

HELPSTON

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



2021 to 2036

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HELPSTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Referendum version May 2022

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List of Appendices

The following appendices have been prepared in support of this Helpston Neighbourhood Plan. Appendices 7 and 8 were prepared by Peterborough City Council: all others were prepared by Helpston Parish Council.

Due to the size of some of these documents, they are not included in the neighbourhood plan itself. Rather, they can be found on the Peterborough City Council Website:

www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/planning-and-development/planning-policies/neighbourhood-plans.

Appendix 1	Consultation Statement (May 2022) (updated following Examination)
Appendix 2	Helpston’s Local Green Space Designations
Appendix 3	Non-Designated Heritage Assets on Helpston's Local List
Appendix 4	Helpston Village Design Statement (March 2001) (superseded by Design and Development in Selected Villages Supplementary Planning Document (2011))
Appendix 5	Helpston Neighbourhood Plan Traffic Survey (March to July 2020)
Appendix 6	Basic Conditions Statement
Appendix 7	Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitats Regulations Assessment Final Screening Report (August 2021)
Appendix 8	Helpston Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Determination Statement (11 August 2021)
Appendix 9	Considerations for assessing planning applications with reference to Helpston’s Neighbourhood Development Plan

1 Introduction

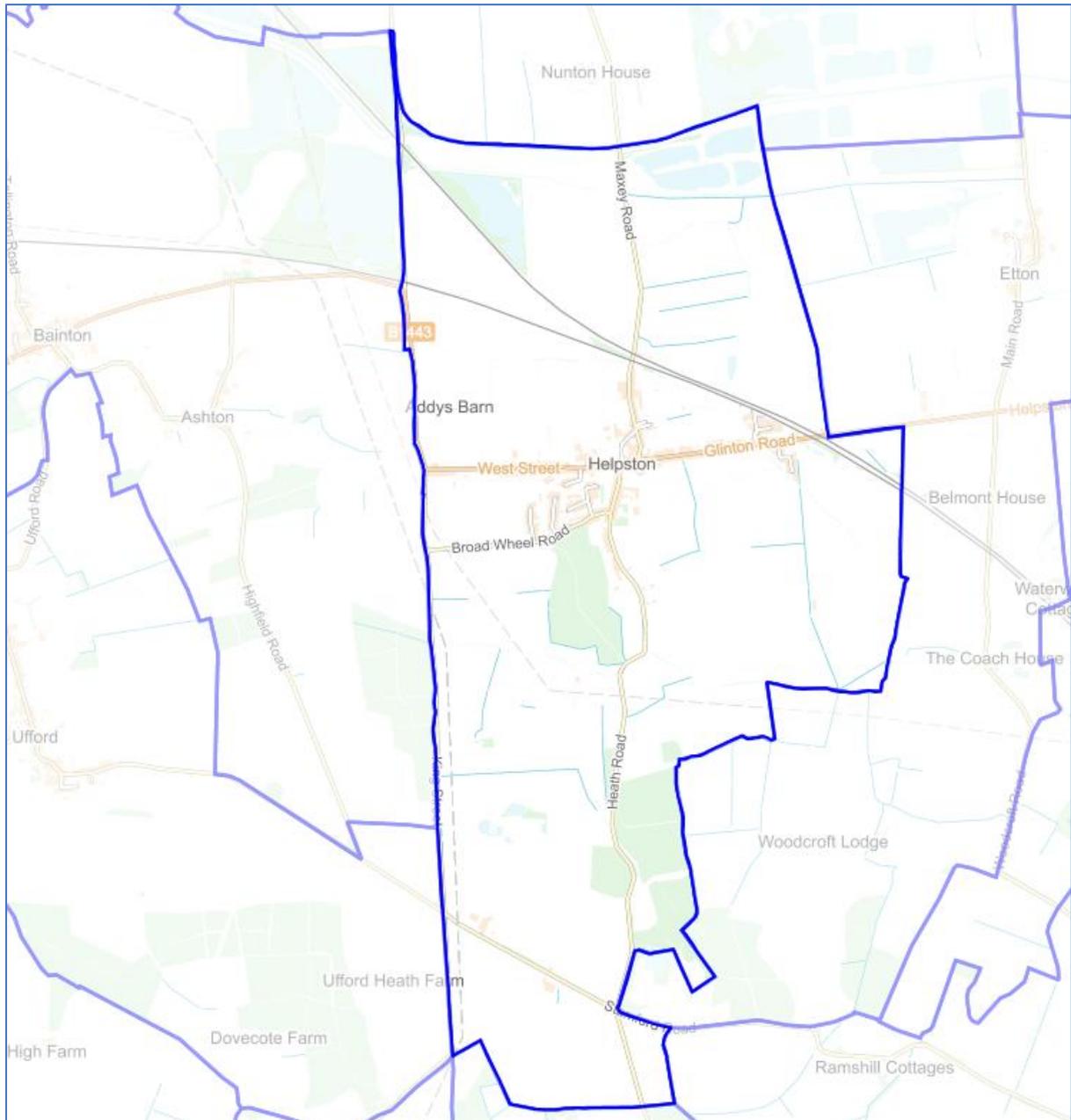
- 1.1 This is the Helpston Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036. The plan covers the Helpston Parish Neighbourhood Area which was formally designated by Peterborough City Council in April 2018 and the boundary of which matches the boundary of Helpston Parish.
- 1.2 This is the version of the plan for submission to Peterborough City Council (the local planning authority) under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Why produce a neighbourhood plan?

- 1.3 Neighbourhood Plans were introduced in the Localism Act (2011) with the intention of giving communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development of their local area. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.
- 1.4 When adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan will have the same status as the Peterborough City Council Local Plan, becoming part of the 'development plan'. Decisions on planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As such this neighbourhood plan will provide an important framework for how Helpston should grow in the coming years.
- 1.5 However, it should be noted that national policy stipulates that neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than is set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic priorities. As such, the Peterborough Local Plan will set a level of growth that will occur within Helpston and the neighbourhood plan cannot prevent that.
- 1.6 What the neighbourhood plan can do is to create a suite of policies that complements existing local, national and strategic planning policy, to provide additional detail and subtlety that reflect the special characteristics of Helpston that cannot reasonably be addressed by higher-level policy. It can also help to secure the infrastructure that is needed to support growth and protect areas, landmarks and services that are most important to the community.

About the Helpston neighbourhood plan

- 1.7 The Helpston Neighbourhood Plan is being produced by Helpston Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for Helpston Parish Council on behalf of the community of Helpston. The boundary of the Helpston Neighbourhood Area, which was formally designated on 3rd April 2018, can be seen on Map 1 below:



