

# Barby and Onley Parish Council (Draft) Neighbourhood Plan Review

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## Pre-Submission Consultation

Representations on behalf of [REDACTED]

Prepared by [REDACTED] BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

Parish Council response in red

**July 2024**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The enclosed representations are submitted on behalf of the [REDACTED] in response to the Barby and Onley Parish Council (Draft) Neighbourhood Plan ('NDP') Review consultation document which has been published for the purposes of public consultation under the provisions of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.2 It is understood that this will be the final consultation stage before the formal submission of the document to West Northamptonshire Council ('WNC') which will trigger a further consultation under the provisions of Regulation 16 of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.3 These representations are lodged against the backdrop of the representor's interests in land at Longdown Lane, Barby. It is therefore urged that this document and appendices be read in conjunction with previous submissions to Barby Parish Council ('PC') in response to the progression of the NDP review.
- 1.4 It is also urged that the following be read in conjunction with the respondent's representations to the recent WNC Regulation 18 consultation (April 2024) in respect of the emerging West Northamptonshire Local Plan. The associated call for sites submission in that respect is also enclosed.
- 1.5 The following representations should be read in conjunction with all the respondents' previous correspondence with the Parish Council and with an appreciation of those formal representations that have been made to previous Call for Sites and Neighbourhood Plan (Review) consultation invitations.
- 1.6 The following is structured to provide commentary on the (Draft) Neighbourhood Plan Review Document, the Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM, October 2023), the (Draft) Design Guidance and Code (AECOM, December 2023), the Site Options and Assessment Report (AECOM, January 2023), the Site Selection Process document (BOPC).
- 1.7 Consideration is also afforded to the WNC SEA and HRA Screening Report (May 2024) and the Regulation 14 Statement of Consultation (April 2024) along with the analysis of previous survey results.

1.8 It is noted that a Housing Needs Survey has not been carried out as part of the evidence base to support the production of the NDP Review, therefore the right of comment is reserved until this piece of the evidence base becomes available.

**There is no housing needs survey undertaken as part of the preparation of the NP**

1.9 Yet further, it is noted that in the interim period since the previous NDP Review consultation, WNC have published their (Draft) Joint Local Plan which will cover a renewed plan area that encapsulates West Northants in its entirety, rather than those of the individual predecessor authority areas of Northampton, Daventry and South Northamptonshire. This revised plan area is now likely to have significant impacts on the future growth of Barby village.

1.10 The emerging Local Plan is expected to adopt a bold approach towards boosting rural housing growth to ensure that housing needs can be met but also ensure that existing community infrastructure aspirations, identified in Neighbourhood Plans, can realistically be delivered over the life of the plan in line with Para 67 of the NPPF.

1.11 To assist the PC these representations are supplemented by several Appendices which provide important contextual information, these are.

**Appendix 1:** Land at Longdown Lane Site Location Plan (N.B revised boundary).

**Appendix 2:** Land at Longdown Lane: Contextual Opportunities Plan, Master Planner Briefing Annotations.

**Appendix 3:** Land at Longdown Lane: Indicative Layout (Ranwood Design Ltd, May 2024).

**Appendix 4a:** Access Drawing 1 showing access geometry (MAC Highways Engineers, May 2024).

**Appendix 4b:** Access Drawing 2 showing visibility splays on to Longdown Lane (MAC Highways Engineers, May 2024).

**Appendix 5:** Representations to West Northamptonshire Local Plan Consultation (June 2024).

**Appendix 6:** Representations to West Northamptonshire Call for Sites Invitation (June 2024).

**These representations are noted – however, the Parish Council has selected its preferred site and is not allocating further land for development**

## 2. Comments on Draft Neighbourhood Plan Review Document

- 2.1 At the outset, the efforts of Councillors to progress the NDP Review and its associated evidence base are to be commended.
- 2.2 The comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those comments made later within this document in respect of the evidence base, and within all of the associated appendices. The appendices provide significant important context to the points which are raised in regard to the current iteration of the neighbourhood plan review document and it is hoped that they will assist the PC as they progress the document further.
- 2.3 The following comments are structured in order of their appearance within the document.
- 2.4 Within Section 1 of the NDP Review, the reference to the Plain English Guide to the Localism Act is welcomed. The Localism Act 2011 is the key piece of legislation that guides the process of producing and adopting an NDP. However, of comparable weight is the content of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and National Planning Practice Guidance ('NPPG'). Consideration of the NPPF and NPPG will be key to the success of the PC's review.
- 2.5 Section 1 is also correct that NDP's must be in general conformity with national policy and strategic policies contained within the WNC Development Plan Documents, in this case the Joint Core Strategy (Part 1) and Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2).
- 2.6 Para 29 of the NPPF is explicitly clear that *'Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies'*. This excerpt from the framework is key and will be returned to in consideration of the proposed site allocation set out at Policy H1 of the review document.

This is correct. There is no housing requirement for the Parish, therefore the proposed allocation exceeds this minimum requirement

- 2.7 In respect of the NDP's vision. Many of Barby's existing services and amenities notably the public house, the village shop and the cricket club / sports field are reliant upon users / customers / members of the public from outside of the Parish.

- 2.8 However, even more drastic and concerning is the reliance of the village school on pupils attending from outside of the Parish, there is a sporadic trend of rural primary schools closing across Northamptonshire due to over-reliance upon students outside of their parishes and new more preferably located schools opening. These closures have significant adverse impacts on those in more semi-remote locations such as Barby.
- 2.9 The closure of such schools is a direct result of the settlement's ageing population coupled with a lack of housing delivery, and subsequently options/opportunities, for younger persons and families.
- 2.10 Therefore, to ensure existing amenities and services are maintained (and hopefully enhanced!) housing growth is the primary solution. There are also significant benefits to be realised to the highways network from having students who live in walking distance to the school, the congestion issues associated with the primary school is a direct byproduct of students who attend from outside of the parish.
- 2.11 For clarity, the Primary School currently has spare capacity and a significant proportion of students do not live within the village, this information can be cross-checked and is a direct result of a lack of housing growth over the past two decades. It is a clear aspiration of the PC and villagers that existing services and facilities be maintained, and a positive approach needs to be taken to ensure the longer-term survival of the school.
- 2.12 In seeking to maintain separation from surrounding villages (notably Kilsby), it is wholly agreed that residential development to the south of the settlement is the correct direction for housing growth. This would ensure no opportunity for coalescence between Barby and Kilsby, it would preserve important ridge and furrow features to the east of Daventry Road, it would not result in visual impacts on views into Daventry Road and the wider village from Elkington Lane and would not impact on those important historic features to the north of the settlement.
- 2.13 To develop in a sustainable way, the village needs to grow (as has been experienced in the neighbouring villages of Kilsby, Crick and Braunston) to ensure that younger persons have an opportunity to stay in the village and to attract families to ensure the maintenance of the settlement's amenities and facilities. A restrictive, zero growth approach to planning for the

future is not sustainable and adversely impact the settlements vitality and viability. As stated above, the village's facilities are unable to be sustained by the current population alone and are reliant upon visitors, the NDP provides a tool to address these regressive trends.

- 2.14 Regarding Objective 6, this needs to be reworded and the reference to small scale removed. Evidenced housing need at both strategic level and through the local housing need survey will dictate the scale of development required.

Small scale is appropriate for the neighbourhood area over the Plan period. It does not need to change

- 2.15 In respect of Objective 12, the infrastructure requirements for the settlement need to be clearly identified, listed and indicatively costed. This will then provide an indication of the level of Community Infrastructure Levy funding that is required to deliver such infrastructure (tra<sup>^</sup>ic calming / signs / open space / play areas etc..), this could then be transposed into an open market housing delivery figure. It must be borne in mind that a<sup>^</sup>ordable housing is exempt from paying Community Infrastructure Levy payments.

The level of additional infrastructure with a minimal amount of new housing is too small to require it to be listed as proposed.

- 2.16 Turning to Section 7, the first Para under a) Social, should be moved to b) Environmental. In respect of the second paragraph, the plan should seek to both protect and enhance community facilities. Whilst it is stated that the plan presents a residential allocation to meet the needs of the present and future generations, it is accepted that the requirement for older person bungalows meets present residents needs in the village who wish to downsize, however these wishes are not necessarily needs. Such an approach does little to reverse those trends which are arising at the settlement and a positive approach to housing growth is required.

The ordering of the elements is not significant. We will change the reference to the community facilities to promote enhancement. The provision of bungalows, as provided for within the proposed allocation, will meet a local need as identified in the Housing Needs Assessment.

