Houghton on the Hill

Neighbourhood Development Plan 2025 – 2041

Referendum Version

Houghton on the Hill Parish Council

Leicestershire **December 2025**

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Table of Acronyms used in this document.

Title	Acronym
AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited	AECOM
Area of Separation	AoS
Community Questionnaire	CQ
Conservation Area	CA
Designated Area (equivalent to Parish for this plan)	DA
Harborough District Council	HDC
Houghton on the Hill Parish Council	HPC
Housing Needs Assessment	HNA
Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre	LREC
Leicestershire County Council	LCC
Local Planning Authority	LPA
National Planning Policy Framework	NPPF
Neighbourhood Development Plan	NDP
Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018	NDP(2018)
Neighbourhood Plan Working Party	NPWP
Open Spaces for Sport and Recreation	OSSR
Rural Community Council (Leicestershire & Rutland)	RCC
Settlement Boundary	SB
Site Allocation	SA
Special Development Area	SDA
Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment	SHELAA
Village Design Guide and Codes	VDG&C
Young People's Questionnaire	YPQ

1 Executive Summary

1. This version of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) applies to the Designated Area (DA) (Figure 1-1) approved by Harborough District Council (HDC) as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for this area. It has been examined by an examiner, who is independent of all involved.

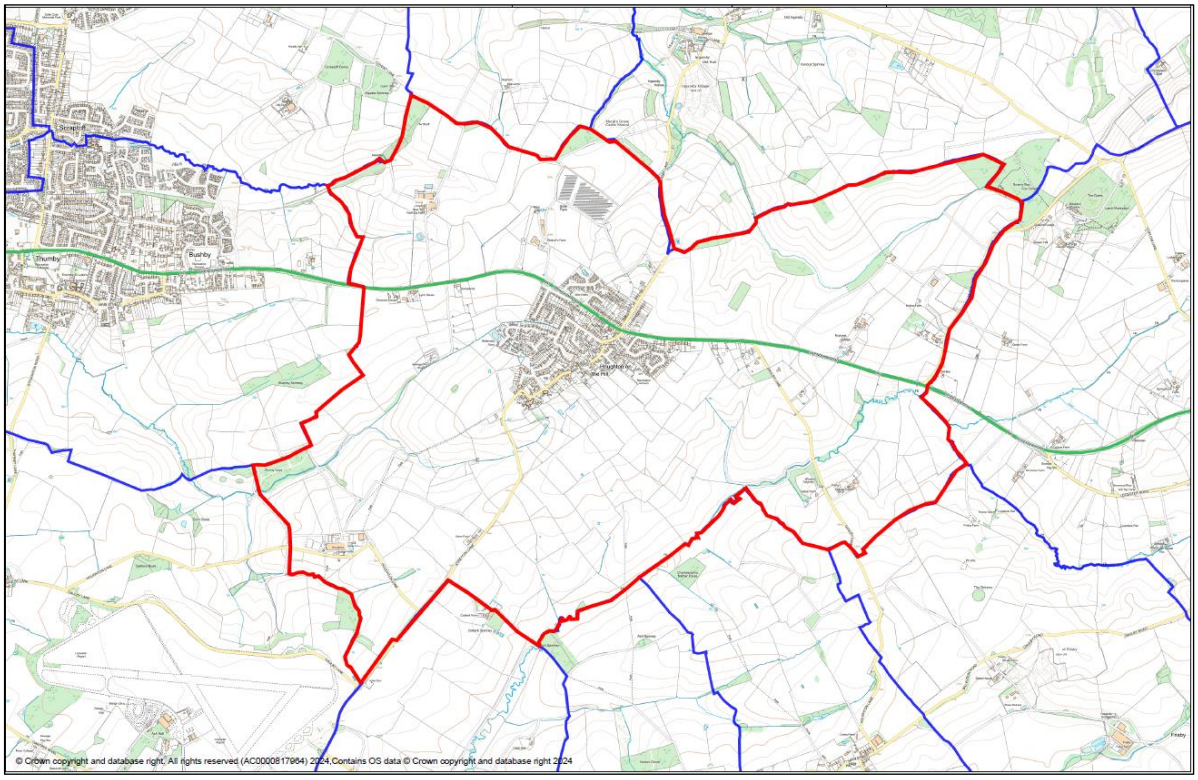

Figure 1-1 The Houghton on the Hill Designated Area (DA) within the red boundary. The blue lines are the boundaries of adjoining parishes.

2. Houghton is a vibrant community. There are many social groups and activities from Art & Craft to Yoga. Houghton has challenges some of which the NDP seeks to address. The previous NDP was made in April 2018 following a community referendum. Since then, about 160 new dwellings have been built, bringing the total number of dwellings in the Designated Area (DA) to just under 800, with the population growing from some 1500 to about 1900.

3. This NDP is a thorough revision of that made in 2018. There are considerable changes from the previous plan. These are listed in Section 2 of this document. The most significant changes relate to the provision of Site Allocations, the revision of the Settlement Boundary (previously called Limits to Development), and the definition of an Area of Separation to the west of the Settlement Boundary extending to the boundary of the DA. Policies on housing provision and environmental issues have also been extensively revised.

4. A Village Design Guide and Codes (VDG&C) is provided as a separate but companion document with extensive cross-references between the two. The VDG&C is a thorough revision of the previous (2018) Village Design Statement.

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

6. The policies in Section 6 are designed to address the NDP Objectives, listed in Section 5, which are in turn derived from the multiple sources of evidence listed in Section 4. Our evidence base contains a wide range of sources which include:

   a) National Government policies and guidance, and the National Census data from 2021.
   b) Local Planning Authority data from Harborough District Council.
   c) Community consultation both through community meetings and community questionnaires.

7. The NDP Objectives seek to preserve and nurture the community cohesion and vibrancy of the present village. This involves considering the long-term sustainability of the settlement and its community and incorporating measures to address future needs. Components to be considered are the age-profile of the community, the provision of housing numbers and types, provision of essential services including communications, transport and employment. Other considerations include mitigation of climate change and loss of biodiversity.

8. Site allocation for housing development is stated in Policy L3A and a policy for a reserve site in policy L3B. These have been determined to satisfy the various constraints which include:

   a) Minimum housing numbers determined in the emerging Harborough Local Plan;
   b) Suitability of potential development sites assessed by an independent study;
   c) A further independent study and report on housing needs;
   d) Consultation with the community as expressed in the Community Questionnaire (CQ);
   e) Consultation with stakeholders at a formal stakeholders meeting;
   f) Discussions with representatives promoting potential development sites.

9. The combined effect of these Policies is to provide a phased development of Houghton to satisfy the emerging Harborough Local Plan minimum requirement of some 100 dwellings. The location and housing mix of the development is designed to address the housing needs of our community and the surrounding area. Particular attention is paid to the demographics of our population and the need to improve the match between housing needs and the available housing stock. Other important factors affecting the environment, biodiversity, lifestyle and well-being of the community are defined in the Objectives and addressed in the various relevant Policies.

10. Climate Change, from local effects to the world-wide scale, has now become widely recognised as a severe challenge to our society. While an NDP can have little effect on global

issues, it can have significant local influence. Throughout this document we have considered the sustainability of our community in a broad sense. Fundamentally our community does not rate well in terms of sustainability. We have a very high percentage of large dwellings, 4-bedrooms or more, mostly built during the last century and not energy efficient. Coupled to that Houghton has a high degree of under occupancy of dwellings. There is poor public transport, only an infrequent bus service along the A47 which does not operate after 7.00 p.m. or on Sundays. A direct result of this is that the vast majority, about 90%, of journeys outside the village are made by private car. Many of these journeys are essential for employment or for access to retail or medical facilities not available in the village.

11. Environmental issues are also widely addressed in this NDP. Some issues relate to climate change, but others interact with the location of new building and protection of the biodiversity which we are fortunate to enjoy in our rural environment. Use of our rural facilities in terms of exercise and well-being will be encouraged by policies to enhance facilities for walking and cycling.

12. Employment opportunities within our community are very limited. The significant move to homeworking triggered by the Covid-19 epidemic has improved this situation. This has been supported by the installation of fibre-to-the-property (FTTP) broadband throughout the community. Homeworking can not only improve quality of life, but it can also decrease travel, and hence its carbon footprint (as well as financial cost), for those concerned.

2 Statement of Modification from the 2018 Neighbourhood Development Plan

13. The 2018 Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was produced at a time when three significant planning applications had already been approved which in total provided for the majority of dwellings required under the Harborough Local Plan. This consequently limited the scope of the NDP, but the situation is now quite different. Following the Harborough District Council (HDC) 2021 Call for Sites, many sites around Houghton were offered and examined in the HDC Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). Some applications for new residential housing development in Houghton area have been submitted since then, but none approved as at the date of this document.

14. Because the situations are quite different many fundamental changes have been desirable in the drafting of an updated NDP, specifically in respect of:

    a) seeking to provide an Area of Separation (AoS) between adjacent villages;
    b) an allocation of development sites, having an appropriate mix of housing, to satisfy a new requirement for the Designated Area;
    c) greater emphasis on addressing the impacts of climate change;
    d) improving biodiversity;
    e) providing greater emphasis on protecting and enhancing walking and cycling provision within the village and footpath connections to the countryside.

15. Independent specialists have assisted the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (NPWP) by providing an objective assessment of potential development sites and an in-depth review of housing needs for the plan area. These inputs have been valuable when drafting the updated plan as have new consultations with residents, businesses and landowner stakeholders.

16. The Village Design Statement (VDS) previously contained within the NDP document, is now a more comprehensive companion document – the "Village Design Guide and Codes" (VDG&C) - to be read in conjunction with, and forming part of, the NDP.

17. Appendix 3 provides a Statement of Modifications in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and an overview of the main objectives set out in the new plan and compares policies in the NDP(2018) to those here. Previous policies are indicated as "Discarded", "Retained Unchanged" or "Retain & Change", and new policies as "New". Many policies are new, while some have been retained but altered to better reflect the current situations. Explanatory notes are included in the Appendix.

3 Houghton on the Hill Neighbourhood Development Plan

3.1 Houghton on the Hill Neighbourhood Area Designation

18. The Neighbourhood Development Plan area, the "Designated Area" (DA), was approved by Harborough District Council (HDC) on 31st July 2015. This defines the geographical area (essentially the Parish) covered by the NDP. Prior to that date the Parish had been somewhat smaller and as part of the process of establishing a viable DA for the NDP(2018) an area to the northwest of the Houghton settlement was transferred from Hungarton Parish to Houghton Parish. This revised area, which is also that of the Parish of Houghton on the Hill, continues to be the DA for this NDP. The area is shown outlined in red in Figure 1-1.

3.2 The Qualifying body

19. Houghton Parish Council (HPC), as the Qualifying Body, established a Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (NPWP) to produce a plan, involving data collation and consultation with residents and other stakeholders, and drafting and submission of the draft plan. The NPWP consists of all councillors of HPC, and additional volunteers from the community. The NPWP has its own pages on the Parish Council website with details of its Constitution and Terms of Reference, minutes of meetings, and associated information.

https://www.houghtononthehillpc.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan-working-party

3.3 Neighbourhood Area Profile

20. Houghton is a vibrant community. There are many social groups and activities from Art & Craft to Yoga. HDC compiled the detailed "Settlement Profile: Houghton on the Hill (2015)" as part of their work in preparing the current Harborough Local Plan. Houghton also has challenges some of which the NDP seeks to address.

21. The NDP(2018) was approved in April 2018, following a community referendum. Since then, about 160 new dwellings have been built, bringing the total number of dwellings in the DA to just under 800, with the population growing from some 1500 to about 1900.

4 Evidence on which this plan is based

22. Following the approach adopted in the preparation of the NDP(2018), Houghton Parish Council invited residents to join with its members to form the NPWP to assist in researching, writing and presenting an updated plan.

23. At the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28thApril 2022 residents were consulted about the proposal and were invited to provide their initial thoughts about Houghton: for example, what is good about the village, what is not so good, what should be retained and what needed changing. This kick-started the consultation process and the subsequent updating of the plan.

4.1 National Framework

24. This NDP has been prepared under the provisions of the Localism Act (2012). The detailed guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been subject to multiple revisions and this plan complies with the NPPF of 12th December 2024.

25. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) is Harborough District Council (HDC). In the Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 - Adopted April 2019, (Harborough LP) Houghton is designated a Rural Centre (re-classified by HDC on 21st December 2023 in their emerging Local Plan as a Medium Village), identified as a focus for rural development, to serve both the settlement itself and the surrounding rural area. The NDP complies with the latest published version of the Harborough LP though it is recognised that this is under review. HDC personnel were consulted during the preparation of the NDP.

26. The Leicestershire County Council Neighbourhood Planning network was also consulted as explained in Section 4.6.

4.2 Community Questionnaires

27. In the Autumn of 2022, the NPWP prepared a Community Questionnaire (CQ) which was delivered to every household in the parish. Recognising that the future will be in the hands of current younger residents a Young Peoples Questionnaire (YPQ) was also produced. The CQ and the YPQ, together with their results, are available to view on the NDP (2025) section of the Houghton Parish Council website.

28. Personal collection of the questionnaires resulted in a pleasing response rate for the CQ of 65%, with 793 copies being delivered and 513 returned. Data from every questionnaire, including all free-form comments, were recorded in a database for analysis during 2023. Residents' responses are referenced in this plan by CQ or YPQ question number (e.g. (CQ#20) particularly in the rationale for Policy wording.

4.3 Stakeholders' Consultation

29. On 2nd February 2023 a consultation workshop was organised on behalf of Houghton PC by Leicestershire & Rutland Rural Community Council (RCC). Invitees included:

a) Statutory Consultation Bodies (set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations);
b) Landowners (within the DA);
c) Developer/Professional Representatives of Landowners;
d) Businesses (operating within or serving the parish);
e) Community/Faith/Voluntary Organisations (operating within or serving the parish);
f) Public Service Providers (delivering services to/in the parish).

Outcomes from this workshop can be viewed on the Houghton PC website HERE.

4.4 Public meetings with residents

30. The revision of the NDP was discussed at the Annual Parish Meetings in April 2022, March 2023, and April 2024. Invited speakers included councillors and officers from HDC as well as from other stakeholders such as Scraptoft Golf Club. At each of these events members of the NPWP were available to discuss progress with residents, and note any points raised by them.

31. To launch the statutory 6-week Public Consultation, a public meeting in the Village Hall was arranged and widely publicised around the community, including articles on the Houghton PC website, community Facebook page, posters on noticeboards, articles in the monthly village newsletter (Houghton News) and a leaflet drop to all dwellings.

32. "Drop-in" sessions for the local community were arranged for several dates during the consultation period. Visitors were able to read paper copies of the documents and seek clarification. Frequently asked questions were added to a FAQ listing on the Houghton PC website.

4.5 Meetings with landowners, agents and developers

33. This NDP contains a Site Allocation, i.e. a specific area that has been assessed as the most appropriate location for additional dwellings. The conditions placed on an allocated site within the plan need to have the agreement of the landowner/developer/agent. To facilitate discussions with these bodies a "Developer Panel" was established from members of the NPWP. The constitution and remit of the Panel can be viewed at the Houghton PC website.

(https://www.houghtononthehillpc.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan-working-party)

4.6 Consultation with LPA (includes LP revision)

4.6.1 Harborough District Council.

34. HDC has organised a series of briefing sessions on topics related to NDPs which have been attended by members of the NPWP. HDC Officers have been consulted regularly for advice during many stages of the NDP process and have consistently provided constructive and timely advice, consulting other colleagues at HDC as necessary.

35. In 2021, HDC carried out a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) exercise. Under this consultation all landowners, agents and other stakeholders

were invited to submit statements offering details of land in which they have an interest for potential development for housing or employment purposes. HDC gathered this information, assessed the viability of such submissions, and published the result as the SHELAA (2021)

4.6.2 Leicestershire County Council Neighbourhood Planning network.

36. Leicestershire County Council (LCC) supports a Neighbourhood Planning Network which holds coordination events for Neighbourhood planning issues throughout the County. NPWP members have attended both online and in-person sessions organised by this group. They also provide support information services through their website: https://www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/np/useful-information

4.6.3 Neighbouring Parish Councils and Parish Meetings

37. All neighbouring Parish Councils were contacted for their input as part of the consultation process for this revised NDP.

4.7 Independent specialists

38. The following organisations and consultants were consulted by NPWP in the preparation of this NDP.

4.7.1 Locality

39. Locality is a national organisation tasked by Government with supporting neighbourhood planning and delivering a programme of Government funding and has supported the Houghton NPWP by arranging government funding to finance the engagement of:

a) a planning consultancy firm experienced in supporting communities through the process of developing a NDP (see paragraph 41);
b) a consultancy organisation to undertake an independent assessment of potential sites for new housing development (see paragraph 42);
c) a consultancy organisation to undertake an independent evaluation of local housing needs (see paragraph 42);
d) a Leicestershire organisation providing independent support to the NPWP during the process of researching and delivering a Neighbourhood Plan (see paragraph 43).

4.7.2 Yourlocale

40. Yourlocale (www.yourlocale.org.uk) is a local, experienced Neighbourhood Plan Consultancy which works with town and parish councils and neighbourhood forums across Leicestershire and into Warwickshire, Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire.

4.7.3 AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited

41. AECOM, an internationally recognised consultancy researched and produced two important documents to assist the NPWP, funded via Locality:

a) Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) January 2024

b) Site Options and Assessment Report February 2024

4.7.4 Rural Community Council (Leicestershire & Rutland) (RCC)

42. RCC provided a range of essential assistance including:

a) collating and analysing the results of the CQ;
b) organising a stakeholder consultation event, (Section 4.3) and compiling a report of the outcomes (Houghton on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan Review Stakeholder Consultation Workshop Thursday 2nd February 2023) ;
c) assisting with consultation processes and preparing a statutory Consultation Statement for the NPWP;
d) collating the comments submitted during the Regulation-14 consultation.

4.8 Consultation Statement

43. A Consultation Statement setting out details of the various consultations undertaken, in accordance with the regulation can be viewed on the NDP webpages Evidence Base in the section Houghton NDP Revision References .

5 Community Vision, Objectives and Key Issues

5.1 The Houghton Vision Statement

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

45. The first question of the Community Questionnaire (CQ) asked respondents to choose key words that best describe their family's feelings about Houghton. Of the 494 households who responded to that question (CQ#1) 312 said they feel a sense of "community", 292 said "being rural", 265 "friendliness, and 214 "neighbourliness. In the separate Young Person's Questionnaire (YPQ), "community", "clean countryside", "everyone kind" reflected feelings of their village.

5.2 Houghton Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives

46. The objectives stem from the Vision Statement

Objective 1 - COMMUNITY COHESION: to preserve and nurture the health, well-being and social cohesion of the community and to promote the integration of all residents regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

Objective 2 - CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION: to minimise the negative effects of climate change across the DA. Major factors include energy use in transport, heating of inadequately insulated homes and water supply. However, this objective is a consideration across all policies in this Plan.

Objective 3 - SUSTAINABLE NEW HOUSING: to manage the development of new housing to provide a balanced range of dwellings to meet the requirements of the village's evolving demographic profile and ensuring the adoption of high standards of sustainability.

Objective 4 - LOCATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS: to direct the location of major new housing developments adjacent to the current boundaries of the built area to encourage cohesion and absorption rather than having fragmented remote developments. Also to safeguard its rural aspect, its separation from adjacent villages, its history, character, green spaces, landscapes and views.

Objective 5 - ENHANCE SERVICES AND FACILITIES: to enhance services and facilities, including recreational and educational facilities, to provide for the needs of an increasing population.

Objective 6 - WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT: to include in new development layouts, footpaths and cycleways which encourage better connectivity and less reliance on motor vehicles and encourage the fullest possible use of public transport.