Map 1 Helpston Neighbourhood Area

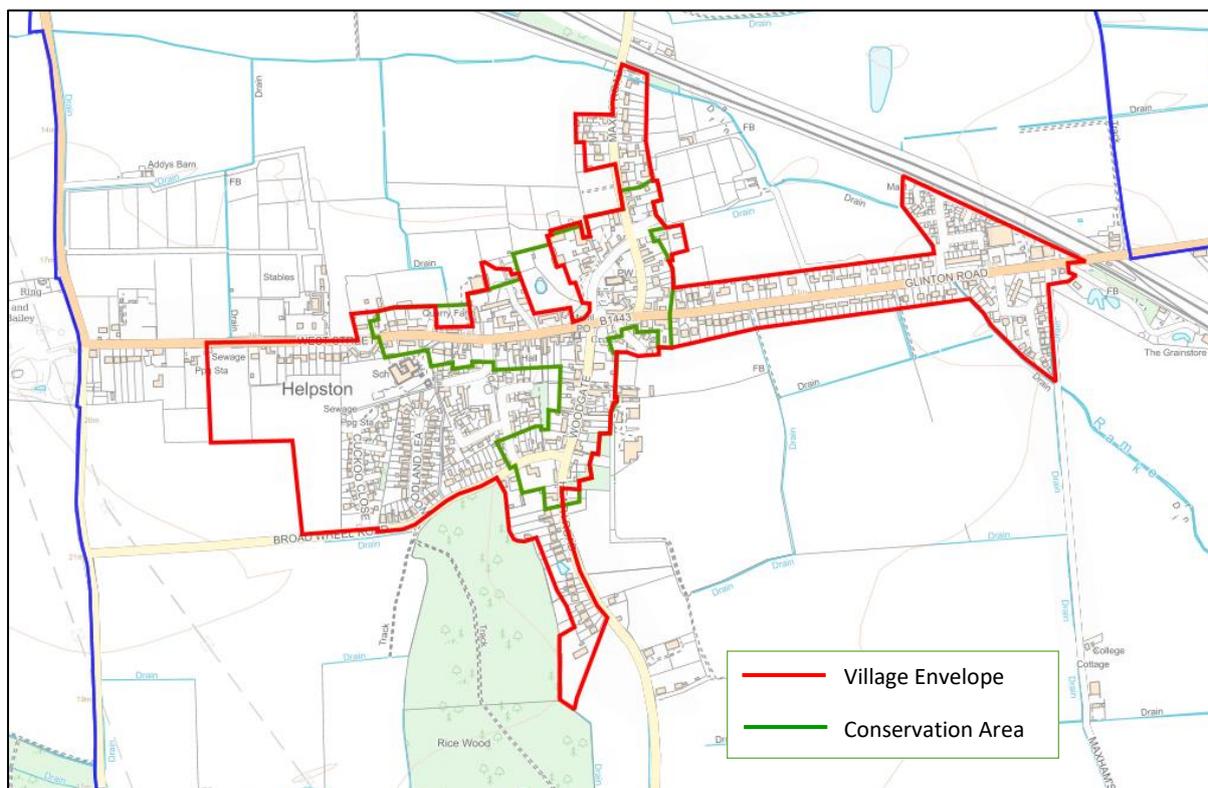
- 1.8 Helpston has undergone rapid growth in the past twenty years with three significant development sites and several smaller ones. The new Peterborough Local Plan includes a further new site for up to 82 houses that is yet to be developed. This plan is intended to ensure that:
- new development fits the village context and delivers an appropriate mix and style of houses
 - development is supported by the necessary facilities and services
 - the important attributes of Helpston that the community holds dear are not lost
 - Helpston’s historical character is retained and strengthened
- 1.9 The Helpston Neighbourhood Plan sets out how Helpston should develop sustainably in the best interest of the village, in the context of the wider Local Plan.
- 1.10 Neighbourhood Plans are restricted to dealing with matters relating to land use and development planning, and therefore many other important non-planning matters cannot be included in the plan. Where the community have raised concerns about non-planning matters during the consultation process, they will be recorded by the Parish Council and other means to tackle the issue will be considered where possible.
- 1.11 Several stages of local consultation were undertaken in the development of this plan, and these are summarised in Appendix 1 – Consultation Statement. The consultation supports the vision and objectives of the plan and also evidences the Policies developed. Residents have been consulted using delivered questionnaires twice during the development of the plan. Regulation 14 consultation was undertaken between July and September 2021.

Policy Context

- 1.12 The following published Planning Policy relating to Helpston was already adopted at the time of submission of the Helpston Neighbourhood Plan:
- National Planning Policy Framework published 27th March 2012, updated 20th July 2021
 - Peterborough Local Plan 2016 to 2036 adopted 24th July 2019
 - The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan adopted by Peterborough City Council on 28th July 2021.
 - Peterborough Design and Development in Selected Villages – supplementary planning document adopted 13th June 2011
 - Peterborough Flood and Water Management Supplementary Planning Document adopted on 25 July 2019
 - Peterborough’s Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document adopted on 25 July 2019
 - Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document adopted on 25 July 2019
- 1.13 In addition, the following appraisals are important references for existing planning policy
- Helpston Conservation Area and Village Appraisal – Report and Management Plan, March 2008

- Helpston Village Design Statement (March 2001) (now superseded by Design and Development in Selected Villages Supplementary Planning Document (2011)), included in Appendix 4

1.14 The extent of the Village Envelope identified in the Peterborough Local Plan and the Conservation Area are shown on Map 2.



Map 2 Village Envelope and Conservation Area

Our local community

1.15 Helpston is an historic, limestone village of circa 1200 people, situated between Peterborough, Stamford, and Market Deeping. There has been a settled community here since Roman times, and the conservation area in the centre of the village includes many attractive pre-18th century dwellings and a medieval church and butter cross. Visitors from all over the world come to John Clare's cottage and explore the landscape and wildlife he celebrated in his poems. The village expanded with the coming of the railway and the development of the local paper mill in the nineteenth century but has retained its rural character, with 3 working farms and thriving livery stables surrounded by arable fields and managed woodlands. Our consultation shows that the community highly values its countryside and strongly supports maintaining and developing the natural environment.

Socio-economic profile

1.16 Helpston is a thriving village which has had a 34% growth in population since the 2001 census. The percentage of residents under 19 yrs. (25.5%) and over 60 yrs. (27.6%), are both above the national average, indicating that provision should be made for those at either end of the age spectrum.

- 1.17 The population has a higher than national percentage of both retired and self-employed people. The 2011 census showed that 8.4% of the working population work from home, and 83% commute by car, bus, or train.
- 1.18 The majority of houses are detached, and recent building development has brought the number of 4+ bedroom houses to 49% of the housing stock. 14.4% of houses have 1 or 2 bedrooms. 82% of houses are owner occupied with only 7.1% available from affordable rented housing providers. (Data from 2011 census). Until recently, the village has grown in an organic manner, with infill buildings between the village centre and the houses built near the railway crossing for employees of the papermill or along Heath Rd. There have been two larger housing developments, at the East and West ends of the village since 2013 and the new Local Plan includes a new development site on land between West Street and Broad Wheel Road (see paragraph 3.10). These more recent developments are less varied in style.



Picture 1: West Street showing the convenience store and village hall

Services

- 1.19 The Local Plan identifies Helpston as a medium village, having a pub, primary school, convenience store and post-office as well as a dental practice, church and village hall (although this building is nearing the end of its life) and scout/guides meeting hall. There is a John Clare centre that is popular with visitors and locals, an office hub, and a small art gallery/framing shop. GP surgeries are located in nearby communities and the local secondary school is in Glinton. The village has a range of community groups and social activities available, including church groups, pre-school, tennis club, indoor bowls club and exercise classes. Livery stables are a base for horse riding groups and several local cycling groups also use Helpston as a base. These, with other social groups provide a foundation for a strong community feeling.

- 1.20 Helpston is connected to all main utility services except for gas. There is fibre-optic broadband connection. Anecdotal feedback from consultation suggests that the sewerage service is at the limit of its capacity.

Transport

- 1.21 There is an hourly bus service from 7am to 6:30 pm to Stamford and Peterborough, on weekdays and Saturdays, and a volunteer driver service to the GP surgeries. The village lies next to some of the busiest railway crossings in the country, at the conjunction of the East Coast mainline and Stamford/Leicester branch line. This results in waves of traffic travelling through the village and queues along Ginton and Maxey Roads. There has been a significant increase in through-traffic in recent years from motorists avoiding busier major roads. This including farm traffic and goods vehicles causes problems for pedestrians, parking, and access to properties. Although there is an active community speedwatch team, traffic issues remain a major concern for residents. The village is a popular route for local cyclists, and there is a network of pathways in the village centre, leading to the roads around the village. There is a designated cycle path between Helpston and Ginton, used by pupils at the secondary school, but otherwise pushchairs or mobility scooters are restricted by narrow, unlinked pavements, and access to the footpaths and bridleways in the surrounding countryside is along busy roads.



Picture 2: St Botolph's Church

2 Vision and Objectives

Vision

2.1 The vision for the Helpston Neighbourhood Plan is:

Helpston will remain a distinctive and historic limestone village within an attractive rural landscape and will maintain the key local physical, environmental, and cultural attributes observed by poet and former resident John Clare. Helpston will retain its separation and distinction from other settlements and will provide services and facilities that will support an inclusive and vibrant community for the benefit of both the present and future population.

