



Dunton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan 2020 – 2031 Submission Version





Dunton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan logo

Contents

Section Name		Page
Foreword		4
1	Introduction	5
2	How the NP fits into the planning system	6
3	The Plan, its vision, aims and what we want it to achieve	7
4	How the Plan was prepared	8
5	Our Parish	10
6	History of Dunton Bassett	11
7	Meeting the Requirement for Sustainable Development	13
8	Neighbourhood Plan Policies.	
	8.1 Housing and the Built Environment	14
	8.2 The Environment	25
	8.3 Community Facilities	52
	8.4 Economy	55
	8.5 Transport	60
9	Monitoring and Review	63
Appendices		
1 – Statement of Community Consultation (with Submission version)		
2 – Statement of Compliance with the Basic Conditions (as above)		
3 – Census Data		
4 – Housing Need Report and Site Sustainability Analysis		
5 – Listed Buildings		
6 – Environmental Inventory		
7 - Views		
8 – Strategic Heritage Assessment		

Foreword

The process of creating the Dunton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan has been driven by Parish Councillors and members of the community and is part of the Government's approach to planning contained in the Localism Act of 2011. Local people now have a greater say about what happens in the area in which they live by preparing a Neighbourhood Plan that sets out policies that meet the needs of the community whilst having regard for local and national policies.

The aim of this Neighbourhood Plan is to put forward the wishes of the community regarding future development and to deliver local aspirations within the context of the strategic planning framework. Dunton Bassett Parish Council has overseen the development of the Neighbourhood Plan but has delegated its preparation to a Steering Committee.

The Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies, including some areas where the Parish Council will support development activity, and other areas such as "Local Green Spaces" that the community wishes to protect. These policies have been drafted following engagement with the residents and landowners of Dunton Bassett Parish.

Dunton Goes Green recently celebrated its 10th Anniversary, and as a result of residents' contact with the University of Leicester they were able to hold an event on the effects of humans on the planet and what we can do to ameliorate these damaging outcomes.

It is clear that the community cannot support an approach to development that has led to the current situation of extreme weather conditions and unknown viruses. As long as the ideas of continual unfettered growth are promoted, the future will be poorer than the present. To repeat the same errors over and over again will only further destroy our environment.

As a community Dunton Bassett has to contribute to finding ways to change its thinking and thereby to change its actions. Fortunately, even small local changes can make a big difference and responsibility is being taken through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan to think this through and follow a path different from the past. The Neighbourhood Plan has been a catalyst for this.

We are grateful to Officers from Harborough District Council who have supported us through the process and to our community for engaging so enthusiastically in the process. Many hours of volunteer time and expertise have made this plan possible. The Parish Council wishes to express sincere thanks to all the Parishioners who kindly contributed to the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Stuart Glover

Chair

Dunton Bassett Parish Council

1. Introduction

This is the Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan for Dunton Bassett Parish. It has been prepared by the Dunton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee together with the support of three Theme Groups. This organisation has brought together members of the local community and Parish Councillors and has been led by the Parish Council.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a new type of planning document that gives local people greater control and say over how their community develops and evolves. It is an opportunity for local people to create a framework for delivering a sustainable future for the benefit of all who live or work in that community, or who visit it.

As the Plain English Guide to the Localism Act 2011 states, “Instead of local people being told what to do, the Government thinks that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live”.

It enables a community to create a vision and set clear planning policies for the use and development of land at the neighbourhood level to realise this vision. This includes, for example, where new homes and employment units should be built, what new buildings and extensions should look like and which areas of land should be protected from development.

Neighbourhood Plans can be general or more detailed, depending on what local people want. They must, however, be in general conformity with District-wide planning policies, have regard for national planning policies and must be prepared in a prescribed manner.

Comments received through the pre-submission consultation process have been taken on board and the Neighbourhood Plan amended where appropriate, prior to being submitted to Harborough District Council who will consult on it further before submitting it for Independent Examination where the Plan will be tested for conformity with a range of ‘Basic Conditions’. It must:

- have appropriate regard for national policy;
- contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan;
- be compatible with human rights requirements and EU obligations (incorporated into UK law).

After that it will be put forward to referendum, where those on the electoral register in Dunton Bassett Parish will be invited to vote on whether or not they support it. Over 50% of those voting must vote yes for it to become a ‘Made’ statutory planning document.

After being ‘Made’, each time a planning decision has to be taken by Harborough District Council, or any other body, they will be required to refer to the Neighbourhood Plan (alongside the District’s own Local Plan and other relevant documents) and check whether the proposed development is in accordance with the policies the community has developed.

2. How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the Planning System

The right for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans was established through the Localism Act 2011, which set out the general rules governing their preparation. A Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the area in which it is prepared. This statutory status means that it must be taken into account when considering planning decisions affecting that area.

A Neighbourhood Plan is not prepared in isolation. It also needs to be in general conformity with relevant national and District-wide (i.e. Harborough) planning policies.

For Dunton Bassett, the most significant planning document is the Harborough Local Plan, adopted in April 2019. This sets out the strategic planning framework for the District's future development up to 2031. It contains a number of policies and objectives which are relevant to Dunton Bassett and which the Plan must be in general conformity with. These policies and objectives span issues such as the provision of new housing; providing strong and sustainable communities; protecting and enhancing historic character and local distinctiveness whilst protecting and enhancing natural habitats; and providing transport systems that reduce the need for car travel. The Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the policies contained in this document.

Also important is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated in February 2019. This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF requires the planning system (including Neighbourhood Plans) to promote sustainable development and details three dimensions to that development, as detailed in Section 6 on page 15.

This Plan and the policies it contains are consistent with the NPPF, Harborough Local Plan and relevant EU legislation. Full details of how the Plan complies with these legislative requirements are set out in the Basic Conditions Statement (Appendix 1). Furthermore, these policies are specific to Dunton Bassett and reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.

It is important to note that not having a Neighbourhood Plan does not mean that development won't happen. Development will still take place but without the policies in this Plan, which set out the type of development that is in keeping with our area's character, having any effect.

Decisions will instead be primarily based on the District's policies rather than local criteria.

3. The Plan, its vision, aims and what we want it to achieve

The Plan area encompasses the whole of the Parish of Dunton Bassett and covers the period up to 2031, a timescale which deliberately mirrors that for the Harborough Local Plan.

Our Vision is as follows:

To enhance the community life; vibrancy and rural character of Dunton Bassett; to protect its open spaces, views, natural environment and historical heritage; to promote physical wellbeing and quality of life for all residents with outdoor recreational spaces and accessible greenspaces, landscapes and footpaths. To support both current and future residents and businesses with appropriate, sustainable, eco-friendly and low carbon development.

To achieve this vision, we will:

- Ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations;
- Encourage the right types of development that meets local needs;
- Protect important community facilities that are special to the local community;
- Promote good design;
- Facilitate appropriate employment opportunities;
- Enable the community to have good access to the surrounding countryside and green spaces;
- Safeguard open spaces that are important to the community and/or wildlife;
- Improve pedestrian and cycle connections within the Plan area and into the surrounding areas.

4. How the Plan was prepared

The Parish Council decided to undertake the formulation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Dunton Bassett and appointed a Steering Committee to take the process forward. The Parish Council appointed neighbourhood plan consultants 'Yourlocale' to advise and assist the Steering Committee.

The mandate was to drive the process, consult with the local community, gather evidence to support the development of policies and deliver the plan.

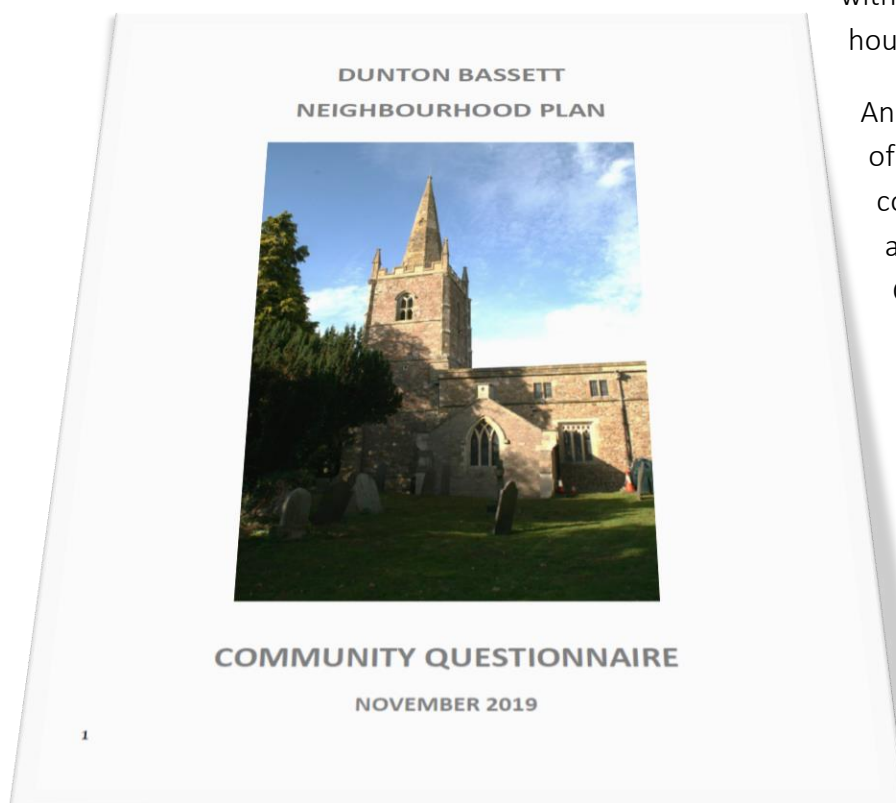
The whole of the Parish was designated as a neighbourhood area by Harborough District Council on 2 March 2018.

All Parishioners were invited to an initial Community Engagement Drop-In Event which took place on Saturday 3 November 2018 in the Village Hall from 12-4:00 pm. The purpose of the Consultation was to inform the community on Neighbourhood Planning and gain some initial feedback from residents on what they liked, disliked or would like to see or improve within the parish. A series of display boards and large-scale village maps were set out in the hall with each focussing on a topic relating to planning and development.



The turnout was good, with 53 attendees participating, providing important input into the future development of the plan. A summary of the responses is available in the supporting information.

A comprehensive questionnaire was produced in late 2019 to obtain further information from the community. The questionnaire was distributed to every household in the Parish with an invitation to all householders to respond.



An independent analysis of the questionnaire was completed and made available on the Parish Council website.

There were 175 responses representing over 28% of the adult population.

Theme groups were established during 2019 which looked in detail at the draft Vision and

considered the development of the Neighbourhood Plan from the perspective of housing, environment, community facilities, transport and employment. These groups continued to meet throughout 2020 and it was through this process that the draft policies and supporting evidence emerged.

It was intended to hold a further Open Event to share the emerging draft policies with the community, but this was not possible due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. An Executive Summary of the Neighbourhood Plan was therefore produced and shared with the community prior to Regulation 14 consultation.

Comments made at Pre-Submission consultation have been taken into account when finalising the Neighbourhood Plan.

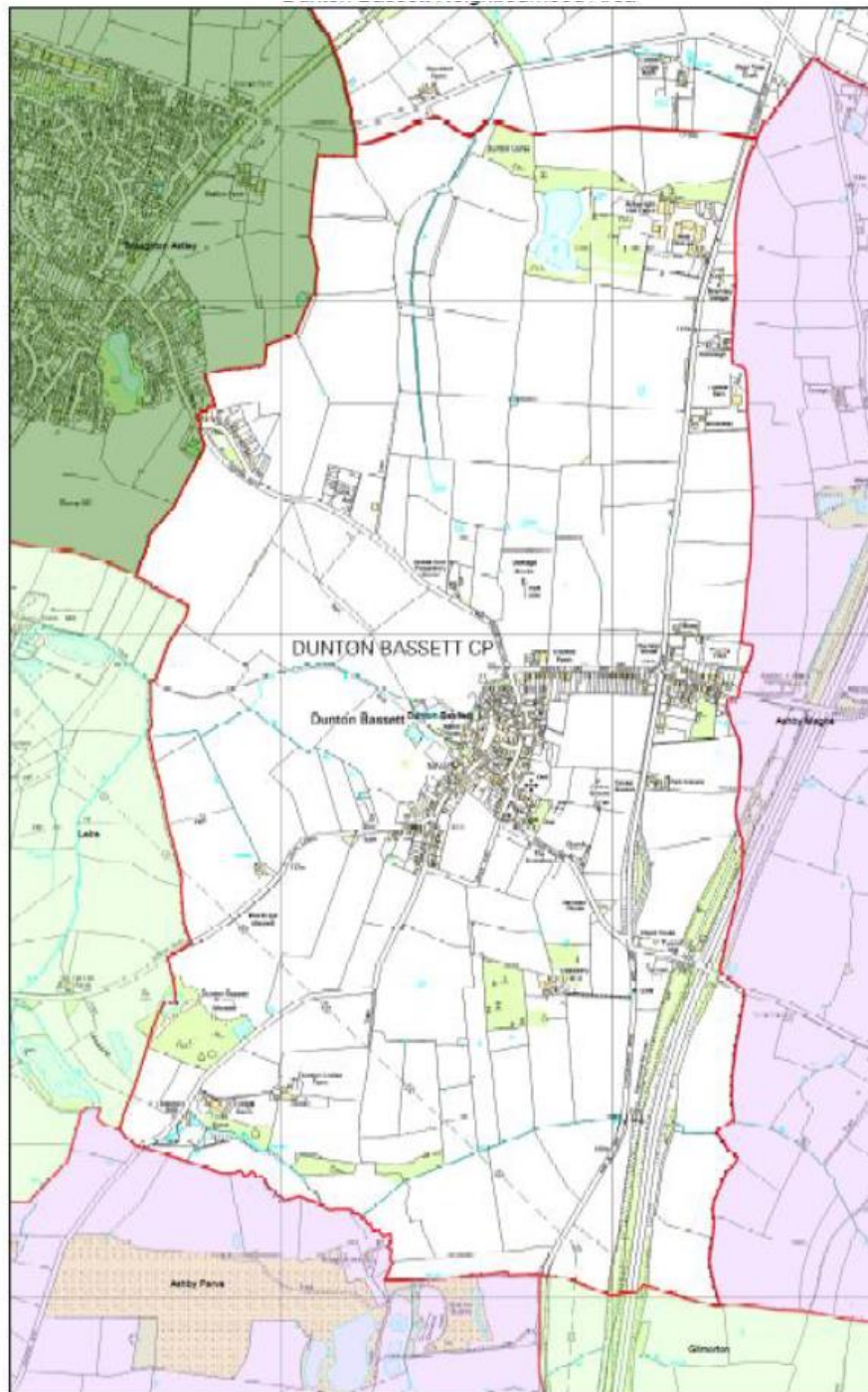
Throughout the preparation of the Plan, parishioners were kept informed through the Parish newsletter and the Parish Council website.

5. Our Parish

The Plan area comprises the whole of the Parish of Dunton Bassett, within the District of Harborough, as shown in figure 1. High resolution versions of all figures are available in the supporting information.

The area was formally designated by Harborough District Council on 2 March 2018.

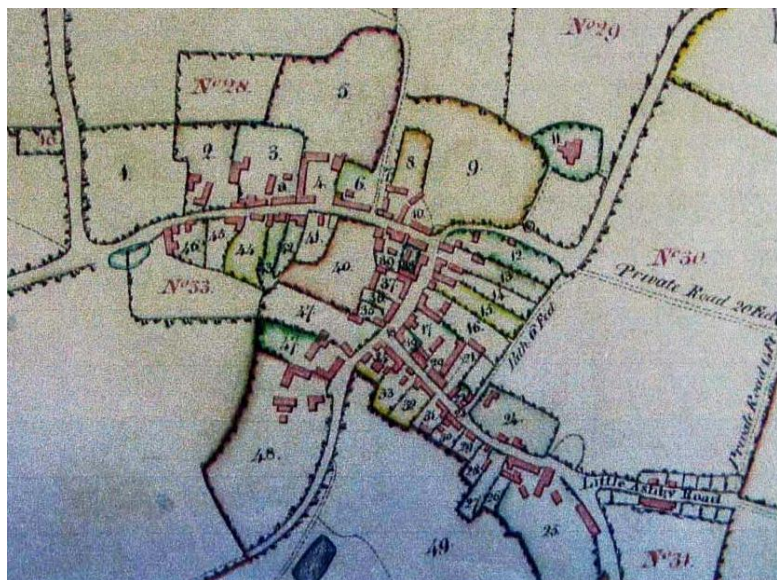
Figure 1 – Parish of Dunton Bassett – Designated Area



6 History of Dunton Bassett

The village is first mentioned in the Domesday Book produced for William I in 1085. It is recorded that 'Robert de Buci holds of the King 7 ½ carucates of land in Donitone'. Living here were 7 villeins, 9 socmen and 4 bordars. Each would live in a small hut, have some land around it and in return, work the Lord's land being roughly 900 acres and 16 acres of meadow land. A small church stood probably where the current church stands. The current church was founded in 1180 by Lady Geva Ridel who gave land at Dunton to Canwell Priory, Staffs which she founded in 1142. She was daughter of Earl Hugh of Chester and married to Geoffrey Ridel who died in the White Ship disaster in 1120. She later transmitted land to the Bassett family, hence the current village name.

The earliest population count, in 1563 shows 24 households in Dunton. In early 17th century the framework knitting industry began in Nottingham and over the next 50 years was introduced to many Leicestershire villages as a cottage industry. By the time of the Enclosure Act of 1794 (see map) about 550 acres were enclosed, the remaining 750 acres being allotted to a small group; the largest share going to Renee Payne, lord of the manor. The census of 1801 gives the population as 407 (98 families) of



which 78 worked in agriculture and 130 in trades and manufacture. An entry in 'Nichols' tells us that in 1745 the Duke of Cumberland marched the English Army through Dunton Bassett when Prince Charlie and the Scottish Highlanders were retreating from Derby. See scratch marks on pillars inside the church (were soldiers billeted there?).

White's Directory, 1846, records the village and parish is of 1286 acres and 553 inhabitants, many of whom are framework knitters. Thomas Stokes Esq is lord of the manor. In Hall Close are foundations of an ancient mansion, supposedly the residence of the Hewitts, one of whom was High Sheriff of the County. Here is a small thatched Independent Chapel opened in 1837. (where Chapel Close is now situated).

The Parish Council was started in 1894 and an early notebook records items discussed in March 1895 include 'New railway under Construction' and 'Site for Reading Room'.

The coming of the Midland Counties railway, later the Midland Railway at nearby Ashby Magna station, gave villagers access to Leicester and Rugby and local farmers the ability

to send milk and other produce to the London market. Its subsequent demise in 1962 has affected the growth and development of the village in more recent times until the development of the motorway network.

Dunton Bassett today

At the time of the 2011 Census, the Dunton Bassett Parish was home to around 795 residents living in 321 households. Analysis of the Census suggests that between 2001 and 2011 the local area population decreased by around 5% (36 people). During this period it is estimated the number of dwellings increased by 2% (6).