Objective 7 - SAFEGUARD VILLAGE HERITAGE: to conserve the heritage assets of the DA by ensuring that all new developments and any alterations to existing buildings are sensitive to their setting and have appropriate regard for the Village Design Guide & Codes (VDG&C).

Objective 8 - PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT: to protect and enhance the surrounding countryside, wildlife habitats and biodiversity and to mitigate the effects of climate change and the environmental impact of additional developments.

Objective 9 - PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT: to promote an increase in the number of appropriate employment opportunities within the DA, including home working, subject to compliance with all relevant policies in this Plan and with the provisions of the (VDG&C).

5.3 Houghton Community Key Issues

47. The Key Issues derive from, or are supported by, analysis of the results of the CQ and the Stakeholders' Consultation Meeting. Details are provided in the Evidence Base on the Houghton PC website and hyperlinks to the relevant parts of that information are included throughout this NDP.

5.3.1 Maintaining the Character of Houghton (Objectives 1,2,4,6,7,8)

48. Maintaining the character of Houghton is a key aspiration embedded in the vision statement. The parish is viewed as a desirable and safe location and community by most of its inhabitants (CQ#1).

49. Although being close to Leicester city it has the advantage of lying in the High Leicestershire landscape area and having a clear rural character. The spread of development on the eastern side of Leicester, mostly connected to the Scraptoft Special Development Area (SDA) and growth in Thurnby & Bushby, could explain the strong community support for the establishment of an Area of Separation (AoS) in the western part of the DA (CQ#16).

5.3.2 Environment & Climate Change (Objectives 2,3,6,8)

50. Fundamentally our community does not rate well in terms of sustainability. We have a very high percentage of large dwellings, 4-bedrooms or more, mostly built during the last century and not energy efficient. Coupled to that we have a high degree of under-occupancy of dwellings which may potentially be influenced by the size and type of available alternative accommodation. We have poor public transport, only an infrequent bus service along the A47 which does not operate after 7.00 p.m. or on Sundays. As a direct result of this the vast majority (>90%, CQ#19 and Figure 5-2) of journeys outside the village are made by private car. Many of these journeys are essential for employment, or for access to retail or medical facilities not available in the village.

51. A broad range of environmental issues are addressed in this NDP. Some issues relate to climate change, but others focus on the location of new buildings and protection of the biodiversity which we are fortunate to enjoy in our rural environment. Use of local rural facilities in terms of exercise and well-being is encouraged by policies to enhance facilities for walking and cycling.

5.3.3 Developing a Sustainable Community (Objectives 1,3,4,5,6,8)

52. The AECOM Housing Needs Assessment analysis and modelling indicates that compared with 2011, the village will have by 2036 an 87% increase in those dwellings whose occupants are aged 65 and over. At para. 164 AECOM concludes "*the study area can be said to have a clearly ageing population and an associated need for smaller dwellings for both the ageing population to downsize and for young starter families*".

53. The significant move to homeworking triggered by the Covid-19 epidemic has the potential to not only improve quality of life but also reduces travel, and hence carbon footprint (as well as financial cost), for those concerned.

5.3.4 Housing Provision (Objectives 3, 4)

54. We have a very high percentage of large dwellings with a high degree of under occupancy. At CQ#5, 61 % of respondent households live in dwellings having 4 or more bedrooms and 62% of households had an occupancy rate of 40% or lower. Only 20% of households had an occupancy rate of 80% or higher. This is supported by the 2021 Census data summary (Figure 5-1). The AECOM independent housing needs assessment report (see Appendix 6) clearly shows the mismatch between our current housing stock and the community needs.

55. There is a clear imperative to re-balance the housing stock by improving the supply of 2- and 3-bedrooom dwellings, and to provide these with support to be affordable, including a range of purchase and tenancy options appropriate to the local community.

5.3.5 Services and Facilities (Objective 5, 6)

56. We have poor public transport, only an infrequent bus service along the A47 which does not operate after 7.00 p.m. or on Sundays. 302 of the 494 responses (61%) about the bus service in CQ#30 felt that the bus service " needs improving". 299 of 490 responses (61%) in CQ#30 indicated that medical services "need improving". This may reflect the problem of travel to the services (out of village), rather than the quality of the services themselves.

57. Retail provision is generally adequate for the current community, though 37% of 495 of responses to CQ#30 regarded retail services as "needs improving".

58. While our hill-top village is generally secure from major flood-risk, there is potential for localised surface water flooding at times of heavy or prolonged rainfall which is exacerbated by Climate Change. This is recognised in a recent review by the Environment Agency.

59. Pollution of watercourses from animal waste and overflow from Houghton sewage works is a concern. Environment Agency data show that Houghton sewage farm overflowed into Bushby Brook 53 times in 2022, 102 times in 2023 and 79 times in 2024. Severn Trent is the water supplier and wastewater collection handler.

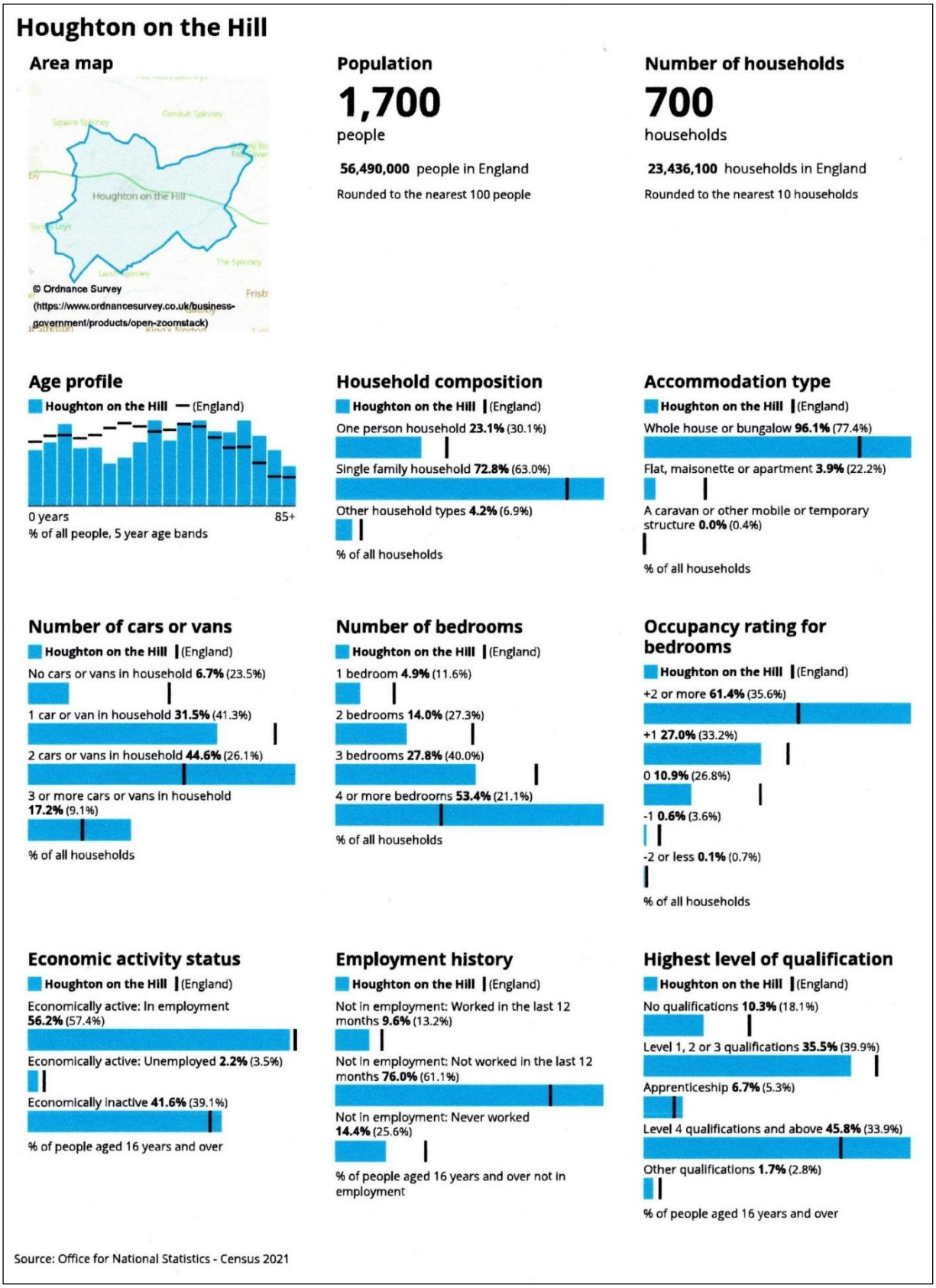

Figure 5-1 2021 Census summary for Houghton on the Hill

5.3.6 Traffic Management and Transport (Objective 4,6)

60. Safety along the A47 is a major concern for the drivers and their passengers, and for pedestrians and cyclists crossing or travelling along it. This problem has been acknowledged by LCC Highways who conducted a full road safety investigation along the A47 from Bushby in the west to the county boundary in the east and produced the A47 East Review Report. Consequent actions to improve safety and decrease the number of deaths along this section of road may be introduced.

61. Houghton PC has collaborated with LCC Highways to impose a 20-mph limit on all adopted roads within the village, excluding the A47. The Parish Council has also funded and maintains radar speed signs and a selection of support posts for them so they can be periodically moved to promote speed awareness within Houghton.

62. The inadequacy of provision of public transport leads to a high usage of private cars as a main form of transport for community members. This is demonstrated by the following data from CQ#19 and the Census data from Figure 5.1.

Travel to access:	Number of respondent households	Number who use a car to access the service	% of respondent households who use a car
Education	226	148	65%
Work	332	310	93%
Shopping	484	428	88%
Health care	482	464	96%
Leisure	471	399	85%

Figure 5-2 Private car use per household and purpose.

63. Parking within the village is a major concern to residents. Particular problems arise at specific times such as school start and finish, specific locations such as the Coop store, the village hall and the school, parking on and obstructing footpaths, and inconsiderate parking blocking the bus service through the village.

5.3.7 Employment (Objective 9)

64. Employment opportunities within our community are very limited. The significant move to homeworking triggered by the Covid-19 epidemic has however improved this situation. This has been supported by the installation of fibre-to-the-property (FTTP) broadband throughout the community. Homeworking can improve quality of life and also decrease travel, and hence carbon footprint (as well as financial cost), for those concerned.

6 The Policies of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

6.1 Use of Land

POLICY L1: SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

Development proposals within the Designated Area will be supported on sites wholly within the Settlement Boundary as shown in Figure 6-1 where the proposal fully complies with all of the policies in this NDP and the provisions of the Village Design Guide & Codes.

Land outside the Settlement Boundary is treated as open countryside, where development will be carefully controlled in line with the provisions of this NDP, and Local and National strategic planning policies.

Appropriate development in the countryside includes uses contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (para 84) and;

a) farm diversification for the viability of agriculture; the re-use and adaptation of redundant rural buildings in the most sustainable locations subject to the consideration of its impact;
b) the provision of affordable housing, where the local need has been proven;
c) the provision of formal recreation, community or sport facilities;
d) replacement of dwellings of a similar scale and with no greater negative impact on the countryside than the existing dwelling(s).

The following proposals will not normally be supported:

a) development within the Area of Separation;
b) groups of dwellings beyond the Settlement Boundary.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

1. Community Cohesion
3. Sustainable New Housing
4. Location of New Developments

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

65. By siting any new dwellings close to existing ones, the NDP seeks to encourage community cohesion which in turn will support and enhance the vitality of Houghton. Focusing development in this way is intended to support the existing services within the village.

66. Outside the SB, development is subject to national policy and the policies of the Harborough LP. Together with relevant policies in this NDP, these policies provide for appropriate forms of development at the edge of settlements and within the countryside beyond. Special criteria apply to the Area of Separation (AoS) defined in Policy L2.

67. The assessment criteria used to establish the SB for Houghton (Figure 6-1) were based on a methodology adopted by many NDP bodies and summarised in the paragraphs below.

Figure 6-1 Houghton on the Hill Proposed Settlement Boundary (purple dashed line).

68. The criteria include within a Settlement Boundary:

a) development sites with a current planning permission for residential dwellings, community buildings use, or employment land on the fringes of the settlement;
b) the residential site allocations within the NDP;
c) defined physical features such as walls, fences, hedgerows, gardens, streams, brooks, allotments, formal leisure uses and roads.

69. Not included are:

a) Open spaces and sports and recreational facilities which stand on the edge of the built form of settlement. Their open character can provide important views from the built form into the open countryside beyond, linking the settlement with its rural context. These spaces can also provide a visual buffer between the built form and the open countryside, softening the visual impact.

b) Non-residential land, which is deemed countryside, agricultural, paddock, recreation, meadow, woodland, or another green-field use.

c) Singular houses or developments or small pockets of development which do not stand adjacent to the built form but better relate to the countryside (derived from their physical or visual detachment) than to the main bulk of the settlement.

d) Agricultural farmsteads which stand on the edge of the built form of settlements as these are characteristically rural and part of the countryside and provide the historical connection between settlements and their agricultural origins. In addition, these spaces can provide visual links to the rural context beyond.

e) Potential development sites which are designated as Rural Exception Sites or are included in a NDP for future additional requirements and designated a Reserve Site. (Rural Exception Sites are defined in policy H3 of the Harborough LP).

POLICY L2: AREA OF SEPARATION

To retain the geographical distinction and visual separation between Houghton and Thurnby & Bushby and Scraptoft, the open and largely undeveloped land (Figure 6-2) between Houghton settlement and the parish boundary is designated as an Area of Separation. Development proposals in the delineated area will be controlled, and any permitted developments will be located and designed to preserve the separation of Houghton from Thurnby & Bushby and Scraptoft.

Development in the Area of Separation must be:

a) of appropriate types including, among others, agriculture, green infrastructure (woodlands) or new facilities providing community amenity;
b) located to maintain the separation of the villages and;
c) wherever possible, designed to enhance the rural character of the areas between the villages;
d) compliant with the Village Design Guide & Codes.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

1. Community Cohesion
4. Location of New Developments
7. Safeguard Village Heritage
8. Protect the Environment

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

70. 1. The AoS aims to help retain the physical separation between the built-up area of Houghton and the adjoining villages of Thurnby & Bushby, and Scraptoft in order to maintain the identity and distinctiveness of both settlements, as well as their landscape setting, built environment and the views across open countryside. By so doing it will help to preserve the character of Houghton and to prevent harmful encroachment into the countryside.

71. This is undertaken in full recognition of the considerable large-scale developer interest in developing the land between these communities, as noted in Paragraph 49 above and evidenced by the HDC SHELAA report.

72. The AoS seeks to recognise the difference between Houghton (open countryside in a sensitive High Leicestershire Landscape Character Area) and the parishes of Thurnby & Bushby, and Scraptoft (large housing developments adjacent to the city boundary). This will maintain the identity and distinctiveness of the settlements and their landscape settings.

73. In doing so, the NDP follows the principle established within the HDC AoS Review to designate the whole area between the settlements as an AoS in recognition of the harm that would be caused by the encroachment of development in this area.

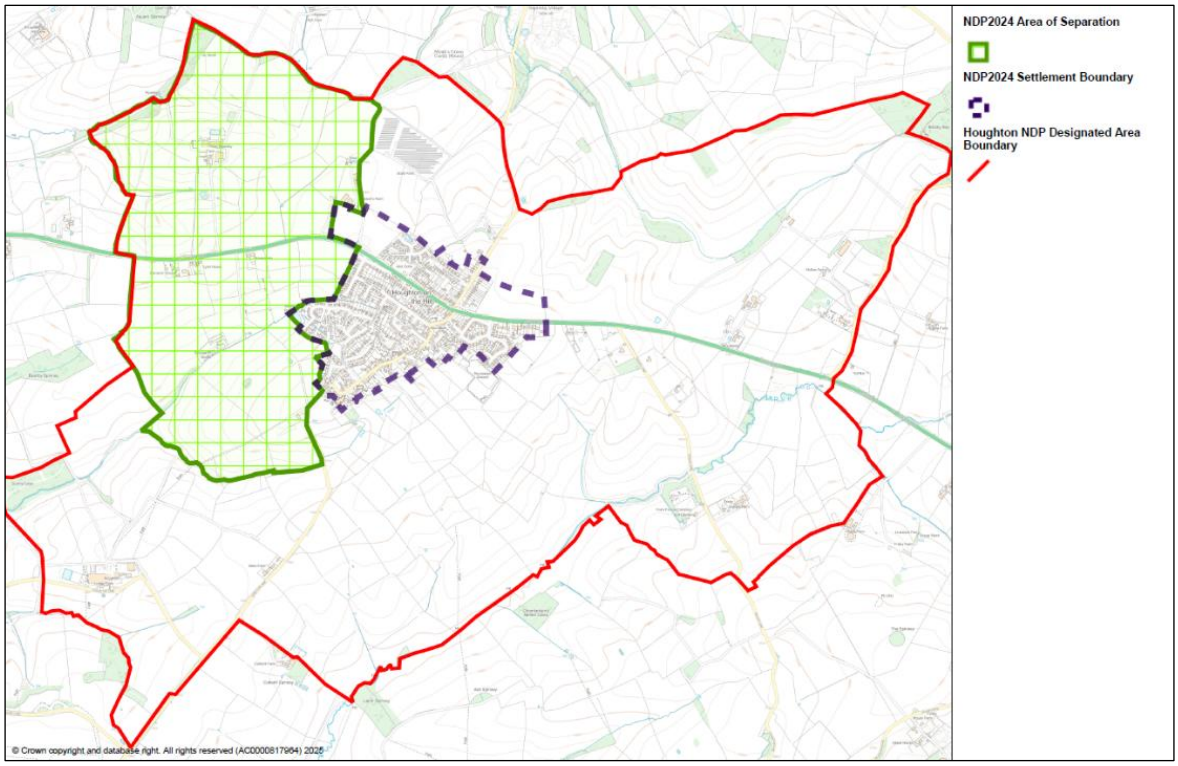

Figure 6-2 Area of Separation between the Designated Area boundary and the Settlement Boundary.

74. This policy is given added weight by the identification of housing sites within the parish which offer a positive contribution to meeting both a local need and HDC's wider housing target without encroachment on any adjacent settlements.

75. Areas beyond Houghton parish boundary cannot be covered by the Policy. Neighbouring parishes were engaged in the statutory consultation process.

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

76. 87% of 500 respondents to the CQ#16 support establishing a formal AoS between Houghton and Bushby as shown on Figure 6-2. Separation of the two communities is important to ensure that the distinct identity and character of Houghton and adjacent villages, is maintained, and the views of and from the countryside are preserved.

77. The 2017 AoS Review commissioned by HDC 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 acknowledges that further areas of separation will come forward in NDPs.

RATIONALE FOR LAND ALLOCATION FOR RESIDENTIAL HOUSING

78. The following pages describe the method by which land has been assessed for allocation for potential residential development. The requirement imposed on this NDP by the Harborough LP is for about 100 new dwellings for the period 2025 to 2041.

79. The site allocations in Policies L3A and L3B are those which best satisfy multiple objectives of this NDP.

80. A consistent approach was adopted by the NPWP when considering all sites, as follows:

a) impact on the character of the landscape;
b) proximity to the established village to provide a unified, not disjointed, expansion thereby encouraging community cohesion;
c) access to the A47 and general road safety and parking concerns;
d) pedestrian and cycle access to village facilities and to the wider countryside;
e) impact on the Conservation Area;
f) safeguarding Village Heritage such as ridge and furrow fields;
g) the HDC SHELAA;
h) sites offered via Stakeholder Consultation, or offered directly to the NPWP;
i) outputs from the CQ;
j) the AECOM Site Assessment (Appendix 5);
k) the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix 6);
l) consultation with the landowner/developer/agent of the selected sites.

