16 *Traffic Management*: the main traffic management problems of the Parish lie in the village of Billesdon. The Village is rural in character and has narrow roads, particularly at its centre. The existing volume of through traffic already poses threats to the safety of both road users and pedestrians, in addition to creating noise and air pollution. With a prospective increase in the village population, further pressure will be put on the road system by the increased number and movement of cars and people. The main problem area lies in and around Market Place, although there are also specific bends, stretches of road and road junctions that give cause for further concern, particularly outside the Village Primary School.

**Key Issue: improve the management of traffic through the Village, including the additional traffic flows that will be generated by new housing.**

3.17 *Parking*: the main car parking problems of the Parish lie within the Village of Billesdon. Parking is a significant problem in Market Place, in the village centre, where important services are located – the village shop, the doctors’ surgery, the hair dresser, the bus stops and one of the two village pubs. Parking outside the Primary School, with its hazard for children and families using the Primary School, is another localised problem area. In addition, many residents of Billesdon do not have a garage: their cars are parked on the village streets, with consequent hazards for pedestrians and difficulties for the flow of traffic through the village.

**Key Issue: improve the management of car parking in the Village, so as to absorb the additional pressure on parking to be generated by new housing.**

3.18 *Footpaths*: the maintenance of existing, and the creation of new, footpaths throughout the Parish are a vital part of maintaining the rural atmosphere of the locality. In particular the centre of the Village, and its services, should remain accessible on foot to as many residents in the Parish as possible.

**Key Issue: ensure that new housing development has adequate footpath provision and cycle way access to the village centre and the countryside.**

#### ENVIRONMENT

3.19 *Protecting and enhancing the rural landscape and natural environment*: there is strong support in the Community to work with other agencies in the preservation of woodland and hedgerows, and the promotion of biodiversity, including wetlands and wildlife corridors. There is also community support for considering the impact on landscapes of new housing, non-agricultural land uses and other developments, such as wind farms.

**Key Issue: ensure that the distinctive rural landscape, settlement pattern, historical assets, natural environment and biodiversity of the Parish are protected and enhanced by the Neighbourhood Development Plan, whilst meeting the need for sustainable development.**

3.20 *Promoting Healthy Lifestyles*: the Community considers that there are insufficient public green open spaces, footpaths, bridleways and safe cycling routes in the Parish to meet the aspirations of the *Core Strategy*. The Parish has no playing field, nor, with the exception of the Play Area on Gaulby Road, the tennis court at The Coplow Centre and the cricket club, any specific outdoor recreational facilities for either young or old.

**Key Issue: provide improved green open spaces, sport and recreation facilities to promote healthy lifestyles in the Parish.**

3.21 *Addressing Climate Change*: there is concern in the Community about climate change and a determination to make a positive contribution to mitigating the impact of development by implementing sustainable energy-neutral practices.

**Key Issue: features to mitigate the impact of development on climate change should be designed into new and existing buildings, such as green roofs, rain harvesting, grey water recycling, high standards of insulation and renewable energy systems.**



*Our rural heritage is a precious natural asset*



## 4 HOUSING

### HOUSING PROVISION

- 4.1 The Harborough *Core Strategy* identifies Billesdon as a Rural Centre and as a focus for rural affordable and market housing. There are five other Rural Centres – Kibworth, Great Glen, Fleckney, Husbands Bosworth and Ullesthorpe. Billesdon, together with Fleckney, Husbands Bosworth and Ullesthorpe, and the 16 Selected Rural Villages, must provide for at least 2,420 homes over the period 2006 to 2028.
- 4.2 Having regard to the level of housing already built and committed (including 15 dwellings at the White Hart Garage), the Plan needs to find sites to allow for the building of a target of a minimum of 45 new homes over the period to 2028 (Supporting Document E). This level of provision will allow Billesdon to deliver sufficient new homes to be compatible with its status as a Rural Centre. The remaining Rural Centres and Selected Rural Villages appear capable of meeting the remaining housing requirement.
- 4.3 The Community supports this scale of development, as it will not dominate the existing community and can avoid placing undue pressure on local services and facilities, although there will be a need for some improvements and additions to these. A housing provision of a target of a minimum of 45 dwellings is not disproportionate to the size of Billesdon and is compatible with the Community Vision for Billesdon in 2028. It is sufficient to deliver enough affordable homes to meet local needs.
- 4.4 Where development would exceed 45 dwellings, consideration will be given to: (i) the degree by which the requirement is exceeded; (ii) the likelihood of delivery of the outstanding permissions; (iii) evidence of community support; (iv) the benefits arising from the development; (v) the impact on the landscape setting of the Village; (vi) the appropriateness of the scale of the development in relation to the size and character of the Village; and (vii) the level of local service provision.
- 4.5 The Plan identifies sufficient developable sites to meet this housing provision. The Plan also allows for infill development within the main built-up part of the Village, as defined by the Limits to Development.

#### POLICY BP2: HOUSING PROVISION

Having regard to dwellings already constructed and existing commitments, the remaining housing provision for Billesdon will be a target of a minimum of 45 dwellings over the period to 2028, which will be met by the allocation of housing sites in Policy BP3. In addition, permission for housing development within the limits to development, as defined on the Policies Map, will be granted if the development:

- is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings;
- does not significantly adversely affect the amenities of residents in the area, including daylight/sunlight, privacy, air quality, noise and light pollution;
- does not significantly increase vehicular traffic flow on Brook Lane, Church Street or Gaulby Road; and
- has safe and suitable access to the site for all people.

### HOUSING ALLOCATIONS

- 4.6 Two sites have been allocated for housing development, with a third site as a reserve as detailed in the Site Selection Framework (Supporting Document F) and using evidence from the Evidence Base (Supporting Document D). This will provide for choice, competition and flexibility in the provision of new homes. In identifying sites, the Plan has regard to the following:

- 🌿 Site capacity
- 🌿 Site availability
- 🌿 Land use (brownfield/greenfield status; agricultural land quality; existing use)

- 🌿 Transportation (access to the services and facilities provided in the centre of the Village; access to the Primary School; access to public transport; public rights of way; footpaths; highways access; impact on traffic flows within the village)
- 🌿 Heritage assets (listed buildings; conservation area; scheduled monuments; other archaeology)
- 🌿 Natural environment (TPO; important hedgerows; local wildlife sites/ local nature reserves; regionally important geodiversity sites)
- 🌿 Water (flood risk; groundwater protection)
- 🌿 Landscape (quality; settlement distinctiveness; safeguarding important views and landmarks; protecting the landscape setting of Billesdon; restoration of damaged landscapes; green infrastructure)
- 🌿 Miscellaneous (gas/oil pipelines; overhead cables; mineral resources; noise; contamination)
- 🌿 Community support.

- 4.7 The sites selected for housing development maintain the compact form of the Village, encourage walking and cycling rather than using the car to access services, and protect both the conservation area and the landscape surrounding the Village (Policies Map: pp.26-27). The Plan also considers the views of local residents in allocating these sites. The proportion of affordable dwellings within the housing allocation is addressed in paragraph 4.8.

#### POLICY BP3: HOUSING ALLOCATIONS

The following sites are allocated for housing development, as defined on the Policies Map:

- land to the north of High Acres, Uppingham Road (Site A), subject to the provisions of Policy BP4; and
- land east of Rolleston Road (Site B), subject to the provisions of Policy BP5.
- the former lorry park on Gaulby Road (Site R) is identified as a reserve site for housing development; the site will be made available for housing development if:
  - it is required to replace allocated Site B above, because there is no reasonable prospect of viable development within the period to 2028;
  - it is required to replace the current commitment of the White Hart garage site, because there is no reasonable prospect of a viable development within the period to 2028; or
  - it becomes necessary to provide for additional homes in accordance with any new development plan document that replaces the Harborough *Core Strategy*.

Should it become necessary to allocate a further reserve site(s), the Billesdon Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed.

