

## Houghton on the Hill Settlement Profile

### Introduction

**General Location:** Houghton on the Hill (hereby referred to as Houghton) lies some seven miles east of the centre of Leicester, straddling the A47. It is equidistant between its closest neighbours Billesdon and Thurnby also on the A47. Houghton occupies a northern position in Harborough District, lying close to the boundary with Leicester City. Market Harborough is some 15 miles away to the south. Houghton parish's most immediate neighbours are Thurnby and Stoughton to the west, Hungarton to the north, Billesdon to the east, and Frisby, Gaulby, Kings Norton and Little Stretton to the south.

The bulk of the village is located to the south of the A47, with the historic clustering of activity along Main Street still being evident despite recent development. The parish area spreads approximately 1 mile north to south, and 3 miles east to west – it is one of the larger parishes in the Harborough District. A number of tributaries of Bushby Brook originate to the south west of the village before flowing westerly out of the parish. The River Sence passes through the south eastern side of the parish before forming the majority of Houghton's southerly border and flowing on towards Great Glen.

As discussed, Houghton's Main Street served as the historical centre of the village, lined by numerous 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings that comprise part of the Conservation Area. The village maintained its concentration around this area until shortly after WWII, where the arrival of four consecutive housing developments throughout 1950 – 1980 effectively tripled Houghton's population from 600 to 1500. Despite this, Houghton retains a strong independent village identity with each of the developments contributing individually to the 'whole character' of the village, with the aforementioned centre continuing to be heart village activity.

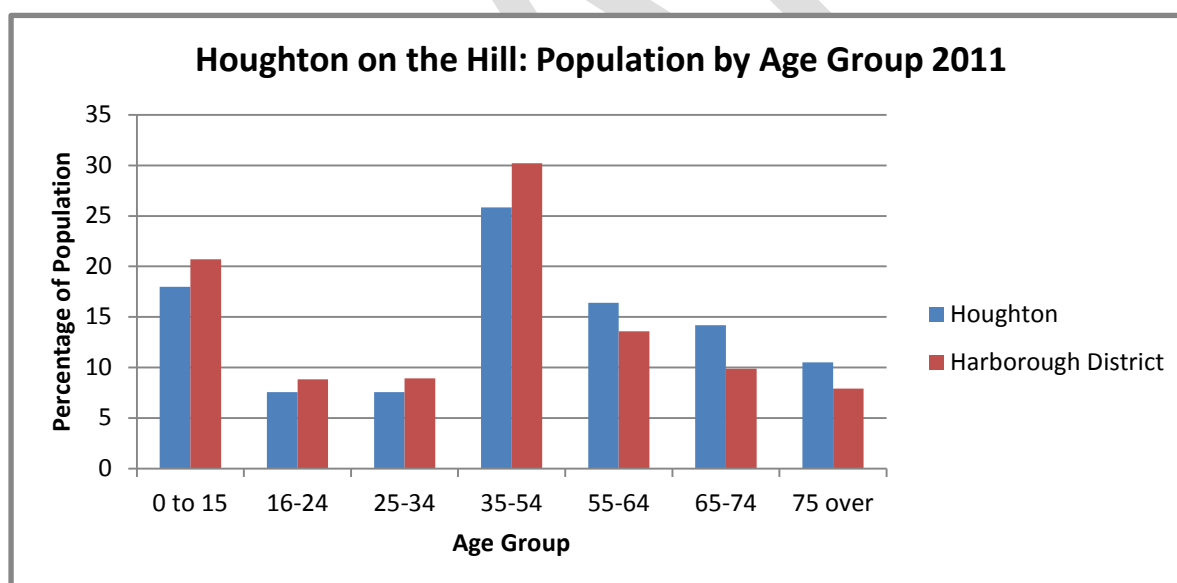
The village is identified as a Selected Rural Village in the Core Strategy for the District and as such, is outlined as a settlement that would potentially benefit from the support of limited development such as rural housing. It is therefore important to understand the function, key characteristics,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



## Key Statistics for Houghton Parish (Census 2011):

- Population of 1524 (decrease of 24 or 1.6% since 2001, compared to an increase of 11.5% across the District over the same period);
- 18% of the population are aged 0 – 15, whilst 25% of the population are 65 or over;
- Number of dwellings 641, an increase of 6% since 2001;
- Number of households is 622 (an increase of 18 or 3% since 2001);
- 57% of households have 2 or more cars/vans whilst 9% of households have no access to a car/van;
- 65% of households live in detached dwellings (compared to 48% across the District);
- 87% of dwellings are owner occupied, 6% are socially rented/shared ownership and 7% are private rented;
- 2.2% of the population is in bad or very bad health;
- Long-term health problems and /or disability: 5.8% of the population say their day-to-day activities are limited a lot and 8.5% limited a little;
- 7.9% of the population is black and minority ethnic (BME);
- 69% of the population is Christian and 5.4% is other religions (including Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh).

