

Wolvey Neighbourhood Plan – Executive Summary

1. Background

The opportunity to prepare a neighbourhood plan (NP) was established through the 2011 Localism Act. Once the NP has been formally 'Made' by Rugby Borough Council, it will sit alongside the Borough's Local Plan and all planning decisions taken by Rugby Borough Council will need to take the Plan's policies into account. It adds Wolvey-specific detail to the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.

The NP has to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Borough's Local Plan and have regard for the National Planning Policy Framework. It cannot promote policies that do not accord with these requirements.

Neighbourhood Plans are opportunities for local people to shape planning policy in their area and helps to make sure that planning decisions taken by Rugby Borough Council reflect local issues and not just Borough-wide concerns. They add local detail to Borough-wide strategic planning policies.

2. Introduction

Wolvey Parish Council took the decision to prepare a neighbourhood plan and established an Advisory Committee involving Parish Councillors and residents which met for the first time on 1 February 2015. The whole of the parish was formally designated by Rugby Borough Council for neighbourhood planning purposes on 31 July 2015.

Three Theme Groups were established to identify the policies needed to deliver an effective NP for the Parish, looking at areas such as housing; the environment; community facilities, employment and transport.

This work is now concluded. We held an Open Event on 12 June 2019 to share the emerging policies and have incorporated comments from this event into the latest draft. It is hoped that this Executive Summary of the NP helps to reach everyone in the parish and explains in plain English why we are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and how we are doing it. There are still opportunities to shape the final document as there are more formal consultation stages still to be undertaken.

Our vision for the parish up to 2031 (a timescale deliberately chosen to mirror that of the Local Plan) is to maintain and enhance the good quality of life, community spirit and attractive natural and built environment in the Wolvey Parish now and for future generations.

The policies in the NP aim to ensure that this vision is realised over the Plan period, by ensuring that development takes place in the most sustainable locations; encouraging the right types of development that meets local needs; protecting important community facilities that are special to the local community; promoting good design; facilitating appropriate employment opportunities; ensuring that the community continues to have good access to the surrounding countryside and green spaces; protecting open spaces that are important to the community and/or wildlife and improving pedestrian and cycle connections within the Plan area and into the surrounding areas.

3. Housing policies

The policies in this section seek to shape residential development in line with locally important issues.

The Parish is required to contribute to the supply of new housing across Rugby Borough irrespective of whether it prepares a Neighbourhood Plan.

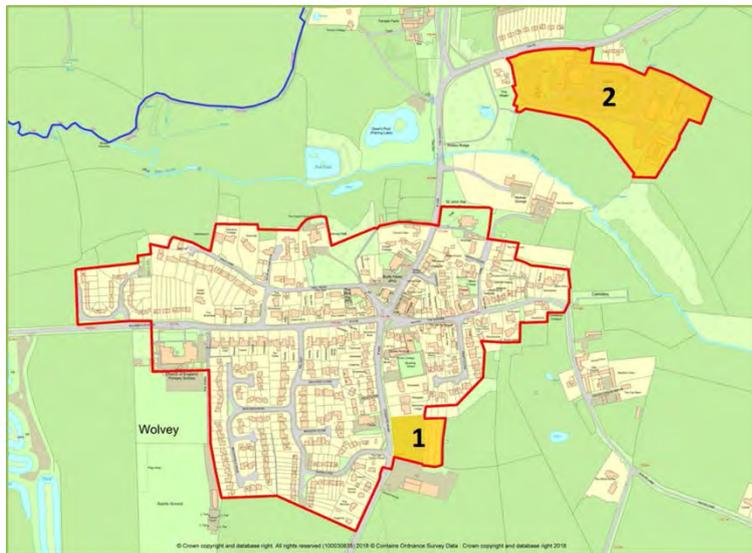
The Neighbourhood Plan can shape the type, size and location of new housing in the Parish – executive houses, family houses or starter homes. It can specify expensive or affordable homes, specialist housing for older people or people with support needs. It can also influence housing design and protect locally important buildings from inappropriate development.

In Rugby Borough Council’s Local Plan, Wolvey is classified as a ‘Main Rural Settlement’. Development is required in Main Rural Settlements to help meet the Borough’s housing requirement up to 2031.

The number of new houses required in the Parish is around 100 up to 2031.

Policy H1 supports the Local Plan allocation of houses at Coventry Road for about 15 dwellings and the Wolvey Campus on Leicester Road for around 85 houses.