Although the population declined between 2001 and 2011 there is evidence of an ageing population with the number of older residents rising by 16% and up from 14% of total population in 2001 to 17% in 2011. In line with national trends the local population is likely to get older as average life expectancy continues to rise.

Home ownership levels are very high with around 85% of households owning their homes outright or with a mortgage or loan and at 5% the share of households living in social rented accommodation is very low when compared with regional and national rates.

There is a predominance of large detached and an under representation of housing for single people with just 3% of dwellings having one bedroom.

Land Registry data indicates there has been some new build housing market activity over recent years, but this has been predominantly high value detached housing.

Deprivation is not a significant issue in the local area, but data suggests that some residents may find it difficult to access owner-occupation or access the private rental market.

7 Meeting the requirement for sustainable development

The NPPF states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: social, environmental and economic, all of which are important and interrelated.

a) Social

We have sought, through the neighbourhood plan, to safeguard existing open space for the future enjoyment of residents.

We are also seeking to protect existing community facilities and to deliver a mix of housing types so that we can meet the needs of present and future generations and ensure that we support the community's needs and its health, social and cultural wellbeing.

b) Environmental

In order to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, we are seeking to ensure that housing development is of the right type in the right location, so that it does not harm but instead positively reflects the existing historic character of the area in order to:

- Protect the village identity and conserve the rural nature of its surroundings;
- Recognise the need to protect and, where possible, improve biodiversity and important habitats; and
- Provide for improved pedestrian facilities.

c) Economic

Whilst the built-up parts of the parish of Dunton Bassett are primarily residential, there is a desire to ensure that appropriate economic activity is maintained as long as the local infrastructure supports it. We therefore wish to encourage employment opportunities in our area by:

- Supporting appropriate existing business development and expansion where the local infrastructure would not be adversely affected by the proposals; and
- Encourage start-up businesses and home working.

This document sets out local considerations for delivering sustainable development across Dunton Bassett Parish. Development proposals should meet the requirements of all relevant policies in the Local Development Plan.

8 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HOUSING POLICIES

8.1 Housing and the Built Environment

8.1.1 Housing Provision

The Harborough Local Plan (Adopted in April 2019) states that ‘The full objectively assessed housing need (OAN) for the Leicester and Leicestershire HMA is 4,829 dwellings per annum between 2011 and 2031 (96,580 total) and for the Harborough District is an additional 532 dwellings per annum between 2011 and 2031 (HEDNA), giving a total plan requirement across the 20 year plan period of 10,640 dwellings’.

The Local Plan incorporates a 20% buffer. Policy H1 therefore makes provision for a minimum of 12,800 dwellings from 2011 to 2031. Of this, about 8,792 dwellings have already been built or committed (through the granting of planning permission, or through allocation in neighbourhood plans) with a further 225 anticipated on windfall sites. Policy H1 therefore provides housing land for a minimum of a further 3,975 dwellings’.

The Local Plan establishes a hierarchy of settlements to help to determine the most appropriate locations for development. On the basis of this hierarchy, Dunton Bassett is classified as a Selected Rural Village. The Local Plan describes Selected Rural Villages as ‘sustainable locations for more limited growth that will help to sustain these villages’, incorporate at least two of six key services and have a minimum 100 households. The ‘key services’ are: food shop, GP surgery, library, post office, primary school and public house. Dunton Bassett is categorised as a Selected Rural Village as it has a primary school and a public house. The minimum housing requirement for the Parish through to 2031 is 40.

8.1.2 Residential Site Allocations

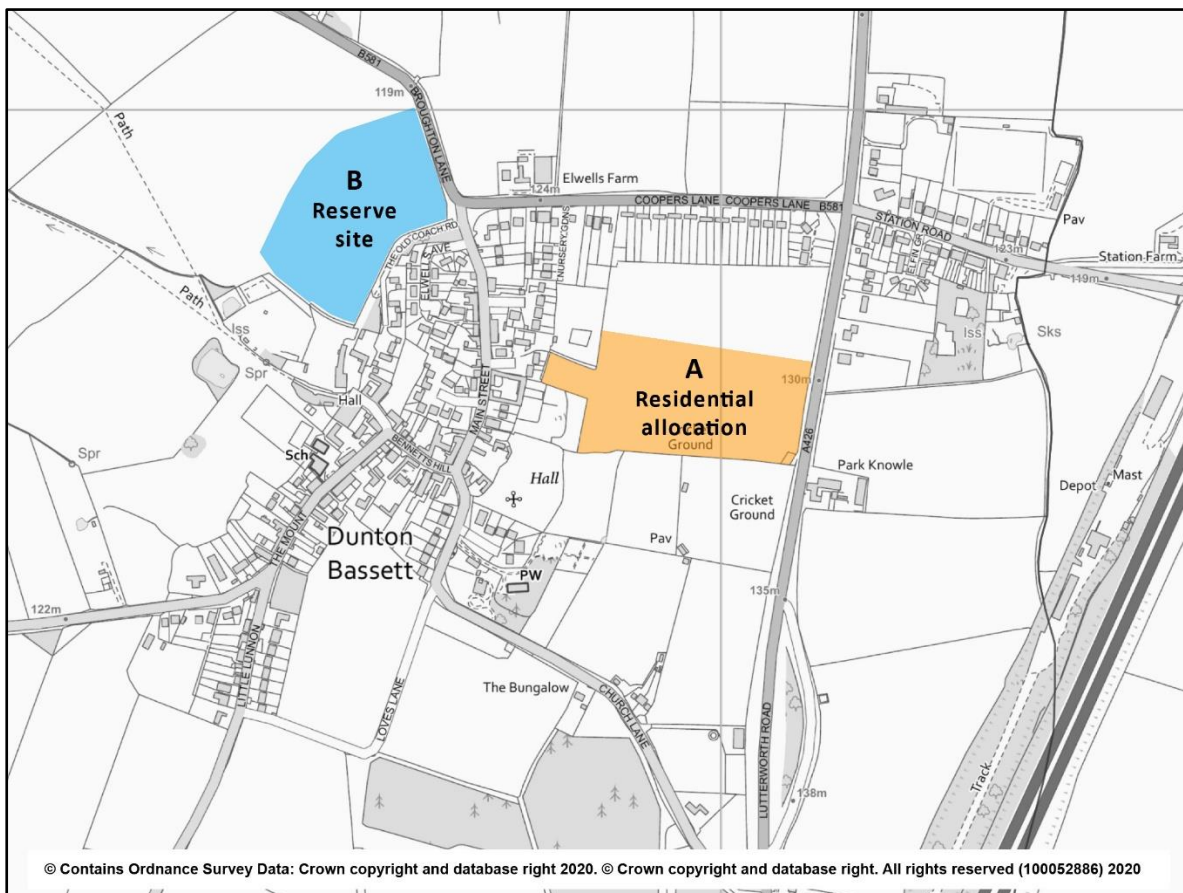
All local landowners were contacted to identify all land in the Parish that could be available for residential development. The aim was to establish the availability of adequate and appropriate land for residential development to provide for the minimum of an additional 40 residential units by 2031. In total, landowners, developers and site sponsors offered 11 potentially suitable sites that would yield over 600 units.

Each site was then subjected to a professional Sustainable Site Assessment (SSA) exercise supported by YourLocale against 25 scoring criteria agreed with the Housing Theme Group members. The detailed SSA process that was undertaken is described in detail at Appendix E. The parties were consulted upon the draft SSA reports and a site selected behind the children’s playground. A reserve site has also been identified to come forward should it be necessary over the Plan period either because of an increase in housing need or as a result of the failure of the allocated site to deliver the scale of housing required.

Policy H1: Residential site allocation – Land is allocated at land behind the children’s playground for around 50 units of residential accommodation as shown in figure 2 below. Development will be supported subject to:

- a) At least 40% of the dwellings shall be Affordable Housing (including bungalows which can be counted on the basis of 2 for 1 Affordable units) spread throughout the site in clusters and visually indistinguishable from the market dwellings;
- b) At least 66% of the housing types shall be properties of three or fewer bedrooms in line with identified housing need;
- c) A desk-based heritage assessment and geophysical survey shall be undertaken and its conclusions followed, including trial trenching if required prior to development;
- d) The footpath through the site shall be enhanced to improve connectivity with village facilities;
- e) A car park with associated open space shall be provided alongside the cricket field for the use of the Cricket Club and residents of the Parish;
- f) The existing playground will be extended;
- g) A natural landscape scheme shall be planted to provide a buffer to the Scheduled Monument and to achieve a biodiversity net gain and a wildlife habitat created to enhance its setting.

Figure 2 – Allocated residential development sites



Policy H2: Reserve Site – An allocation for around 50 houses at the site at the junction of Broughton Lane and Coopers Lane will be supported subject to:

- a) At least 40% of the dwellings shall be Affordable Housing (including bungalows which can be counted on the basis of 2 for 1 Affordable units) spread throughout the site in clusters and visually indistinguishable from the market dwellings;
- b) At least 66% of the housing types shall be properties of three or fewer bedrooms in line with identified housing need; and
- c) Appropriate access arrangements are provided.

The site will come forward for development where:

- i. It is required to remediate a shortfall in the supply of housing due to the failure of existing housing sites in Dunton Bassett to deliver the scale of development required; or
- ii. It becomes necessary to provide for additional houses in the parish in accordance with any new development plan document that replaces the Harborough Local Plan 2019.

It has been exceedingly difficult to find appropriate sites to allocate in the Neighbourhood Plan because of the large number of constraints to development within the Parish.

The Parish Council has met obstacles at every stage in the process as sites it has put forward have been shown to have complexities associated with their delivery including access to sites and the presence of heritage assets which have been challenging to overcome.

However, the Parish Council has persevered in the interests of meeting its minimum housing requirement as indicated by Harborough District Council and in order to make its contribution to sustainable development, to help meet a local need and to secure the additional benefits that neighbourhood plans can achieve through Paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

A Screening Opinion issued by Harborough District Council in relation to the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment on the allocation and reserve sites concluded that a Strategic Heritage Assessment was needed to determine whether there would be harm to the significance of the Scheduled Monument. A detailed Strategic Heritage Assessment was undertaken and is included amongst the supporting information as Appendix 8. The conclusion was that there is 'less than substantial harm' to both below ground and above ground heritage assets from the allocation and reserve site. The Strategic Heritage Assessment is attached as Appendix 8.

8.1.3 Settlement Boundary

Historically, communities like Dunton Bassett have been protected against unsustainable or insensitive development by the designation of a village envelope (or settlement boundary). The settlement boundary was originally defined by Harborough District Council in consultation with the relevant Parish Council through a statutory Local Plan designation. With the settlement boundary in place, development was only permitted within the red-line area. Only in exceptional circumstances (for example - to provide affordable housing) was development allowed outside

of the envelope and it was therefore strictly controlled. In the Adopted Local Plan, Harborough District Council has removed settlement boundaries to be replaced by criteria-based policies.

Having considered these issues within the Housing Theme Group, the Neighbourhood Plan establishes a new and updated Settlement Boundary to protect the Parish from unsustainable development proposals. The Settlement Boundary policy will also ensure that sufficient land to meet residential and commercial need is available in the right locations. The future land uses will be supported by existing transport and services infrastructure and will therefore be able to avoid encroaching into the countryside.

The new Settlement Boundary is shown in Figure 2 updating and superceding the Limits to Development previously used by Harborough District Council as it takes into account recent planning approvals, the proposed housing allocation through the Neighbourhood Plan and business developments.

Within the defined Settlement Boundary, an appropriate amount of suitably designed and located development is acceptable in principle. Focusing development within the agreed Settlement Boundary will support the existing services within the village and protect the open countryside area surrounding the current built form from inappropriate and/or unsustainable development.

The Methodology

- a) Development sites with an extant planning permission for residential, community use or employment land on the fringes of the settlement have been incorporated;
- b) The residential site allocated within the Neighbourhood Plan has been included;
- c) Defined physical features such as walls, fences, hedgerows, gardens, streams, brooks, allotments, formal leisure uses and roads have been used to define boundaries where appropriate;
- d) Non - residential land which is deemed countryside, agricultural, paddock, meadow, woodland or another green-field use has been excluded.

The community has expressed a clear desire to protect what is special about Dunton Bassett for future generations. Its setting in an area of high landscape quality is perceived as being of very high importance and an important consideration in meeting the long-term vision for the parish.

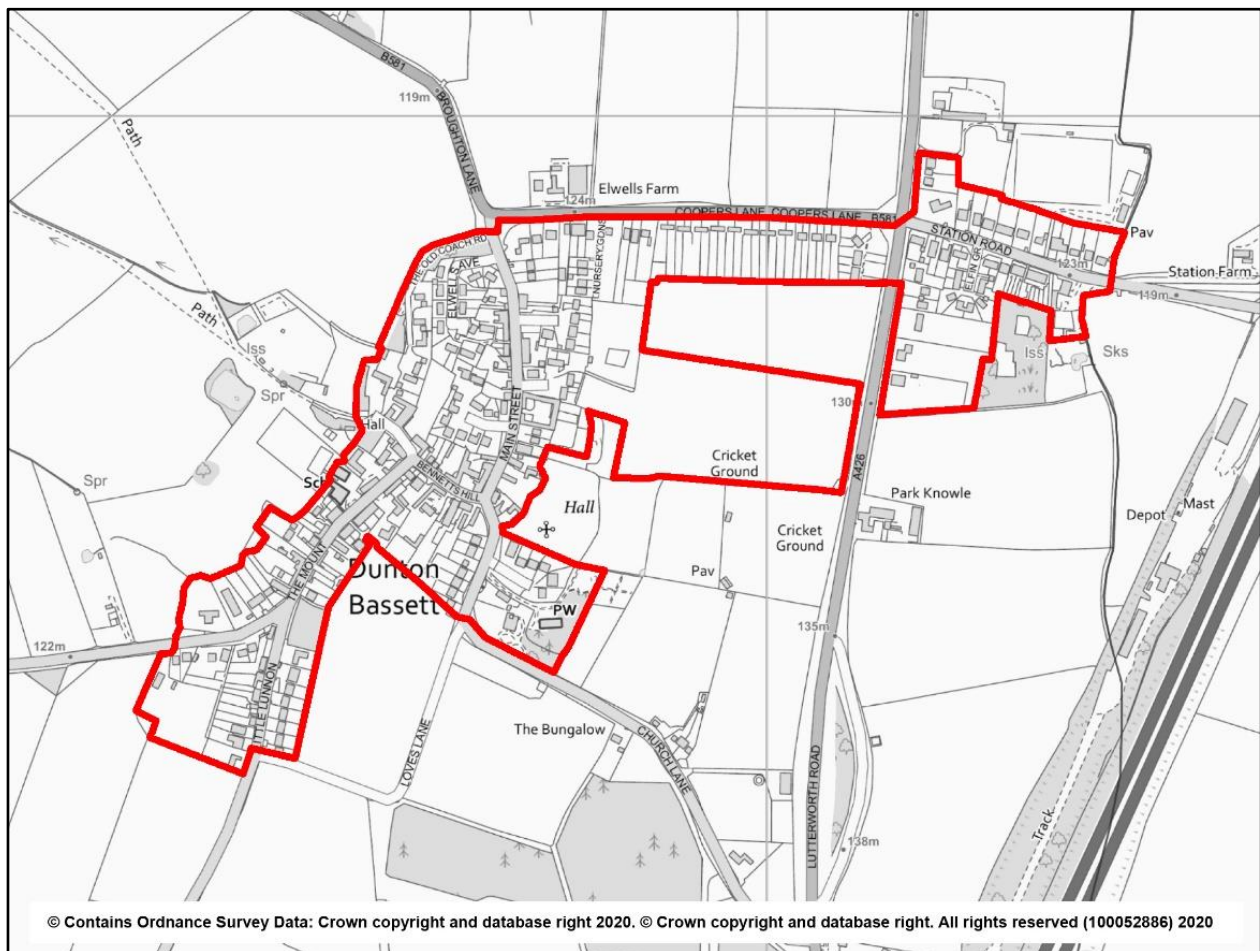
In statutory planning terms, land outside a defined Settlement Boundary, including any individual or small groups of buildings and/or small settlements, is classed as countryside. It is national and local planning policy that development in the countryside should be carefully controlled. Development will only be allowed where it is appropriate to a rural location, such as for the purposes of agriculture, including (in principle) farm diversification, or if needed for formal sport and recreation uses or for affordable housing provision where there is a proven need.

This approach to development in the open countryside is supported through the Neighbourhood Plan to help maintain the unique landscape character setting of Dunton Bassett and retain the

open countryside surrounding the village as an attractive, accessible, distinct and non-renewable natural resource.

POLICY H3 - SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY: Development proposals will be supported on sites within the Settlement Boundary as shown in Figure 3 (below) where the proposal complies with the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. Land outside the defined Settlement Boundary will be treated as countryside where development will be carefully controlled in line with local and national strategic planning policies. Development on the Reserve Site identified in Policy H2 will be acceptable subject to complying with the terms of that policy

Figure 3 – Settlement Boundary



8.1.4 Housing Mix

Around two fifths (38%) of households live in houses with four or more bedrooms which is higher than the district (34%), regional (20%) and national (19%) averages. There is an under representation of housing for single people with just 3% of dwellings having one bedroom against 6% for the district, 8% for the region and 12% for England as a whole.

Dunton Bassett's population is ageing and there is evidence of under- occupancy in the Parish. Home ownership levels are high, and the majority of residential dwellings are detached, whilst the presence of four plus bedroomed properties exceed the District average, as described above.

The balance of the housing stock in Dunton Bassett, coupled with the level of under occupancy suggests a need for smaller homes of up to three bedrooms suitable for residents wishing to downsize, as well as providing homes for small families and those entering the housing market. Providing suitable accommodation for older residents will enable them to remain in the local community and release under-occupied larger properties onto the market suitable for growing families.

POLICY H4: HOUSING MIX - New housing development proposals should provide a mixture of housing types specifically to meet identified local needs in Dunton Bassett. Development should deliver more than 60% of the units as 3-bed or fewer (which can include accommodation for older people which should be built to the M4(2) Building Regulations 2016 or any future standard updating this).

All proposals will be expected to demonstrate how the proposal will meet the current and future housing needs of the parish as evidenced in the Parish Housing Needs Survey Report 2019 (Appendix 4) and the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Employment Development Needs Assessment 2017 or any more recent document updating either of these reports.

8.1.5 Design Quality

The Parish of Dunton Bassett has a long and interesting history, resulting in a wide array of heritage assets, attractive landscapes and a distinctive local character.

The biggest challenge facing the future of Dunton Bassett is to balance the desire to protect the character of the village with the need for it to grow and evolve in a sensitive and proportionate manner in order to sustain the community and its facilities.

The policy seeks to reflect the design principles which the community believes will help to achieve this aim. They reflect the outcome of consultations with residents and community organisations all of which showed broad unanimity of views. The overall aim is to protect the village of Dunton Bassett so that it retains its character within a unique and distinctive Parish. This can be achieved by the use of the planning system to respond sensitively to the wide range of historic buildings, structures, landscapes and archaeology situated within the Parish. These assets form many of the key characteristics of the Parish, and future development should seek to enhance, reinforce and preserve this distinctive historic environment.