#### POLICY BP4: LAND TO THE NORTH OF HIGH ACRES, UPPINGHAM ROAD (Site A)

Land is allocated for housing development to the north of High Acres, Uppingham Road, as defined on the Policies Map. Development will be permitted subject to the following criteria:

- the development provides for a target of a minimum of 35 dwellings. At least 40% of the dwellings shall be affordable housing. A mix of housing types will be required. The affordable housing and mix of housing requirements to be informed by the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment or other local evidence. A proportion of dwellings shall be designed to achieve *Code for Sustainable Homes* level 4 or above, or equivalent. All these requirements to be subject to viability, in accordance with paragraph 173 in the NPPF;
- principal access to the site is to be from Uppingham Road. There should be no vehicular access to Long Lane;
- a footway and/or cycleway link to be provided from the west of the site to Long Lane;
- approximately 4,000 sq.m. of green open space is to be provided along the northern

boundary of the site. A local play area for young children shall be provided elsewhere within the site;

- e. a landscaping scheme should be implemented to provide for an improvement in biodiversity and include:
  - i. the retention of important trees and hedgerows;
  - ii. additional planting along the southern boundary of the site to protect the residential amenities of existing residents;
  - iii. additional planting along the northern boundary of the site to minimise the impact of noise and disturbance from A47 traffic on residential amenities;
  - iv. an appropriately designed, constructed and maintained sustainable drainage system; and
  - v. the green open space identified in criterion d above;
- f. undertake an archaeological field evaluation.

**POLICY BP5: LAND EAST OF ROLLESTON ROAD (Site B)**

Land is allocated for housing development to the east of Rolleston Road as defined on the Policies Map. Development will be permitted subject to the following criteria:

- a. the development provides for a target of a minimum of 10 dwellings. At least 40% of the dwellings shall be affordable housing. A mix of housing types will be required. The affordable housing and mix of housing requirements to be informed by the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment or other local evidence. A proportion of dwellings shall be designed to achieve *Code for Sustainable Homes* level 4 or above, or equivalent. All these requirements to be subject to viability, in accordance with paragraph 173 in the NPPF;
- b. principal access to the site is to be from Rolleston Road;
- c. approximately 1,800 sq.m. of green open space is to be provided on the western boundary of the site, parallel with Rolleston Road, to an average depth of approximately 15 metres;
- d. a landscaping scheme should be implemented to provide for an improvement in biodiversity and include:
  - i. the retention of important trees and hedgerows;
  - ii. the retention of the mounding and the provision of additional planting on the green open space along the western boundary of the site to minimise the visual impact on existing residents of Rolleston Road; and
  - iii. additional planting along the eastern boundary of the site to minimise the impact of development on the landscape setting of the Village.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- 4.8 Affordable housing is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. The *Harborough Core Strategy* requires 40% of new dwellings to be Affordable housing.
- 4.9 In 2008, a Housing Needs Survey, undertaken in the Village, identified a need for around 13 affordable homes. This was updated in 2012 in connection with the preparation of this Plan. 10% of respondents knew of someone who had left the parish in the last 5 years through lack of housing that they could afford; 21% knew of a family member looking for alternative accommodation.
- 4.10 In November 2012, Harborough District Council’s Homesearch (Housing Needs) Team confirmed that 76 households have nominated Billesdon as a location of choice, although only 8 households have a local connection to the village.
- 4.11 All of this information suggests that up to 15 homes, mainly 2 bedroomed for social rent, would meet local needs for Affordable housing. This requirement can be met by

the above housing allocations, but the detail will be agreed at the time of a planning application. Should a further need for Affordable housing be identified in the future, the Plan will make provision to allow planning permission to be granted for Affordable housing on a ‘Rural Exception Site’, i.e. a site within or adjoining the village that would not normally be released for private market housing. New Affordable housing will be allocated initially to people registered with the Homesearch Team with a local connection, including those living, working or with close family ties in the Parish.

**POLICY BP6: AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The need for Affordable housing is to be met by the housing allocations identified in policies 3, 4 and 5. Affordable housing may also be permitted on a rural exception site within or adjoining the limits to development where:

- a. the housing is demonstrated to meet an identified local need for affordable housing that will not be met by the housing allocations identified in policies 3, 4 and 5, and
- b. the development is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings;
- c. the development does not significantly adversely affect the amenities of residents in the area;
- d. the development does not significantly increase vehicular traffic flow on Gaulby Road, Brook Lane and Church Street; and
- e. safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people.

All affordable housing will be subject to conditions, or a planning obligation will be sought, to ensure that when homes are allocated, priority is given to people with a local connection to Billesdon Parish (i.e. including living, working or with close family ties in the Parish).



Existing design styles within Billesdon: thatched ironstone, Georgian brick, restored ironstone, sympathetic ‘new build’

**DESIGN**

- 4.12 The Plan expects all development to contribute positively to the creation of well-designed buildings and spaces. Through good design, practical and meaningful places can be created and sustained and the character of Billesdon can be maintained and enhanced. Good design in the built environment also involves the creation of places that work well for both occupants and all users and are built to last.
- 4.13 The Billesdon Village Design Statement (VDS), first published in 2001, has been updated to ensure that new development is locally distinctive. The revised VDS describes the distinctive character of Billesdon and highlights the qualities valued by its residents. From these qualities, design principles, based on the distinctive local character of the Village, have been drawn up to guide development.
- 4.14 The Plan expects that housing developments will be attractive, functional and sustainable places, having regard to *Building for Life 12* - the industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods.

**POLICY BP7: DESIGN**

New development should meet the requirements of the Billesdon Village Design Statement. Housing developments of five or more dwellings should achieve 12 ‘greens’ against the requirements of *Building for Life 12* and be eligible for ‘Building for Life Diamond’ status.

## 5 EMPLOYMENT

- 5.1 There are no large or medium sized employers within the Parish. However, a range of businesses operates from the Park Farm Business Units on the boundary of Billesdon within the Parish of Skeffington. The main employment is based around agriculture, the school and a number of small businesses. With very few employment opportunities in Billesdon, many residents commute to work in Market Harborough, Leicester and elsewhere. Public transport services are poor, so around 83% of residents travel to work by car or van. Nevertheless, a relatively high proportion of residents – 8% – work from home.
- 5.2 A significant number of residents would establish or expand businesses within the Parish if there were suitable accommodation. So the Plan supports economic growth in Billesdon in order to create jobs and prosperity, reduce the need for people to travel to work by car, and provide opportunities for the expansion and growth of local enterprise.

### WORKING FROM HOME

- 5.3 While working from home may not be a suitable option for every employee in every business, using home as a working base for at least part of the week offers a number of benefits for business. For example, home working can help working parents with childcare responsibilities.
- 5.4 Working from home does not necessarily need planning permission. Whatever business is carried out from home, the key test is: is the premises still mainly a home, or is it used primarily for business?
- 5.5 With a relatively large proportion of residents working from home, the Plan responds positively to enable these businesses to grow.

#### **POLICY BP8: WORKING FROM HOME**

Planning permission for development that enables home working will be granted if the development:

- is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings;
- does not significantly adversely affect the amenities of residents in the area;
- does not significantly increase vehicular traffic flow on Brook Lane and Church Street; and
- has safe and suitable access to the site for all people.

### INTERNET CONNECTION

- 5.6 The internet is driving business innovation and growth, helping people access services, and opening up new opportunities for learning. Billesdon's residents and businesses are unable to take advantage of these opportunities, as local internet connection speeds are currently lower than 2Mbps. Local people think that current connection speeds are unacceptable.
- 5.7 Furthermore, Billesdon is at risk of not receiving market-led Next Generation Access. The Billesdon telephone exchange is not on BT's superfast fibre broadband rollout plans. Superfast broadband will revolutionise internet use, opening up new opportunities for businesses, communities and individuals. For businesses of every size, from self-employed and home based businesses, right up to the very largest employers, the benefits of high-speed broadband are considerable. The Plan considers that a basic requirement of all new employment and housing development should be superfast broadband ready, especially where this could help bring forward superfast broadband for existing residents and businesses.

#### **POLICY BP9: SUPERFAST BROADBAND**

All new dwellings and employment buildings should incorporate ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable Superfast Broadband.

### THE LCC DEPOT (GAULBY ROAD)

- 5.8 The Leicestershire County Council (Highways) Depot has become less well-used over recent years and is likely to be declared surplus to requirements later in 2013. The re-use of the site will prevent the site from becoming an eyesore and prone to vandalism. The Plan encourages the redevelopment of the LCC Depot for business use to provide an opportunity for the expansion of existing businesses and the creation of new businesses in the Parish (Policies Map: pp.26-27). The nearby Park Farm Business Units could provide a model for the development of the LCC Depot site.
- 5.9 The redevelopment of the Depot site should complement the adjoining Nature Reserve and discourage the movement of HGVs through the village.