The Neighbourhood Plan reinforces the Borough Council’s Limits to Development which define the boundary between the built-up area of Wolvey and the countryside, where development will be carefully controlled. The Limits to Development are marked by the red line in the figure below, with the site allocations shown in the same figure.



Policy S1 states that development proposals within the Limits to Development will be supported where they comply with other policies in this Plan.

Land outside the defined Limits to Development will be treated as open countryside, where development will be carefully controlled in line with local and national strategic planning policies.

Endorsing these sites helps to protect areas outside of the Limits to Development from inappropriate future development.

The Parish of Wolvey has a long and interesting history, resulting in a wide array of heritage assets, attractive landscapes and a distinctive local character. A policy on design helps to maintain this.

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

Policy S2 on design seeks to reflect the design principles which the community believes will help to achieve this aim. They reflect the outcome of consultations of all age groups, of community organisations and of the Housing Theme Group which specifically focused on relevant issues – all of which showed broad unanimity of views. The overall aim is to protect Wolvey so that it retains its character within a unique and distinctive Parish. This can be achieved by the use of the planning system to respond sensitively to the range of historic buildings, structures, landscapes and archaeology situated within the Parish.

The policy says all new commercial and residential development proposals will need to satisfy the following building design principles:

The design should enhance and reinforce the local distinctiveness and character of the area in which it is situated, and proposals should clearly show how the general character, scale, mass, density and layout of the site, or the building/s or extension fits in with local character.

The quality of design of new buildings and their layout should positively add to the character of the village; listed and historic buildings and their settings should be conserved or enhanced. However, contemporary and innovative materials and design will be supported where positive improvement can be robustly demonstrated without detracting from the historic context.

Redevelopment, alteration or extension of historic farmsteads and agricultural buildings within the Parish should be sensitive to their distinctive character, materials, form and setting.

Proposals should minimise the impact on general amenity and give careful consideration to privacy, noise and light. Light pollution should be minimised wherever possible and security lighting should be appropriate, unobtrusive and energy efficient; new street lighting should be modest in scale and appropriate to the rural setting. Development should be enhanced by fostering and increasing biodiversity. Where possible and appropriate, enclosure of plots should be of native hedging, wooden fencing, or stone and/or brick walls of rural design. Any enclosures that are necessarily removed through the development process should be reinstated in keeping with the original. Mature trees of good arboricultural value should be retained as part of the development's landscaping proposals or, where this is demonstrably not practicable, replaced with new plantings on a two-for-one basis, using native species, either on site or elsewhere in the parish.

Development should incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques to meet high standards for energy and water efficiency, including the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology, as appropriate.

Having regard to climate change, development should incorporate sustainable drainage systems with viable long-term maintenance regimes to minimise vulnerability to flooding from streams, dykes and surface water run-off, by ensuring appropriate provision for the storage of waste and recyclable materials; all developments must consider impacts both within the site and in the surrounding area of the development within the development period.

In relation to housing mix, there is a higher than average share of detached housing, private rented properties and houses with more than 4 bedrooms in Wolvey. Home ownership levels are also high. There is evidence of under occupied dwellings particularly those with 4+ beds.

The high level of under occupancy suggests a need for smaller homes which would be suitable for residents needing to downsize, small families and those entering the housing market. Providing suitable accommodation for elderly residents will enable them to remain in the local community and release under-occupied larger properties which would be suitable for growing families.

Policy H2 says: New housing development proposals should provide a mixture of housing types specifically to meet identified local needs in Wolvey. Priority should be given to dwellings of 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms and to homes suitable for older people, including 2-bedroom bungalows and dwellings suitable for those with restricted mobility; 4+ bedroom dwellings may be included in the mix of dwellings, but will be expected to comprise a clear minority within the overall mix.

Windfall, or infill, sites are small-scale sites which come forward unexpectedly. These sites often comprise redundant or vacant buildings including barns, or a gap between existing properties in a built-up street scene.

Policy H3 supports small residential development proposals on infill and redevelopment sites for 1-4 dwellings subject to proposals being well designed and meeting relevant requirements set out in other policies in this Plan and the Borough's Local Plan, and where such development:

- a) Comprises a restricted gap in the continuity of existing frontage buildings;
- b) Is within the Limits to Development established in Policy S1; and
- c) Does not adversely impact on the character and visual amenity of the area, or the amenity of neighbours.