**Age Structure:** The age structure of the population, compared to the district, is set out below. The demographics of Houghton differ from those of the District in so far as the percentage of the population aged over 55 is much higher (41% compared to 28%). Consequently the under 55 age groups are all under represented compared to the District, particularly the 35-54. The chart below illustrates Houghton's aging population structure.



Source: ONS Census 2011

## Houghton on the Hill Parish Council

- There are seven seats on the parish council, of the seven seats, there are currently six posts occupied by a parish councillor, leaving one vacant. Elections are due in 2015.
- Parish council meetings take place monthly, with the council maintaining a particularly strong online presence.
- There is a Parish Plan and a Village Design Statement for Houghton, dated 2004.
- These publications have highlighted certain issues within the parish:

- Roads and Transport;
  - Traffic calming measures, speed reduction measures and further provision of safe crossings;
- Walking in the Village;
  - Disabled access to buildings and general getting around is raised as a constant issue in Houghton;
- Development;
  - Heritage: To protect the heritage of the village through the planning process, particularly in retaining Houghton's true village character and identity despite its proximity to Leicester (worries of Thurnby's eastern developments infringing Houghton);
  - Development: Maintain important open spaces that contribute to Houghton's rural character, whilst keeping a balance in housing stock in the historic centre of the village, as the Conservation Area now constitutes only 10% of housing in the village and risks falling further into obscurity;
  - Commercial: Due to Houghton's proximity to Leicester, commercial developments are warranted as unnecessary unless strong arguments for local employment opportunities can be made;
- In general, Houghton has been subject to numerous developments in the last 50 years, with each development having its own unique character. The overarching objective of their Village Design Statement is for the relationship of each area to the rest of the village is to be properly managed such that 'the whole' is not spoilt by disproportionate piecemeal developments.
- Lastly, the reports voices concerns over the capacity of community facilities to provide services to the ever-enlarging community, the capacity of the village hall being a case-in-point.
- Houghton Parish Council is considering whether to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Residents of Houghton are anticipating a Section 106 funding opportunity, to the tune of £80,000, to improve current facilities in the village. However, such funding is unlikely to be available to the community for at least two years.
- Despite Houghton's outdated Parish Plan, there is no public appetite for an update. There are aspirations for a Neighbourhood Plan, but early consultations have failed to generate enough backing for a steering group to be formed.

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

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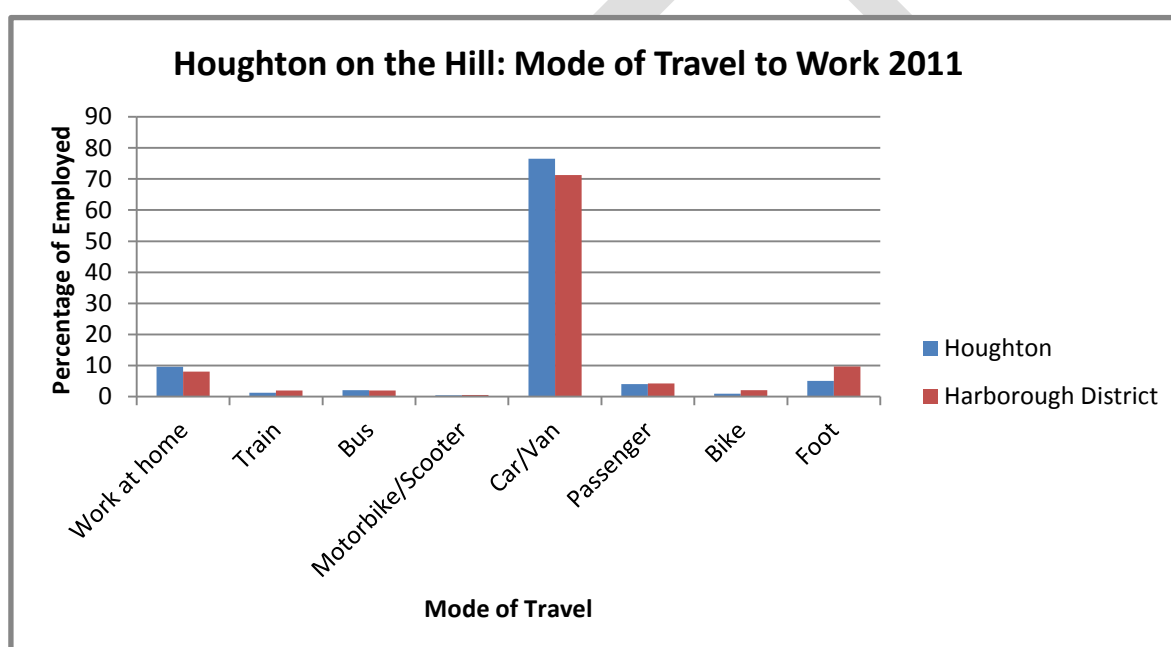
## The next sections consider Houghton on the Hill's:

### A) Transport and Communications

- Transport:
  - Rail: Houghton's nearest railway stations include Leicester (6 miles), Syston (8 miles), South Wigston (8 miles), Narborough (12 miles) Sileby (12 miles), Melton Mowbray (13 miles), Market Harborough (15 miles) and Oakham (18 miles).
  - Bus services/frequency:
    - Centrebus service 747: Leicester – Humberstone – Houghton – Billesdon – Belton – Uppingham. Monday – Saturday service hourly from 6am to 7pm. (No night, Sunday or Bank Holiday service). See route at <http://www.centrebus.info/Documents/Map%20747%20Leicester-Uppingham.pdf>. Bus stops at non A47 stops after 9 and before 4 only (Linwal Avenue, St Catherines Way, North Way, Main Street) and A47

stops before nine and after 4 only (Firs Road, Rose and Crown, Deane Gate Drive).

- Centrebus service RR1: Hallaton – East Norton – Loddington – Tilton – Houghton – Thurnby – Leicester. Monday – Operates Friday once daily only. (No other service).
  - Centrebus service RR4: Market Harborough – Langtons – Hallaton – Tugby – Billesdon – Houghton – Thurnby – Leicester. Operates Tuesday and Thursday once daily only. (No other service).
  - Centrebus service RR6: Leicester – Thurnby – Houghton – Billesdon – Tilton – Hungarton – Ashby – Melton Mowbray. Operates Wednesday once daily only. (No other service).
  - Centrebus service RR12: Leicester – Thurnby – Houghton – Tilton – Hallaton – Uppingham. Operates Friday once daily only. (No other service).
- Travel to work: Over 76% of people drive a car or van to work. This is higher than the District average of 71%. A further 4% are passengers. Just fewer than 10% work from home at present, slightly more than the District average of 8%.



Source: ONS Census 2011

- Road Connections: A47 to Leicester and Uppingham (<1 mile), A6 south to Market Harborough (4 miles), A607 to Melton Mowbray (5 miles), A6 north to Loughborough (6 miles), A6003 to Oakham and Corby (12 miles), M1 north/south and M69 west (11 miles).
- Houghton is served by the Voluntary Action South Leicestershire Community Transport initiative which can provide transport for shopping, visiting friends and relatives, social activities and health appointments for the elderly, the mobility impaired/disabled, the rurally isolated and those who find it difficult to use public transport;
- **Car Ownership:** Whilst the majority of households have access to at least one car or van, 57 (9%) households do not have access to their own private transport. This is higher than the previous figure of 7% in 2001 but slightly lower than the District figure of 11%. During this same ten year period, the percentage of households with 3 or more cars or vans has increased very slightly from 11.9% to 13.2%. The total number of

cars/vans in the parish rose from 1000 to 1027 over the same 10 years, an increase of 2.7%.

- **Connectivity: Broadband Coverage:**

- The majority of Houghton parish already has fibre broadband, provided for by commercial suppliers, whereby it seems that Houghton has benefitted due to its proximity to Leicester. However, the entirety of the parish may not have full coverage until 2018, subject to further public investment.
- <http://www.superfastleicestershire.org.uk/when-and-where/>

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## **B) Local Services and Facilities**

Houghton currently has Selected Rural Village status in the Harborough District Core Strategy (2011). This means that any development will be on a small and limited scale, which reflects the size and character of the settlement and its service provision. Selected Rural Villages have been identified on the basis of the presence of at least two of six relevant services (food shop, GP surgery, library, post office, primary school and pub). This section is concerned with the range of services and facilities in Houghton to ascertain whether the village can function as a Selected Rural Village going forward.