- 2.17 The proposed allocation does nothing to plan for addressing the ageing demographic profile of the settlement, it makes no provision for starter homes, self-build homes, specialist housing, socially rented properties, intermediate tenures etc... all of which are needs which either exist in the settlement currently or will arise over the life of the NDP. It

is these types of housing, notably market homes, that will provide a much-needed boost to local businesses, services and community facilities.

The NP provides for housing over and above its requirement and therefore does help meet this need, in a proportionate manner. It also promotes affordable housing through an exception site policy.

2.18 The Barby and Onley Housing Needs Survey (2019) clearly identifies a need for 28 dwellings, this should be the absolute minimum starting point for allocating land for housing.

This survey is 5 years old and is out of date.



2.19 Regarding the Environmental Sustainability objectives on Page 18, it is absolutely accepted that pedestrian facilities should be expanded and improved. To generate the funds to improve and extend the network, Community Infrastructure Levy receipts must be realised.

2.20 Section 8 of the Review lays focus on housing delivery, this is a key theme that runs through these representations and as such it is urged that this submission and its associated appendices be read in conjunction with comments relating to Section 8.

2.21 Reference to those Core Principles of the NPPF is welcomed. However, to support those key principles the Government's objective to 'significantly boost the supply of homes...' is a key catalyst, as is the remainder of Section 5 of the NPPF.

**The Parish exceeds its requirements through the NP so meets this objective.**

2.22 Development in the open countryside, adjacent to the village boundary, is seen as acceptable within both the Core Strategy (2014) and the current NDP, where it meets an identified local need. That identified local need is 28 dwellings, as per the 2019 survey and those conclusions will remain valid until the needs survey is updated utilising the appropriate methodology. The neighbourhood plan should therefore, as a minimum, allocate land adjacent to the village to meet these needs and allow for proportionate open market housing growth. However, the PC will need to identify and cost out infrastructure requirements / aspirations to ensure that a suitable level of CIL receipts can be realised through the allocation of additional market housing.

**This is incorrect. The Housing Needs Survey does not remain valid until a new survey is undertaken. In promoting an exception site, the NP supports further affordable housing is a need can be identified. Local Plan and Core Strategy policies allow this at the moment.**

2.23 The Parish Council's recent consultation quite rightly confirms that there is overwhelming support (82%) for a small number of homes to meet local needs. There is of course opposition to large-scale development which in the context of present needs, would be expected to be a development more than 50 dwellings.

**Large-scale, i.e. major development is defined in the NPPF as 10 or more dwellings.**

2.24 In discussion of the proposed residential allocation within the NDP, it is stated that there is a 'preference for a small number of dwellings', it is questioned whose preference this is. Is it the preference of those who are not in need, is it the preference of those who aspire to

return to the village due to the lack of historic home ownership opportunities, the preference of those who live outside of the village who drive their children to the village school each day. The evidence exists to demonstrate that an immediate need for 28 dwellings exists, this increases further if the findings of the AECOM assessment are fully considered, therefore whilst respondents to this point may have highlighted a preference, the evidenced need shows the exact starting point on the quantum of development required.

- 2.25 The size, mix and tenure split to meet housing needs, wants and allocation(s) at Barby must be based on evidence, not on preference. The immediate and default response to questions relating to development, from those who are not in any sort of need, is one of NIMBYISM and staunch opposition. Plan preparation should be based on primary data collection and with full acknowledgement of the silent majority's existence, not based on anecdotal aspirations, preferences or pressure from protectionists elements of the community.
- 2.26 The principle of the approach advocated in Policy H1 is welcomed and the bold approach in seeking to allocate land is commended. However, the soundness of the policy approach needs to be fully considered.
- 2.27 At the outset, the site south of School Close lies wholly within the village boundary and is not subject to any planning policy restrictions or designations within the West Northamptonshire Development Plan.
- 2.28 The land south of School Close could therefore be developed for open market housing without the need to provide affordable or older persons housing. Open market housing would be fully supported by existing policies within the development plan and a favourable policy basis has now existed to support the development of the site for a decade.
- 2.29 The approach to prescribing a housing mix in part a) of Policy H1 and an affordable housing requirement at part b) of the policy is at odds with the West Northants and former Daventry Area development plan documents. The NPPF is clear at Para 29 and Footnote 16 that a neighbourhood plan should be in general conformity with the development plan and should not promote less development or undermine strategic policy.
- 2.30 In its current form, Policy H1 is not in conformity with the strategic policies for the area and undermines the approach set out by West Northamptonshire Council in its strategic development plan documents. The policy presents a more restrictive approach by requiring

affordable housing to be delivered on a site where the Development Plan does not require such provision.

This is simply wrong – however it has been agreed that the provision of affordable housing within the proposed allocation will be removed following discussions with the land owner. Irrespective of this, securing an agreement to provide affordable housing within the Village Confines is not against WNC policies.

2.31 Additional comments in respect of the suitability, availability and achievability of the allocated site are set out later within this submission and within the appendices.

2.32 The reference within Criteria a) of Policy H3 (Housing Mix) relating to the Housing Needs Assessment at Appendix A needs to be revised to refer to the 2019 Housing Needs Survey which is referenced within the West Northants Strategic Development Plan Documents and utilises the West Northants standardised methodology.

This is not necessary. The HNA updates earlier survey work.

2.33 The approach set out within Policy H4 needs to be fully reconsidered. The NDP review needs to make significant allocation(s) to meet the current affordable needs at the settlement as well as those identified in the AECOM report. The most suitable way of doing this is through allocating land, through extensive community involvement, to meet this need. Additional market housing growth is also required to sustain the settlement over the longer term.

This is not a need, or indeed a requirement of the NP. It is discretionary ....

2.34 In its current form, the policy sets out a case to suggest that any land adjacent to the settlement is 'fair game'. This is not positive planning and will give rise to unease in the community should speculative application(s), to meet identified needs, be submitted to WNC in lesser preferred locations. It is therefore considered that the NDP should be bolder in its approach to housing delivery and seek to allocate sufficient land adjacent to the settlement to meet needs and promote growth, this approach would allow community involvement in identifying the most suitable site(s) for development. The site at Longdown Lane has the potential to address several locally held concerns, notably through redressing the Water Tower / Ridgeway / Longdown Lane crossroads, extending the 30mph zone beyond the cricket club and decentralising growth away from the centre of the village. It also presents an opportunity to provide significant connectivity benefits between the settlement, sports field, skate park and woodland. A number of other positives are

highlighted later within this submission.

The PC has chosen not to take the opportunity to allocate land outside of the Village Confines, as is its right to do.

2.35 In respect of Policy ENV1: Local Green Spaces, this policy and its associated plan should be updated to include reference and designation of the Meadow Woodland.

2.36 The approach to Policy ENV 7: Non-Designated Heritage Assets, whilst positive in its intention, could undermine those buildings / structures that it seeks to protect. Work to properties and key pieces of infrastructure (particularly the Water Tower and Canal Bridges) should not be overburdened by unnecessary policy requirements. If urgent works are required to either, this policy could restrict such works.

We disagree. Important buildings are identified for protection.

2.37 The approach within Policy ENV 8: Ridge and Furrow, is wholly supported.

2.38 Policy ENV10: Important Views needs to be amended to remove Important Viewpoint 12. The planting of the Meadow Woodland is at odds with the plans intention to protect the view to the southwest. Upon maturity, the woodland trees will obscure this view. Therefore, in its current form there is direct conflict between competing priorities in this respect and as such removing this notation will remove said conflict. The remainder of the policy is welcomed.

This will not happen within the lifetime of the NP therefore this is not a legitimate concern.

2.39 The approach set out in Policy ENV13: Footpaths and Bridleways is welcomed. The Longdown Lane site presents an opportunity to provide a high-quality link between footpath EC006 and EC009 and an indicative approach to this is set out within the Appendices. The site also presents an opportunity to provide a high quality and safe footpath link between the existing pavement on Daventry Road and the Sports Field and Meadow Woodland. There is also an opportunity for additional reserve lane for much needed extended car parking facilities and other social infrastructure items, examples of which are noted on the enclosed opportunities plan. This opportunity to link the settlement to these key facilities should not be overlooked and the Longdown Lane site presents the only feasible option to increase safer foot patronage to both the Sports Field and Woodland, both of which currently lack dedicated foot access without conflicting with

each other's interests.

2.40 In respect of ENV14: Renewable Energy Generation Infrastructure, it appears that Figure 16 is missing from the document. Therefore, the right to comment is reserved for the next consultation.

