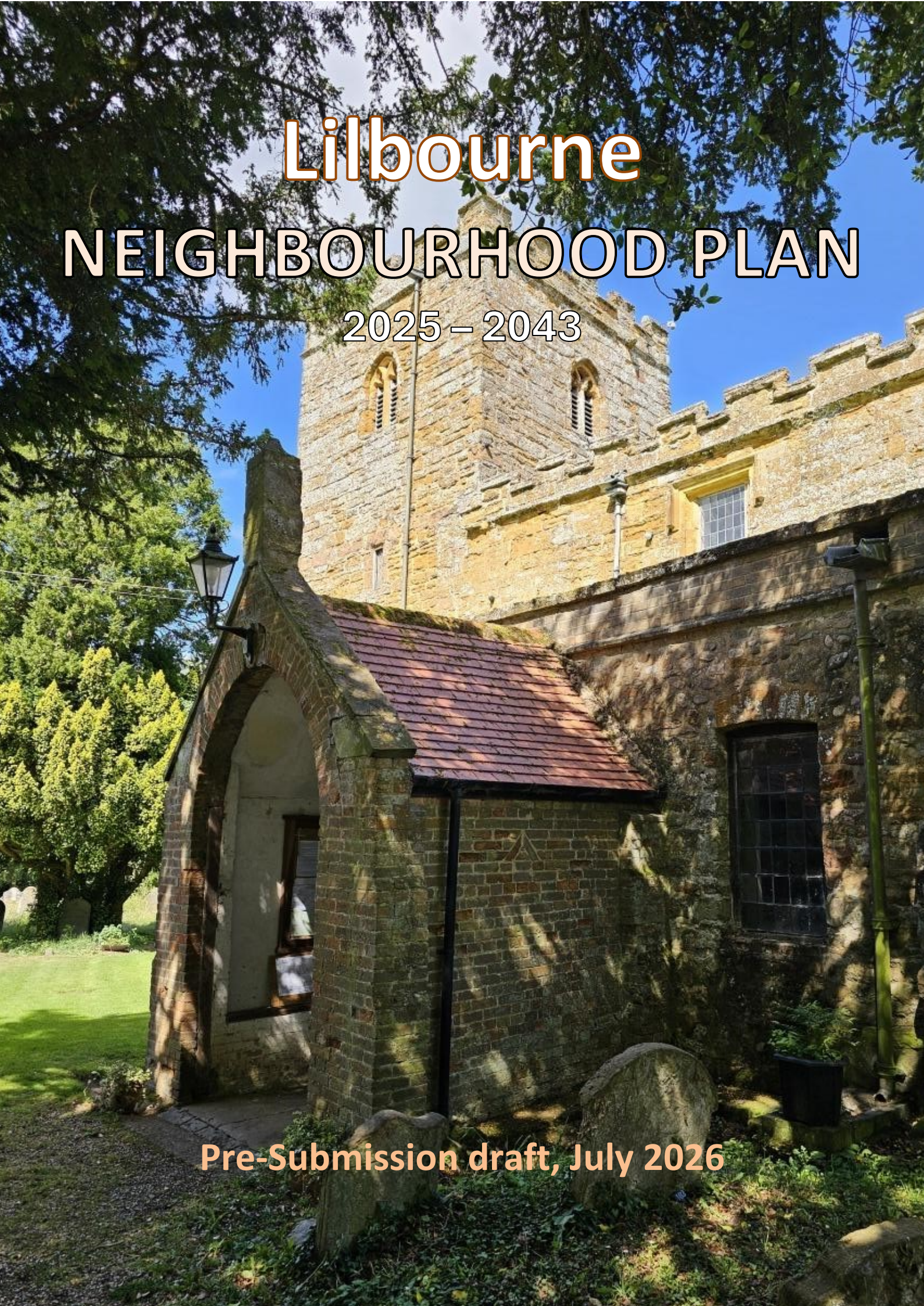


Lilbourne

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2025 – 2043

Pre-Submission draft, July 2026


LILBOURNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Contents

		Page
	Foreword	4
	Introduction	5
	How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the planning system	6
1	The Plan, its vision and what we want to achieve	7
2	How the Plan was prepared	8
3	History of Lilbourne	10
4	Meeting the requirements of sustainable development	13
5	Policies	14
	A: Housing and Design	14
	B: Natural, Historic and Social Environment	22
	C: Sustainability	
	Community Facilities	45
	Employment	45
	Traffic	47
		51
6	Monitoring and Review	52

	Appendices	
	1: Housing Needs Assessment	
	2: Design Codes and Guidance Report	
	3: Site Options Appraisal	
	4: Local Green Spaces, Open Space, Sport & Recreation sites: evidence base	
	5: Important views	

FOREWORD

On behalf of Parish Council, I would like to welcome you to the Lilbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan is a type of planning document based on the views of our local community and the evidence of the housing, community and other development needs of Lilbourne and the wider area. It is part of the Government's approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about how their area develops.

The overall aim of the plan is to make the Parish even better, especially by guiding and shaping development, so that it conserves and, wherever possible, improves what makes our Parish so great and we believe its recommendations will help achieve that.

I recognise that any new development will not be universally welcomed and that location, size and impact on the wider community will always be an emotive subject. However, by creating a small development that meets our specific housing needs we can protect the village against much larger or inappropriate developments both now and in the future and we believe that our Neighbourhood Plan will achieve that.

The Plan has been developed over a period of several years by a small working group comprising Parish Councillors, members of the community and Neighbourhood Plan consultants, Your Locale. I would like to thank everyone involved who has given up so much of their time, energy and commitment to deliver this.

I would also like to thank every member of the community who has attended the public consultations and events, completed the questionnaires, and given feedback throughout the process to help ensure that we are acting within the public wishes. Together, I believe, we have created a plan that meets our community needs and enables Lilbourne to continue to develop and prosper while retaining its rural charm.

Lilbourne Parish Council

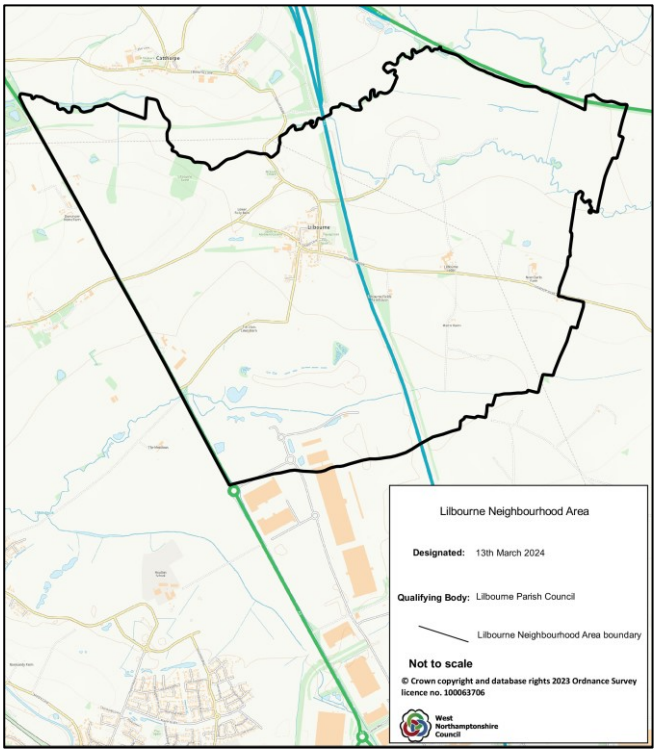
Introduction

The Lilbourne Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee, which brings together members of the local community and Parish Councillors.

A key part of the Government's Localism agenda, a Neighbourhood Plan is a type of planning document that gives local people greater say and control over how their community develops, now and in the future. This includes, for example, where new homes, shops, etc. should be built, what new buildings and extensions should look like, and which areas of land should be protected from development.

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

Figure 1: Neighbourhood Area, Designated 13 March 2024.
(West Northamptonshire Council)



The Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of the Parish of Lilbourne (Figure 1). It sets out a long-term approach for the development of Lilbourne, and clear development-related policies to realise this.

In preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, a community is not working from a 'blank piece of paper'. Legislation requires that the Neighbourhood Plan, and the policies it contains, must be prepared in a certain manner; in particular, the policies must be in general conformity with relevant national and local (i.e. West Northamptonshire) planning policies.

Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Statutory Development Plan for West Northamptonshire. This means that it must be taken into account when considering planning applications affecting Lilbourne.

How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the Planning System

The right for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans was established through the Localism Act 2011, which set out the general rules governing their preparation.

A Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the area in which it is prepared. This statutory status means that it must be taken into account when considering planning decisions affecting that area.

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

For Lilbourne, the most significant planning documents are the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Daventry Part 2 Local Plan alongside the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. These documents set out the strategic planning framework for future development up to 2029.

They contain a number of policies and objectives which are relevant to Lilbourne and which the Plan must be in general conformity with. These policies and objectives span issues such as the provision and location of new housing; providing strong and sustainable communities; protecting and enhancing historic character and local distinctiveness whilst protecting and enhancing natural habitats; and providing transport systems that reduce the need to travel. The Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the policies contained in these documents.

West Northamptonshire Council is in the process of updating its Local Plan. It will replace the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) and the Part 2 Local Plans which were adopted for the former Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire areas.

The Lilbourne Neighbourhood Plan has taken the emerging Local Plan into consideration as it developed its policies. In February 2025, the Council agreed to publish another regulation 18 consultation plan for public wide consultation. This follows a review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the requirement to allocate further sites to meet additional housing requirements. The Regulation 18 version of the new Local Plan was published in January 2026.

Also important is the NPPF, updated in December 2024. This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF requires the planning system (including Neighbourhood Plans) to promote sustainable development and details three dimensions to that development: an economic dimension – they should contribute to economic development; a social dimension – they should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the right supply of housing and creating a high quality-built environment with accessible local services and an environmental dimension – they should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. In addition, Neighbourhood Plans must be compatible with that European Union (EU) legislation that is now absorbed into English law. Particular obligations which pertain to the neighbourhood planning process are those relating to Strategic Environmental Assessments, protected European Habitats and Human Rights Legislation.

Full details of how the Plan complies with these legislative requirements will be set out in the Basic

Conditions Statement which will be part of the submission package once the Plan has reached that stage. These policies are specific to Lilbourne and reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.

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

Neighbourhood planning enables communities to produce their own planning policies for West Northamptonshire Council to take into account when determining planning applications in the Parish.

They add local detail to broader strategic policies and can include anything for which planning permission is required.

A vision statement has been prepared by the Advisory Committee.

Lilbourne is a small village nestled between other rural communities, enveloped by green space and agricultural land.

Our vision is to enhance our unique environment, preserving its rich history while allowing access to its countryside and facilities. Our mixed and balanced population will be sustained by ensuring that further accessible residential development attracts a multi-generational community, whilst respecting the character of the village. Lilbourne will be cushioned from industrial encroachments while artisan employment opportunities are encouraged.

New development, with its appropriate infrastructure, should be relative in scale to the size of our small community. It should enhance the local environment, while retaining the rural nature, open spaces and character of Lilbourne.

Essential parts of this vision for the parish of Lilbourne are that

- land use and development activity will be in keeping with the existing character of the village, meets the needs of the whole community and is proportionate to the capacity of the existing utilities, infrastructure and essential services;
- any development will be measured, proportionate, timely and sustainable. It will be environmentally and bio-diversity friendly in both design and operation;
- the Plan will identify the most important areas of the village for protection. Open green spaces, high-quality natural environment and wildlife, community and recreational facilities and historical features will be protected with a clear separation from surrounding villages;
- important views are to be maintained;
- the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders as well as motorists is managed appropriately; and
- local employment within existing businesses and working farms is supported and encouraged.

It is important to note that when using the Plan to form a view on a development proposal or a policy issue the whole document and the policies contained in it must be considered together.

While every effort has been made to make the main parts of this Plan easy to read and understand,

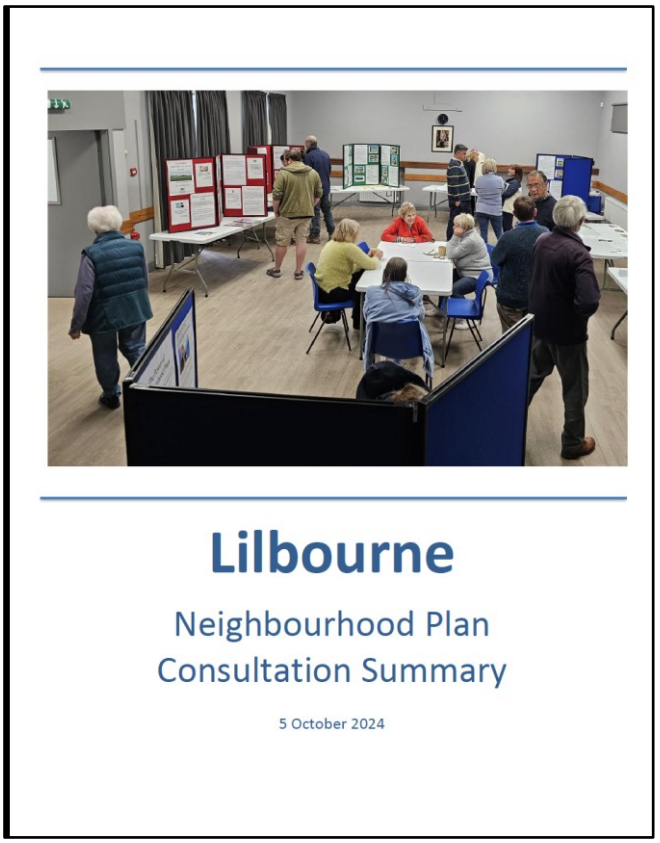
the wording of the actual policies is necessarily more formal, so that it complies with statutory requirements.

The Plan will be kept under review and may change over time in response to new and changing needs.

2. How the Plan was prepared

The Parish Council decided to undertake the formulation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Lilbourne following a well-attended public meeting in April 2024 and appointed an Advisory Committee to take the process forward. The Parish Council appointed neighbourhood plan consultants 'Yourlocale' to advise and assist the Advisory Committee.

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



The whole of the Parish was designated as a neighbourhood area by West Northamptonshire Council on 13 March 2024.

An open event took place on 5 October 2024 which was attended by 38 people. This was a successful event with a good level of attendance and many comments from residents.

People made very considered and thoughtful comments and there is clearly a lot of passion for the community and people are invested in helping to ensure that Lilbourne thrives into the future.

There was strong support for the draft Vision Statement, with some concern to maintain the fields surrounding the village but recognition that growth is necessary and the importance of Lilbourne having a say in any decisions.

Comments on housing reflected the need to encourage provision for young and older people, with support for Affordable Housing products and renewable technology.

Most respondents to the section of design referenced the need to be compatible with existing design features, but there was also support for good quality contemporary design. Other identified features included incorporating environmental aspects, adequate parking and increases in biodiversity.

The need to protect heritage buildings was emphasised.

Environmental protection was identified as an important element and there were many comments in this section on the inappropriateness of HGVs driving through the village. The importance of footpaths

and bridleways was highlighted.

The poor state of the roads was drawn attention to in the section on highways and access, along with the need for improved footpaths and the issue of light and noise pollution.



Views were mixed in relation to the need for employment locally, however improved broadband was identified as an issue and it was suggested that the Village Hall could be opened as a community hub.

There was a feeling that Lilbourne has sufficient community facilities, but that they are not well used by residents. The point was made that additional housing will bring the potential for better facilities, and some additional facilities were mentioned, such as a shop, post office and traffic calming. The need to protect the Church was referenced and someone suggested acquiring the field bordering the playing field for leisure use.

A number of suggestions were made in the 'anything else?' section, including the problem of light pollution, the need for better signage and information boards, issues relating to parking on pavements and the suggestion that a Farmer's Market is held in the Village Hall.

A questionnaire was produced by the Advisory Committee and delivered to each household in the Parish during autumn 2024 and was available by hard copy and electronically.

The level of response from the community was good, there being 65 responses. Copies of all consultation events will be contained in the Consultation Statement which will be made available on Submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to West Northamptonshire Council.

Once background information such as socio-economic data had been gathered, three separate 'Theme Groups' were established to explore in detail the evidence that was being gathered and to consider what policies should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Theme Groups were on the subjects of housing and the built environment and the natural and historic environment. Policies relating to community sustainability, incorporating community facilities, transport and employment were progressed by the Advisory Committee. These groups continued to meet until into 2026 and it was through this process that the draft polices and supporting evidence emerged.

In xxx, a further Drop-in Event was held in the Village Hall to allow Parishioners to view draft policy statements and make their comments on the Plan.

Throughout the process, Parishioners have been kept informed on progress and all supplementary documents relating to the consultation process can be found on the Parish Council website.

3. History of Lilbourne

The early village 600s – 1600s: Lilbourne began as a Saxon settlement about the fifth century AD. A thriving network of packhorse trade routes was gradually established and, on a junction of three roads, the settlement thrived as a trading centre. A market was established and became locally important. Around 700AD, missionary monks arrived to convert the Saxons to Christianity. They made a church at the heart of the settlement, and brought converts for baptism in the nearby river. By the end of the tenth century the fist wooden building had been replaced by a stone one, and this forms the chancel of Lilbourne's parish church. It was added to over the next 200 years. It is the oldest church in the area.