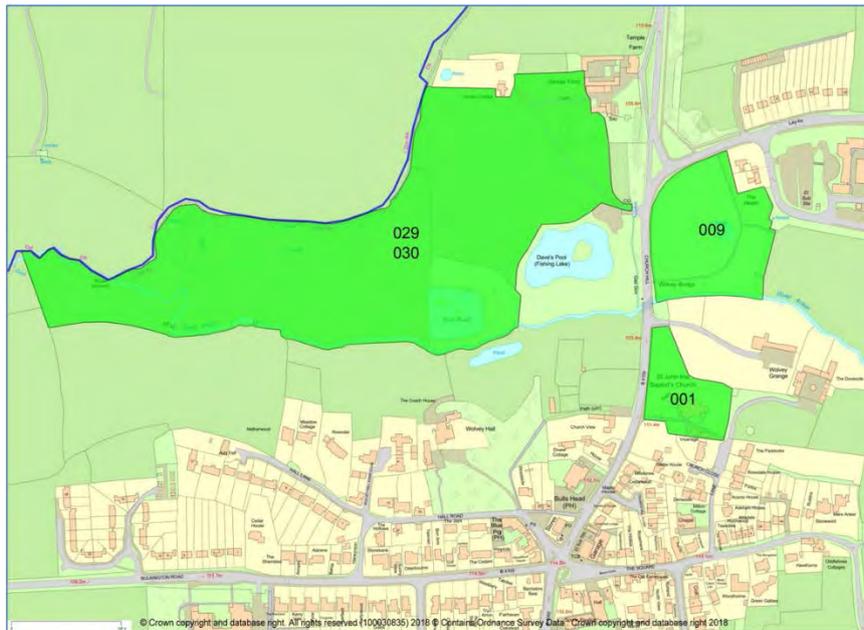
With average house prices too high for those on average incomes, housing affordability remains a key housing issue for the Parish and there is a clear case for affordable housing provision. Consultation has demonstrated support for affordable units to be provided for those individuals in housing need who have a local connection so that local need is prioritised. An Affordable Housing policy is included to address this.

Policy H4 says on sites of 11 or more dwellings, or on sites of more than 0.36 hectares, developers will be required to supply a percentage of affordable homes in line with Local Plan requirements or make an equivalent financial contribution in lieu.

The affordable housing stock should be made available as an integral part of the development, should be visually indistinguishable from the equivalent market housing on the site, should be dispersed throughout the development and where possible, shall be allocated to eligible households with a connection to Wolvey.

4. Environment policies.

The policies in this section seek to identify and protect the most important environmental aspects of Wolvey from inappropriate development. They have been informed by the completion of an 'environmental inventory' of fields in the parish, compiled by local people who have measured each field against national policy criteria, resulting in a comprehensive catalogue of environmental features.



Policy Env1 designates the most important local environmental sites as 'Local Green Spaces'. These areas will be protected from inappropriate development in perpetuity and will be given the same level of protection in planning terms as the Green Belt.

The fields selected for this designation are as shown on the figure opposite and

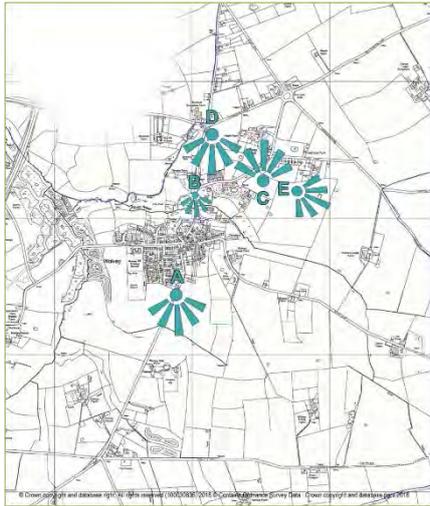
comprise St John the Baptist Churchyard, Wetland Nature Reserve and Anker Meadows.

Policy Env2 identify other significant features that are present elsewhere in the Parish. The features are detailed in the Environmental Inventory and represent features of environmental or historic significance. Any development proposal will need to take these features into account and will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the benefit of the development outweighs the harm caused.

Policy Env3 highlights local buildings and structures which have heritage value in the Parish. There are 5 structures identified as 'non-designated heritage assets' and afforded a degree of protection in the planning system against inappropriate development either to the structure itself or to its setting. The identified structures are as follows: Temple Farm; The Axe and Compass Cottage; Wolvey Grange; Leicester Grange and Wolvey Baptist Chapel.

