

# NORTH MARSTON REFERENDUM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## ANNOTATED SUMMARY OF MAIN CONTENTS

### Vision

*The inclusion of a Vision is a requirement for a valid Neighbourhood Plan, and the North Marston Vision is an attempt to capture in a few sentences the principles that have been the foundation of the Steering Group's approach to writing the Plan itself. It was put together after assessing the responses to the Parish Questionnaire, and other consultations. The Plan's Vision is:*

The plan will promote a flourishing community-based parish, which maintains its rich heritage, rural landscape, and agricultural environment, each of which plays an important part in the lives of its residents. Protection, enhancement, and promotion of these characteristics are the key components of the plan.

It is vital that North Marston remains a thriving and sustainable parish that encourages the well-being of its residents both now and in the future.

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### Objectives

*The Plan's Objectives reflect the parish's main areas of concern as they were reported to the Steering Group. They encapsulate what the Plan should attempt to achieve in order to produce policies with which the community agrees. For convenience, the Objectives were placed under 4 major headings as follows:*

Environment	
Rural Environment	To retain and enhance the rural character of the parish by minimising the impact of development
Historic Environment	To protect and enhance all structures of historical importance and their environs
	To protect and enhance the nationally important ridge and furrow landscape and other historic landscape features
	To maintain and enhance all aspects of the heritage of North Marston for the future benefit of both parishioners and visitors
	To promote the heritage of North Marston as a key element in the sustainable development of the village
Natural Environment	Development should respect the green environment of the parish and have a positive impact on the existing ecosystem of the countryside particularly by increasing biodiversity

<b>Sustainable Development</b>	
New Development	Development should respect the historic nature of the village and have minimal impact on the countryside
	Development should respect the rural and agricultural character of the village by having minimal impact upon designated agricultural land
	No development in the parish shall impact negatively upon the current infrastructure or provision of services
Housing	Over the period of the plan, new housing will be limited to infill construction and small-scale developments within the settlement boundary and on previously developed and brownfield sites
	New housing developments should contain affordable and market housing and be concentrated on family centred properties, especially those suitable for younger residents
	New build housing should be constructed to high energy saving standards in ways which are appropriate to the existing rural environment and sensitive to the historic setting and context
	All new houses should incorporate elements to minimise the risk of flooding and drainage problems and conserve water
	New housing should provide adequate parking provision on the plot for vehicles and, where appropriate, visitor parking
	New housing should recognize the need for the safe passage of pedestrians in the village
	All new housing shall conform to the design guidance described in the Plan with respect to the village design code.

<b>Community</b>	
Facilities	Village facilities and services will be supported, retained, and enhanced where possible
	Important green spaces will be protected from development and enhanced for the benefit of the community
Business	Employment opportunities on a small scale will be encouraged including appropriate farm diversification

<b>Traffic and Transport</b>	
Traffic	Vehicular traffic will be encouraged to drive safely through the village particularly in the vicinity of local facilities and on the roads leading to the village taking notice of cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders
Rights of Way and Pavements	Provision for cyclists, pedestrians, and horse riders within the village will be retained and extended.
	Pavements and pathways within the village will be retained and extended where space and road conditions allow

## Policies

*The Policies are the most important part of the Plan as they provide the structure for how Buckinghamshire should consider all applications relevant to North Marston until 2035. They are intended to demonstrate to Buckinghamshire the wishes of North Marston residents in relation to how the village should develop, and would be the part of the Plan most often used by Buckinghamshire to help decide planning applications in the village.*

*Much of the time preparing the Plan has been spent in finding evidence to support the formulation of these Policies so that they meet all legal requirements and are in accordance with both national and county planning policies and the policies of national organisations such as Historic England and Natural England. The Plan itself contains the context of the evidence and reasoning which has resulted in these Policies.*

*In the order they appear in the Plan, the Policies are:*

### Policy E1: Rural Character

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should respond positively to the rural character and linear form of the village and its surroundings by ensuring that:

- the scale and character of new buildings are in keeping with the rural setting, and surrounding buildings,
- the variable sense of space between and around existing buildings is retained where appropriate, particularly where views of the countryside beyond the village are available. The design of new buildings should ensure that adequate space is provided around them to complement the rural character of the village,
- boundary treatment and landscaping schemes are carefully designed so as to prevent the urbanisation of the location.
- proposals take advantage of the local topography, landscape and water features, trees and plants in the vicinity and on the site.
- Key Views of particular importance as defined on Policy Map 1 should be respected by new development.