EVIDENCE AND RATIONALE FOR THE USE OF LAND POLICIES:

81. In assessing the suitability of potential housing development sites, we have combined information from multiple sources, the main ones being the HDC SHELAA call for sites, the independent report provided by AECOM, and the CQ. We have combined the results of these sources into the tables shown below, using the colour coding method adopted by AECOM in which: **Red** indicates the site is not appropriate for allocation and **Green** indicates the site is appropriate for allocation. **Amber** indicates the site may be appropriate for development if certain issues can be resolved or constraints mitigated. Five sites were assessed **Red** and are not discussed in this NDP, though can be read in the AECOM report.

82. Of the 11 sites assessed by AECOM six sites were considered potentially suitable for allocation for housing, subject to identified constraints being resolved or mitigated. In the overall objective assessment in this NDP, one of these six sites was assessed as **Green** and the remainder were **Amber**, though within that category some sites were considered more appropriate than others.

83. Objective assessments of all these 11 sites are documented in the Evidence Base. Extracts are included below each policy. The Residential Land Allocation (land north of the A47 immediately east of the Houghton village) is deliverable. Further work is required in respect of the Reserve Site (land north of the A47 immediately west of the Houghton village), including agreeing a suitable access to the A47 which may involve a diversion of the bridleway through the site.

POLICY L3A: RESIDENTIAL SITE ALLOCATION; Land north of A47, east of Houghton (Figure 6-3)

Development will be supported subject to the provisions of this Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Village Design Guide and Codes and all of the following specific criteria:

a) The development will provide for up to 90 dwellings arranged in the area outlined in red on Figure 6-3.
b) Dwellings will have 1, 2 or 3-bedrooms apart from up to 10% which may have 4-bedrooms.
c) At least 10% of the total number of dwellings will be built to at least M4(2) standards to meet the needs of people with mobility issues.
d) Dwellings appropriate for single-level occupancy and easily adaptable "Whole-life" housing will be supported.
e) Recreational facilities for children will be provided by a S106 commuted sum payment towards facilities more central to the village.
f) Pedestrian and cycle pathways will be provided throughout the whole site and will link with existing routes to village facilities, as well as a safe means for crossing the A47 .

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:
1. Community Cohesion
3. Sustainable New Housing
4. Location of New Developments
8. Protect the Environment

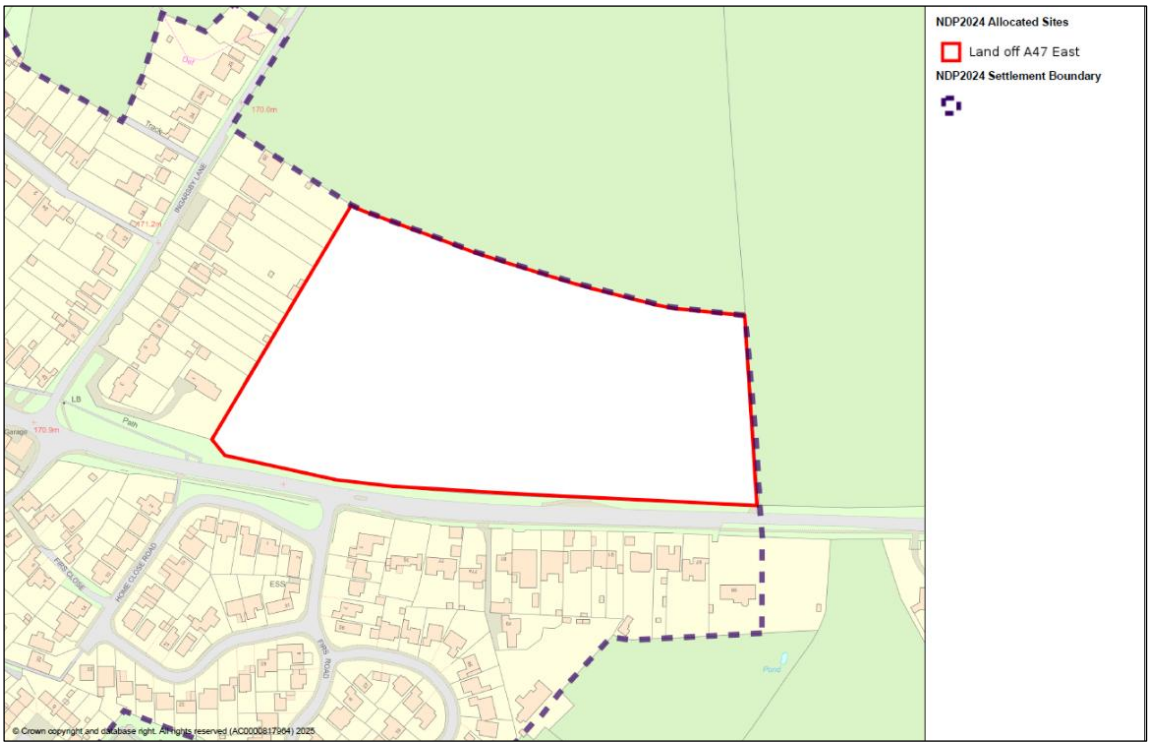

Figure 6-3 Location of the Allocated Site, north of the A47, east of Houghton.

EVIDENCE AND RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

	Land north of Uppingham Road east of Houghton Note: The NDP(2018) Reserve Site occupies only the flat southern part of the total area assessed by SHELAA and AECOM. Potential for up to 80 dwellings (AECOM estimate). Planning applications 23/01499/OUT and 24/00175/OUT include this site.
	SHELAA APPRAISAL 21/8195 The site is adjacent to Houghton on the hill, a sustainable settlement. Development on northern part of the site would impact on wider landscape which falls away to the northeast. The southern part of the site is less sensitive in landscape terms. Whilst the site has access to the A47, the promoter's potential access solution involving the closure of the existing Ingarsby Lane/Main Street junction would need to be considered by Highway Authority. Any access solution involving the intensification of turning movements onto the A47 raises potential concerns. The site is considered potentially suitable. The site is in single ownership. No discussions with developers have taken place and the site has not been marketed. No legal or ownership issues have been identified to prevent development being delivered. The site is considered available. Provision of suitable access arrangements to the existing highway could impact on the viability and achievability of the site. The northern part of the site does not relate well to the village and has the potential to adversely impact on the wider landscape without a reduction in capacity or substantial mitigation. The site is considered potentially achievable.
	AECOM ASSESSMENT The southern portion of the site is potentially suitable for housing and is therefore potentially appropriate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. The landowner would need to agree to a smaller portion of the site for allocation The top end of the expected housing requirement range of 77 could be accommodated within this southern section of the site and can be accessed via the A47, however, it is important to note that the Highways Authority would be minded to advise refusal on sites where access is from a road where measured speeds are above 40mph.
	COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE OUTCOME Rank 1 of 6 sites
	NPWP APPRAISAL
	The southerly part, adjacent to the A47, is flat and potentially suitable for allocation. The site is adjacent to existing residential properties of Ingarsby Lane and those on the south side of Uppingham Road, so maintains a relatively tight envelope to the built form of the village. Safe pedestrian access across the A47 would require a light-controlled crossing.
	Both SHELAA and AECOM assessments conclude that the northern part of this site is not suitable for housing development. Community comments on the above planning applications demonstrate significant concerns about the potential impact of traffic volumes from this site. Vehicles heading west for morning commuter journeys, will conflict with traffic approaching from Billesdon, and together are likely to back up in both directions as pedestrians cross the A47 using the proposed controlled crossing, impacting on Firs Road and the busy A47/ Main

	Street/Ingarsby Lane junction. This, added to any additional southbound traffic, would increase congestion along Main Street.
	NPWP CONCLUSION The southern part of the site is potentially appropriate for housing development. However, the potentially serious negative impacts on nearby roads from additional traffic movements, raise serious concerns about the suitability and achievability of this site. Sites more appropriate than this are available for allocation. *This conclusion was reached before the removal of the proposal for an access to Ingarsby Lane and the closure of the existing Ingarsby Lane/Main Street junction.*

POLICY L3B: RESERVE SITE; Land north of the A47, west of Houghton (Figure 6-4)

If the requirements of the prevailing HDC Local Plan for housing numbers cannot be met by the allocated site and infill housing, development on this site will be supported, up to but not exceeding the shortfall. Support for such development will be subject to the provisions of this Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Village Design Guide & Codes and all of the following specific criteria:

a) The development will provide for up to 90 dwellings and will also accommodate within the site boundaries SuDs facilities, recreational and green space.

b) Development of the site may not commence before January 2027.

c) Dwellings will have 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms apart from up to 10% which may have 4 bedrooms.

d) At least 10% of the total number of dwellings will be built to at least M4(2) standards to meet the needs of people with mobility issues.

e) Dwellings appropriate for single-level occupancy, and easily adaptable "Whole-life" housing will be supported.

f) The area to the north and west of the access road from the A47 will be used to encourage biodiversity, create "green and leafy" open space, and be accessible by pedestrians and cyclists.

g) Pedestrian and cycle pathways will be provided within the site and to link with existing routes to village facilities, and the bridleway through the site.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:
1. Community cohesion
3. Sustainable New Housing
4. Location of New Developments
8. Protect the Environment

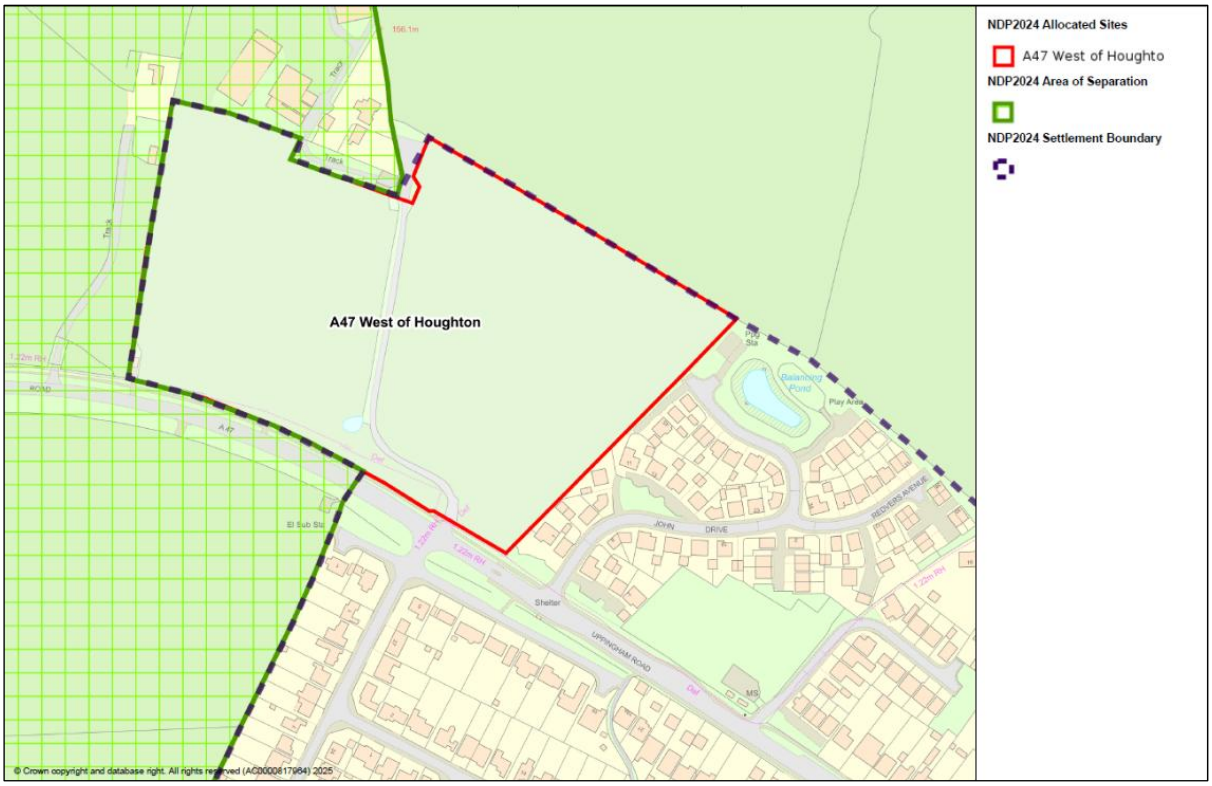

Figure 6-4 Location of Reserve Site

EVIDENCE AND RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

	Land to the north of Uppingham Road, west of Houghton (Figure 6-4) Potential for about 80 dwellings (AECOM estimate)
	SHELAA APPRAISAL 21/8206 The site is adjacent to a housing site under construction on the western edge of Houghton on the Hill, a sustainable settlement. A gas pipeline crosses the site north to south and an indicative layout provided shows that a suitable buffer zone can be incorporated. Information provided shows that an access onto the A47 can be achieved but this will need to be verified by the highway authority, particularly as it concerns the intensification of turning movements onto the A47. Half of the site is within a mineral consultation area. The site is considered potentially suitable. The site is in single ownership. No ownership or legal issues have been identified to prevent development being delivered. The site is considered available. Whilst an initial transport assessment has been provided, the provision of a suitable access from the A47 would need to satisfy the highway authority. The site is considered potentially achievable.
	AECOM ASSESSMENT The eastern half of the site is suitable for housing and is therefore appropriate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. It is noted that the western half of the site sits within the area proposed as an Area of Separation in the Neighbourhood Plan Review therefore an allocation would not align with this policy. The landowner would need to agree to a smaller portion of the site for allocation. The eastern part of the site can be accessed via the A47 however it is important to note that the Highways Authority would be minded to advise refusal on sites where access is from a road where measured speeds are above 40mph. The eastern part of the site is away from the high-pressure gas pipeline and is also screened by hedgerows whilst adjoining the existing settlement. Design proposals should account for the impact of development on the local landscape and visual sensitivity of the site upon entering the settlement.
	COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE OUTCOME Ranked 2 of 6 sites
	NPWP APPRAISAL
	The eastern part of the site is flat and is not in the proposed “Area of Separation”. The western portion, which lies within the “Area of Separation” would not be developable but could provide attractive and accessible community space. Development for residential housing would contribute to maintaining a tight envelope to the built form of the village. There is easy and convenient access to footpaths heading north, and then west to Scraptoft and east to Billesdon Coplow as well as across the A47 via a pedestrian controlled crossing into the village. Linking by a footpath with the adjacent housing development will enhance community cohesion enabling children from this site to have access to the existing play area. The proposed vehicular access would not conflict with traffic flows to Deane Gate Drive. Traffic towards Leicester would have little or no impact on the busy A47/Main Street /Ingarsby Lane cross-roads.
	To enhance safety for vehicles turning at the new entrance the 40mph speed limit should be extended west of the new road junction.
	NPWP CONCLUSION The site is appropriate as an allocation site.

POLICY L4: INFILL HOUSING

New residential development will be permitted on small-scale infill sites within the Settlement Boundary subject to the Policies of this Neighbourhood Development Plan, the provisions of the Village Design Guide & Codes and all of the following specific criteria:

a) is in keeping with the scale, form, and character of its surroundings and reflects the level of service provision within the Designated Area;

b) provides for a safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the site and any traffic generation and parking impact created does not result in an unacceptable direct or cumulative impact on congestion or on road and pedestrian safety;

c) does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring occupiers by reason of loss of privacy, loss of daylight, visual intrusion or noise in line with Harborough District Council Supplementary Planning Guidance.

The locations to which this policy applies include, but are not limited to, the site off Main Street by the church shown on figure 4.1 of Site Options and Assessment report as site J; and the site east of Main Street, by Willowsic, 34 Main Street, shown on figure 4.1 of Site Options and Assessment report as site L.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:
3. Sustainable New Housing
4. Location of New Developments

RATIONALE

87. Policy L3A allocates the major site for housing development in Houghton, providing for up to 90 new dwellings. The balance to achieve the HDC emerging LP requirement of about 100 will be met by infill and redevelopment housing distributed across the parish.

88. Residential infill development may include:

a) erecting new dwellings within the curtilage of existing dwellings;
b) creating new plots from portions of several, existing, neighbouring plots and rearrangement of existing plot boundaries;
c) demolition of an existing building(s) and redevelopment of the vacant plot with a higher density of housing;
d) extending an existing dwelling for it to be subdivided;
e) erecting new dwellings on vacant land between existing dwellings.

POLICY L5: DEVELOPMENT WITHIN AGRICULTURAL AREAS

Planning applications to re-purpose agricultural buildings for non-residential purposes will be supported subject to the provisions of this Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Village Design Guide and Codes and all of the following specific criteria:

a) The financial viability of an agricultural operation is maintained or enhanced.

b) Employment opportunities are secured or created.

c) The proposed use is appropriate to a rural location.

d) The development respects the character of the surrounding area and will not have any adverse impacts, including on wildlife and biodiversity.

e) The local road system, and parking provision, can accommodate any increase in traffic volume and type of vehicle.

f) There is no adverse impact on neighbouring properties through noise, light pollution, increased traffic or environmental degradation.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:
1. Community Cohesion
3. Sustainable New Housing
6. Safeguard Village Heritage
9. Promote Employment

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

89. Viable businesses in the countryside are an essential part of the overall mix of economic activity in any neighbourhood. Challenges faced by farmers to remain financially viable solely via agriculture have encouraged many to look to diversify their activities to generate additional revenue and profit streams. Conversely "Prolonged wet weather, squeezed margins and falling farm support have added enormous financial and mental strain, which has left more farmers considering leaving the sector." (Farmers Weekly 10th May 2024)

90. Farm diversification can come in many forms such as farm shops, wedding venues, holiday lets, camping/glamping sites, self-storage units, light industrial/workshop units, dog walking fields, renewable energy, residential conversion.

91. This NDP supports farm diversification initiatives which comply with Policy EM3 and the Harborough Local Plan (adopted 2019) GD3. The introduction of the Harborough Rural Grant Scheme 2024/25, which provides capital grants for rural businesses to help them diversify outside of agricultural activities to improve business resilience, development, and revenue, is welcomed.

POLICY L6: IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES INCLUDING THOSE FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

The sites shown green on Figure 6-5 including those listed below, are of high value for sport, recreation, amenity, tranquillity or as green spaces within the built area. Development proposals that result in their loss, or have a significant adverse effect on them, will not be supported.

Important Open Space, Sport & Recreation sites (OSSR's)

	Location	Designation	
1	Cricket Ground, Stretton Lane	Sports facility	*
2	Churchyard and Cemetery, Main Street	Burial ground	*
3	St Catharines Way/Main St. north & south corners	Amenity Open Space	*
4	Freer Close green areas	Amenity Open Space	*
5	St Catharine's Green, west side of St Catharine's Way	Amenity Open Space	*
6	St Catharine's Way north of junction with North Way	Amenity Open Space	*
7	Chapel Close Green, Chapel Close	Amenity Open Space	*
8	St Catherines Way/Chapel Close Green	Amenity Open Space	*
9	Allotments, Uppingham Road	Allotments	*
10	Uppingham Road/Ingarsby Lane verges	Amenity Open Space	*
11	Recreation Field, Weir Lane This includes football and tennis facilities, two pavilions, Jubilee Walk.	Amenity Open Space & Sports facility	*
12	Recreation Field play area, Weir Lane.	Play area	*
13	Village Hall field including bowling green.	Amenity Open Space	*
14	Attenuation pond area and footpath Harris Drive/Stacey Avenue	Amenity Open Space	
15	Children's play area (LEAP), Stacey Avenue	Play area	
16	Children's play area & attenuation pond area, John Glover Drive	Play area/Amenity Open Space	
17	Other areas on Figure 6-5 not stated above	Amenity Open Space	

* Source: HDC list of Green Spaces Houghton-on-the-Hill

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:
1. Community Cohesion
4. Location of New Developments
7. Safeguard Village Heritage
8. Protect the Environment

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

92. The many green spaces in the village all contribute to the character of the area and to the quality of residents' lives. They promote health and wellbeing for all age groups and the NDP seeks to ensure current green spaces are protected and that new developments have adequate pleasant green spaces within them.