Reference to Figure 16 will be removed from the Submission version of the NP

2.41 Whilst there are no further comments on the content of the NDP Review document at this stage, it is urged that the content of Appendix A of the WNC SEA HRA be fully considered as it cites that numerous policies within the review draft conflict with the development plan, namely.

- Policy H2
- Policy H4
- Policy H5
- Policy ENV7
- Policy ENV14
- Policy CS2
- Policy CS4

We disagree

### 3. Comments on Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM, October 2023)

The HNA was prepared by a third party and signed off by that organisation. Changes cannot be made and are not deemed necessary as the recommendations in the report are clear and unambiguous.

- 3.1 It is noted at Para 2 of the Executive summary that WNC have advised that 15 new homes have been built in Barby and Onley since 2011 and that two of these were affordable dwellings. At Para 21 the document then suggests that in fact 47 dwellings were erected / created during the period 2011-2021, both figures are incorrect.
- 3.2 The completion data supplied by the LPA in terms of housing delivery since 2011 either includes double counting or does not account for those properties that have been demolished to make way for new residential units.
- 3.3 Furthermore, the suggestion that 47 dwellings have been erected at the settlement is drastically incorrect and a gross overstatement. Utilising strategic population growth figures from two sets of census data is a flawed approach to estimating housing delivery, is not a recognised approach in planning policy terms and is not in keeping with the recognised sources of information utilised in establishing progress towards meeting the Council's housing trajectory for the purposes of accurate local plan monitoring.
- 3.4 To assist, the following table (taken from the WNC Planning Register) has been prepared, this information is publicly available, and must be maintained by WNC in line with Government legislation. The information can be viewed on the Council's website to fact check what is quoted herein.
- 3.5 Utilising local knowledge in respect of completions, this table accurately accounts for all planning approvals since April 2008 to April 2024 which could have been implemented in the period 2011-2024 and those which have been built / demolished. The conclusions of this information are clear that accounting for demolitions there have been (net) **8 additional dwellings completed at Barby in the period 2011-2024, which is clearly less than the 15 which WNC have suggested have been delivered and vastly different to the 47 dwellings quoted**. The table below provides a clear demonstration of those completions in Barby.

Planning Ref	Approval Date	Address	Proposal	Built	Notes	Net Gain
DA/2010/0014	17/2/2010	8 &10 The Green	Demolition of 2 dwellings and erection of 2 dwellings	Yes		0
DA/2011/0230	20/07/2011	62-64 Daventry Road	Demolition of existing dwellings and construction of 4 dwellings	Yes		2
DA/2013/0095	16/05/2013	Hill Farm, Elkington Lane	1 Agricultural Workers Dwelling	Yes	Would not be monitored as dwelling due to Ag Tie.	0
DA/2013/0154	21/08/2013	Land adj Hophorne Farm, Kilsby Road	Construction of 2 dwellings	No	Consent expired	0
DA/2014/0611	08/01/2015	Land oW Balding Close	Outline for erection of 6 dwellings	no	Consent expired	0
DA/2014/0695	01/10/2014	Land oW Elkington Lane, Barby	Outline up to 4 dwellings	Partially	Only 1 dwelling erected	1
DA/2015/0008	11/03/2015	Old Pinfold House, The Green	Subdivision of 1 dwelling to form 2	Yes		1
DA/2015/0658	23/05/2016	Land north 56 Rugby Road	7 dwellings	No	Permission not implemented, See DA/2018/1119	0
DA/2015/0982	14/01/2016	38 Kilsby Road	Variation of 2003 consent for single dwelling	yes		1
DA/2016/0646	19/09/2016	36 Kilsby Road	Replacement dwelling	yes		0
DA/2016/0070	14/12/2016	Barn oW Onley Lane	1 dwelling (Class Q, Part A only)	No	Expired consent	0
DA/2016/1019	01/03/2017	Land Adj Hophorne Cottage, Kilsby Road	2 dwellings	No	Renewal / Replan of DA/2013/0154	0
DA/2017/0965	28/03/2018	Land R/O Westfield House, Rugby Road	3 dwellings	No	Consent expired	0
DA/2018/0013	01/11/2018	Land oW Balding Close	6 dwellings	No	Consent expired	0
DA/2017/1212	26/04/2018	The Bungalows Manor Works	Demolition of 2 and replacement with 2 dwellings	Yes		0
DA/2018/0382	27/11/2018	6 The Green	2 dwellings	Yes		2
DA/2018/0635	21/02/2019	Land oW Balding Close	4 dwellings	No	Permission expired	0
DA/2018/1119	12/03/2019	Land North of 56 Rugby Road	1 dwelling	No	Under construction – Site had	0

					consent for 7 dwellings under ref: DA/2015/0658	
DA/2019/0072	08/04/2019	14 Ashleigh Close	1 dwelling	Yes		1
DA/2019/1015	22/10/2020	Land Adj Bridle Lodge	1 dwelling	No	Permission implemented.	0
DA/2021/0165	01/06/2021	31 Kilsby Road	1 dwelling	No	Reserved matters approved	0
DA/2021/0226	07/10/2021	3 Star Corner	1 dwelling	No	Consent expired	0
WNP/2021/0017	13/09/2021	Barby Woodbridge, Onley Lane	1 dwelling	No	Renewal of DA/2016/0070	0

3.6 In respect of Para 14 of the AECOM report, the updated WNC Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2024) (HENA) has now been published and needs to be fully considered within the body of the AECOM report.

3.7 At Para 14.1.16 the WNC HENA confirms that the ageing population in rural areas (including Barby and Onley) is because of an inability to attract or retain younger persons due to a lack of housing opportunities.

3.8 At Para 13.1.36 the HENA also confirms that the delivery of family sized housing remains a requirement in urban and rural locations within West Northamptonshire and goes on to confirm that this requirement should be met across the widest possible choice and mix of housing locations, including through the sustainable expansion of rural settlements. This is a key indication that Barby will be expected to expand in future once the new plan for WNC is adopted.

3.9 Clearly, this only confirms those issues which have been historically discussed anecdotally within the Parish and referenced earlier. However, those issues have never been evidenced or addressed through an appropriate local plan or neighbourhood plan policy response.

3.10 The WNC HENA (2024) confirms that in more rural areas, new development should broaden the mix and choice of all accommodation to respond effectively to demand. That stance is taken before building in those local housing needs identified through local needs surveys, such as the 2019 Barby and Onley Housing Needs Survey.



3.11 Towards the end of Para 14, the AECOM study states that more than 3 (but less than 6) dwellings per annum are required to be delivered in the Parish as affordable housing between 2021-2041. To be precise, zero affordable dwellings have been delivered in the neighbourhood area since 2021 therefore, utilising the AECOM findings, the current affordable housing deficit stands at **9 dwellings** (3 years of non-delivery between 2021-24 at 3 dwellings per annum).

3.12 Para 17 of the AECOM study takes no account of the current housing needs survey as published in 2019 which provides clear evidence of a need for **28 dwellings to meet local needs**. A recent appeal decision at the village confirms that the 2019 survey remains the most up to date evidence and clarifies that its content is valid. The validity of the document is confirmed at Para 26 of Appeal Decision Ref: APP/W2845/W/23/3325605, dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (previously issued to the PC) and therefore is a key consideration in developing the emerging NDP review document. A failure to take an appropriate policy response to housing delivery leaves every parcel of land adjoining the settlement boundary at risk from a speculative planning application. Through allocating sufficient land to meet the evidenced needs, the PC would be instilling protective measures within the Neighbourhood Plan to stave off speculative applications coming forward in less favourable parcels of land adjacent to Barby.

3.13 Para 16 of the AECOM report quite rightly references development viability and those triggers within the Countryside and Settlement (Part 2) Local Plan. These need to be carefully considered in developing a suitable policy to allocate sufficient land to meet existing needs and to plan for those 60 additional affordable dwellings which the AECOM study advises will be required in the Parish (at a rate of 3 per annum between 2021-41).