- **Key Services Present:**

- Pubs (Rose and Crown, Uppingham Road; Old Black Horse Inn, Main Street);
- School (Houghton on the Hill Church of England Primary School, Main Street);
- Food Store/ATM (Co-operative, Main Street);
- Post Office/Newsagents (St Catherine's Way);

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

- Pharmacy/Chemist (Main Street);
- Car Repairs/Fuel Supplies/Shop (County Vehicle Services, Uppingham Road; Houghton Garage, Uppingham Road);
- Hairdressers (St Catherine's Way);
- Take-Away Restaurant (Costa's Fish Bar, Uppingham Road);
- Taxi Hire (Main Street);
- Village Hall (Main Street);
- Churches (St Catharine's Anglican, Main Street; Methodist Chapel, Main Street);
- Allotments (Uppingham Road);
- Mobile Library – Last Thursday of each month: 2 – 2:15 (Dean Gate), 2:20 – 2:45 (Forsells End), 2:50 – 3:10 (Weir Lane), 3:15 – 3:45 (Home Close);
- Nursery School (Glebe Farm, Gaulby Lane);
- Recreation Ground/Playground and Floodlit Football Pitches (Houghton Rangers FC) and Tennis Courts (Weir Lane);
- Houghton Bowls Club (Village Hall Green);
- Cricket Club and Pavilion (Dixon's Field, Stretton Lane);
- Numerous Clubs and Societies (Scouts, Guides, Social and Leisure, Women's Institute, Walking, Music, Gardening etc).

### **Infrastructure Capacity Issues:**

Early consultation with infrastructure providers identifies specific issues regarding:

- Impact on Billesdon GP practice. S106 contributions towards additional equipment for Billesdon practice would be sought;

- Capacity of primary school, 11-16 and post 16 educational establishments. S106 contributions towards a primary school extension and other school extensions would be sought. It is noted that the primary school site is constrained with limited space to extend the existing school;
- Shortfall in types of open space. Appropriate S106 contributions would be sought where a shortfall in certain types of open space is identified.

Houghton on the Hill has 4 out of the 6 key services identified in the Core Strategy. Based on the current Core Strategy definition, the range of services and facilities in Houghton on the Hill supports its continued designation as a Selected Rural Village and would support its elevation to a Rural Centre. No insurmountable infrastructure constraints have been identified to date although S106 contributions would be sought towards additional GP surgery equipment in Billesdon and extensions to schools. It is noted that the primary school site has limited space to extend.

## C) Natural Environment

### Natural Environment Constraints in and around Houghton on the Hill

Issue/Constraint	Commentary
<b>Landscape:</b>  <b>District Landscape Character Assessment (2007)</b>	Located within the High Leicestershire Landscape Character Area which has low-medium landscape capacity to accommodate development (in general terms it is unlikely to be able to accommodate development without significant degradation of the existing landscape character – mitigation measures are unlikely to be able to address adverse landscape impacts). High Leicestershire is one of the District's most sensitive landscapes.
<b>Area of Separation</b>	No separation or coalescence issues identified. However, residents are concerned about the advance of Thurnby & Bushby along the A47.
<b>Tree Preservation Orders</b>	Group TPOs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stretton Lane on southern entry into village</li> <li>• Eaton House, 57 Main Street</li> <li>• The Old Rectory</li> <li>• 31 Main Street</li> <li>• 10a and 10b Elizabeth Close</li> <li>• Surgery</li> <li>• Adjacent to 2 Main Street</li> <li>• Adjacent to 21 Uppingham Road</li> </ul> <p>Numerous individual TPOs in village.</p>
<b>SSSI</b>	None in vicinity
<b>Local Wildlife Sites</b>	None identified
<b>Protected Species and Wildlife Corridors</b>	Badgers Bats



	Great crested newt
<b>Areas at risk of flooding</b>	None identified in village.
<b>Footpaths and Bridleways</b>	Village is well served by RoW leading into open countryside in all directions (apart from north east).
<b>Other settlement/local features</b>	

## D) Built Environment

**Number of Dwellings:** The Census 2011 found that there were 641 dwellings in Houghton, representing an increase of 35 dwellings or 6% since the 2001 Census, compared to an increase of 12% across the District.