The Normans arrived, and in 1086 assessed Lilbourne's status, recording it in the Domesday book. It was a good-sized settlement, for its time. A castle of the typical motte-and-bailey design, probably wooden at first, was swiftly erected opposite the church The de Camville family held this for four generations, during which time it was extended, probably with some stone used. (There is another mound about half a mile away – the purpose of this remains obscure.) In 1218 Henry III ordered the de-fortification of many castles, and following this it is likely that the castle fell into disuse and the lord's residence was transferred up the hill. There was a general move away from the river, which flooded frequently, and this left the church and rectory isolated.

The market continued to thrive for some two hundred years. It then lost trade due to competition from Rugby and Daventry, and by the 1500s had ceased, leaving Lilbourne as a farming community.

There are good instances of the ridge and furrow system which operated over three huge fields.

Enclosures, in the 1600s, brought a change from mainly arable to sheep farming (less work needed) and the loss of common land. 38 acres were set aside for the poor, including access to a gravel pit on 'Round Hill' and to 'the ancient washbrooke at Sowerleys', but the whole situation hit the poorer members of the community hard, and changed the demographic of the village as some left and many turned to weaving as a cottage industry.

Employment: Work on looms, making stockings or a cloth known as 'tammy', continued to be a major source of employment in Lilbourne into the nineteenth century. The merchandise was taken, by the company that rented out the looms, for sale in Leicester. It was a hard and unhealthy job, and most weavers were very poor. As the Industrial Revolution took effect cottage industries died out, and by 1861 weaving in Lilbourne had come to an end. Census records include butchers, smiths, shoemakers, innkeepers, bakers, tailors and carpenters, with farm work and being in service, as occupations in the latter part of the nineteenth century. With coming of the railway and the station new possibilities for work opened up. Despite this a number of villagers still needed to go to the workhouse in Rugby.

Education: Education was provided by people offering it from their homes, at a charge, until in 1873 a school began in what had been the Poors Cottages. The school had a Board of Managers, a headteacher and assistant teacher, and a very over-worked caretaker. A cottage across the road from the school was acquired as headteacher's accommodation. Hampered by inadequate space, facilities, and in some instances training, the standard of education varied, but in 1928 Miss V. Lovell took the

headship, remaining successfully as head for 23 years. From 1928 the older children (11-14) went to Yelvertoft School, then from 1957, to Guilsborough. Despite huge support from the village Lilbourne school was closed in 1968, its pupils then going to Yelvertoft. The premises became a residence again.

War years: In the First World war Lilbourne had an airfield, on the A5. It was mainly for training squadrons of the Royal Flying Corps, and was visited by the King and Queen during the Army Manoeuvres of 1913. Twenty-four young men joined the army in 1918; twenty-one came back. An alabaster memorial plaque was installed in the church in 1922. The village lost another young man in the Second World War. The war memorial on The Green marked the centenary of the Armistice, 2018.

Pubs, shops and leisure: The village had three pubs for most of the nineteenth century. By the mid-twentieth century two had closed, leaving only The Bell on Rugby Rd. This too closed in the 1990s, but about 15 years later a new one, the Head of Steam, on Station Rd., opened.

A post office was established in 1902, being run from a house until it was moved to premises on The Green. It also sold general groceries. Another shop, at the top of Hillmorton Lane, sold fresh foods; and milk was available from Green Farm or later, from Stone House Farm. Vans came round selling other commodities. The post office closed in 1988; the other shop a decade earlier.

The Bell ran various teams competing in leagues, there was a thriving cricket side, and bell-ringing was popular. The village hall purchased in 1948 (replacing an earlier one) was a wooden ex-military building. It ran a varied and much appreciated social programme. Thirty years later it needed too much work done to be practicable, and a new hall was built on the playing field in 1988. The school organised an annual coach trip to the seaside. The railway was used to access work, shops and leisure further afield until its closure in 1968. There were bus services, but by the 1970s not many were running, and this led to inception of the Lilbourne minibus scheme in 1977.

Management: In the 18th and 19th centuries the village was run by a management group comprising the Parish Constable (who was not a member of the constabulary), 2 overseers, 2 assessors of taxes, and a chairman, along with the Rector and 2 churchwardens. This group was superseded when, in 1924, a five-member Parish Council was inaugurated. It was upgraded to eight members in 1990.

Developments: Changes in the twentieth century included electricity (1932), a telephone box (1938 – 2017), mains water (1938) at first not supplied to all houses, so pumps from wells continued for a few years; bin collections to replace the village tip (1948), official naming of roads (1955), street lights (1960) and a sewerage system (1961). The internationally-important Daventry Radio Station took the place of the old airfield in 1925, the red lights topping its masts becoming a familiar landmark. Council housing was made in 1935 (replacing old cottages, some condemned as unfit for habitation) and in the mid-1960s about 30 new private houses were built along The Horsepool and Hillmorton Lane, greatly increasing the size and population of the village. This led to a demand for a playing field and play facilities. The field was provided by DRDC in 1972, along with seven garages (demolished in 2014) and the village found the funds to install play apparatus and mark out a football pitch. Further small residential developments and infill (1980s – 2022) increased village housing again, by around 30%, to about 165 houses. Industry encroached from 1993, when the Radio Station was superseded by the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal and the developing new town of Houlton, along the A5.

Lilbourne has been threatened by several unwanted schemes in the last 50 years, including proposals for boundary changes that would have put the village into Warwickshire. In 1992 an application for a large residential project went to a formal village referendum, resulting by roughly 2:1 that the village classification should remain 'restricted infill' rather than becoming 'limited development'. The coming of the M1 in 1965, and DIRFT in 1993, were unavoidable and had a profound effect on the village. Since DIRFT went into its third phase in 2016, the village has benefitted from the creation of a buffer zone that became the Lilbourne Meadows nature reserve, and from the involvement of the development company, Prologis, with several village projects. The wind-farms were another source of contention that went ahead, but on the plus side they do provide income for the village and renewable electricity for the country.

Villages are never static, so there will be further change. The Neighbourhood Development Plan is being undertaken to give the village more power over change in its future.

Lilbourne in recent years

The 2021 Census recorded 273 individuals in Lilbourne, across 120 households, indicating an increase of 35 people since the 2011 Census. 2021 Census data highlights that Lilbourne has a high distribution of 45-64 aged residents (32.1%), exceeding that of West Northamptonshire and country as a whole. There was considerable growth in the 15-24 age category between 2011 and 2021.

Larger dwellings, specifically 3 and 4+ bedroom housing, represent a combined 88% of Lilbourne's housing stock, whilst semi-detached housing represents the dominant dwelling type in the Parish.

2023 Valuation Office data illustrates that 19% of Lilbourne's housing is in the form of bungalows, which can be a suitable form of housing for elderly residents. The number of 75+ individuals in the Parish is expected to increase substantially by 2041.

33% of the working population work from home in Lilbourne, compared to 31% across England. 63% of the population travel to work in a car or van, higher than the percentage across England (48%).

Economic activity is high in Lilbourne with over 68% in employment compared to 57% across England.

Nearly 50% of the local population consider themselves to be in good health, broadly in line with the population across England.

4. Meeting the requirement for sustainable development

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

a) Social

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

b) Environmental

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

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

c) Economic

The built-up parts of the parish of Lilbourne are primarily residential, but there is a desire to ensure that appropriate economic activity is maintained on condition that the local infrastructure supports it. We therefore wish to encourage employment opportunities by:

- supporting appropriate existing business development and expansion where the local infrastructure would not be adversely affected by the proposals; and
- encouraging farm diversification and home working.

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

5. Neighbourhood Plan Policies

A. Housing and the Built Environment

Introduction

One of the ways in which the planning system can ensure sustainable development is to direct residential and employment growth to the most sustainable locations and to shape the key characteristics of that development.

This is a core principle of the NPPF, which promotes "guiding development towards sustainable solutions" whilst recognising that in doing so it "should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area" (paragraph 9). It is also at the heart of the Daventry Part 2 Local Plan which seeks to direct growth to the most sustainable settlements based on a Settlement Hierarchy.

In the Part 2 Local Plan for Daventry, (now West Northamptonshire Unitary Authority) a settlement hierarchy is established to help determine the most suitable locations for development. Primary Service Villages are deemed to be most appropriate for local housing and employment needs followed by Secondary Service Villages. Lilbourne is classed as an 'Other Village' along with 36 other similarly sized villages. 'Other Villages' are below Secondary Service Villages but above 'Small Settlements/Hamlets'. Lilbourne remains in the 'Other Villages' category in the Regulation 18 Local Plan.

About 12,730 net additional dwellings are required up to 2029, with about 2,360 of these being in the Rural Areas. This rural requirement has been met during the currency of the current Local Plan.

The Regulation 18 Local Plan establishes a housing requirement for the period 2025 – 2043 of 45,054 homes.

In general terms, development in Other Villages is described in the Part 2 Local Plan as having a 'more limited range of services and facilities' with development primarily 'limited at these villages, to being small scale within the confines'. Residential development outside the Village Confines is limited to exceptional circumstances, described as development required to meet an identified local need or to support an essential local service that is otherwise under threat.

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan Part 1 was Adopted in December 2014.

The Joint Core Strategy makes it clear that 'Quality and affordable housing must be delivered to create balanced communities and to meet the current and future needs of our communities, taking into account mix, size and tenure and including the requirements for specialised accommodation. Housing should be sustainable, flexible and well designed' (para 4.57).

Residential Allocation

Through the Neighbourhood Plan, the opportunity has been taken positively to plan for development

within Lilbourne to help meet local need and help to support local services, which are limited in Lilbourne. Village Confines have therefore been drawn in order to accommodate the potential for housing growth up to 2043 and to direct development to the most suitable locations.

West Northamptonshire Council provided an indicative housing requirement of nine over the Plan period. This is based on an estimate of the housing stock across the Neighbourhood Area expressed as a percentage of the district total.

A call for sites was undertaken to identify potential development sites in the Neighbourhood Area and 3 landowners or their agents responded. A Site Options Appraisal of all submitted sites was undertaken by an independent organisation.

The Parish Council then undertook their own assessment of the available sites and as a result of this, having been endorsed through community consultation, a single site has been allocated through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The outcome of the assessment process is described in Appendix 3.

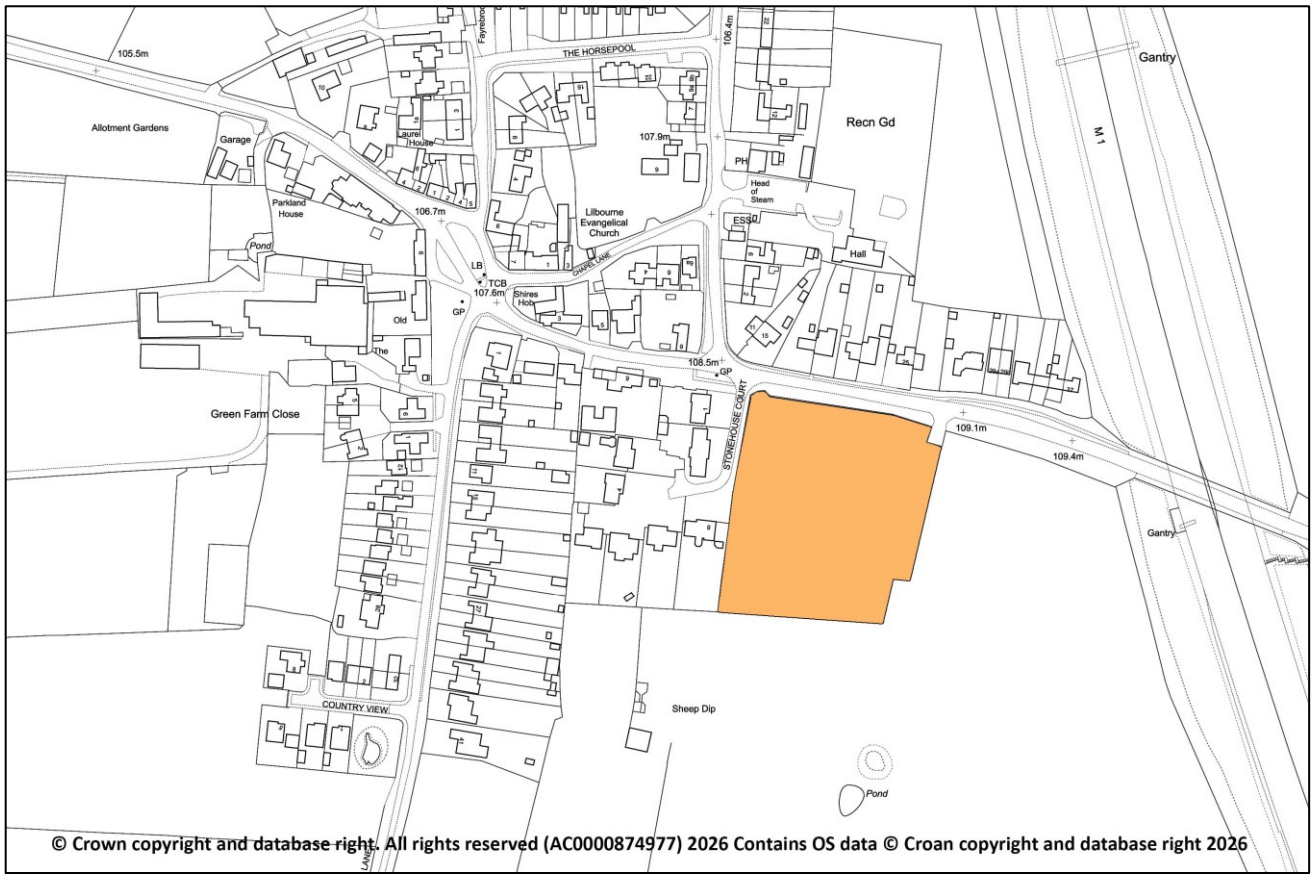
POLICY H1: RESIDENTIAL SITE ALLOCATION - Land is allocated for residential development at the following location as shown in figure 2, subject to the development:

a) Providing 9 x 2/3 bed bungalows

b) Meeting the design criteria identified in Policy H6

c) Contributing to the enhancement of the village hall/play area

Figure 2 – Site Allocation



Village Confines

The Parish is predominately rural in nature with the built-up area of Lilbourne surrounded by open and attractive countryside.

In planning terms, land outside a defined Village Confines, including any small groups of buildings or small settlements, is treated as countryside.

The purpose of Village Confines is to ensure that sufficient housing and employment land is available in appropriate locations that can be supported by existing infrastructure and avoid impinging into the local countryside.

Figure 3 – Village Confines for Lilbourne



It is national and local planning policy that development in the countryside should be carefully managed. Supporting "the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside" is identified as a key element in the NPPF (paragraph 187 b). This approach is also supported by this Plan, in particular, because it will help ensure that development is focused in more sustainable locations with a greater

range of services and facilities and infrastructure that has capacity for expansion, as well as helping to maintain the special landscape character of the Parish and protecting the countryside for its own sake as an attractive, accessible and non-renewable natural resource.

Village Confines were established by Daventry District Council in order to clarify where new development activity is best located. Although a Village Confine was not drawn for Lilbourne in the Made Local Plan for Daventry, the emerging Local Plan for West Northamptonshire does have a draft Village Confines for Lilbourne.

After discussion, it was agreed to retain this draft Village Confines line for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan (Figure 3).

POLICY H2: VILLAGE CONFINES – Development proposals on sites within the Village Confines as identified in Figure 3, will be supported where they comply with the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan. Development outside the defined Village Confines will be carefully managed in accordance with national and local planning policies

Housing Mix

Neighbourhood Plans offer the opportunity to include a policy on housing mix. This can enable a policy to be written that helps to balance the housing stock locally to ensure a wide range of accommodation is available to address local issues.

The Joint Core Strategy makes it clear that 'Quality and affordable housing must be delivered to create balanced communities and to meet the current and future needs of our communities, taking into account mix, size and tenure and including the requirements for specialised accommodation. Housing should be sustainable, flexible and well designed' (para 4.57).

A Housing Needs Assessment is available as Appendix 1. The evidence base for the policy on Housing Mix draws heavily on this expert report and its recommendations are supported.

The 2021 Census recorded 273 individuals in Lilbourne, indicating an increase of 35 people since the 2011 Census. As with most areas in the UK, Lilbourne's population appears to be ageing, and will continue to do so over the Neighbourhood Plan period to 2041. 2021 Census data highlights that Lilbourne has a high distribution of 45-64 aged residents (32.1%), exceeding that of West Northamptonshire and country as a whole. As Lilbourne enters into the later stages of the Neighbourhood Plan period (towards 2041) this large economically active cohort will progress into an aging population.

The 2021 Census data shows that semi-detached housing represents the dominant dwelling type in Lilbourne, by a considerable margin. Larger dwellings, specifically 3 and 4+ bedroom housing, represent a combined 88% of Lilbourne's housing stock in 2021.

The Housing Needs Assessment concludes that future housing stock should concentrate on smaller dwellings (1 or 2 bed) and homes suitable for older people.

The Open Event held in October 2024 was well attended. Comments on housing reflected the need to

encourage provision for young and older people.

A Questionnaire was distributed in late 2024. When asked 'what type of new housing is needed in Lilbourne?', there was support for more bungalows, small starter homes and homes for older people, and small family homes.

Policy H3 addresses this important matter. Proposals which include homes with four or more bedrooms should identify the way in which they deliver local housing needs or the way in which they would make the delivery of the overall development commercially viable.

Policy H3: HOUSING MIX - New housing development proposals should provide a mixture of housing types specifically to meet evidenced local needs as identified in the Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix 1) or more recent studies updating these findings.

Priority should be given to smaller family homes (3 bedrooms or fewer) and those suitable for older people (especially those who wish to downsize). The inclusion of four-bedroom houses in housing developments will be supported only where there is a proven housing need.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is defined in the NPPF (2024 - annex 2) as "housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market".