3.14 Para 21 and the assertion that 47 dwellings have been completed at the settlement between 2011 and 2021 needs to be carefully revisited and accurately revised with an appreciation of the Council's monitoring returns to central government. Transposed forward over the life of the emerging West Northants Local Plan (2021 to 2041) 47 completions (between the 10-year period 2011-2021) suggests to the local authority that the settlement is likely and capable of growing by approximately **100 dwellings over the twenty-year period between 2021 and 2041 and this will undoubtedly influence the**

**level of development apportioned to the settlement through the emerging WNC Local Plan policies for the rural area.**

- 3.15 Para 26 of the AECOM study presents a clear indication that suitable policies need to be urgently and pragmatically imposed to ensure the longer-term vitality and viability of the Parish. This is not insignificant, particularly when the school, cricket club, public house and shop all survive due to their utilisation by persons who live outside of the Parish.
- 3.16 Para 28 of the AECOM report presents a very pragmatic conclusion, however the starting point for housing delivery at the settlement should be that evidenced need within the most up to date Housing Needs Survey, based on primary research and data. Aspirations for additional growth beyond that should be led by the market, community involvement and infrastructure needs.
- 3.17 Para 34 of the AECOM report suggests that 19 – 31 specialist homes will be required between 2021 and 2041, taking the midpoint, this would suggest a delivery requirement of (1.725 dwellings per annum) 2 specialist units per annum between 2021 and 41. No specialist units have been delivered between 2021-24, therefore the current **deficit is 6 dwellings** for specialist units. Coupled with the affordable housing under delivery the current overall deficit for affordable and specialist housing units for the village units over the period 2021-24 is **15 dwellings**.
- 3.18 At Para 47 the document states that it is not possible to be definitive about housing need and demand. However, the starting point for estimating need is to understand those evidenced local housing needs within the Housing Needs Survey (2019), the level of need arising from demand for other types of housing (specialist, open market etc...) would only increase that level further.
- 3.19 In respect of Para 48, the AECOM report quite rightly confirms that *'Neighbourhood Plans can have a significant impact in shaping their neighbourhoods, enhancing the positive role the neighbourhood plays within the wider housing market, or developing policies to change entrenched patterns and improve housing outcomes in the neighbourhood and wider area'*. The entrenched pattern at Barby has been a persistent under delivery of housing, including a significant lack of affordable housing delivery and general concerns in respect of an ever-aging population due to the out-migration of younger persons resulting from a lack of

housing supply and choice. The AECOM report presents a stark warning that the issue of an ageing population is set to increase exponentially and the NDP review presents the opportunity to take real action to address this issue.

- 3.20 Para 53 of the AECOM report is important and will become increasingly so when WNC reveal their strategy for the rural area and more importantly information on the level of growth which Barby village will be expected to deliver over the life of the emerging development plan.
- 3.21 Para 92 presents a welcome acknowledgement of the salary range (£38,000 - £72,000 per annum) for persons who would be eligible for affordable home ownership products.
- 3.22 There is a general misconception locally that affordable home ownership is limited to the lowest quartile earners, the reality couldn't be further from that misconception. An individual who earns £38,000 per annum would just be capable of affording to purchase an affordable intermediate tenure property, for clarity the average wage in the East Midlands is £31,364 as at mid-2023. Even with an annual income of £71,999 an individual would still be eligible for affordable housing and without a significant (25%+ deposit) would be incapable of accessing open market housing. These figures are a clear indication of the housing crisis that exists locally, but also nationally.
- 3.23 It is individuals within this range of salaries (£38,000 - £72,000) that also need to be catered for within the plan. Individuals below the £38,000 per annum threshold would be catered for through socially rented affordable housing, those on incomes of between £38,000-£71,999 would be eligible for intermediate (shared ownership affordable products) tenures. The report suggests that those earning above the £72,000 mark can access open market housing.
- 3.24 The locally held opinion is that everyone has access to the same dwellings which come to the market, however the AECOM report now affords the Parish Council absolute clarity on the earning levels that individuals must be at before they would be able to afford a house on the open market in the village.

- 3.25 In its current form, the School Close allocation within the plan makes provision for those individuals on incomes below £38,000 or older persons, typically mortgage free, who wish to downsize.
- 3.26 Those two older persons / couples who wish to downsize would be expected to vacate two properties in the village which would be expected to be either large properties or existing local authority housing, the former would be expected to be unaffordable to either a first-time buyer or an individual earning less than £72,000 per annum. If decanting from a local authority / housing association property, that dwelling would be recycled back to those on the Council's housing waiting list. Therefore, the approach to allocating a small site for housing, whilst commendable, does not solve the long-standing issues and has the potential to create uncontrollable outcomes through unwanted planning applications.
- 3.27 Para 95 of the AECOM report presents important information about development viability and confirms that a larger site needs to be allocated at the settlement to meet the affordable housing needs over the life of the plan. Once again, this presents stark acknowledgement of the response that is required. A 'larger' site in planning terms could be 'major development' which is defined as 10 dwellings or more, however the term 'larger' does need to be defined appropriately.
- 3.28 Para 102 to 111 of the AECOM report need to be revisited against the backdrop of that primary data for housing need for the Parish as set out in the Local Needs Survey (2019). To suggest the current need is 1.1 dwellings per annum, when the 2 separately evidenced assessments / surveys (AECOM Report / Local Need Survey (2019)) including figures in the body of the AECOM report itself (referred to above) are well in excess of that figure. This would suggest that it is not a sound approach to developing a suitable planning strategy to meet housing needs or sustaining the settlement.
- 3.29 At Para 129, the document rightly confirms that the affordable housing requirement is triggered at 10 dwellings and requires 40% of properties above that 10-dwelling threshold level to be affordable.
- 3.30 Therefore, the approach to delivering affordable dwellings should be pragmatically considered against what has been assessed as being viable. For example, to deliver 20 affordable dwellings, a site of 50 units would need to be permitted. To deliver the AECOM

report's identified need of 60 affordable dwellings (3 per annum between 2021-2041) 150 units would need to be permitted overall (on qualifying sites over 10 units), this is also without accounting for the additional 20 (2 dwellings per annum between 2021-41) specialist housing requirement identified within the AECOM report as required up to 2041.

- 3.31 It is hoped that the above presents an overview of the clear need for a step change in housing delivery at the settlement through adequate allocation(s) to shield the settlement from speculative development.
- 3.32 It is **urged** that the content of footnote 15 of Page 67 of the AECOM document is not overlooked, but rather fully considered through future revision to the NDP review. The AECOM Housing Needs Assessment does provide very valuable secondary evidence which provides a clear demonstration that a step change in housing delivery is required in the Parish, information relating to the neighbourhood area and its position within the wider WNC area supports this. Unfortunately, the key detail contained within the Local Housing Need Survey for Barby and Onley is an equally, if not more, important piece of evidence, based on primary data collection, which can assist in the development of the NDP has been overlooked despite being acknowledged as a key source of evidence within the adopted development plan for West Northamptonshire and referred to within recent appeal decisions.

## 4. Comments on (Draft) Design Guidance and Code (AECOM, December 2023)

This document was prepared by a third party and has been signed off. It cannot therefore be amended.

- 4.1 It is noted that since the publication of the Draft Design Guidance and Code the Government have now published an updated National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF').
- 4.2 The draft guide provides useful information, whilst geared to larger scale development proposals, it is useful to obtain an understanding of the approach that will be required to be taken in delivering development proposals at the settlement in future.
- 4.3 The land at Longdown Lane is a 'Gateway Site' when assessed against the provisions of the Design Guidance and Code.
- 4.4 A Gateway Site presents the opportunity to make a statement for the settlement and frame the entrance to the village. Notably, the Longdown Lane site presents an opportunity to re-order / frame the Longdown Lane and Ridgeway cross roads with Daventry Road. There are of course significant public and highway safety benefits to be realised because of this.
- 4.5 The Design Guidance and Code has been fully accounted for in the preparation of an indicative residential layout for part of the Longdown Lane site which would present a high level of connectivity to the existing settlement, its public transport offer and range of services and facilities. Connectivity could also be enhanced between footpaths at the Elkington Lane cross roads and that route which runs through Barby Meadow Woodland to Braunston. This is a key area of connectivity that needs to be addressed to reduce conflict between the sports field and dog walkers but also between cyclists and vehicles on Longdown Lane. In terms of pedestrian linkages, a number of examples are provided within a recent response to the WNC Call for Sites invitation (April 2024), that document is included for reference with pedestrian permeability routes shown, an extract is set out below. The document is appended in its entirety to this submission.



4.6 The checklist at Section 5 of the document is a welcome addition and provides a high level of clarity to the reader.

4.7 To enable a thorough assessment, the indicative proposals for the Longdown Lane site has been assessed against the checklist and it is clear that the development could align with the general design guidelines at point 1 of Chapter 5. The indicative proposals have been prepared with connectivity and integration at its core, notably pedestrian connections between the settlement and key outlying facilities and 'joining up' existing public rights of way. The layout also caters for both cyclists and pedestrian users and has been designed to ensure that the road within the site is able to be constructed to an adoptable standard, capable of being utilised by emergency services, refuse vehicles and residents alike.