The number of properties in the parish liable for council tax is 635 (2014).

**Completions, Commencements and Planning Permissions:** From 2011 to March 2014 the Council has recorded 1 house completion. As of March 2014 there were no dwellings under construction and 4 outstanding planning permissions for residential units.

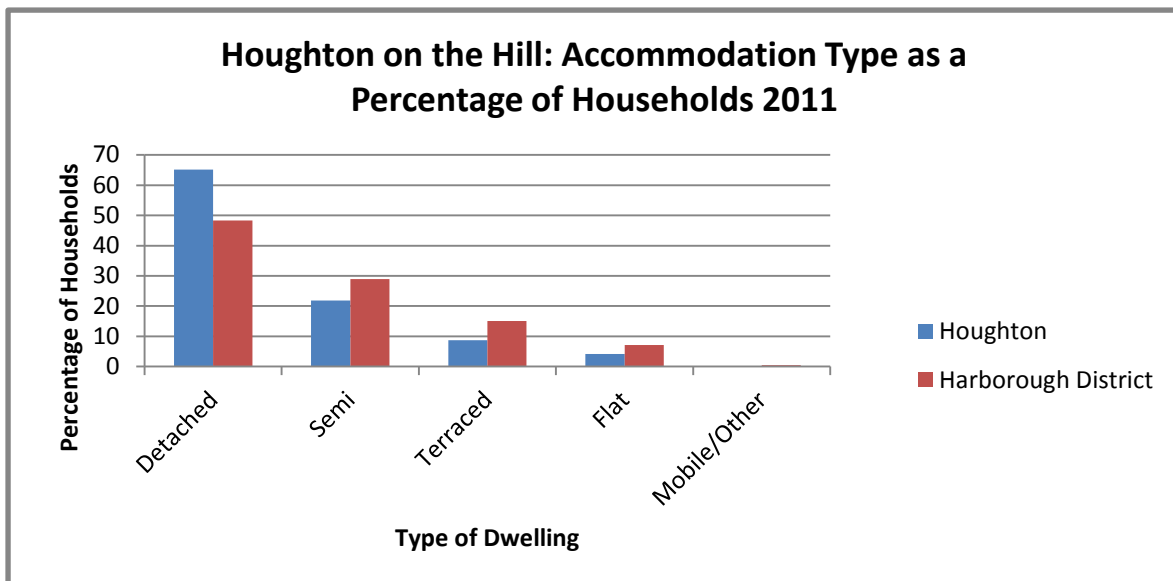
**Housing Land Supply:** The recently completed 2014 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment forms part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan and supports the delivery of sufficient land for housing across the District. The study identifies sites with potential for housing, assesses their housing potential and assesses when they are likely to be developed (next 5 years, 6-10 years, 11 -15 years and 16+ years). It should be noted that the sites identified are not allocations and sites still need to be taken through the normal planning application process for full consideration.

The following table summarises the SHLAA findings in relation to developable sites in Houghton on the Hill. The full document is available at:  
[http://www.harborough.gov.uk/directory\\_record/571/strategic\\_housing\\_land\\_availability\\_assessment\\_20132014](http://www.harborough.gov.uk/directory_record/571/strategic_housing_land_availability_assessment_20132014).

No. developable sites identified in SHLAA 2014	Total area of developable sites	Estimated yield of developable sites (dwellings)	Estimated timeframe for development of deliverable sites (no. of dwellings)			
			0 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	11 – 15 years	16+ years
2	4ha	77	-	77	-	-

**Tenure:** In 2011, almost 87% of dwellings were owner occupied, well above the District figure of 78% but down from 2001 when 94% of dwellings were owner occupied. 6% are social rented/ shared ownership (up from 2% in 2001) and 7% are private rented (up from 3% in 2001).

**Accommodation Type:** In terms of housing type, the percentage of households living in detached dwellings (65%) in 2011 was well above the District level of 48%. Semi detached and terraced accommodation is well down on the District levels.



Source: ONS Census 2011

**Under Occupancy:** The 2011 Census found that 61% of households had at least 2 more bedrooms than required, well above the District figure of 49%.

**Households:** Of the 622 households in Houghton on the Hill:

- 24% are one person households (compared with 26% across the District);
- 32% are pensioner only households (compared with 23% across the District);
- 15% are single pensioner households (compared with 13% across the District);
- 28% have dependent children (compared to 30% across the District).