Objectives

2.2 There are four Policy Focus areas identified in section 3 as follows:

A - Built Environment

B - Natural Environment

C - Community Amenity

D - Local Economy

The objectives of the Helpston Neighbourhood Plan with alignment to Policies A/B/C/D are:

Objectives	A	B	C	D
1) To manage development in Helpston to ensure it is sustainable for Helpston's context, delivering a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures with high quality design that does not detract from the historic centre of the village.	✓			
2) To preserve the rural setting of the village, retaining separation from neighbouring communities and ensuring that access to the countryside and important rural views and open areas are maintained.	✓	✓	✓	
3) Retain the existing village nucleus and minimise ribbon development outwards from the centre or outside the village envelope.	✓			
4) To maintain, and wherever possible to enhance, key community infrastructure and services, including but not limited to the village school and nursery, John Clare Cottage, shop/post office, pub, farm shop, village hall, church, scout hall, play and sports facilities.			✓	✓
5) To ensure local farmers and other employers are successful and wish to remain in Helpston.				✓
6) To continue to welcome day visitors to the village and encourage improvement of facilities to provide for them.			✓	✓
7) To protect local wildlife and habitats, improve biodiversity in the parish with emphasis on local nature reserves, including those managed by the Langdyke Trust.		✓		
8) To ensure that people can move safely and without hindrance throughout Helpston and to neighbouring areas.			✓	
9) To ensure new development does not cause the capacity of infrastructure to be exceeded, including, but not limited to, transport, water and drainage.			✓	
10) To encourage new development with designs that are ecologically and environmentally friendly, incorporating new technologies and materials that minimise or eliminate any contribution to climate change.	✓			
11) To ensure development does not reduce the safety of the railway level crossings and where possible improves it.			✓	

3 Policies

Focus A: Built Environment

Context

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework states “To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby” (MHCLG, Feb 2019, para. 78).
- 3.2 Historically, building development in Helpston has not followed a unified pattern or design. There is a mixture of domestic dwellings that include single storey rented accommodation through to multi-story private accommodation, alms houses, former railway buildings, and converted former public houses. The style of housing and the choice of materials, in most cases, has not had an adverse visual impact on the street scene and has generally provided an attractive alternative to what has gone before. Only within the conservation area is there some homogeneity of architectural style with the use of natural stone predominating.
- 3.3 In more recent times individual plots have been developed piecemeal with little thought given to maintaining visual integrity of the whole village. Brownfield sites, infill and windfall sites used for development have consolidated the built environment to the point where the rural aspect of the village is threatened. Only the conservation heart of the village consistently retains its character. Houses with large gardens have been extended so that views of the open countryside between them are now obscured. The availability of disused farmyards and small plots have led to some developments being built in a courtyard style with minimal garden space, typically with large stone or brick faced houses maximising the use of the available land. Apart from a few exceptions this contrasts with the majority of older dwellings that have larger gardens. It is likely that opportunities for infill development will continue to be sought although suitable sites are diminishing.
- 3.4 The larger modern developments established at Temples Court/Crossberry Way, Towgood Close, Cuckoo Close and Millfield Close have had a more significant impact on the visual appearance of the village with uniform architectural styles dominating, with the notable exception of the Temples Court/Crossberry Way development where more variety in styles can be seen including the use of stone.
- 3.5 Policy and context relating to the character and appearance of Helpston has already been developed in the Helpston Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) and Design and Development in Selected Villages SPD (2011): the Neighbourhood Plan supports these documents in their application to future development via policy A1.
- 3.6 Helpston is not served by the national gas distribution network, therefore much of the heating needs of the village are currently met by oil or liquid gas delivered by road. This leads to additional pollution and carbon dioxide generation over and above areas supplied with gas. Residents have indicated support through consultation for more sustainable development and reduced carbon emissions both from the construction and on-going energy use of new buildings. With the move to electric cars, new diesel and petrol cars being phased out by 2030 under current Government proposals, it is also important that new developments provide charging points for electric vehicles.



Picture 3: The old school, Ginton Road, as part of the street scene it provides an example of the building materials used that are prominent in older dwellings and those of modern interpretations within the centre of the village.



Picture 4: Woodgate. Woodgate has an abundance of traditionally built dwellings within the conservation area with historic connections to John Clare and his cottage, The Blue Bell public house and the Old Rectory.



Picture 5: Temples Court (part of the Twickenham development), spacing and the juxtaposition of different facades and roof level of dwellings coupled with open spaces are characteristic of this well-planned development.



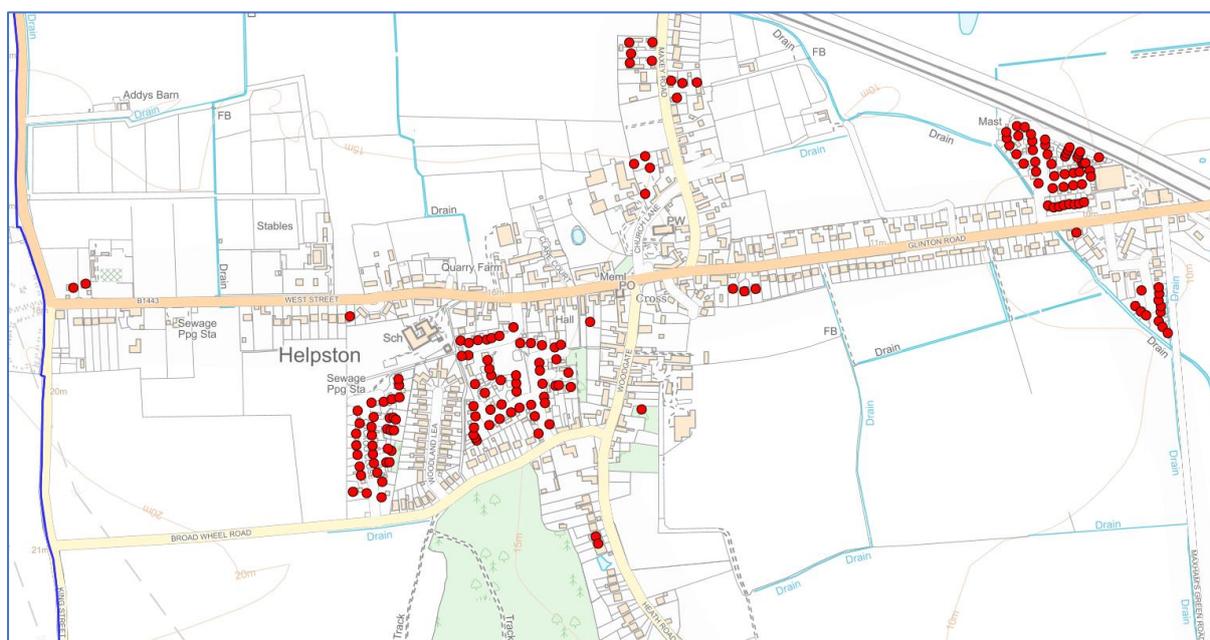
Picture 6: Maxey Road development of five architect designed houses using traditional materials.



Picture 7: Eastwell Court, another small development demonstrating use of traditional materials.

Village growth

- 3.7 There are currently (December 2020) an estimated 510 houses in Helpston. 1.8% are one bedroom, 12.1% are two bedroom, 38.7% are 3 bedroom 34.6% are 4 bedroom and 12.7% are 5 bedroom dwellings. The average no of bedrooms in Helpston is 3.8 (ONC 2017 indicates a national average of 2.7). The current mix of residential buildings is already biased to larger houses, there are very few smaller dwellings, and even fewer of these are available to meet the need for affordable or social housing.
- 3.8 Since the year 2000, 120 dwellings have been built this represents a 34.5% increase. If the nominal 82 houses designated for LP41.5 are included the increase will be 58.2%. If the Crossberry Way / Temples Court development of 43 dwellings is added (as this was completed shortly before the year 2000) the increase in the number of dwellings is 70% (The number of new dwellings built before the Crossberry Way / Temples Court development was circa 347). Map 3 shows the location of new houses constructed in the last 25 years (since 1996).



