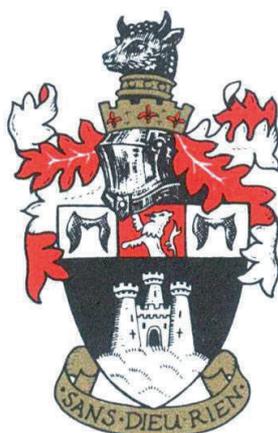


ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2011-2031



FOREWORD

In 2013, the Town Council of Ashby de la Zouch made the decision to commence the process of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan.

A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was established with the aim of preparing a Plan that will deliver the long term goals of a balanced and vibrant neighbourhood.

Since becoming established, we have held many public meetings, both general open events and specific discussions with groups of stakeholders; established Theme Groups on the key issues comprising local residents; professionals and representatives of local businesses and voluntary groups.

In preparing this Neighbourhood Plan we have listened very carefully to all the feedback received through all these consultations and have worked hard to ensure that the Plan incorporates and reflects the views of the community.

This is the Neighbourhood Plan for Ashby de la Zouch and this means that Ashby de la Zouch Town Council is satisfied that it has a robust Neighbourhood Plan. The Examiner's Report of 2nd August 2018 found the Plan satisfactory subject to alterations to conform with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and to improve clarity in future planning decisions. The neighbourhood plan passed Referendum on 22nd November 2018 and has been 'made' by North West Leicestershire District Council,

The Neighbourhood Plan will now form part of the statutory Development Plan alongside the District-wide Local Plan. We are grateful to Officers at the Local Authority and to the wider community for their involvement in the development of this Plan. Ashby de la Zouch is an attractive and popular place in which to live and the contribution from people who care about their community and want to make it better for generations to come is greatly appreciated.

Leader
Ashby de la Zouch Town Council

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This document has been prepared by the Ashby de la Zouch Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which has been led by Ashby de la Zouch Town Council.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community led framework for guiding the future development and growth of an area; it provides an opportunity for local people to directly shape and influence planning policy on matters that affect them.

The Plan provides a vision for the future of the community, and sets out clear policies to realise this vision up to 2031. These policies must accord with higher level planning policy, at a local and national level, as required by the Localism Act. The Plan has been developed through extensive consultation with the people of Ashby de la Zouch and with others with an interest in the community.

The Plan adds local detail to broader planning policy and now it has passed through a Referendum the planning policies within the Plan will become part of the decision making process for planning applications.

1.2 How a neighbourhood plan fits in to the planning system

A Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for local people to create a framework for delivering a sustainable future for the benefit of all who live, work or visit our area.

The right for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans was established through the Localism Act 2011 and the rules governing their preparation were published in 2012. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that a Neighbourhood Plan gives the community “direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need” (NPPF para 183). It helps us to get the right types of development in the right locations; and to set planning policies that will be used in determining decisions on planning applications throughout the designated area of Ashby de la Zouch.