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Policy H2 requires 40% Affordable Housing to be provided on all individual sites subject to an assessment of viability on a site-by-site basis. Policy H3 considers the provision of Affordable Housing through rural exception sites. This is intended to address the issue of high average house prices.

The Part 2 Local Plan adds local detail to the Joint Core Strategy by requiring Rural Exception Sites to be located in settlements that are highest in the settlement hierarchy where they meet the needs of more than one community. This is effectively a sequential test. The Joint Core Strategy makes it clear that 'Quality and affordable housing must be delivered to create balanced communities and to meet the current and future needs of our communities, taking into account mix, size and tenure and including the requirements for specialised accommodation. Housing should be sustainable, flexible and well designed' (para 4.57)

The most common tenure type in Lilbourne is home ownership, accounting for 77% of the total mix. This is considerably higher than the equivalent proportions in England (62%) and West Northamptonshire (65%).

Census 2021 data show that social rent and private rent account for much smaller proportions in Lilbourne's tenure mix (14% and 8%, respectively). By comparison this is noticeably lower than England's and West Northamptonshire's proportion of social and private rented tenures.

It is noteworthy that social rent was the only form of tenure that fell across the Neighbourhood Area.

There is a large gap between the spending power of average earning households (£50,900 in 2020)

and those earning the lowest 25% of incomes, particularly where the household in question has one earner (only £21,239 in 2020). Nevertheless, even average earning households, fall below the affordability threshold required to afford an average home through market ownership. The median house price would require an annual income slightly over double the current average.

The Housing Needs Assessment concluded that 'An offering of Affordable Housing tenures would be beneficial in Lilbourne to widen access to those with varying home ownership/renting aspirations'

The Questionnaire respondents prioritised more homes for sale on the open market (34%), with 12% citing affordable homes for sale, 9% affordable homes for rent and 5% social housing.

At the Open Event, there was general support for affordable housing.

POLICY H4 AFFORDABLE HOUSING – Development proposals which include affordable housing should provide a mix of housing types and sizes to help meet the identified needs of the Parish. The provision of smaller homes, especially for young families and young people and for older people who wish to downsize, will be supported, as is the provision of affordable housing for people with a local connection. Affordable housing should be designed and delivered to be indistinguishable from market housing and, wherever practicable, should be distributed evenly throughout the development. The achievement of Lifetime Homes Standards for affordable housing will be supported.

First Homes proposals are supported. Where First Homes are provided, they should be at a discount of 50% (as per the evidence provided in Appendix 1, Housing Needs Assessment (2023), subject to viability.

The provision of high-quality affordable housing through an exception site will be supported where the following criteria are met:

a) the site adjoins the settlement boundary;
b) the type and scale of affordable housing is justified by evidence of need from a local housing needs survey;
c) arrangements for the management and occupation of the affordable housing will ensure that it will be available and affordable in perpetuity for people with a local connection to the Plan area; and
d) the development consists entirely of affordable housing or is for a mixed-tenure scheme where an element of market housing is essential to the delivery of the affordable housing. The market housing must be the minimum necessary to make the scheme viable and be of the type and size that will meet a specific locally identified housing need for low cost market housing.

Windfall sites

A windfall site is defined in the NPPF as one which has not been specifically identified in the development plan. The sites usually comprise previously developed land or open spaces within the Settlement Boundary that has unexpectedly become available.

The Part 2 Local Plan references windfall development as follows: 'This Plan provides further policy guidance for each settlement according to its classification within the settlement hierarchy. This allows

for appropriate levels of windfall development that will ensure services and facilities can be sustained or, where necessary, enhanced without undermining the overall spatial strategy'. Within Secondary Service Villages, development will be 'located within the confines of the village' other than in prescribed circumstances.

The Parish Council has agreed to a policy on windfall development to add local detail to Local Plan Part 2 Policy RA3.

POLICY H5: WINDFALL SITES – Development proposals for infill and/or redevelopment sites comprising individual dwellings or small groups of dwellings within the Village Confines will be supported where they:

a) retain existing important natural boundaries such as trees, hedges and streams;
b) provide for a safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the site; and off street parking that meets highways standards;

In gardens of existing properties, tandem and back land development will only be supported if it does not:

i. reduce existing garden space to an extent that it adversely impacts the character of the area or residential amenity of neighbouring & proposed dwelling(s)
ii. adversely impact neighbouring properties by reason of loss of privacy and/or loss of daylight, and/or creation of visual or noise intrusion; and
iii. have a significant detrimental heritage or environmental impact.

Design and the built environment

Local Plan Policy ENV10 promotes high quality design and sets broad development principles. The NPPF (2024) notes that development that is not well designed should be refused (paragraph 139), especially where it fails to reflect local design policies. Policy H6 seeks to reflect the design principles which the community believes will help to achieve good design. The overall aim is to protect Lilbourne from inappropriate development so that it retains its character.

In this section, the Neighbourhood Plan sets out design guidance which seeks to identify and protect the distinctive elements which together provide the special qualities of the landscape setting and built heritage of the Neighbourhood Area. Policy H6 addresses this important issue. The approach taken is underpinned by the *Design Guidelines and Codes (2025)* (Appendix 2).

Lilbourne is similar to other similarly sized West Northamptonshire villages. Its present amenities comprise the All Saints Parish Church, Head of Steam public house and Village Hall which provide the village with venues to worship, meet, celebrate and share in community-based events.

Consultation has shown that many people value the built environment and expressed concern that it should be protected from insensitively located or poorly designed development. The built form of Lilbourne boasts an interesting mix of architectural styles, much of it historic. This adds to the village's vibrancy and informs its distinctive character.

It is important that new building benefits from high-quality design so that it makes a positive contribution to enhancing this distinctive character. It should take inspiration from the rich heritage of Lilbourne. This includes ensuring that it would not lead to a significant adverse impact on key heritage assets (both nationally and locally designated).

Policy H6 seeks to reflect the design principles which the community believes will help to achieve good design. They reflect the outcome of consultations with the community and the Housing Theme Group of the Advisory Committee which specifically focused on relevant issues. The overall aim is to protect Lilbourne so that it retains its character.

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

It is not considered necessary to have uniform properties within any new development, rather to ensure that new developments respect the features of buildings which make Lilbourne a desirable place to live.

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

POLICY H6: DESIGN

Development proposals should demonstrate a high quality of design, layout and use of materials which make a positive contribution to the special character of the neighbourhood area.

As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals should identify how they incorporate the principles in the Design Guidance and Codes. In addition, development proposals should respond positively to the relevant character area and, where practicable, enhance its character.

B. The Natural, Historical and Social Environment

Introduction

This chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan deals with the environmental agenda of sustainable development, together with open spaces of community value in the social agenda, as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), page 5. The chapter aims to balance the requirement for appropriate development in the Plan Area against the value of environmental and other features that are both special – valued, in their own right and as community assets, by local people – and significant for their wildlife, history and other material factors.

Care was taken during preparation of the Plan to ensure that the policies (and the sites and areas of environmental significance covered by them) were not unduly restrictive on development during the Plan's lifetime. A sustainable 11% by area of all the open and currently undeveloped land in the parish is protected at some level through the Neighbourhood Plan's policies, and the planning system generally, from the environmentally-damaging effects of development:

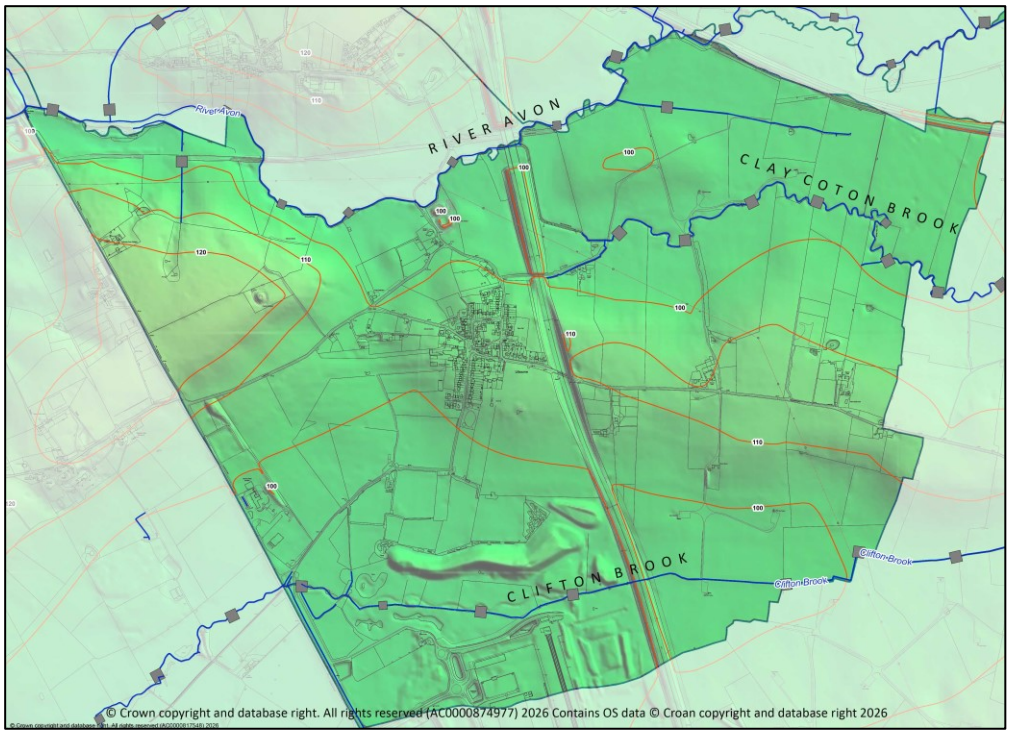
1. Total area of Neighbourhood Plan Area	c. 705 ha
2. Open and undeveloped land	c. 630 ha
3. Area designated or recognised in this Plan for environmental protection (not including Green Wedge c. 185 ha)	**c. 70 ha**

Landscape, geology and setting



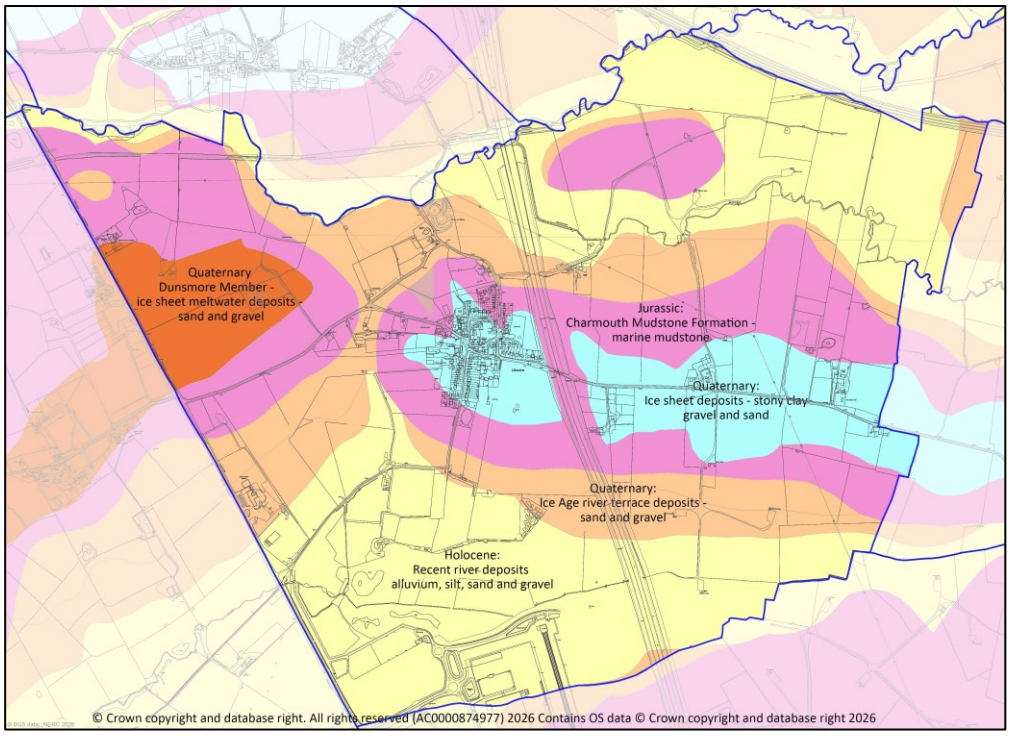
Lilbourne – the village and its immediate, heritage-rich, pastoral setting – could be described as a landscape and character anomaly. No other rural settlement in West Northamptonshire is like it. For local residents, this is what makes it special. It can be experienced as a living memory of an earlier time: a country village, accessed only by country lanes, with its medieval church, Norman castle, rectory, fields and woods, and local trades. All this survives in spite of being (or perhaps because it is) wedged between highly visible (and audible) manifestations of 20th and 21st century commerce and infrastructure – motorway, lorry parking, renewable energy generation, warehouses and businesses. One result is notably high local pride in the settlement, a strong community spirit and locally (often volunteer) maintained open spaces. Another, of relevance to this Plan, is a determination of residents to support sustainable development (to ensure the village remains economically and socially viable) while protecting its coherent historic and natural environment features and the setting they provide.

Figure 4.1 Topography of the Plan Area



Geologically (figure 4.2) the Neighbourhood Area is underlain at depth by Jurassic (about 200 million years old) clay. This only outcrops as a west-to-east ridge overlooking the wide valley of the river Avon and Clay Coton Brook and upon which the village itself sits, just above the flood-prone water meadows. South of this ridge is another wide floodplain containing the headwaters of Clifton Brook. Everywhere else the landscape is formed by Quaternary ('Ice Age') deposits, mainly sand and gravel (which has been quarried) and stony clay (which is notoriously impermeable), and wide expanses of modern floodplain alluvium.

Figure 4.2: Geology of the Plan Area



The areas of clay across the Neighbourhood Area give rise to rapid surface water run-off, and this increases flood risk in the two valleys (River Avon and Clifton Brook) and downstream in the lower Avon valley.

Historic environment

Heritage is an important component of Lilbourne's character which deserves to be taken into account in the planning system.

Like almost everywhere in the region, the area we now know as Lilbourne parish must have been frequented by humans in deep prehistoric time. But the earliest evidence for habitation is from archaeological excavations on the south bank of the river Avon which found pits, ditches, a posthole and pottery of Romano-British age. Roman Watling Street passed by to the west, but seemingly ignored whatever was happening in Lilbourne.

The name of the modern place shows that Lilbourne is a 'dark ages' settlement established by Anglo-Saxon settlers, perhaps in the 5th century CE, probably on the site of an even older farmstead or similar):

History from a placename
Lilbourne [place by] Lilla's stream
Elements and their meanings:

- **Lilla** (Old English) personal name
- **burna** (Old English) a stream

Source: *Key to English Placenames* (Nottingham University, online)

The parish church dates from the early medieval period, as its chancel (which itself probably replaced an older, wooden, building) was built using local stone in about 1000CE. Lilbourne is listed in Domesday (1086); the village on its low terrace above the Avon had 28 households, and its economy was based on farming an *open field* system of ploughlands, with some pasture but (already, see below) very little woodland. After the Norman invasion Lilbourne, now a feudal manor, clustered around the church (now Listed Garde I) and a new motte and bailey castle. Earthworks preserve relics of house platforms and lanes, and the castle itself is a Scheduled Monument, while parts of the open fields ploughlands are preserved as ridge and furrow earthworks across the Neighbourhood Area. A second castle mound west of the original is also a Scheduled Monument; Lilbourne had become an important market and wool trade centre subject to regulation and competition.

Increased flooding in the 14th century (a foretaste of things to come?) seems to have been a factor in expansion of the village uphill in to its modern location and extent. This move means the old village (church, earthworks and castle mound) has never been built over, enabling its protection and survival as a significant heritage asset. The medieval open field system continued in use until the 17th century, when Enclosure created a new rural landscape and an economy based on livestock, predominantly sheep, managed in hedged small fields owned by a few landowners or yeoman farmers. Cottage-scale textile production began, with framework knitters doing 'worsted weaving' eked out a living when they were no longer employed in arable agriculture.

Weaving peaked in the early 1800s, but died out as the Industrial Revolution took hold. Lilbourne, despite the coming of the railways and the proximity of Rugby, avoided industrialisation. Only in the 20th century did new house-building begin, and this modestly expanded village became the rural enclave it now is, surrounded by, but unconnected to, modern infrastructure.

Natural environment

Lilbourne has no nationally important wildlife sites, and (a result of two millennia of continuous habitation, its history of land use and ownership, 20th and 21st-century quarrying, commercial and transport infrastructure) relatively few designated sites of ecological significance. These comprise several areas of permanent semi-improved grassland, flood-plain meadows, some species-rich hedgerows, watercourses, gardens, and the churchyard. There is very little woodland, for historical reasons. The relative paucity of habitat for wildlife in the Neighbourhood Area makes protection of what survives vital, while measures for nature recovery and biodiversity net gain as a condition of new developments are a priority for the community.

Existing environmental designations

Lilbourne is an *Other Village* in the *Daventry Settlements & Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) 2011-2029* settlement hierarchy. This settlement hierarchy is under review for the emerging new *Local Plan for West Northamptonshire* (to 2043), but at the time of Submission of this Neighbourhood Plan this was/is at too early a stage to be taken into account.