Map 3 New Houses constructed in Helpston over the last 25 years (since 1996)

- 3.9 This pattern of growth in the village reveals how disproportionate the recent increases are within the context of a village initially of 'limited growth status' and within the new Local Plan hierarchy a 'medium village'. The Village Envelope has been extended successively since 2000 to facilitate the actual and projected growth of the village.
- 3.10 At the first stage of the current Peterborough Local Plan landowners were asked to submit land for inclusion for consideration for development. The final site included in the Local plan for Helpston, LP41.5 (see Map 4), is an amalgam of two sites offered in the village with the rest being rejected. In total seven sites were offered for inclusion and those not included in the Local Plan can be considered as dormant although consultation with landowners indicate that their interest in realising the potential of these sites has not ceased. However, there is no immediate intent indicated to pursue applications for development of these sites under the current Local Plan and this Helpston Neighbourhood Plan has no intention to allocate any further sites for development in addition to LP41.5.

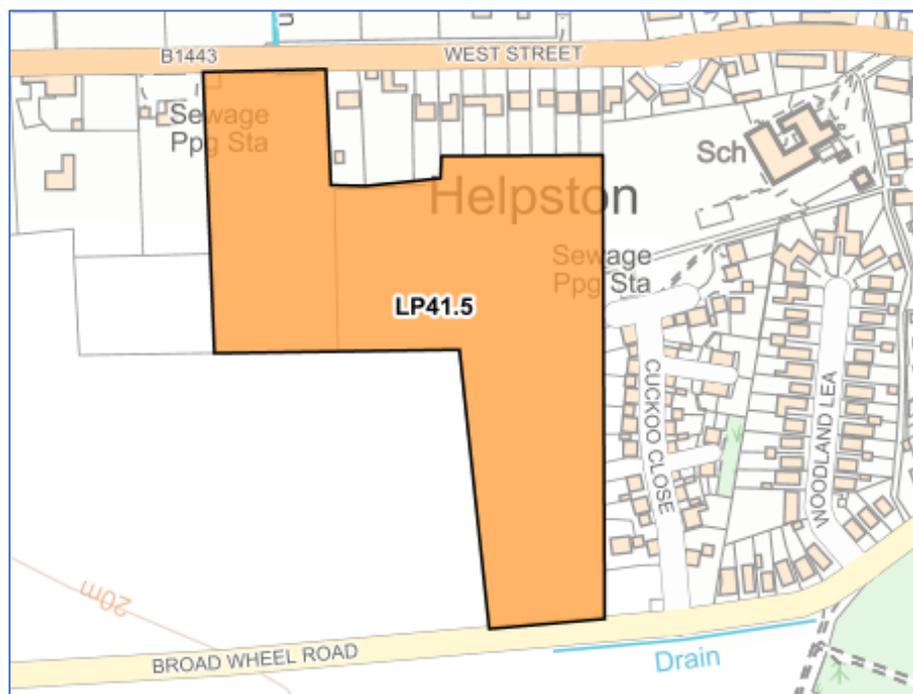
- 3.11 With regard to development site LP41.5 this Neighbourhood Plan fully supports policy LP42 of the Local Plan which is repeated below for clarity:

Policy LP42: Land Between West Street and Broad Wheel Road' Helpston

Any application for the site at Broad Wheel Road, Helpston (Site LP41.5) shall comprise amongst other matters, a comprehensive masterplan for the whole site. In developing the masterplan there should be a high level of engagement with appropriate stakeholders including the local community.

The masterplan, together with other material submitted with a planning application should demonstrate achieving the following key principles:

- *A residential led scheme incorporating on site open space provision and a suitable buffer to the adjacent open countryside that respects the surrounding context;*
- *Ensure the provision of satisfactory education facilities. If the need for additional provision is identified, the presumption is that land within the site will be utilised to allow the expansion of the existing school, unless there is convincing evidence that an alternative solution provides greater benefits;*
- *The Transport Assessment should demonstrate that the quantity of homes proposed is deliverable taking account of; safe and suitable access to the site; and any necessary improvements to the transport network. It is anticipated that the scale will be up to 82 dwellings, but potentially less following the outcome of the transport assessment.*



Map 4 Development Site LP41.5

Development in the Countryside

- 3.12 In line with national advice, Local Plan Policy LP2 makes it clear that land outside the village envelopes is defined as countryside, where development is to be restricted to four categories. These include that which is essential to agriculture and outdoor recreation etc; minerals and waste development; housing which satisfies the "Rural Exceptions" conditions

set out in Policy LP8; and other development which is dealt with in Policy LP11 (including the conversion of rural buildings to housing, the replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside, mobile homes and dwellings for agricultural workers and other enterprises where a countryside location is essential). In addition, Policy LP11 accepts the principle of development which would support the rural economy. This Neighbourhood Plan need not duplicate these Local Plan policies, although the opportunity is taken to add some specific local detail.

Policy A: Built Environment

A1 Policy Context

In addition to complying with the policies of this neighbourhood plan, regard should be had to the detailed guidance contained in the Helpston Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (adopted by PCC in 2008 as approved planning guidance) and Design and Development in Selected Villages SPD (adopted by PCC 2011: this SPD supersedes the Helpston Village Design Statement (2001)), or any subsequent superseding guidance of a similar nature.

A2 Meeting Housing Needs

- a) New housing development within the village envelope will be supported in principle, subject to other relevant policies of this Plan being satisfied. In accordance with Peterborough Local Plan Policy LP2, land outside the village envelope will be treated as countryside, where the only development which will be permitted is that which satisfies Local Plan Policies LP2, LP8 and LP11. In addition, the development of community amenities such as those set out in Policy C10 of this Plan will be supported in principle.
- b) Development proposals for 2 or more new dwellings (whether through new build or conversion) should provide a range of dwelling sizes in terms of number of bedrooms. Where a development proposal consists of 5 or more dwellings, a minimum of 20% of the dwellings should be of 1 or 2 bedrooms.
- c) New affordable housing must include a greater proportion of properties to be made available for rent than made available for sale in accordance with Local Plan policy LP8.
- d) For the Local Plan development site LP41.5; requirements of Local Plan policy LP42 must be adhered to. A masterplan for the whole site is required with any application for development.

A3 Tandem and Back-land Development

- a) Tandem developments will not be supported where they have the potential for loss of amenity of neighbouring properties.
- b) Tandem developments will not be supported where they affect the street scene resulting in a 'terracing' effect.
- c) Any back land or tandem development must have a direct highway frontage or direct highway access.

Policy A: Built Environment continued

A4 External Building Materials

- a) Helpston is considered to be a 'limestone village'. The use of appropriate building materials in the village is crucial in encouraging high quality design. Applications for new builds and extensions will only be granted if the proposed building materials are complementary and sympathetic to the existing building (if applicable) and neighbouring buildings and will form satisfactory visual relationships within the settlement.
- b) In considering the requirements of Policy A4(a), and where the size of the development makes it appropriate, steps should be taken to avoid any one architectural style (including the use of materials) dominating the street scene.

A5 Development within the Conservation area

Any new buildings, alteration or extensions should be traditional in form, embodying materials, colours and general design features identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal (2008) and Helpston Village Design Statement (2001).

A6 Sustainability and Climate Change

- a) All proposals will demonstrate the opportunities taken to use sustainable materials and reuse existing resources: in instances where such opportunities cannot be demonstrated, the applicant should provide a statement setting out the opportunities considered and the reasons why these cannot be utilised.
- b) All applications for housing development must use renewable or low carbon energy as a significant source of heating the dwellings, for example through the use of biomass, heat recovery, solar or heat pumps systems. Affordable housing should achieve this requirement where possible: exemption for affordable homes may be permitted where achievement of this requirement would render the development financially unviable. In such circumstances, the applicant would have to provide sufficient financial analysis to demonstrate the impact on viability.