4.8 Regarding open space, environmental areas, views and character, the site responds to the landscape by virtue of it sitting behind a ridge line when viewed from the south and screened by significant foliage and topographical features to screen it from all other long-range viewpoints. Several trees would be planted as part of the development to ensure shading, but not wholesale coverage that would disable the use of PV panels. The site does not lie within an important view, and it presents an opportunity to enhance neighbouring recreational areas and areas of publicly accessible open space.

- 4.9 In respect of Point 4, the site presents an enormous opportunity to enhance the arrival point into the village and would not erode a gap between settlements. Through appropriate hard and soft landscaping, it is considered that the PC could seek to influence the presentation of the site (and village) to road users entering Barby from Longdown Lane, Daventry / Welton Road and Ridgeway.
- 4.10 The pattern of development has been influenced by national guidance which has been transposed into the NDP Guidance and the layout, form and grouping of properties ensures the proposals adhere to points 4 and 5 of the draft design guide.
- 4.11 Parish Council involvement in the presentation of the proposed buildings lines and boundary treatments would be welcomed. However, the characteristics of the Longdown Lane frontage has been informed by the setback which are in situ elsewhere at the village.
- 4.12 The layout demonstrates that parking can be provided in adherence to Northamptonshire Parking Standards. However, the PC input into surface materials would be welcomed along with input into the materials palette for any proposed development.
- 4.13 Regarding the content of the guidance, it is considered that the inclusion of Figures 83 and 84 on Page 62 is wholly inappropriate and only serves to alienate individuals from engaging in the plan making process. The guidance does not relate to a large urban centre where said examples could be deemed indistinguishable, the approach taken in this case sets out imagery of two properties which are identifiable to most readers. The document has not been produced with public engagement at its heart, these figures have been seen for the first time at this late consultation stage and should be replaced with non-distinguishable, generic examples, perhaps from outside the plan area, which demonstrates the kind of design the Steering Group wish to avoid.
- 4.14 Overall, the guidance presents a positive addition to the suite of local development documents, and it is considered that the Longdown Lane site could be suitably and respectfully delivered to ensure that the content of the guidance and code could be met in its entirety.



## 5. Comments on Site Options and Assessment Report (AECOM, January 2023)

This report was prepared by a third party and is formally signed off. It cannot be amended. It is to be expected that site promoters will favour their own site, but this is an independent report whose conclusions were taken into account by the Parish Council in determining the most appropriate site for allocation.

- 5.1 Along with other evidence base documents relating to housing delivery, it is considered that the emerging WNC approach to rural housing growth / delivery be fully understood before work on the evidence base is finalised.
- 5.2 The emerging WNC Local Plan and its supporting evidence base presents a case which demonstrates a need for a step change in housing delivery across all types of settlement in West Northamptonshire, including Secondary Service Villages such as Barby.
- 5.3 This emerging evidence will undoubtedly impact on the approach which the NDP is required to take and will undoubtedly require revisions to both the policies and evidence base.
- 5.4 Regarding the Executive Summary, the acknowledgement that site NP5 is partially suitable for allocation is welcomed. As such, the landowner has sought to reframe their submissions to account for a smaller parcel of the wider site. This approach has been informed by the outcomes of the assessment, a consideration of previous NDP consultations, an understanding of local need and in response to the WNC wide approach which is due to be published by WNC after the General Election in July 2024.
- 5.5 It is agreed that the Longdown Lane site is suitable for allocation, and it is also confirmed both herein and within the appendices that the site is also achievable, viable, developable and immediately available for residential purposes.
- 5.6 For several reasons, it is considered that Site NP2, NP4 and SLAA71 are not suitable for allocation and those reasons are set out within discussion contained both within this submission and those appended submissions which were lodged in response to the recent WNC consultations, notably the WNC Call for Sites invitation. It is therefore urged that Section 9 of Appendix 6 be read in its entirety with this section of these representations.

- 5.7 It is urged that Table 4.1 of the AECOM site assessment document be revised to account for the reduction in the Longdown Lane site area presented within the most recent call for sites submission and the corresponding notes be updated accordingly.
- 5.8 Turning to Table 4.2 and the commentary relating to site NP5: Land North of Longdown Lane. The site is **not** the best and most versatile agricultural land, and this is confirmed within Appendix 6 attached to this submission.
- 5.9 Secondly, the site does not fall within an important view, and it is considered that this comment has been entered in error. The location of the important view, referenced within the document, is from the Sports Field looking south across a valley which stretches southeast towards Priors Marston. Development of the site would not impact on this view, topography to the south of the Longdown Lane site is also such that dwellings at the site, when viewed from long range publicly accessible viewpoints, would be invisible due to the now reduced site area falling behind a pronounced ridge line.
- 5.10 It is acknowledged that land to the north and west is developed and therefore the area of promoted land has been reduced to account for surrounding features and to ensure that the site can be suitably delivered within its environs.
- 5.11 It is correct that the NDP settlement boundary could be redrawn to include the Longdown Lane site, and it is urged that the site (as edged in red at Appendix 1) be included within the village boundary to provide a safety valve to stave off future pressure from speculative planning applications.
- 5.12 This approach would allow a residential development to be delivered in line with community aspirations and with the Parish Council involved in the design and delivery process, rather than having a proposal forced upon the community. Development pressure at the settlement is due to increase imminently, and with any land adjacent to the settlement being suitable this site could deliver a proposal which aligns with the aspirations of both the wider community and Parish Council.
- 5.13 In review of the site-specific assessment of NP5 in the AECOM report, the SHLAA/SHELAA Reference for the Longdown Lane site is 433.
- 5.14 The proposed development capacity is now circa 39 dwellings with a mix of open market, affordable and self-build dwellings / plots.

5.15 In terms of neighbouring uses, it is reasonable to suggest that residential properties lie to the north and west, within the recreational fishery, to the south and east lies a mix of recreational and agricultural facilities. All these surrounding uses directly abut the site, albeit separated by the highway in some cases.

5.16 Development at the site will not impact upon any Green Infrastructure corridor, LWS, POS, SINC, NIA, RIGS and it is urged that the assessment be updated to **NO** to reflect this. Green space to the south is separated by 2 hedgerows and a significant highway, therefore no adverse impact will arise on this provision. Its proximity to both the Sports Field and Woodland would in fact serve as a positive for future residents and increase the perception of safety for those users of both of the aforementioned. This sustainability feature weighs heavily in favour of the site's allocation.

5.17 It is reasonable to confirm the site is Grade 3 agricultural land and is of moderate quality. It has historically been utilised for grazing livestock and the soil quality, as per the majority of land along Longdown Lane is not of sufficient quality to support arable crops.

5.18 There are no veteran or ancient trees that would be adversely impacted by development at the site. There are no trees, notably no trees subject to a TPO, which fall either within or adjacent to the site which are of importance. Therefore, the notation in the assessment in this regard needs to be amended to green.

5.19 The landscape of the site, and its contribution to the wider context, is of low sensitivity. The site is not highlighted as important within the West Northants Landscape Character Assessment. Long range views into the site are non-existent due to the presence of significant field boundaries on each approach to the site and the wider topography of the landscape which serves to 'hide' the site. Whilst those users of the footpath to the north would undoubtedly take in views of any proposed development, however a development could serve to illuminate sections of this footpath and provide natural surveillance and the users perception of safety. Any development could also potentially provide financial contributions towards the resurfacing of the lane which borders the north of the site.

5.20 From the south, the site is only visible from Longdown Lane once the road user is adjacent to it, from the Woodland Footpath the site is not visible.

5.21 From the north, there are no ranging views into and through the site from the pavement on Daventry Road and from Ridgeway glimpses into the site would be minimal, at worst, if the hedge line to Longdown Lane was to be reduced.

5.22 Even if the site was entirely void of field boundaries the visual amenity offered by the field is low, the existing barn and associated yard has been described by respondents to recent application as, messy, ramshackle and dilapidated. Therefore, development of the site would present a significant opportunity to harness environmental improvements.

5.23 The site assessment highlights the potential impacts on the historic environment, notably the Old Cornmill. It is urged that this element of the assessment be reconsidered in the context of those structures that lie near the Listed Building itself. A development at the Longdown Lane site presents an opportunity to enhance the setting of the listed building and both open up and frame views of the building.