#### Built Environment Features/Heritage Assets/Designations

Issue/Constraint	Commentary
<b>Conservation Area</b>	Houghton on the Hill Conservation Area was first designated in 1973. The boundary was revised in 2005. It is mainly focussed on main Street and the fields to the south which are important to the setting.
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	None
<b>Listed Buildings:</b>	
<b>Grade I</b>	None
<b>Grade II*</b>	Church of St Catherine
<b>Grade II</b>	20
<b>Ridge and Furrow</b>	Not known
<b>Archaeological Sites</b>	Area north of A47 at Ingarsby Lane Area south of A47 at Firs Road 2 areas to south of the village.



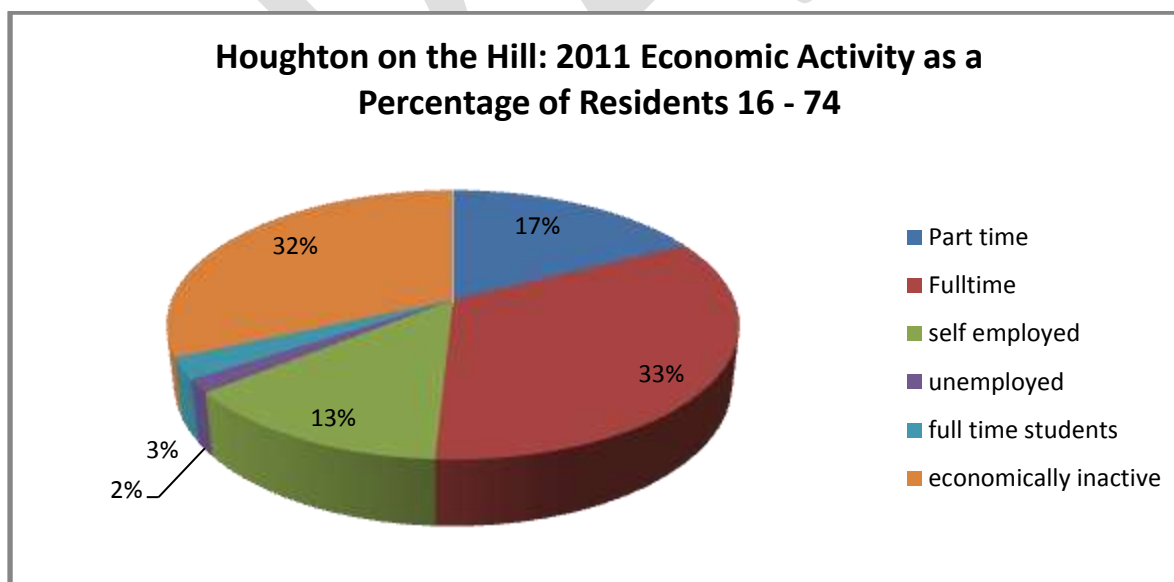
<b>Recreation Grounds/Play Areas</b>	Play area at playing fields
<b>Open Space, Sport and Recreation</b>	See map
<b>Other</b>	HSE and National Grid Gas Buffer Consultation Zone runs along the western edge of the village.

## E) Local Employment and Economic Activity

### Local Employment:

Few residents (around 6% of those employed) either walk or cycle to work, indicative of the lack of employment opportunities within the village itself. However, almost 10% of those in employment work from home or mainly from home, higher than the District figure of 8%. Houghton has direct access to Leicester via the A47 and eastwards to Peterborough and employment opportunities in these areas.

