Highnam Neighbourhood Development Plan

2011-2031

Introduction

Government initiatives, under the Localism Agenda, now enable communities to produce their own vision of how they would like their area to develop.

The Government's overarching strategy is laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Gloucester City, together with Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough Councils, have been working to produce a Joint Core Strategy (JCS) which will provide an agreed strategic framework, to accommodate, in particular, the joint housing needs of the three Authorities. Each of those authorities is now working on their own Local Plan for the period up to 2031, which must reflect the JCS and which will provide the third tier in the structure. The Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to national policy and guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework, which provides the Government's overarching approach to planning. It must also be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan – in Highnam's case, this means the saved policies of the Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan to 2011. It is also relevant to note that various relevant information was taken account of during the plan-making process, including that relating to the first draft Tewkesbury Borough Plan and the emerging Joint Core Strategy. The Neighbourhood Development Plan is the final part of this planning structure. Once it has gone through all its stages, including a referendum of the Parish, it will become a Statutory Document, reflecting the views and aspirations of the Parish and it must be taken into account in all future determining Planning Decisions up to in the Neighbourhood Area during the plan period, 2011-2031.

Place Setting

The Parish of Highnam is situated in the County of Gloucestershire, 3 miles to the West of the city of Gloucester and separated from it by the River Severn. The Parish is bounded on the South by the Severn, on the North by the smaller River Leadon and to the west by Highnam Woods (See map 1 Location Plan). The Parish is crossed by the A40 trunk road with the B4215 branching off and continuing towards Newent. The Gloucester to South Wales railway passes through the southern part of the Parish but there is no station.

Originally, the location of the Roman river crossing of the Severn was near Over, and much later the higher ground was occupied by the residence of the Bishops of Gloucester, and a vineyard, bounded by the Severn and the Leadon. To the northwest, the principal settlement was at Lassington which had Parish status, and further south there was the estate associated with Highnam Court. Post-Reformation, the status of Lassington and Over diminished in importance. Highnam Court became the principle landholding, and in the 1840's and 1850's the estate was remodelled with the addition of Holy Innocents Church, the Old Vicarage, the village school (now part of the Community Centre) and a scattering of estate housing, principally around Highnam Green.

The core housing estate in the village of Highnam itself, known as Maidenhall was first started in the late 1930's, but was primarily built in the late 1940's to early 1960's. In the early 1970's the village started to expand with a sequence of housing estates within the enclosing ring and discipline of Oakridge. This gave the village the structure it has today with the bulk of the village northeast of the B4215, the church and the Community Centre separated to the south, Highnam Farm and its

Business Centre and a commercially run Golf Course to the West. Lassington now consists of the church tower of St Oswald's, its nave having been demolished in 1975, two farms and a scattering of dwellings. Over largely consists of a housing estate built on the site of the now demolished Over Hospital ; the canal basin of the Gloucester-Hereford Canal which currently houses the offices of the Canal Trust and an up market restaurant/hotel; traveller sites, a pub/restaurant and some industrial development along the A40(T). The village of Highnam is host to a Primary School, a Doctors' Surgery, a Day Nursery and a Post Office and Stores¹.

The Parish landscape as a whole is characterised by good quality agricultural land particularly towards the Severn, with a Listed park and garden associated with Highnam Court. Public access woodland on the East flank of Lassington Hill which slopes down to the River Leadon is an important landscape feature, as is the broad sweep of Highnam Woods which are managed as an RSPB Reserve and which enclose views to the west of the Village, with Rodway Hill Golf Club in the foreground.

Demographic Demography

Of the 1935 people registered as resident in the Parish, 1250 are of working age, the remainder being made up of 335 people over retirement age and 350 children under the age of 16. With the exception of the retired populations, which is greater than the national average (17.4% compared to 16.3% nationally)², the demographic groups are almost exactly the national average for England.