5.24 In comparison to those other sites promoted at the settlement, the Longdown Lane site would score most favourably on its impact on heritage with only one Listed Building nearby. Furthermore, unlike the Daventry Road site (opposite school) development at Longdown Lane would not result in the destruction of important ridge and furrow.

5.25 The site is immediately available for development, and this should be acknowledged within the assessment.

5.26 The landowner is prepared to work with the Parish Council, West Northamptonshire Council and all other stakeholders to deliver a mutually agreeable development solution which could be delivered in years 1-5 post NDP or Local Plan adoption.

5.27 Having reviewed the site assessment, it is hoped that the additional information above will result in the sites re-assessment, and it is considered that the overall rating for the site should be **GREEN**.

## 6. Comments on Site Selection Process Paper

- 6.1 It is urged that these comments be read in conjunction with those representations made to the WNC Call for Sites and Local Plan consultations which closed in June 2024 and contains similar discussion in respect of site selection across the wider West Northants plan area, not just Barby and Onley Parish. For clarity, the above-mentioned representations are appended to this submission.
- 6.2 At the outset, a key facet of local site selection is that of community involvement and it is considered that the site selection process would have benefited greatly from public awareness of those available parcels of land within the plan area. Such an approach would have meant that true local, community led planning could take place.

The Executive Summary shared with the community all of the available sites. 76% of those responding said that the allocated site was the best one.

- 6.3 Details of the make-up of the Advisory Committee would also serve to benefit the reader as there is an element of confusion as to the purposes of the Steering Group and the interests of the Advisory Committee.
- 6.4 At Para 3.1 the site selection paper refers to a locally agreed criteria about proximity to the built-up area, it is considered that such a methodology for identifying preferred site(s) should have been the subject of public consultation.
- 6.5 At Para 3.2 and 3.3 the size, scale and quantity of dwellings to be delivered should be based on evidence, primarily that contained within a Housing Needs Survey conducted in accordance with the methodology established by WNC, its stakeholders and through public consultation. Housing Needs Surveys are carried out across the rural area of West Northamptonshire in its entirety, utilising a standard approach across all settlements. The only Local Needs Survey for the Parish remains that which was published in 2019, the AECOM assessment does not nullify its conclusions.
- 6.6 At 4.2 it is suggested that a buffer would be required between the water tower, phone mast and the proposed allocation to the south of School Close. There are questions as to what form such a buffer would take, particularly given the height of those key features of the Water Tower and mast, one of which is an attractive non-designated heritage asset within the draft review. To secure the remainder of the field as a buffer will only serve to increase the need for land outside of the settlement envelope to deliver those housing needs in the Parish.

- 6.7 At Para 4.3 the document suggests that a 4-dwelling proposal is three times the size of the identified need. This is a miscalculation and signifies the shortcomings of an assessment based on secondary evidence rather than a survey based on primary data collection, utilising a long-established methodology which has been rolled out across West Northamptonshire.
- 6.8 At 4.4 it is clear that there is an appetite from the landowner to develop the site at School Close. However, the site has always been developable since the settlement envelope was established in 2016. Land within the village boundary that is capable of being developed has also had the full backing of policies within the Joint Core Strategy since 2014. It is therefore considered that the site could in fact currently be unavailable and undevelopable due to access constraints, multiple ownership issues and ransom issues from School Close.
- 6.9 To the north, the site adjoins School Close which is under private ownership and therefore serves as a ransom strip which would impact on the financial viability of delivering any dwellings at all. Information to confirm that this is the case is present on HM Land Registry records. Clearly, were the associated Housing Association to develop the site then these issues would likely fall away. However, it is likely that a more financially lucrative option would be the delivery of a single open market dwelling than 4 smaller occupancy restricted properties.
- 6.10 To the south, the site adjoins the lane from the water tower, however this would not be technically capable of supporting the development of 4 dwellings.
- 6.11 Whilst an access opportunity could exist on to the Daventry Road, this is not considered to be technically unfeasible due to the proximity of the School Close junction, the erosion of on street parking which the school is dependent upon and also to the proximity to that access to the Water Tower / Sub Station, it is highly likely that the Local Highways Authority would lodge strong opposition due to its proximity to the priority route through the cross roads. This approach would also need to fully consider the parking / traffic issues associated at peak times with the village school and those objections which would arise if parking were to shift elsewhere, particularly further into the village which would undoubtedly be the case.
- 6.12 Therefore, whilst the landowner may have an appetite to develop, there are question marks as to whether it would be financially or technically feasible without an alternative access

being brought into the site from Longdown Lane across the neighbouring field (to which this submission relates) and across that lane which lies under separate ownership and borders the proposed allocation to the south.

6.13 However, if the Housing Association who own the site access to the north were to express an interest in delivery, there is potential confidence that the site may be achievable. For the purposes of the assessment though that would suggest that the site is currently unavailable due to multiple ownerships and access constraints.

6.14 The Officer comments which are set out at 4.6 are to be expected, their commentary relates to residential development within the village boundary. The Joint Core Strategy and Local Plan, in their current form, provide absolute support for residential development within the village boundary of Barby. As it clearly concludes, those comments were presented as an informal opinion without technical input (from the Highways Authority) and without an appreciation of the technical and financial constraints of the site.

6.15 It is however agreed that development to the south of the village is the most appropriate direction for growth. It ensures no impacts on the Scheduled Ancient Monument at the north of the village, will not result in the coalescence of Barby and Kilsby and would serve to bring populations closer to the key facilities such as the school, sports field, Camps Copse and the Meadow Woodland. This area is also directly served by bus stops.

## 7 Comments on Alternative Sites Promoted at the Settlement

Noted, however the site selection process has concluded and the site promoted here was not successful. The appendices relating to this site (access, layout etc) are therefore irrelevant.

7.1 A review of the evidence base associated with the emerging local plan and on review of the recently published Barby and Onley (Draft) Neighbourhood Plan Review document, it is apparent that alternative potential development sites have been submitted to the Council and Parish Council as part of their respective Call for Sites Invitations.

7.2 Those alternative sites are shown below and listed thereafter.



### **Site NP1: Land at Windy Ridge, Footpath, Elkington Lane**

7.3 This site is inaccessible and a remote distance from the settlement boundary, it would therefore constitute an isolated site in the open countryside when assessed against the provisions of the NPPF.

7.4 The site has been deemed unsuitable for development in assessment by AECOM.

### **Site NP2: Site at Toft Hill, Rugby Road**

7.5 Part of this site, which lies within the village boundary, is subject to a current planning application for the demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of four dwellings (Application Reference: 2024/0993/FULL).



7.6 There has been a significant level of public objection to the development proposal, notably in relation to the following.

- Safety of access
- Ecology Issues
- Critical Drainage issues
- Over Development
- Amenity / Privacy / Character Issues

7.7 The allocation of land to the rear, outside of the village boundary, would give rise to a significant level of further public objection.

7.8 In addition, the site would not be of a scale to deliver affordable housing in a sustainable manner, and it is unlikely that the site could feasibly deliver dwellings from a technical standpoint.

7.9 The Barby and Onley Neighbourhood Plan (2016) seeks to strictly control back land development. Any development at this site to the rear of existing properties at Rugby Road would give rise to significant amenity and privacy issues and would appear as back land development when compared to the current spacious nature of the site.

7.10 The delineation of Rugby Road is dangerous in this part of the village, in addition there is no pavement that serves the site. There are also no opportunities to introduce a suitable crossing point or traffic calming measures on this key entry / exit point into the village. It is therefore considered that highways constraints would render this site unachievable.

7.11 The topography to the north of the site is such that the land falls away significantly to the Rainsbrook. Subsequently, any development at this site could have adverse landscape and visual impacts.

7.12 As such, whilst a policy basis currently exists for the development of that element of the site which falls within the village boundary, the land to the rear whilst considered to be available is **not technically achievable** and as such the site is **not suitable** for development.