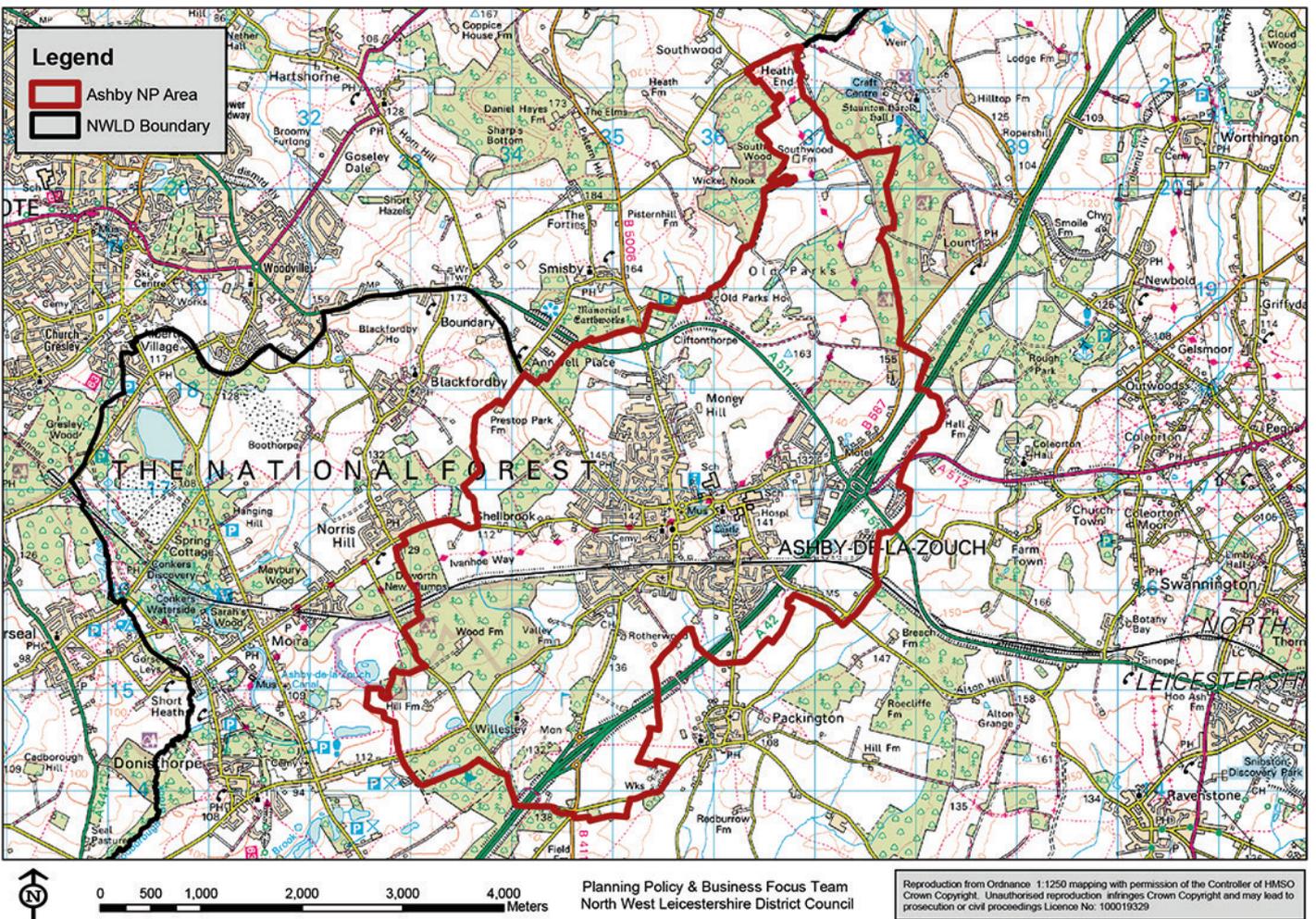
A Neighbourhood Plan is part of the statutory Development Plan for the area and this statutory status gives Neighbourhood Plans far more weight than other local documents such as parish plans or village design statements. But a Plan must also comply with European and National legislation and be in general conformity with existing strategic planning policy. Whilst every effort has been made to make the main body of this Plan easy to read and understand, the wording of the actual policies is necessarily more formal so that they comply with these statutory requirements.

In addition to formal planning policies, the Neighbourhood Plan also contains a number of actions for the Town Council, to progress with third parties such as Leicestershire County Council matters that are important to the aspiration to shape the Plan area but are not in themselves planning policies.

Robust evidence is the foundation on which a Neighbourhood Plan has to be based. This includes evidence of community engagement and consultation and how the views, aspirations, wants and needs of local people have been taken into account alongside stakeholder comment and statistical information to justify the policies contained within the Plan. A detailed Statement of Consultation and a comprehensive Evidence Pack have been produced to support this Neighbourhood Plan.

1.3 Ashby de la Zouch neighbourhood plan area

The Ashby de la Zouch Neighbourhood Plan covers a designated area (the Plan area), comprising the Council wards of Ashby Holywell, Ashby Money Hill, Ashby Ivanhoe, Ashby Castle and Ashby Willesley, which covers the town of Ashby de la Zouch and excludes Blackfordby. Designated status was achieved in February 2014. Blackfordby has been excluded as it is a distinct settlement in its own right with its own planning and development requirements.