Of the 1935, 1013 (70.3% cf 69.9%) are regarded as being "economically active" (either working or seeking employment) and 427 as "economically inactive" (29.7% cf 30.1%)(Students, home makers or retired). Of the economically active 38.2% are employed full time (cf 38.6% nationally) 18.1% are employed part time (cf 13.1%) 9.6% are self employed (cf 9.8%)

Highnam is a relatively prosperous Parish. Gross and net weekly household income is above both the national and county averages at $\pm 720/\pm 490$ respectively (cf $\pm 673/420$).

Of the 1250 people of working age only 85 are recorded as DWP benefit claimants (6.8% cf 13.9%) and only two households are registered as experiencing multiple deprivation. (0.3% cf 0.5%) In addition to this 51 people are in receipt of housing benefit (6.7% cf 20.7%), 30 people are in receipt of income support (2.4% cf 3.2%) and 51 people are in receipt of pension credits (15.1% cf 24.4%)³

Skill levels are above average with 40.6% having Degree level qualifications (cf 29.9% nationally) and only 10.9% with no qualifications at all (cf 22.5% nationally) The generally high level of skill is reflected in the type of employment where Highnam has 51% of its people working in managerial or professional occupations (cf 41.1% nationally) and only 4.1% working in elementary occupations (cf 11.1% nationally).

Types of Employment

Highnam has a higher proportion of Public Sector Employees at 35% of those employed, than the national average of 28%. ⁴ This is probably accounted for by the proximity of Gloucester and Cheltenham where large Public Sector employers such as GCHQ, the NHS and Gloucestershire County Council are located.

The largest employment category is Health and Social Work at 14% followed by Retail 12% and Public Sector/Defence at 11%. Few of these people are employed within the boundaries of the Parish, the figures reflect Highnam's status as a dormitory for commuters, mainly to the nearby large centres of population, Gloucester and Cheltenham, and some further afield. These major population centres offer a wide range of employment opportunities of all types. This conclusion is supported by the finding that only 4.4% of people travel less than 2km to work (cf. 20% nationally) and 6.7% travel more than 40km, exactly the national average. 5

The proportion of people working from home is relatively high at 5.6% (cf, 3.5% nationally).⁶

Plan Content and Status

The Neighbourhood Development Plan for Highnam covers the whole of the civil parish. Its boundaries are clear and well established. The Plan provides a vision for the future of the parish, drawn up following extensive consultation. It sets out the Parish's objectives, together with the policies required for their realisation. Objectives and policies were formulated following analysis of the natural environment of the Parish, of the social and economic needs and characteristics of its settled population and of the responses of residents and other interested parties to consultation. Care was taken to include all residents, including minorities and the disabled.

Neighbourhood Area

Add Map (Appendix C of Basic Conditions Statement)

Plan Development

Highnam Parish Council decided in September 2013 that it would be in the interest of the Community to formulate our own Neighbourhood Development Plan and a sub committee of the Parish Council was established to take it forward. The committee was formed of two Parish Councillors plus volunteers from within the community, with people joining, and a couple leaving, during the period that the work was carried out. Assistance was also given at all stages by the Parish Clerk.

Assistance and guidance was purchased from the Gloucester Rural Community Council (GRCC) and a grant obtained from LOCALITY to fund the project. Assistance and some additional funding was also provided by Tewkesbury Borough Council and one of their officers attended many of the committee's meetings.

To start the process the GRCC gave a public presentation on Neighbourhood Planning which was well attended, and led to volunteers joining the committee

It was agreed by the Committee that the area of the Plan should be the whole Parish of Highnam and this was proposed to Tewkesbury Borough Council. Following the correct statutory procedures, including a consultation period, this was approved.

There were three main public consultation events: to launch the project, to report back on the results of the survey, and to offer the draft plan to the Community. Feedback from these Community Consultations was considered by the Committee and reflected in the plan. In addition a detailed survey was conducted throughout the Parish with forms being delivered to every home and volunteers calling to collect them, some 1360 forms were distributed and 752 returned, a 55% response. Regular updates on progress were given to the Parish Council, posted on the Parish Council Website and published in the Parish magazine. A full timeline of all events, meetings and other activity is available on the Parish Council Website.