93. Even with its diverse more modern developments Houghton has maintained an attractive and particularly non-urban aspect. This is due to the spaciousness and non-uniformity of layouts within the individual developments including provision of large and small public open space which serve to link the village to its rural setting and mitigate against urban/sub-urbanisation.

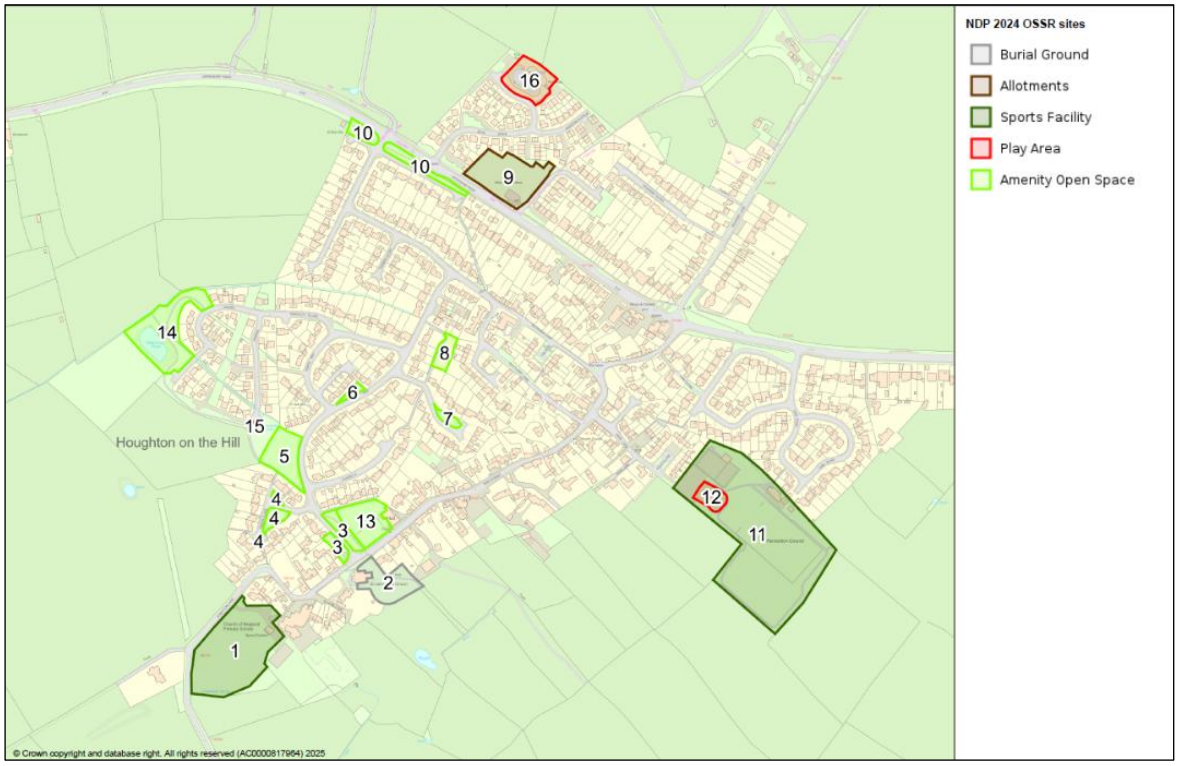

Figure 6-5 Open Spaces and Recreational sites in Houghton.

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

94. Local Green spaces and OSSRs within Houghton are highly valued by residents. In CQ#28 some 90% of respondents indicated that they highly value all the green spaces listed even if they do not or are not able to use them all.

95. Similarly, in CQ#25 73% of respondents confirmed their support for the provision of a community wood, defined nature trail, and/or a wildflower meadow if appropriate location(s) could be identified. In the YPQ respondents indicated support for more individual tree planting and more woodland planting, both of which relate to green spaces.

6.2 Housing Provision

POLICY H1: HOUSING MIX

Where practicable and viable, new housing development proposals should provide a mixture of housing types specifically to meet identified and evidenced local needs. In this context proposals which deliver smaller homes (three bedrooms or fewer) and homes suitable for older people seeking appropriate accommodation for their changing needs will be particularly supported.

There is a presumption in favour of:

a) new dwellings having 3 bedrooms or fewer (unless evidence of need is provided);

b) provision for those seeking to buy their first home;

c) provision for those wishing to move to a dwelling within the village more appropriate to their needs e.g. bungalows.

For sites of 50 or more dwellings, at least 10% should meet the accessible and adaptable standards in Building Regulations, Part M4(2) Category 2M.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

1. Community Cohesion
3. Sustainable New Housing

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

96. The housing developments of 2019-2021 included a much higher proportion of large dwellings than either the HDC target mix, or the community consultation preferred mix. Many (42%) were built with 4 or more bedrooms compared with the 12.5% HDC target, and a similar figure from the 2016/17 residents' consultation. In CQ#2 99 single-occupancy dwellings were reported by residents, 43 of which have 4 or more bedrooms. In CQ#9, high priority was assigned by residents to having more smaller dwellings for down-sizing (296 responses), first homes/starter homes (273 responses) and family homes up to 3-bedrooms (269 responses). Only 92 responses placed a high priority on having more larger dwellings (4 + bedrooms), 169 said "not needed" and 176 "low priority".

97. The Housing an ageing population independent study reported "*There is a shortage of accessible and specialist housing for older people (for example, retirement housing, sheltered housing and housing with care) in both the private and social sectors. Older people are more likely to be under-occupying their accommodation. Barriers to "downsizing" or 'rightsizing" can include a lack of choice in appropriate accommodation to move on to. In England, there is a lack of a national strategy on housing for older people to provide a strategic vision and ensure housing, health and social care policies are joined up*."

98. A separate national study Housing our Ageing Population concluded "*Many people in later life want to "right-size", but there is a chronic under-supply of high quality, affordable or desirable accommodation in the right locations*".

99. These conclusions resonate well with the situation in Houghton where the demographic is skewed towards an older age range, many of whom have lived in the village for many years and raised their children here. The CQ received responses from households comprising 1267 people (CQ#2.1) of which 622 were aged 50 or older (185 aged 75 or older). Census data are not available to assess what percentage of the total over-50 residents this 622 represents but it is about 33% of the total village population, which is a significant number. Age 50 is chosen because by the middle of the new plan period those residents will be 65 and many of the other 50+ year old residents will be well into later life. Although some are (statistically) unlikely to make it to that year, the natural conclusion from these data is that the requirement for a range of homes suitable for an ageing population is not likely to decline.

100. "Facilitating downsizing among older households may also release those larger homes for use by families who need more bedrooms if the existing stock of larger homes is sufficiently affordable". (AECOM HNA). Data obtained from 500 answers to CQ#2 (Figure 6-6), show that about 100 (20%) dwellings were occupied by only 1 person, with many of the houses having 4 bedrooms. Not every person living alone in a property may wish to move. However, significantly high numbers of one-person households, and increasing numbers of retirement age people, indicate that more attention needs to be given towards providing appropriate housing, services and infrastructure for them.

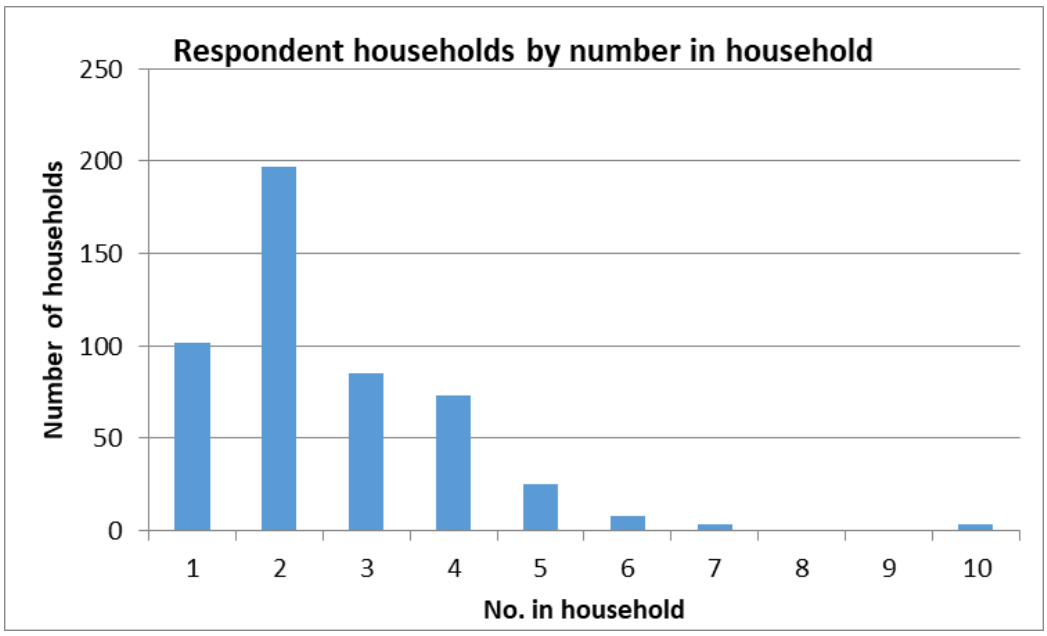

Figure 6-6 Number of residents per household as documented in the CQ

101. Provision of open-market housing units which cater for both younger starter households and downsizing/right-sizing households is a key supply gap which urgently needs to be addressed. Regarding the latter group, "land hungry" bungalows are not attractive for developers. Efforts should be made within new developments to provide for older

households and not just in the "affordable" rented sector. Importantly, dwellings should include adaptable and single-level accommodation. Design features should encourage social interaction, and provide level access footpaths and pavements to the retail/social areas of the village. In CQ#10.1, 323 respondent households placed high priority on building dwellings which satisfy these criteria.

102. Downsizing from a single-occupancy 4-bedroom house does not necessarily imply a need to release capital, nor a desire for a small property, as provision for visiting friends and relatives can be essential for the social wellbeing of residents as they age. This NDP refers to this as "right-sizing" rather than merely "downsizing". Many residents say they would like to downsize/right-size and stay in Houghton but moving out of the village is currently their only option. This may reflect the unwillingness of developers to prioritise this important sector.

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

103. The HNA states that rented affordable housing is likely to be unaffordable by likely tenants, and the most viable affordable housing tenure would be assisted purchase.

104. In view of the current large proportion of older residents, and the HNA predicting that this will increase during the plan period (see Appendix 6), considerable demand for market 2 and 3-bedroom homes (including bungalows) should be anticipated to allow people to remain in the village in a dwelling appropriate to their changing needs (right-sizing).

105. The impact on Houghton's housing mix of building 50% 2-bed or less , plus 50% 3-bed, as recommended by AECOM, is estimated to be as follows:

No. of Bedrooms in dwelling	2021 % split for 800 dwellings	Expected additional dwellings during plan period	Future % split for Houghton for 900 dwellings	Harborough District aspiration % split by No. of bedrooms
1 or 2	19%	50	22%	23%
3	28%	50	31%	40%
4 or more	53%		47%	37%
Total	100%	100	100%	100%

Figure 6-7 Predicted effect on the housing mix of building only 2 and 3-bedroom houses.

POLICY H2: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Developments with a net gain of more than 10 dwellings should provide Affordable Housing in line with the policies contained in the latest HDC Local Plan. In addition, such new developments will comply with all the following:

a) The affordable houses should be an integral part of the development. They should be visually indistinguishable from the equivalent market housing on the site and should be dispersed throughout a mixed development, in clusters of no more than 6 dwellings. This is subject to a registered provider being prepared to take on the dwellings if applicable.

b) The tenure mix should meet an identified local need and include units for social or affordable rent, units for shared ownership provision, and units for low-cost starter homes for sale.

c) Priority will be given to people with a local connection to Houghton i.e. living, working or with close family ties in the Designated Area.

d) If insufficient demand has been identified, or on-site provision has been demonstrated as impractical, off-site commuted amounts of an equivalent value may be spent within the Designated Area.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:
1. Community Cohesion
3. Sustainable New Housing

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

106. Affordable housing tenure is defined as social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. As of 24th May 2021, First Homes is included as a category of Affordable Housing as well. The current Harborough LP policies on affordable housing will continue to apply until the new Harborough LP is adopted.

107. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable homes remain affordable for future eligible households.

108. The Harborough LP Policy H2 requires 40% of new dwellings on sites of more than 10 dwellings to be affordable housing. Where on-site provision is demonstrated to be impractical, off-site commuted sums of an equivalent value will be made in lieu of on-site provision. The tenure split for affordable housing will be 75% socially rented, and 25% comprising low-cost home ownership products although a different percentage split can be approved where it can be justified by the latest assessment of affordable housing need.

POLICY H3: PARKING & TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The following elements are supported:

a) roads with a design speed of no more than 20 mph;

b) pedestrian and cycle routes as appropriate to provide safe, convenient and attractive routes to shops, employment, Houghton School and community facilities and which are integrated into wider networks;

c) provision for safe parking having regard to highways authority guidance and standards.

d) where distributed lay-by parking is not viable, then car parking of equal or greater capacity within the development may be substituted.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:
1. Community Cohesion
3. Sustainable New Housing
6. Walking and Cycling

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

109. Residents are concerned about in-village speeding and measures to avoid this are desirable. Safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists to village facilities and to the wider footpath and cycle networks will encourage less use of vehicles in the village. Responses to CQ#22 indicate a high level of support for safe walking and cycling links to shops, community buildings and recreational areas. Similarly high levels of support were indicated for a second controlled pedestrian crossing on the A47 (e.g. near to the Firs Road/Uppingham Road footpath), and safer cycling and walking links between Houghton and Bushby (e.g. improve the footpath to Bushby for cyclists to use as well as pedestrians).

110. Garages tend to be used for storage as many new dwellings often have a small footprint and little in-property storage space. Hence more cars are parked on roadways obstructing emergency vehicles, public transport, and delivery vehicles. Parking on footpaths restricts passage for wheelchair, mobility scooter, or pushchair users.

111. Property owners sometimes convert garage space into living accommodation or a gym, thus increasing on-street parking. When calculating effective available in-curtilage parking, garage spaces should be excluded. The VDG&C sets out guidance to address the problems highlighted here.

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

112. Responses to CQ#22.1 demonstrated strong support for safe walking & cycling, and those to CQ#42.2 clearly identified pavement parking as an issue.

6.3 Design of Sites and Buildings

POLICY D1: DESIGN

The "Village Design Guide & Codes" (VDG&C) is to be consulted when preparing designs for new developments, renovations, extensions or alterations to existing buildings in the Designated Area regardless of scale.

Any new development application should make specific reference to how the VDG&C have been incorporated into the design proposals.

Only developments that reflect the VDG&C will be supported.

POLICY D2: HOUSING DESIGN

Development proposals demonstrating all of the following will be supported:

a) high quality design, layout, and use of materials;

b) a positive contribution to energy efficiency and optimising the carbon footprint;

c) respects the character of the area in which the proposal resides.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

1. Community Cohesion,
2. Climate Change Mitigation
3. Sustainable New Housing
6. Safeguard Village Heritage

RATIONALE FOR POLICIES D1 AND D2:

113. Houghton has grown incrementally over time so current buildings date from many different periods, thereby providing a richness and variety of styles and materials. This traditional rural character should be enhanced by new development with schemes designed to sit

comfortably within the existing settlement pattern and are respectful of their surroundings. Care should be taken to ensure that no development disrupts the visual amenities of the street scene, nor impacts negatively on any significant wider landscape views, or on the views into the village of valued assets such as the parish church of St. Catharine.

114. Central Government places significant importance on the development of design guides to set standards for design upfront and provide firm guidance on how sites should be developed. The NPPF(Dec 2024) notes at para 129 *"Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places."*

115. The NPPF guidance is echoed in the Harborough LP at Policy GD8 which states in para. 4.15.1: "*This policy requires all proposals to achieve a high standard of design quality to ensure that new development is both sustainable and attractive. It aims to safeguard and improve the character and distinctiveness of the District both now and for future generations. Well designed places relate well to their environment, are attractive and safe, and offer an improved quality of life for those that live and work in the District. Crime and community safety are important factors as part of all new development, and the Council works with Leicestershire Police and developers to ensure that all new major developments are secured by design*." The NPPF (Dec 2024) notes at para. 139 that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies. The VDG&C seeks to avoid poor design in Houghton.

116. Guidance within the VDG&C seeks to influence, through good design, development within the parish which protects the local character and distinctiveness of Houghton, mitigates the adverse effects of climate change and helps to enhance community cohesion.

117. Individuals and bodies involved in the process of designing, developing and delivering good, successful development will be required to consult and comply with the guidance or explain why they have not been able to do so at the time of submitting their planning application.

118. Objectives include:

- promoting the conservation and enhancement of local distinctiveness and identity; including those aspects of the Conservation Area (CA) and its Listed Heritage Assets (Figure 6-9);
- creating well-designed places through good landscape and buildings design and architecture;
- retaining and enhancing existing natural features and integrating new landscaping that supports biodiversity;
- promoting safe, attractive, pedestrian/cycling-focused residential layouts which provide safe access to village facilities and to the wider countryside;
- encouraging well-designed homes in terms of size and format, energy efficiency, and addressing climate change resilience and mitigation.

119. The VDG&C was developed as part of the process of preparing an NPD and is available as a companion document. Policy D1 seeks to reflect the design principles which the community believes will help to achieve good design. They reflect the outcome of consultations with all age groups, community organisations, the LPA and a planning consultant. The overall aim is to protect Houghton so that it retains its character.

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

The National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024

The Harborough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 Policy GD8 -adopted April 2019

"Building for a Healthy Life" which replaces the previous "Building for Life" as used in the current made Plan
The National Design Guide

"Building with nature "

The Houghton Village Design Statement at Appendix 1 of the made Neighbourhood Plan.

Houghton Community Questionnaire Autumn 2022 (Residents free-form comments)

POLICY D3: EXTENSIONS & MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING DWELLINGS WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

Applications for extensions and modifications will generally be supported if they comply with the provisions of this Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Village Design Guide & Codes and all of the following specific criteria:

a) The scale, height and form fit unobtrusively with the character of the street scene avoiding over-development of the site, or negative impact on neighbours (e.g. privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook).

b) The traditional boundary treatment of an area is retained and, where feasible, reinforced.

c) Materials are compatible with those of adjacent or existing building(s).

d) New roofs visible from the street are pitched unless this is out of character with the existing building(s) or a pitched roof will fail to preserve an established, attractive view of the countryside which might otherwise be lost.

e) Dormer roof extensions should not adversely impact on the street scene nor on the privacy of neighbouring gardens.

f) There is provision for safe vehicular and pedestrian access and any additional traffic and parking does not adversely impact on congestion or on road and pedestrian safety.

g) An existing garage is not converted for any purpose which may result in more cars being forced to park on roadways and pavements.

h) New/replacement garages, particularly those sited in front gardens, are proportionate in size and height to the needs of car parking and not designed or built with future occupation in mind.

i) Free-standing buildings or extensions within the curtilage of a dwelling to accommodate working from home, beyond that already allowed as “permitted development”, will not result in the on-site parking provision being reduced below the level set out in Policy H3.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:
1. Community Cohesion
3. Sustainable New Housing
7. Safeguard Village Heritage

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

120. NDP(2018) does not have this level of detail immediately available in one place, making it difficult to identify key factors when considering supporting or objecting to a planning application. This current plan, in conjunction with the VDG&C, seeks to address those shortfalls and provide guidance to residents, developers, and decision makers.