### **Site NP3: Land at School Close**

- 7.13 There are known technical constraints to delivery of this site, a ransom strip exists from School Close to the north. Ownership constraints exist to the south from the unmade track / public right of way (Elkington Lane). There is no direct access on to Daventry Road and given the distance between School Close and the Ridgeway / Daventry Road crossroads there are questions from a technical standpoint as to whether access here is technically.
- 7.14 However, the site does lie within the settlement envelope and has done so for a significant period, therefore there has been a favourable policy context for development at the site for several years.
- 7.15 It is considered that due to deliverability issues (technical and legal) that development at the site is not currently feasible and if it was feasible then a planning application would have already been submitted.
- 7.16 Its longer-term potential could come forward in tandem with land to the south, which is promoted in this case, whereby the site could be unlocked through a<sup>o</sup>rding direct access from Longdown Lane through a wider development area.
- 7.17 Through the information within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan Review it is considered that to the south of the settlement is the Parish Council's preferred direction for growth, this is demonstrated within the Neighbourhood Plan Review (April 2024) consultation document.
- 7.18 The site does not currently have a suitable access and there is anecdotal evidence of congestion issues outside the site on Daventry Road during peak school drop o<sup>o</sup> times. Whilst there are no known flood risk issues, there are issued with the attenuation feature at the site and persistent issues with the pumping station attached to that feature. There would be severe amenity impacts on School Close residents during the construction phase, including at delivery times. Therefore, it is considered that the site is **not currently suitable**.
- 7.19 In terms of availability, the site is not controlled or under the ownership of a development, nor is there any clear evidence of the landowner's intention to sell as the site has had a favourable policy basis for residential development since the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan and even more so since the adoption of the Daventry District (Part 2)

Local Plan. There are ownership issues in respect of access to the site and therefore the site is considered to be **unavailable**.

7.20 Due to the issues identified above, it is clear that the site is **not currently achievable**.

#### **Site SLAA71: Land at Daventry Road**

7.21 This site was the subject of a planning application in 2014 and a subsequent appeal in 2016 (Ref: APP/Y2810/W/15/3138048, dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016). That decision is appended to this submission.

7.22 The findings of that appeal were clear that the proposed access would change the character of the site lying in such proximity to the school and would impact upon the large number of persons going to and from the school. This would lead to a significant level of local objection and inconvenience through both the construction phase and upon occupancy.

7.23 From a landscape and visual impact perspective, the site would be prominent from views from that public footpath that ran outside of the application boundary, but within the ownership of the Appellant at that time. It was also considered that the impact would be yet further exacerbated by the contrived nature of the site in that case that did not follow apparent field boundaries.

7.24 The site was highlighted as being of *'particular significance to form and character of Barby'*.

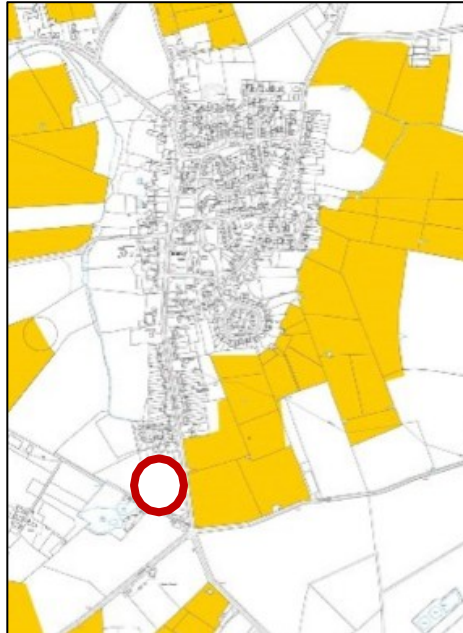
7.25 The ridge and furrow at the site were considered to be of greater significance at the site than at other areas around the settlement. A map showing the extent of ridge and furrow around the village is shown below, notably the Longdown Lane site contains no ridge and furrow.

7.26 Any development at the site would have significant adverse landscape and visual impacts when viewed from several publicly accessible vantage points. Notably, the hedgerow coverage to the south along The Ridgeway is spreading for the majority of its length and there are significant visual impacts which would arise even from longer ranges.

7.27 Notably, the emerging (Draft) Barby Neighbourhood Plan Review (2024), clearly highlights the ridge and furrow that extends to cover the entirety of the site as being of significance to the

village. Any loss, no matter how small, to that valuable asset was seen by the Inspector as adversely affecting the asset as a whole.

**Barby Village, Extent of Ridge and Furrow**



7.28 A further image showing the extent of the ridge and furrow is shown below.

**Site SLAA71 – Birds Eye View Looking West**



7.29 As such, whilst this site may be considered available, due to technical constraints it is **not suitable** and significant technical constraints in terms of landscape and visual impacts, access and heritage issues the site is **not achievable**.

### Site NP4 and SLAA72: Land at Arnold House and Grove Farm

7.30 Whilst the preparation of a proposed site masterplan is indicative on an intention to develop, it is considered that the site is neither suitable nor achievable.



7.31 The site's accessibility is questioned, the proposed access area lies at a pinch point between what appears to be a cob building which would be of historic significance and an existing residential curtilage. There is no indication that sufficient width can be achieved to allow two vehicles to pass on an unimpeded basis, yet further there is no demonstration of sufficient width to allow for pedestrian access on either side of the proposed entrance road.

7.32 Due to the access constraints, residents in the southernmost section of the site would have a walk-in excess of 1km to the primary school and those public transport stops on Daventry Road, despite them being just 160m away as the crow flies.

- 7.33 From a landscape character perspective, views into the site from footpath EC6 and Elkington Lane would be significantly altered, and it is considered that harm would arise in terms of visual impacts which would be unable to be mitigated.
- 7.34 The site lies in proximity to listed buildings and a number of non-designated heritage assets that are highlighted within the Barby Neighbourhood Plan Review.
- 7.35 Whilst the site is accessible to the local services and facilities the access constraints that exist do in some cases result in significant walking distances to some of these.
- 7.36 In terms of the potential development of the site to impact on residential amenity of existing occupiers. The development site lies directly to the rear of 30+ residential properties on the western side of Daventry Road and a similar number lie on the other side of Daventry Road. There would be significant adverse impacts on the level of amenity and outlook enjoyed by residents in this location. Furthermore, the access constraints will have additional adverse impacts for the road user. It is anticipated that a high level of local objection would be received in this instance.
- 7.37 To this end, it is considered that the site is at best **not currently suitable**, however a more detailed assessment by the LPA may consider the site to be **unsuitable**.
- 7.38 It is understood that the development, whilst controlled by a developer, is under multiple ownership interests. Whilst this is not indicative of the site being unavailable, there are numerous examples of development sites not being delivered at Barby due to multiple ownership interests. Therefore, it is considered that the site is potentially **not immediately available**.
- 7.39 Given the size of the site, the technical constraints that exist and the anticipated level of objection to a development in this location it is considered that the site is **not currently achievable**.
- 7.40 With an appreciation of those 5 competing sites, at the outset it is reasonable to confirm that all share an attachment to the village boundary, aside from site NLP1 which is in an isolated position in the open countryside. Those with a connection to the existing

settlement boundary are all considered to share the same sustainability credentials as one another.

7.41 However, it is clear from an assessment of site characteristics, external factors and the findings of the Council's site assessments, including the Sustainability Appraisal that Site 344 (Longdown Lane) is considered the most sustainable of all those parcels submitted to the Call for Sites process.

7.42 Therefore, in seeking to allocate land at the settlement the Council should be mindful of all reasonable alternatives. In considering those reasonable alternatives it is considered that the conclusions would support the allocation of land at site 344 to meet future housing growth requirements both at the settlement and across the wider West Northamptonshire plan area.

## 8 Comments on WNC SEA and HRA Screening Report (May 2024)

8.1 The content of Para 3.8 of the WNC response makes it clear that to fulfil one of the basic conditions, policies within the NDP are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies from the development plan. In this case, the development plan comprises of the West Northamptonshire Joint Local Plan (2014) and the Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (2021).

8.2 WNC have assessed the conformity of the NDP's policies against the content of the document but have not provided any concluding commentary within the body of the report. However, it is clear from Table 1 (starting at Page 15 of WNC's response) that the following policies are not in conformity with the development plan and will therefore need re-consideration / revision to ensure the basic conditions are met. The first basic condition at Schedule 4B 8 (2) of the Localism Act (2011) is clear that the regard must be given to national policies and guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- Policy H2: Village Confines
- Policy H4: Affordable Housing
- Policy H5: Windfall Sites
- Policy ENV7: Non-Designated Heritage Assets
- Policy ENV8: Ridge and Furrow
- Policy ENV14 Renewable Energy Generation
- Policy CS2: Supporting Local Employment
- Policy CS4: Farm Diversification

8.3 It is considered that the WNC assessment in respect of Policy H1 is incorrect. In its current form the policy seeks to prescribe a level of additional control, through specifying the size, type and tenure of dwelling and additional controls on land within the settlement envelope which currently has limited policy restrictions in respect of its development. In its current form the draft policy provides stricter controls and serves to promote lesser development than the development plan would currently allow. This is in direct conflict with national policy contained within Para 29 of the NPPF. Para 29 is clear that Neighbourhood Plans should not



promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.