#### **POLICY BP10: THE LCC DEPOT (GAULBY ROAD)**

Land amounting to 1.5 hectares is allocated for business development through the redevelopment or re-use of the Highway Depot site on Gaulby Road. Development will be permitted subject to the following criteria:

- uses are limited to Business and Storage or Distribution (Classes B1 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987) (as amended);
- principal access to the site to be provided from Gaulby Road;
- in consultation with the Highway Authority, measures to be taken to discourage HGVs from entering and leaving the site via the centre of Billesdon village. These measures are to include weight restrictions and signage to the site from the A47;
- the development not to have a greater adverse impact on the nature conservation interests or the quiet enjoyment of the adjoining wildlife site than the existing use. Particular regard shall be paid to the impact of noise, disturbance and light pollution;
- important trees and hedgerows on the site to be retained within a landscaping scheme; and
- the development to provide for a small number of starter or 'grow-on' units.

### BUSINESS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

- 5.10 To support the rural economy and protect the open countryside from new development, the Plan supports the sustainable growth and expansion of business and enterprise through the conversion of existing buildings in the countryside.
- 5.11 The change of use of some rural buildings to new uses is already permitted under the General Permitted Development Orders. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013 allows existing redundant agricultural buildings of 500m<sup>2</sup> or less to change to a range of new business uses, to boost the rural economy whilst protecting the open countryside from development. Prior approval is required for such a change of use of buildings between 150 – 500m<sup>2</sup>. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014 allows, under certain circumstances, the change of use of agricultural buildings to residential use and change of use of agricultural buildings to registered nurseries providing childcare or state-funded schools, under the prior approval system.

#### **POLICY BP11: BUSINESS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

In addition to developments permitted by the General Development Orders, planning permission for the conversion or re-use of buildings in the countryside will be permitted where the development is for:

- restaurant and café, business, storage or distribution uses (Classes A3, B1 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987) (as amended);
- the diversification of agricultural or other land-based rural business; or

- c. the provision or expansion of tourist and visitor facilities.  
The buildings to be converted or re-used should be of a construction that is suitable for the development proposed without the need for major, additional construction works. The development should:
  - a. be in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings;
  - b. have good access to and from the A47 and not generate significant additional traffic through Billesdon Village; and
  - c. have safe and suitable access to the site for all people.

## 6 SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### KEY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

6.1 Policy CS17 (Countryside, Rural Centres and Rural Villages) of the Harborough Core Strategy identifies Billesdon as a Rural Centre, because it has at least four of six relevant (key) services, namely a food shop, GP surgery, library, post office, primary school and pub. Of these, Billesdon has a food shop/general store, a GP surgery, a community post office, a

primary school and two public houses. In addition, there is a garage/petrol station, a hairdressing salon, a retained fire station, church, chapel and The Coplow Centre. The garage/petrol station is likely to close, as planning permission has been granted for the development of the site for housing. The Leicestershire County Council mobile library visits Billesdon every two weeks, while mobile fishmonger and fish-and-chip vans also serve the village weekly.

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



The New Greyhound: one of the two pubs

### POLICY BP12: RETENTION OF KEY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

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



Billesdon is a well resourced village: the Community Post Office; the Queen's Head pub; the village shop



### BILLESDON PAROCHIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.3 Billesdon Parochial Primary School provides education to 4-11 year olds and has a capacity of 102 pupils. It is a smaller-than-average sized primary school with four classes. Pupil numbers are growing steadily and have done so for the past three years. The Primary School catchment area includes Billesdon, Gaulby, Rolleston, King's Norton and Illston on the Hill. The 2013 Ofsted inspection recognised the School as being good.

6.4 Despite being extended in 2010, the School will need more capacity to cope with the demand created by new housing development (see Supporting Document E 8.6). There are already associated traffic/parking problems outside the School at drop-off and pick-up times, and they need to be addressed when the school is expanded.

6.5 There are no secondary schools within a three mile walking distance of Billesdon and so buses and taxis are provided through the Village by the county's School Transport Service. Billesdon lies within the current catchment areas of Kibworth High School (ages 11-14) and Robert Smyth Academy (14-18) in Market Harborough. New development may also need to contribute to increasing secondary school capacity (see Supporting Document E 8.6).



### BILLESDON SURGERY

6.6 Billesdon Surgery is located in the centre of the village at the Market Place and offers a range of services and clinics. There is also a dispensary for prescriptions. The Surgery has recently been extended and the facility is of a good quality. The GP practice has identified that new equipment would assist in meeting the additional demands of a growing population.

The Surgery is housed in a listed building

However, the Community has expressed concern about parking problems in the mornings, when the Market Place and surrounding roads are congested. The increase in visits to the Surgery, associated with housing growth, will make these problems worse.



The Coplow Centre seen from the all-weather court

### THE COPLOW CENTRE

6.7 The Coplow Centre is a multi-functional community facility opened in 1996, with funding from Harborough District Council, other grants, and monies raised by the people of Billesdon, including the sale of the former village hall. With a large and adaptable main hall, a separate meeting room, floodlit multi-use sports court, kitchen and parking for 50 cars, it provides for a range of community and sporting events. The Centre is in regular use by a range of groups and classes including aerobics, badminton, bridge, drama, painting, brownies, creative dance, fitness, parent & toddler groups, table tennis for seniors and the Women's Institute. The Centre is constantly in use throughout the week and facilities require upgrading and expansion to accommodate a growing population.

6.8 The 2006 Parish Plan identified a number of possible initiatives for young people. Although a youth club was formed, based in the Old School, it had limited life and little has been done since to meet the needs of young people. The Baptist Chapel has activities for young people and, at present, a small youth club meets there every fortnight. Community consultations and consultations with Clubs, Societies and Formally Constituted Groups showed that the Community wishes priority to be given to the establishment of a youth club.

### SPORT AND RECREATION

6.9 Although the Primary School has a sports field, it is not open to use by the Community. There is a thriving Cricket Club in the village, with several teams that play in local leagues at senior and junior levels. The cricket pitch is on Coplow Lane and the clubhouse, with planning permission for enlargement, provides social facilities for the members. There is also a small Play Area on Gaulby Road for young children, managed by the Parish Council.

- 6.10 There is no public playing field – a serious deficiency for a Rural Centre. There is good community support for the provision of a public playing field for the recreation and healthy living of residents of all ages, but particularly young people. The provision of a playing field would enable children, young people and adults to engage in informal physical activity and encourage the development of competitive team sports. Ideally, a new playing field should be located adjacent to the Coplow Centre (see Policies Map), which is already the focus for most community leisure activity.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

- 6.11 New development will have some impact on the existing, and the need for new, infrastructure, services and amenities. Sometimes these impacts can be detrimental and so developers must expect to contribute towards the cost of providing additional infrastructure.
- 6.12 To enable the level of housing development set out in this Plan to take place, there will need to be improvements at Billesdon Parochial Primary School, Billesdon Surgery, The Coplow Centre and other sites of recreation provision. However, the Plan must be deliverable. Therefore, the developments identified in the Plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and burdens that their viable implementation is threatened.

#### **POLICY BP13: INFRASTRUCTURE**

New development will be supported by the provision of new or improved infrastructure as set out in policies BP4, BP5, BP9, BP10 and BP14, together with financial contributions as appropriate for the following off-site infrastructure requirements:

- a. the provision of additional school places at Billesdon Parochial Primary School and secondary schools arising from the development. This should include measures that address local traffic congestion and parking problems associated with the Primary School;
- b. the improvement, remodelling or enhancement of Billesdon Surgery. This should include measures that address local traffic congestion and parking problems associated with the Surgery;
- c. the improvement, remodelling or enhancement of The Coplow Centre, to include greater provision for young people; and
- d. a community playing field to be located near to The Coplow Centre.

Contributions will be phased or pooled to ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities where necessary. To ensure the viability of housing development, the costs of the Plan's requirements will be applied flexibly where it is demonstrated that they are likely to make the development undeliverable.

### WATER MANAGEMENT

- 6.13 The sites allocated for housing development are within Flood Zone 1, as defined by the Technical Guide to the *National Planning Policy Framework* as having a low probability of flooding.
- 6.14 However, Billesdon Brook is an ordinary watercourse running through the village; the geology is of low permeability; and there are a number of springs in the area. Therefore, new development should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Developers will need to consider potential water logging issues and any infiltration drainage will need careful investigation.
- 6.15 Information from Severn Trent Water indicates that the sewage works is near to its permitted dry weather flow. Therefore, any development would require the potential for further treatment capacity being provided at the sewage works and possibly to the sewerage system.

- 6.16 While there are no known land contamination issues, a Preliminary investigation (Phase 1) to establish the risk of contamination may be required prior to the development of sites. This is particularly important for those sites where there is likely to have been contamination on site (e.g. the Lorry Park and LCC Depot sites on Gaulby Road, and the White Hart Garage).