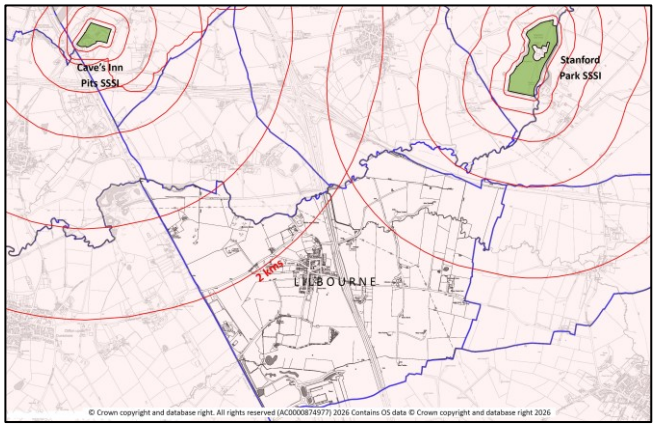
The Neighbourhood Area is located where two National Character Areas meet: (NCA) 94 *Leicestershire Vales* and 95 *Northamptonshire Uplands*. NCAs are landscape areas defined by Natural England for planning purposes. It is also in Northamptonshire Landscape Character Type (Current Landscape Character Strategy and Guidelines, 2003) *Broad Unwooded Vale*, which overlaps the larger national Areas.

In the historic environment there are 13 Listed Buildings, two scheduled monuments and 22 further sites and features of historical environment significance (Historic England and/or Northamptonshire Historic Environment Records, HER), of which 11 (plus some 25 areas of ridge and furrow) are of direct relevance to this Neighbourhood Plan's policies.

In the natural environment there are three Priority Habitat sites (as designated by Natural England). No Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) have yet been validated in the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre (NBRC) database.

There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or other statutorily protected natural environment features in the Neighbourhood Area, but the Area falls within the Impact Risk Zones (2 kms) of two SSSIs in nearby parishes (figure 5).

Figure 5: SSSIs and their Impact Risk Zones



Local Green Spaces

One open space (figure 6) in the Neighbourhood Area is designated as Local Green Space in this Neighbourhood Plan. This assessment has been endorsed by the community in informal and statutory consultations, and is approved by the landowner (Lilbourne Parish Council). Supporting evidence based on the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 106-108, December 2024 as amended February 2025) criteria for Local Green Space eligibility is provided in Appendix 4.

The statutory status of Policy ENV 1 will ensure the site's protection for future generations.

Figure 6: Local Green Space



POLICY ENV 1: LOCAL GREEN SPACES – Development proposals that would result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, the following Local Green Space (evidence Appendix 4; location figure 6) will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances:

Lilbourne recreation ground and play space (basketball etc.) (010) and Andy Hemmings Memorial children's play park (012)

Open Space, Sport & Recreation sites (OSSRs)

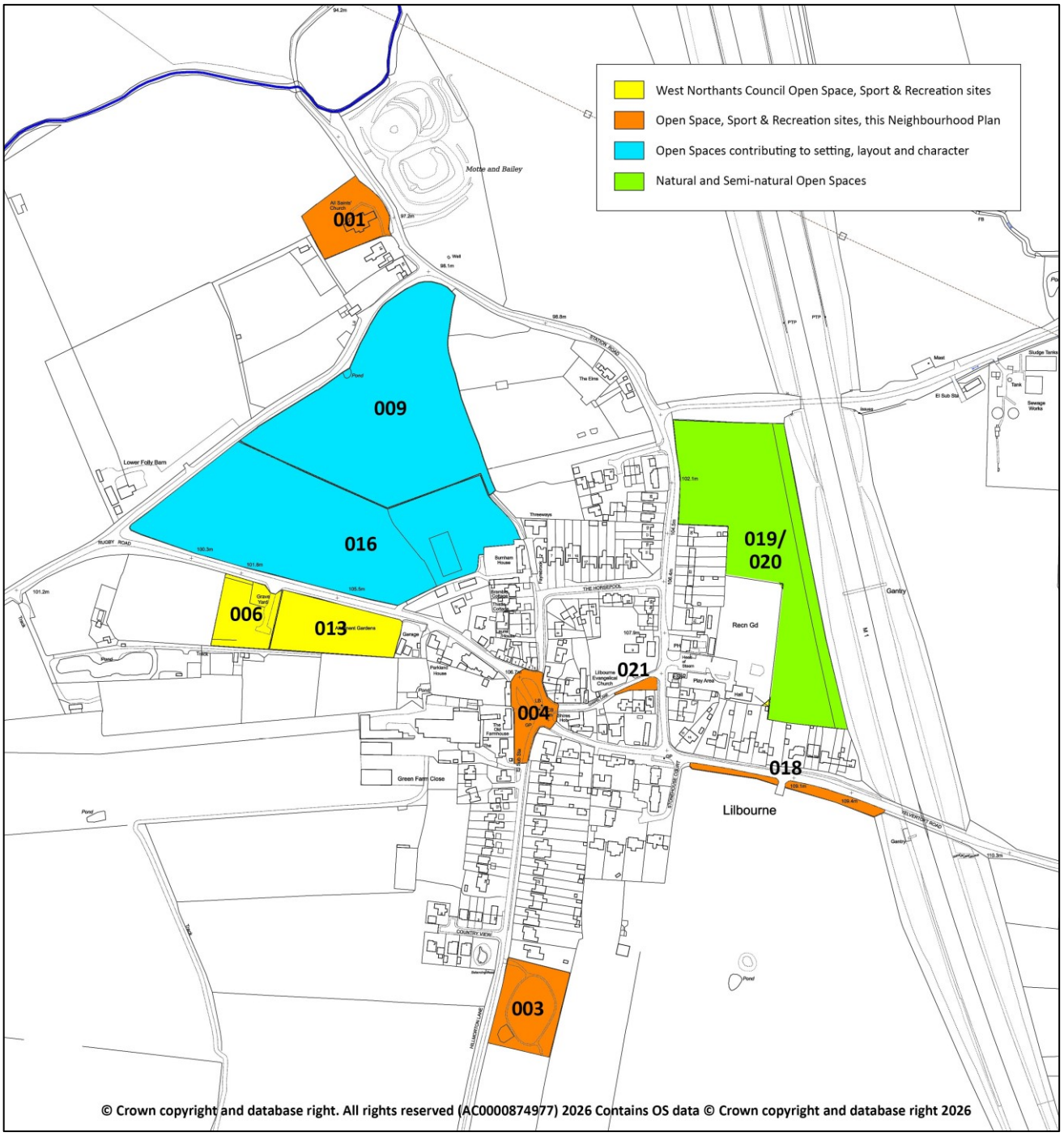
Five Open Space, Sport & Recreation sites (OSSRs; figure 6) are included in the West Northants Council audit of OSSRs (*Planning the Future of Open Space, Sport and Recreation in West Northamptonshire*:

Daventry District, 2017, parts 2-4 and appendices). Two of them (Lilbourne Recreation Ground and Andy Hemmings children's play area) are designated as Local Green Space by this Plan, so are omitted from this policy (ENV 2) to avoid duplication.

Seven further open spaces have the functions of OSSRs and are valued as such by the community; they are added by this Plan, and are covered by Policy ENV 2.

The policy is in general conformity with, and adds local detail to, West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Policy RC2 and with Daventry Part 2 Local Plan Policy CW1 (B).

Figure 7.1: Open Space, Sport & Recreation Sites (OSSRs)



Policy ENV 2 – OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION SITES:

1. The following open spaces (locations, figure 7; evidence, Appendix 4) are of high local value for their functions and other features. Development proposals that result in their loss, or have a significant adverse effect on them, will not be supported unless the open space is replaced by at least equivalent provision in an equally suitable location, or unless it can be demonstrated that the open space is no longer required by the community.

West Northants Council Open Space, Sport & Recreation site designations (emerging Local Plan)

Lilbourne Burial Ground (as Lilbourne cemetery, WNC (map reference 006)

Lilbourne allotment gardens (013)

Open Space, Sport & Recreation sites designated by this Plan

All Saints churchyard (map reference 001)

Jubilee Meadow Park (003)

The Green (004)

Yelvertoft Road verge (018)

Chapel Lane verge (021)

2. Open Spaces provided as a condition of planning consent (i.e. to meet national and local standards) in future new developments will be covered by this policy following their completion and formalisation/adoption as open space, however owned and managed.

3. The following open spaces (locations, figure 6; evidence, Appendix x) make a significant contribution to Lilbourne's setting, layout and character. Development proposals that result in their loss, of have a significant adverse effect on them, will not be supported unless the local benefits of the development can be shown to outweigh the existing open space value of the proposal site, or it can be demonstrated that the open space is no longer required by the community.

Open Spaces contributing to the setting, layout and character of the Neighbourhood Area

The Butts (map reference 009)

Burnham House paddock (016)

4. The following open spaces (locations, figure 6; evidence, Appendix x) are of actual and/or potential value for biodiversity. The significance of the species, habitats or features present, or the site's potential for habitat and species enhancement via Biodiversity Net Gain measures should be balanced against the local benefit of any development that would adversely affect them.

Natural and Semi-Natural Open Spaces

Lilbourne Meadows Nature Reserve (map reference 002) (for location see figure 7.2)

Land surrounding recreation ground (019) and Millennium Wood (020) (for location see figure 7.1)

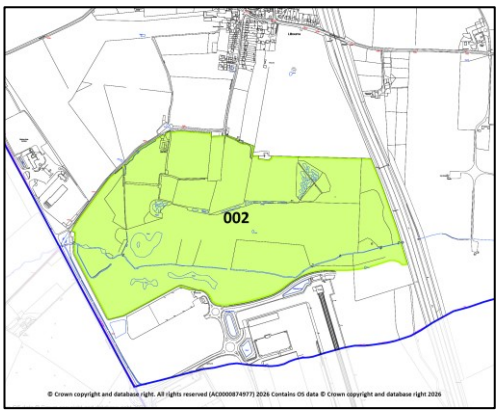


Figure 7.2: Lilbourne Meadows Natural and Semi-Natural Open Space

Green Wedge

The emerging West Northamptonshire Local Plan Policy BN8 is intended to protect the identity and open character of settlements and to prevent their visual coalescence with nearby settlements and major developments. A new Green Wedge is proposed between Lilbourne and the major commercial/employment development (DIRFT) to its south, and this Neighbourhood Plan endorses the policy. By doing so it notes the implications for this Plan's housing site allocation process (Policy H1) and ensures policy BN8's presumptions against inappropriate development in this area are maintained even in circumstances under which the Local Plan is out of date.

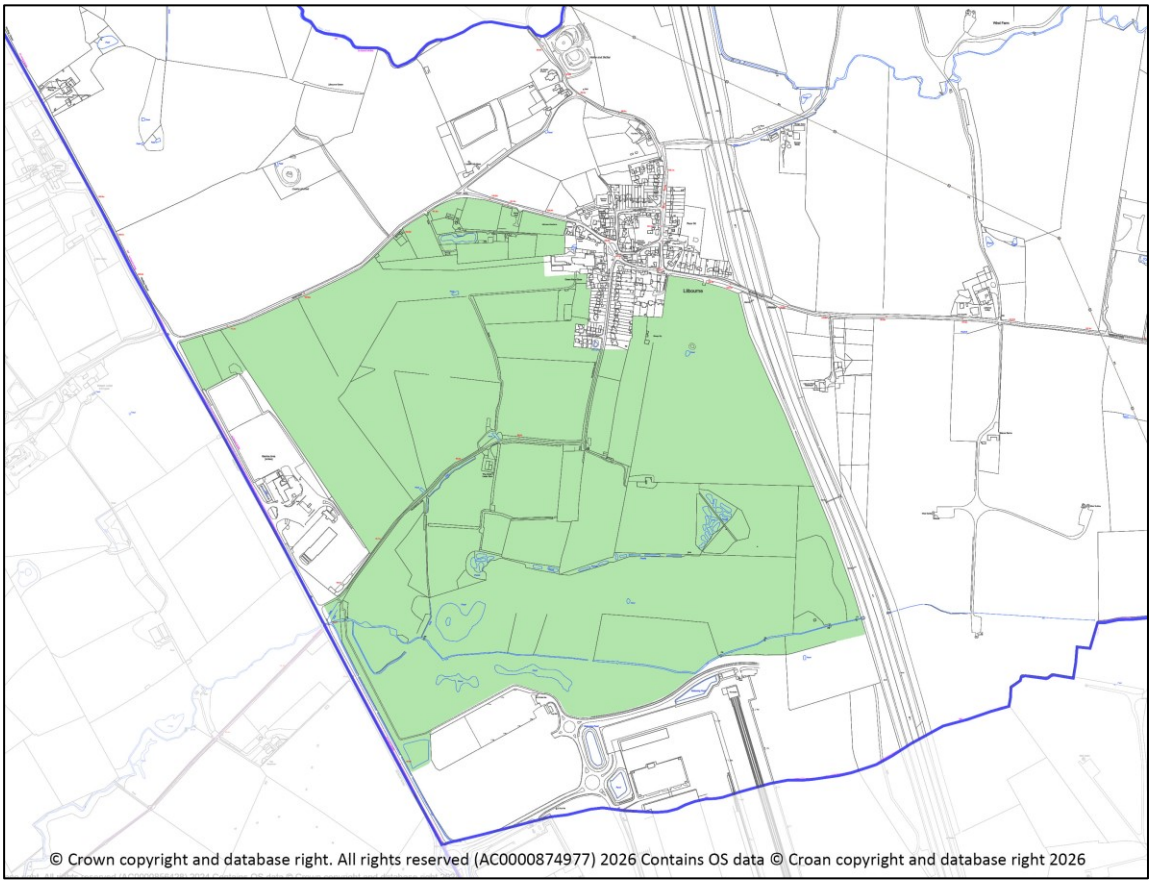
WNC Regulation 18 Local Plan Policy BN8, for reference:

The character and identity of settlements will be protected, a sense of place will be retained and physical or perceived visual coalescence will be avoided. In order to achieve this:

A. Proposals within the areas of Green Wedge defined on the policies map will be required to demonstrate how they will protect the identity, open character around and setting of fringe settlements by avoiding physical or perceived visual coalescence between them, the towns and other major development.

B. A proportionate landscape and visual appraisal or landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to identify how potential coalescence can be successfully mitigated.

Figure 8: Green Wedge in Lilbourne Neighbourhood Plan Area, for reference

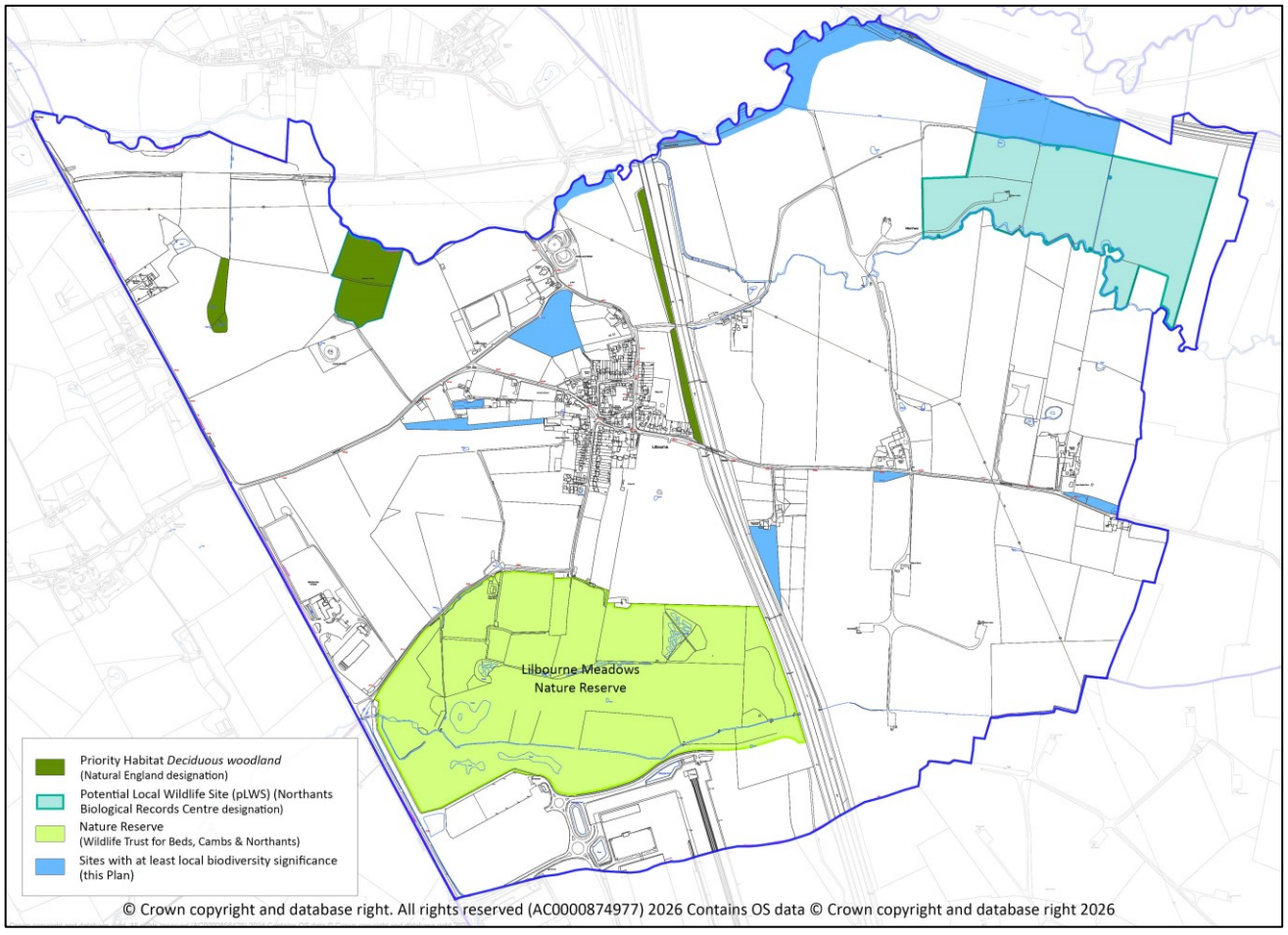


Sites and features of Natural Environment significance

A number of identified sites in Lilbourne are important for wildlife (biodiversity). The features and designations for which they have been identified comprise a) statutorily protected sites, b) those where priority habitats and National Forest Inventory sites occur (Natural England designations); and c) sites identified during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan as being of high biodiversity significance in the context of the Plan Area. The map (figure 9) shows their locations.