*11 Key Views are shown in detail on a map in the Plan and have been listed to provide them protection. They are, in brief, all views to and from the Oving Hills and to the Quanton Hills from publicly accessible points and footpaths throughout the village, together with the view towards the Claydons from Granborough Road, and along Marston Fields Road. Views are recognised by Buckinghamshire as being an important part of the village's character and attraction.*

### Policy E2: North Marston Conservation Area and its Setting

Development in the Conservation Area as shown on Policy Map 2 and its setting should preserve and enhance its special character by achieving high quality design, set in a clear context in terms of materials, scale, setting and layout. Development proposals should demonstrate the way in which they address the following matters:

- Development should be of an appropriate scale and mass for the immediate area;
- Use of locally distinctive details will be required (materials, openings/access and boundary treatments) as set out in the North Marston Design Code.

*North Marston's Conservation Area is one of the oldest in the county and comprises much of the central part of the village to the north of the main road. It is shown on a map in the Plan.*

*The North Marston Design Code is a large document which has been produced by the Group as a manual for developers, builders, and householders to ensure that any new builds, alterations, or retrofits are suitably designed for the village environment. It provides a comprehensive background to the village as it currently exists and provides guidelines under sections such as energy efficient eco design, sustainable drainage systems, and wildlife-friendly features. It forms an annex to the Plan proper and can be found on the village website. There is a link to the Design Code in the Plan, and more references to the Code will be found below.*

### **Policy E3: Protecting and enhancing Local Heritage Assets**

The Plan identifies the following Local Heritage Assets:

1. Schorne Well
2. The Parish Barn and associated land
3. Garfield House
4. The Old Post Office

The effect of an application on the significance of an identified local heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect a local heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset concerned.

*Neighbourhood Plans may identify important heritage assets which are not already protected by listing. The list of four non-designated heritage assets identified here are not considered to be of sufficient architectural or historic merit to justify listing, but they are an important part of the character of the Parish. They are included with the permission of the owners and the Parish Council.*

### **Policy E4: Field patterns and archaeology**

Development proposals within and adjacent to the ridge and furrow landscape as shown on Policy Map 4 at Annex 1 should take account of its significance within the local environment and its archaeological significance.

Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on the archaeological significance of the identified ridge and furrow landscape will not be supported.

*North Marston has some of the largest areas of undisturbed mediaeval ridge and furrow landscape in England, and the conservation of this landscape is regarded by both Historic England and Buckinghamshire Council as being of national importance. A map in the Plan shows its full extent, but it is clear on both sides of Portway, along Marstonfields and Granborough Road, and in many other areas. Over three-quarters of respondents to the Questionnaire regarded it as being important or very important to conserve this landscape.*

### **Policy NE1: Protecting the Landscape**

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should protect, and where practicable, enhance the natural landscape and local character of the Parish, including field ponds, mature, veteran, and notable trees and hedgerows, and existing field patterns. Where appropriate, protected natural landscape features should be incorporated into any landscape design schemes.

*In addition to the historic landscape, parishioners strongly feel that as much protection as possible should also be extended to the whole of the countryside and landscape which surrounds the village, in order to preserve the parish's existing character.*

### **Policy NE2: Biodiversity**

New development should protect, and where practicable, enhance existing natural features within and adjacent to application sites and provide at least 10% measurable net gain in biodiversity.

As appropriate to their scale, nature, and location development proposals should make provision of appropriate species-related measures, such as swift, martin, and bat bricks, and the incorporation of native species into landscaping schemes.

Development proposals should retain black poplars wherever practicable. Where black poplar trees need to be removed, each tree lost should be replaced by two new black poplar trees of an appropriate size and age planted in a suitable location.

Development proposals should respond positively to opportunities to enhance and restore wildlife corridors and to link sustainable drainage solutions in new developments to complement wider nature conservation objectives.

*National and local environmental policies are targeted towards conserving and improving wildlife habitats, and to increasing the biodiversity of natural areas by at least 10%. This is in accordance with the wishes of parishioners. and this policy is designed to formalise those wishes and take account of local features, in particular black poplar trees.*

### Policy SD1: Development within the Settlement Boundary

The Plan identifies a Settlement Boundary as shown on Policy Map 5. Development proposals on infill or redevelopment sites inside the Settlement Boundary will be supported where they comply with other policies in the Plan.

In exceptional circumstances, non-residential development proposals will be supported on sites adjacent to the Settlement Boundary where all the following criteria are met:

- the development responds to an identified community need;
- the scale of development is proportionate to serve local needs or to support local facilities;
- the development contributes positively to the character of the settlement and is appropriate to its structure, form, character, and size; and
- in situations where a community building is being proposed, the users of the proposed development can safely travel to and from it by sustainable modes of transport.

Development proposals should not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties by way of:

- a loss of privacy;
- the overshadowing of existing properties caused by proposed building;
- the overbearing effect of a proposed building or structure;
- the loss of car parking unless mitigated as part of the proposal;
- the excessive loss of mature vegetation or landscaping; and
- additional traffic resulting from the development.