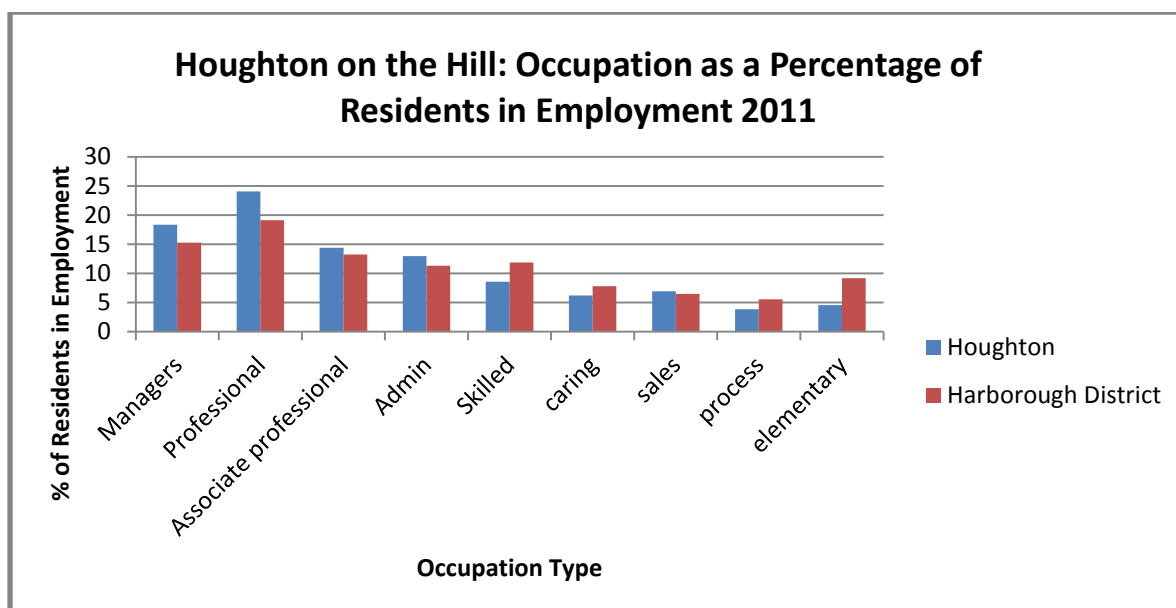
**Economic Activity:** In 2011, 68% of Houghton's population aged 16-74 was economically active, lower than the District figure of 74% but similar to the regional and national levels of 69% and 70% respectively. This relatively low percentage compared to Harborough as a whole is a reflection of the aging population found in Houghton. The unemployment rate of 1.6% was lower than the District figure of 2.5%. The rate of self employment (13%) was well same as the District level. Of the economically inactive, 73% were retired.



Source: ONS Census 2011

**Qualifications (16 and over population):** In 2011 the percentage without any qualifications was 15%, lower than the comparable District figure of 18% and well below the regional and national levels of 23% and 25% respectively. The percentage with a degree or higher degree was 25%, well above the District figure of 19%.

**Occupation:** The proportion employed in managerial and professional occupations is particularly high compared to the District as a whole (i.e. Houghton 42% and District 34%). The percentage employed in elementary occupations is almost half the District proportion.



Source: ONS Census 2011

## Emerging Findings:

### Opportunities

Houghton on the Hill benefits from a reasonable bus service, relatively easy access to Leicester via the A47 and fibre optic broadband. The village has 4 key services and is relatively close to parts of Leicester offering a wider range of services and facilities. The city's range of employment opportunities is also accessible.

Houghton has a relatively low economic activity rate compared to the rest of the District, due to the noticeably ageing population. Unlike most villages all the under 55 age groups are well below the District levels with the older age groups all significantly higher in percentage terms. This older population profile feeds through into high under occupancy of homes and a high proportion of pensioner only households. The proportion of detached homes is also relatively high.

Developable housing land has been identified through the SHLAA across 2 sites, both to the west of the village, and sympathetic development may provide the opportunity to improve the mix of homes for all ages. The capacity of the sites identified may be impacted by the presence of a gas pipeline buffer zone. The increase in housing since 2001 has been relatively low.

### Constraints

Houghton is located within High Leicestershire, one of the District's most sensitive landscapes. There is no imminent threat of coalescence but residents are concerned about

Thurnby and Bushby's expansion along the A47. The A47 is a constraint giving rise to issues around speed, access and safe crossing for pedestrians.

Development would need to respect the Conservation Area and the very high number of listed buildings (including their setting) in the village through sensitive siting and design. Much of the agricultural land adjoining the south east of the settlement is included in the Conservation Area due to its contribution to the setting of the historic part of the village.

The village primary school has limited capacity and an extension may be required. However, the site is constrained with limited space for an extension. Billesdon surgery has the capacity to accommodate growth in patient numbers.

A HSE and National Grid Gas Buffer Consultation Zone runs along the western edge of the village and may impact on housing capacity to the west of Houghton.