Policy ENV 3 delivers site-specific compliance in the Neighbourhood Area with the relevant West Northamptonshire and Daventry Local Plan policies, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017-2019, and the UK Environment Act 2021. It has direct regard for National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024, as amended February 2025) policies 192 and 193. It also refers to the *Planning Practice Guidance* of December 14, 2023, in respect of the use of the *biodiversity metric* approach for assessing the wildlife value of development sites and for delivering *biodiversity net gain.*

Figure 9: Sites and features of natural environment significance



POLICY ENV 3: SITES AND FEATURES OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SIGNIFICANCE – The sites mapped in figure 9 have been identified as being of at least local significance for biodiversity and the natural environment. They are ecologically important in their own right, make a contribution to carbon sequestration, and are locally valued. The significance of the species, habitats or features present

should be balanced against the benefit of any development that would adversely affect them. Development proposals affecting the identified sites will not be supported unless they include evidence-based, measurable proposals for delivering biodiversity net gain at a minimum 10%.

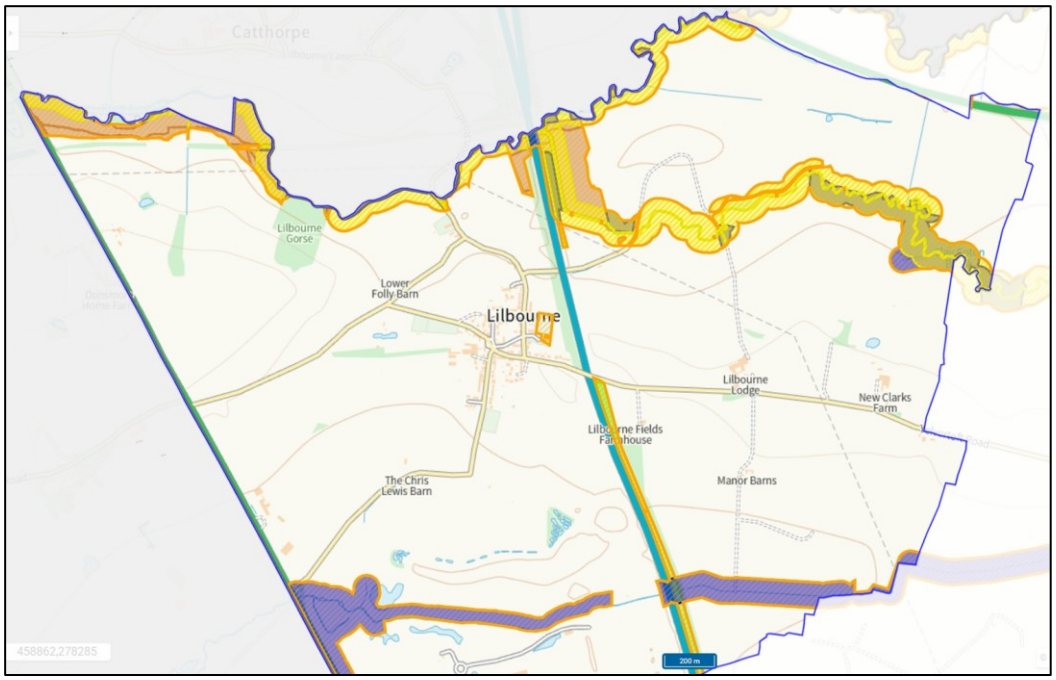
If significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided (through relocating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated by net gain as above or compensated for, planning permission should be refused, in conformity with paragraph 193a of the NPPF (December 2024, as amended February 2025).

Nature Recovery, Biodiversity and Habitat Connectivity across the Area

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

Nature recovery A change of emphasis at all levels in the planning system (policy and legislation) since 2024 introduces new strategic and site-specific objectives for achieving reversal of the recent nation-wide record of biodiversity loss (habitats and species). Local Planning Authorities, including West Northamptonshire, have been preparing Local Nature Recovery Strategies and introducing Local Plan policies to deliver them, while Neighbourhood Plans are now required to include references to nature recovery (figure 10.1; Policy ENV 4.1).

Figure 10.1: West Northants Local Nature Recovery Strategy – all *priority* layers
(West Northants *LNRS habitat areas (combined) map*, online, 23-4-26)

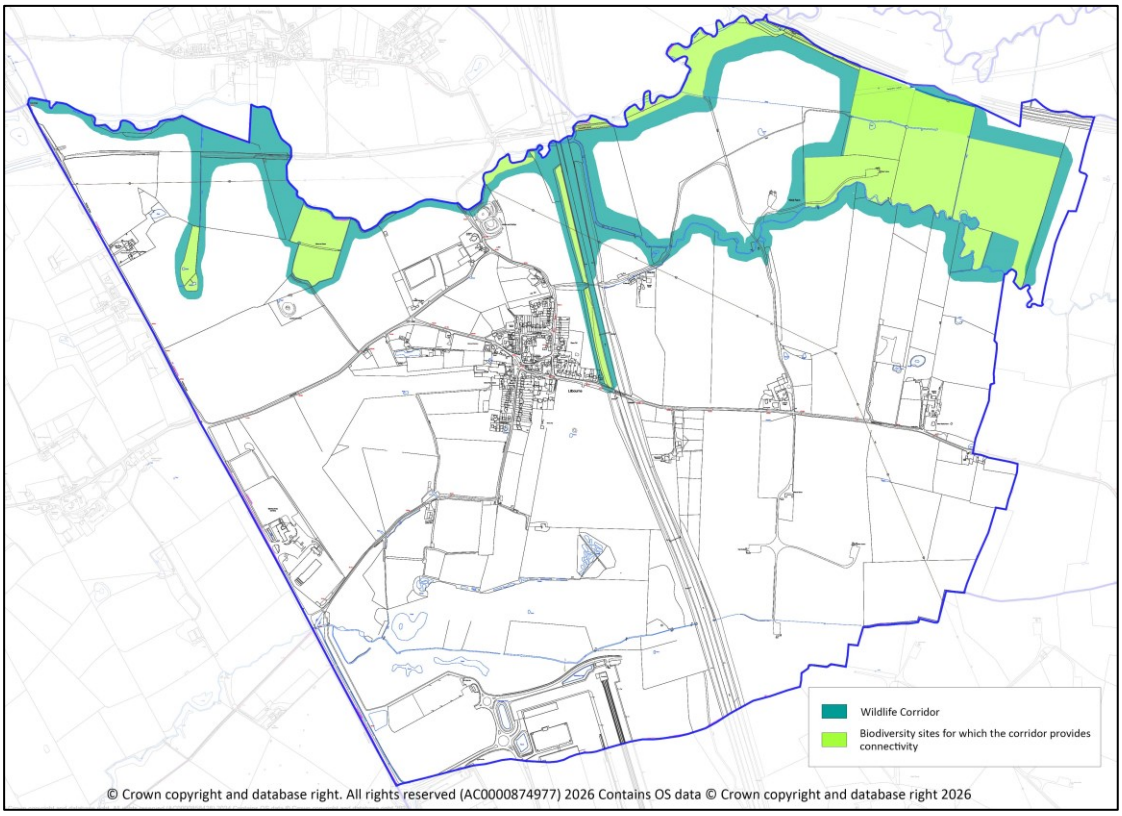


Trees, woodland and hedges For historical reasons, apart from a couple of small coverts and plantations Lilbourne is not a wooded parish. The largest area of deciduous woodland is 'new' – the result of tree-planting and natural growth on the embankments of the M1 motorway – although it is now 60 years old and maturing nicely. Most trees, including some of notable size or of interest as specimens, are in older gardens and hedgerows, particularly close to the village. The scarcity of woodland, trees and hedges in the Neighbourhood Area means attention should be paid to their protection in new development. Trees are living organisms, so they do not live for ever and require arboricultural management to prolong their lives and for safety reasons; this policy deals with their protection within the limits of the planning system (Policy ENV 4.3).

Biodiversity Net Gain All new development (with exemptions and relaxions for small and medium sites) is now required to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of 10% above that of the measured biodiversity of the site before development begins (Policy ENV 4.2). Part of this requirement is enabled nationally by the establishment of a 'bank' of land (sites) that is available as 'offsite offsetting credits' where (if it cannot be delivered on-site) developers create new habitats to replace, plus 10% gain, the biodiversity lost to development. Two areas in the Neighbourhood Area are actual or potential offsite BNG sites (Policy ENV 4.5).

Meanwhile, habitat connectivity can be delivered now by wildlife corridors, which are designated to prevent obstacles to the movement or spread of animals and plants between existing priority and other valuable habitats that would otherwise be imposed by new developments. They also help to re-connect populations and habitats within parishes and more widely. A wildlife corridor is mapped in this Plan (figure 10.2) to be taken into account (Policy ENV 4.4) when development proposals within it (or adversely affecting it) are under consideration.

Figure 10.2: Wildlife corridors



While policy ENV 3 delivers site-specific compliance in the Plan Area with the relevant West Northamptonshire and Daventry Local Plan policies, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017-2019 and the UK Environment Act 2021, this policy (ENV 4) does the same for strategic planning and future development proposals across the Neighbourhood Area. The policy is explicitly supported by National Planning Policy Framework (Consultation Draft, December 2025) paragraphs 187, 192 and 193(a), on which this policy's wording is partly based. The community also expects all planning strategies, proposals and decisions affecting the Neighbourhood Area to comply with the requirements of the *Climate Change Act* 2008, to follow the spirit of the *Paris Agreement* (UK ratification 2017) and the UK's *25 year environment plan (2018)*, and to plan for *biodiversity net gain* through the mechanisms described in the *Environment Act 2021*, the relevant *Planning Practice Guidance* of December 14, 2023 and paragraphs 192(b) and 193(d) of the Draft NPPF December 2025.

POLICY ENV 4: NATURE RECOVERY, BIODIVERSITY ACROSS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA, AND HABITAT CONNECTIVITY

1. All new development proposals will be required to have regard for their impact on the West Northamptonshire Nature Recovery Strategy, specifically but not exclusively the areas and locations within the Lilbourne Neighbourhood Area (figure 10.1) mapped (2026) by WNC for their nature recovery potential.

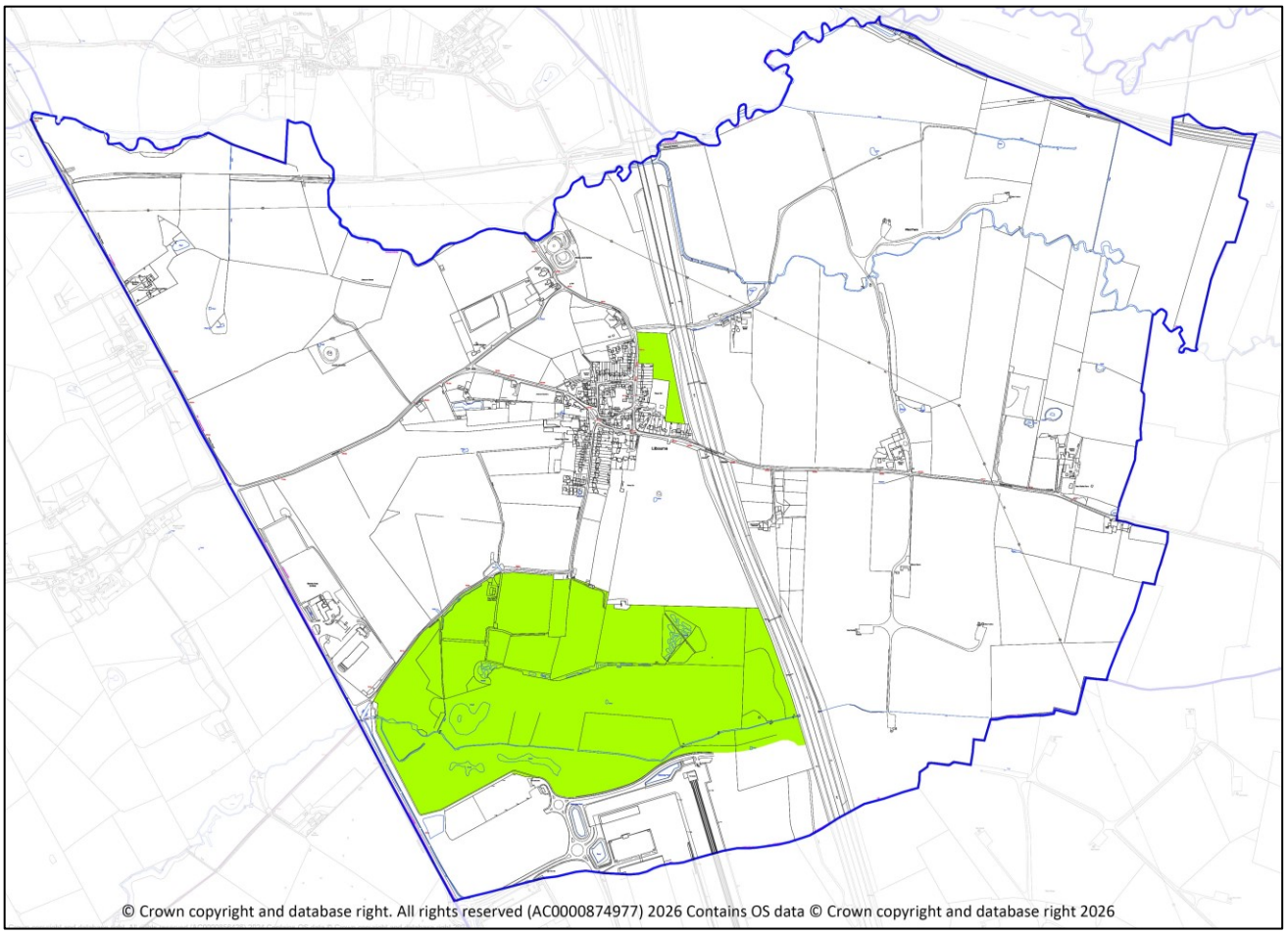
2. All new development proposals will be expected to safeguard habitats and species across the Plan Area, including those of local significance, and to deliver biodiversity net gain. If significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided (through relocating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or dealt with through onsite or offsite enhancement (via biodiversity net gain at 10%), planning permission should be refused, in conformity with paragraph 193a of the NPPF (December 2024).

3. Development proposals that adversely affect trees, woodland and hedges of environmental (biodiversity, historical, arboricultural) significance, or of landscape or amenity value, will be resisted. New development should be designed to retain such trees and hedges wherever possible. Where destruction cannot be avoided, developers will be required to plant replacement trees and/or hedges on site or to provide compensatory planting elsewhere in the Parish. Hedgerows should be retained and protected. Where loss is unavoidable, it should be minimised and compensated for by replacement planting of locally-appropriate native species. Only development proposals providing a net gain in length and species diversity of hedgerows will be supported. When fulfilment of biodiversity net gain involves trees and hedges, compensatory plantings should be of native or suitable exotic/ornamental species and should take account of current best practice regarding plant disease control and aftercare.

4. Development in the Neighbourhood Area will be expected to protect and enhance the identified wildlife corridors (figure 10.2) and other potential habitat links. It should not create barriers to the permeability of the landscape for wildlife in general, or fragment coherent populations of species of conservation concern.

5. The areas mapped in figure 10.3 are allocated for *Off-site Biodiversity Net Gain offsetting*. Except for developments enhancing or augmenting the objectives of biodiversity net gain, access to nature and nature recovery strategies, no other types of development proposal on them will be supported.