*This Policy restricts parish support for new builds before 2035 to NO MORE THAN infill construction of 1-2 houses or small-scale developments on redevelopment (brownfields) sites within the Settlement Boundary. The Boundary is shown on a map in the Plan. Any applications would also need to comply not only with the restrictions included in this Policy, but also with the other Policies in the Plan before they are supported.*

*In exceptional circumstances, the only variation from this could be for a NON-RESIDENTIAL community facility built outside the Settlement Boundary which the parish supports and needs, and which complies with the restrictions listed.*

*The Settlement Boundary encompasses the gardens and curtilages of the great majority of existing residential properties on all roads and streets in the village and extends at certain points to include areas such as the Sportsfield and The Park to enable their designation as protected areas (see Policy C2 below). Please view the map in the Plan if you are unclear about this.*

*There is NO designated agricultural land included in the Settlement Boundary. The Boundary itself has been accepted by Buckinghamshire Council and the independent examiner as being appropriate for the village.*

*There are NO site allocations for housing In the Plan - in other words, no sites either within or outside the Settlement Boundary have been earmarked as suitable for housing. There are also no allocations of new housing for North Marston in the County Local Plan (VALP).*

*95% of respondents to the Parish Questionnaire agreed that there will be a need for extra housing in the parish during the lifetime of the Plan. Of these, 22% felt that fewer than 10 houses would be appropriate, and 50% felt that between 10 and 25 houses would be appropriate before 2035.*

### **Policy SD2: New Housing Development**

Development proposals for three or more homes should include a mix of house sizes and have a larger proportion of one- or two-bedroom homes.

*Over 90% of respondents to the Questionnaire felt that smaller houses of 1 or 2 bedrooms would be the most suitable size for the majority of any new houses.*

### **Policy SD3: High Quality Design**

Proposals for good quality new development (including new buildings and extensions to existing buildings) will be supported, where they are in accordance with other policies in the North Marston Neighbourhood Plan and the North Marston Design Code.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should:

- have regard to the guidelines and design principles set out in the North Marston Design Code
- relate to the existing development pattern and context in terms of boundary enclosure and the definition of streets/spaces.
- be of an appropriate scale and density in relation to its setting both within the landscape and within the character of the surrounding context, including, in particular, a respect for existing heritage resources.
- respond positively to the topography and natural features of the site.
- retain existing hedgerows, trees, and other historic boundaries where practicable. Hedgerows should only be lost where removal is essential to allow for access, and hedgerows should be replanted along the back vision splays wherever practicable.
- use high-quality materials appropriate to the development's context and character with a concentration on locally sourced or salvaged materials wherever practicable
- be of a design with a locally-inspired character incorporating innovative and creative features appropriate to the site as identified within the parameters of the guidelines of the North Marston Design Code. In this broader context the use of superior environmental performance techniques will also be supported.
- be no more than 2 storeys in height and no higher than the roofline of existing buildings in the area.
- be well integrated with the surroundings by reinforcing pedestrian connections and taking opportunities to provide new pedestrian connections.
- integrate car parking within the hard and soft landscaping on the development site.

Developments of more than 2 dwellings should contain a variety of house types to reflect the existing architectural diversity of the area.

*This Policy should ensure that any new building, extension, or retrofit meets the requirements of the Design Code, and is designed to drive all applicants to take account of this in their planning. The conditions listed here are all to be found in more detail in the Code.*

*Any development remains subject to the restrictions and conditions outlined in Policy SD1 above and needs to comply with the other Policies in the Plan before it would receive parish support.*



### **Policy SD4: Provision of energy efficient buildings**

The design and standard of all new development should achieve a high level of sustainable design and construction.

All new build should be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting net zero carbon emissions. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should positively address the following matters:

- Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain.
- The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials.
- Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double/triple glazing.
- The incorporation of on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as unobtrusive solar panels appropriately positioned.

Proposals for the retrofit of existing buildings, including heritage assets, to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy will be supported where such works retain the character and integrity of the building concerned.

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for alterations to existing buildings should be designed to achieve sustainable design and construction standards.

*To achieve UK carbon reduction targets cost effectively any housing built now or in the future must be built to net zero carbon emission standards, and the energy efficiency of existing buildings will need to be improved when alterations or retrofit proposals are made. This is national planning policy that has been adapted to meet the circumstances of the parish.*

### **Policy SD5: Water management**

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should respond positively to the following principles:

- Development proposals should incorporate a sustainable and integrated approach to the management of flood risk, surface water (including run off) and foul drainage.
- Development proposals which would involve the loss of permeable surfaces, loss of trees, loss of soft landscaping, or loss of any other feature that reduces flood risk should use appropriate mitigation measures to prevent an increase in flood risk within the site or elsewhere.
- Development proposals should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs) wherever practicable.
- Development proposals should be designed taking into account best practice in water efficiency, such as water efficient fittings and appliances, water harvesting, grey water recycling, and storage features.