New development proposals should be designed sensitively to sit within the distinctive settlement patterns of the village of Dunton Bassett. Existing settlement patterns have grown incrementally over time. The buildings date from many different periods, providing a richness and variety of styles and materials. This traditional rural character should be enhanced by new development and schemes should be designed to ensure that new buildings sit comfortably within the existing settlement pattern and are respectful of their surroundings.

The community consider it to be important that new residential development is of the highest standard to ensure that it is in keeping with the majority of residential properties in the village. It

is not considered necessary to have a uniform series of properties that all look the same, rather to ensure that new developments respect the features of buildings which make Dunton Bassett a desirable place in which to live. Non-traditional forms of building including system-built dwellings are supported.

New development proposals should be designed sensitively to ensure that the high-quality built environment of the Parish is maintained and enhanced. New designs should respond in a positive way to the local character through careful and appropriate use of high-quality materials and detail. Proposals should also demonstrate consideration of height, scale and massing, to ensure that new development delivers a positive contribution to the street scene and adds value to the distinctive character of the area.

Residents in the Plan Area want their communities to play their part in the sustainable development of the District. As noted in the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Authorities should, through their policies, contribute as fully as possible to the aims of *Biodiversity 2020* DEFRA, 2011. New development in Dunton Bassett should be designed to incorporate the current (at time of Application) best practice standards and methods for biodiversity protection and enhancement. The control of artificial lighting in new development required to enable bats to survive in the village also contributes to energy conservation.

The Community Questionnaire (February 2020) asked the question about which design features were important. Almost all respondents felt that off street parking is an important design feature for new developments. 77% want homes with a rural style and traditional materials to blend with existing homes. 71% feel that ecological homes – i.e. zero-rated energy consumption, porous standing surfaces, grey water recycling, trees and open spaces are important. These are reflected in the following design policy.

POLICY H5: DESIGN QUALITY - Development proposals must demonstrate a high quality of design, layout and materials in order to make a positive contribution to the special character of Dunton Bassett Parish.

- a) New development should enhance and reinforce the local distinctiveness and character of the area in which it is situated, and proposals should clearly show how the general character, scale, mass, density and layout of the site and the building or extension fits in with the aspect of the surrounding area. Care should be taken to ensure that the development minimises disruption of the visual amenity of the street scene and does not impact negatively on any significant wider landscape views.
- b) New buildings should follow a consistent design approach in the use of materials, fenestration and the roofline to the building. Materials should be chosen to complement the design of the development and add to the quality or character of the surrounding environment.
- c) Contemporary and innovative materials and design will be supported where positive improvement can be robustly demonstrated without detracting from the historic context.

- d) Proposals should minimise the impact on general amenity and careful consideration given to noise, odour and light. Light pollution should be minimised wherever possible and security lighting should be appropriate, unobtrusive and energy efficient.
- e) Development should enhance biodiversity and relate well to the topography of the area, with existing trees and hedges preserved whenever possible and watercourses (including ditches) protected and retained as open features where possible.
- f) Where possible, enclosure of plots should be of native hedging, wooden fencing, or stone/brick wall.
- g) Development is encouraged to incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques to meet high standards for energy and water efficiency, including the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology, as appropriate; and minimise surface run-off and risk of flooding.
- h) Energy and communications connections should be sited below ground.
- i) Cabling of at least 7kW is provided to the most practical point in the home to facilitate subsequent installation of a home electric vehicle charging point;
- j) Development should incorporate sustainable drainage systems with maintenance regimes to minimise vulnerability to flooding and climate change.
- k) Design should ensure appropriate provision for the storage of waste and recyclable material.
- l) Adequate off-road parking should be provided, with a minimum of two car parking spaces for dwellings of up to three bedrooms and three spaces for dwellings of four bedrooms or more, in line with Highways Authority requirements. Garages should be adjacent to each house and large enough to accommodate modern cars and SUVs. Blocks of garages remote from dwellings will not be supported.
- m) Innovative designs with varied house types, building widths, styles, details, facing and roofing materials reflecting a varied street scene will be supported. On developments of ten or more dwellings, housing development should be predominantly two-storey with any three-storey dwellings being spread throughout the development.
- n) Roof and wall construction should incorporate integral bird nest boxes and bat breeding and roosting sites
- o) Hedges (or fences with ground-level gaps) should be used for property boundaries to maintain connectivity of habitat for hedgehogs and other terrestrial animals
- p) Security lighting, if essential, should be operated by intruder sensors and illuminated for no longer than 1 minute. Sports and commercial facility lighting should be switched off during agreed 'curfew' hours between March and October, following best practice guidelines in *Bats and Lighting* Leicestershire Environmental Records Centre, 2014.
- q) Lighting design, location, type, lux levels and times of use should follow current best-practice, e.g. by applying the guidelines in *Guidance note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK*: Bat Conservation Trust / Institution of Lighting Professionals, 2018.

8.1.6 Affordable housing

The NPPF (2019) defines affordable housing as ‘housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers)’. The definition goes on to list different types including affordable housing for rent (including social rent); starter homes, discounted market sale housing and other affordable housing routes to home ownership.

Harborough Local Plan policy H2 on affordable housing states that the tenure split will be about 75% affordable or socially rented; and about 25% low cost home ownership products. However, the policy allows for a variation on this mix if justified by reference to the latest assessment of affordable housing need.

House prices are high locally. Given the high levels of detached and large houses in the Parish and the absence of any affordable housing for sale locally, the only opportunities for subsidised housing are through rental affordable housing products.

The housing affordability gap continues to widen between the most and least affordable areas. In Harborough the gap has worsened with average house prices estimated at being 10.05 times workplace-based average annual earnings in 2018 compared with 8.0 times in 2008.

In Dunton Bassett Parish in 2016, a low to mid-priced property cost on average £215,000 which is higher than the national average. Assuming a 15% deposit, those entering the property market in the area would require a household income of £40,611 (£26,444 E&W average) and savings of £36,050 which is a challenge for many households.

With the average cost of an entry-level home in the area being £215,000 prospective buyers would require an estimated £2,000 for legal and moving costs, £1,800 for stamp duty and £32,250 for a 15% deposit, coming to £36,050 in total.

Home ownership is dominant in Dunton Bassett and affordable rental properties may be difficult to access for people on low incomes.

There are currently no affordable housing for sale products in the Parish and the high property prices locally mean that subsidised home ownership or rental products offering a discount of around 20% on current values would probably still be unaffordable to most people. It is for this reason that the policy supports the provision of affordable housing for sale and promotes a variation from the Local Plan tenure split.

In the Community Questionnaire (February 2020) 73% of respondents indicated concern over the lack of affordable homes to buy. 30% highlighted a lack of affordable homes to rent. A specific question on affordable housing indicated a response of around three quarters (74%) in favour. 81% of these wanted the affordable housing to be available for people with a local connection to the Parish.

POLICY H6: AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISION - Development proposals which include affordable housing should provide a mix of housing types and sizes to help meet the identified needs of the parish, based on the assessment of affordable housing need (2019) or later report updating this document. This is currently 75% Affordable Housing for Sale, preferably Shared Ownership, and 25% Affordable Rent. The provision of smaller homes especially for young people and young families and older people who wish to downsize will be supported, as will be the provision of affordable housing for people with a local connection.

Any affordable housing should be designed and delivered to be indistinguishable from market housing and must be distributed evenly through the development as a whole.

8.1.7 Windfall sites

Windfall sites are small infill or redevelopment sites that come forward unexpectedly and which have not been specifically identified for new housing in a planning document. These sites often comprise redundant or vacant buildings including barns, or a gap between existing properties in a built-up street scene. The Harborough Local Plan recognises that in Selected Rural Villages such as Dunton Bassett, development will be primarily in the form of small-scale infill developments or limited extensions to help address economic, social or community objectives.

Such sites have made a small but regular contribution towards the housing supply in the Parish for a considerable time. It is expected that windfalls will continue to make a small contribution to housing provision in the Parish up to 2031.

POLICY H7: WINDFALL SITES – Development proposals for infill and redevelopment sites will be supported where:

- a) They help to meet the identified housing requirement for Dunton Bassett in terms of housing mix (Policy H4).
- b) They reflect the character and historic context of existing developments within Dunton Bassett.
- c) They retain existing important natural boundaries such as trees, hedges and streams.
- d) They provide for a safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the site and any traffic generation and parking impact created does not result in a severe direct or cumulative impact on congestion or road and pedestrian safety unless appropriate mitigation measures are undertaken.
- e) They do not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring occupiers by reason of loss of privacy, loss of daylight, visual intrusion or noise.
- f) They do not reduce garden space to an extent where it adversely impacts on the character of the area, or the amenity of neighbours and the occupiers of the dwelling.

8.1.8 Street lighting

The Parish Council is concerned to limit the increase in streetlights within the Parish. This is driven by the environmental benefits of limiting street and security lighting; the amenity benefits to households of limiting intrusive security lighting on adjacent properties and the economic benefits of reducing the cost of lighting and light pollution. This is supported by the NPPF. Paragraph 180 states that planning policies “should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation”. The Harborough Local Plan states in policy IN2 ‘proposals to reduce the environmental effect of highway related structures by reducing unnecessary traffic signs and street lighting should be implemented where safety allows’.

Accordingly, this Neighbourhood Plan will require that any developments within the Parish should only feature on-street and external wall mounted lighting that is appropriate and sympathetic to the context, and consistent with the density and output of the lighting used in the surrounding area. Consideration should be made to maximise energy efficiency and minimise light pollution, all light being directed ground-ward.

POLICY H8: USE OF STREET LIGHTING AND EXTERNAL WALL-MOUNTED LIGHTING: Any new lighting should be well designed and the minimum required to meet its purpose. Development proposals should not increase local light pollution (excess artificial light that shines where it is not wanted or needed), therefore;

- a) street lighting should be used only where and when it is needed;
- b) all external lighting should only shine where the light is needed and not create glare or light intrusion (and may need to be shielded to direct light downwards in order to ensure this); and
- c) external lighting should be designed to minimise energy use and reduce the potential to impact wildlife, including bats.

8.2 The Environment

8.2.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan deals mainly with the *environmental* component of *sustainable development* together with open spaces of community value from the *social* component, as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), page 5. The chapter aims to balance the requirement for appropriate development in the Plan Area against the value of environmental and other features that are both *special* – appreciated, in their own right and as community assets, by local people - and *significant* for their wildlife and history. It also deals with broader environmental issues of concern to the community, including protection and enhancement of local biodiversity, geology, flood risk and renewable energy.

Care was taken during preparation of the plan to ensure that the policies (and the sites and areas of environmental significance covered by them) were not unduly restrictive on development during the Plan's lifetime. Although parts of the Plan Area have considerable, and at least local, environmental significance, less than 10% by area of all the open and currently undeveloped land in the parish is protected in any way through the Planning system from potential environment-damaging development. The key statistics are:

1. Total area of Neighbourhood Plan Area	532 ha
2. Open or undeveloped land	512 ha
4. Area designated or recognised in this Plan for environmental protection	c.50 ha

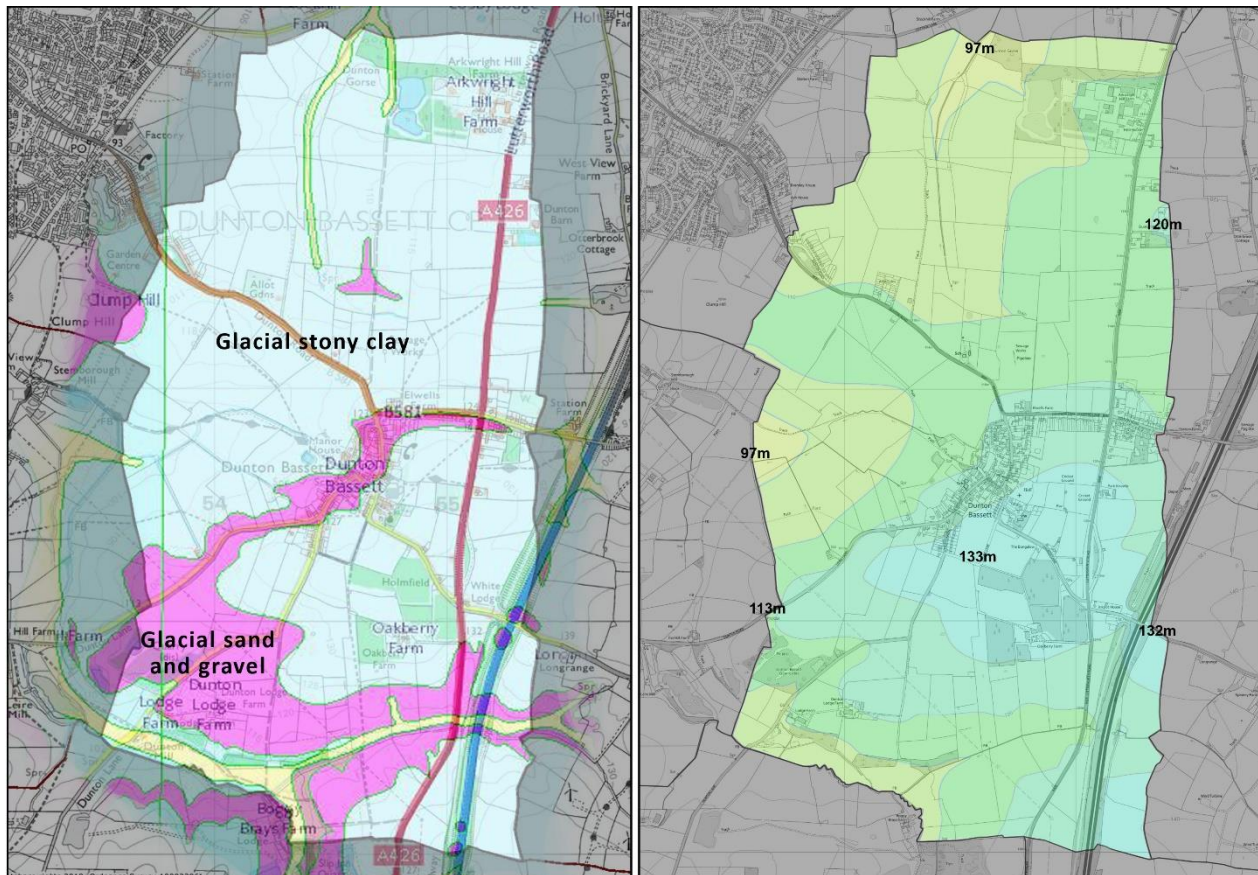
8.2.1.1 Landscape, geology and setting

The topography of the Plan Area, which lies between the broad lowland of west Leicestershire and the upland of 'high east Leicestershire', rises gently from west to east away from the upper River Soar valley. Dunton Bassett itself is a hilltop village which, despite its modest elevation (the height difference across the parish is less than 40 metres), is both a local visual landmark and a viewpoint.

Buried beneath this landscape are rocks of Triassic and Jurassic age (225 to 190 million years old). Their disposition, in a series of steps rising west to east, is the reason for the rising topography, although nowhere are these layers of ancient sandstone and clay seen at the surface. They were buried during the Ice Ages by up to ten metres of glacial sand, gravel and clay. These sediments were deposited here by ice sheets, glacial outwash rivers and on the floor of a huge meltwater lake that occupied an area of low ground stretching some 20 kms west from here. Dunton Bassett quarry is a Regionally Important Geological Site for the sequence of glacial sand, gravel and clay layers here that were used by geologists to work out the ice age history of England. Moreover, Dunton Bassett village was established where it is, on an outcrop of glacial gravel,

because of the combination of dry footings for building with the natural springs the gravel provided; most of the rest of the area (as local people still know) is heavy clay, prone to waterlogging and flooding.

Figure 4: Geology (left) and topography of the Plan Area. Geological map adapted from British Geological Survey online mapping. Both © Crown copyright and database rights. All rights reserved (100052886) 2020.



8.2.1.2 Historic environment

Archaeological excavation on the hillside just west of the school has shown that small numbers of people lived, or camped, in the area in prehistoric time: remains of late Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Bronze ages were found. People also lived here during the three centuries of the Roman occupation – presumably mainly British people who had adopted some of the culture. After the Romans left Britain in AD410, surviving natives probably lived in a ‘re-wilded’, wooded landscape in a small number of separate farmsteads, and the first Saxon settlers who arrived here via the Welland Valley probably did the same. But by the later 6th century the present village had been established, on a hilltop site with springs of fresh water and gravelly soil.

History from the place-name

Dunton Bassett: Old English *dun tun* ‘hill settlement’ (Anglo-Saxon, 6th century), with Norman-French addition of *Bassett* from ownership by the family of Rudulphus de Bassett (1166)

For the next millennium, medieval Dunton Bassett was a farming community, with three or more *open fields* of arable, together with some areas of grazing meadow, surrounding the village. The

layout of the village, its countryside and most of the country lanes dates from this time; in fact the village reached its maximum size in the 14th century – earthworks and excavations show several areas now outside the built-up area where cottages and streets stood until the Black Death and climate change reduced the population in about 1340. The site of the medieval manor house can still be seen as earthworks on the east edge of the village. Also surviving from medieval Dunton Bassett are several areas of ridge and furrow, the traces of centuries of ploughing the open fields. The modern pattern of hedged fields dates from the Enclosure of Dunton Bassett (1796), when the open arable fields were subdivided and replaced by pasture in the ‘agricultural revolution’.

Further 18th and 19th century changes included the by-passing of the village (which had been on the ‘way’ from Leicester to Lutterworth) by the turnpike road, and the building of the railways, first the 1841 Midland Railway (Leicester – Rugby) – this was just outside the parish but helped boost the local economy – and the ‘last main line’ Great Central Railway (1898-99) whose station and goods yard prompted the extension of the village eastwards along Station Road. The characteristic layout of the village streets and house-plots may be medieval, but the buildings are a comprehensive mix of replacements and new builds recording the changing fortunes of Dunton Bassett from before the 16th century to the present.

8.2.1.3 Natural environment

The history of land use in the Plan Area – it has been cleared and more or less managed by its human inhabitants for at least 1500 years – means that all ‘natural’ environment is actually *semi-natural* (as classified by Natural England). This does not imply, however, an absence of wildlife, because animals and plants have adapted and evolved, even moved in, to occupy the landscape features created by human occupation and use. While Dunton Bassett has no recorded nationally important wildlife sites it does have a number of local features and habitat areas whose ecological value makes a vital contribution to English biodiversity (see Policy Env 5). They include watercourses and wetlands, osier beds, woods, hedgerows, gardens and churchyards, old quarries, arable field margins and other ‘re-wilded’ places, in all of which remnants of the natural environment survive.

8.2.1.4 Existing environmental designations

The parish is located in National Character Area (Natural England landscape areas, defined for Planning purposes) 94 *Leicestershire Vales*, and Harborough District Council Landscape Character Area *Lutterworth Lowlands*. There are 14 *Listed Buildings* and one *Scheduled Monument*, two further sites and features of history significance (*Leicestershire Historic Environment Record*), one site of regional geological importance (*RIGS*), some 13 areas of *Priority Habitat* (as defined by Natural England), and two current and nine historic *Local Wildlife Sites* (Leics. CC).