I.4 What the neighbourhood plan covers

The Ashby de la Zouch Neighbourhood Plan covers the timeframe 2011 to 2031; this ensures alignment with the North West Leicestershire Local Plan. A vision for the future of Ashby is set out and the following themes are included in the Plan:

- General Principles
- Housing and the Built Environment
- Town Centre
- Transport and Accessibility
- The Natural Environment
- Employment and Economic Growth
- Infrastructure Investment Priorities

The Neighbourhood Plan includes planning policies which are designed to help shape development across the Neighbourhood Plan area. The Plan also contains Community Actions for the Town Council, to progress with third parties. These cover matters that are important to the aspiration to shape the Plan area but are not in themselves planning policies. For clarity, the community actions are separately highlighted within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Some issues, such as minerals and waste which are the preserve of Leicestershire County Council are excluded from the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, as are strategic matters such as housing targets that are determined by North West Leicestershire District Council.

1.5 How the plan has been prepared

The Neighbourhood Planning process has been overseen by a Steering Group consisting of 4 Town Councillors, a representative from Ashby Civic Society, a representative from Ashby Town Team, the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk.

The Neighbourhood Plan was launched in April 2013 with a series of drop-ins and workshops for members of the local community and other interested parties, where participants were asked:

- What they like about Ashby
- What they do not like about Ashby
- What would they want that Ashby doesn't have

From the launch events key issues for the town were identified and these were grouped together in to the following themes:

- Town Centre Vitality
- Economic Growth
- Housing and the Built Environment
- Accessibility and Transport
- Education and Leisure

The five Theme Groups, comprised volunteers from the local community who looked in detail at the issues and prepared emerging objectives and policies alongside officers from the District and County Councils (who attended in an advisory capacity). A Reference Group consisting of the Chairs of each Theme Group reviewed the objectives and policies coming from the Theme Groups and agreed the objectives and policies which formed the basis of the Plan.

Consultation on three draft versions of the Neighbourhood Plan have taken place and comments received during those consultations have influenced the content of the Neighbourhood Plan.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Habitats Regulation Assessment have been completed as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process and the results of these assessments have been taken in to account in the Neighbourhood Plan.

A Consultation Statement detailing the consultation process to date has been produced to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan.

SECTION 2: ABOUT ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH

Ashby de la Zouch is a historic market town of 12,530 people (2011 census for Neighbourhood Plan area) at the heart of the National Forest and on the borders of Leicestershire and Derbyshire.

Ashby de la Zouch has a vibrant Town Centre that forms the heart of the local community providing the principal focus for the Town's economic, social and leisure activity. The wide range of specialist shops, ancient castle and broad Market Street give Ashby its unique character. It is set within attractive countryside and sits at the heart of the National Forest, with the National Forest Way, a new long distance walking trail and the Ivanhoe Way running through the town. New National Forest plantations can be found in the extensive countryside that surrounds the town. Residents have easy access to public footpaths and cycle trails, for example at the Hicks Lodge cycle centre, there is a popular golf club and a wide range of other sporting facilities and clubs. Within the Town Centre there are tracts of attractive green spaces at the Bath Grounds and Hood Park.

Ashby stands at the intersection of the roads between Nottingham and Tamworth/ Birmingham (A42) and between Leicester and Burton upon Trent (A511). These provide easy access to the major cities in the East and West Midlands, leading to many of the town's residents commuting to work around the Midlands. There is no railway station in the town, as the railway that connected Ashby with Leicester and Burton upon Trent closed for passenger transport many years ago.