The members of the team also carried out considerable local research, interviewing local business and land owners, visiting the School and Surgery, collecting transport data and much more. Details are listed in the Evidence Base. Care has been taken to ensure that the NDP conforms with, and is in accord, with both the Joint Core Strategy and the Tewkesbury Borough Council plan, as they exist in draft at the time of writing. The only mention of Highnam in either is as a "Service Village". This will require Highnam to accept a proportion of the total housing allocated to Rural areas. At time of writing Highnam's share is expected to be some 108 dwellings, this could change in the future but is the current planning assumption and assuming that all other settlements can meet their allocated shares. A recently (Nov 2014) granted outline planning permission for 90 houses adjacent to the village will satisfy most of that. It is considered that it should be possible to accommodate the balance during the period of the plan without undue difficulty. The Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the saved Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan.

The Vision

Highnam wishes to maintain its character as a self-contained community where people of all ages enjoy good quality of life.

To achieve this Highnam will:

- Remain a separate and distinct community from Gloucester and not become a suburb.
- Maintain and develop its own range of local facilities, services and employment opportunities
- Develop in ways appropriate to the needs of the local community
- Ensure that development reflects the nature, character, scale and density of the community.
- Maintain its relationship with its landscape setting.

In order to achieve this vision the following Objectives, and Policies for their achievement, have been identified.

Housing

Whilst it is unrealistic to expect no building during the plan period, the people of Highnam do not want to see their community swamped by inappropriate development.⁷

Objective-H1. To ensure that future residential development includes a wide range of housing types and tenures, with provision for a mixed community including the increasing older segment of the population.

Policy H1a. Any residential development of multiple homes must provide a range of housing types and tenures This should include bungalows and other homes specifically designed for older people, in line with the Parish demographic profile.

Policy H1b. As part of any development of multiple homes, provision must be made to provide an appropriate amount of Affordable Housing⁸, with priority for people with connections to the Parish.⁹

Policy H1c. Opportunities will be taken to accommodate a wide range of dwelling types, including Within residential developments, the inclusion of sites for-self-build and/or live home/work properties units is encouraged.

Objective H2. To ensure that the design quality and environmental performance of new development reflects current and future best practice standards.

Policy H2a In the interests of good planning, short term planning decisions should not be allowed to prejudice longer term opportunities for environmental, infrastructural and community improvement as identified in the Local Plan.

Policy H2b. The design and visual character of any new development, or conversions, in Highnam should make a positive contribution to forming a sense of place: demonstrating both design quality and sensitivity to the existing environment. Density of any new development should reflect that of the existing settlement¹⁰ though exceptions can be considered for specialized homes for the elderly, including care provision.

Policy H2c. any new build homes must provide off street parking for at least two vehicles per household in addition to any garages.¹¹

Policy H2d. <u>All nN</u>ew housing <u>development is encouraged to have regard to should where possible</u> comply with the best possible standards in building performance, space standards and green energy systems available, including any changes to policy that become operational during the plan period.

Transport

The Community is increasingly concerned with the congestion on the roads, particularly during morning rush hour and with the poor state of maintenance of the minor roads in the Parish.⁴²

Objective \mp **1.** To ensure that development does not exacerbate current problems with the flow of traffic and pedestrian safety within and through the Parish, especially at peak times, and if possible, contributes to their alleviation.

Policy T1a. Large scale traffic generating projects should, where necessary, incorporate measures such as road improvements which will mitigate severe impacts on congestion related to the development.

Policy T1b. Any future development in the area of Two Mile Lane should be conditional, where necessary, on improvements to that road; including provision of some safe footway reinstatement of drains and ditches, repairs to the surface and measures to control runoff flooding.

Policy T1c. Any future large scale development on the land to the west of the village of Highnam abutting the B4215 must be conditional on the provision of new road access, preferably to a new roundabout at the end of Two Mile Lane, a light controlled pedestrian crossing, to provide safe access from the village to Highnam Business Park and the Golf Club and a cycle path linking the Village to Whitehall Lane.¹³

Policy T1d. Revival of the County's (currently on hold) Community Action. The Parish Council will support Park and Ride proposals at the junction of the A40 and A48 will be supported inasmuch as it will they would help to alleviate congestion on the A40.