8.2.2 Environmental inventory

An environmental inventory (Appendix 6) of Dunton Bassett was carried out between October 2019 and February 2020. The work comprised two elements:

- Review of all existing designations and available information, and
- Fieldwork to identify sites and features of natural and historical environment significance in the context of the Plan Area.

The review compiled information from relevant sources, including DEFRA, Natural England, Historic England, Leicestershire Historic Environment Records, Leicestershire Environmental Record Centre records (biodiversity and geology), Environment Agency, Harborough District Council, British Geological Survey, Old maps (Ordnance Survey, manuscript), Local history and archaeology publications and local knowledge.

Fieldwork reviewed all open and currently undeveloped land in the Plan Area, and significant species, habitats, landscape characteristics, earthworks and other extant features were checked or identified for the first time.

These data, along with all relevant site-specific information from the existing information review, were mapped and tabulated, and each site was scored and evaluated using the nine criteria for Local Green Space selection in the *National Planning Policy Framework* 2019 (Table 1).

Table 1. Environmental inventory scoring system used in the Plan

Criterion (NPPF 2019)	Score range			Notes
1. LOCAL IN CHARACTER , not an extensive tract of land	N	Y		Yes is essential for LGS designation. The site should be a single bounded parcel of land, or a small, coherent group (evidence-based, with shared characteristics and in single ownership).
SPECIAL TO COMMUNITY:				
2. PROXIMITY	0	1-4	5	5 = an open space <u>within</u> a settlement 4 = adjacent to the settlement boundary (Limit to Development line when defined) 3, 2, 1 = successively farther from settlement 0 = most distant from main settlement(s)
3. BEAUTY	0	1-2	3	Subjective, relative (give justification); use consultation 'dot' map results for views. Only the most attractive land in the Plan Area should qualify. Most should get 0 or 1.
4. TRANQUILLITY	0	1	2	Tranquillity should be judged as a real experience; just being 'a long way from anywhere' doesn't make a site tranquil. Most sites should get 0. 2 will probably be limited to e.g. churchyards, well-designed memorial gardens, managed semi-natural habitats where birdsong is louder than traffic noise.
5. RECREATIONAL	0	1-4	5	5, 4 = Public Open Spaces designed for sport and recreation or as

VALUE				<p>facilities for children and young people</p> <p>3 = Membership sport facilities (tennis, bowls, etc.). Very well used park or other recreational space with full or comprehensive public access. Managed wildlife site with public access. Semi-natural parkland (trees, grass) with public footpaths and no restriction on access.</p> <p>2 = Paddock or grazing field with 1 or more public footpaths, e.g. well-used for dog-walking, traditional sledging field</p> <p>1 = arable farmland with public footpath but no other access.</p> <p>0 = private property with no public recreational value or access</p>
LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE:				
6. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE	0	1-4	5	<p>Historical significance can only apply to sites and features that can be seen (to be appreciated) or are proven buried archaeological features. NB cumulative: more features/designations = higher score.</p> <p>5 = statutory site, includes or comprises Scheduled monument, Listed Building, feature or structure. National Trust or English Heritage site</p> <p>4 = site with features in the County <i>Historic Environment Record</i>, Historic England <i>PastScape</i> records. <i>Registered park or garden</i>. Well-preserved <i>ridge and furrow</i>.</p> <p>3, 2 = site includes feature, earthworks or building with known local historic environment significance – history includes 20th century. Fainter <i>ridge and furrow</i></p> <p>1 = site of local oral or recorded history importance, no actual structure</p> <p>0 = No evidence for historical environment significance</p>
7. RICHNESS OF WILDLIFE (BIODIVERSITY); GEOLOGY	0	1-4	5	<p>Protection of habitats and species, in compliance with EU Directives and English legislation, at the local level of individual land parcels. NB cumulative: more features/species = higher score.</p> <p>5 = Statutory site, includes or comprises SSSI (biodiversity or geology) or other national or European designation.</p> <p>4 = County Wildlife Trust, etc. <i>nature reserve</i>, <i>Country Park</i> with importance for biodiversity, etc.</p> <p>3 – site with National, county and local biodiversity features, e.g. <i>Priority Habitats</i>, occurrence of one or more <i>Species of Conservation Concern</i> (use national or county Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Species lists), mapped Gt Crested newt ponds, bat roosts and foraging areas. County or local site designations e.g. <i>Local Wildlife Site</i> (LWS), Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS), <i>Site of Importance for Nature Conservation</i> (SINC), <i>Local Nature Reserve</i>, <i>Community WildSpace</i>, etc.</p> <p>2 = other site of known local biodiversity importance not recorded elsewhere with e.g. BAP species, species-rich hedgerows, watercourse, pond</p> <p>1 = (parish background level), moderate or potential wildlife value</p> <p>0 = no evidence for natural environment significance</p>
Maximum possible score			25	

8.2.3 Local Green Space

Of the approximately 125 inventoried parcels of open land in the parish, some 75 were identified as having notable environmental (natural, historical and/or community) features. These sites were scored, using the seven criteria for Local Green Space designation noted in the *National Planning Policy Framework 2019* (see Table 1 for the criteria and scoring system devised for this Plan).

Two sites score 18/25 or more of the maximum possible and meet the essential requirements for designation as Local Green Space as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019, paragraph 100). Their statutory protection will ensure that these most important places in Dunton Bassett's natural and human environment are protected.

POLICY ENV 1: LOCAL GREEN SPACE – Development proposals that would result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, the following Local Green Spaces (details table 2; map figure 5) will not be permitted other than in special circumstances.

All Saints churchyard and entrance (inventory reference 126/127)



The Beat and Loves Lane (061)





Well Lane green space (124; HDC designation LGS/DB/c)

TABLE 2: EVIDENCE BASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACE

REF	DESCRIPTION / EVIDENCE	NPPF (2019) LOCAL GREEN SPACE CRITERIA							TOTAL /25
		LOCAL BOUNDED, NOT EXTENSIVE YES/NO	SPECIAL TO COMMUNITY (Max 10)				LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE (Max 10)		
			PROXIMITY 0 - 5	BEAUTY 0 - 3	TRANQUIL 0 - 2	REC. VALUE 0 - 5	HISTORY 0 - 5	WILDLIFE 0 - 5	

Designations in the Neighbourhood Plan

126 127	All Saints Churchyard and entrance.	Y	5	3	2	2	5	3	20
	<p>Churchyard on elevated site. Deciduous and coniferous trees including yew, mown and rougher grass. Headstones include 18th century Swithland Slate examples.</p> <p>Setting for Grade II* Listed Building</p> <p>Locally significant biodiversity site, with five national Biodiversity Action Plan species birds and bat foraging area from colonies (pipistrelle sp., Natterer's) in the church (LERC data)</p> <p>HDC Open Space (churchyards, cemeteries and burial grounds). Footpath Y35.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>All Saints churchyard, March 2020</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Location map</p> </div> </div>								

REF	DESCRIPTION / EVIDENCE	NPPF (2019) LOCAL GREEN SPACE CRITERIA							
		LOCAL BOUNDED, NOT EXTENSIVE YES/NO	SPECIAL TO COMMUNITY (Max 10)				LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE (Max 10)		TOTAL /25
			PROXIMITY 0 - 5	BEAUTY 0 - 3	TRANQUIL 0 - 2	REC. VALUE 0 - 5	HISTORY 0 - 5	WILDLIFE 0 - 5	
061	The Beat and Loves Lane Permanent pasture, species-rich hedge boundaries. Highest point of the village. Ridge and furrow at south end, village earthworks north end. Leicestershire HER. Access via two Public Footpaths (Y37 and Y38) and surrounded by a Public Bridleway (Y40). Very well-used informal recreational amenity and village open space. Viewpoint x2 (church and village; distant across the parish, especially NW) Low flood risk – as defined by Gov.UK Long term flood risk assessment for locations in England	Y	4	3	2	3	3	3	18
	<div><div><p>Looking east to the church</p></div><div><p>Location map</p></div><div><p>View west showing archaeological earthworks</p></div><div><p>Love Lane from the east boundary</p></div></div>								

Designation by Harborough District Council

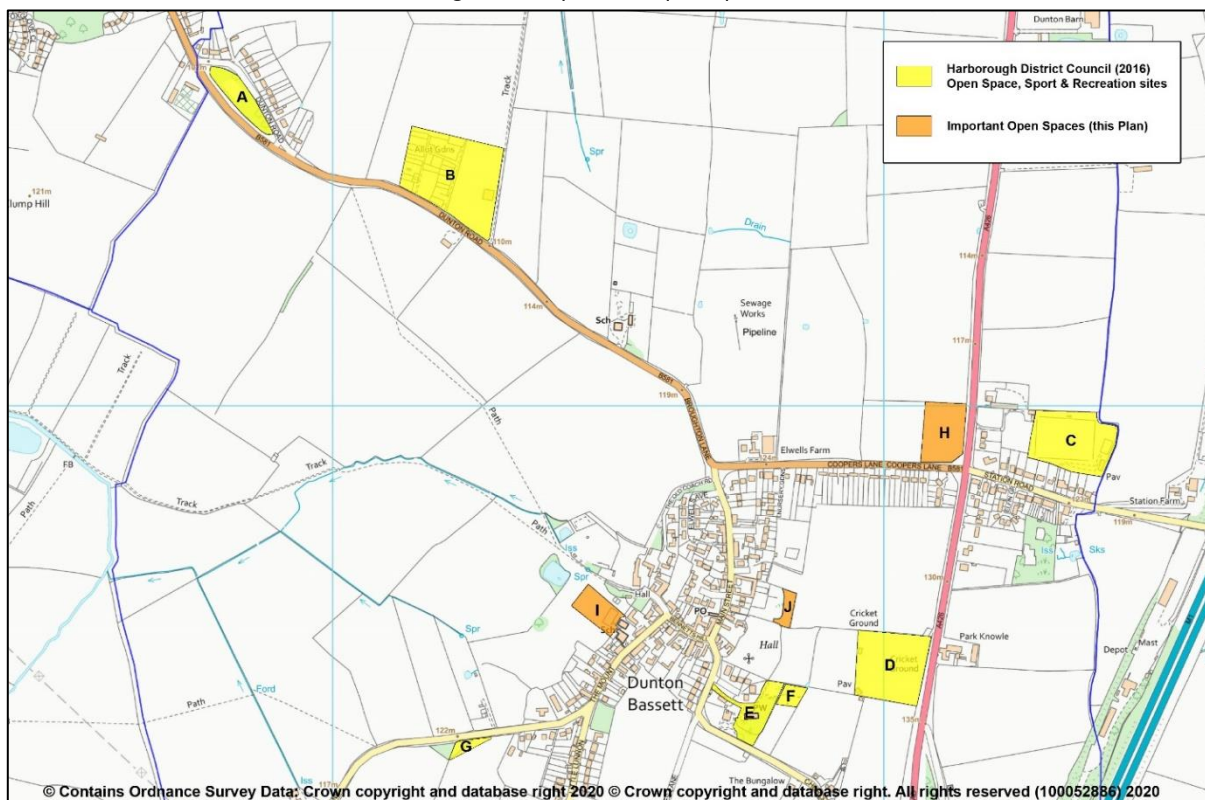
REF	DESCRIPTION / EVIDENCE	NPPF (2019) LOCAL GREEN SPACE CRITERIA							
		LOCAL BOUNDED, NOT EXTENSIVE YES/NO	SPECIAL TO COMMUNITY (Max 10)				LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE (Max 10)		TOTAL /25
			PROXIMITY 0 - 5	BEAUTY 0 - 3	TRANQUIL 0 - 2	REC. VALUE 0 - 5	HISTORY 0 - 5	WILDLIFE 0 - 5	
124	Well Lane green space Semi-natural open space, contiguous with western extension of Bennett's Hill, forming the village end of bridleway W66. 3.3 – Harborough District Council Local Green Space LGS/DB/c as <i>Wild Area next to Leicestershire Round Footpath</i> – HDC Policies Map (April 2019). 4.2 – rather overgrown mixed woodland with mature Scots pines and other conifers, native deciduous trees and scrub.	Y	5	2	1	2	1	2	13

8.2.4 Important Open Space

A group of sites scored highly in the inventory (scoring at least 75% of the possible total under the 'special to community' criteria) for their amenity, community or open space value. They have been identified in fieldwork, community consultations and in Parish records; some are existing Harborough District Council Open Space, Sport & Recreation (OSSR) sites (2016 review) or Dunton Bassett Parish Council assets, while some have been newly identified in this Plan.

Their value as open space *within and close to the built-up areas* and/or their current, or potential, value as community resources are recognised in this Policy.

Figure 6: Important Open Spaces



POLICY ENV 2: IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES – The following open spaces in Dunton Bassett (figure 6) are of high value for recreation, beauty, amenity, tranquillity or as green spaces within or close to the settlements. Development proposals that result in their loss, or have a significant adverse effect on them, will not be supported unless the open space is replaced by equivalent or better provision in an equally suitable location, or unless the open space is no longer required by the community.

- A. Dunton Road Natural Greenspace (HDC OSSR site)
- B. Dunton Bassett allotments (HDC OSSR site)
- C. Dunton Bassett Football Ground (HDC OSSR site)
- D. Dunton Bassett Cricket Ground (HDC OSSR site)

- E. All Saints churchyard (HDC OSSR site)
- F. All Saints burial ground extension (HDC OSSR site)
- G. Land at Leire Lane, Dunton Bassett (HDC OSSR site)
- H. Parish Council field
- I. Dunton Bassett Primary School field
- J. Children's playground

8.2.5 Natural Environment and Biodiversity

8.2.5.1 Sites of natural environment significance

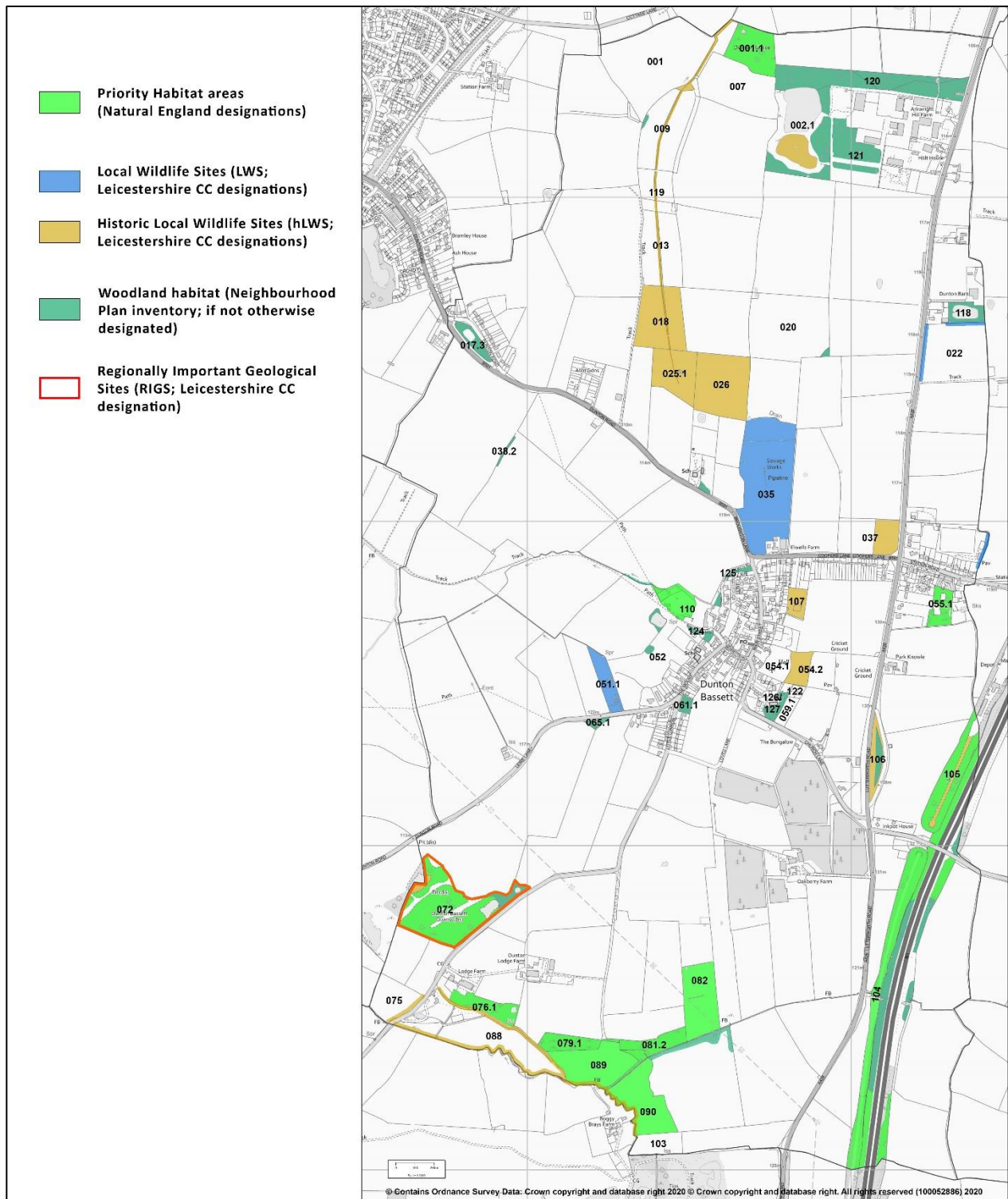
A group of inventory sites scores highly for 'wildlife' (scoring at least 3/5 under this criterion). The features for which the identified sites have been selected and notified are listed in the environmental inventory (Appendix 6). The map (figure 6) shows their locations.

These **sites of natural environment significance** comprise a) those where *priority habitats* occur (Natural England mapping) or where *biodiversity action plan (BAP) species* have been recorded as breeding or as regular visitors; b) sites identified as ecologically significant by Leicestershire County Council, including Local Wildlife Sites, c) sites of significance for their geological interest and d) other habitats and feature identified during the inventory process as being of high biodiversity significance in the context of the Plan Area.

Policy ENV 3 delivers site-level compliance in the Plan Area with the relevant Harborough District Council policies, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all relevant English regulations, and the pertinent parts of the European Habitats and Species Directives / Environment Bill 2019.

POLICY ENV 3: PROTECTION OF SITES OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SIGNIFICANCE – The sites mapped here (figure 7) have been identified as being of local significance for their natural environment features. They are ecologically important in their own right, make a contribution to carbon sequestration, and are locally valued. The significance of the species, habitats or features present should be balanced against the benefit of any development that would adversely affect them.

Figure 7: Sites of natural environment significance



8.2.5.2 Woodland and notable trees

Leicestershire is one of the least wooded counties in England¹, so the conservation of existing and planting of new trees and woodland is an important part of protecting and enhancing the natural environment locally. Trees are also known to be an effective contributor to carbon sequestration in the UK policy to reach carbon-neutrality by 2030; while new tree planting is essential for this, existing trees

¹ [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/nigreatbritain.pdf/\\$FILE/nigreatbritain.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/nigreatbritain.pdf/$FILE/nigreatbritain.pdf)

and woodland are already sequestering carbon, while the natural succession to woodland of land allowed to 're-wild' provides by far the most sustainable solution to meeting the target at local scale.