Figure 10.3: Biodiversity Net Gain – sites earmarked for off-site offsetting

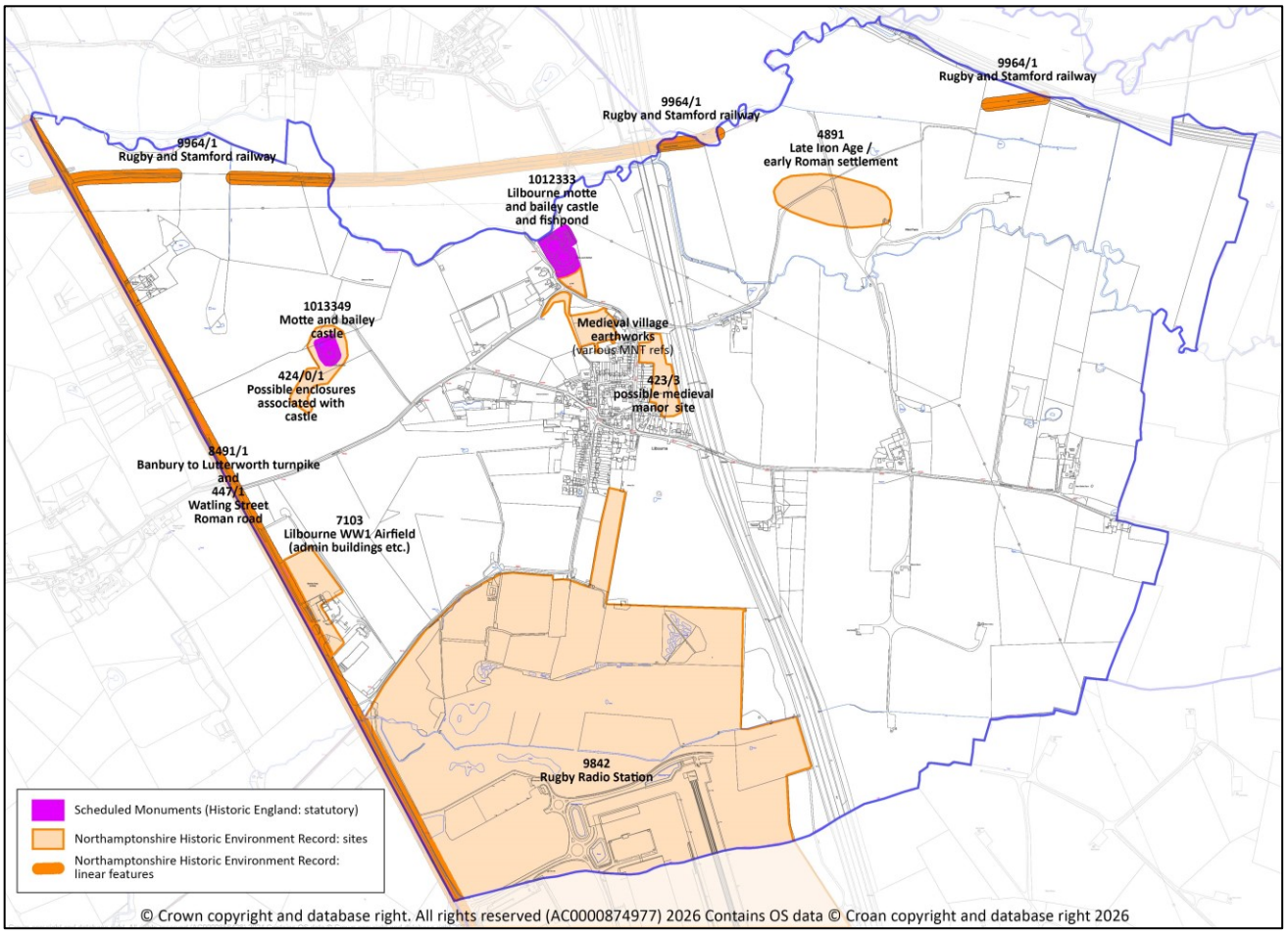


Sites of Historic Environment significance

A number of sites in Lilbourne are important (at least locally) for archaeology, history and heritage. In addition to the two Scheduled Monuments in the Neighbourhood Area (which are statutorily protected and mapped here only for reference), they comprise eleven sites and features of relevance to Neighbourhood Plan policies in the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and Historic England databases. The map (figure 11) shows their locations.

POLICY ENV 5: SITES OF HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SIGNIFICANCE - The sites mapped in figure 11 are of at least local significance for their historical features. The features are extant and have visible expression or there is proven buried archaeology on the site, and they are locally valued. The significance of the features present should be balanced against the local benefit of any development that would affect or damage them.

Figure 11: Sites of Historic Environment significance

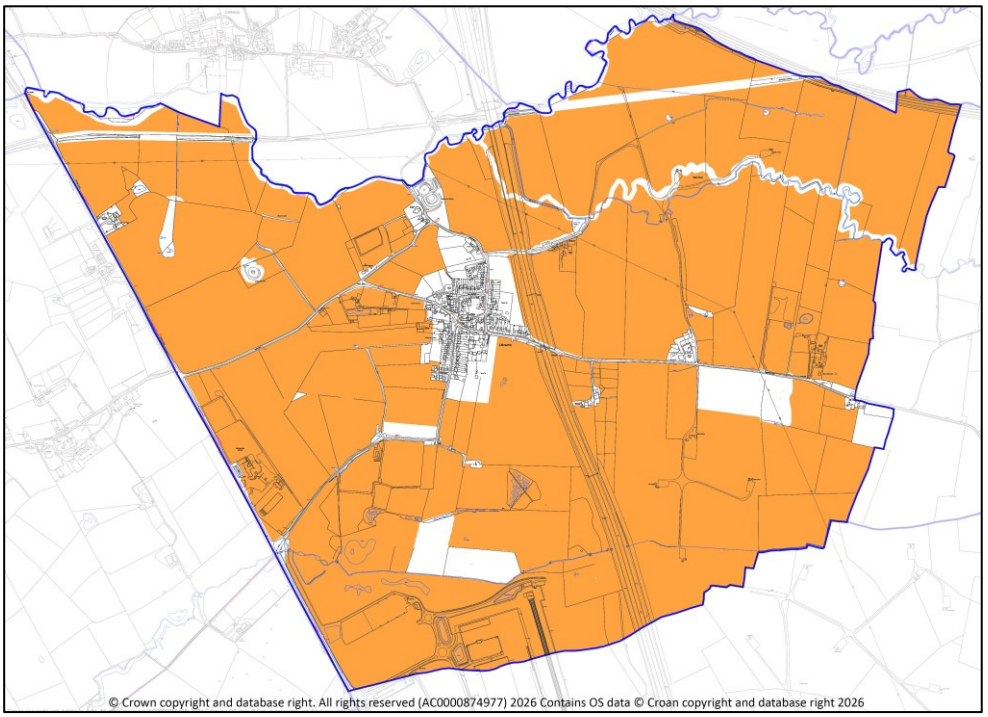


Ridge and furrow

The medieval village of Lilbourne was primarily agricultural and, beginning in the 8th or 9th century CE, was farmed using the Open Field system. All the open land, except small fields (closes) backing onto the houses and areas of woodland or waste, was worked in a seasonal and yearly rotation of arable crops (cereals, beans), grazing and fallow. The ploughlands consisted of three large open fields. Medieval ploughs were pulled by oxen and, because (unlike a modern plough) they were not reversible, the soil was always turned rightwards as the plough team progressed up and down the furlongs, producing a corrugated pattern of ridges and furrows whose dimensions increased with every year.

The open field system was practised for most of the medieval period and beyond, until changes in land ownership or adoption of the latest farming methods gave rise to a change from the large open fields to smaller fields with hedged boundaries, and a move from arable to pastoral (livestock) farming. The open land in the Lilbourne was enclosed in this way in several phases, starting in the early 17th century and culminating in a formal *Enclosure* in 1681. Sheep farming became an important part of the local economy and way of life, and this situation persisted until the late 1940s (figure 12.1), when a second agricultural revolution in the mid-20th century effectively reversed the first one.

Figure 12.1: Ridge and furrow in Lilbourne in 1945 (from RAF aerial imagery, via Google Earth)



British governments, and later the European Union, encouraged farmers, mainly through subsidies, to plough the pastures and turn them over to intensive arable production. Wherever this happened, modern reversible ploughs quickly obliterated the ridge and furrow. In most English open field parishes, the loss of ridge and furrow since c.1950 has been over 90%. In the late 1990s, English Heritage (now Historic England), realising the scale of this destruction, undertook the first of a series of surveys ('Turning the Plough') across the Midlands and made recommendations for protection and management, including in the Planning system (figure 12.2).

Figure 12.2: Ridge and furrow in Lilbourne c.1999 ('Turning the Plough' survey, from Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record)

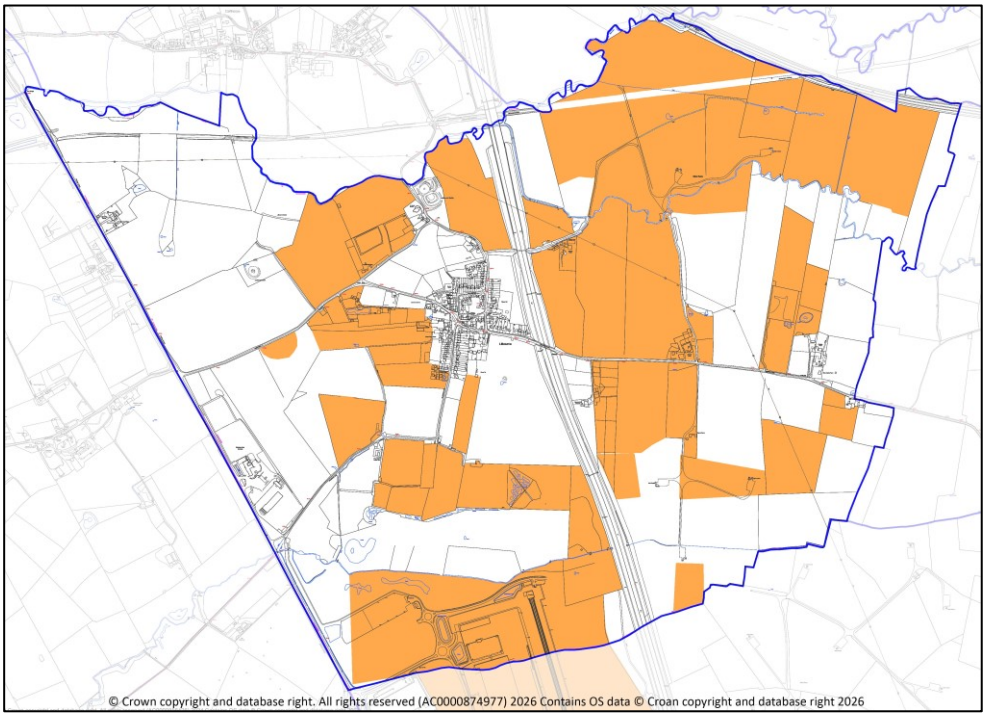
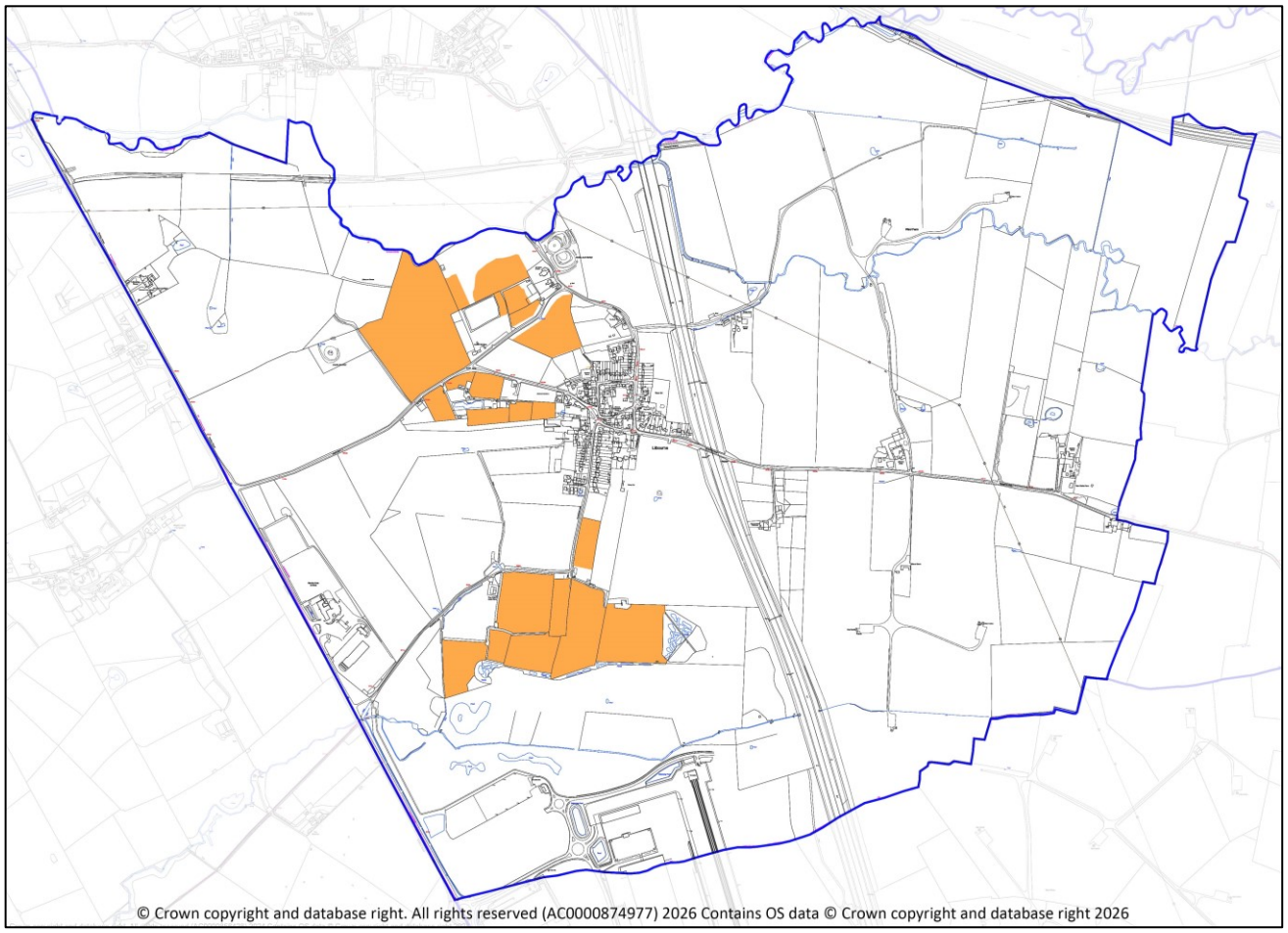


Figure 12.3: Ridge and furrow in Lilbourne 2026 (surveyed for this Plan)



The extent of ridge and furrow estimated to have existed in Lilbourne immediately after WW2 (figure 10.1) shows the scale of loss in Lilbourne, while a nation-wide survey be English Heritage and Northamptonshire County Council in about 1999 (figure 10.2) provided a baseline for a new survey undertaken for this Plan in 2025-26 (figure 12.3). The situation is now as follows:

1945	c. 590 ha
c.1999	c. 240 ha
2026	c. 42 ha

In English legislation ridge and furrow fields (except for the few that are Scheduled Monuments) are not statutorily protected, despite recognition that, in view of the level of loss since the mid-20th century, “as the open field system was once commonplace in NW Europe, these [surviving] sites take on an international importance” (English Heritage, 2001).

While the 25 individual fields with surviving ridge and furrow in Lilbourne are not claimed to be of international importance, the relatively large area still surviving and clearly visible, and their relationship with the other medieval heritage assets in the Plan Area, means that any further, avoidable, loss would be irreversibly detrimental. In conformity with paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (including footnote 75) and following the recommendation of Historic England, all surviving ridge and furrow in the Plan Area (figure 9.3) should now be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset and taken into account in the planning system as the visible evidence of a

component of national heritage comparable in significance to that of surviving medieval buildings. In future, and whenever possible, increased local housing need or new targets required at a higher level in the planning system should only be fulfilled in the Plan Area by allocating development to available sites where there is no surviving ridge and furrow. The policy is supported by NPPF (2024) paragraph 216.

POLICY ENV 6: RIDGE AND FURROW – The areas of ridge and furrow earthworks mapped in figure 12.3 are non-designated local heritage assets.

Any loss or damage arising from a development proposal (or a change of land use requiring planning permission) is to be avoided; the significance of the ridge and furrow features as heritage assets must be balanced against the local benefits of such development.

Statutorily Protected Heritage Assets

Fourteen sites, buildings and structures in the Neighbourhood Area have statutory protection as Scheduled Monuments and/or through Listing at Grade I or II. The Neighbourhood Plan lists them here for reference, and to note that new development nearby will be required to take into account their *settings*, as determined on a case-by-case basis by Historic England.