#### **POLICY BP14: WATER MANAGEMENT**

New development should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) with attenuation, storage and treatment capacities incorporated. Consideration should also be given to potential water logging, land contamination and waste water treatment capacity.

### RETAIL

- 6.17 Billesdon has a range of shops to meet many of the day-to-day requirements of local people. The Village has an excellent food shop/general store situated in the Market Place in the centre of the Village. Ten years ago Billesdon Post Office, sited in Church Street, was threatened with closure when the owner wished to sell. With the help of funding and loans from a number of local residents, a Community Post Office was set up, providing postal and some retail services to the village and the wider area. It has proved to be a thriving business and funds from its income support local community projects. The Royal Mail Sorting Office is situated in the premises. There is also a Hairdressing Salon on Uppingham Road. Two public houses, both serving meals, are The Queen's Head, in Church Street, and The New Greyhound, in Market Place; they are both popular with local residents and visitors.
- 6.18 The Community has identified a number of other retail services that the residents would use in the village, including a coffee shop, chemist and farm shop.
- 6.19 The conversion of existing buildings is strongly preferred, provided that existing services and facilities are not threatened by such developments.

#### **POLICY BP15: RETAIL**

Planning applications for the conversion or extension of shops and leisure uses, including public houses, which are designed to improve their viability, will be supported. The conversion of rural buildings to farm shops, which contribute to the rural economy, will be supported.



## 7 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

### TRAFFIC

7.1 Most of the roads within the Village of Billesdon are not well suited to modern traffic. Over the years, local people have expressed concerns about road safety, noise and vehicle emissions associated with the volume and speed of traffic passing through the centre of the Village. The Community wants to minimise the impact of additional traffic generated by new development, especially along Brook Lane and Church Street which are particularly narrow. There is also concern about the speed and volume of vehicles passing the Primary School on Gaulby Road.

Traffic congestion outside the Primary School



7.2 These concerns have been considered in the selection of development sites (Policy BP3). Most of the new homes that are being planned for will have good vehicular access to the A47 without needing to pass through the centre of the village. The Plan, as regards the redevelopment of the LCC Depot on Gaulby Road, will restrict lorry movements through the village.

7.3 The Plan does not propose specific traffic management measures, which have little local support. However, the Plan ensures that new development does not make the current situation significantly worse and Billesdon Parish Council will keep traffic management under review.

#### POLICY BP16: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

With the exception of those developments allocated in Policies BP3, BP4, BP5 and BP10, new development will only be permitted where it will not cause a significant increase in the volume of traffic using Brook Lane, Church Street or passing the Billesdon Parochial Primary School on Gaulby Road.

### PARKING

7.4 Some services and facilities have their own car parking: The Coplow Centre, the Community Post Office, the Chapel and the Queens Head pub. Other services and facilities have car parking on adjacent roads or they share the car park in the centre of the Village (Market Place). Parking is a particular problem in the mornings in the centre of the Village, around the shop, doctors' surgery, bus stops and New Greyhound pub. A similar problem exists outside the Primary School at those times when children are being taken to and from school. The proposed housing development sites will have reasonable pedestrian and cycle access to these services and facilities without the need to use a car.

7.5 The Plan is unable to propose a solution to the parking problem in the centre of the Village, as there is no land available to create an additional car park. The Community does not want additional parking restrictions and the associated road markings and signage. However, new housing developments will include generous car parking spaces to minimise the need for on-street car parking within the Village and have regard to the level of public transport available. On the road outside the Primary School, the Community favours some form of parking restriction, but not yellow lines.

#### POLICY BP17: PARKING

At least two off-street car parking spaces shall be provided for each new dwelling. Three such spaces should be provided for four-bedroom or larger dwellings.

### BUSES

7.6 Billesdon is currently served, until early evening Monday to Saturday, by the hourly Centrebus Midlands 747 service between Leicester and Uppingham. There are also irregular Rural Rider services to Leicester, Melton Mowbray and Market Harborough. The Community would like to see a more frequent bus service to Market Harborough, which would provide residents with improved access to employment, retail and leisure opportunities in the closest main centre to Billesdon.

7.7 To encourage the use of sustainable transport, it is recommended all new houses should be provided with a Travel Pack containing information about the local area, advice on local transport bus services, cycle routes, taxi information, walking maps and journey planning assistance. The pack should also contain application forms for two, free, 6-month bus passes for the local bus service, to encourage the use of sustainable transport. Travel packs are not a land use policy requirement in this Plan.



Billesdon has an hourly daytime bus service

## 8 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### LANDSCAPE

8.1 The High Leicestershire landscape is characterised by steep valleys and broad ridges containing many woodlands and a network of small villages connected by winding country lanes and gated roads. Billesdon is typical of High Leicestershire – a compact village nestling in valley folds within a grazing and arable landscape. A notable landmark is the wooded hill of the Billesdon Coplow, which lies to the north-west of the parish. The Village gives the impression of being well wooded, with many mature trees in and around the settlement. In surrounding fields, the medieval ridge and furrow pattern is often visible and many field boundaries are defined by hedgerows. The Community wants to conserve this landscape setting and ensure that the wooded valley appearance of the Village is maintained and enhanced. The landscape setting of Billesdon has been an important consideration in deciding the location of new development.

#### POLICY BP18: COUNTRYSIDE AND LANDSCAPE

Account should be taken of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside of the Parish and the need to support thriving rural communities within it, in the context of a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

### LOCAL GREEN SPACES

8.2 Green Infrastructure is a term used to encompass the network of multi-functional green spaces which helps to provide a natural life support system for people and wildlife. This network of both public and privately owned land and water supports native species, maintains natural and ecological processes, sustains air and water resources and contributes to the health and well-being of people and communities.

The wildlife area at the Woodland Pool



8.3 Green Infrastructure is important because it can provide many social, economic and environmental benefits close to where people live and work, including:

- 🌿 Places for outdoor relaxation and play
- 🌿 Space and habitat for wildlife with access to nature for people
- 🌿 Climate change adaptation – for example, flood alleviation

- 🌿 Environmental education
- 🌿 Local food production – in allotments, gardens and through agriculture
- 🌿 Improved health and well-being – lowering stress levels and providing opportunities for exercise

8.4 The Community has identified, for special protection, green spaces of particular local significance (see Policies Map). This local significance could be because of the green space's beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. Local Green Spaces identified in Billesdon include a community orchard, parish allotments, a wildlife pool nature reserve, a carriage road, a copse and a stream-based wildlife corridor (Billesdon Brook). By designating land as Local Green Space, the Plan will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.

#### POLICY BP19: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The Local Green Spaces identified on the Policies Map will be protected. Development that is harmful to these Local Green Spaces will not be approved.

### BIODIVERSITY

8.5 The Community places considerable value on the enhancement of biodiversity in the Parish, including the creation of wildlife habitats, the conservation of native hedgerows, the planting of native trees and wild flowers, and the protection of wildlife corridors.

#### POLICY BP20: BIODIVERSITY

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

### HERITAGE ASSETS

8.6 The Community wants to conserve heritage assets so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. In Billesdon there are 44 records on the National Heritage List for England. There are 43 Listed Buildings which include the church, market cross, telephone kiosk, pump, barns, school, Queen's Head PH, homes and boundary walls. The 13th or 14th Century Market Cross on the west side of Market Place is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Most of the village lies within Billesdon's Conservation Area.

8.7 Although most heritage assets have already been identified and are protected, the Community has identified other features which are an important part of Billesdon's heritage, due to their architectural, historic or archaeological significance. (1) Muddy Lane was for centuries a 'carriage road', giving access to the rear of properties in Church Street through to the Church. A stretch of it has been preserved as a pleasant walk, rich in flora, and forming a distinctive boundary to the village on its western side. (2) Earthworks at the north end of Long Lane have been officially mapped and recorded as a probable 'medieval shrunken village'.



Muddy Lane

### CLIMATE CHANGE

8.8 The Community supports the national move to a low carbon future. The Plan plays a role in helping secure reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy.

8.9 The sites allocated for housing development have good access to local services and facilities, which can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by minimising car use. Some of the new homes will be built to higher standards of sustainable design than required by national building regulations.

8.10 The Plan also encourages energy efficiency improvements to new and existing buildings and the incorporation of sustainability measures, such as rain harvesting, grey water recycling, high standards of insulation and renewable energy systems. The following small-scale renewable energy technologies will be acceptable where they integrate with new and existing buildings:



- ☘ Solar heating systems
- ☘ Photovoltaic Panels
- ☘ Biomass fuelled combined heat and power facilities and biomass boilers
- ☘ Wind turbines
- ☘ Ground or air source heat pumps

**POLICY BP21: CLIMATE CHANGE**

Where compatible with the Village Design Statement, the incorporation of rain harvesting, grey water recycling, high standards of insulation and renewable energy systems in new and existing development will be encouraged.