In Dunton Bassett there is a group of planted and rewilded deciduous woodlands along the M1 and Great Central Railway corridor, a locally-important area of streamside woodland and osier beds close to the southern parish boundary and a few areas of fox covert, spinney and ornamental planting, the latter a valued characteristic of the village itself. Most of these areas have been mapped as Priority Habitat by Natural England, while other small woods, together with several species-rich hedgerows and notable trees, are Local Wildlife Sites (Phase 1 Habitat Surveys, Leicestershire County Council, 2005-2015). A few further small areas have been identified as part of the inventory carried out in 2019-20 for this Plan.

This policy protects the small, and thus disproportionately valuable, area of woodland in the Plan Area, to protect all notable trees whenever practicable, and to require developers to plant or arrange for replacement of trees and woodland.

POLICY ENV 4: WOODLAND AND NOTABLE TREES– Woodland and notable trees should be protected from loss or damage in development proposals and where possible integrated into their design. Where loss is unavoidable*, the developer should provide biodiversity net gain through new planting either on site or elsewhere.

*Proposals to fell or remove trees should be accompanied by a tree survey (BS5837 standard or its equivalent) to confirm the condition of affected trees.

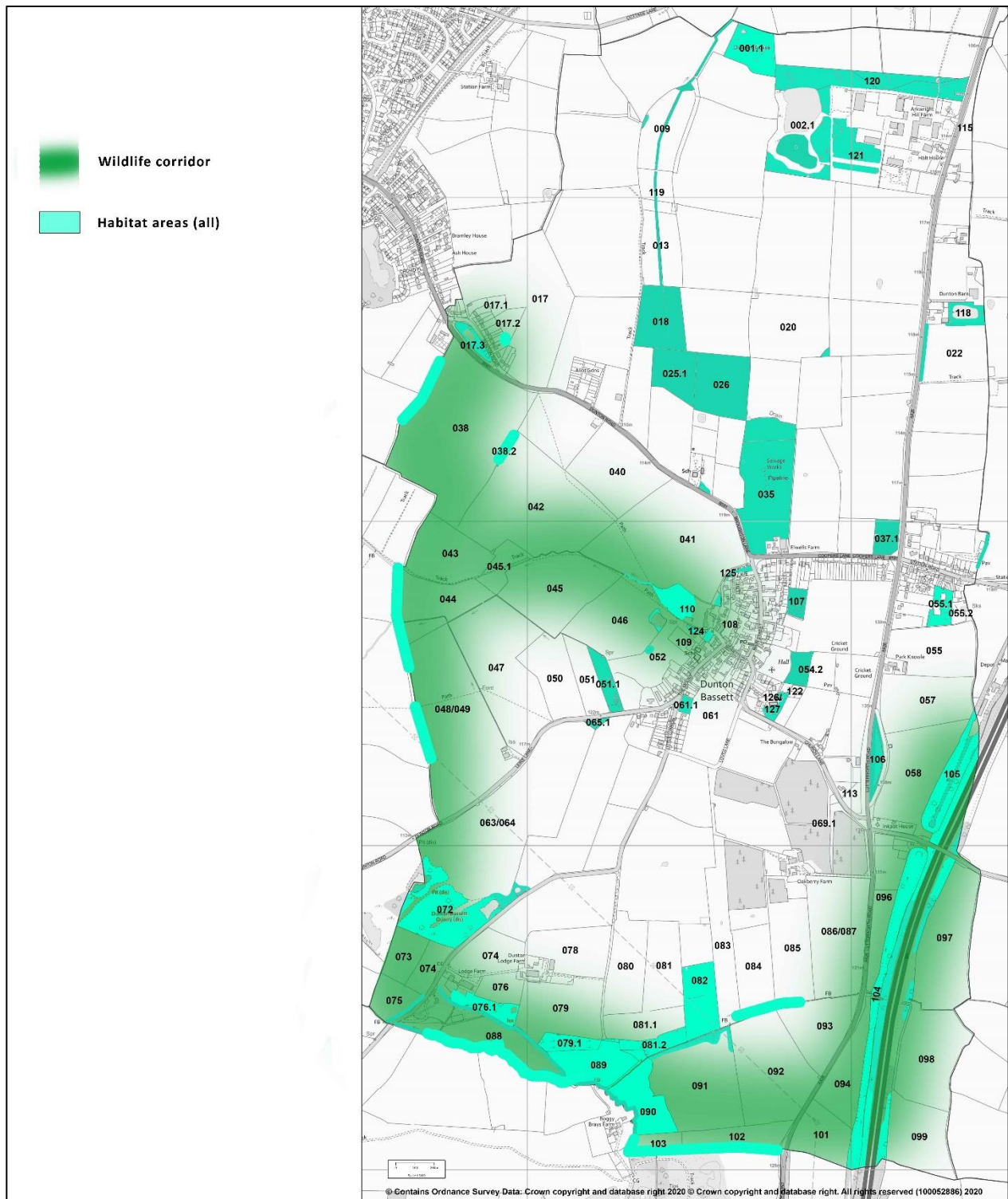
8.2.5.3 Biodiversity and habitat connectivity

Because the Plan Area includes no nationally important wildlife sites, it might be argued that it is a 'typical' area of English Midlands countryside, and thus that it has little or no biodiversity significance to be taken into account in the Planning system. This would be a misunderstanding of the concept of biodiversity. England's biodiversity is entirely and only the sum of the wildlife in all of its individual parishes: Dunton Bassett is as important in this regard as every other parish, and residents want it to play its essential part in protecting what remains of England's threatened and diminishing biodiversity.

Connectivity is an essential component of biodiversity. Isolated populations of animals and plants are at risk of destruction or of simply 'dying out'. Wildlife Corridors aim to re-connect populations and habitats within parishes and more widely. A network of parish wildlife corridors (figure 8) has been identified during the preparation of this Plan.

This policy is therefore about parish-level compliance with the relevant Harborough District Council policies, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 (as amended), and the European Habitats and Species Directives [or their transitioned English equivalents] – and about how Dunton Bassett can 'do its bit' to maintain biodiversity by taking it into account, at a Neighbourhood Plan level of detail, in the Planning system. The policy is also supported by National Planning Policy Framework (2019) paragraphs 170 (a) and (d); 174; 175 (a) on which the policy is based, 175(c); and 177.

Figure 8: Habitat connectivity: Wildlife Corridors



POLICY ENV 5: BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT CONNECTIVITY- All new development proposals will be expected to safeguard habitats and species, including those of local significance. If significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided (through locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or compensated for, planning permission should be refused.

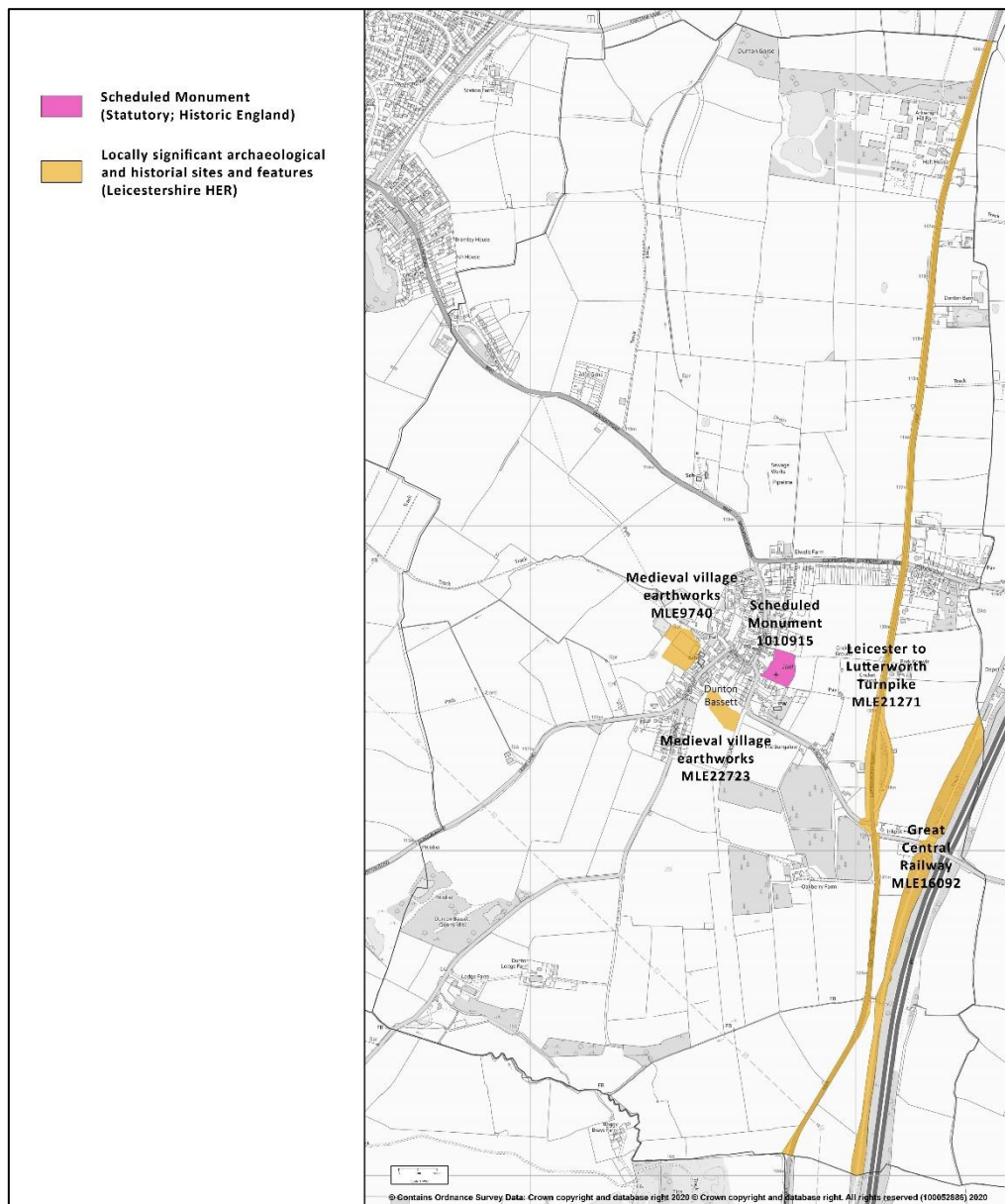
Development proposals should not damage or adversely affect the habitat connectivity provided by the wildlife corridors identified in figure 8.

8.2.5 Historical environment

8.2.5.1 Sites of historical environment significance

A group of inventory sites scores highly for history (scoring at least 3/5 under this criterion). The features for which the identified sites have been selected and notified are listed in the environmental inventory (Appendix 6). The map (figure 9) shows their locations.

Figure 9: Historic Environment sites



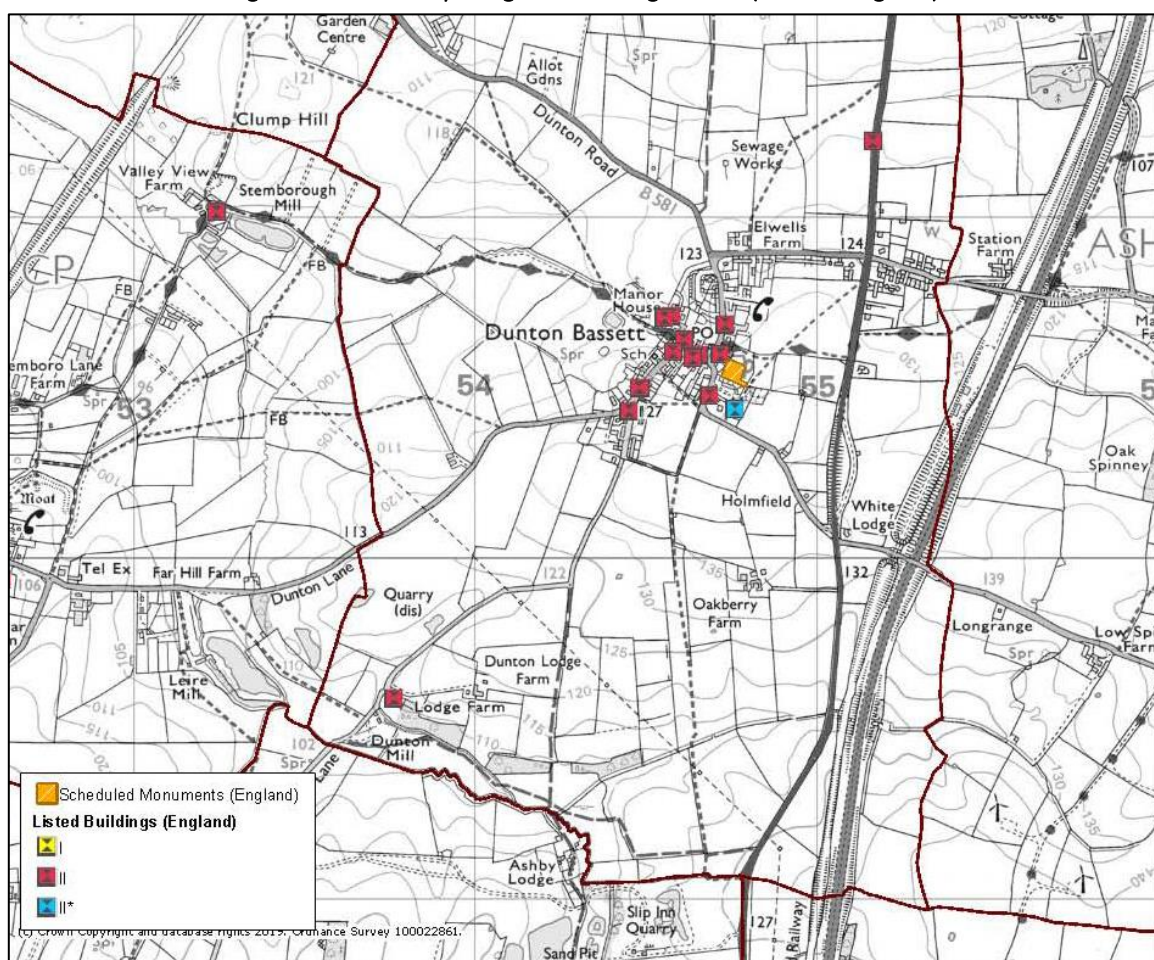
These **sites of historical environment significance** comprise a) statutorily protected sites, b) sites with *extant and visible* archaeological or historical features or proven buried archaeology, as recorded in the Historic England or Leicestershire Historic Environment Records databases, and c) other sites of historical and social significance identified in local records and during the inventory process.

POLICY ENV 6: PROTECTION OF SITES OF HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT SIGNIFICANCE – The sites listed and mapped (figure 9) have been identified as being of at least local significance for their historical features. The features are extant and have visible expression or there is proven buried archaeology on the site, and they are locally valued. The significance of the features present should be balanced against the benefit of any development that would affect or damage them.

8.2.5.2 Buildings, structures and features of local heritage significance

15 buildings and structures in the Plan Area have statutory protection as Scheduled Monuments or through Listing at Grade II* or II. The Neighbourhood Plan lists them for reference, and to acknowledge that new development will be required to take into account their *settings* as defined, on a case by case basis, by Historic England. Their location within, or close to, sites designated or noted for protection in the Plan's Policies and Community Actions contributes to these sites' evidence of significance.

Figure 10: Statutorily designated heritage assets (Historic England)



CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS

List Entry Number: 1360702

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II*

Location: CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, CHURCH LANE, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

Moated site with fishpond at Dunton Bassett

List Entry Number: 1010915

Heritage Category: **Scheduled Monument**

Location: Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

2, Little Lunnun

List Entry Number: 1061559

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: 2, Little Lunnun, Dunton Bassett, LE17 5JR, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

Onion Cottage

List Entry Number: 1178225

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: Onion Cottage, The Mount, Dunton Bassett, LE17 5JL, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

LODGE FARMHOUSE

List Entry Number: 1178200

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: LODGE FARMHOUSE, DUNTON LANE, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

MILEPOST CIRCA 400 YARDS NORTH OF COOPERS LANE

List Entry Number: 1178210

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: MILEPOST CIRCA 400 YARDS NORTH OF COOPERS LANE, LUTTERWORTH ROAD, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

HILLSIDE HOUSE

List Entry Number: 1178189

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: HILLSIDE HOUSE, BENNETTS HILL, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

NUMBER 36 AND ATTACHED BARN

List Entry Number: 1360703

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: NUMBER 36 AND ATTACHED BARN, THE MOUNT, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

THE ELWELLS AND ADJOINING FARM BUILDINGS

List Entry Number: 1360701

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: THE ELWELLS AND ADJOINING FARM BUILDINGS, BENNETTS HILL, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

MANOR FARMHOUSE

List Entry Number: 1178171

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: MANOR FARMHOUSE, 4, BENNETTS HILL, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

OLD HALL COTTAGE

List Entry Number: 1061560

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: OLD HALL COTTAGE, MAIN STREET, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

BLOOMHILLS FARMHOUSE

List Entry Number: 1251005

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: BLOOMHILLS FARMHOUSE, 20, MAIN STREET, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

WAR MEMORIAL

List Entry Number: 1393524

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: WAR MEMORIAL, CHURCH LANE, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

BARN AT MANOR HOUSE

List Entry Number: 1061558

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: BARN AT MANOR HOUSE, BENNETTS HILL, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

OUTBUILDINGS AT MANOR HOUSE

List Entry Number: 1295179

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: OUTBUILDINGS AT MANOR HOUSE, BENNETTS HILL, Dunton Bassett, Harborough, Leicestershire

8.2.5.3 Local built environment character area

As its population grew, Saxon and medieval Dunton Bassett extended north, south and west, downhill from the church and the manor house. Although the southern area was abandoned in the 14th century (now seen only as earthworks in 'The Beat', and the southward section of Loves Lane) the other main streets – Church Lane, Main Street and Bennett's Hill – and their house plots are the direct descendants of the original layout. Main Street was part of the 'way' connecting Dunton Bassett with Cosby, Gilmorton and Bitteswell, and ultimately with the market towns of Leicester and Lutterworth.