Lilbourne motte and bailey castle and fishpond
List Entry Number: 1012333
Heritage category: Scheduling
Location: Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

Motte and bailey castle south of Lilbourne Gorse
List Entry Number: 1013349
Heritage category: Scheduling
Location: Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

Church of All Saints
List Entry Number: 1287539
Heritage category: Listing Grade: I
Location: CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STATION ROAD, Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

K6 Telephone Box, The Green, Lilbourne
List Entry Number: 1426270
Heritage category: Listing Grade: II
Location: Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

Lilbourne Post Office
List Entry Number: 1216627
Heritage category: Listing Grade: II
Location: 4 AND 5, THE GREEN, Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

Chest Tomb Adjacent to South Aisle of Church of All Saints
List Entry Number: 1287540
Heritage category: Listing Grade: II
Location: CHEST TOMB ADJACENT TO SOUTH AISLE OF CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STATION ROAD, Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

Headstone Approximately 8 Metres South of Chancel of Church of All Saints
List Entry Number: 1216626
Heritage category: Listing Grade: II
Location: HEADSTONE APPROXIMATELY 8 METRES SOUTH OF CHANCEL OF CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STATION ROAD, Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

Headstone Approximately 4 Metres South of South Aisle of Church of All Saints
List Entry Number: 1227861
Heritage category: Listing Grade: II
Location: HEADSTONE APPROXIMATELY 4 METRES SOUTH OF SOUTH AISLE OF CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STATION ROAD, Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

Chest Tomb Approximately 1 Metre South of Chancel of Church of All Saints
List Entry Number: 1287469

Heritage category: Listing Grade: II

Location: CHEST TOMB APPROXIMATELY 1 METRE SOUTH OF CHANCEL OF CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STATION ROAD, Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

Burnham House

List Entry Number: 1227897

Heritage category: Listing Grade: II

Location: BURNHAM HOUSE, THE HORSEPOOL, Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

Pair of Headstones Approximately 5 Metres South of Porch of Church of All Saints

List Entry Number: 1216625

Heritage category: Listing Grade: II

Location: PAIR OF HEADSTONES APPROXIMATELY 5 METRES SOUTH OF PORCH OF CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STATION ROAD, Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

Row of 3 Headstones Approximately 5 Metres South of Porch of Church of All Saints

List Entry Number: 1227822

Heritage category: Listing Grade: II

Location: ROW OF 3 HEADSTONES APPROXIMATELY 5 METRES SOUTH OF PORCH OF CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STATION ROAD, Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

The Old Manor House

List Entry Number: 1287541

Heritage category: Listing Grade: II

Location: THE OLD MANOR HOUSE, 9, YELVERTOFT ROAD, Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

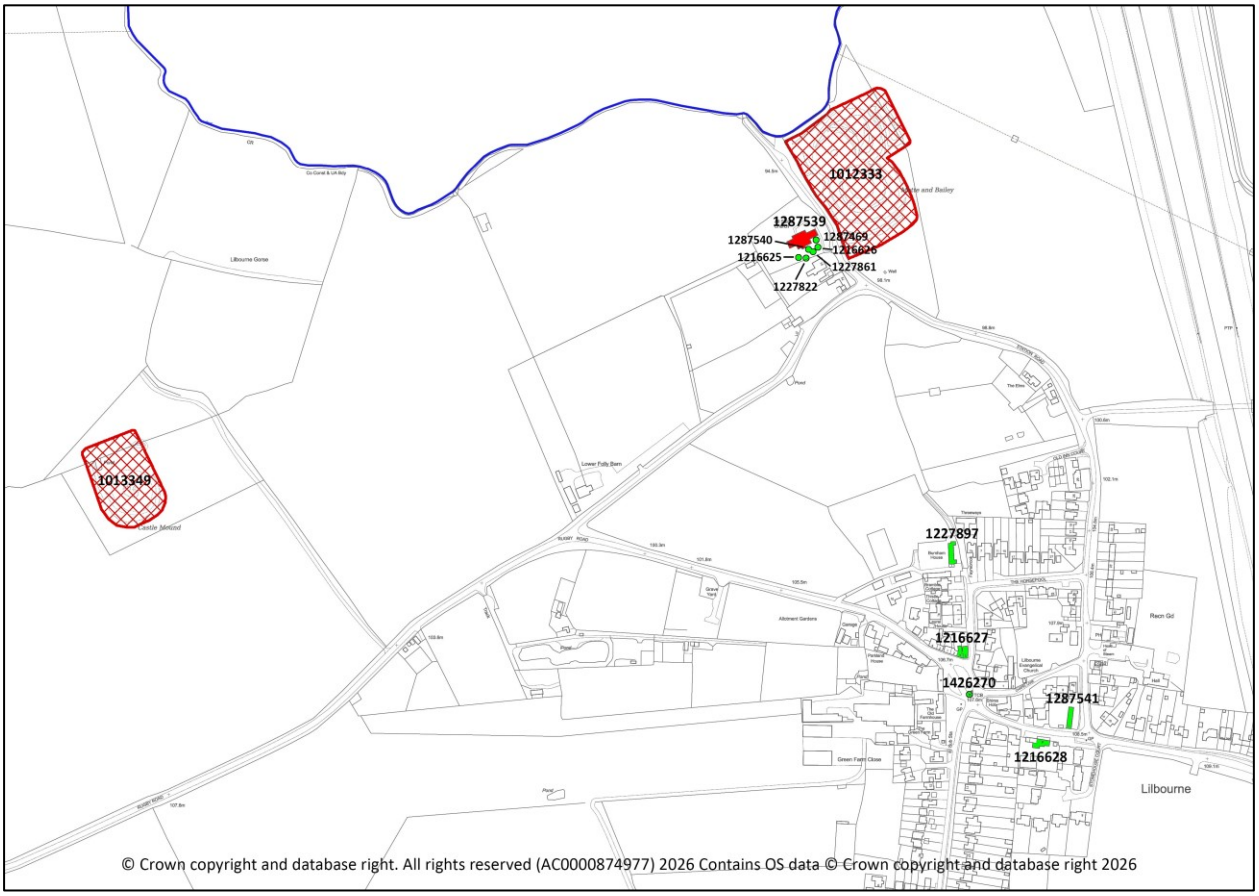
Stone House Farmhouse

List Entry Number: 1216628

Heritage category: Listing Grade: II

Location: STONE HOUSE FARMHOUSE, YELVERTOFT ROAD, Lilbourne, West Northamptonshire

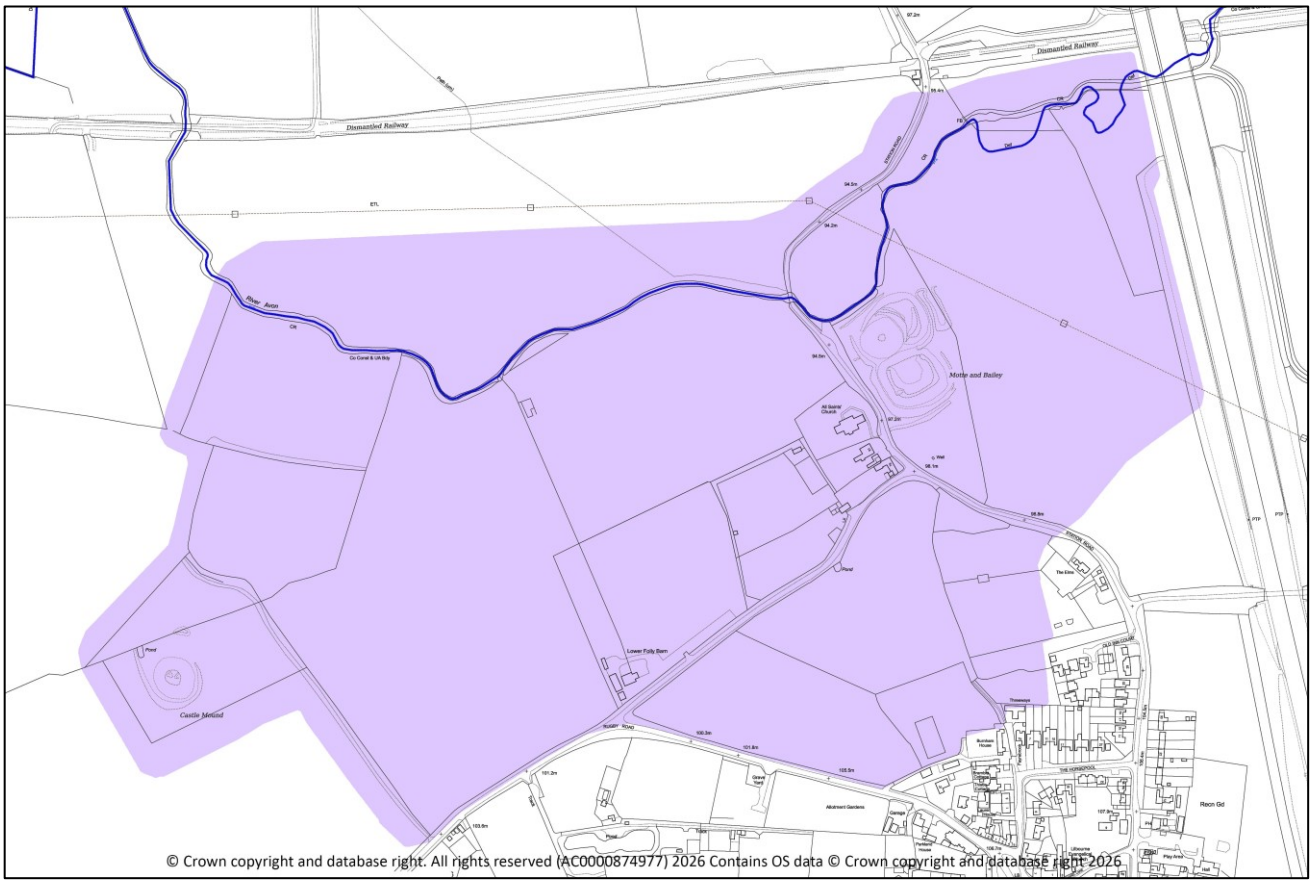
Figure 13: Statutorily Protected Heritage Assets (for reference)



Lilbourne's historic landscape

Despite, or perhaps because of, Lilbourne's situation – tightly squeezed between roads, viaducts, warehouses, windfarms and other post-modern infrastructure – it has survived as a small, essentially rural, village surrounded by a quintessentially 'English' patchwork of farmers' fields, streamside meadows and woodlands. It even provides one of the few non-industrial landmarks seen by travellers on the M1 motorway: a glimpse of a landscape of sheep, grassy mounds, medieval church and manor house that appears to be from a past age.

Figure 14: Local historic landscape character area, Lilbourne



In fact, this is a glimpse of a small but significant historic landscape, comprising two Scheduled Monuments, a group of Listed Buildings, and a cluster of medieval ploughlands and 18th-century hedgerows which have survived the 20th-century agricultural revolution that swept across most of the English midlands region.

Local residents value this corner of their home parish very highly and it is recognised by historians and geographers as being a landscape of at least County-level importance.

POLICY ENV 8: LOCAL HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA - Development proposals within or affecting the historic landscape character area mapped in Figure 14 should respect its character, local distinctiveness and its natural and historic features. Proposals that have a harmful effect on it will not be supported.

Important views

Consultation during the Neighbourhood Plan's preparation identified a widely held wish to protect what remains of Lilbourne's rural setting, in particular its visual relationship with the historic landscape area in the north of the Area, the southward expanse over open farmland, and taking account of its location in Natural England National Character Areas 94 *Leicestershire Vales* and 95 *Northamptonshire* Uplands, and more locally in Northamptonshire Landscape Character Type (Current Landscape Character Strategy and Guidelines, 2003) *Broad Unwooded Vale*, which overlaps the larger national Areas. The key *landscape character features* and *guidelines* in this document provide principles by which decisions about the protection of views can be made:

Landscape Character Type: Broad Unwooded Vale

Key Landscape Character Features

Woodland cover extremely limited, with tree cover confined mainly to hedgerow trees and overgrown hedgerows. The general absence of woodland contributes to the open and sometimes exposed character of the vale.

Landscape Guidelines

• **Conserve** the predominantly open and unwooded character of the Vale by limiting extensive woodland planting.

• **Conserve** and **enhance** the woodlands that are present by appropriate management, encouraging natural regeneration and replanting with broadleaved native species.

• **Conserve** mature hedgerow trees and encourage their replacement and continuity as features in the landscape through natural regeneration within hedgerows, or by new planting.

One of the main ways in which residents expressed this wish was by describing several highly valued views within and around the village and toward the surrounding countryside. These consultation findings were supported by the fieldwork for this chapter of the Plan, which although principally aimed at identifying sites of environmental significance also confirmed the sightlines of the suggested views and mapped them (figure 15).

POLICY ENV 9: IMPORTANT VIEWS – The following views (map figure 15, details Appendix 5) are important to the setting and character of the village. Development proposals should respect and whenever possible protect them. Development which would have an adverse impact on the identified views will not be supported.

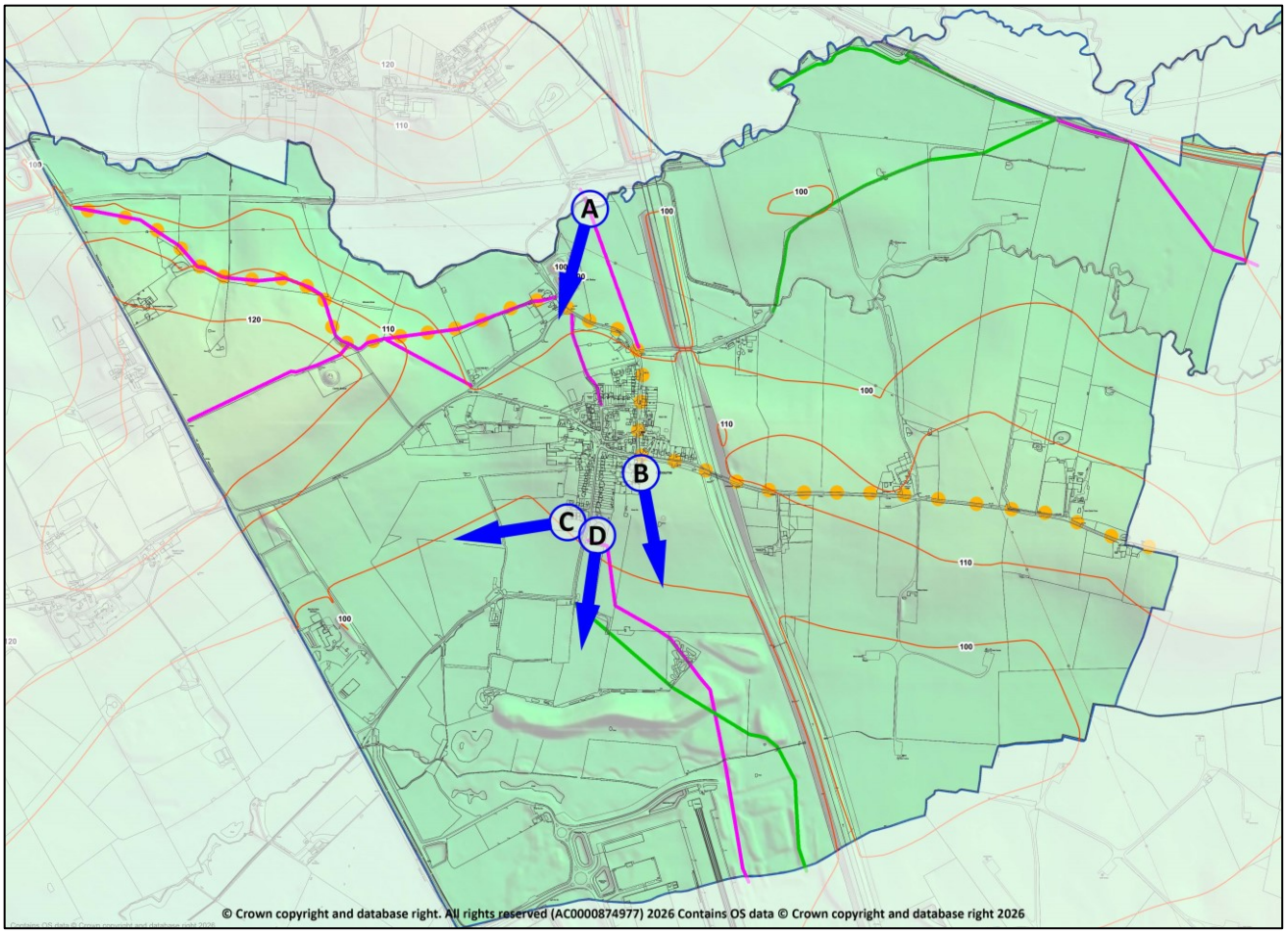
A: from the bench and river crossing on footpath EX/003, southwest over the castle and earthworks to the parish church and up the hill toward the modern village

B. from the end of Stonehouse Court (off Yelvertoft Road), extensive views southward

C. from Country View and Hillmorton Lane at the gateway into the fields, west over open countryside toward Roman Watling Street

D. From Jubilee Meadow Park open space and footpath EX/005, south over the dog agility field to Lilbourne Meadows nature reserve. This viewpoint is used by birders for watching rarities on and over the reserve

Figure 15: Important views



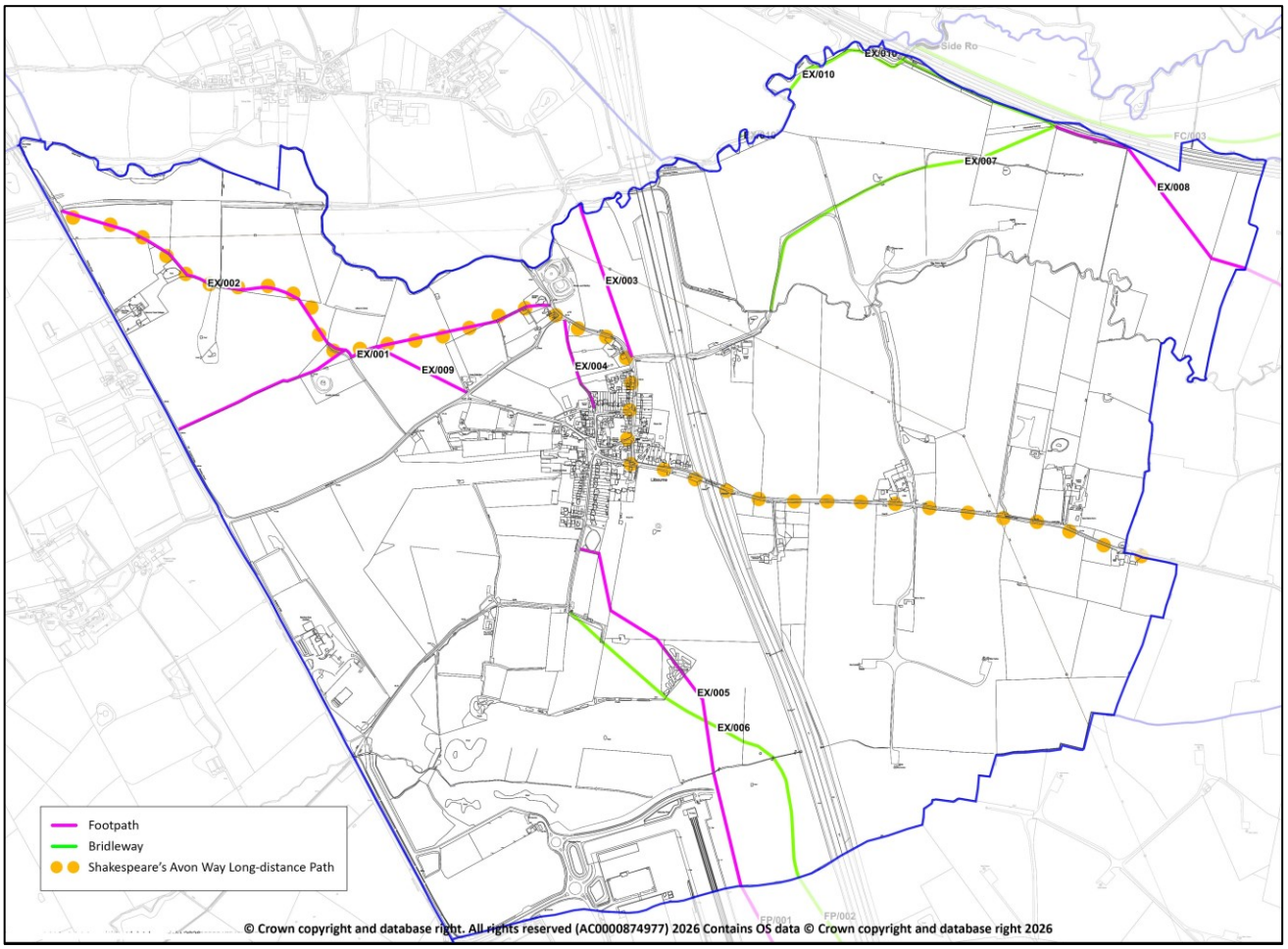
Footpaths, bridleways and other recreational routes

The network of footpaths and other rights of way in the Plan Area is not extensive compared with other parishes in West Northamptonshire. Because walking routes everywhere tend to be survivors from around the time of the 18th century Enclosure of the farmed landscape and from before the development of paved motor roads, there are historical reasons for this, including in the case of Lilbourne land ownership history, 20th century quarrying and transport infrastructure. However, with modern recognition of the value of walking routes for health and wellbeing, the lack is unfortunate and any erosion of the already modest network's extent and character will be resisted.