POLICY D4: ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND MITIGATING THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

In new developments the following will be supported:

a) measures to improve energy efficiency exceeding the current Building Regulations requirements e.g. insulation, heating systems;

b) suitable means of in-curtilage generation of power, for example by solar panels, solar tiles, heat pumps or domestic wind generators and no connection to the gas grid;

c) the latest most efficient water fittings and controls including rainwater harvesting for every building;

d) careful consideration of the orientation of the main living areas to maximise solar gain and energy efficiency;

e) location, layout and design to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and minimise car usage, connecting people to where they want and need to go through attractive, efficient and convenient walking, cycling and public transport networks;

f) inclusion of small-scale renewable energy generation and energy storage facilities.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:
2. Climate Change Mitigation
3. Sustainable New Housing

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

121. There is substantial evidence that the greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are having an influence on the world's climate e.g. a measurable increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) levels, rising global temperatures, increases in extreme weather events, the melting of ice sheets and glaciers, and rising sea levels. There is international agreement that the growth in the production of such gases must be reduced. A neighbourhood development plan cannot address the national challenges but can seek to make a positive contribution at the local level.

122. Responses to the CQ demonstrated how local people feel about facing up to reducing reliance on fossil fuels. At CQ#39 80% of respondent households supported all new buildings having appropriate solar panels/tiles. About half the respondents supported additional commercial solar energy farms, heat pumps and individual wind turbines. Few were against these initiatives, with rather more taking a neutral stance. The YPQ indicated considerable support for solar and wind generated energy.

123. New homes that are heated through gas boilers will need retrofitting to be compatible with net-zero carbon so designing in electric heating and hot water now will avoid this additional work and costs for residents.

6.4 Employment

POLICY EM1: EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

There is a presumption against the loss of commercial premises or land that currently provides employment. Applications for a change of land use or buildings which would involve the loss of an existing employment opportunity will only be supported where:

- the commercial premises or land in question has not been in active use for at least 12 months; and
- the commercial premises or land in question has no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment-generating uses, demonstrated through results from both a full valuation report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least 6 months.

Proposals for new and/or expansion of light commercial/light engineering/retail facilities will be favourably considered subject to all of the following criteria:

a) Employment opportunities for local people are available.

b) Vehicle parking and EV charging is provided on-site for employees and visitors.

c) Expected volumes of commercial vehicle movements and types of vehicles are presented with any application and do not generate levels of traffic movements that cannot be accommodated.

d) Routes which vehicles will be expected to take will be specified, and no vehicle movements will be permitted during unsociable hours.

e) There is no likelihood of excessive noise, smell, light or other pollution.

f) Operations will not be permitted between the hours of 22.00 and 06.00.

g) Compliance with all relevant policies in this plan and the Village Design Guide and Codes.

Warehousing operations will not be supported due to the potential for excessive vehicle movements.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

1. Community Cohesion
2. Climate Change Mitigation
5. Enhance Services and Facilities
9. Promote Employment

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

124. Houghton has more than 100 businesses most of which are operated from homes in the village. There are few business premises, and these are scattered throughout Houghton.

125. The responses to CQ#38.1 indicate an even division between households who would and those who would not support developments specifically designed to create employment opportunities. In response to CQ#38.2, 74% would like to see a proportion of new retail/service outlets included in new developments. Commercial viability will obviously be a major factor in determining their inclusion.

126. Notwithstanding those responses, over time applications may be submitted that could potentially change the local employment scene, possibly substantially. The above policy provides guidance to decision-makers.

127. The Stakeholder Consultation workshop revealed no real desire or demand for new employment-generating developments in Houghton.

POLICY EM2: WORKING FROM HOME

Planning applications for developments that enable homeworking, by way of in-curtilage extensions or small buildings in gardens, will be supported if the development complies with all of the following criteria:

a) It is for the primary use of the property residents only and remains ancillary to the main use of the building as a residential dwelling.

b) It does not adversely impact the residents in the area in terms of noise, lighting, fumes, unsocial hours of working or other nuisance associated with the activity being undertaken.

c) It complies with all relevant policies in this plan and in the Village Design Guide and Codes.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

1. Community Cohesion
5. Enhance Services and Facilities
9. Promote Employment

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

128. The NDP supports working from home, recognising the many benefits which may result, such as:

a) fewer cars on the road leading to less pollution, congestion, reliance on fuels to power the vehicles.
b) more jobs might become available to those who otherwise would need to rely on less-than-convenient public transport.
c) avoiding commuting provides additional opportunities for a better work/life/home balance.

129. Finding employment by working from home can also benefit the local economy by encouraging residents to use local shops, pubs and local facilities/events.

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

130. Results from the CQ, listed in paragraph 62 demonstrate that the vast majority of respondents (93%) use a car to access work.

6.5 Services and Facilities

POLICY S1: RETENTION OF KEY FACILITIES

The following community facilities and assets shall be safeguarded:

a) St. Catharine's Church
b) Houghton Methodist Chapel
c) Houghton Church of England Primary School
d) Houghton Village Hall and field
e) Houghton Recreation Field and facilities
f) Houghton Post Office
g) Food retail outlets
h) Houghton Pharmacy
i) Old Black Horse and Rose & Crown (Public Houses)
j) Allotments
k) Village sports and children's facilities
l) Car repair workshop and filling station

Development proposals that would result in the loss, or have a significant adverse effect on, a community facility will not be supported, unless the facility is replaced by an equivalent or better one in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location. Alternatively, the proposal must demonstrate that the facility is either not economically viable (to be tested with a marketing campaign of at least 12 months) or is no longer required by the community.

New proposals to enhance the range and diversity of community facilities to meet an identified local need and to improve accessibility will be supported provided they comply with all relevant policies in this plan and the Village Design Guide and Codes.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

1. Community Cohesion
2. Climate Change Mitigation
5. Enhance Services and Facilities
7. Safeguard Village Heritage

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:
Availability of services within the village increases quality of life for service users and reduces transport demands.

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

131. Community facilities contribute to the health, education and well-being of residents, play an intrinsic role in their life, and are crucial for economic, social and environmental sustainability. The ongoing provision of community facilities is particularly important for Houghton in view of the ageing and growing population projections (see para. 164 of HNA).

132. Having local facilities contributes to improving community cohesion and reduces the need for residents to travel outside the village, usually by car, to access them (see paragraph 62 above). Facilities in Houghton also provide access for those living in surrounding more rural areas where such provision is absent.

POLICY S2: RETAIL

Development proposals that result in the loss, or have a significant adverse effect on, an existing retail facility will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that its continued use for retail is no longer viable.

Development proposals that involve provision of new, or the enhancement of an existing, retail outlet will be supported where it meets a local need and complies with all relevant policies in this plan and the Village Design Guide and Codes.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

1. Community Cohesion
5. Enhance Services and Facilities
9. Employment

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

133. Local retail facilities play an important role in enabling residents to shop without the need to travel by car out of the village. At CQ#19, 428 resident households reported going out of the village by car in order to shop. If current retail outlets were not there then logically there could be even more car journeys, increased carbon emissions, increased incidence of congestion and so on.

134. Importantly the ongoing provision of local retail outlets is particularly relevant for Houghton in view of the ageing and growing population projections (see para. 164 of HNA). Facilities in Houghton also provide access for those living in more rural areas where again such

provision is absent. At CQ#38.2, 74% of respondent households would like to see a proportion of new retail/service outlets included when new developments take place. This would understandably be dependent on the location, likely footfall and financial viability of such provision.

POLICY S3: INFRASTRUCTURE

Provision for new, or improvements to existing, infrastructure will be supported particularly when it relates to:

a) The improvement, or enhancement of key facilities listed in Policy S1.

b) Countryside access improvements in accordance with Policy EV4.

c) Traffic and parking management measures, including but not limited to measures that address local traffic congestion and parking problems near the school, the Coop store, the recreation field and surrounding roads.

d) Installation of communal electric vehicle charging points for visitors to the village and those residents whose house cannot have home charging for practical reasons.

e) Progressive enhancement of communication technology to follow evolving standards.

f) General community infrastructure improvements e.g. local energy generation, sewage treatment capacity.

Where developments in the Designated Area provide contributions to community infrastructure, the above should be considered as a priority. Funding from other sources may also be used.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

2. Climate Change Mitigation
6. Walking, Cycling and Public Transport
7. Safeguard Village Heritage.

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

135. Home working, students studying at home, and home entertainment generally require access to high-speed reliable means of electronic communications (broadband, mobile phone network). From CQ#35, having a better/faster/consistent mobile phone service was cited as a major factor in assisting local businesses to operate better, or to encourage new local businesses to start up. More home working reduces the amount of car travel. (see Policy EM2).

136. As the number of electric vehicles increases, consideration should be given to the introduction of communal charging points for visitors to the village and those residents

whose house cannot have home charging for practical reasons. Location of charging points should respect the amenity of the local area and not cause inconvenience to residents. The cost of installing an electric vehicle charging point could be a factor for a resident to choose not to have an electric vehicle or delay the purchase.

137. Local infrastructure improvements to satisfy the demands from more houses need to keep pace with the rate of housing construction. During the drafting of this plan concern was expressed by residents about the ability of the local sewage works to satisfy even the current demand (increased in the early 2020's) with 53 reported spillages into Bushby Brook recorded in 2022, 102 in 2023 and 79 in 2024. Details are contained in the NDP Evidence Base.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICY AREAS:

138. NPPF 119. "*Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution)*".

139. NPPF 120. "*The number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate*".

140. Harborough LP Policy IN3 Electronic Connectivity.

6.6 Environment

POLICY EV1: CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND BIODIVERSITY

New development should protect and enhance:

a) identified sites of natural environmental significance;

b) biodiversity with a 10% minimum biodiversity net gain;

c) wildlife corridor(s) shown in Figure 6-8 and ensure connectivity between them.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

2. Climate Change Mitigation
4. Location of New Developments
8. Protect the Environment

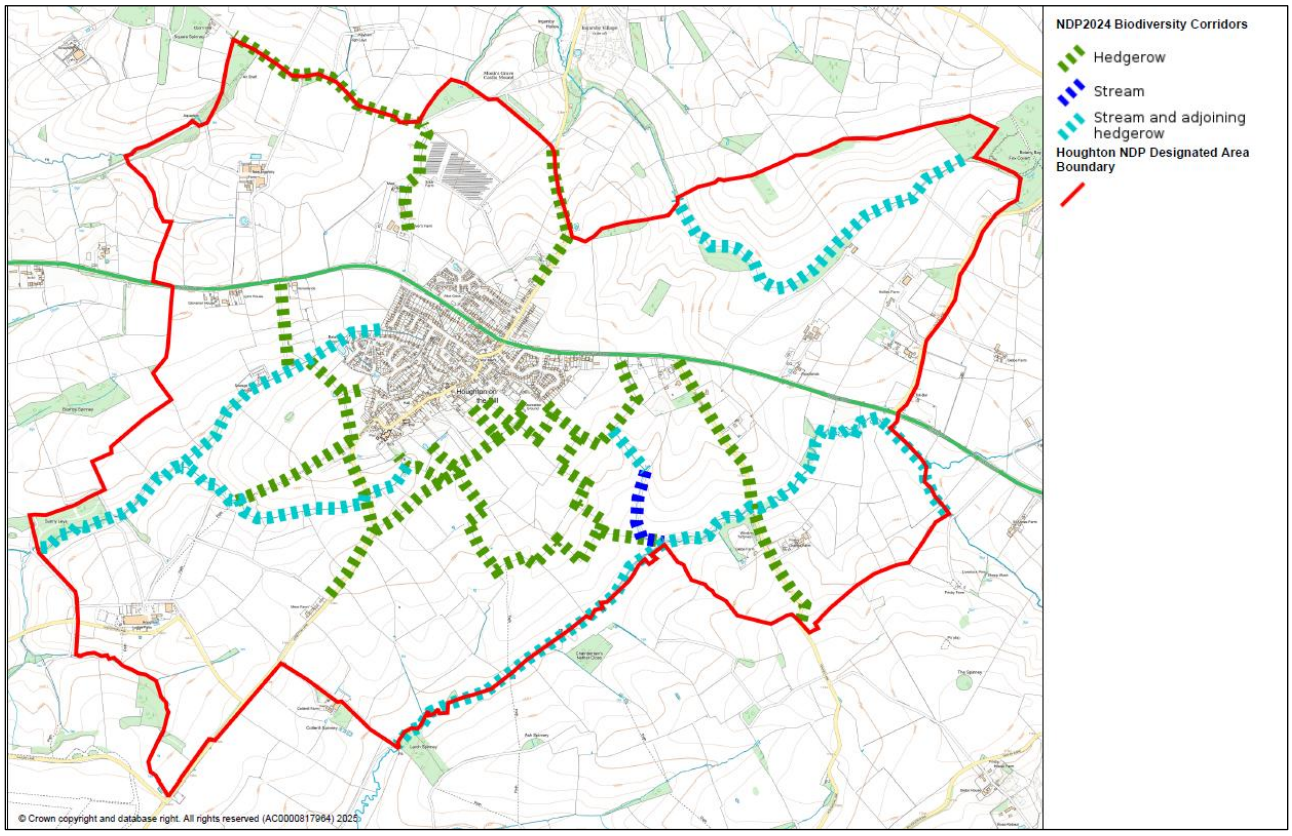

Figure 6-8 Wildlife corridors along watercourses, hedge systems, and combination watercourses and hedge systems.

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

141. The rural setting of Houghton village means that most residents live within 5 minutes' walk of open fields and wildlife habitats, and this is highly valued. At CQ#28, 98% of respondents appreciate access to the countryside via footpaths, and 90% use them.

142. Housing constructions adversely impact on residents and wildlife particularly from the many construction vehicle movements on the local road network, and pollution from construction noise, dirt on roads, and dust, and driving wildlife from their established habitats. Phasing of developments would provide a break from that which can be beneficial.

143. There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within the DA, but data from Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LREC) identifies 12 current and 14 historic Local Wildlife Sites, including woodland, trees, hedges, grassland and ponds. At least 16 red-listed bird species have been recorded in the DA, many in the habitats marked on Figure 6-8 (data from Naturespot.org & LREC). The DA contains around 10 active badger sets as well as bat roosts, great-crested newts, and swift nesting sites.

144. Responses to the CQ at #Q25 and Q#28 show how greatly residents value and use the green spaces and footpaths around the village. Responses to CQ#26 showed overwhelming support for enhancing habitats and biodiversity around the parish, and for measures to combat climate change.

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

145. Within the DA the following detailed information is available:

a) identified sites of natural environmental significance.
b) biodiversity generally across the Plan Area (HDC Habitats Survey).
c) wildlife corridor(s) and connectivity between them (Figure 6-8)

146. In the wider context, this policy seeks to give neighbourhood detail to the following local and national plans:

a) HDC Phase 1 Habitat Survey 2008 provides information relating to habitats, protected species, designations, wildlife corridors and potential Local Wildlife Sites (non-statutory biodiversity designations) for areas in the district most at risk of development.
b) NPPF (December 2024) paragraphs 187, 192, 193.

POLICY EV2: TREES, HEDGES AND WILDFLOWERS.

Development proposals should:

a) retain trees and hedges of arboricultural, ecological or amenity value (Figure 6-8), particularly where they form natural boundaries to a development site;

b) include within them, when more than 10 dwellings are to be constructed, native trees positioned to enhance the street-scene, but in sufficient space that their roots will not interfere with footpaths or other infrastructure. Similarly native hedges should be planted connecting to existing hedges, particularly those on Figure 6-8;

c) ensure at least one new UK-grown native tree, is planted within or on the boundary of the site for each tree removed during the development work;

d) include native perennial wildflower mixes rather than grass in open spaces and the entrance to new sites and consider the provision of community orchards.

Proposals must be accompanied by a detailed survey and plan of the site showing existing trees and hedges with their health and longevity, and the landscaping plan. On completion, these plans can be used to monitor compliance with planning consent.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

2. Climate Change Mitigation
4. Location of New Developments
8. Protect the Environment

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

147. The NPPF at para 136 says "*Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users*."

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

148. Experience with recent housing developments in Houghton demonstrated that some developers failed to protect established trees. It is appreciated that HDC may not have the resources to monitor compliance in detail and thus we include in Policy EV2 a requirement for developers to supply plans of retained and proposed new trees to both HDC and HPC. This will enable local monitoring of compliance.

POLICY EV3: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

All of the identified heritage assets listed below are important for their contribution to the layout and mix of structures and architectural styles, landscape and archaeological features, in the village and Designated Area. These assets and their features and settings will be protected wherever possible.

Changes affecting any of these assets will not be supported unless the benefits arising from the change would outweigh the harm.

Development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the potential impact on these assets and identified mitigation strategies to ensure that evidence which could contribute to the understanding of human activity and past environments is not lost.

Buildings and Structures

#	Name	Location
1	Hollies Farm	10, Main Street.
2	Terraced cottages and mud wall	21, Main Street, and Scotland Lane
3	Methodist Chapel and Schoolroom	Main Street (no number)
4	The Willowsic	34, Main Street
5	Old Black Horse Public House	36, Main Street
6	Terraced cottages and old print works	38, 38a, 40 Main Street
7	Hall Farm	41, Main Street.
8	18th Century house	47 Main Street, Hawthorn Cottage,
9	Outbuildings	Rear of 49 Main St.
10	Boundary Wall	54 Main Street
11	Houghton School	Main Street (no number)
12	Stretton Lane Cottages	2,4 Stretton Lane
13	Medieval house	18 Scotland Lane
14	Terraced cottages on Scotland Lane North	19,21,23,25,27 Scotland Lane
15	Village Pump and wells.	Scotland Lane
16	Old Farmhouse	9 Weir Lane
17	Rose and Crown Public House	Uppingham Road

Landscape Features

#	*Name*	*Location*
1	Old Windmill sites	Ingarsby Lane area.
2	Railway track-bed and tunnel	Northwest of village
3	Salt Road	Along the northern parish boundary.
4	Turnpike Toll Road	Now marked by the A47 road.
5	Medieval Fish-ponds	East of Houghton Church.

Archaeological Features

The point locations of these are shown in Figure 6-12, and the details are listed in the full description of Non Designated Heritage Assets in the Evidence Base.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

2. Climate Change Mitigation
4. Location of New Developments
7. Safeguard Village Heritage
8. Protect the Environment

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

149. The settlement of Houghton on the Hill has a long and rich history extending back to pre-Roman times. It is documented in the Domesday Book (1086) and there is a pattern of continuous occupation of over 2 millennia. This has resulted in a wide-ranging variety of features which are considered as heritage assets. Here we divide these into categories as follows:

    A. nationally Designated Heritage Assets (e.g. listed buildings)
    B. non-designated heritage assets, comprising:
        i. buildings and structures
        ii. landscape features including areas of ridge and furrow fields
        iii. archaeological features

    Group (A) are designated and protected by national legislation, but we list them for completeness and their relationship to other assets included in Group (B).

    Group (B) are declared in this plan as non-designated heritage assets to provide them with the protection possible from this Neighbourhood Development Plan.

GROUP A: NATIONALLY DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

150. The NPPF states:

    "*212. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

    213. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of: a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional*."

151. Current designated Heritage Assets comprise listed buildings mainly in the Conservation Area. Figure 6-9 shows these apart from two milestones on the A47 outside the area covered by the figure. The details of the Designation are available from Historic England. Under the NPPF, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the

significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and substantial harm, or loss, should be exceptional.