Objective T2. To maintain and improve public footpaths and cycle paths both within the Parish and to the surrounding areas in order to provide alternative means of movement within and through the area.

Policy T2a. <u>Any nN</u>ew public paths constructed as a result of <u>work relating to Herefordshire and</u> Gloucestershire Ccanal Trust restoration work should be linked to the existing network of paths used by the public.

Policy T2b. Any future development must respect and ensure tThe continuity protection and maintenance of existing footpaths and rights of way will be supported.

Policy T2c. The completion of an all weather, wheelchair friendly, footpath around Oakridge in the interest of road safety and equality of access will be supported.

Business and Enterprise: Objectives and Policies

The Community supports existing small scale local business and enterprise but would not wish to see the character of the Parish changed by large scale industrial development or energy generation related schemes.¹⁴

Objective. To support appropriate business start-up, expansion and home working.

Policy B<u>1</u>a. Any pProposals for appropriately scaled expansion of to extend Highnam Business Park up to around twice its current size (see Plan below) will be supported ¹⁵.

Insert New Plan

Policy B<u>1</u>b. The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust will be supported in their plans for appropriately designed and scaled provision of offices and workshops at in Over, at the site identified on the plan below, will be supported. The and their continuinged reinstatement restoration of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Ccanal through in the Parish and beyond Neighbourhood Area will also be supported.

Insert New Plan.

Policy B1c. Businesses along the A40 at Over will be supported and reasonable The expansion of existing business units in Over, within the site identified on the plan below, that is appropriately designed and scaled, will be supported.

Insert New Plan.

Policy B<u>1</u>d. Appropriately designed and scaled proposals to <u>The</u> expandsion of the farm shop and visitor centre at Over Farm, within the site identified on the plan below, will be supported in principle.

Insert New Plan.

Policy B<u>1</u>e. The building of work/live units, in limited numbers, within the Parish will be <u>is</u> encouraged. These could make use of existing unused farm buildings or other commercial properties where possible and should be integrated into existing settlements.

Community Facilities: Objectives and Policies

Highnam has a good range of Community Facilities, these should be supported, maintained and, where possible, enhanced.¹⁶

Objective C1. To support appropriate expansion of facilities such as the Surgery and School to meet the needs of a growing population.

Policy C1a. <u>The extension of Highnam Surgery and/or its car park</u> will be supported in principle in any appropriately designed and scaled extension of its building to meet future demand, and in increasing the area of its car park in association with adjacent future housing development.

Insert New Plan.

Policy C1b. Any <u>The</u> necessary, appropriately designed and scaled, expansion and/or enhancements to the buildings and surroundings <u>alteration</u> of Highnam Academy will be supported in principle in order that the school can accommodate all present and future pupils from the area.

Insert New Plan.

Objective C2. To support and enhance local facilities such as shops, the post office, the community centre and businesses as well as any sports clubs and other leisure facilities that provide a service to the Parish.

Policy C2a. Any appropriate <u>The</u> expansion of the village post office and shop, which would lead to improved services and facilities will be supported in principle.¹⁷

Insert New Plan.

Policy C2b. The Community Centre, as shown on the plan below, is a valued local resource and it will be preserved and protected from a change of use. and its governing Trust will be supported in its work in providing a range of venues for use by the residents of the Parish. Any proposals to develop land or buildings currently or previously in change of use as of a community facility will have to demonstrate, including evidence of engagement with relevant local community groups and partner organisations, why the facility be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that it is no longer required, and, as appropriate, how, when and where suitable local or that it can be replaced ment facilities will be provided with an equivalent or improved facility elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Area. Prospective developers are encouraged to engage with community groups as part of any change of use proposals.¹⁸

Insert New Plan.

Environment and Conservation: Objectives and Policies

The community values the rural nature of the Parish with its extensive wildlife habitat and wishes to see this maintained and enhanced where possible.¹⁹

Objective E1. To conserve the rural character and agricultural heritage of the parish.

Policy E1a. The wider Parish should remain an agricultural landscape. In order to maintain this, any proposals for non-agricultural development would need to demonstrate that there would be no adverse impact.