We are planning in order to protect our history and heritage into the future



**9 VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT**

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**Introduction**

The Billesdon Village Design Statement was first prepared in May 2001. In 2013, the Statement was updated and integrated into the Billesdon Neighbourhood Plan.

The objectives of this Village Design Statement are to describe the distinctive character of the village as it is today and to highlight the qualities that the residents value. From these qualities design principles based on the distinctive local character of the settlement have been drawn up to guide future development and maintenance.

**Who is the Village Design Statement for?**

Group	Individuals	Purpose
<b>Developers</b>	Architects, Designers, Engineers	Describes the visual qualities and character of the village to inspire new designs, and incorporate the views of villagers in developments and alterations, which may shorten negotiations and planning applications
<b>Residents</b>	Homeowners, Tenants	Guidance in alteration, maintenance work and new build
<b>Local Government and Statutory Consultees</b>	Harborough District Council, Leicestershire County Council, Billesdon Parish Council	It can be used as guidance in considering the design of new developments, & can strengthen the local authority's position when negotiating on design & at appeal.
<b>Local Businesses</b>	Retailers, Employers, Services	Understand local needs & facilities
<b>Community Groups</b>	Charities, Recreation, Social	Appreciate facilities available and future requirements of community

**How is the Village Design Statement to be used?**

The Village Design Statement should be consulted when preparing designs for new developments, renovations, extensions or alterations to existing buildings in the village regardless of scale.

*The relationship between the site and its surrounding should be carefully considered*



The Village Design Statement is intended to encourage and stimulate the following design process:

1. A survey of the relationship between the site and its surroundings, working with and respecting what is already there.
2. The identification of design opportunities presented by existing views, landscaping, built form, materials and details.
3. The designers should demonstrate in their proposals that an analysis of the site details and wider contextual setting has been carried out.

The Village Design Statement does not aim to provide design solutions. 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.

**History**

Like many English villages, Billesdon's origins were ancient but few traces remain. Following Iron Age and Roman occupation of the hilly land around Life Hill to the north of the parish, the Anglo-Saxons moved down into the nearby valley watered by Billesdon and Coplow Brooks. The new settlement developed into a classic open field village, with communal cultivation of land in three open fields – Portbridge, Mill and Stonepitt. Repeated ploughing of the strips by teams of oxen created the ridge and furrow pattern that is so characteristic of the parish today, and animals grazed on common land near the Coplow.

*Billesdon is unmistakably a rural community*



Billesdon is unmistakably a rural community and in the mid-19th century was a busy and prosperous place with a population of around 1000 at its peak in 1861.

The village economy was boosted by regular coach services, the White Hart coaching inn and employment for several farriers and blacksmiths. Agriculture, especially stock-rearing, occupied most people, but framework knitting flourished around Bradley's Square and several brickworks, including a sizeable one on the eastern edge of the village, produced distinctive 'Billesdon Bricks'. The full range of basic needs was met by bakers, butchers, grocers, shoemakers, tailors, milliners, dressmakers, carpenters and bricklayers. There were also one or two more specialist trades, including the world famous taxidermist Thomas Potter. Following Lord Suffield's construction of lavish stables and kennels around the Quadrant in 1838, the Billesdon (later the Fernie) Hunt was periodically resident in the village, giving employment to assorted huntsmen, grooms, smiths, livery tailors and domestic servants.

Other reminders of Billesdon's past include the Cricket Club, founded in 1872 at the ground off Coplow Lane; the Women's Institute, constituted in 1917; and its offshoot in 1920, the Drama Society – all still going strong. No longer with us are the Village Hall, built in 1870 by the Ancient Order of Foresters to a design by the distinguished Leicester architect Mr Goddard and sadly demolished 125 years later; the celebrations of Feast Week in June, the annual Flower Show and Sports Meeting (including horse racing around the cricket field) in August, and the Village

Pageant; and organisations like the Sick and Divi Club and the Tennis Club. Much changed but recognisable on close examination is the Prisoner of War Camp and the Royal Observer Corps post on opposite sides of Gaulby Road. Both are important reminders that Billesdon, like all communities, played its part during the World Wars of the 20th century.

**DESIGN STATEMENTS**

**1. Setting within the Landscape**

*Design Guidelines*

- 1.1 One of Billesdon's endearing features is its secluded valley setting, almost invisible from all the approaching roads and the A47 bypass. Development that encroaches above the ridgeline could compromise this feature and should be avoided.
- 1.2 The wooded-valley appearance of the village should be maintained and enhanced by the planting of additional appropriate native broadleaf species both within the village and along the approach roads.
- 1.3 Any proposals for prominently-located telecommunication equipment, mobile phone masts, wind turbines and other high-level equipment such as high voltage power lines, could have a significant negative impact on the surrounding landscape. Very careful consideration should be given to the siting of any such equipment and its subsequent removal when redundant.

**2. Shape of the Settlement**

Billesdon village today has developed around a central core enclosed by Church Street and Brook Lane, although the original village probably existed nearer Long Lane. The remains of the medieval village lie adjacent to the cricket field off Coplow Lane and behind High Acres. The restored Market Place lies at the north end of Church Street at its junction with the Uppingham Road. The existence of the Market Place with its war memorial and medieval cross is indicative of the former central importance of Billesdon within the surrounding countryside. The Market Place, with its enclosing buildings, makes this an important focal point in the village.



*Brook Lane forms part of the central core of the village*

To the south, at the opposite end of Church Street, sits the Parish Church of St John the Baptist, its spire clearly visible from the approach to the village. The church and its grounds form another focal point within the village. The Manor House, in ironstone with a Swithland slate roof, closes the view opposite the church. The tree and small green in front of the Manor House form one of the few open spaces within the village.

The total group of church, Old School, Old Vicarage with associated walls and churchyard, and listed mud barn (now converted to residential use), comprise an especially significant group of buildings and open spaces, which impart a special character to this part of the village. Billesdon is notable for its diversity of building styles and variety of materials used, including stone, brick and mud.

The majority of Billesdon is designated a Conservation Area, to which policy CS11 (Promoting Design and Built Heritage) of the Harborough Core Strategy applies. Many of the older houses

were built during the transition from stone to brick and there are many fine examples of both. Some buildings retain timber frame construction, much of which is obscured. Roofing materials are of thatch and traditional Welsh or Swithland slate, although a number of houses in Church Street contain fine examples of crucks, the Old Bakehouse for example. Historically many stone/brick built houses were constructed along the west side of Church Street. The 17th century Manor House, with its extensive hunt kennels and stables built to the rear around 1840, were of central importance to the area between Church Street and Brook Lane. The stables, now known as The Quadrant, were converted into houses in the 1980s.

Church Street contains a wide range of styles



A row of nine terraced cottages built in the 19th century for hunt servants on Brook Lane is known as Suffield Terrace. More recent development has taken place along Church Street and Brook Lane during the 20th century, culminating in modern-style houses and bungalows being built during the 1970s along the east side of Church Street and in the 2001 Weare Close development of 44 houses. The Weare Close development fails to conform to the requirements of the

Village Design Statement and any repetition of this must be avoided and permission refused. Further infill developments have taken place throughout the village in recent years with a range of styles in evidence. Development has also taken place along the village approaches. The Workhouse on Leicester Road was demolished in the mid 1930s and the recovered bricks were used to build the row of semi-detached houses on The Bank. Rolleston Road leads southwards out of the village past a Local Authority housing estate, the village fire station, some private houses and the Weare Close development. Gaulby Road, running westwards, has been developed on the south side with a small ribbon of houses built during the 1960s and 1970s. Uppingham Road, leading east out of the village, has also been subject to development, with houses built along High Acres during the 1960s and 1970s. Large executive homes were built at the Poplars during the early 1990s.

Varied frontings co-exist happily along Church Street



The most recent large-scale developments (including White Hart Close and Weare Close) have taken place during the late 1990s and early 2000s and were planned before the introduction of the Village Design Statement. These developments have been mixed and remain somewhat out of character with the main village. Others have been more suburban in character, again, not in keeping with the traditional core of the village. Conversely, some newer buildings have attempted to reflect more traditional building styles, or have incorporated some interesting features, but not always successfully.