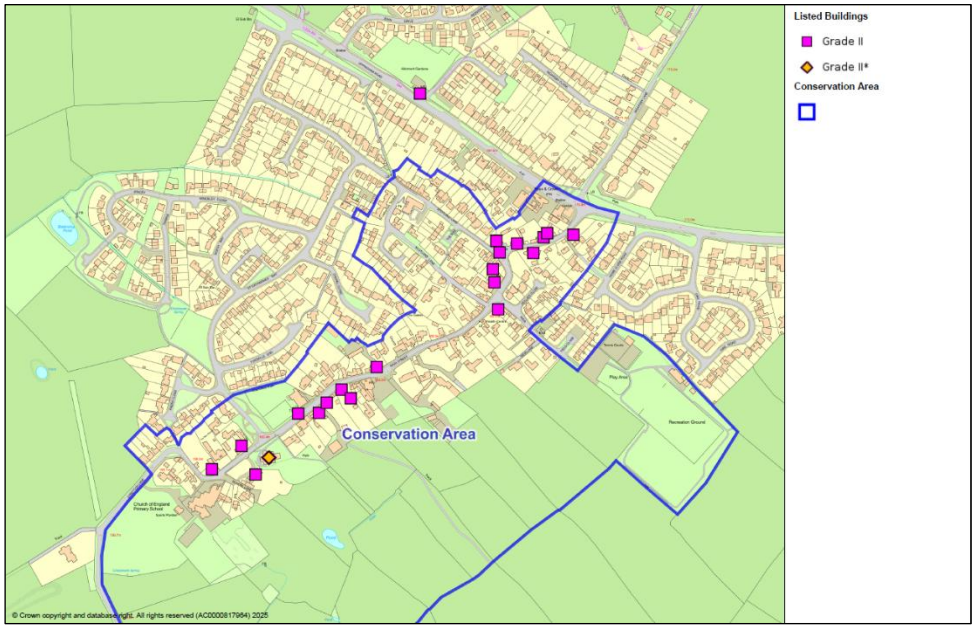

Figure 6-9 Location of listed Buildings and the Houghton Conservation Area.

Listing Number	Description	Grade
1061694	Milestone Uppingham Rd.	II
1180102	Milestone Uppingham Rd.	II
1074819	Milestone Uppingham Rd.	II
1361026	2 Main St.	II
1361004	3 Main St.	II
1178325	5 Main St.	II
1074815	Old Boot Cottage, 8 Main St.	II
1074854	Little Acres, 7/9 Main St.	II
1361023	11 Main St.	II
1074811	War Memorial	II
1074812	East Thorpe Cottage 13A Main St .	II
1361024	Granary Cottage, The Old Bakehouse, 15/15A Main St.	II
1074816	The Smithy, 14 Main St.	II
1074813	Red Roofs, 41 Main St.	II
1361027	46 Main St.	II
1074817	Outbuilding at 46 Main St.	II
1180087	48 Main St.	II
1361028	50 Main St.	II
1078231	Telephone kiosk	II
1295074	St. Catharine's Church	II*
1361025	Manor Farm, 53 Main St.	II
1074818	The Old Rectory, 58 Main St.	II
1074814	Eaton House, 57 Main Street	II

GROUP B: DECLARATION OF NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS (NDHA)

152. Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as making a positive contribution to local character because of their heritage value. Although such heritage assets may not be nationally designated, they may be offered a level of protection through a NDP or via identification by the local planning authority as having local interest.

153. In the DA, non-designated heritage assets include a variety of significant buildings, ridge and furrow fields as well as the other historic landscape features, and the impressive number of archaeological features which have been collected in national databases. All of these features contribute to, and are considered integral to, the local character.

154. Detailed listings can be found in the Evidence Base document.

GROUP B(i) BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

155. Several built structures (e.g. buildings, walls, monuments) within the DA are identified as non-designated heritage assets by the community. Their locations are shown in Figure 6-10, and brief details are listed in the following table. A more detailed description of each is included in the Houghton Heritage Assets document included in the Evidence Base.

Figure 6-10 Location of NDHA Buildings and Structures, numbered as listed in policy EV3.

GROUP B (ii) LANDSCAPE FEATURES

156. Many of the fields around the Conservation Area show the remains of medieval ridge and furrow fields (Figure 6-11). The midlands, including High Leicestershire, were identified by the Monuments Protection Programme as having some of the best surviving examples in Europe ('Turning the Plough': Hall, 2001).

157. Other examples of landscape features result from non-agricultural activity. There are a wide variety of these, ranging in age from pre-roman salt roads, to Medieval fish ponds, to railway tracks.

158. Development proposals that affect areas of Ridge and Furrow must balance the need for, and the public benefit of, the proposal against the significance of the asset and scale of any harm or loss.

159. Development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the potential impact on archaeological remains and identify mitigation strategies to ensure that evidence which could contribute to the understanding of human activity and past environments is not lost.

160. Their locations are shown in Figure 6-11, and brief details are listed in the table in policy EV3. A more detailed description of each is included in the Houghton Heritage Assets document included in the Evidence Base.

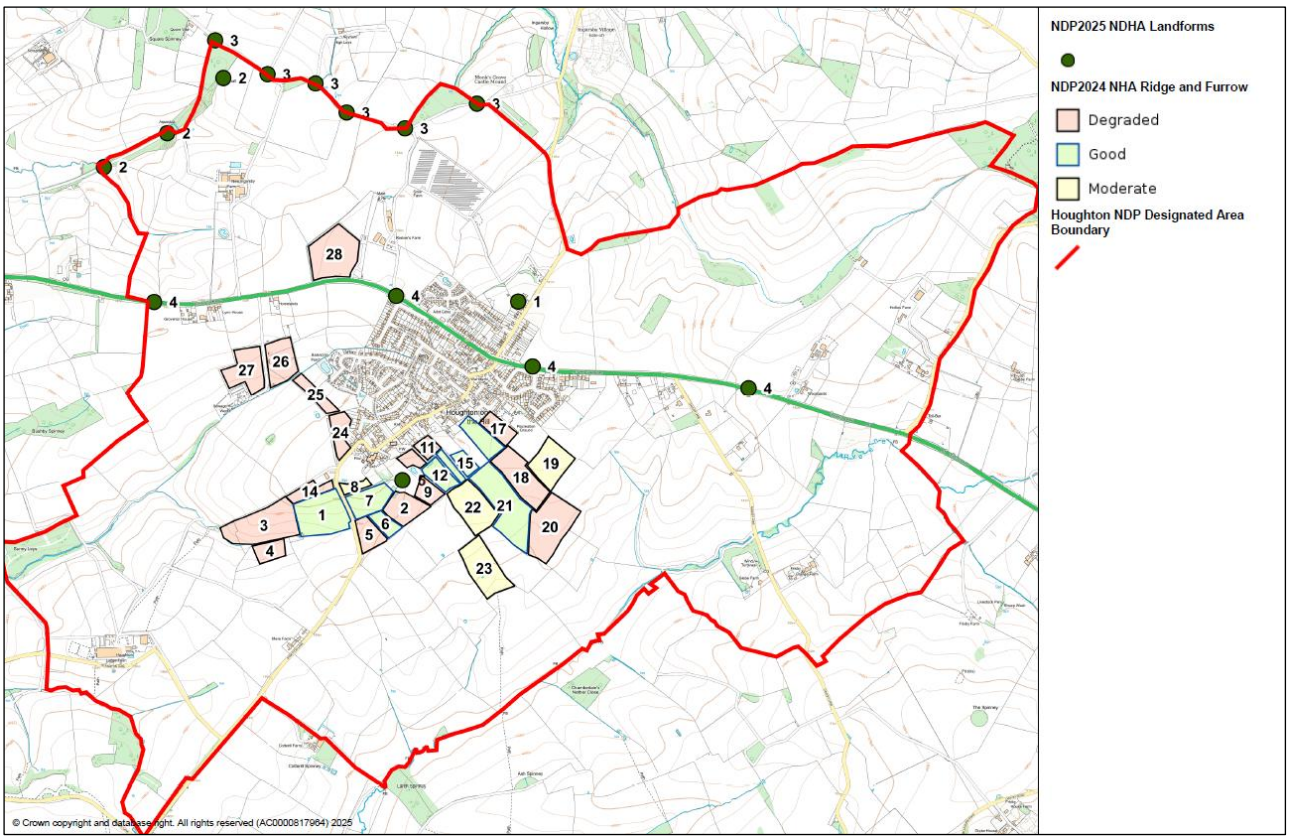

Figure 6-11 Location of NDHA Landforms within the DA. Numbers on landforms refer to the table in policy EV3. Numbers on fields are numbers allocated during ridge and furrow survey.

GROUP B (iii) ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

161. The DA has a long history of human settlement. Archaeological finds have been identified during fields walking as well as during archaeological surveys related to planning applications, extensions and development. Find locations are shown on Figure 6-12 and have been colour coded to indicate the historical period to which they relate. A more detailed description of each is included in the Houghton Heritage Assets document included in the NDP Evidence Base.

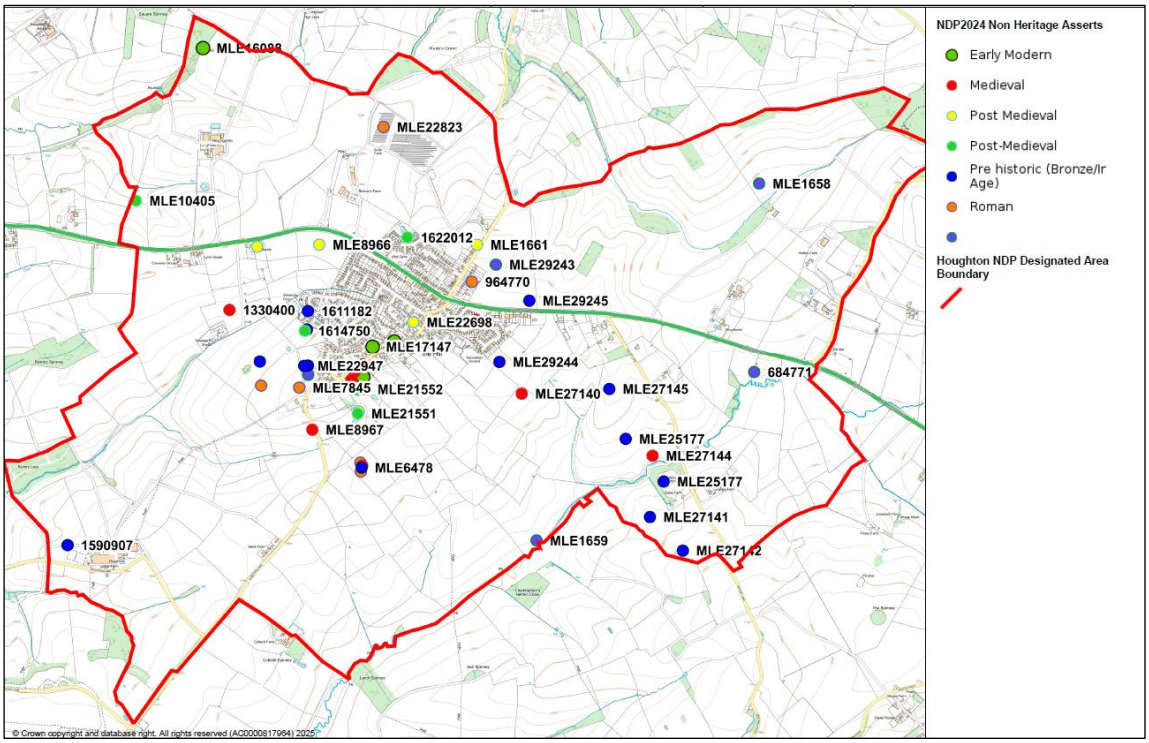

Figure 6-12 Location of Archaeological Structures and Finds in the Houghton Designated Area

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

GROUP A : Listed Buildings and structures

Nationally designated heritage assets are those found on the Historic England list.

GROUP B (i) NDHA buildings and structures

Historic England buildings records and Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record. Additional buildings and structures within the DA were identified by the community and through walking the area.

GROUP B(ii) NDHA Landscape Features

A range of landscape features (e.g. roads and tracks, fishponds, railway track-bed) occur in the DA and were inspected by field-walking. Ridge and Furrow fields around the Conservation area were identified and graded by field walking, aided by Google earth views and old photographs.

GROUP B (iii) NDHA Archaeological features

Information on archaeological findings were sourced from Heritage Gateway (https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/). This collates archaeological findings from multiple sources, including National Monuments Record Excavations Index, Archaeology Data Services and Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record.

POLICY EV4: FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS, CYCLEWAYS AND ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the existing network of footpaths (Figure 6-13) will not be supported without appropriate mitigation.

The creation of new footpaths and cycle routes, or the enhancement of existing routes will be supported to provide safe, convenient and attractive routes to shops, employment, schools, and community facilities and for health & leisure. Such routes must be integrated into wider networks (e.g. north to Hungarton, east to Billesdon, south to Great Glen and Oadby and west to Bushby, Thurnby and Leicester).

Improvements to signage of footpaths, bridleways and cycleways will be supported.

Upgrading of the footpath between Houghton and Bushby for use by cyclists and walkers will be supported and developer contributions sought to fund this through application by the Local Planning Authority of HDC developer contributions policy.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

2. Climate Change Mitigation
5. Walking and Cycling
8. Protect the Environment

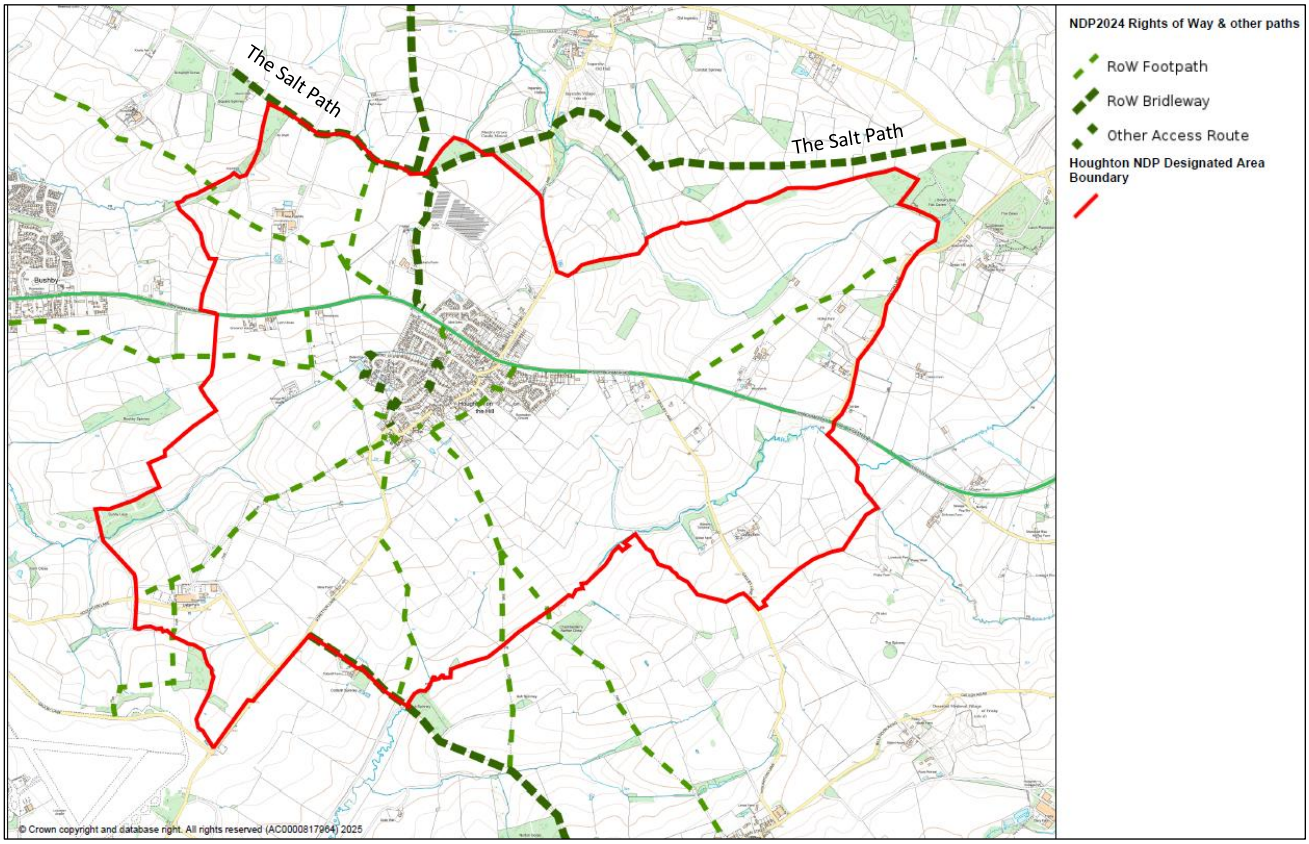

Figure 6-13 Existing Footpaths and Bridleways linking Houghton to neighbouring settlements.

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

162. Houghton has an extensive network of footpaths within the village and into the surrounding countryside. This includes a link to an ancient Salt Path linking the east coast with central England which locally crosses Ingarsby Lane close by the Parish boundary. All footpaths are well used by local and non-local walkers, as well as people moving around the village to shop, go to school and to visit friends and families. Many footpaths terminate at St. Catharine's church originally providing access from remote farms to a place of worship. Equally these paths provided access to the countryside for farm workers, and to visit other villages in the area.

163. National Cycle Route 63 passes along the Stoughton airfield road just south of the village. This route continues westwards into the city of Leicester providing a marked cycling route into our closest city centre.

164. Most journeys outside Houghton are made by private car. One reason for this is that public transport by bus is only east-west along the A47 and is infrequent and can be unreliable. Another is that footpaths are generally poorly maintained and walking and cycling routes are considered unsafe by a considerable proportion of the community. Possible walking and cycling destinations outside the DA are numerous and include:

Along the A47:

a) Leicester (work and leisure)
b) Billesdon Surgery, Bushby surgery.
c) Billesdon or Scraptoft Post Office
d) Thurnby Coop
e) Coles and Parsons nurseries

Other directions, including field walks:

f) Oadby shopping, choice of supermarkets and banks.
g) Great Glen (dentist, Post Office, U3A)
h) Social and dining options: Billesdon, Thurnby, Keyham, Hungarton, Scraptoft

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

165. CQ#28 indicates that residents make significant use of and greatly value footpaths in the village and surrounding countryside. This was also supported by the responses to the YPQ.

166. CQ#22 indicates significant support for having safe walking and cycling links in new developments, and for improving the footpath/cycleway between Houghton and Bushby to provide a safer alternative to the busy 60 mph single carriageway A47 trunk road.

POLICY EV5: WATER MANAGEMENT AND WATER-COURSES

Development sites should conform to the Village Design Guide & Codes, and:

a) be built to manage surface water sustainably, as a minimum in accordance with the most up to date regulations, and following expert guidance on mitigating adverse impacts of climate change;

b) not harm existing watercourses or ponds, or reduce water quality, within or beyond the Settlement Boundary, and if necessary, enact appropriate mitigation measures;

c) not prevent the continuation of existing natural or manmade drainage features within the development site unless appropriate mitigation measures are in place.

ADDRESSING NDP OBJECTIVES:

2. Climate Change Mitigation
8. Protect the Environment

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:

167. As its name might convey Houghton on the Hill is not prone to flooding. However effective and efficient manmade and natural water courses are, and will continue to be, important in ensuring proper management of surface water.

168. The River Sence, which forms part of the eastern boundary to the NDP area, is a tributary of the River Soar and is known to support populations of water vole and native freshwater crayfish, while otters also utilise it. The NDP area also includes other watercourses and ponds (Figure 6-8).

169. There is potential for localised surface water flooding at times of heavy or prolonged rainfall. Concerns have been raised by residents about pollution of watercourses from animal waste and overflow from Houghton sewage works into Bushby Brook.

EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED:

170. Severn Trent is the water supplier and wastewater collection handler. It has been consulted during the preparation of this plan.

171. Environment Agency data show that Houghton sewage farm overflowed into Bushby Brook 53 times in 2022, 102 times in 2023 and 79 times in 2024.

7 Progress, Use and Maintenance of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

172. Houghton PC will maintain regular contact with HDC to monitor the implementation of the NDP and consider the need to review it in response to changing national, district and local requirements. The completed plan is only useful if the policies within it are periodically reviewed, and their results monitored. This process is the responsibility of Houghton PC.

173. The continuing accuracy and relevance of the NDP should be considered annually by Houghton PC including assessing the conformity between the NDP and the Harborough LP. A specific aspect is the weight of the NDP policies being applied to planning decisions as determined by HDC as the LPA.