Non - Designated Heritage Assets

- 3.13 There are a number of buildings and other assets in Helpston which do not satisfy the criteria for listing at a national level but are of importance locally. Some of these buildings are also included on Peterborough City Council Local List of Heritage Assets or, if not, application has been made to include in the revision of the Local List. (<https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/planning-and-development/conservation-trees-and-hedges/local-list>). Listed buildings have not been included in this designation as they have a higher order of protection already. The locations of Non - Designated Heritage Assets are shown on Map 5. Information and evidence for designation of these locally important assets is available in Appendix 3 Non-Designated Heritage Assets on Helpston's Local List.



Map 5 Location of Non – Designated Heritage Assets

Policy A: Built Environment continued

A7 Non-designated Heritage Assets

The following are considered non-designated heritage assets and are included in the local list:

- Railway signal and level crossing box, Helpston Road
- Former Station Masters House, 97 Ginton Road
- Old School, 7 Ginton Road
- John Clare's gravestone St Botolph's Church
- Privy at Royal Oak Cottage, 18 Woodgate
- James Bradford Alms-houses, 1 – 6 West St
- Boundary Stone, ditch north of Torpel Manor field
- Gibbet stone, entrance to Manor Farm
- Brick walls to Cemetery, Maxey Road
- Remnant of enclosure wall, 16 Broadwheel Road
- Old School House, 7 Ginton Road
- Annakinn Art Gallery, West Street

A8 Development affecting Heritage Assets

Development proposals requiring planning permission that have the potential to affect the significance of Heritage Assets, including the contribution made by its appearance and setting, should be accompanied by a Heritage Statement as required by policy LP19 of the Local Plan.

Proposals that would enhance or better reveal the significance of Heritage Assets will be supported. Proposals that would harm the significance of a Heritage Asset directly, or through development in its setting, must be clearly justified in the Heritage Statement.

Focus B: Natural Environment

Enhancing the natural environment

- 3.14 As the birthplace of the poet, John Clare, Helpston has a special affinity with the natural environment. Clare wrote about the changes to the landscape that he experienced in the early 19th century and is seen as one of the foremost English writers of natural history. We in the 21st century share Clare's passion as we too face change and challenge to our environment.

Policy Context

- 3.15 The various documents listed below set the context in which the policies of this focus of the Helpston Neighbourhood Plan have been proposed.
- National Planning Policy Framework
 - The Making Space for Nature (Lawton) Report of 2010 (established the principle of creating 'more, better, bigger and more joined up places for nature')
 - The Government's 2018 25-year plan for the Environment (states that "We want to improve the UK's air and water quality and protect our many threatened plants, trees and wildlife species")
 - The proposed Environment Act 2019 sets out ambitions to "create or restore wildlife rich habitats to enable wildlife to recover and thrive" and sets a minimum biodiversity net gain target of 10% for new developments.
 - The 2019 United Nations report on biodiversity indicates that a million species are threatened with worldwide extinction. 15% of the UK's native species, including over one in four mammals, were regarded in 2019 as being at risk of extinction and the overall abundance of wildlife in this country had fallen by 13% since the 1970s (RSPB et al. 2019. State of Nature).
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Section 40 requires local planning authorities to have regard to the conservation of these priority habitats and species.
 - Doubling Nature July 2019 Natural Cambridgeshire, the local nature partnership for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire launched an ambition to double the area of wildlife rich habitats managed for nature across its area and endorsed by the Combined Authority for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.
 - Developing with Nature toolkit - Natural Cambridgeshire has also published a toolkit, referred to in Peterborough's Local Plan, which sets out ways in which development can enhance biodiversity.
 - John Clare Countryside Vision - In September 2019 the Langdyke Countryside Trust launched a vision to create 'an ambitious and accessible nature recovery area across the landscape areas west of Peterborough.' PCC unanimously adopted a motion in support of the JCCV on 29/7/20.
 - Peterborough Local Plan 2016 to 2036 adopted 24th July 2019, section 6.23/ Policy LP28 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and section 6.24 / Policy LP29 Trees and Woodland.

Wildlife Habitats and Species

- 3.16 Much of the farmland in the Neighbourhood Plan Area is open cultivated arable fields that are intensively farmed with limited biodiversity. However, there are extensive wildlife corridors along road verges, field edges and hedgerows and within areas of the villages such

as the School, Churchyard, Cemetery, undeveloped areas, some extensive private gardens and the uncultivated fields.

- 3.17 Rice/Royce Wood to the south of the village is ancient woodland that was felled and replanted in the 1960s. The wood contains important areas of oak, as well as less common species such as Wild Service Tree and significant areas of English Elm. It is home to several key butterfly species including white admiral, white letter hairstreak and silver-wash fritillary as well as important woodland fungi and flowers.
- 3.18 Further south of the parish the land rises gently and contains further areas of ancient woodland on the east side of Heath Road, Oxey Wood (which is well known for its bluebells) and Swaddywell Pit, a local nature reserve and regionally important geological site owned and managed by the Langdyke Countryside Trust. The reserve provides significant habitat for wildlife particularly invertebrate species with several nationally scarce species of moth and fly, and populations of scarce butterflies such as grizzled and dingy skipper. The pit also includes important populations of scarce flowers such as Pyramidal and bee orchid, and autumn ladies' tresses.
- 3.19 Additional wildlife sites are provided by the network of roadside verges within the parish, which provide habitat for several key plant species and some of the verges are recognised as county wildlife sites. On its southern boundary the parish borders on to Castor Hanglands National Nature Reserve, a site of special scientific interest.
- 3.20 To the northeast, the land is flat and largely open, arable farmland with occasional hedgerows and isolated trees. The Maxey Cut runs along the parish's northern boundary providing an important wildlife corridor and habitat for otters, kingfisher, grey heron, and little egret. It and the South Drain also contain notably large colonies of glow-worm. The recently excavated pits between the Cut and Drain are equally important for wildlife. Further extraction is planned within the parish over the next 10-15 years, creating a further series of ponds, meadows, and woods in the northeast of the parish.
- 3.21 To the northwest is a much older extraction pit, part of Bainton Pits, sometimes known locally as Franks' Pit. This also contains wetlands habitats and some deciduous tree at its margins.
- 3.22 The whole wetland area is increasingly important for nature as it hosts significant numbers of key species of bird, mammal and insect and particularly important species including Biodiversity Action Plan species; glow worm, four spotted moth, otter, turtle dove and cuckoo.
- 3.23 The village centre has important wildlife habitats through its networks of gardens and older buildings and outhouses providing homes for swifts, house martins and bats. Hedgehogs and the great crested newt are also known to be present in and around the village.

Wildlife Sites and Corridors

- 3.24 Swaddywell Pit is the only site within the parish that is managed as a nature reserve. It is a particularly significant site given its close associations with John Clare and its status of one of the first nature reserves in the country. However, the parish benefits from designated ancient woodlands and county wildlife sites at Rice/Royce Wood and Oxey Wood. Franks' Pit in the northwest is also a county wildlife site along with the railway lands along the east

coast mainline from Maxey Road eastwards. For the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan the following are designated as Local Sites (shown on Map 6):

- Swaddywell Pit Nature Reserve (County Wildlife Site)
- Oxey Wood (County Wildlife Site)
- Royce/ Rice Wood (County Wildlife Site)
- Franks' Pit -part of Bainton Pits (County Wildlife Site)
- Marholm Crossing and Brook Drain (County Wildlife Site)
- The verges outside of the Village Envelope of Heath Road, Kings Street, Stamford Road and Castor Road (County Wildlife Site)

- 3.25 Torpel Manor Field, managed by the Langdyke Trust, borders on the western edge of the village, but is located in Bainton Parish. Other wildlife sites bordering the parish are designated ancient woodland at Hilly Wood and Simon's Wood, and the Castor Hanglands National Nature Reserve in the south. During consultation non-designated gravel pits east of Maxey Road between the Maxey Cut and South Drain and additional verges outside of the Village Envelope of Heath Road, Kings Street, and Broad Wheel Road were identified as being important for wildlife (shown on Map 6). These are important in relation to the creation of wildlife corridors within the parish.
- 3.26 During consultation many residents expressed a concern about the protection of notable trees in the parish, particularly those located within the Village Envelope. While this Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any specific policy on trees it strongly supports implementation of Local Plan Policy LP29: Trees and Woodland.