### Essential Characteristics

Billesdon is a compact settlement along and within the circular road route of Church Street, Brook Lane and Uppingham Road. Together with this are various roads leading from the circular route, such as Long Lane and West Lane. There are also the alleyways and lanes, such as those to the Baptist Chapel off Brook Lane and to the Quadrant off Church Street. Since the opening of the bypass in 1986, the former through route of Uppingham Road (which has some ribbon development and modern closes of executive homes, converging on the Market Place) has become an ordinary village road comparable with Church Street.

The buildings fronting all of these roads are varied in age, design and materials. Ironstone and brick intermingle, but there is no excessive size or massing to traditional buildings. The traditional width of buildings is approximately 5 metres. This does not result in excessive massing of the roof line.

A continuous road frontage of individual buildings, many with small plots to the front, is typical, as in Church Street. This slight setting back of the houses places emphasis on the walls. These are stone, brick or mud, with a variety of copings.

The modest form of the buildings reflects cottages of only one and a half storeys. Two- or even three-storey buildings are still restrained in massing. A two-storey modern building can be as high as a traditional three-storey dwelling. The greater width of many modern homes results in a much greater massing that can sit uncomfortably among the older traditional buildings.

### Design Guidelines

- 2.1 Where appropriate, developments that follow the street line should be encouraged; closes and cul-de-sacs should be avoided where possible. Three-storey dwellings should also be avoided.
- 2.2 Modern developments have not always integrated with the village. Planning applications should provide an analysis of the site and its wider context, either in the form of a short written statement, and/or through the use of photographs of the site and its surroundings.
- 2.3 Existing open spaces and gaps between buildings should be preserved. Specifically views of the Church, open farmland, the Market Place and the green adjacent to the Manor House are vistas that should be protected.
- 2.4 Views of the village from the approaches generally give a positive first impression. Any new building should respect these approaches, be of sympathetic design, and sit comfortably within its surroundings.

## 3. Buildings

Billesdon has a wide and diverse range of domestic and commercial buildings reflecting the history and development of the village. Buildings vary in size and material. There are a few significant three-storey buildings within the village centre, but the majority are of two-storey construction.

The village has the benefit of a well-defined Conservation Area at its heart, where many of the oldest buildings are to be found. There are fine examples of cruck-built cottages, thatched cottages and mud or cob walls. Roof materials are thatch or traditional Welsh or Swithland slate, and walls of red brick or local ironstone. Features found in this area have been replicated in the surrounding streets as the village has developed over time.

These aspects of design, and the construction materials used, are to be encouraged in any future development within or around the village. Examples of these preferred design features are illustrated in the following paragraphs that highlight the recurring design themes that emerge from the Conservation Area within Billesdon.

### Roofs and Chimneys

The use of slate and thatch should be encouraged to reflect the roof types in the immediate vicinity of the development (Figs 1, 2, 3, pp. 44-5). The use of dark red clay tiles may also be appropriate in certain locations. Attention should also be paid to the types of chimney as part of the overall design of the building; the use of appropriate styles of chimney pot should be encouraged (Figs 4, 5, 6). These should reflect the styles generally found within a rural village and Billesdon in particular.



The use of more traditional rural materials is to be encouraged

**Rainwater Features**

Gutters and downpipes are important features. Inappropriate styles or colours can adversely affect the appearance of buildings. Modern materials are acceptable for these items but dark colours (preferably black) are considered more appropriate. The use of white and other bright colours should be discouraged.

**Dormer Windows**

Dormer windows can dramatically influence the character of a building. Within Billesdon, dormer window design is generally of a type that has a pitched roof and sits close to the eaves, with the bottom of the window interrupting the guttering. Where dormer windows are being considered as a part of a new development or a loft conversion, adherence to the preferred design features (ridged and hipped) should be encouraged (Figs 7 & 8).

Window styles are encouraged to be sympathetic



**Windows**

A predominant window design is multi-paned sash or casement. Whilst traditional materials are encouraged, sensible and sympathetic use of modern materials is considered acceptable, provided the window design reflects that of properties in the immediate vicinity. Examples of preferred window designs are illustrated in Figs 9 and 10. Note should be taken of the brick details over the window and the sill design and materials.

**Doors and Porches**

The majority of doors are set into the building with only a small rebate. Doors are predominantly of a solid type with, occasionally, a fanlight set above. Adjoining glass panels are inappropriate and should generally be discouraged. The majority of porches in the village consist of a single canopy. Such designs are considered appropriate (Fig 11). Porches having a pitched roof should be designed to reflect and mimic the main roof construction (Fig 12).

The use of these design features, together with, as far as possible, the use of traditional materials (although modern materials are acceptable if used sympathetically outside the Conservation Area) will be encouraged, subject to compatibility with the building and adjacent properties.

**Building Materials**

The predominant building material within the village is red/orange brick. Whilst several properties are built of stone, some specific examples have mud (“cob”) or rendered walls. The use of bricks and mortar and rendering materials that match with buildings in the immediate vicinity should be expected, as will the use of matching brick bonds and features. Flemish Bond is a common feature that should be encouraged (Fig 13).

The finishing of gables and eaves should be in keeping with the design aspects of the village (Fig 14); the use of bargeboards on gable ends is incongruous to the settlement and should be discouraged. The preferred feature is brick relief design (cornicing in Fig 15) that has been used extensively on new and old properties alike.

The closeness of the buildings, the mixture of building materials and the juxtaposition of cottages and larger houses and farmhouses give Billesdon its particular character. The irregular positioning of the buildings, with some set directly onto the streets and others with gardens in front or set sideways on, all adds interest and character to the village.

Most properties within the village have been maintained to reflect their origins, with the retention of existing or sympathetic replacement of windows and doors.

This attention to the environmental impact of building maintenance and sympathetic construction of new in-fill developments has enabled the village to retain its particular character.

**Design Guidelines**

- 3.1 New developments will be required to be sympathetic with their surroundings in respect of scale, design, siting and materials, unlike the Weare Close development, which was agreed before this Village Design Statement was adopted.
- 3.2 Building materials should be in keeping with the existing materials in the vicinity of the site. Brick size and colour, mortar colour, and roof materials will all be features to be considered.
- 3.3 Wall cladding is not a traditional feature of the village and will be discouraged.
- 3.4 Windows and doors made of traditional materials will be encouraged, although modern materials will be acceptable provided that the door and window designs reflect those on the properties in the immediate vicinity. Windows should be of a multi-pane design and doors solid, without an insert window.
- 3.5 Any new properties must be designed to fit sympathetically with the buildings in the immediate vicinity and to respect the local character.
- 3.6 Roofs of future developments should follow the example of the past: i.e. pitched and gabled with traditional Welsh slates, satisfactory alternative or, where appropriate, dark red clay tile.
- 3.7 Chimneys will be required on new developments. Wherever possible, chimneys should be incorporated into gable end walls with details similar to those of older dwellings.
- 3.8 Care should be taken when extending older properties, and when building new developments within the Conservation Area, to maintain the proportions of walls to windows and doors, as found in older style cottages. Larger windows do not fit in alongside original small windows. Thought should be given to materials used for replacement windows and doors so that they blend with the general appearance of the locality.
- 3.9 New developments should avoid featureless and windowless walls on buildings in prominent locations. Suitable traditional details should be incorporated, e.g. the use of windows, false windows or blue bricks to form a pattern, where this does not adversely affect the amenity of adjoining residents.
- 3.10 Any housing developments on the edge of the village should be incorporated into the village as far as possible, linked by footpaths, so that they do not become self-contained and/or inward-looking.
- 3.11 Developments should avoid ‘Standardised Designs’; individual and traditional styles that capture the distinctiveness of the village and reflect the building features found within Billesdon will be encouraged.
- 3.12 Garages should be unobtrusive and not a prominent feature of the design.



Hedges feature throughout Billesdon

#### 4. Boundaries

One of the most notable characteristics of many Billesdon properties is a frontage abutting directly on to the road. Church Street, Brook Lane, West Lane and Leicester Road are examples of this. Many have no front gardens and those that do exist tend to be very small. Areas of the village developed since the 1940s, such as High Acres, The Poplars and Gaulby Road, have larger front gardens, so that houses are further from the highway. Many of these later developments have minimal, if any, walls or fencing marking their boundaries. Council-built properties around Glebe Close and Vicarage Close tend to have boundaries that are more substantial, such as hedging. Most boundaries in the centre of the village were built to keep out driven livestock. These utilitarian walls are fairly plain, strong and normally built to shoulder height.

Materials that have been used include mud (as seen around the Old Vicarage and the Manor House), local ironstone and red brick or a mixture of these. They tend to have a blue brick or tile coping often with a tile crease immediately beneath it. All these types of boundary treatment are considered acceptable. Standardised wooden fencing is often unsympathetic to its surroundings and should be avoided in front gardens.