Policy Env3 resists development on these sites unless the open space is replaced by an equivalent space or the space itself is no longer needed by the community





Ridge and Furrow fields are a rapidly diminishing resource. Policy Env4 identifies the remaining three areas of Ridge and Furrow in the parish and designates them as non-designated heritage assets. Any development requiring a planning consent will have to demonstrate that the benefit of development outweighs the harm.

Biodiversity is protected in policy Env5 which also identifies wildlife corridors in the parish where biodiversity is to be safeguarded.

5 views are identified across the parish of being of local importance and policy Env6 is included that resists development that has an adverse impact on the views

listed, which are shown on the map alongside.

5. Community Facilities and Amenities policies

The NP describes the wide range of community facilities in the parish their importance to the community. Policy CF1 resists the loss of these important facilities unless there is no longer any need or demand for them, it is no longer economically viable or appropriate alternative provision is made available. Policy CF2 supports the development of additional or enhanced facilities as long as it does not generate unacceptable traffic movements or parking that cannot be catered for on site, is of a suitable scale and takes into account the needs of people with disabilities.

6. Business and Employment

There are a number of businesses in Wolvey and they are important to the community as they provide local employment opportunities. Policy E1 supports the retention of existing businesses unless it can be demonstrated that the premises in question is not viable and reasonable steps have been taken to let or sell the site for business purposes for at least 24 months. Policy E2 welcomes new businesses which are appropriate for a community the size of Wolvey, are within the Limits to Development unless suitable for a countryside location, does not involve the loss of dwellings, create unacceptable levels of traffic movement or increase noise or pollution levels that impact on nearby residential properties.

The NP supports home working through policy E3 which requires home extensions for business purposes to have appropriate parking provision, no significant impact on residential amenity and to be in keeping with the character of the building to which it is subservient.

Farm diversification is supported through policy E4 where development which extends the range and diversification of businesses is supported insofar as its use is appropriate for a rural location; it does not generate traffic that cannot be accommodated by the road system, provides adequate off-road parking and has not significant adverse impact on neighbours.

In support of improved broadband and telecommunications in the parish, policy E5 requires new development to have access to superfast broadband. Any above-ground installations must be sympathetically located.

7. Transport and Traffic

The anticipated issues relating to transport resulting from increased housing were summarised as: Almost 80% felt that public transport would need improvement. Over 50% felt that public parking provision would need improvement. Other concerns were that it would increase the number of cars impacting at the school, that pathways into the village from the Galliford site would need improvement, that access to the new housing could be problematic on the busy road, there were concerns over traffic and safety of pedestrians and there was concern over the impact development will have on the transport network in the village.

Policy T1 says all development must: be designed to minimise additional traffic generation and movement; incorporate sufficient off-road parking; provide any necessary improvements to site access and the highway network either directly or by financial contributions; consider, where appropriate, the improvement and where possible the creation of footpaths and cycleways.

8. Review

The NP will be subject to formal review to ensure it remains a helpful tool in determining planning applications. This is likely to occur when the Rugby Local Plan is updated or when housing need increases.

9. Community Actions

In addition to the planning policies described above, the NP also identifies a number of Community Actions. They reflect future work activities that it is proposed be undertaken within the Parish which will involve a wide range of parties including residents and the public and private sector alongside the Parish Council to help improve the Parish in line with the outcome of community consultation. They will be considered over the lifetime of the Plan and progressed in line with the degree of community support for each activity.

10. What Happens Now?

The NP is now in the process of formal Pre-Submission consultation. Residents and a range of stakeholders will be able to comment on the draft Plan up to 14 August 2020. Once all comments have been considered, the NP will be amended accordingly and formally submitted to Rugby Borough Council who will undertake a further six-week consultation and send the NP and all comments received to an Independent Examiner, who will consider the NP against local and national strategic planning policies and make recommendations for any changes felt to be necessary. Once the Examiner's report has been accepted and the changes made, the final NP will be put before the community of Wolvey in a Referendum, and the NP will pass or fail on the basis of a simple majority.

Once the NP is 'Made', it will be used by Rugby Borough Council to determine planning applications in the Parish.

The full NP can be found on the Wolvey village website <https://www.wolvey.org/WPC.htm>