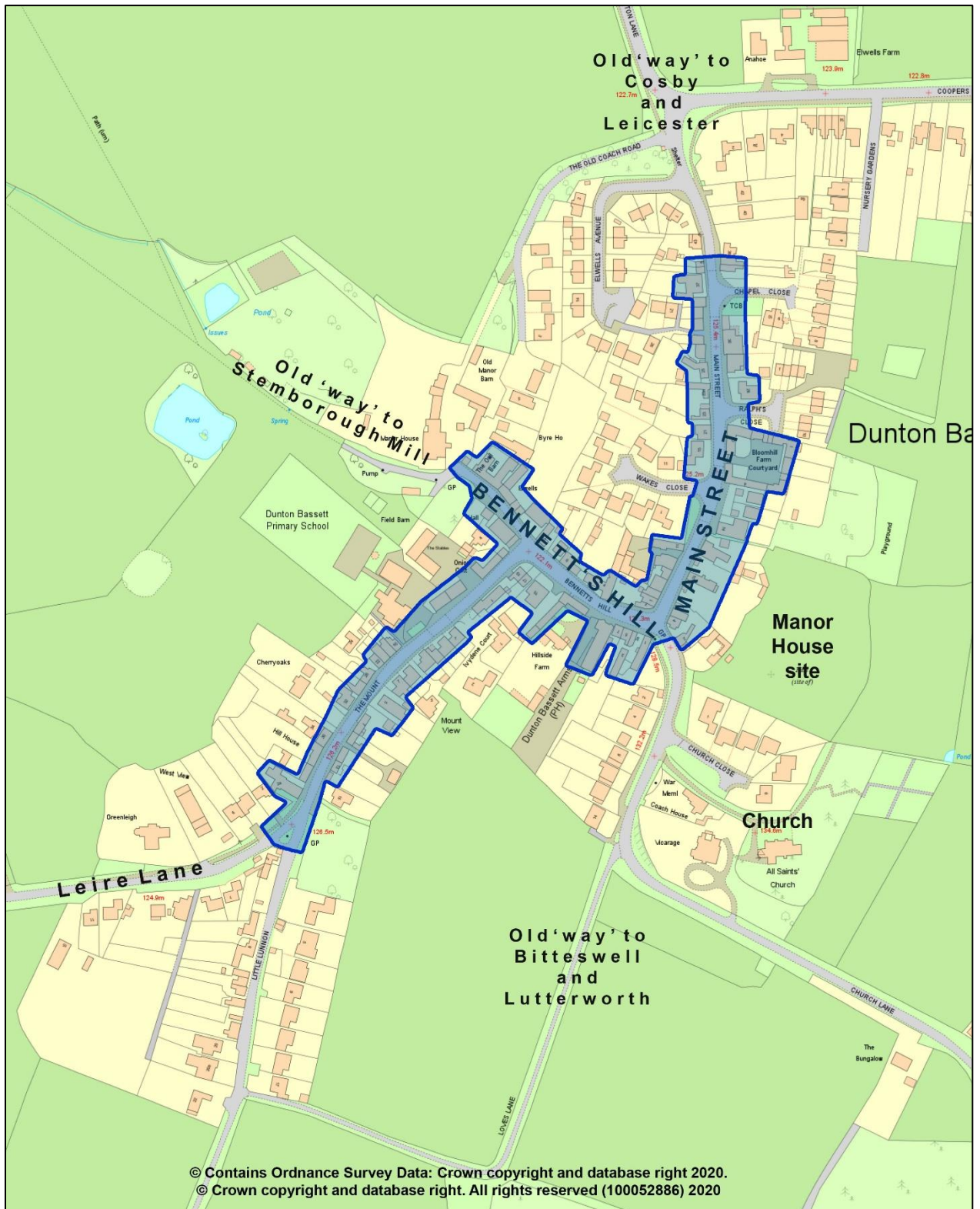
Other villages in south Leicestershire have similar histories, but in Dunton Bassett the narrow winding streets with houses abutting directly onto the roadway were protected from through traffic and modernisation when the village was by-passed in 1764 by the Leicester & Lutterworth Turnpike. Medieval house plots tended to be arranged end-on to the street, with the houses accessed from short side lanes or yards, but from the 18th century houses were often extended along the street frontage while gaps were infilled with rows of cottages. Even in the 20th century, new houses have been built on the original medieval plots, thus preserving medieval house plots building lines and footprints even when the building style changed.

This village layout is therefore distinctive and characteristic, and residents wish to protect it as far as possible within the Planning system. There is currently no designated Conservation Area in Dunton Bassett; the expectation is that if one were designated in future it would include but extend beyond this character area, which is designated for the precise reasons given.

Details of the character area are described in the supporting information.

POLICY ENV 7: LOCAL BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER AREA – The area of Dunton Bassett village mapped here (figure 11) is locally significant for the arrangement of buildings, the medieval village layout, streetscape views and for the characteristic and eclectic mix of architectural styles represented. Its features, buildings and their settings will be protected wherever possible. The local benefits of a development proposal within this area should be judged against the area's significance as an asset to the history, heritage and identity of Dunton Bassett.

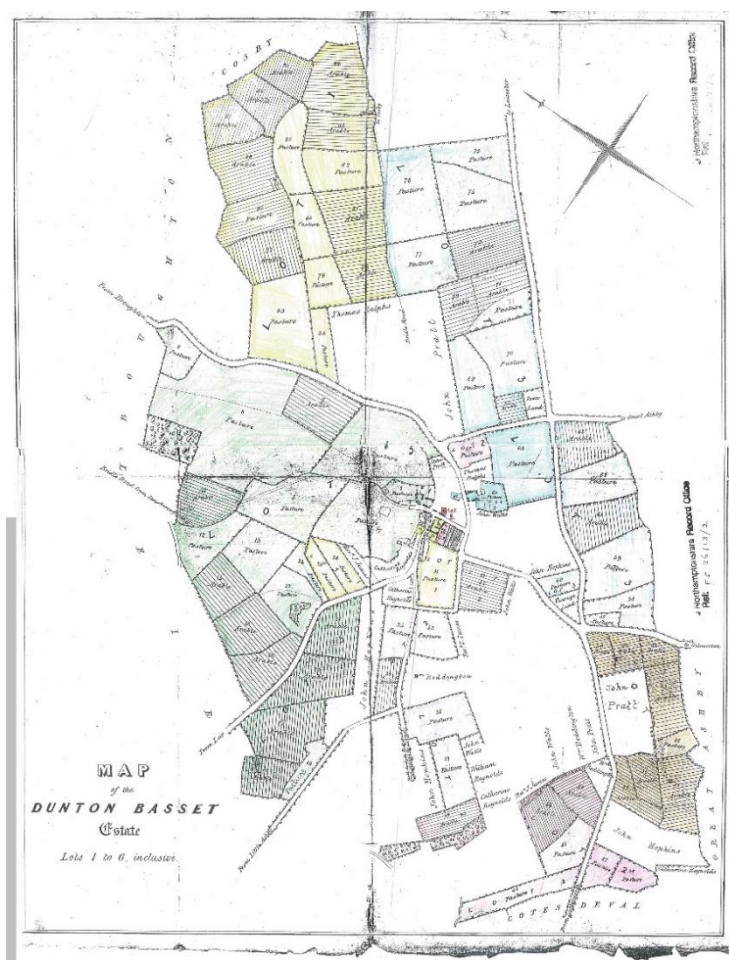
Figure 11: Local built environment character area



8.2.5.4 Ridge and furrow

The early medieval township of *Duntun* was primarily agricultural and, beginning in the 7th or 8th century AD, was farmed using the *Open Field* system. All the open land, except for small fields (closes) backing onto the village, meadows in stream valleys and a few patches of woodland or waste, was worked in a seasonal and yearly rotation of arable crops (cereals, beans), grazing and fallow. Medieval ploughs were pulled by oxen and, because they were not reversible, the soil was always turned rightwards as plough team progressed up and down the furlongs, to produce a corrugated pattern of ridges and furrows whose dimensions increased with every season. The difference in height between ridge crests and furrows could be much as 2-3 metres; this had real advantages in the heavy clay of Midlands, with ridges remaining dry and the furrows acting as drains.

Duntun Basset estate map about the time of its Parliamentary Enclosure, c.1796, showing 'arable' fields still with ridges and furrows, and 'pasture' where ridge and furrow is not shown
Leicestershire Record Office



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The open field system was practised in Duntun Bassett for almost all of the medieval period – perhaps 800 years – until changes in land ownership and an ‘agricultural revolution’ gave rise to a change from large communal open fields to enclosed, privately-owned small fields with hedged boundaries, and a change from arable to pastoral (livestock) farming. Duntun Bassett was enclosed like this in at least two phases, while the Parliamentary Enclosure of the parish in 1796 completed the process.

The result of Enclosure, although socially disruptive, was to ‘fossilise’ the ridges and furrows under grass and hedgerows, and this situation persisted until the mid-20th century, when a second agricultural revolution after the Second World War effectively reversed the first one. British governments, later the European Union, encouraged farmers, mainly through subsidies, to plough the pastures and turn them over to intensive arable production. Wherever this happened, modern reversible ploughs quickly obliterated the ridge and furrow. In most English open field parishes, the loss of ridge and furrow since 1950 has been over 90%. In the 1990s English Heritage (now Historic

England), realising the scale of this destruction, undertook the first of a series of surveys across the Midlands, including Leicestershire, and made recommendations for protection and management. In English legislation ridge and furrow fields (except for the few that are Scheduled Monuments) are not statutorily protected, despite recognition that “*as the open field system was once commonplace in NW Europe, these [surviving] sites take on an international importance*” (English Heritage, 2001).

The *Turning the Plough* (Historic England and Northamptonshire CC, 1999) survey (reproduced as figure 12.1) was used as a baseline for a new survey, undertaken as part of the inventory for this Plan in 2020 (Figure 12.2). Of the 16 fields with ridge and furrow in 1999, six have been lost in the intervening years.

Figure 12.1: Ridge and furrow in 1999

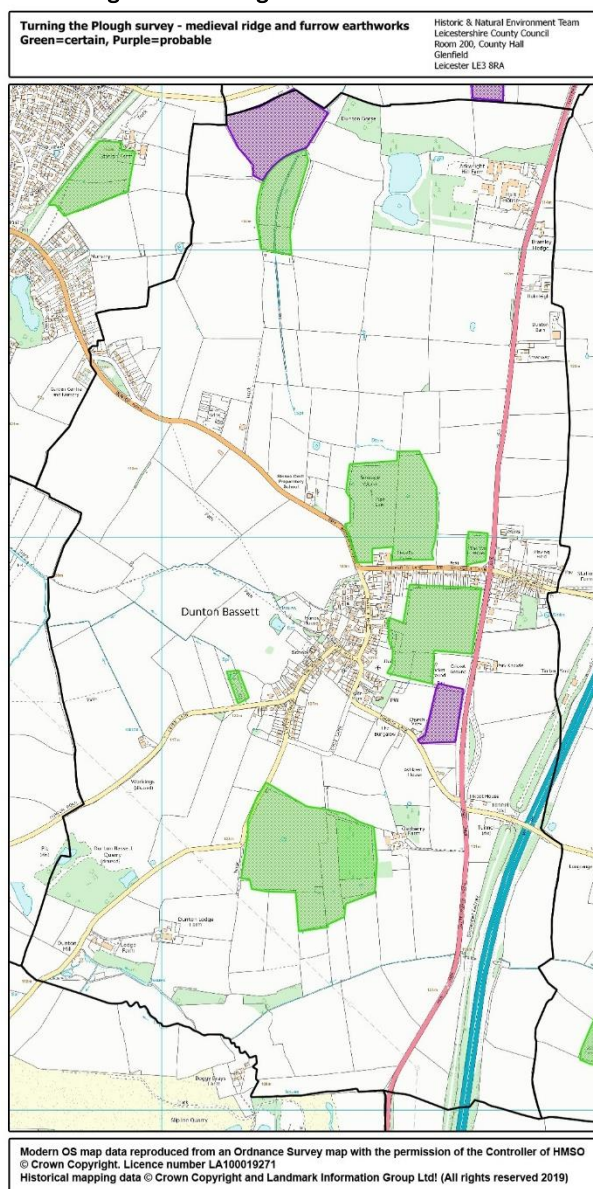
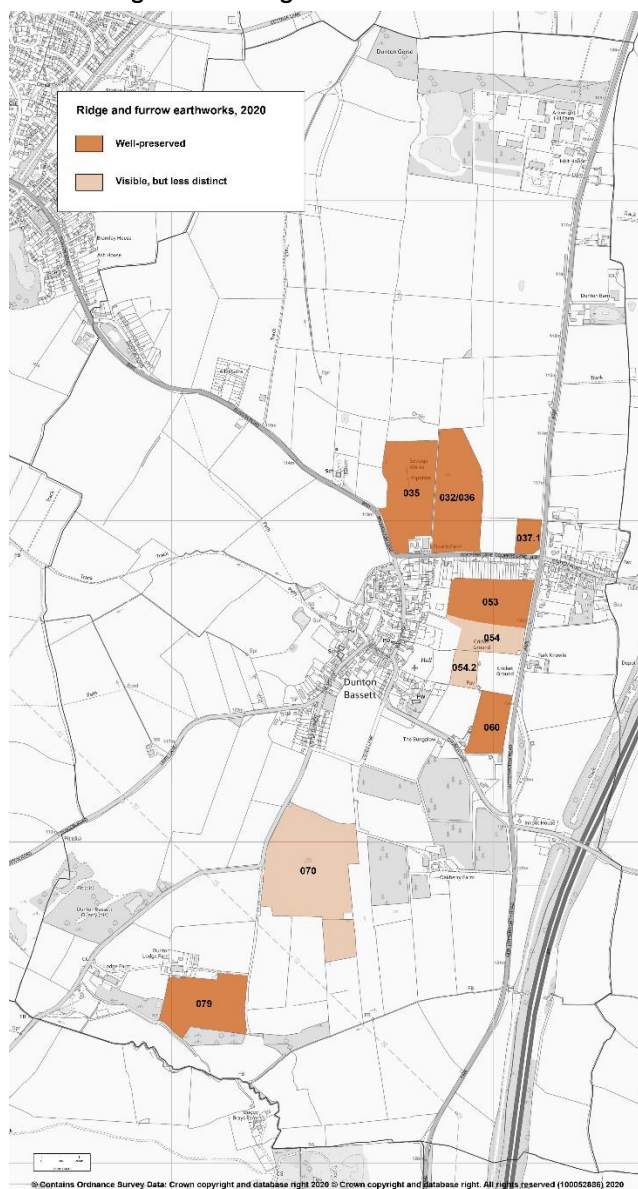


Figure 12.2: Ridge and furrow in 2020



While the ten individual fields of surviving ridge and furrow in Dunton Bassett (figure 12.2) are not claimed to be of international importance, their rarity in the Plan Area and across the Midlands means that any further, avoidable, loss of the well-preserved Ridge and Furrow would be irreversibly detrimental. In conformity with paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy

Framework (including footnote 63) and following the recommendation of Historic England all surviving ridge and furrow in Dunton Bassett should now be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset and taken into account in the planning system as the visible evidence of a component of national heritage comparable in social history significance to that of our surviving medieval buildings.

POLICY ENV 8: RIDGE AND FURROW - The areas of well-preserved ridge and furrow earthworks (see Figure 12.2) are non-designated heritage assets. Any harm to the assets arising from a development proposal, or a change of land use requiring planning approval, will need to be balanced against the benefits having regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the affected heritage assets.

8.2.6 Important views

Consultation during the Neighbourhood Plan's preparation identified a widely held wish to protect Dunton Bassett's rural setting, in particular its visual relationship with the surrounding landscape, including its hilltop location on the watershed between the Soar and Avon river systems.

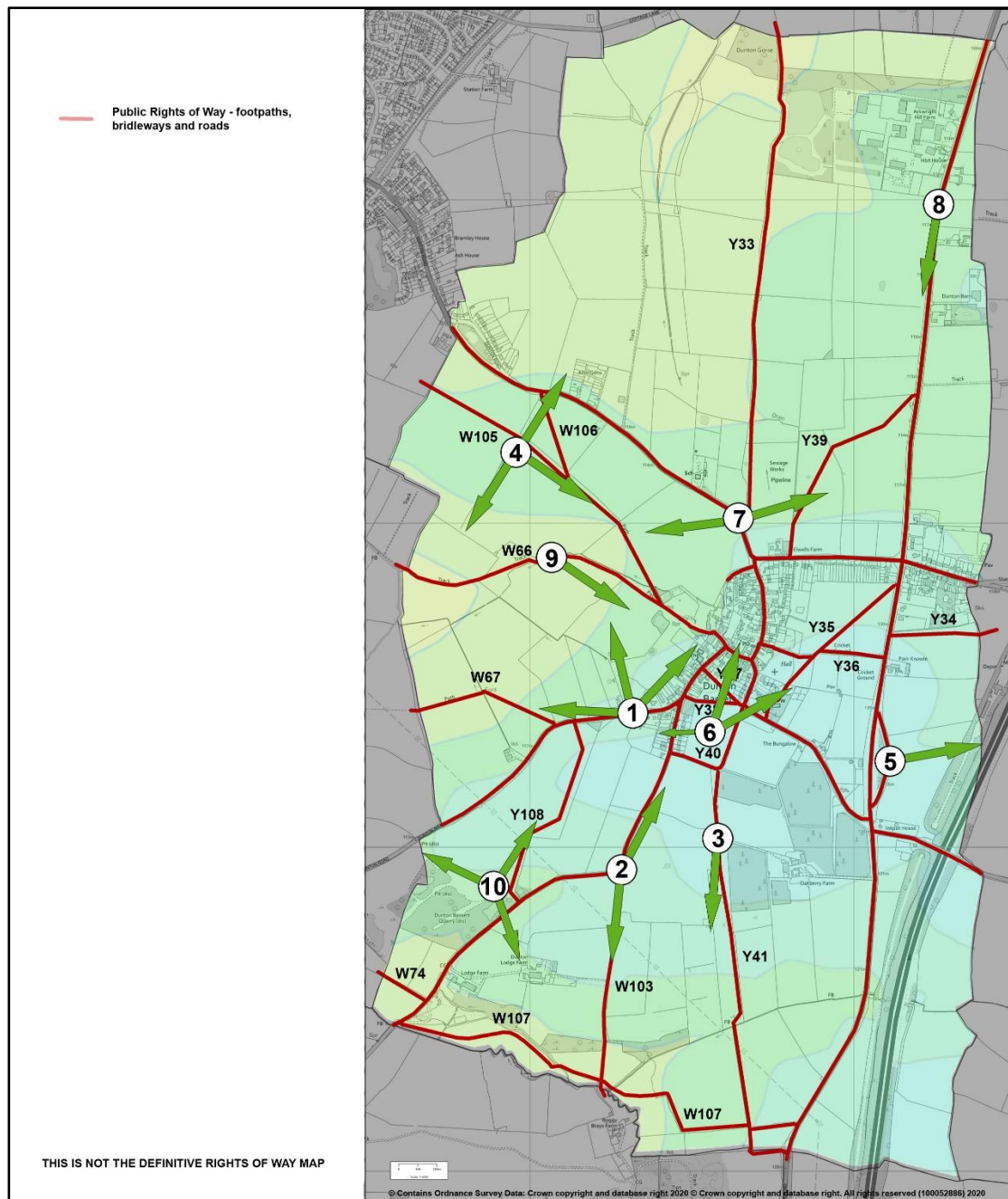
One of the main ways in which residents expressed this wish was by describing several highly valued views within and around the village and toward the surrounding countryside. These consultation findings were supported by the environmental inventory, which although principally aimed at identifying sites of environmental significance also confirmed the sightlines of the suggested views and mapped them (below, figure 13).

POLICY ENV 9: PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT VIEWS – Development proposals should retain and respect where practicable the views within the village, to and from the village and of the wider landscape (as shown in Figure 13, details in Appendix 7). Development which would have an unacceptable impact on the identified views will not be supported.