*North Marston is in an area of “water stress”. It has poor overall water quality and reduced quantity of water resources. This is designed to prevent any new development from making the situation worse.*



### Policy C1: Community Facilities

The Plan identifies the following key community facilities:

- The Pilgrim Public House
- The Wesley Centre
- The Memorial Hall
- The Village Shop
- The Clubhouse at the Sports Field

Development proposals for the change of use to a use other than for community facilities, or the demolition/the conversion of a key community facility will not be supported unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the facility's continued use is no longer commercially viable and there is evidence that the property has been actively marketed, commensurate with its use, and at a commercial value on the open market, for a period of at least 12 months.

Proposals to improve a key community facility by way of the extension or partial replacement or redevelopment of buildings, structures, and land, will be supported where the design of the scheme respects the character of the village, is appropriate in design terms and will not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities of adjoining residential properties.

The provision of new community facilities which are proportionate both in scale and use to the Parish will be supported.

*Almost all the consultations the Group have held, as well as almost all respondents to the Questionnaire, have emphasised the importance of retaining and, if possible, improving community facilities.*

### Policy C2: Local Green Spaces

The following areas shown on Policy Map 6 are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- North Marston and Granborough Sports Field
- North Marston Playground ("The Park")
- High Street Green North
- High Street Green South
- Green outside "The Pilgrim" (Pub Green)
- Quainton Road Woodland
- Schorne Lane Green
- Village Pond
- Parsnip Pond
- Memorial Hall Green
- Marstonfields Road Verges
- St Mary's Church Spinney

Development proposals within the designated local green spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.

*Designating these areas as “local green spaces” effectively secures their protection from any form of development, including not only protection from any new building, but also any traffic proposals which could lead to their loss. They are shown on a map in the Plan.*

### **Policy C3: Supporting Local Employment and Agriculture**

Development proposals for new small businesses and for the expansion or diversification of existing businesses, including farm-based operations, will be supported, providing that:

- it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impact from increased traffic, noise, smell, lighting, vibration or other waste or similar emissions or activities arising from the proposed development
- They would respect the character and scale of the village, its rural hinterland and landscape
- Where relevant, they take opportunities to secure the re-use of vacant or redundant historic buildings as part of the development.

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for extensions to or the part change of use of dwellings to enable flexible or home working within the Settlement Boundary will be supported where appropriate vehicle parking is provided and where there is no unacceptable impact of the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.

New development should be provided with effective high speed broadband services. Appropriate measures for access to the existing North Marston fibre network should be incorporated into the design of proposed workplaces.

*Encouragement for appropriate new small businesses and the appropriate diversification of existing operations is regarded to be a key element in all Neighbourhood Plans. This policy has been adapted to meet the village’s circumstances.*

### **Policy TT1: Car Parking**

Proposals for new housing developments should provide space for parking in line with VALP’s parking standards for all vehicles and have adequate on-site parking to meet current and future needs, unless alternative and accessible parking arrangements can be made which do not add to on-street congestion.

Electric charging points for cars should be provided in line with Policy T7 of VALP.

New development should not result in the loss of publicly accessible off-street car parking.

*The difficulty of car parking is already one of the major concerns of residents. A paper on this can be found as an Annex of the Design Code.*

*VALP (Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan) is the County Local Plan relevant to North Marston. All policies within the North Marston Neighbourhood Plan must comply with the Policies laid out within it.*

## **Policy TT2: Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders**

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals that would demonstrably increase traffic movement and/or affect rights of way should incorporate traffic management measures and improve the provision of pavements and access for pedestrians and cyclists and horse riders. Any new roads, junctions, pavements and traffic management measures should be designed to complement the rural character of the village and reflect its local heritage.

Development proposals should respect the rights of way network. The development of new links within the village, to neighbouring villages and to the wider countryside will be supported.

*The public footpaths and bridleways are valued by almost all of the community, and the network is widely used.*

*The lack of pavements and safe walking areas is a recurring concern raised with the Group. A paper on this can be found as an Annex at the end of the Design Code.*

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The Neighbourhood Plan's mandate applies to LAND USE only, and these Policies can only reflect that concern.

However, there are a number of "Aspirations" which have been raised with the Group (improving traffic conditions, public transport provision, heritage plans, the need to improve infrastructure services, etc) which lie outside the remit of the Plan but which are relevant both to the future of the village and to Buckinghamshire's consideration of any proposals relating to the parish. These have all been included in the Plan as a final section 13 "Aspirations". There are 17 in total.

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This summary contains the key parts of the Neighbourhood Plan, and the notes have been included to explain some of the Policy contents, but please read the Plan itself if you possibly can – it contains far more information.

<https://northmarston.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/01/North-Marston-Referendum-Neighbourhood-Plan.pdf>

Michael Lane  
North Marston Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Chair

24/01/2023