Policy E1b. Inappropriate and poor quality development²⁰ should not be allowed to undermine the quality of Highnam Parish's existing built and natural environment.

Objective E2. To secure and conserve the landscape setting to the village of Highnam.

Policy E2a. Development may only be permitted which does not adversely affect the landscape setting to the village of Highnam, including Highnam Court, its Park and the Church. Future housing development should be subject to detailed studies to evaluate the landscape impacts.

Policy E2b. Landscape views will be maintained and not adversely affected by inappropriate development. In particular:²¹

- The view to the East from the path exit from Highnam Woods, marked as VP1 on the map.
- The view to the East and Southeast from Oakridge marked as VP2 on the map.
- The view to the Northeast from the field known as Monkey Back, marked as VP3 on the map.
- The view to the North from the open space adjoining Oakridge, marked as VP4 on the map.
- The view to the Northwest from the A40, near Over Farm, marked as VP5 on the map.

Objective E3. To maintain and expand public green spaces in the Parish and develop their nature conservation potential.

Policy E3a. Any proposals to develop IL and or buildings currently or previously in use as recreational grounds will be protected from a change of use unless it can be demonstrated that they are demonstrate, including evidence of engagement with relevant community groups recreational organisations sports clubs and partner organisations, why the facility is no longer required; or that they can be replaced by equivalent or better p and, as appropriate, how, when and where suitable local replacement facilities will be provided including those for the playing of organised sports. Provision; or that the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss of replacement facilities will have regard to the other relevant elements of this plan.

Policy E3b. The important open spaces within the Village, as shown on map 2, will be protected from development and encroachment of any kind.²²

Policy E3c. Proposals for appropriately located <u>The change of use of existing</u> allotments will be <u>resisted and the provision of new allotments will be supported in principle. Allotments will continue</u>

to be provided and the existing site will be protected Further land will be sought as a condition of development if demand appears.

Policy E3d. Highnam and Lassington Woods<u>, shown on the accompanying plan</u>, will be protected from <u>adverse</u> development and continue to be appropriately managed as local nature reserve areas. ²³ Planning permission will not be granted for development which has an adverse effect on local nature conservation unless the importance of the development can clearly be proved to outweigh the value of the substantive interests present.²⁴

Insert New Plan.

Policy E3eCommunity Action. ∓ Highnam Parish Council supports and where possible, will work with other parties, including the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust, towards the proposed establishment of a Country Park through the Leadon Valley by the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust will be supported.

Objective E4. To address flooding issues in the parish

Policy E4a. New development must not exacerbate the existing problem of water run off on the B4215 and Two Mile Lane. Any proposed development should be subject to a surface water study.

Map of the Parish showing views to be retained as in Policy E2b

Green Areas within Highnam Village for Protection.

Remove Map

1. Open space between Mary and Lime Kiln Groves, part of Maidenhall and houses on Lassington Lane.

2. Green areas to the West and North of Oakridge, from its junction with Maidenhall to Hill Crest.

3. Green area to the South of Oakridge, adjacent to Pincoate and Tunacre.

4. Green area to the South of Oakridge, adjacent to Tunacre and Cams Ground.

5. Green area to the South of Oakridge, adjacent to Long Field and Poppy Field.

6. Green area to the South of Oakridge, adjacent to Poppy Field and Woodleigh Field

7. Green area adjacent to Wetherleigh Drive, West Field and Stoney Field.

8. Green area adjacent to Stoney Field and Peters Field, bounded by the footpath to the South.

9. Green area adjacent to Clayburn Close and Wetherleigh Drive, bounded by the footpath to the North.

10. Green area East of Oakridge adjacent to the Range and Cottage Field.

11. Green area to the East of Oakridge adjacent to the Range

12. Green area to the West of footpath between Williams Orchard and Popes Meade.

13. Green area between 15 Farthing Croft and 18 Beech Close.

14. Green area between 21 and 22 Farthing Croft.

15. Green area South and East of the B4215, West of Beech close.

16. Green area South of Oakridge from the B4215 to the Rectory.

17. Green area between Farthing Croft and Park Brake.

18. Land at the end of Little Lancarridge

19. Green area adjacent to West Field and Poole Ground, bounded by the footpath to the South.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the Plan has been considered at all times by the Committee, using a matrix to compare policies against objectives.