The landscape around the village boundaries is characterised by hawthorn hedges, some of which have never been laid. Muddy Lane, Rolleston Road and Gaulby Road near to the Council Depot show good examples.

Street furniture should be in keeping with the surroundings



#### Design Guidelines

- 4.1 Traditional boundaries should be preserved wherever possible and new developments should aim to retain existing walls or hedges.
- 4.2 Where hedging is planted, repaired or replaced, it should be with native species that are common within the area and if possible of local stock.
- 4.3 New planting of native hedging is to be encouraged in new developments as a form of boundary treatment to properties.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 Wherever possible walls should be of red brick and/or ironstone with blue brick or ridge tile coping incorporating a tile crease beneath it.
- 4.6 Gardens open to the highway are not appropriate and new developments should incorporate enclosed boundaries to reflect this.
- 4.7 Walls should carry forward the heritage of a working village, i.e. finished with no unnecessary decorative treatment.

#### 5. Street Furniture

Billesdon is relatively uncluttered by street furniture, although installations over the years have varied in quality. Traditional designs are preferred. The quantity of street furniture should be kept to a minimum according to needs whilst maintaining quality.

Good examples of recent installations include seating, the village notice board and a litter bin, all of which can be seen on the village green. The nearby bus shelters have also recently been installed and are constructed of wood, to blend in with the street scene.

#### Design Guidelines

- 5.1 Care should be taken to preserve the rural nature of the village; street furniture should be carefully located, of good quality, traditional in design and in keeping with the character of the village.

#### Lighting

Lighting installations within the Conservation Area have been mainly of decorative ironwork design, either wall mounted or freestanding giving out soft yellow low-level light.

More modern lamp styles have been introduced. However, to avoid urbanisation it would be preferred if traditional styles were to be used. An example is the traditional-style lamp outside the Old School, which recently replaced a more utilitarian lamppost.

#### Design Guidelines

- 5.1.2 Older ironwork lighting columns/fittings should be preserved where possible and it is preferable that replacement or new lighting match these designs.
- 5.1.3 Street lighting for new developments will be encouraged to be of a design that is in keeping with the rural character of the village
- 5.1.4 To minimise the effects of light pollution softer yellow lighting is preferred where this does not compromise personal safety.
- 5.1.5 Private security lighting should be carefully sited to illuminate the required area, whilst minimising light pollution and any nuisance to road users or adjacent properties.

#### Signs

Examples of both modern and traditional road signs can be seen in Billesdon. Use of modern sheet metal road signage with broad painted borders can detract from the rural character of the village. Plain black and white signage without a border has less impact yet, with modern reflective materials, can remain safe and visible when required.



Signs should be in keeping with the surroundings

#### Design Guidelines

- 5.2.1 All signage should be kept to a minimum. Redundant signs should be removed and every effort made to avoid duplicate signage.
- 5.2.2 Where they remain legal, older traditional signs need preserving and should not be replaced by modern equivalents. Where this is not possible, replacement or new signs should be of older traditional designs with black lettering on white background. Mounting these on walls or buildings avoids clutter at street level and does not impede the safe passage of pedestrians or vehicle forward-visibility.
- 5.2.3 Internally illuminated signs of any type are unacceptable.
- 5.2.4 Advertising signs should be unobtrusive and generally fixed flat to the appropriate building. Free standing advertising signs should be discouraged and hoardings are unacceptable.

#### Public Utilities

An increasing number of overhead cables and wires festoon many of the streets and spoil the visual quality of the village. Recently installed telegraph poles are often of metal construction. The statutory bodies for utilities are to be encouraged to seek alternative solutions, e.g. laying cables underground. There is concern that future TV cable layers could leave pavements and roads badly patched, and place junction boxes in inappropriate locations, spoiling the street line.

**Design Guidelines**

- 5.3.1 Public utilities should be made aware of their duty to respect the heritage of the village.
- 5.3.2 Installation of new electrical and telegraph poles should be avoided if possible. If unavoidable, wood rather than galvanised steel is preferred. Routing of future cabling underground should be encouraged when appropriate.
- 5.3.3 Television/communication systems cables should, wherever possible, be installed below ground level, with the minimum number of junction boxes carefully sited.

Public open space is scarce in Billesdon

**6. Public Rights of Way**

Billesdon has a substantial network of rights of way, including footpaths and bridleways, providing access to the countryside. All of these are in the process of being improved.

There are two principal footpaths going north: one to Billesdon Coplow and one towards Sludge Hall. A bridleway links the village to Green Lane and continues as a footpath towards Tilton-on-the-Hill. To the south is a further footpath, leading to Frisby; another footpath joins a bridleway leading from Gaulby Road to Ashlands

on the Illston-on-the-Hill border. To the south-east, another footpath leads to the Skeffington to Rolleston Road, intersecting it at Skeffington Vale. There are also similar rights of way within the village confines.

**Design Guidelines**

- 6.1 Footpaths and bridleways should be kept open, in (legally defined) good repair and free of obstruction, with their distinctive character maintained.
- 6.2 Any new developments should be encouraged to incorporate footpaths giving access to the countryside and the remainder of the village, provided that they form safe routes for public use.
- 6.3 Proposals to clear any rights of way are likely to be strongly resisted, depending on circumstances.
- 6.4 Wherever possible, public rights of way should be retained along existing routes. Proposed diversions should be carefully scrutinised and considered on their merits.

**7. Open Spaces**

There are few significant public open spaces in Billesdon. They include the Market Place, the triangular road junction adjacent to the church, the tiny public garden by the chapel, the 'oval' in Vicarage Close, the wildlife pond and surrounds and the sweep of Leicester Road at its junction with Coplow Lane. The grounds of the church and the chapel and the school playing fields are also vital amenities. The last of these, on the edge of the village, contains the only official children's play area. Because public open space is so scarce, the spaces created between buildings, and in particular private gardens, are vital to the character of the village. Glimpses of rising countryside give the village its relatively enclosed feel.

The Wildlife Pool and spinney off Gaulby Road, adjacent to the Council Depot, are important public amenities and should be protected.

Open plan gardens, in the White Hart Close and Weare Close developments, are not a traditional feature of Billesdon and represent an import from suburban design. They create a form of open space that is inappropriate to the overall feel of the village.

**Design Guidelines**

- 7.1 The treatment of space between buildings is of considerable importance to the village design and should be considered at the initial design stages. The design of open spaces should reflect a rural, rather than suburban, character and every opportunity should be taken to enhance their ecological potential.
- 7.2 Open spaces and important views, including important sight lines within the village, should be preserved as they contribute to the setting and character of this settlement.

**8. Trees**

The county of Leicestershire has a relatively low density of woodland. Billesdon has few mature trees within the village, notably the limes in the Market Place and near the Old School, but several of the roads are lined with ash and occasional oaks. Apart from the Cemetery, most large trees are in private gardens. Viewed from the high fields surrounding the village, the buildings seem to be hidden beneath a canopy of large trees.

The contrast between well-wooded roads, such as Brook Lane, and others, such as West Lane, The Poplars and Vicarage Close, is stark. In Brook Lane, for instance, trees soften widely divergent architectural styles.

Trees soften hard architecture, create contrast, encourage wildlife, reduce extremes of climate and have been shown to benefit both physical and mental health. They also enhance the overall character of the area.

**Design Guidelines**

- 8.1 Existing trees and shrubs should be retained where possible and integrated into new developments.
- 8.2 New development should include landscaping proposals at the initial design stage, including provisions for native trees and hedge planting and the incorporation of existing mature trees.
- 8.3 Appropriate maintenance of existing trees, shrubs and hedges within the village should be encouraged.
- 8.4 Mature trees and hedgerows should be preserved or replaced within the village boundaries, along all the access roads to Billesdon and in the immediate surrounding countryside.

### 9. Referenced Illustrations of Styles

The illustrations below are referenced throughout the Village Design Statement (pages 33 to 43).