### **Overall Summary**

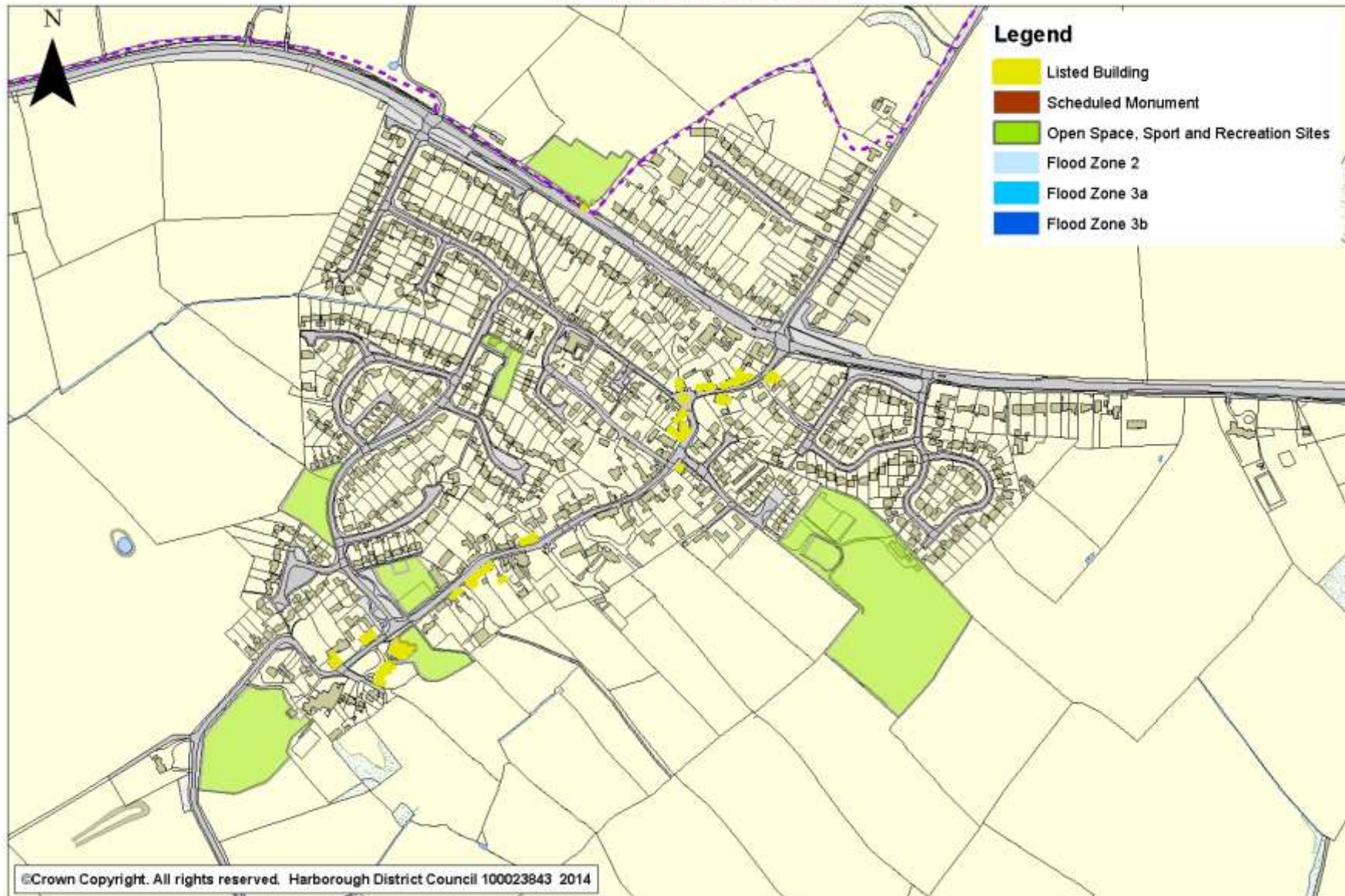
Houghton on the Hill has the services to support its continued designation as a Selected Rural Village. With 4 out of the 6 key services it has the level of services to become a Rural Centre. Whether Rural Centre status is appropriate given its location between Billesdon (a Rural Centre) and Thurnby and Bushby will need to be considered further. It has the capacity to accommodate growth but there are constraints which could impact on the delivery of sites. Development would need to be sympathetic to the village's numerous heritage assets, the High Leicestershire landscape setting, traffic concerns and to any specific housing needs of the village.

## **Appendix 1: Maps showing**

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

DRAFT

## Houghton on the Hill





## Houghton on the Hill Conservation Area



— Conservation Area Boundary 0 60 120 240 360 480 Meters

Designated 1973

Boundary Revised: 9<sup>th</sup> March and 18<sup>th</sup> May 2005

1:5,406



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# SHLAA 2014 Houghton on the Hill Sites