Policy B: Natural Environment

B1 Local Sites

For the application of Local Plan policy LP28; Local Sites shall include, as a minimum, the designated sites listed in paragraph 3.24 of this Neighbourhood Plan and shown on Map 6 Locally important wildlife sites.

B2 Adverse Impacts and Mitigation

All new development should take account of Natural Cambridgeshire's Doubling Nature ambition and the overall vision of the John Clare Countryside project, demonstrating how they can support the delivery of these ambitions.

In line with Local Plan policy LP28 (criteria 3), adverse impact on existing biodiversity and geodiversity features must be avoided as the first principle. Where avoidance cannot be achieved, the applicant must demonstrate that all reasonable alternatives to the proposal have been carefully considered. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, they must be adequately and proportionately mitigated. If full mitigation cannot be provided, compensation will be required as a last resort where there is no alternative.

B3 *Net Biodiversity Gain*

In accordance with Local Plan Policy LP28(2), all development proposals should deliver a net gain in biodiversity by creating, restoring and enhancing habitats for the benefit of species. Pending the implementation of mandatory provisions, proposals should aim to deliver a minimum of 10% net gain, as demonstrated through a suitable biodiversity metric as approved by the local planning authority. The infrastructure work required to achieve net biodiversity gain should be the subject of an implementation and management plan to be agreed with the local planning authority. In the first instance, the gain should be delivered on-site. Where this is not achievable, one or more of the off-site locations shown on Map 6 will be preferred, the details and timing of such provision to be included in the implementation and management plan. Net biodiversity gains could be achieved by, for example:

- creating wild-flower strips and meadows;
- use of green roofs or walls within the architectural design of the property;
- creation of properly angled and sized banking for invertebrates
- the planting of local species of tree and hedgerow;
- the creation of small, safe, ponds.

B4 *Landscaping*

New development sites should provide landscaping schemes that will maximise opportunities to create new or extend existing habitats and for wildlife corridors by using berry-rich shrubs, wildflower borders or coppices as exemplified in Natural Cambridgeshire's Developing with Nature toolkit.



Picture 8 typical Helpston countryside view

Focus C: Community Amenity

Village Amenities

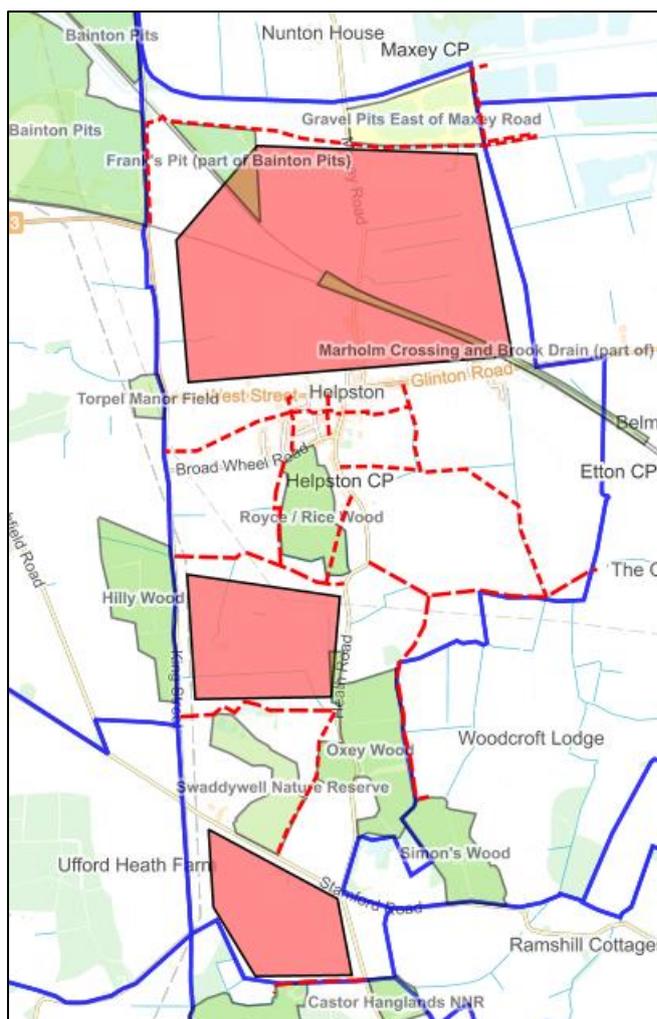
- 3.27 The strong community feel of Helpston is supported by its amenities, be those physical buildings, cultural assets or open spaces. All these are valued by the community and there is a desire that they be maintained and where possible enhanced.
- 3.28 Helpston, however, does lack in certain amenities compared to neighbouring villages including a GP surgery, play facilities and recreation areas. Peterborough City Council has recognised the need for new play facilities in Helpston as part of its core strategy and at the time of writing was the only high priority need in the council area.
- 3.29 The Local plan already provides a level of protection to community facilities and green space, however the Neighbourhood Plan, can enhance this protection by identifying specific needs and sites within the village deserving of additional protection where supported by the community.

Views to open countryside

- 3.30 One of the key characteristics of Helpston is its rural aspect with easy access to the countryside both visually and through its network of public and permissive rights of way. During consultation three views outwards from the village were identified as being special to the local community and worthy of protection from development, these views are shown on Map 7.
- 3.31 As Helpston has developed, gaps to open countryside from built-up frontages have become increasingly restricted such that on some streets it is not possible to appreciate the immediately surrounding landscape. Where existing gaps to the countryside exist, it is important that these remain in place and are not altered to further restrict views to open countryside in the future.



Map 7 Views to open countryside and Gaps in frontages to be protected



Map 8 Public footpaths and bridleways showing areas with missing links (shaded light red areas)

Public rights of way

3.32 Helpston has a network of public rights of way (footpaths and bridleways) that are generally well used by residents, walking groups also visit from wider areas attracted by local facilities and John Clare heritage. There are, however, some 'missing links' on the North-South axis forcing pedestrians and horse riders along highways. This is illustrated on Map 8.

Local Green Space

3.33 Helpston contains a number of open spaces which have local importance for a number of reasons, including their role for recreation, maintaining the setting of a view or landmark, historical importance for the village, or for its richness in wildlife. Whilst all of these open spaces perform some function and are special to the local community, only some are suitable for designation as a Local Green Space. National Policy defines that the designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for

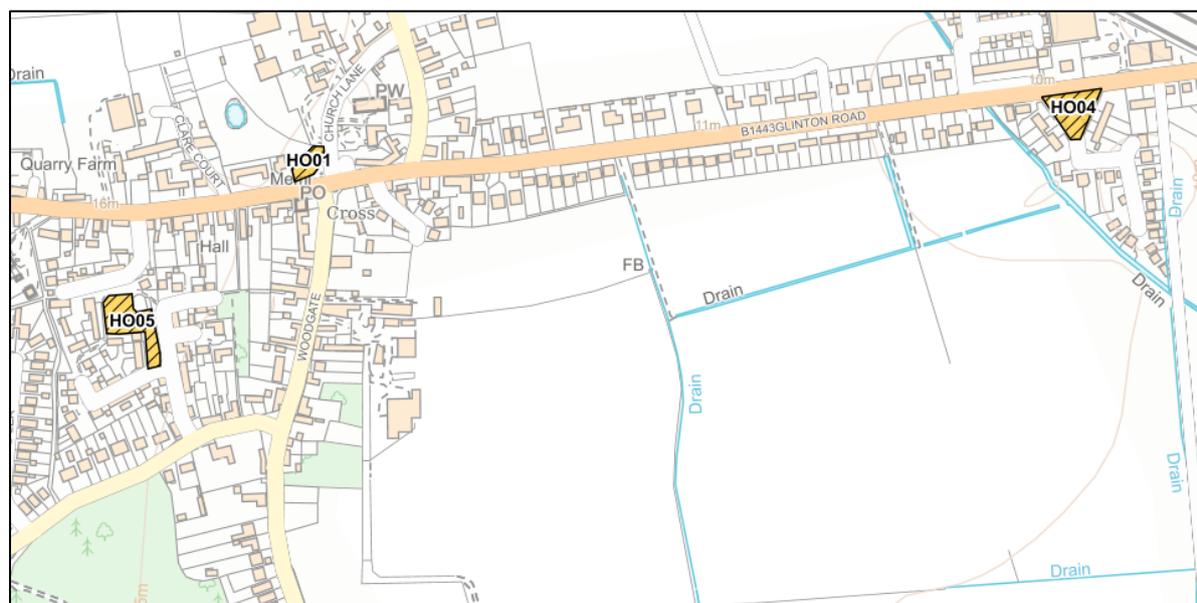
example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;

- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- where the green space is capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period

3.34 Helpston Local Green Space Designations (October 2020) included in Appendix 2 assessed several potential sites against these conditions and concludes that 3 areas are suitable for designation as a Local Green Space and will be protected in accordance with national policy in the NPPF and summarised in the table below. Development proposals on these local green spaces will not normally be permitted except where they are to enhance the function of the space.