1. From viewpoint at entrance to field 051.1 on Leire Lane, 180° panorama southeast to northwest down the sloping field to a small valley and beyond over open countryside to the parish boundary.
2. From Little Lunnon (by-road from village to footpath W104) over fields 066 and 067, views southwest and west and northeast toward the village.
3. South and southwest from break of slope on footpath Y41.
4. North (to Dunton Lane), east (along the valley toward Dunton Bassett village) and south from several points on footpaths W105 and W106 and from close to the copse on the skyline here. This is the main viewpoint in and of the parish for residents of the Dunton Lane outlying settlement.
5. East from layby on A426 road over the Great Central Railway embankment to the parish boundary and beyond.
6. In several directions across and from The Beat (field 061) and Loves Lane, including west and north over medieval village earthworks (visible archaeology); from corner of Loves Lane northeast to the village and church spire; northeast across The Beat from entrance to field and Loves Lane off Little Lunnon.

7. From Broughton Lane, at the junctions with footpath Y33 and with Main Street/Coopers Lane; these are important village entrance and identity views.
8. South from A426 road approaching the village from Leicester (crossroads junction in distance, village through gap in hedge on right).
9. View from footpath W66 in field 042 over field 045 and of the village in its hilltop location, surrounded by trees with the church spire as a distinctive landmark.
10. From field 072 on new footpath Y108, panoramic views in all directions across the parish, including northwest to Stemborough Mill and the upper Soar valley (this is a popular summer sunset view for residents); northeast to the church spire; and southwest toward Ashby Parva.

Figure 13: Important Views



8.2.7 Area of separation

New development in the area between the Dunton Bassett *Limits to Development* and the Parish boundary close to the built-up area of Broughton Astley would encroach on open countryside and begin the process of coalescence of the two settlements.

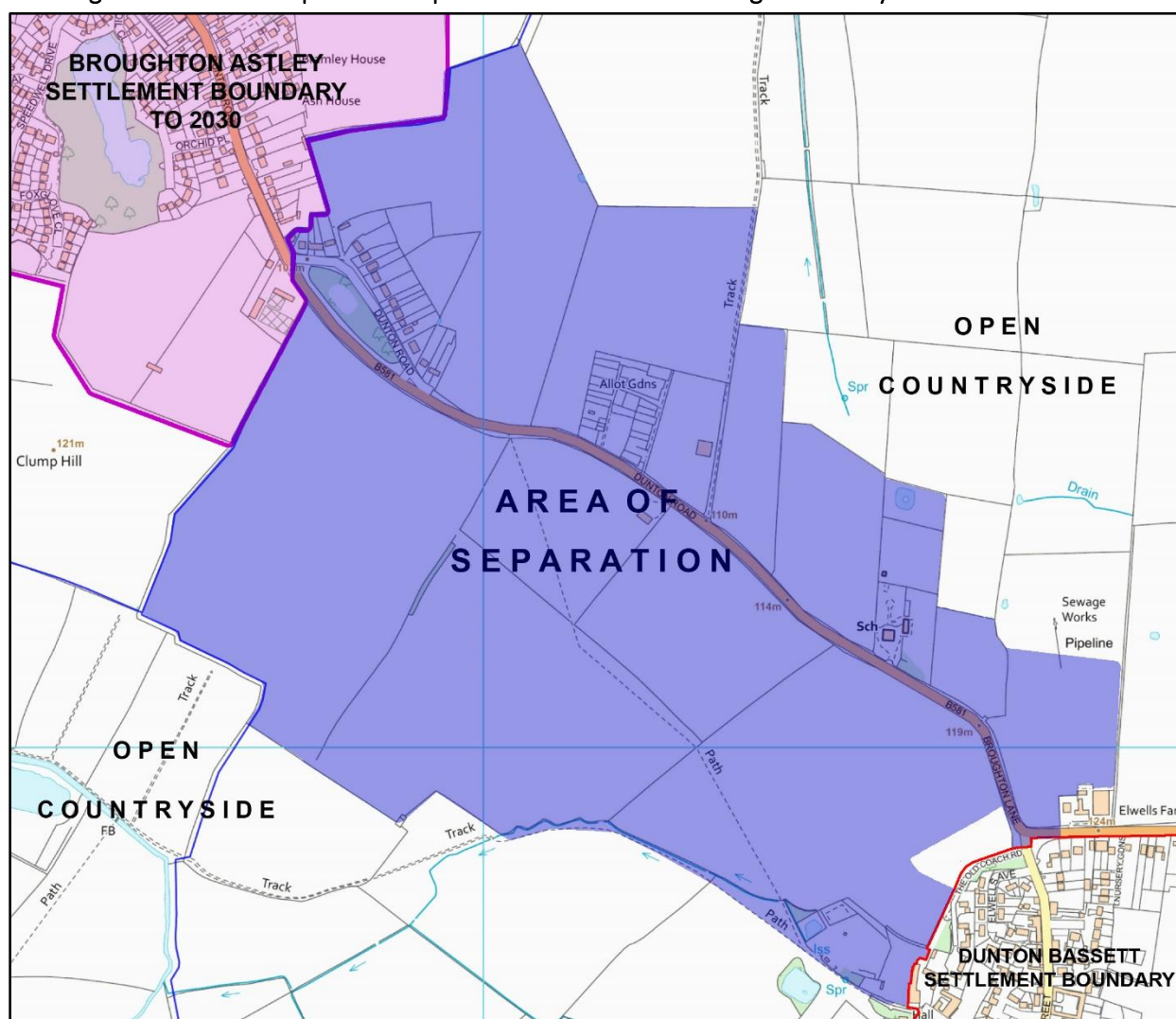
The Area of Separation Review commissioned by Harborough District Council in 2017 recognises that the function of an area of separation is to ensure that development does not harmfully reduce the separation between settlements where there is a potential risk of merging. The 2017 study reinforces the importance of 'prevention of coalescence' and the sense of separation between settlements. The review identifies two large scale and strategic areas for inclusion in the Local Plan (between Great Bowden and Market Harborough, and between Lutterworth/Bitteswell and Magna Park). The review acknowledges that further areas of separation will come forward in Neighbourhood Plans.

The Area of Separation identified in this Neighbourhood Plan has been delineated to help retain the physical separation between the built-up area of the *Small Settlement* of Dunton Bassett and the adjoining *Rural Centre* of Broughton Astley, in order to maintain the identity and distinctiveness of both settlements, as well as their landscape setting, built environment and the intervening views across open countryside. By so doing it will help to preserve the character of Dunton Bassett, including the small satellite development at the north end of Dunton Road.

The Area of Separation seeks to recognise the difference in scale and character between Broughton Astley (large, suburban-style housing) and Dunton Bassett (rural, small settlement), which is surrounded by open countryside in the HDC *Lutterworth Lowlands Landscape Character Area*, which notes as issues 'urban influence in particular around Broughton Astley' and 'open landscape vulnerable to the adverse effects of development'.

This Neighbourhood plan adopts the principle established in the HDC Local Plan (2018) for the area of separation between Harborough and Great Bowden, and applied in the Saddington Neighbourhood Plan (2019), namely to designate the whole area directly between the two settlements in recognition of the harm that would be caused by encroachment of development from the larger to the smaller settlement. This is particularly pertinent in Dunton Bassett, in view of current development and future development options under consideration in Broughton Astley having already extending right to the parish boundary, where its suburban appearance adversely affects the valued rural character of the northern part of Dunton Bassett parish (despite the latter's classification for planning purposes by HDC as a *small settlement*).

Figure 14: Area of Separation to prevent coalescence of Broughton Astley with Dunton Bassett



POLICY ENV 10: AREA OF SEPARATION – To maintain the physical and visual separation between Broughton Astley and the rural northwest part of Dunton Bassett, an Area of Separation is designated, as shown in figure 14. Development proposals in the identified gap between villages should be located and designed to maintain, and wherever possible, enhance the separation of the villages.

8.2.8 Managing Flood Risk

Even if international cooperation and national strategies and policies eventually succeed in halting the domestic and industrial contributions towards climate change, the effects of recent and current warming on weather events will likely persist for decades. It is therefore desirable to plan for a medium-term future in which weather events continue to become more extreme by putting in place measures that mitigate the challenge of climate change for the lifetime of this Plan and beyond. This objective is explicitly supported by the Environment Agency (EA) draft National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (2019), in which the strategic emphasis for the EA shifts from mitigation to resilience; in other words from requiring new development to reduce their adverse effects on flood risk to avoiding creating or adding to flood risk at all.

While there is no risk of flooding from rivers in the present built-up areas of the parish, surface water flooding has always been an issue (see the introductory paragraphs of this chapter) for reasons of geology, topography and land use. Local experience in recent years, including during the time of preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2020), is that this type of flooding has increased in extent, duration and severity; reasons include conversion of pasture to arable, intensification of agriculture generally, increased run-off from impermeable surfaces in new development, and the effects of climate change. The location and technical standards of all new development proposals in the Plan Area should in future be judged on their likely contribution to flooding in a climate change world. The community will support proposals to improve the infrastructure within the built-up areas for managing flash-flooding and surface water run-off events providing this is not unnecessarily detrimental to the historic built environment, biodiversity sites or open and green spaces.

This policy supports and is in conformity with NPPF paragraphs 155, 156 and 157, especially (b), and is strongly supported by the 2019 draft National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England, particularly the strategy's recognition for the need to build resilience into future strategic development planning.

POLICY ENV 11: MANAGING FLOOD RISK - The sequential test will be applied to all development proposals in Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3. In addition, development proposals in Flood Risk Zone 1 and should take account of the increased flood risk from rivers and from surface water expected as a result of climate change.

Development proposals will be required, where appropriate, to demonstrate that the benefit of development outweighs the harm in relation to its adverse impact on climate change targets, and on the likelihood of it conflicting with locally applicable flood mitigation strategies and infrastructure.

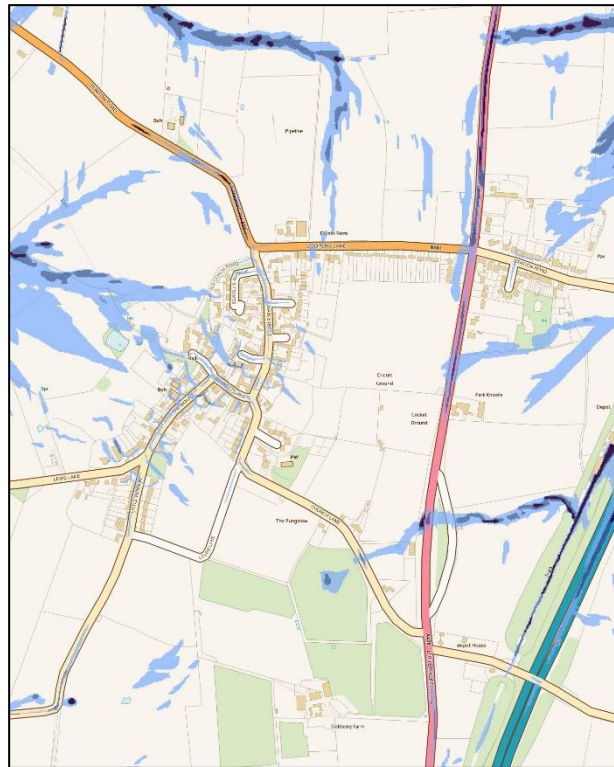
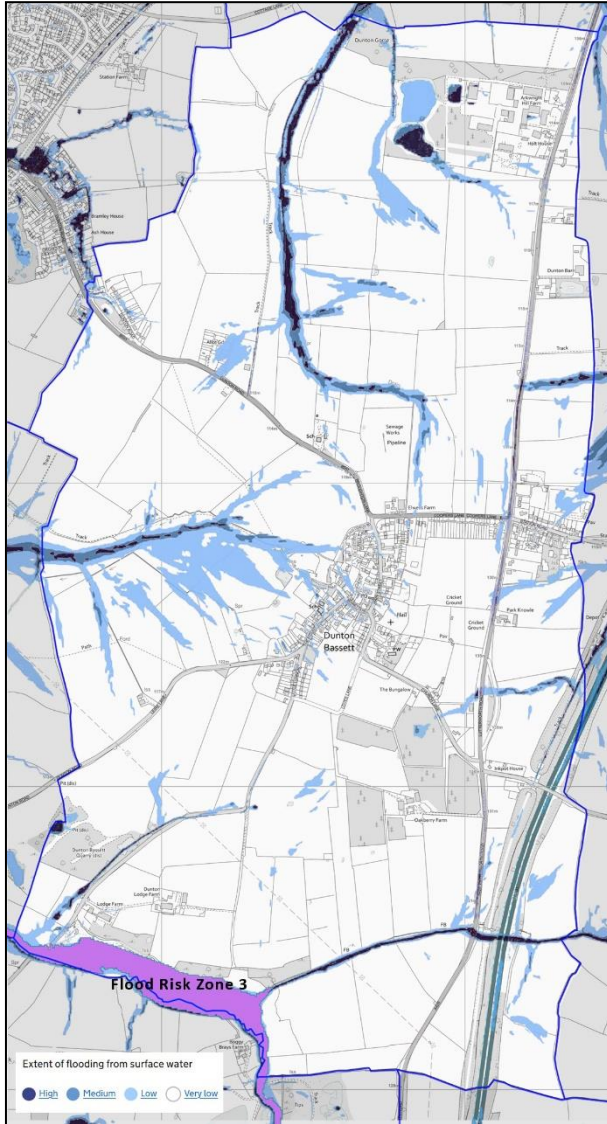
Except where inapplicable, each development proposal in the Plan Area will also be required to demonstrate that:

- Its location takes geology, ground water conditions and flood risk (from rivers, watercourses and surface water) into account and provides suitable mitigation proposals;
- Its design includes, as appropriate, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), surface water management measures and permeable surfaces; and
- It does not increase the risk of flooding to third parties or downstream.

Proposals to construct new (or modify existing) floodwater management infrastructure (ditches, roadside gullies, retention pools, etc.), including within the built-up area, will be supported.

Figure 15: Flood Risk Zones 3/2 and surface water flood risk in the Plan Area (top left); surface water flood risk (detail) in Dunton Bassett village (top right); surface water flood risk at the Dunton Road settlement (lower right). All adapted from Environment Agency mapping.

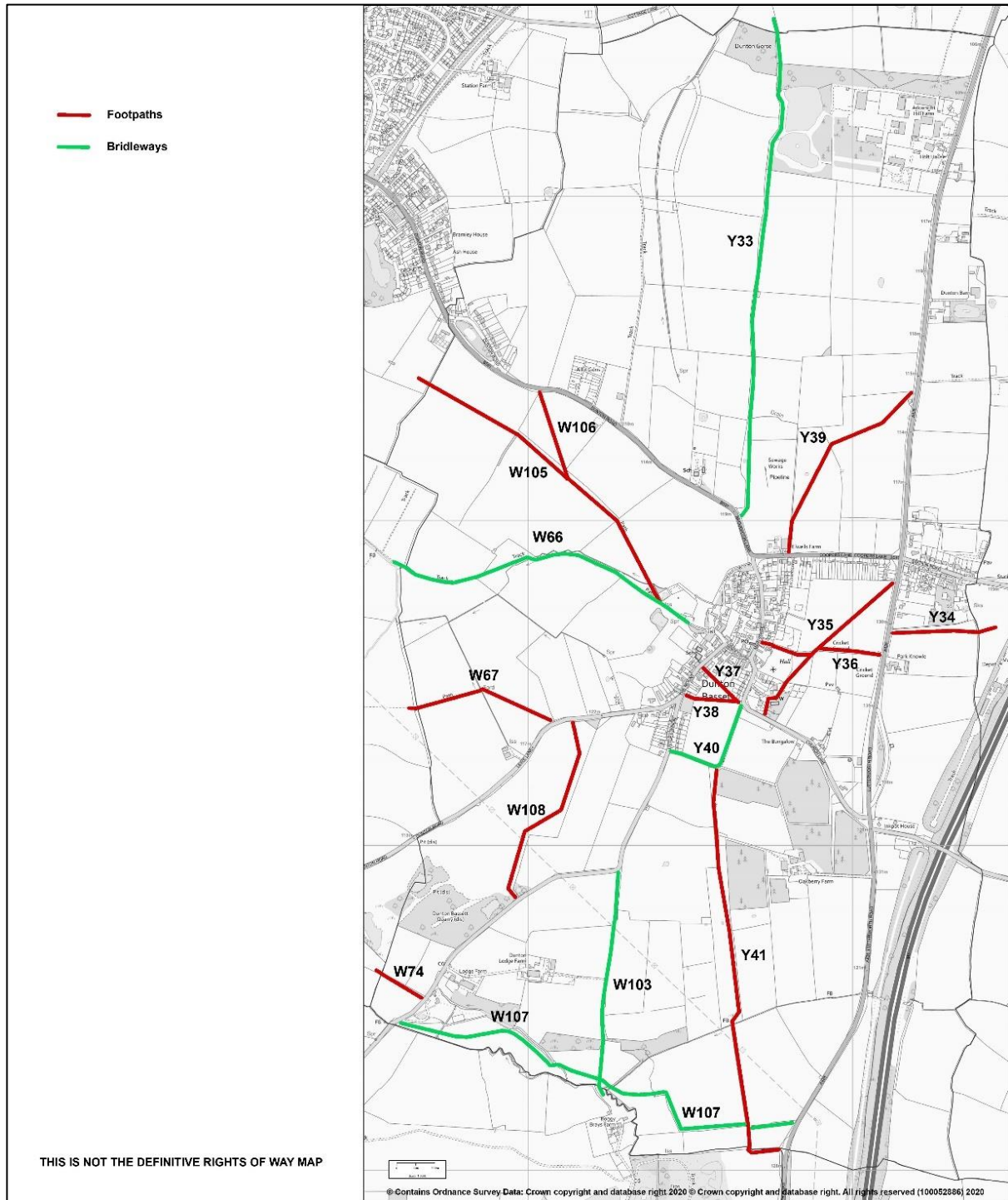
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8.2.9 Footpaths

A fairly extensive network of footpaths and bridleways survives in the Plan Area. They (and many of the roads) around Dunton Bassett are ancient 'ways' established and used in the medieval period when walking was the only way of getting around – between Dunton and neighbouring villages, to market towns, and out into the open fields – for most people. They are a characteristic feature, as well as being a well-used community asset that helps improve physical and mental wellbeing for residents and visitors.

Figure 15: Footpaths and bridleways



POLICY ENV 12: FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS - Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the existing network of footpaths (see Figure 15) will not be supported without appropriate mitigation.

8.3 Community Facilities

8.3.1 Existing Community Facilities

The village hall is located at the bottom of Bennetts Hill; it was built and opened on November 22nd, 1895 thanks to the generosity of a benefactor Mr Orson Wright, a previous resident of Dunton Bassett. The hall is used throughout the week by the local primary school pupils for various lessons, assemblies and dinners. It is also regularly used for keep fit, dancing classes, other village social activities and Parish Council meetings. On election days it is transformed into a polling centre. During the 1960s the hall was modernised with the addition of cloakrooms to the front of the building and kitchen facilities at the rear. It is a very popular and well used facility.