Risks Monitoring

The Committee has considered the risks which might threaten the plan and concluded that they are largely outside the control of the Parish.

The following potential risks have been identified:

1. Changes in planning policies at national and district level during period of the NDP.

2. Inconsistent and incorrect interpretation of national and local planning policy, dictated by short term expediency, by decision makers.

3. The separation of responsibility for planning, provision and maintenance of transport infrastructure between the Borough Council, Gloucestershire Highways and the Highways Agency.

4. Failure to interpret the policy priorities of Highnam's Neighbourhood Development Plan within the context of the Tewkesbury Borough Development Plan, the Joint Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is essential that tThe Parish Council <u>will</u> monitors developments during the <u>plan</u> period of the Plan and calls to account any attempt to ignore or override the provisions of the Plan.

Evidence Base and Supporting Documents

The supporting documents and evidence base referred to in footnotes can be viewed on line at

www.highnamparish.org.uk/NDP/Neighbourhood Development Plan.

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¹ Full details of the School, Surgery, Post Office, Business Centre etc. are available in the supporting documents.

² Source: IMD 2010 (CLG), Working age Benefits (DWP Aug-12), Multiple deprivation (Census 2011)

³ Source: Income Support/Pension Credit (DWP Aug-12), Economic Deprivation Index 2009, Fuel Poverty (Department for Energy and Climate Change 2009), Housing/Council Tax Benefit (DWP 2005), Households below median income (ONS 2008)

⁴ Source: Census 2011 (tables KS601EW, KS604EW and KS605EW)

⁵ Source: Travel to employment centres (DfT 2011)

⁶ Source: Working from home (Census 2011 QS701EW)

⁷ Source: Response at public events and answers to questionnaire section C

⁸ The official definition of Affordable Housing is to be found in annex 2 (page 56) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

⁹ "People with connections to the Parish should be interpreted in line with the definition included in the adopted Development Plan.

¹⁰ The average density of housing in the settlements in the Parish is currently in the order of 14 dwellings per hectare.

⁴⁴ See NPPF para 39. Further information on car ownership is provided in the ACRE Rural Community Profile for Highnam which can be viewed on the Parish website.

⁴² Source: Feedback at public events and answers to questionnaire section E.

¹³ Source: Feedback from public at public events expressed strong support for a new roundabout which would make access to the B4215 safer, reduce speeds through the village and relieve congestion on Lassington Lane. Provision of a cycle path is supported by local SUSTRANS representatives as it would link the village to their NCN42 route, this providing a safe route from the Eastern Forest of Dean all the way into Gloucester.

¹⁴ Source: Answers to Questionnaire section G

¹⁵ The present owners of the Business Park do not envisage large scale expansion, believing that there is not a market for such but might wish to add some additional units in due course, this would be supported provided the Park was not increased to more than twice its present size (based on opinions given at public events).

¹⁶ Source: Answers to Questionnaire sections B and D

¹⁷ Source: Answers to Questionnaire section D

¹⁸ Emerging JCS policy INF5 (part 1) states:

Proposals to develop land or buildings currently or previously in use as a community facility will demonstrate, including evidence of engagement with relevant local community groups and partner organisations, why the facility is no longer required and, as appropriate, how, when and where suitable local replacement facilities will be provided. Provision of replacement facilities will have regard to the locational and other relevant elements of this policy.

¹⁹ Source: Answers to Questionnaire section F and feedback from school and public functions.

²⁰ Inappropriate development includes multi storey blocks (more than three floors), of flats, commercial premises or high density housing (see policy H2b). Source: Answers to Questionnaire section C and views expressed at public events.

²¹ These views were specified by the residents at public forums.

²² Further background available in the Basic Conditions Statement.

²³ Further support for this policy is provided in the Basic Conditions Statement.

²⁴ Further support for this policy is provided in the Basic Conditions Statement.