3.35 The table below summarises the evidence for the sites chosen for Green Space Designation from Appendix 2. The locations of these sites are shown on Map 9.

Description	Close Proximity to Community	Local in character	Demonstrably special to local community	Consistent with local plan and capable of enduring beyond plan period
Land behind the Village Green (HO01)	Adjacent to village green.	Small, existing open space.	Contains mature trees at centre of village.	Outside village envelope.
Arborfield Close entrance (HO04)	Within existing development.	Small, existing open space with public access.	Open area and small trees within built up area.	Existing open space within a development.
Crossberry Way and Temples Court (HO05)	Within existing development.	Small, existing open space with public access.	Open area and small trees within built up area.	Existing open space within a development.



Map 9 Helpston Local Green Space



Picture 9: Local Green Space. Village Green H001(Top). Temples Court H005 (Bottom Left). Arborfield Close H004 (Bottom Right).

Community Facilities

- 3.36 Helpston has a good range of services and facilities and the additional planned growth will help a number of these services to thrive but will also have the potential to put a strain on this infrastructure. These services are important to retain and, where necessary, expand to help ensure that the community is well served.
- 3.37 The lack of parking for facilities is a recognised problem in the village with Woodgate often restricted to one way traffic flow due to visitors parking on the road (John Clare Cottage and the Bluebell pub being located on this road).
- 3.38 The local Village Hall is also recognised to be at the end of its useful life having been constructed as a prefab in 1916. Proposals to replace and/or relocate the hall are widely supported by the community.
- 3.39 The local John Clare Primary School is an important asset for the village, but it is understood to be limited by capacity in certain school years; with the further growth identified for the village it is likely that the need for primary school places by residents of the village will not be met by the current school. It is recognised that the school may need to expand or relocate to enable larger premises to be constructed in the future.
- 3.40 The school is also the location for the only substantial play area in the village which restricts access during school hours for those of pre-school age. The need for a new LEAP for pre-school children (Local Equipped Area for Play) is recognised and supported by local

residents. In addition, children at the eastern end of the village have no local play areas and must travel to the school to access facilities.

3.41 The following are identified as Facilities of Community Value in Helpston:

- The convenience store and post office
- The Bluebell public house
- John Clare cottage and visitor centre
- Village Hall
- Scout Hut
- St. Botolph's Church
- St. Botolph's Barn
- Tennis Club
- John Clare school and pre-school, with shared playing field
- Annakinn gallery

Permissible Amenity development outside of the Village Envelope

3.42 As already highlighted, there is very limited space within the current Local Plan Village Envelope for further development to take place. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore recognises that if new amenities are to be built, or existing ones improved sites may need to be made available outside the Village Envelope. For specific amenities, identified during consultation, support for development outside the Village Envelope is given.



Picture 10: John Clare Cottage

Policy C: Community Amenity

C1 *Views to Open Countryside and Gaps in an otherwise built-up frontage*

The defined views to open countryside are to be maintained as shown Map 7. Gaps in built up frontages allowing key views in and out of the village shall be protected from in-fill as shown on Map 7. Developments will not be permitted which would significantly restrict these views to open countryside or restrict views out of the village from these gaps.

C2 *Public Rights of Way*

Planning Applications that weaken the footpath and bridleway network around the parish will not be supported. Planning applications that enhance the network, particularly to create north-south linear routes (as indicated on Map 8) that link the village to the key areas for nature at Swaddywell Pit and the wetland areas along the South Drain are supported.

C3 *Local Green Space*

The following locations, detailed in paragraph 3.35, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- A Land behind the Village Green (HO01)
- B Arborfield Close entrance (HO04)
- C Crossberry Way and Temples Court (HO05)

Development proposals on a Local Green Space will not be permitted except where the proposal meets the 'very special circumstances' set out in national policy for the protection of Green Belt land.

C4 *Community Facilities and Parking for Existing Amenities*

- a) Planning applications that enhance existing community facilities or provide new community facilities are supported in principle.
- b) Reasonable new parking provision for existing amenities in is also supported where this is in accordance with other policies within this plan.

C5 *New Village Hall*

Development for a new village hall is supported provided the applicant can demonstrate, through a proportionate consultation exercise, that there is community support for the development and that neighbouring residents have been consulted and any planning concerns raised have be mitigated to the satisfaction of Peterborough City Council.

C6 *Educational and Medical Facilities*

The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals to maintain and enhance educational facilities and new medical facilities for the local community at existing or new sites. Developments that enhance these facilities will be supported where they are in accordance with other policies within this plan.

C7 *New Play Facilities*

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the provision of new Play Facilities within new developments or elsewhere. The need for a LEAP for use during school hours is recognised and supported.

C8 *Existing Play Facilities and Recreation Areas*

Development on the site of existing Play facilities or recreation areas within the village envelope is not supported unless alternative provision is provided that is:

- Of at least the same quality as that which it is replacing; and
- As accessible by foot and bicycle as the existing facility/ area; and
- Completed prior to the loss of the existing facility.

Policy C: Community Amenity continued

C9 Facilities of Community Value

Proposals to change the use of Facilities of Community Value (as identified at para 3.41 above) will not be permitted unless the facility is being replaced elsewhere in the village or it is demonstrated, following community consultation, that the facility is no longer required.

C10 Community Infrastructure outside the Village Envelope

The Neighbourhood Plan supports development outside, but adjacent, to the Village Envelope for the following amenities:

- New Village Hall
- Extension or relocation of John Clare primary school
- Recreation and/or play facilities for the local community
- Public medical facilities serving the local community.

Any such development outside the village envelope will only be permitted if it is connected to the village's footpath network via a suitable footpath: should the development site not be accessible via an existing footpath, or the existing footpath not be of sufficient width for wheelchair and pushchair users, provision of a new or improved footpath will be required by planning condition.