The parish church of All Saints has features that date back to the late 12th century, with the first vicar being appointed in 1220. The tower and spire are 14th century additions to the original structure. Pillars in the north aisle are deeply scored and these marks are believed to have been caused by Roundhead troops, who were billeted in the building, sharpening their swords and axes in readiness for the Battle of Naseby. Further facilities have been added over the years, the latest being kitchen and toilet facilities built into the former vestry.

The church is used by the village school for harvest festival and Christmas services and is also in regular use by the community singers for their rehearsals and concerts. Church services are held on the 3rd Sunday of the month at present, but this has changed with the advent of Covid-19 restrictions. Plans are currently being developed for the space to be made more flexible enabling more community events to take place.

The Dunton Bassett allotments are situated on Broughton Lane on land owned by the Aikman Estate and have been a village amenity since the 1960s. There are about 38 plots, some of which are currently vacant.

The Dunton Bassett Arms is the only remaining public house in the village and until 1988 was known as The Shoulder of Mutton. The current building dates back to 1912 and replaced a low thatched structure dating back to the 1720s. In the rear of the pub there is a popular Chinese restaurant which also offers a takeaway menu.

The children's playground which is accessed from Main St, provides a much-loved facility for younger children but currently lacks the space to provide a ballpark facility for older children. The playground has been developed on land leased from Aikman Estates but only has a few years left on the lease. Options to either renew the lease or purchase the land are being actively pursued by the Parish Council to ensure this popular facility is retained. It is regularly inspected and maintained by the Playground Committee on behalf of the Parish Council. New equipment and facilities have recently been installed with the support of the village Windfarm fund.

POLICY CF1: THE RETENTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND AMENITIES - Development leading to the loss of an existing community facility (including the village hall, DBA public house, church, school, childrens' play area and allotments) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that any of the following apply:

- a) There is no longer any need or demand for the existing community facility;
- b) The existing community facility is no longer economically viable;
- c) The proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation of the existing community facility to an equally or more appropriate and accessible location within the Parish.

8.3.2 New or Improved Community Facilities

Local residents have been very disappointed with the loss of the Post Office and local shop which sadly closed in early 2018. Many have expressed a desire to see a community shop/café to be developed as an alternative and this neighbourhood plan supports such new initiatives.

POLICY CF2: NEW OR IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES - Proposals that provide new community facilities (such as a new village hall, medical facility or shop) or improve the quality and range of existing community facilities, will be supported provided that the development:

- a) Will not result in unacceptable traffic movements that generate increased levels of noise, fumes, smell or other harmful disturbance to residential properties including the need for additional parking which cannot be catered for within the curtilage of the property;
- b) Will not generate a need for parking that cannot be adequately catered for.
- c) Is of a scale appropriate to the needs of the locality and conveniently accessible for residents of the village wishing to walk or cycle;
- d) Takes into full account the needs of disabled people.

8.3.3 Primary School

Dunton Bassett has a Primary School which was first opened in 1849 by Thomas Stokes, who was then Lord of the Manor. The building was updated in the early 60s with mains water and proper flush toilets. When numbers of the school rose increased in the 70s a mobile unit was used to provide 2 further classrooms. In 2002 these were replaced by a purpose- built brick building and in 2004 land at the rear of the school was acquired for a playing field.

The 2011 Census showed a population of 33 under 4s with 103 in the 5 to 15 age bracket. There are 98 pupils aged 4-11 years with a total of 4 classes. The school was last rated Good by an Ofsted inspection in February 2018. In October 2018 it was converted to an Academy, in partnership with other local schools and has recently appointed a new Head Teacher who is shared with Claybrooke School.

There is no integral school hall, so school meals and various classes are taken in the nearby Village Hall. There is a playground and adjoining field for sports and recreational activities. A thriving PTA group organises fundraising events throughout the year.

The current site has limited space and therefore it is difficult to envisage increasing the size of the school. A number of pupils come from outside the village which leads to both an increased number of car journeys and parking congestion in the village at school opening/closing times.

POLICY CF3: PRIMARY SCHOOL - Proposals for the expansion of the existing primary school in the village will be actively supported where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) The expansion would not exacerbate existing access related or traffic circulation problems, unless suitable mitigation measures are brought forward as part of the proposal;
- b) There is no significant loss of outdoor recreation space at the school;
- c) The development would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent users and is in character, scale and form to the current building.

Where expansion is not possible on the current site, the creation of a new school in the village will be supported where:

- i. It would be safely accessible by pedestrians and cyclists and is well related to bus routes
- ii. It has appropriate vehicular access and does not adversely impact upon traffic circulation;
- iii. It would not result in a significant loss of open space and amenity to local residents or other adjacent uses.

8.4 Economy

8.4.1 Support for existing employment opportunities

The strength of the local economy and of the community go hand in hand. Supporting the growth of a stronger local economy is recognised as an important theme of the Neighbourhood Plan. Indeed, the Harborough District local plan for 2011-2031 recognizes the need for sustainable development which both delivers local employment opportunities, supports and diversifies the rural economy and enables the expansion of local enterprise. Dunton Bassett is a rural parish with a traditional agricultural heritage and is relatively distant from the major employment centres. Employment opportunities within the parish are therefore limited in scale although Arkwright Hall Industrial estate outside the village could provide some scope for further development within its boundary.

There are also established businesses which are run from home-based facilities within the village. There is an increasing trend for residents to work from home (4.9% of people living in the parish (aged 16-74) compared to 5.7% in Harborough District) and with continuing changing employment patterns nationally, this trend is likely to continue.

For the majority of workers resident in the parish the lack of significant local employment opportunity means that their only option is to work away from the area, commuting increasingly greater distances to secure employment. 62.3% of residents go to work by car, above the rates for the Harborough district (50.3%) and England (36.9%). The lack of both local employment and affordable housing impacts particularly on the young people of Dunton Bassett.

Where there are buildings dedicated to business use in the parish it is important that they are protected against being lost to other uses. It should be clearly demonstrated that there is little prospect of existing building or land generating employment before allowing demolition or redevelopment.

When asked in the Community Questionnaire (February 2020) if people supported more small businesses into the village, a resounding 91% said yes.

POLICY E1: SUPPORT FOR EXISTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES - Where planning permission is required there will be a presumption against the loss of existing commercial premises which provides employment.

Applications for a change of use for an activity that does not provide employment opportunities will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the commercial premises or land in question has not been in active use for at least 12 months and has no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment-generating uses as demonstrated through the results both of a full valuation report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least six months.

8.4.2 Support for new employment opportunities

New employment initiatives in the right location can greatly help to boost and diversify the local economy and to provide more local employment opportunities.

Overall, maintaining the rural nature of the parish strongly mitigates against any larger scale business development, although the existing business park located outside of the village does provide some scope for expansion within its boundary.

Any new employment initiatives should be sensitive to the character of the parish. Employment proposals should only be seen as acceptable if they avoid harmful impacts on other matters agreed to be locally important such as air quality, green spaces, increased traffic flows, parking, residential amenity, the preservation of historic/heritage assets and the local environment.

There is, however, a need to recognise and support the increasing numbers of people who conduct their businesses from home. The Neighbourhood Plan reflects this in its proposals to provide a wider range of housing and to both support conversion of redundant agricultural buildings and the development of local business premises where appropriate.

POLICY E2: SUPPORT FOR NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES - In supporting additional employment opportunities, new development should:

- a) Fall within the boundary of planned limits of development for the village of Dunton Bassett unless it relates to small scale leisure or tourism activities, or other forms of commercial/employment-related development appropriate to a countryside location or there are exceptional circumstances;
- b) Where possible, development should be sited in existing buildings or on areas of previously developed land;
- c) Be of a size and scale not adversely affecting the character, infrastructure and environment of the village itself and the neighbourhood plan area, including the countryside;
- d) Not involve the loss of dwellings;
- e) Not increase noise levels or light pollution or introduce any pollution to an extent that they would unacceptably disturb occupants of nearby residential property;
- f) Will not result in unacceptable levels of traffic movements that generate increased levels of noise, fumes, smell or other harmful disturbance to residential properties including the need for additional parking which cannot be catered for within the curtilage of the property;
- g) Contribute to the character and vitality of the local area; and
- h) Be well integrated into and complement existing businesses.

8.4.3 Support for homeworking

The reduction of CO2 omissions to net zero by 2050 is now enshrined in law, so it is important to consider new employment opportunities in the right location for the residents of Dunton Bassett in order to help reduce vehicle usage and carbon footprint. The last census of 2011 identified 82 residents out of 759 as self-employed and 28 working mainly from home. 354 regularly drove to work and back making a total of 708 vehicle journeys.

Our consultation process highlighted the wish to encourage small businesses, startups and suitable employment for mothers. However, it is important to note that large businesses or warehouses were not welcomed within the village. Unfortunately, Dunton Bassett lost its Post Office and shop in 2018 due to retirement but there is still support for its return. It has been demonstrated that there is support for those people who wish to conduct their business from home. Again through the consultation process this will only be seen as acceptable if it avoids impact on other matters that are considered equally important, such as increased traffic flows, parking, retaining the residential amenities, the local environment and the preservation of historic and heritage assets. 90% of respondents in the Community Questionnaire supported home working. The neighbourhood plan therefore supports the rural economy by allowing for new employment planning applications to provide or safeguard local jobs.

POLICY E3: WORKING FROM HOME - Proposals for the use of part of a dwelling for office and/or light industrial uses, and for small-scale free-standing buildings within its curtilage, extensions to the dwelling or conversion of outbuildings for those uses, will be supported where:

- a) Such development will not result in unacceptable traffic movements and that appropriate parking provision is made;
- b) No significant and adverse impact arises to nearby residents or other sensitive land uses from noise, fumes, light pollution, or other nuisance associated with the work activity; and
- c) Any extension or free standing building should not detract from the quality and character of the building to which they are subservient by reason of height, scale, massing, location or the facing materials used in their construction.

8.4.4 Reuse of agricultural buildings

The conversion of former agricultural buildings enables farm diversification, leads to the sustainable reuse of vacant buildings and provides opportunities for the establishment and development of small businesses which generate income and employment opportunities for local people. This is a national trend, which the Parish Council would like to encourage within the Plan area to maintain a balanced and vibrant community, subject to the proper consideration of residential amenity for nearby houses, visual impact on the countryside and highway safety issues. New business development in the countryside is covered in Policy E2.

To help maintain the rural economy and protect the open countryside from inappropriate development, the Plan supports the sustainable growth and expansion of business and enterprise through the development and where appropriate conversion of farm existing buildings in the countryside. Specifically, this is intended to: Promote a viable and sustainable farming and rural economy in Dunton Bassett Parish and the diversification of rural businesses; encourage new businesses to provide a wider range of local produce, services and leisure facilities, to provide local employment and attract both visitors and tourists to the parish and maintain and enhance the local environment of rural and agricultural lands.

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 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. 89% of respondents to the Community Questionnaire supported the re-use of agricultural buildings.

POLICY E4: REUSE OF AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS - The reuse, conversion and adaptation of rural buildings for small businesses, recreation, or tourism purposes will be supported, as will the provision of well-designed new buildings, where:

- a) The use proposed is appropriate to the rural location;
- b) The conversion/adaptation works respect the local character of the surrounding area;
- c) The development will not have an adverse impact on any archaeological, architectural, historic or environmental features;
- d) The local road system is capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed new use and adequate parking can be accommodated within the site; and
- e) There is no significant adverse impact on neighbours through noise, light or other pollution, increased traffic levels or increased flood risk.

8.4.5 Tourism

The Leicestershire Round, a walk of 100 miles through the County which links field paths, green lanes and bridleways, passes through Dunton Bassett and attracts many walkers who walk it either in total or in part. This could open up possible opportunities for low key tourism and further enhancement of the rural character of the village, which is sought and enjoyed by those walking through. There is now only one public house in the village when 20 years ago there were 3. The Dunton Bassett Arms does not open during the day on weekdays and is not so available for passing trade or the local community. However, it is now the only known establishment in the village that offers bed and breakfast accommodation. Together with policy E3, this Tourism policy also offers possible opportunities for those who wish to work from home or in the village. 64% of

respondents to the Community Questionnaire (February 2020) said they would like to see tourism developed in the village.

POLICY E5: TOURISM - Support will be given to facilities that enhance and promote tourism where:

- a) They are within or adjoining Dunton Bassett, on a scale appropriate to the nature of the village;
- b) They do not have a detrimental effect on the distinctive rural character of the Parish;
- c) They do not adversely affect the surrounding infrastructure, particularly local road networks, water supply and sewerage;
- d) They benefit the local community through, for instance, provision of local employment opportunities and improvements to local service provision appropriate in scale to their location;
- e) They involve the reuse of existing buildings subject to policy E4; or
- f) They form part of farm diversification.

8.4.6 Broadband and Communication

The Harborough District Local Plan only allows development where there is adequate broadband infrastructure in place. This neighbourhood plan recognises the fundamental importance of ultra-fast broadband to the development of the local economy and that rural communities must not be disadvantaged with a poor communication infrastructure. Such facilities are particularly important for promoting and developing homeworking as outlined in policy E3.

In the Community Questionnaire (February 2020), a large majority of respondents felt that reliable and fast broadband is important and would also support ultra-fast broadband. A similar majority feel that a reliable mobile and 4G service is also important.

POLICY E6: BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE - Proposals to provide increased access to a super-fast or ultra-fast broadband service (including future developments at present unforeseen) and improve the mobile telecommunication network that will serve businesses and other properties within the parish will be actively supported. This may require above ground network installations, which must be sympathetically located and designed to integrate into the landscape and not be located in or near to open landscapes.

- a) All new developments should have access to superfast broadband (of at least 30Mbps). Developers should take active steps to incorporate superfast broadband at the pre-planning phase and should engage with telecoms providers to ensure superfast broadband is available as soon as initial build on the development is complete.
- b) Where possible telecommunication providers will be encouraged to improve existing mobile coverage and provide new 5G services.

8.5 Transport

8.5.1 Traffic Management

Dunton Bassett is a rural village community consisting of about 360 homes. The heart of the village has narrow roads with a 7.5t weight limit and a speed restriction of 20 mph. In the older part of the village there is very limited provision for off road parking and as a result the village is often congested with only room for a single flow of traffic. This has historically caused problems for emergency and delivery vehicles particularly at peak times. The A426 is an arterial road that bypasses the historic village and speed is restricted to 50mph. However, the village is often used as a shortcut from the A426 via Church Lane. There are also currently no pedestrian crossings to enable people to cross the roads safely.

The village mostly predates increases in traffic which have occurred in the last 20 years, which has led to traffic congestion issues particularly close to the primary school on The Mount. For most residents the car has become the principle mode of transport even for short journeys and this has been exacerbated since the closure of the Post Office/Shop.

The Parish Council has analysed traffic flow on Coopers Lane where the speed restriction is 30 mph. In March 2017 there was an average of 3,220 vehicles each day with about 14% speeding and the average speeder doing 39mph; however, the highest speed recorded was a staggering 80mph. By March 2018 this had increased to 3,644 vehicles each day and the highest speed recorded was 85mph. There is widespread concern that speed limit signs need to be improved and other measures put in place to prevent serious accidents.

There is public transport available on Coopers Lane. The buses into Leicester run every hour taking 67 mins to reach the city centre with the last bus leaving the village at 19.34. They return every hour until 18.45 and then there are two additional late-night services leaving Leicester at 21.45 and 22.45. During the school term further special buses for the local children are provided to transport them to their various schools.

With the Government supporting environmental policies that promote lower gas emissions and improved air quality, reductions in the use of the car are essential and actions need to be taken by individuals and businesses to support these policies.

The Community Questionnaire (February 2020) identified increased traffic and congestion as a very important consideration with any housing development. Over 91% of respondents highlighted this – whilst 81% of respondents referenced the pressure on parking needs. These were the highest categories of responses. The speed of traffic was also a concern as was access for emergency vehicles, the condition of the roads, on-street parking and public transport.

POLICY T1: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT - With particular regard to the rural highway network of the Parish and the need to minimise any increase in vehicular traffic all development must:

- a) Be designed to minimise additional traffic generation and movement;
- b) Incorporate sufficient off-road parking;
- c) Provide any necessary improvements to site access and the highway network either directly or by sufficient financial contributions;
- d) Consider, where appropriate, the improvement and where possible the creation of footpaths and cycleways to key village services; and
- e) Provide additional pedestrian crossings where appropriate.

8.5.2 Car Parking

Dunton Bassett does not have any public car parking areas and the residents are rightly concerned about increases in street parking, which has unfortunately become essential for houses which either have no garages or off-street parking availability. This is causing an impact on the wide variety of vehicles that need to travel through the village including essential utility services and agricultural machinery. Where possible residents should be encouraged to use their garages and existing driveways to park their cars to reduce this problem. Any proposed new developments should include adequate off-street parking arrangements and garages to mitigate this issue.

POLICY T2: CAR PARKING - Development proposals that would result in the loss of off-street car parking would be acceptable where:

- a) It can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer any potential for the continued use of the land for car parking and that the loss of parking will not aggravate an existing shortfall of spaces in the vicinity; or
- b) Adequate and convenient replacement car parking spaces will be provided elsewhere in the vicinity.

The Neighbourhood Plan actively supports proposals to develop off-street car parks in the village at a suitable location.

8.5.3 Transport Assessments

Communication with the surrounding areas is important for all inhabitants and businesses. With the probability of further housing development in the village and other developments in the region, the impact of increased traffic flows must be considered and mitigated. Where possible car sharing, public transport and cycle usage should be promoted to reduce the number of individual car journeys. With such new developments the provision for adequate off-road parking should be considered essential for the wellbeing of its inhabitants. Traffic calming measures

should also be improved to prevent rat runners causing unnecessary congestion in the narrow streets.

In a recent petition by the villagers to investigate views on traffic, 118 households responded and 55% wanted to see the speed limit on the A426 reduced. There was also support for a filtering system at the existing traffic lights as turning right into Coopers Lane can be dangerous. Most villagers were concerned about the traffic going through the village at excessive speed and the lack of pedestrian crossings.

POLICY T3: TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - All transport assessments for new housing development should demonstrate that:

- a) The cumulative impact on traffic flows on the strategic and local highway network, including the roads within and leading to the village centre, will not be severe, unless appropriate mitigation measures are undertaken where feasible;
- b) Provision has been made for the improvement of public transport facilities to serve the development;
- c) Improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes are incorporated to serve the development, where appropriate, and to provide safe, convenient and attractive routes to the school and other community facilities and which are integrated into wider networks;
- d) It retains existing rights of way or provides acceptable diversions;
- e) It incorporates adequate parking and manoeuvring space within the development in accordance with the Highway Authority's standards and Neighbourhood Plan Policy H3; and:
- f) Travel packs are to be provided on residential developments to encourage use of public transport and to promote existing pedestrian and cycle routes.

9. Monitoring and Review

The Neighbourhood Plan will last for a period of 10 years. During this time it is likely that the circumstances which the Plan seeks to address will change.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored by Dunton Bassett Parish Council on an annual basis. The policies and measures contained in the Plan will form the core of the monitoring activity, but other data collected and reported at the Parish level relevant to the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan will also be included.

The Parish Council proposes to formally review the Neighbourhood Plan on a five-year cycle or to coincide with the review of the Harborough District Local Plan if this cycle is different.