174. A more extensive review is expected to take place about every 5 years.

8 Appendix 1 – Houghton Services and Community Facilities

8.1 Community Facilities and Services

8.1.1 Houghton C of E Primary School

175. Houghton Primary School is a well-respected and valued facility within the community and an important contributor to community cohesion. While educational provision is outside the remit of neighbourhood planning, there are aspects of planning which can have significant effects on the school, in terms of the numbers of children attending the school, and their safety travelling to and from the school.

176. As demonstrated by the new housing development in the early 2020s, a large influx of primary age children into Houghton at about the same time, cannot always be accommodated by the local school. Children have to be driven to schools beyond the village creating the negative impacts of increased traffic flow, congestion and pollution. At these alternative schools, children and parents develop closer relationships with people outside the village than with those within it. Phasing the build of new houses over a number of years could assist the school in absorbing an influx of pupils enabling them to create local friendships and promote community involvement.

177. The ageing demographic of the community and the identified under-occupancy of the housing stock reduces the in-catchment pupil numbers. Building smaller houses to facilitate both older people downsizing, and young families staying in the village could have a significant effect. See Policy H1 and the Housing Needs Assessment.

178. Improving the safety of access to the school by walking and cycling would increase safety and promote healthy exercise for the pupils.

8.1.2 Secondary schooling.

179. There is no easy access to secondary schooling for teenagers from Houghton. The nearest school is Manor High School in Oadby, but this has an admission policy which effectively obstructs entry for Houghton residents. Most Houghton teenagers attend Beauchamp School, but since this is not the nearest school, there is no supplied or subsidised transport to the school. Parents are compelled to pay close to £1000 a year for a private school bus, or take children to the school by car.

8.1.3 Health Service – GP Practice.

180. Houghton parish lies within the catchment area of Billesdon GP practice and constitutes the largest settlement within that catchment. The Billesdon practice has its main surgery and dispensary facility within the village of Billesdon, and a second surgery in the village of Bushby. Houghton has no surgery facility but does have a private pharmacy which cooperates with the Billesdon practice for dispensing prescriptions and provides separate pharmacy advisory services.

181. Houghton has a high proportion of older residents that may have above average medical needs. The only public transport between Houghton and Billesdon is a bus service which runs a two-hourly service during most of the day when the surgery is open. Most patients from Houghton travel to either of the surgeries by private car. This can be a challenge for older and infirm patients who may rely on family, taxis or volunteer drivers.

182. The practice has approximately 7,500 patients who are supported by 6 GP's whose days in clinic equate to 3.9 FTE (full time equivalents), giving a doctor/patient ratio currently of 1:1250. For comparison the figure widely used as a "safe" number is 1:1800 and the national average figure is 1:1923.

183. The surgery runs GP clinics each weekday, typically staffed by 3 or 4 doctors. Additional services include Nurse and Health Care Assistant appointments, health and wellbeing/social prescribers, mental health practitioner, pharmacists, and First Contact Physiotherapists.

184. While the practice is aware of potential housing developments within the practice area Its forward planning is based on retaining the current surgery and associated facilities in Billesdon. Current and foreseeable demand does not justify any additional surgery locations within the catchment area.

8.1.4 Other Health Services

185. The Village Pharmacy on Main Street is a small commercial business which is very well used and highly regarded by the community. It has a link to the Billesdon Surgery and can arrange prescriptions and repeat prescriptions. The location is central to the village but the space in the current building is very cramped.

186. There are no other medically related or care services in the village. Any other medical need (e.g. Dentist, Physiotherapy, Mental Health) must be accessed by travelling out of the village, usually to Leicester. Due to the infrequent bus service this usually means travel by car or taxi. CQ#19 shows 96% of respondent households use a car to access health services. This can present problems for the elderly or infirm.

8.1.5 Houghton Village Hall

187. The Village Hall stands on Main Street near to St Catharine's church. The land was given to the village and a separate financial donation by a local resident enabled the hall to be built in 1921. Since then it has been considerably adapted with outbuildings and extensions added to the north side of the hall and a porch with toilet facilities put on the front.

188. The hall and land is held in a charitable trust as a space for exercise, education and social activities and is managed by a team of Trustees (UK registered charity number 521432). The building is primarily for community use in the village. There are several regular activities such as WI, yoga, karate and children's playgroups. Every Friday a free community coffee morning takes place between 10am and noon. The hall is also available for hire for events such as children's birthday parties and village fundraising events. Houghton Bowls Club is based at the village hall.

189. Currently the main hall is in good condition, although the energy-efficiency of the building is poor since this was not an issue considered in its design. Out-buildings and extensions added to the north side of the hall over 70 years ago are now beyond their useful life and considerable re-development of this area will be required.

8.1.6 Houghton Field Association

190. Houghton Field is an area of land of 7.8 acres on the edge of the village. The land is held in a charitable trust as a recreation ground for the benefit of residents. The field and its facilities are managed by the trustees of Houghton Field Association (UK Registered Charity No. 521431). The facilities consist of a pavilion/changing rooms, two adult and one junior football pitches, three tennis courts, children's playground, basketball hoop/outdoor youth pod and car park. There is ample open space for informal recreational activities including a perimeter path with beautiful views over open countryside.

191. Houghton Field is home to Houghton Rangers Senior and Junior football clubs and Houghton Tennis Club. The pavilion hosts a number of user groups including bridge club, table tennis club, youth club and other social groups and is available for hire for social functions.

192. Houghton Field is an asset to the village giving the community the opportunity to enjoy sports and a variety of recreational activities and play. It also provides open access to the countryside which dog walkers use daily.

193. The project to replace the ageing pavilion is underway during 2025/6.

8.1.7 Sport and recreation

194. In addition to the facilities at Houghton Field, the community also has a thriving Cricket Club with its own field at the southern end of the village and a Bowls Club based at the Village Hall. Less formal activities include an informal running club which has exercise runs around the village each week, and a Pétanque club based at the Old Black Horse pub.

195. There are several informal walking groups within the village who meet socially for countryside walks, both from the village and throughout Leicestershire and Rutland.

196. The Parish Council provides an area of allotments within the village which are tenanted by members of the Houghton Gardening Club. Demand for the allotment plots remains high.

8.1.8 Places of Worship

197. The church of St Catharine is part of the Cornerstone Team which includes Thurnby & Bushby, St Mary & All Saints Stoughton, and Living Hope Thurmaston. Its spire stands as a landmark from all approaches to the village and is floodlit at night. The church is a well-loved feature of the village`s oldest heritage, often featured in publications.

198. Regular worship happens each Sunday at 10.30am, Wednesday at 9.15am as well as for weddings, funerals and christenings. "Explore", a monthly gathering for families, happens once a month at 4pm in the Rectory.

199. The Church is frequently used by the village school, and for occasional village functions, such as concerts, for numbers larger than can be accommodated in other public buildings. While the church is in fair condition it fails to be easily accessible by those with mobility issues and does not allow for a range of activities that we wish to develop. The Houghton Parochial Church Council have ambitions to extensively re-order the church to improve the facilities, both for worshipers and for general community use as a meeting and concert venue as a well as potential coffee shop.

200. There is a burial ground adjacent to St Catharine's Church which provides for the village needs. The remaining space is limited but reasonably plentiful. It is not possible for the burial ground to be extended.

201. The Methodist Chapel and Schoolroom have a small congregation. Both the Chapel and the adjacent Schoolroom are also used for community events. The Chapel hosts well-attended monthly "Talks in the Chapel", the Music Society and Houghton Singers meetings. The Schoolroom is used regularly for Parish Council meetings and the Houghton Food Bank.

8.1.9 Voluntary Organisations and Clubs

202. A wide range of organisations and clubs are active within the village and contact details are listed monthly in the village magazine, Houghton News.

8.2 Commercial Services

203. The following services are important to residents of the village, the parish and further afield, and are widely used. Some of them are key resources as defined by HDC in assessing the hierarchy of settlements.

- Food retail outlets
- Post Office and News centre
- Village Public Houses
- Filling Station & car repair workshop
- Hairdresser
- Beauty salons

8.2.1 Solar Farm

204. In 2016 a Solar Farm was constructed on agricultural land to the north of the village on part of Ingarsby Hall Farm whose landholding is mainly in Hungarton parish.

205. While the solar farm is in a location where its visual impact is mitigated by the shape of the immediate local landscape it still forms a prominent feature, visible particularly from the north and east. The essential position of Houghton on the Hill on the western boundary of the High-Leicestershire landform ensures that any such facility occupying a large area of land almost inevitably becomes prominently visible. This effect is evidenced by the HDC Landscape Capacity Assessment (2016).

9 Appendix 2 – Community projects to be considered

9.1 Facilities for young people

206. In a separate consultation Houghton's young residents commented that there is little for teenagers to do. Site Allocation policies seek to provide a commuted sum for activity equipment. Within Houghton there are several play areas for younger children, but little for teenagers and this could be addressed by commuted sums from new developments to, for example, build a Multiple Use Games Area (MUGA).

207. In common with many similar communities, organised youth activities are constrained by a shortage of volunteer leaders. For example, in the uniformed groups, cubs and scouts struggle for leaders and helpers, and brownies and guides have had to close. A very positive exception to this general situation is the local football club where youth teams for both boys and girls are thriving, with the assistance of many parents.

208. For informal activity there were requests in the YPQ for some form of meeting place, perhaps a coffee bar. While provision of a stand-alone facility is unlikely to be viable, integrating this activity into the facilities offered by the Village Hall, Houghton Field pavilion, or St. Catharine's Church is an option.

9.2 Facilities for older people

209. Houghton has a larger than average proportion of older people, and this is expected to increase over the period of this plan (para. 194, Table 6.1 of the AECOM HNA). While the community has a good range of social activities, a minority of responses from the CQ express feelings of isolation and loneliness. A number of residents complain of being unaware of events in the village.

210. This suggests that knowledge of local activities and events should be improved. The village has a monthly newsletter "Houghton News" which is delivered each month about 350 subscribers. The village also has a moderated Facebook page with over 1000 registered users. Both these provide a wide range of village information but are not necessarily being accessed by all residents. One possible proposal has been to provide Houghton News freely to all the village, but the ensuing requirements for finance and delivery have not been resolved.

211. Another option is to provide more social activities attractive to older people. St. Catharine's church operates a soup-lunch in the village hall once a month, and the Village Hall provides a coffee morning in the hall every Friday. There have been suggestions of forming a local U3A group to encourage more social meeting and exercise opportunities.

212. Some of the community facilities are not easily accessible for people with mobility problems. This may be either by entrances which have steep slopes, steps, no ramp options, or just a relatively long walk from car access points. Lack of suitable transport is a major concern for older residents, even within the village. Pre-Covid-19, volunteer drivers

operated a scheme known as “Houghton Helpline” to provide car transport to locations within the village, and also to (mostly medical) facilities in Leicester, Harborough and beyond. This voluntary organisation no longer operates due to a combination of ageing drivers, and the complications of modern administration including CBS checks.

9.3 Traffic management initiatives

213. To address concerns raised by residents the following measures should be considered:-

a) Street parking causing congestion in the village is seen as a problem to residents (CQ#24, 498 responses). New developments should seek to mitigate this where possible e.g., providing suitable walking and cycling routes including road crossings.

b) The speed limit on A47 should be continuous at 40 mph or lower from the eastern approach to Houghton through to the western boundary of the Parish. Contributions from developers should be sought for speed monitoring along the A47, particularly if there is further development alongside the A47 in the village.

c) Excessive speeding through the village, particularly on Main Street and St Catharine’s Way remains a problem. Speed monitoring devices have been installed on these streets.

d) Residents support a continued bus service and wish to see it improved with a route to Oadby (CQ#20). In a separate consultation Houghton’s young residents commented that the current bus service is too irregular and not late enough in the evenings. They support the above comment that a bus to/from Oadby would be welcome.

9.4 Encouragement of walking and cycling

214. Our rural parish enjoys many rights-of-way, bridleways and footpaths within its own limits, and linking to neighbouring settlements including a section of the historic Salt Path stretching from the Midlands to the Wash (Figure 6-11) . In normal times these are a source of exercise and well-being for many. During Covid-19 times they were an even more valued resource for the same reasons.

215. The Parish Council is in the process of applying for a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) to define a Right-of-way around the proposed Golf Course to preserve access to the countryside to the east of the village for the community.

216. The combination of narrow streets in the central core of the village, and fast traffic on both the A47 and the minor roads leading north and south from the settlement, increases the risks for cyclists and potentially deters cycling. The establishment of the 20mph limit throughout the village (except for 40mph on the A47) has improved the situation within the settlement itself. The lack of safe cycle access to the west and into Leicester is a prominent concern.

217. Some years ago, LCC Highways re-laid the tarmac footpath from Houghton to Thurnby and this was informally used by cyclists to avoid the unrestricted section of the A47. This path has not been maintained and is now difficult even for walkers, with cracked and broken surface and overhanging trees and bushes. The provision of a safe route to Leicester, either

alongside the A47, or following the ancient trackway of Covert Lane would be a community benefit.

218. Similarly, since most of the teenagers in the village go to school in Oadby and have friendship-groups there, a safe cycle route to Oadby would be beneficial. This would also link Houghton to National Cycleway 63 and provide an alternative route to Leicester.

219. Within the community greater awareness of walking and cycle routes could be promoted by improved and well-maintained signage. In many rural communities the Parish Council provides walking and cycling maps and guides, an option Houghton PC may wish to consider.

220. There is little needed in terms of physical facilities to encourage cycling within the village, but the installation of marked cycle parking spaces with racks suitable for security locks at prominent village venues, might be an inexpensive encouragement to cyclists.

9.5 Village welcome/transport information packs

221. Recent new housing developments have included in their community obligations the provision of transport information packs. Since there is only one public transport service to the village and this is sufficiently infrequent to be of use to many residents such packs are not useful. Most users are able to get better information using mobile apps.

222. The volunteers who edit, publish and deliver Houghton News (see Section 9.2 above) deliver a complimentary copy to each new resident moving into the village. This is a much more useful action that the provision of standard “travel packs”. Perhaps the Section 106 provision for the travel packs could be transferred to effective community use with Houghton News.

9.6 Community Open Spaces

223. The response to the CQ showed considerable support for more open and quiet green spaces around the settlement, which could take a variety of forms including a community wood. Perimeter paths around biodiversity space in new developments have contributed to this and may do so in future. There is also the option of creating additional such spaces where small areas of suitable land may be available.

9.7 Community car pool/club

224. Houghton residents own a very high number of cars, averaging more than 2 cars per household. While this is an inevitable response to the lack of adequate public transport it is neither good for the finances of those households nor the environment. Many 2nd or 3rd cars do very low mileages. Older people may be worried about losing their independence.

225. A community car pool/club would provide advantages in costs, the environment, and options for older people. This would be particularly useful, and also improving the financial viability if it was used by volunteer drivers. It might also stimulate the adoption of electric cars in the village and contribute to reducing the current parking problems

10 Appendix 3 – Modification Statement for Pre-submission Consultation (Reg.14)

This statement is prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Statement

We, the qualifying body for the Houghton on the Hill Neighbourhood Development Plan, consider that the Submission Version of the plan and the accompanying documents are a significant modification of the existing Neighbourhood Plan for the following reasons:

- *They now include one site allocation for housing plus a reserve site. The original plan contained only a reserve site.*
- *They include several other new policies which were absent from the original Plan.*
- *There are substantial changes to some of the existing policies.*

As a result, we anticipate that the Plan will require to go through Examination and Referendum stages before adoption.

Houghton on the Hill Parish Council,
Qualifying Body for the Houghton Neighbourhood Development Plan, May 2025

226. The NDP(2018) was produced at a time when three significant planning applications had already been approved which in total provided for the majority of dwellings required under the Local Plan. This consequently limited the scope of NDP(2018) but the situation is now quite different. Following the 2021 "Call for Sites", many were offered and reported in the HDC SHELAA. Some applications for new residential housing development in Houghton area have been submitted but none approved as at the date of this document.

227. Because the situations are quite different many fundamental changes have been made in the drafting of an updated NDP, specifically in respect of:

a. seeking to provide an area of separation between adjacent villages;
b. allocation of a development site, having an appropriate mix of housing to satisfy a new requirement for the designated area;
c. greater emphasis on addressing the impacts of climate change;
d. improving biodiversity,
e. providing greater emphasis on protecting and enhancing walking and cycling provision within the village and footpath connections to the countryside.

228. Independent specialists have provided an objective assessment of potential development sites and an in-depth review of housing needs for the DA. These inputs have been valuable when drafting the updated plan as have new consultations with residents, businesses and landowners.

229. The Village Design Statement (VDS) previously contained within NDP(2018) is now replaced by a more comprehensive companion document "Village Design Guide and Codes" (VDG&C) to be read in conjunction with, and forming part of, the NDP.

230. The following compares policies in NDP(2018) with those in this revised NDP. Policies discarded, are indicated as "Discarded", any retained unchanged as "Retain Unch", those retained but changed as "Retain & Change", and new policies as "New". Many policies are new while some have been retained but altered to better reflect the current situations. Explanatory notes are included. The Policies are addressed in the sequence shown in the NDP(2018). A different sequence is used in the revised NDP.

Section D Design of Sites and Buildings (Objectives 1 & 2)		
Policies in NDP(2018)	**Action Re Policy**	**Policies in the revised NDP**
POLICY D1: SUSTAINING THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA	Discarded	Replaced by a new policy D1 DESIGN (see below) with reference to the VDG&C.
POLICY D2: SUSTAINING THE CHARACTER OF HOUGHTON OUTSIDE THE CONSERVATION AREA	Discarded	Replaced by a new policy D1 DESIGN (see below) with reference to the VDG&C.
POLICY D3: SUSTAINING THE RURAL CHARACTER OF HOUGHTON THROUGH THE USE OF GREEN SPACES	Discarded	Replaced by new Policy L6 IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES INCLUDING THOSE FOR SPORT AND RECREATION.
DESIGN: The Village Design Statement (VDS) at para. 1.5 and para. 1.6 included some general design guidance but no specific policy was presented, as details for sites were already agreed by HDC.	NEW	POLICY D1: DESIGN AND POLICY D2: HOUSING DESIGN Requires designers and developers to consider design guidance contained in the VDG&C which seeks to identify and protect the distinctive elements which together make up the special qualities of the landscape setting and the built heritage of the DA.
Extensions and alterations were mentioned in the VDS but not as a Plan Policy	NEW	POLICY D3: EXTENSIONS & MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING DWELLINGS WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY Provides a focussed reference when read in conjunction with the VDG&C such as for planning applications.
Energy Efficiency and Climate Change were mentioned in the VDS, but not as a Plan Policy.	NEW	POLICY D4: ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND MITIGATING THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE Provides new, and greater, emphasis on a range of important topics.

Section H Housing Provision (Objective 3)		
Policies in NDP(2018)	**Action Re Policy**	**Policies in the Revised NDP**
POLICY H1: GENERAL HOUSING PROVISION	Retain & Change	Now included in site allocation policy L3A. See Section L "Use of Land" below.
POLICY H2: SPECIALIST HOUSING FOR PEOPLE IN LATER LIFE	Retain & Change	Now included in site allocation policy L3A. See Section L "Use of Land" below.
Housing mix was removed from the draft of NDP(2018) following advice, because housing requirements were already covered by consented planning applications.	NEW	POLICY H1: HOUSING MIX To address the current over-provision of large dwellings, and better meet the needs identified by independent housing needs assessment and the Community Questionnaire.
Affordable housing had already been determined by HDC as part of consented applications prior to the writing of the NDP.	NEW	POLICY H2: AFFORDABLE HOUSING Sets guidelines to complement the criteria set out by the LPA.
Traffic and Transport were mentioned at para. 4.4 but no specific policy was included.	NEW	POLICY H3: PARKING & TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS Housing developments completed in recent years included insufficient parking provision particularly for visitors. Together with narrow carriageways this leads to a greater incidence of on-pavement parking, and seriously restricted carriageway width.