Transport and Infrastructure

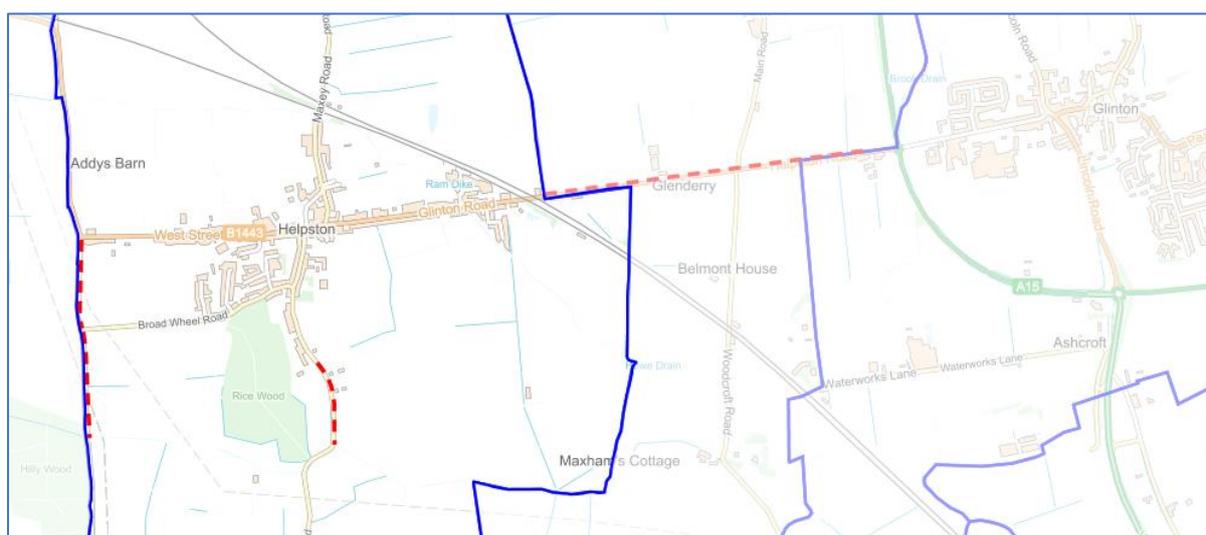
- 3.43 During consultation, one of the major areas of concern for villagers was identified as the capacity of local infrastructure to cope with further development. Particular areas of concern are the level of traffic (in particular through traffic in peak hours), the capacity of the level crossings and the capacity of the sewerage and surface water drainage systems. In addition, there was resulting safety concerns for users of the level crossings and for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians using village highways.
- 3.44 Evidence from Network Rail shows the railway crossings are shut for up to 40 minutes in every hour during the day which often causes significant tail backs through the village. Speeding in excess of the 30 and 20mph limits in the village is also a major issue and an active Speedwatch Group undertakes regular sessions to raise driver's awareness of speed limits.
- 3.45 Whilst a Neighbourhood Plan cannot influence highways projects or strategy it can try to limit the impact of development on traffic growth and other infrastructure which may not be readily improved such as the railway crossings. To this end the Neighbourhood Plan undertook a survey of traffic flows through the village during March to July 2020, and updated this following the pandemic during September to November 2021 to establish a baseline against which to measure the impact of future growth, this is included in Appendix 5.
- 3.46 A summary of results from the survey for Sep-Nov 2021 is presented below:

	Maxey Road	Heath Road	Glington Road	West Street
Daily Vehicle Count (both directions)	556	943	2396	1824
Peak Hourly Traffic (both directions)	107	136	265	185



Picture 11: Traffic over the level crossing on Ginton Road

3.47 Secondary school and GP facilities servicing Helpston are located in the nearby village of Ginton, this leads to increased pedestrian and cycle traffic between the villages along the B1443 particularly for school children attending the school. Currently there is a narrow footpath by the side of the road but no cycle path with much of the link at national speed limit of 60mph. Also, on the outskirts of the village, there are some sections of road where there is no pedestrian footpath linking to footpaths and bridleways, some of these are also at 60mph speed limit. These sections of road are shown in Map 10.



Map 10 Missing walkways or cycleways

- 3.48 Helpston lies at the edge of the catchment of the Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board; surface water run-off from the village is managed through the board's drainage network. To prevent flooding within the village and surrounding farmland it is important that the capacity of the drainage network is not exceeded. Any increase in run-off from Helpston would increase the likelihood of flooding elsewhere in the catchment due to its upstream position; Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can limit the impact of any new development and help prevent flooding both in the village and downstream. Policy LP32, Flood and Water Management, of the Local Plan requires SuDS to be incorporated on development proposals located in areas known to be at risk from any form of flooding and requires a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for proposals meeting certain criteria. FRA's will need to set out appropriate flood risk management and demonstrate no increased risk of flooding to the development site or to existing properties and should also seek to reduce flood risk where possible.

Policy C: Community Amenity continued

C11 *Traffic at level Crossings*

In applying Local Plan Policy LP13 in relation to the transport impacts arising from major new developments, particular attention must be given to the impact on Helpston's railway level crossings (including on waiting times, queuing and air quality for local residents).

C12 *Road Safety*

Developments improving access for and safety of cyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians within Helpston village and to/from Glington are supported.



Picture 12 Glington Road

Focus D: Local Economy

Employment and Local Businesses

- 3.49 It is estimated that the vast majority of Helpston’s adult residents are either employed outside the parish or are retired. Local employment is in farming and local services; Stamford Stone is located to the south of the parish and part of the old paper mill site is occupied by a paper supplier. Local employment is important to retain the character of the village and prevent it becoming a dormitory village for employment in Peterborough and further afield. However, it is also important that commercial development does not change the character of the village and its surrounding natural environment as required by Policy LP11 of the Local Plan.
- 3.50 Many residents of Helpston are employed in office work outside the parish. With a move to flexible working including working from home, particularly as a consequence of the COVID pandemic, it is important that all new houses provide for this. The ability to do office-based work remotely will lead to reduction in traffic and potential pollution within the village and generally improve the quality of life for all residents.

Policy D: Local Economy

D1 Local Employment

- a) Development proposals for new or improved local services and/or premises for employment will be supported in principle if they are located within the Village Envelope and in accordance with other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.
- b) Employment-related development outside the village envelope will be supported in principle if in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP11(e), or as allowed under Policy C10 of this Neighbourhood Plan.

D2 Working from Home Facilities

Wherever feasible, the design of new dwellings should allow for a degree of working from home with this being clearly demonstrated on annotated plans, or in planning statements or design and access statements.

4 Community Projects

- 4.1 Through the process of developing this neighbourhood plan a number of issues were raised that are not related to land use and development planning. Whilst these issues cannot be tackled through a neighbourhood plan it is important not to let these issues be forgotten and to address them through other means.
- 4.2 This section contains a number of community projects or intentions for review by Helpston Parish Council in response to these issues. These projects, whilst contained within this neighbourhood plan, are not intended to be used in making decisions on planning applications.
- 4.3 Please note, these projects are not in priority order

Project A – Construction of a new Village Hall to replace the existing building which is beyond its design life.

Project B – Investigate provision of improvements to footpaths for pedestrians, wheelchair users and buggies and provision of information boards on walking routes.

Project C – Investigate the provision of a pedestrian crossing on West Street between the Alms Houses and Shop.

Project D – Investigate opportunities to improve road safety in the village including speed reduction, parking provision and consideration of horse riders and cyclists.

Project E – Investigate opportunities for extending the public bus service to evenings and Sundays.

Project F -Investigate provision of improved sports and play facilities for younger and older children

Project G – Investigate improved public access to green spaces around the village

Project H – Investigate opportunities for significant improvements to the natural environment including sympathetic cutting of verges, hedge and tree planting, the creation of ponds and planting of wildflower strips and provision of connectivity in developments that allows for safe routes for amphibians, hedgehogs and other small mammals.

5 Monitoring and Review

- 5.1 At the time of writing this neighbourhood plan conforms with the published Local Plan 2016 to 2036 adopted 24th July 2019 and the National Planning Policy Framework published 27th March 2012, updated 20th July 2021.
- 5.2 Should either of these documents be re-published then Helpston Parish Council should initiate a review and update of the Helpston Neighbourhood Plan as necessary. The Helpston Neighbourhood Plan should in any case be reviewed at least every five years from the previous adoption date.

6 Glossary

Affordable Housing

As defined in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework and summarised below:

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) Affordable housing for rent*
- b) Starter homes*
- c) Discounted market sales housing*
- d) Other affordable routes to home ownership*

Conservation Area

Local planning authorities designate as Conservation Areas any parts of their own area that are of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Conservation Area designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides a basis for planning policies whose objective is to conserve all aspects of character or appearance, including landscape and public spaces, that define an area's special interest.

Major Development

As defined by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015:

major development means development involving any one of the following:

- a) the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits;*
- b) waste development;*
- c) the provision of dwelling houses where

 - i) the number of dwelling houses to be provided is 10 or more; or*
 - ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph (c)(i);**
- d) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or*
- e) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.*

Medium Village

Within the Peterborough Local Plan Helpston is classified as a Medium Village for the purposes of assessing development permissible within the village, this is based on an assessment undertaken in the Peterborough Settlement Hierarchy Study (January 2018).

Village Envelope

A boundary defined in the Local Plan beyond which the local planning authority proposes that a village should not be able to extend.