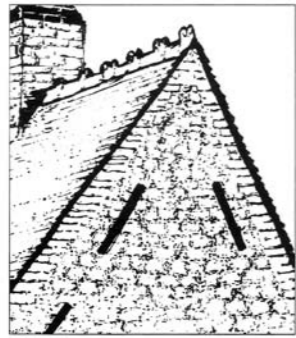


Fig 1

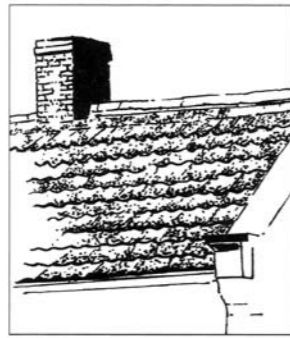


Fig 2

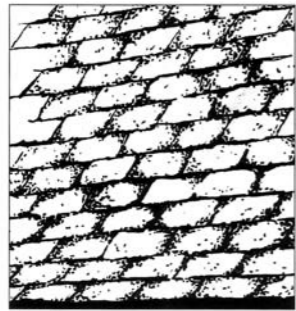


Fig 3



Fig 4

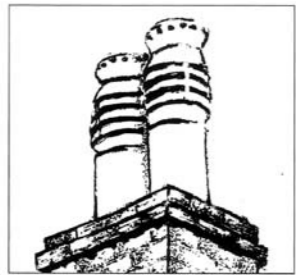


Fig 5

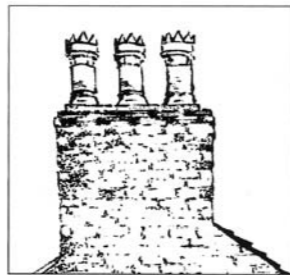


Fig 6



Fig 7



Fig 8



Fig 9



Fig 10



Fig 11



Fig 12

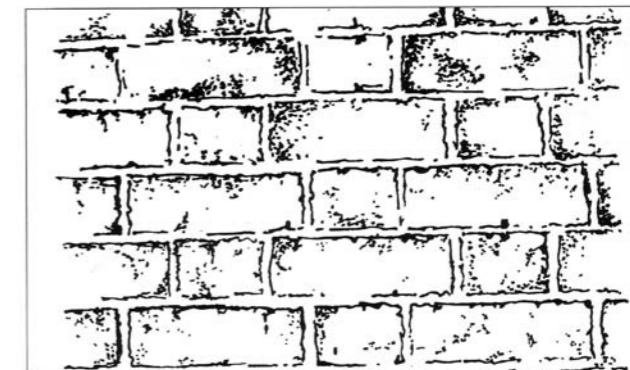


Fig 13

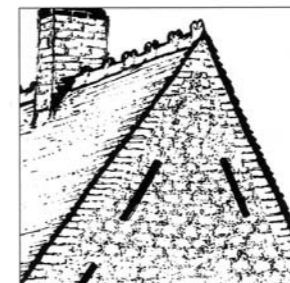


Fig 14

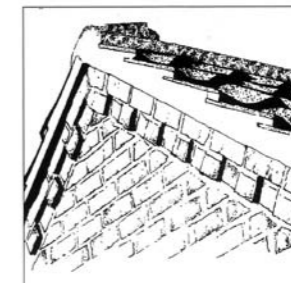


Fig 15

**10 SUMMARY OF PLANS**

This summary should be read in conjunction with the more detailed statements within the full document.

BP		
1	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	Where there are no policies in the Billesdon Neighbourhood Development Plan relevant to a planning application, the provisions of the <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> and the <i>Harborough Core Strategy</i> apply.
2	HOUSING PROVISION	Having regard to dwellings already constructed and existing commitments, the remaining housing provision for Billesdon will be a target of a minimum of 45 dwellings over the period to 2028.
3	HOUSING ALLOCATIONS	These sites are allocated for housing development: (A) Land to the North of High Acres, Uppingham Road; and (B) Land East of Rolleston Road. The former Lorry Park (R) on Gaulby Road is identified as a reserve site.
4	LAND TO THE NORTH OF HIGH ACRES, UPPINGHAM ROAD	Land is allocated for housing development to the North of High Acres, Uppingham Road, as defined on the Policies Map, subject to the specified criteria.
5	LAND EAST OF ROLLESTON ROAD	Land is allocated for housing development to the East of Rolleston Road as defined on the Policies Map, subject to the specified criteria.
6	AFFORDABLE HOUSING	The need for Affordable Housing is to be met by the housing allocations identified in Policies 3, 4 and 5.
7	DESIGN	New development should meet the requirements of the Billesdon Village Design Statement.
8	WORKING FROM HOME	Planning permission for development that enables home working will be granted subject to the specified criteria.
9	SUPERFAST BROADBAND	All new dwellings and employment buildings should incorporate ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable Superfast Broadband.
10	THE LCC DEPOT (GAULBY ROAD)	Land amounting to 1.5 hectares is allocated for business development through the redevelopment or re-use of the Highway Depot site on Gaulby Road.
11	BUSINESS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE	Planning permission for the conversion or re-use of buildings in the countryside will be permitted subject to the specified criteria.

12	RETENTION OF KEY SERVICES AND FACILITIES	Development which fails to protect existing facilities providing for people’s day-to-day needs will not be approved.
13	INFRASTRUCTURE	New development will be supported by the provision of new or improved infrastructure, together with financial contributions for specified off-site infrastructure requirements.
14	WATER MANAGEMENT	New development should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems. Consideration should also be given to potential water logging, land contamination and waste water treatment capacity.
15	RETAIL	Planning applications for the conversion or extension of shops and leisure uses, including the conversion of rural buildings to farm shops, will be supported.
16	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT	New development will be permitted only where it will not significantly increase the volume of traffic using Brook Lane, Church Street or passing the Primary School on Gaulby Road.
17	PARKING	At least two off-street car parking spaces shall be provided for each new dwelling, or three for four-bedroom dwellings.
18	COUNTRYSIDE AND LANDSCAPE	The countryside will be protected for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and to ensure that it may be enjoyed by all.
19	LOCAL GREEN SPACES	The Local Green Spaces identified on the Policies Map will be protected and enhanced.
20	BIODIVERSITY	New development should not harm the network of local ecological features and habitats.
21	CLIMATE CHANGE	Where compatible with the Village Design Statement, the incorporation of rain harvesting, grey water recycling, high standards of insulation and renewable energy systems in new and existing development will be encouraged.



## 11 NEXT STEPS

### REFERENDUM

- 11.1 In 2014, an Examiner was appointed by Harborough District Council to consider if the proposed Plan meets 'Basic Conditions'. The Examiner recommended in May 2014 that the Plan be modified to meet the 'Basic Conditions' and then submitted to a referendum. Those modifications have been incorporated into this document.
- 11.2 The District Council will arrange a referendum and, if the Plan is passed by a simple majority of those voting, the Council must adopt it as part of the Development Plan.

### MONITORING AND DELIVERY

- 11.3 The policies of the Plan have been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), which considered each of the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 (Supporting Document C). The Plan has been amended so as to address the conclusions of the EqIA. The policies of the Plan have also been subject to a Sustainability Audit (SA) (Supporting Document G). The Plan has been amended so as to address the conclusions of the SA.
- 11.4 When the Plan is adopted, it will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area, alongside the *Harborough Core Strategy*. Harborough District Council will continue to be responsible for determining most planning applications, but the policies in the Plan will be the basis for those decisions.
- 11.5 Billesdon 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.

## 12 GLOSSARY

B&DPN&V	Billesdon and District Parish News and Views
BNDP	Billesdon Neighbourhood Development Plan
BNDPG	Billesdon Neighbourhood Development Plan Group
BP	Billesdon Plan
BPC	Billesdon Parish Council
EqIA	Equality Impact Assessment
HCS	Harborough Core Strategy
HDC	Harborough District Council
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
The Plan	Billesdon Neighbourhood Development Plan
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
VDS	Village Design Statement

## 13 ANNEXE

### Supporting Documents

The following documents are available at [www.leicestershirevillages.com/billesdon/neighbourhood-plan.html](http://www.leicestershirevillages.com/billesdon/neighbourhood-plan.html) and on application from Parish Clerk (E.mail: [billesdonclerk@aol.com](mailto:billesdonclerk@aol.com); Telephone: 01572 822 062):

- A: Consultation Statement
- B: Basic Conditions Statement
- C: Equality Impact Assessment
- D: Evidence Base (D1/D2)
- E: Number Of New Dwellings
- F: Site Selection Framework
- G: Sustainability Audit Report
- H: Parish Profile

### Reference Documents

The following documents are referred to in the Plan:

**Billesdon Parish Plan** (2006) Billesdon Parish Council, Billesdon

**Billesdon Village Design Statement** (2001) Billesdon Parish Council, Billesdon

**Code for Sustainable Homes** (2006) Department for Communities and Local Government

**Harborough Local Development Framework:**

*Core Strategy* (2011) Harborough District Council, Market Harborough

**Localism Act** (2011) Legislation.gov.uk, London

**National Planning Policy Framework** (2012) Department for Communities & Local Government, London.





# Billesdon Neighbourhood Development Plan

2014-2028

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