Section L Use of Land (Objective 4)		
Policies in NDP(2018)	**Action Re Policy**	**Policies in the Revised NDP**
The Settlement Boundary (SB) in the made plan was pre-determined by already approved applications. The Reserve Site was included (wrongly it transpires) within the boundary line.	NEW	POLICY L1: SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY With the need to provide for more residential housing development, an allocated but as yet undeveloped site is specified in the NDP, hence the boundary had to be redrawn to include it.
Areas of Separation (AoS) were not considered when drawing up NDP(2018).	NEW	POLICY L2: AREA OF SEPARATION A large number of SHELAA sites were offered west of Houghton village and east of the adjacent villages of Bushby & Thurnby and Scraptoft. This policy seeks to reduce the risk of these villages becoming joined and seeks to retain the geographical distinction and visual separation of the built areas.
No site allocations were made as consents had already been granted.	NEW	POLICY L3A is a Site Allocation. POLICY L3B provides for a Reserve Site.
No infill policy as consents to satisfy most of the HDC requirements had already been granted.	NEW	POLICY L4: INFILL HOUSING Provides basis for infill development to support site allocation L3A in satisfying the emerging HDC Local Plan.
Policy D2 refers to VDS guidance on developments within agricultural areas, but there is no specific policy.	NEW	POLICY L5: DEVELOPMENT WITHIN AGRICULTURAL AREAS Provides basis to re-purpose agricultural buildings for non-residential purposes
POLICY D3: SUSTAINING THE RURAL CHARACTER OF HOUGHTON THROUGH THE USE OF GREEN SPACES	Existing discarded & replaced by NEW	POLICY L6: IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES INCLUDING THOSE FOR SPORT AND RECREATION This revised policy seeks to protect important open space, and sport & recreation sites.

Section S Services & Facilities (Objective 5)		
Policies in NDP(2018)	**Action Re Policy**	**Policies in the Revised NDP**
POLICY S1: RETENTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF KEY SERVICES AND FACILITIES	Retain & Change	POLICY S1: RETENTION OF KEY FACILITIES POLICY S2: RETAIL Includes additional criteria that should be considered in decision making.
POLICY S2: INFRASTRUCTURE	Retain & Change	POLICY S3: INFRASTRUCTURE A broader and more detailed policy including reference to developer contributions to support community infrastructure.
POLICY S3: PROVISION OF HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND	Discarded	Full fibre-to-the -premises (FTTP) broadband now available throughout most of the DA so a separate policy is not now required. Reference to technology (including broadband) is included in Policy S3.

Section EV Environment (Objectives 6, 7 & 8)		
Policies in NDP(2018)	**Action Re Policy**	**Policies in the Revised NDP**
POLICY E1: CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND BIODIVERSITY	Retain & Change	POLICY EV1: CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND BIODIVERSITY Provides more extensive measures for protection now developers are required to enhance biodiversity by at least 10%. New map shows biodiversity corridors needing to be protected.
Trees, hedges and wildflowers were not specified within Policy E1 above	NEW	POLICY EV2: TREES, HEDGES AND WILDFLOWERS Provides guidance with regard to protection of existing, and provision of additional, hedgerows, trees etc. in new developments.
HERITAGE ASSETS were not addressed.	NEW	POLICY EV3: HERITAGE ASSETS This policy seeks to protect such assets when developments are being considered.
Footpaths were referenced in Appendix 4 Para. 1.1.5 “Community Projects to be Considered” but not included as a Policy.	NEW	POLICY EV4: FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS, CYCLEWAYS AND ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE Policy to ensure proper consideration is given to these important topics when new developments are being considered.
Water management was referenced in the VDS but not included as a Policy.	NEW	POLICY EV5: WATER MANAGEMENT AND WATER-COURSES Measures are set out to better protect and enhance the management of water in new developments.

Section EM Employment (Objective 9)		
Policies in NDP(2018)	**Action Re Policy**	**Policies in the Revised NDP**
Little stakeholder support was evidenced so no policy provided.	NEW	POLICY EM1: EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT Seeks to protect existing employment and provide guidance for any new proposals.
Working from home was not prevalent at the time. The impact of COVID-19, coupled with improvements in technology, have since encouraged significant increase in working from home, hence need for a policy.	NEW	POLICY EM2: WORKING FROM HOME Supports planning applications that enable home working but in a controlled way.
Farm diversification did not have a high profile in 2018 but has become more prevalent as an economic benefit/necessity in the countryside, hence the inclusion of a policy.	NEW	POLICY L5: DEVELOPMENT WITHIN AGRICULTURAL AREAS Acknowledges that diversification can often provide the gateway to financial viability for a farming enterprise and provide new employment opportunities for the local community.

11 Appendix 4 – NDP Evidence Base

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

    http://www.houghtononthehillpc.org.uk

232. This provides online access to explanatory information about the Neighbourhood Planning process, and the way we have implemented this at Houghton. It includes access to online copies of the Consultation Drafts of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the accompanying Village Design Guide and Codes. For community interaction it includes both a Newsline page and a FAQ page.

233. Or going direct to the Evidence Base section of this site at:
    https://www.houghtononthehillpc.org.uk/background-information1

234. This provides access to copies of the main reference material for the NDP. We have provided copies here of information which is publicly available elsewhere, but by having the specific copies and version of these files on our own site we hope this will make the reference material robust against third party updates to documents, and editing of their own websites, at later dates.

235. The information is grouped by origin in terms of National, Local Planning Authority, Houghton PC commissioned reports etc which we intend will make material easily accessible.

12 Appendix 5 - AECOM Site Assessment, Executive Summary

The full report can be viewed on the link HERE

236. AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent site assessment for the Houghton on the Hill (HotH) Neighbourhood Development Plan 2023 on behalf of HotH Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. The work undertaken was agreed with the Working Party and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) as part of the national Neighbourhood Planning Technical Support Programme led by Locality.

237. HotH Neighbourhood Area was designated on 31 July 2015 and the first Neighbourhood Plan was made on 05 April 2018. The Neighbourhood Plan Working Party are currently undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan Review.

238. In total, 11 sites were identified in the Neighbourhood Area, seven of which were submitted by landowners, and six from the Harborough Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). All of these sites have been assessed to establish their suitability for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan for housing.

239. Of the 11 sites assessed, six sites are considered potentially suitable for allocation for housing, subject to identified constraints being resolved or mitigated:

- Site South of Uppingham Road
- Site Land to the north of Uppingham Road
- Site Land north of Stretton Lane
- Site Land north of Uppingham Road (east)
- Site Land at Weir Lane
- Site Land off Main Street, by Church
- Site Land east of Main Street, by Willowsic

The following four sites are considered unsuitable for allocation:

- Site Land south of the A47 Uppingham Road, west of HotH
- Site Land north of Uppingham Road (west)
- Site Land north of A47, east of HotH
- Site Land off proposed re-routed Gaulby Lane

240. This assessment is the first step in the consideration of site allocations. From the shortlist of suitable and potentially suitable sites identified in this report, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party should engage with Harborough District Council, landowners and the community to explore options for site allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan Review which best meet its objectives, and the development needs of the neighbourhood area.

13 Appendix 6 - AECOM Housing Needs Assessment, Executive Summary

The full report can be viewed on the link HERE

241. Houghton on the Hill is a Neighbourhood Area (NA) located in the district of Harborough. The NA boundary covers the areas administered by Houghton on the Hill Parish Council.

242. It should be noted that since 2016, changes have been made to the Parish boundary with land transferred from Hungarton parish to Houghton on the Hill parish. Whilst this was agreed in 2016, the legal implementation has taken several years. As a result, it has not been possible to recreate the NA boundary exactly using Census Output Areas (OAs). The OAs used to recreate the NA have been agreed in advance with the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party and are explained in further detail (with a map) in Appendix A. This means that the 2021 Census data throughout the report relates to a slightly wider area than the NA as it incorporates part of Hungarton which falls outside of the NA. Census data in the tables throughout the report is therefore represented as percentages rather than raw figures. The data is still considered robust, with the overall characteristics of the NA still reflected when using this proxy area, with Houghton on the Hill the larger geography.

243. It is important to note that parish level Census data is available for limited datasets, with the parish boundary at the time of the 2021 Census aligning with the NA. It is not possible to use this data throughout the report as not all of the datasets are available, the data is not comparable to 2011, and the available datasets not all available in suitable detail. A mix of geographies cannot be used throughout the report. However, headline data for the population, number of households, and number of dwellings is possible. 2021 Census data for the exact NA shows a population of 1,830, with 726 households.

244. The 2021 Census recorded 2,091 individuals in the study area, indicating an increase of 309 people since the 2011 Census. This is approximately 261 more individuals than the exact NA, further highlighting that the study area used predominantly represents the NA population, households, and dwelling stock.

245. There has been some development in the study area in recent years. Harborough District Council has provided data showing that 110 new homes have been built since 2011. This takes into account the changes in parish geography over the decade. It is not known precisely what proportion of these are market/affordable, the dwelling type, or the number of bedrooms. This number of additional dwellings is slightly higher than that indicated in the 2021 Census, due to development continuing past March 2021.

246. This Executive Summary details the conclusions of each chapter of this Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), addressing each of the themes agreed with the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party at the outset of the research.

13.1 Affordability and Affordable Housing

13.1.1 Current tenure profile

247. In the study area 85.0% of properties are owned, compared to 75.8% in Harborough and 61.3% in England. As a result, a smaller proportion of households rent socially and privately and there are fewer options available for those lacking the funds to buy. Whilst the percentage of people owning their home through shared ownership in the NA is similar to that in the District, it is nearly double that of the national average due to a recent injection of supply.

248. Since 2011 a large increase can be seen in the percentage of those privately renting or buying their home through shared ownership. This could indicate persistent affordability challenges, or reflect the tenure offering associated with specific recent developments.

13.1.2 Affordability

249. The overall mean average house price in the study area has increased by 47.8% between 2013 and 2022, from £338,583 to £500,500. The median, which is the middle number when you sort the data from smallest to largest has increased by 76.9% between 2013 and 2022, increasing from £302,500 to £535,000.

250. The average total household income locally was £48,800 in 2020. Harborough's gross individual lower quartile earnings were £15,363 in 2022. To estimate the income of households with two lower quartile earners, this figure is doubled to £30,726.

251. It appears that local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of a higher than average income, is likely to remain out of reach to most. The median house price would require an annual income 65% higher than the current average.

252. Private renting is generally only affordable to higher earners. Affordability is improved if households are able or willing to dedicate a larger proportion of their incomes to rental costs, although this has repercussions for other quality of life aspects and cannot be assumed to suit all individuals' circumstances.

253. First Homes with a discount of 30%, 40% and 50% are not affordable to any of the income groups considered. As such, the maximum discount should be sought if desired, even if this tends to primarily benefit above average earners.

254. Shared ownership appears to be slightly more affordable than First Homes but is broadly accessible to the same groups. Government has recently announced that the minimum equity share for shared ownership will fall to 10% of the property value. If this is delivered in the NA, it will make shared ownership easier to access for more people.

255. Discount on average rents would make Rent to Buy affordability, in terms of household income required, more affordable than First Homes and comparable to 10% Shared Ownership.

256. Affordable rented housing is generally affordable to households with two lower earners depending on their household size (average earning households are unlikely to be eligible). However, households with a single lower earner appear unable to afford any of the tenures considered including socially rented units. Many such individuals will, if unable to secure a social rented dwelling require additional subsidy through Housing Benefit to access housing.

13.1.3 The need for Affordable Housing

257. AECOM estimates the need for 3.8 affordable rented homes per annum in the study area, equating to a total of 45.3 over the plan period.

258. AECOM estimate potential demand for 3.6 affordable home ownership dwellings per annum in the study area, equating to a total of 42.7 over the Neighbourhood Plan period. The estimate and assumptions used is detailed in Appendix D.

259. Local Authority waiting list data shows that in the ward of Thurnby & Houghton, there are currently 196 households in need. When pro-rated to the NA, this suggests that 44 households may currently be in need of affordable housing, of which the majority have a need for 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom properties.

13.1.4 Affordable Housing policy

260. Harborough's adopted policy on this subject (Policy H2) requires 40% of all new housing to be affordable. The Local Plan guideline mix of 75% rented to 25% ownership for the District appears to offer a suitable benchmark for the tenure mix within affordable housing for the NA as well as the wider District, and also complies with the various minimum requirements mandated nationally.

261. Of the 25% affordable ownership, a split of 25% First Homes, 0% Shared Ownership and 0% Rent to Buy is suggested.

262. Table 4-6 summarises the study area's position with regards to the expected delivery of Affordable Housing, and how this might ideally be apportioned among sub-categories of tenure to meet local needs over the Plan period. This exercise simply applies the housing requirement figure for the area to the Local Plan policy expectation, and shows the quantities of affordable housing for rent and sale that would be delivered if the tenure mix proposed in this HNA were to be rigidly enforced. In this sense it is hypothetical, and the outcomes in practice may differ, either as a result of measures taken in the neighbourhood plan (e.g. if the group plans for more housing (and therefore more affordable housing) than the local plan, or if the group decides to influence the tenure mix in other ways), or as a result of site-specific constraints.

263. This expected level of delivery does not meet the quantity of demand identified in the HNA estimates of the need for affordable housing. The recommendation is therefore that the policy requirement be met wherever possible, and for further avenues for delivering greater quantities of Affordable Housing (such as exception sites) to be explored.

Table 4-6: Estimated delivery of Affordable Housing in Houghton on the Hill

	Step in Estimation	Expected delivery
A	Indicative housing requirement plus residual NP target	70
B	Affordable housing quota (%) in LPA's Local Plan	40%
C	Potential total Affordable Housing in NA (A x B)	28
D	Rented % (e.g. social/ affordable rented)	75%
E	Rented number (C x D)	21
F	Affordable home ownership % (e.g. First Homes, Rent to Buy)	25%
G	Affordable home ownership number (C x F)	7

Source: AECOM estimate based on LPA's affordable housing policies, AECOM's indicative tenure mix

264. Affordable housing is typically provided and made financially viable by its inclusion as a proportion of larger market developments, as guided by Local Plan policy. However, if the community wishes to boost the supply of affordable housing, there are other, more proactive routes available for its provision. For example, using neighbourhood development orders, identifying exception sites or developing community land trusts are all ways of boosting the supply of affordable housing.

13.2 Type and Size

13.2.1 The current housing mix

265. The dominant form of housing in the NA is detached properties (66.7%), followed by semi-detached properties (22.8%). Terraced houses and flats make up a small proportion of the dwellings, accounting for just 7.0% and 3.6% respectively. Development over the past decade appears to have entrenched existing imbalances in the dwelling stock in favour of less dense options, which may be contributing to affordability issues.

266. The majority of dwellings in the NA have 4 or more bedrooms, accounting for 53.2% of properties – a much larger proportion compared to the district and national averages. This is followed by 3-bedroom properties at 28.2, 2 bedroom properties at 13.9% and 1 bedroom properties at 4.8%. Whilst there have been completions of smaller properties over the past decade, it can be seen that there is still a gap in the market for smaller and more affordable options.

13.2.2 Population characteristics

267. The population in the NA has seen a 3% larger growth than the population in Harborough between 2011 and 2021. In 2021, the 45-64 age group accounted for the largest proportion

of the population, however with a 5.4% decrease to 26.2%. The 15-24 and 25-44 age groups have seen the largest population changes at +43.8% and +42.3%, respectively. The NA has a smaller proportion of residents ages 0-44 and a higher proportion of residents ages 45-85+ compared to district and national averages.

268. The study area has a smaller proportion of one person households compared to Harborough and England whilst there is a larger proportion of family households compared to Harborough and England. A lack of smaller properties in the plan area partly explains the smaller proportion of one person households in the NA.

269. The non-dependent children category grew by 30.4% between 2011 and 2021 in the NA – a faster rate than the district average. This is potentially indicative of worsening affordability challenges for younger households.

270. In the study area, 89.1% of dwellings are under-occupied by at least one bedroom, whilst 62.3% of dwellings are under-occupied by two bedrooms. Whilst under-occupancy is high across all household types, it is particularly high in families under 66 with no children and families aged 66+, at 98.1% and 96.6% respectively. This may suggest that the larger housing isn't being occupied by households with the most family members, but by the people with the most wealth or by older people who have not chosen, or able, to move to smaller properties. There is some over-occupancy in the NA, with 1.4% of families under 66 with dependent children are living in potentially overcrowded conditions.

13.2.3 Future population and size needs

271. The total projected population for 2036 is 2,328. Future population growth can be expected to be driven by the oldest households, with an 87.0% increase expected in the 65 and over age group in the study area to 2036. This increase is much higher than the next largest increase of 20.0% for the 55 to 64 age group. The 24 and under and 25 to 34 age groups are expected to increase by 17.0% and 18.05 respectively, whilst the 35 to 54 age group is expected to increase the least of all age groups, at 7.0%.

272. In order to reach the suggested housing mix by the end of the plan period, priority should be given to 3 bedroom properties, equating to 48.4% of the size mix for new housing, followed by 2 bedrooms (39.8%) and 1 bedroom properties (11.8%). No dwellings with 4 or 5+ bedrooms are required to achieve the suggested mix. The key recommendation here is diversification away from a relatively skewed current mix, with a particular emphasis on the smallest options.

273. It is important to remember that other factors should be considered in determining the dwelling mix that is desirable in the NA or on any particular site. These include the specific characteristics of the nearby stock of housing (such as its condition and design), the role of the NA or site within the wider housing market area (linked to any Local Authority strategies or plans) and site-specific factors.

13.3 Specialist Housing for Older People

274. There is a total of 17 units of specialist accommodation in the NA at present, all of which are flats available for social rent.

275. In 2021 there was 262 people aged 75+ in the plan area, equating to 12.5% of the total population in the NA. This is expected to increase to 407 by the end of the plan period, which equates to 17.5% of the population.

276. The potential need for specialist housing with some form of additional care for older people can be estimated by bringing together data on population projections, rates of disability, and what tenure of housing the current 55-75 cohort occupy in the NA. This can be sense-checked using a toolkit based on national research and assumptions.

277. These two methods of estimating the future need in the study area produce a range of 36 to 37 specialist accommodation units that might be required during the Plan period. These estimates are based on the projected growth of the older population, thereby assuming that today's older households are already well accommodated. If this is found not to be the case, it would justify aspiring to exceed the range identified here.

278. Table 6-3 shows that of the 37 specialist housing units needed by the end of the plan period it is suggested that 15 (40.5%) should be for housing with care, of which 2 (13.3%) should be affordable and 13 (86.7%) should be market housing. It is also suggests that 22 (59.5%) are delivered as sheltered housing, of which 2 (9.1%) should be affordable and 20 (90.9%) should be market housing.

279. As noted above, the main unmet need in the NA is for market sheltered housing This could be satisfied by making sure all new housing is accessible and adaptable for people with lower support needs. Local Plan policy H5 Housing density, mix and standards currently requires 4% of dwellings on sites of 100 units or more to meet the accessible and adaptable standards set out in Building Regulations, Part M4(2) Category 2. A policy specific to the NA could increase this requirement in order to meet the need for market sheltered housing, though this would require discussion with HDC. The Working Party may also be able to encourage the adaptation of existing properties through grant schemes and other means (though it is acknowledged that Neighbourhood Plans may have limited influence over changes to the existing stock).

280. It is considered that the study area's position in the settlement hierarchy makes it a relatively less suitable location for specialist accommodation on the basis of the accessibility criteria and the considerations of cost-effectiveness above. As such, noting that there is no specific requirement or obligation to provide the specialist accommodation need arising from the study area entirely within the Neighbourhood Area boundaries, it is recommended it could be provided in a 'hub and spoke' model. In the case of the study area, suburban Leicester is considered to have potential to accommodate the specialist housing need arising from the Neighbourhood Area (i.e. to be the hub in the hub-and-spoke model).