POLICY ENV 10: FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND OTHER RECREATIONAL ROUTES - Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the existing network of footpaths (figure 16) will not be supported without appropriate mitigation.

The inclusion of new walking and cycling routes in new development proposals, or the provision of walking and cycling connectivity from new developments to nearby community assets and other services and facilities, will be strongly supported.

Figure 16: The existing network of footpaths and other walking routes (not the definitive map)



Flood risk resilience and climate change

Lilbourne village is located on high ground and is therefore not susceptible to flooding of property or amenities. However, the latest (2025-26) Environment Agency mapping of flood risk from rivers and surface water (figure 18) confirms that the Lilbourne Neighbourhood Area:

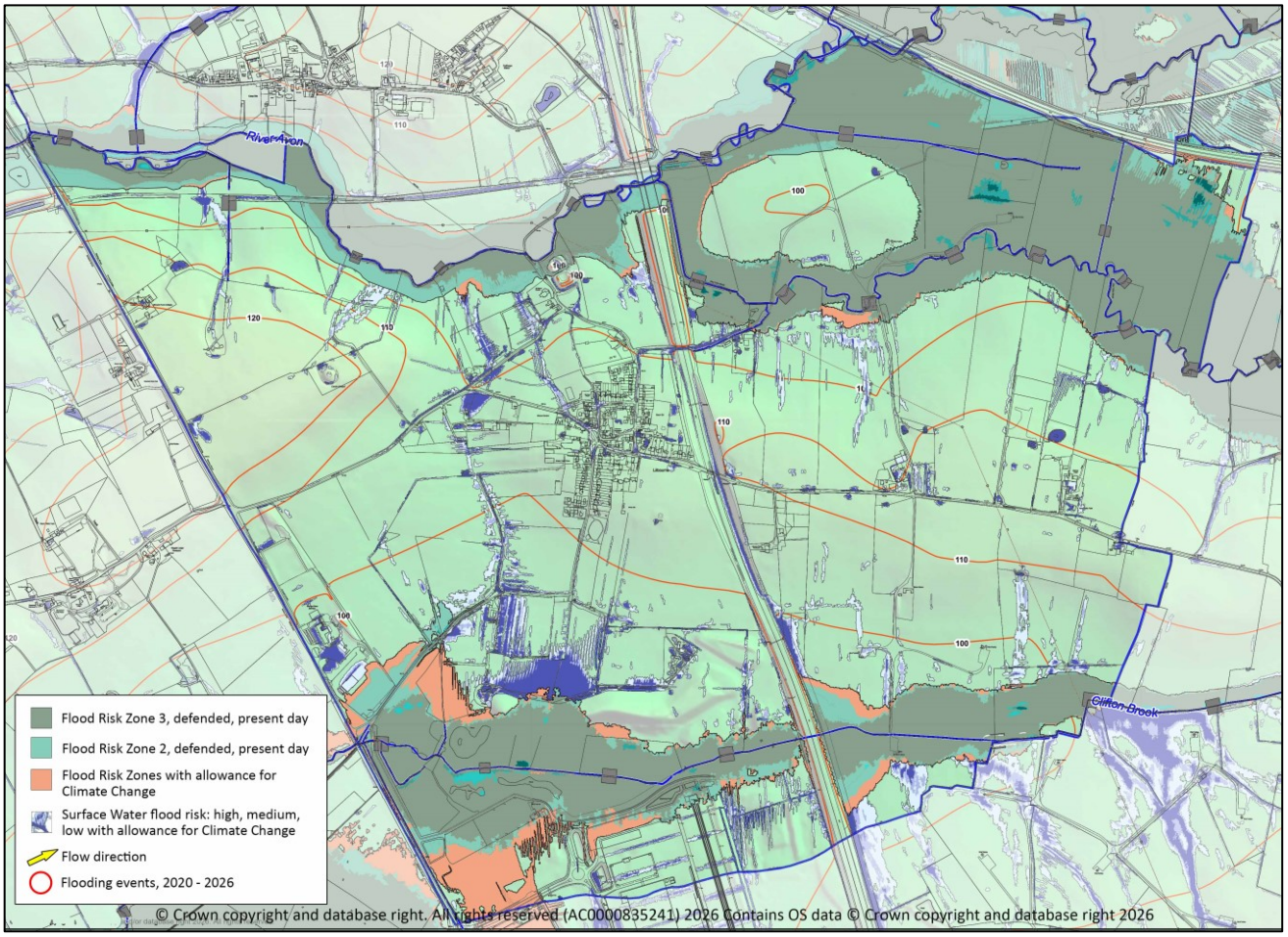
a) because of its watershed location, a source of the water that potentially floods other, downstream, communities, and

b) is cut off at times of flood events when the roads to the north and south are inundated.

For these reasons, the community is content at present to rely on national and Local Plan policies (and relevant regulations and standards) as they apply to new development proposals. This Neighbourhood Plan therefore remains silent on the matter.

A policy dealing with the local causes, risks and possible mitigations of flooding, and the contributions new development can make to their resolution, may be introduced in a future Review Neighbourhood Plan for Lilbourne.

Figure 17: Risk of flooding from rivers and surface water
[combined Environment Agency mapping, 2026]



C. Community Sustainability

This chapter looks at aspects of village life including: - Community facilities; Traffic management & road safety (including parking); and Business & employment.

1. Community facilities

Community facilities and amenities provide important infrastructure for the residents of Lilbourne, supporting and enhancing the quality of daily life and contributing to the vitality of the village.

Some of these facilities and amenities offer local employment opportunities whilst others provide a focal point for social interaction and support important services; thereby reducing the need to travel, which is particularly important for those who do not have access to a car.

Lilbourne has a limited range of facilities including the following:

- Village Hall – Provides a central venue for social occasions, meetings and village activities such as coffee mornings, plays etc.
- Allotments – provide an opportunity to grow one's own produce and social activity, as well as helping with mental wellbeing.
- Andy Hemmings Memorial Park and Playing Fields – provides a central venue in the village for leisure activities across a wide range of age groups.
- Church – Open everyday provides a local place of worship and contains a wealth of history as well as a venue for bell ringing and the church yard has a gold award for nature conservation (Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust)
- Jubilee Meadows – provides an ideal opportunity for leisure use in close proximity to the village and contains a wide range of natural species of flora and fauna.
- Village Pub – Head of Steam is the only licenced premises in the village serving the community, it provides a social hub to the community to be able to meet and relax in easy proximity to where they live.
- Community Transport Minibus – This provides a means of getting the villages children to school in Yelvertoft and provides a means to travel into to Rugby as there is no other provided local transport other than private car or bicycle.

This increases the need to travel, often by car, to nearby settlements. 63% of people aged 16 or over who are in employment use a car to travel to work, compared to 56.4% across West Northamptonshire. It also creates challenges for those residents without access to a car. Reductions in the frequency of local bus services compound the issue.

The loss and threatened closure of facilities and services is, however, a common dilemma for rural communities. The viability of many rural services is likely to be challenged further in future as a consequence of squeezed local authority budgets and more car owning residents commuting to work, driving to retail centres and accessing leisure facilities and other amenities further afield.

At the Open Event in October 2024, there was a feeling that Lilbourne has sufficient community facilities, but that they are not well used by residents. The point was made that additional housing will bring the potential for better facilities, and some additional facilities were mentioned, such as a shop, post office and traffic calming. The need to protect the Church was referenced and someone suggested acquiring the field bordering the playing field for leisure use.

The Community Questionnaire from the autumn 2024 showed a different perspective. Only 5 respondents from over 100 said that the presence of facilities was what they liked most about living in the Parish. 26 people said the lack of facilities was the thing they disliked the most out of living in Lilbourne – the highest response of any category.

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy reinforces the need for the planning system to deliver appropriate social, recreational and cultural facilities. Policy RC2 of the Joint Core Strategy requires new residential and commercial development to make provision for community facilities and resists the loss of existing community facilities.

POLICY CF1: THE RETENTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND AMENITIES - Development leading to the loss of an existing community facility (see above) not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that any of the following apply:

a) There is no longer any proven need or demand for the existing community facility;

b) The existing community facility is no longer economically viable and there are no alternative uses for the building that meet a community need;

c) The proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation of the existing community facility to an equally or more appropriate and accessible location within the Parish which complies with the other general policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Proposals that provide new community facilities or improve the quality and range of existing community facilities, will be supported provided that the development:

a) Meets the design criteria stated in Policy x;

b) Will not result in unacceptable traffic movements that generate increased levels of noise, fumes, smell or other harmful disturbance to residential properties including the need for additional parking which cannot be catered for within the curtilage of the property;

c) Provides appropriate levels of car parking;

d) Is of a scale appropriate to the needs of the locality and conveniently accessible for residents of the village wishing to walk or cycle; and

e) Takes into full account the needs of the wider community.

2. Employment

Existing and new employment opportunities

The strength of the local economy and of the community go hand in hand. Supporting the growth of a stronger local economy is recognised as an important theme of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Joint Core Strategy (Policy R1) seeks to sustain the rural economy by retaining existing employment sites where possible and enables small scale economic development.

Lilbourne has a number of established businesses these include:

Lilbourne Garage – has been in operation since 1960? Providing a local car maintenance and servicing opportunity for the community. Employing approx. 4 people.

Village Pub (Head of Steam) – (see above) Employment for bar staff and other waitress activities to support the key function of the business.

There are also a number of home-based business activities such as music teachers, dog walking, embroidery service, wedding services using campervans, chip away vehicle repairs, builders services, interior design, farming and land services and various consultancy services.

In 2021 33.3% of people living in the parish (aged 16-74) worked from home compared to 29.1% across West Northamptonshire). Lilbourne has a high proportion of economically inactive residents (30.2%). Only 21.8% of residents work within a 10km distance of where they live, compared to 36% across West Northamptonshire.

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

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

Overall, maintaining the rural nature of the parish strongly mitigates against any larger scale business development.

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

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

The Community Questionnaire from the autumn 2024 asked for people's thoughts about business development. 24 respondents supported new employment opportunities in the parish, whilst 34 did not.

The sort of businesses people would welcome included a retail outlet (supported by 28 people); artisan crafts (19 people) and lifestyle services [i.e. hairdressers] supported by 14 people and start-up businesses (13 people).

POLICY E1: BUSINESSES & EMPLOYMENT - There will be a presumption against the loss of commercial premises or land that provides employment opportunities. Development proposals for a change of use or the redevelopment of a business or commercial use to an activity which does not provide employment opportunities will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

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

Proposals for employment-related development (for new and/or expansion of employment uses, including homeworking) will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the development will not generate unacceptable disturbance, noise, fumes, smell or traffic; that it will respect and be compatible with the local character and surrounding uses; and that it will, where appropriate, protect residential amenity.

Working from home

The reduction of CO2 omissions to net zero by 2050 is now enshrined in law, so it is important to consider new employment opportunities in the right location for the residents of Lilbourne in order to help reduce vehicle usage and carbon footprint. The last census of 2021 identified 33.3% of residents in employment working mainly from home. The Questionnaire from the autumn of 2024 asked whether after Covid, people still has a hybrid working arrangement. 26 said they had, whilst 27 said they did not. 63% of the working community locally travel to work by car.

The neighbourhood plan therefore supports the rural economy by allowing for new employment planning applications in residential dwellings to provide or safeguard local jobs.

POLICY E2: WORKING FROM HOME - Insofar as planning permission is required the conversion and extension of dwellings for office/light industrial use will be supported where this:

a) The commercial development of the property is for the primary use of the property residents only and where the proposed commercial use remains ancillary to the main use of the building as a residential dwelling;

b) Any extension or free-standing building does not detract from the quality and character of the building to which they are subservient by reason of height, scale, massing, location or the facing materials used in their construction; and

c) Such development will not result in significantly increased traffic movements or significant and adverse impact to nearby residents or other sensitive land uses from noise, fumes, light pollution, or other nuisance associated with the work activity.

Farm diversification

There are 3 working farms in the Parish. The conversion of former agricultural buildings enables farm diversification, leads to the sustainable reuse of vacant buildings and provides opportunities for the establishment and development of small businesses which generate income and employment opportunities for local people. This is a national trend, which the Parish Council would like to encourage within the Plan area to maintain a balanced and vibrant community, subject to the proper consideration of residential amenity for nearby houses, visual impact on the countryside and highway safety issues.

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

The change of use of some rural buildings to new uses is already permitted under the General Permitted Development Orders. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014 allows, under certain circumstances, the change of use of agricultural buildings to residential use and change of use of agricultural buildings to registered nurseries providing childcare or state-funded schools, under the prior approval system. The policy allows for circumstances where planning permission is required.

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy supports farm diversification through Policy R1.

POLICY E3: REUSE OF AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS – Preferably, the land should be used for agriculture as originally intended, but if not viable, the reuse, conversion and adaptation of rural buildings for small businesses, recreation, or tourism purposes will be considered where:

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

Broadband

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy supports addresses the issue of Broadband Infrastructure in Policy C1. This neighbourhood plan recognises the fundamental importance of ultra-fast broadband to the development of the local economy and that rural communities must not be disadvantaged with a poor communication infrastructure. Such facilities are particularly important for promoting and developing homeworking as outlined in policy E2.

When asked in the Community Questionnaire from the autumn of 2024 about what improvements to infrastructure people would like to see, 41 people said, 'improved broadband'. This was the highest category of response, with 'better mobile reception' second.

POLICY E5: BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE - Proposals to provide improved access to faster broadband for businesses and households in Lilbourne Parish will be supported; this includes suitable connectivity for future generations of mobile technology.

Improvements to the mobile telecommunication network that serves businesses and households within the Parish will be supported. If a new mast is installed, this should be shared, where possible, by more than one provider.

Any infrastructure improvements requiring above ground network installations, must be sympathetically located, designed to integrate into the local area, and not be visually intrusive in open landscapes.

3. Traffic

Traffic management

The Parish Council have installed in co-operation with West Northamptonshire Police and Fire Commissioners to install vehicle activated speed signs in the village in an attempt to influence the speed of vehicular traffic entering, passing through and exiting the village. These have been partially successful but additional measures would be supported to address the speed and volume of traffic.

The provision of off street / driveway parking is essential to minimise inappropriate and antisocial parking within the confines of the village. The damage to verges and pathways, which are primarily for the use of pedestrians, detracts from the visual appearance of the village.

The highway network in and surrounding the village is in need of improvement and improvement works would be supported especially where future development takes place.

The Open Event from March 2024 received comments about the poor state of the roads, along with the need for improved footpaths and the issue of light and noise pollution.

The Community Questionnaire from the autumn of 2024 highlighted comments from a number of respondents about traffic and transport issues.

54 respondents cited the speed of traffic as a concern (10 said they did not see it as a problem). A large number of responses highlighted concerns related to the poor condition of the roads and the lack of public transport.

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

a) be designed to minimize additional traffic generation and movement through the village and on single-track roads;
b) avoid additional on-street parking and ensure provision is made for cycle storage by meeting against West Northamptonshire Parking Standards;
c) Not remove or compromise the use of any existing off-road parking areas unless a suitable equivalent alternative is provided;
d) provide any necessary improvements to site access, communal parking and the highway network; and
e) Provide for traffic calming measures as appropriate.

6. Monitoring and review

The Neighbourhood Plan will last for a period up to 2043. During this time, the circumstances which it seeks to address could change.

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

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