- 8.4 One of the development plan's strategic policies is Policy H2 which requires 50% affordable housing; however, no threshold is set on sites across the rural area. The NPPF is clear that affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments (i.e. over 10 dwellings). For clarity, Barby and Onley Parish Council is not a 'Designated Rural Area' as mentioned in Para 66 of the NPPF and as defined within The Housing Order (2016) at Schedule 1 and 2 of Article 3 (UK Stat Ins 2016 No. 587). It is urged that clarity is sought from the Council in respect of this particular policy to ensure that the plan can positively pass through examination.
- 8.5 The SEA and HRA assessment conclusions are clear, and the amendments proposed would not give rise to significant environmental effects or any adverse impacts on the Upper Nene Valley or Rutland Water SPA's.
- 8.6 Therefore, whilst the SEA and HRA conclusions are clear that no further work is required, the content of Appendix A does give rise to separate questions of conformity that need to be considered.

## **9 Comments on the NDP Review Prior to Regulation 14 Consultation Statement (April 2024)**

- 9.1 The introductory text on Page 1 (4<sup>th</sup> Paragraph) suggests that an updated Local Housing Needs Survey has been carried out, this is not the case, the evidence base should be fully supported by evidence of housing need which is based on primary data collection. Whilst useful, the AECOM survey is based on nationally available data which makes no account for local circumstances.
- 9.2 Midlands Rural Housing work closely with West Northamptonshire Council to establish local housing needs at parish level across Northamptonshire and utilised an agreed standardised methodology. It is urged that the Neighbourhood Plan be prepared in accordance with the most up to date, appropriate and recognised evidence.
- 9.3 At Page 3, the wording of Question 1 suggests that the promoted sites and potential development options were published for public comment during the March 2023 consultation. The Land South of School Close was not published as a potential allocation opportunity until the current Regulation 14 consultation. As such the wording of the question needs to be revisited as in its current form the results suggest that there is an overwhelming support for the allocation of a site to which the public had no knowledge.
- 9.4 Policy CS7 suggests that there is support for the expansion of Barby Primary School, whilst this may be the case, the school is now reliant upon persons from outside the Parish who, anecdotally, nearly outnumber those children who attend the school from within the settlement. This is a key barometer which signposts to the observer that proportionate housing growth is required at the settlement to ensure this key piece of community infrastructure survives. The education authority will seek to invest where the students are, travelling into the village is not sustainable and causes associated issues such as traffic, congestion, parking and air quality issues. A thriving school, with most students coming from the village is vital to a thriving community. Rather than creating policies to enable the extension of the school, greater emphasis should initially be placed on ensuring its survival.

- 9.5 In respect of the Appendices, it is urged that responses be published in full to ensure transparency. It is also considered necessary that future consultations seek to identify the age profile of respondents to obtain an understanding of those who are engaging and where the efforts should go in terms of directing consultation materials to encourage participation.
- 9.6 Younger persons are typically disenfranchised and largely excluded from the planning system due to its overt complexity, confusing narrative and simply down to the fact that it will do little to improve their quality of life. The bullet points of those responses confirm this to be the case, for example *'proper houses for proper people'*, *'I seen no reason why Barby needs to grow at all'*, *'No'* (in response to a question about additional housing), then overwhelming opposition to energy initiatives despite there being support for the principle of renewable energy installations. NIMBYISM is part and parcel of the planning system, but in reviewing the consultation responses note it is clear that there are many quieter voices which would support larger scale housing growth if they fully understood the benefits associated with it.
- 9.7 The shop, public house, cricket club and principally the school are now overly reliant upon persons from outside the settlement to ensure their survival, housing growth to meet the cross section of needs for all age groups is a tool which could be utilised to partially address this reliance, whilst allowing for much needed infrastructure improvements which many of the responses appear to be calling for.
- 9.8 To ensure that the consultation process can be carried out in the most thorough manner, it is urged that all representations from the previous consultation, and the Regulation 14 consultation be made publicly available for review. This would allow for an appreciation of the issues that residents face, in their entirety and allow for appropriate representations to be made to WNC at the point of submission. A similar exercise was carried out, successfully, during the process to adopt the current neighbourhood plan.

## 10 Conclusions

- 10.1 A significant amount of work has been carried out by the PC and the efforts of Councillors to get the review to this stage are to be commended.
- 10.2 The Localism Act and the NPPF are clear that NDPs should be prepared to be in conformity with national and local planning policy and that they should specifically not undermine strategic policies within the development plan.
- 10.3 The development plan in this case is currently in a period of transition with a significant increase in pressure for development in rural areas is expected as the WNC strategy for such locations becomes clear.
- 10.4 However, there is now clear evidence at both district and neighbourhood level to demonstrate that the services, facilities and community infrastructure offer at Barby is now reliant upon persons from outside of the NDP area to ensure their longer-term survival. This over reliance is in part down to the ageing population at the settlement but undoubtedly due to the persistent under delivery of housing to meet locally identified needs.
- 10.5 It is clear that the NDP should now be utilised as tool to guarantee the survival of these facilities through enabling appropriate proportionate growth through harnessing a bold policy approach.
- 10.6 It is agreed that village expansion to the south, as per the thrust of the proposed housing allocation, is the correct direction of growth. This direction will preserve historic assets to the north of the village, retain sensitive views into the site from footpaths to the west and protect that important ridge and furrow to the east of Daventry Road. Yet further, development in this location will prevent the coalescence of Barby and Kilsby.
- 10.7 The step change approach to housing delivery on a larger allocated site is now fundamental to instil protections at the village from speculative applications on sites where fierce public opposition is likely to arise. Such an approach will also ensure that future planning for the village is truly community led rather than taking a reactionary approach which merely seeks to object to proposals on unallocated sites.

- 10.8 Evidence is clear that just 8 net additional dwellings have been built at Barby since 2011, this is at odds with elements of the evidence base which drastically, and incorrectly, inflate this figure. The AECOM Needs Assessment which supports the NDP is clear that there are now serious and significant affordability issues at the settlement and WNC evidence now provides absolute confirmation that the settlements population is ageing due to an inability to attract or retain younger persons due to a lack of housing opportunities. Once again, the NDP is the key tool to address these issues.
- 10.9 Whilst the south of the settlement is the most suitable location for growth, there are questions over the suitability of the allocation. These question marks relate to the actual availability and deliverability of the allocation, particularly since there has been a favourable policy for its development for more than a decade.
- 10.10 To this end, the land north of Longdown Lane has been offered as an available, viable and deliverable development site with no technical constraints and a site which is confirmed within the NDP evidence base as being suitable.
- 10.11 A suitable development of up to 39 dwellings at the site could be delivered across the entire spectrum of house types and tenures from older person bungalows, affordable and intermediate tenures, starter homes, self-build plots and open market housing. This development could be brought forward with community and PC aspirations at its heart and would serve to protect the settlement from speculative applications on any piece of land that adjoins the settlement boundary.
- 10.12 The site has the potential to deliver a wider range of social, environmental and economical sustainability benefits and would provide connectivity between the settlement and outlying pieces of social and community infrastructure.
- 10.13 In comparison to other promoted sites, the Longdown Lane site has been demonstrated both herein and within the appendices as being the most preferential site when assessed against all reasonable alternatives.
- 10.14 In review, the work which has been carried out to evidence the level of development the NDP should seek to deliver presents a welcome acknowledgement of those needs which exist at the settlement. However, it does present a flawed and unrecognised approach to

establishing those dwellings that have been delivered and in identifying a suitable target moving forwards.

10.15 Primary data and evidence are key, the 2019 Local Need Survey has concerningly been overlooked and there is a need for a step change in housing delivery at the settlement to ensure community services, facilities and infrastructure can be maintained.

10.16 The SEA and HRA are clear that the NDP review is acceptable, however Appendix A of that document suggests that some policies within the consultation document will require some alteration.

10.17 It is hoped that the above is of some use as the NDP Review progresses towards submission, should you wish to discuss the above or any of the enclosures then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

# APPENDICES

1. Land at Longdown Lane, Barby: Site Location Plan
2. Land at Longdown Lane: Opportunities Plan
3. Land at Longdown Lane, Barby: Indicative Site Layout (Ranwood Designs, May 2024)
4. Land at Longdown Lane, Barby: Indicative Site Access (MAC Highway Engineers, May 2024)
5. [REDACTED] WNC Local Plan Regulation 18 Response (June 2024).
6. [REDACTED] WNC Call for Sites Response 2 (June 2024)