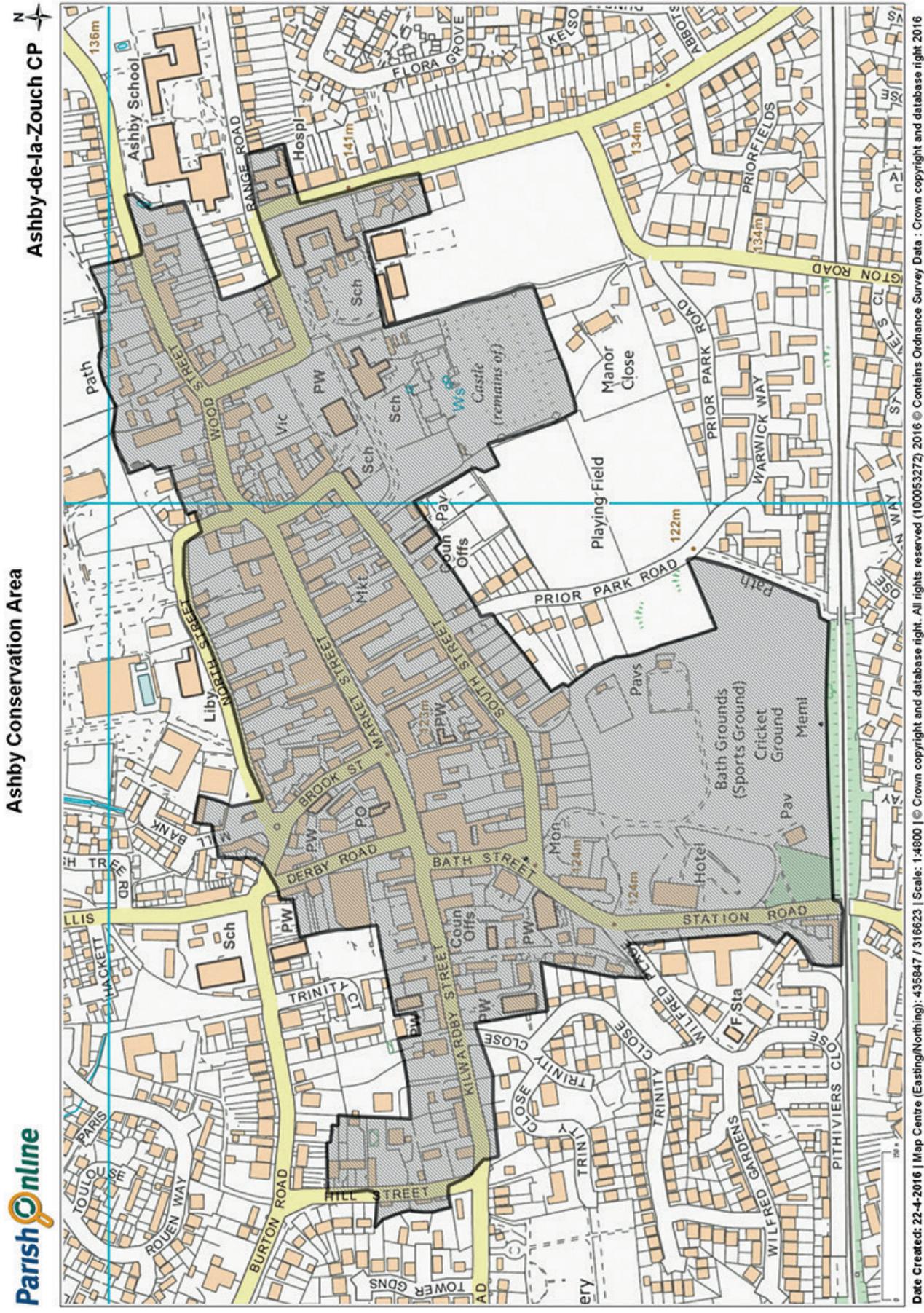
Employment in the town has changed in recent years with significant manufacturing employers like McVities, Arla Dairy and the Soap Factory closing. However, the two significant industrial estates, Ashby Park and Ivanhoe Business Park have been expanding.

The first documented record of the town is in the Domesday Book of 1086/87 and the town takes the second part of its name from the La Zouch family who held the castle and manor from circa 1160 to 1399. Ashby de la Zouch Conservation Area was first designated in November 1972.

During the medieval period Ashby Castle was one of the chief influences on the town's development. The castle was slighted (partial demolition) by parliamentarian troops in March 1646. The appearance of the Conservation Area (Figure 2) is predominantly Georgian/ early Victorian townscape. However many buildings contain medieval structures.

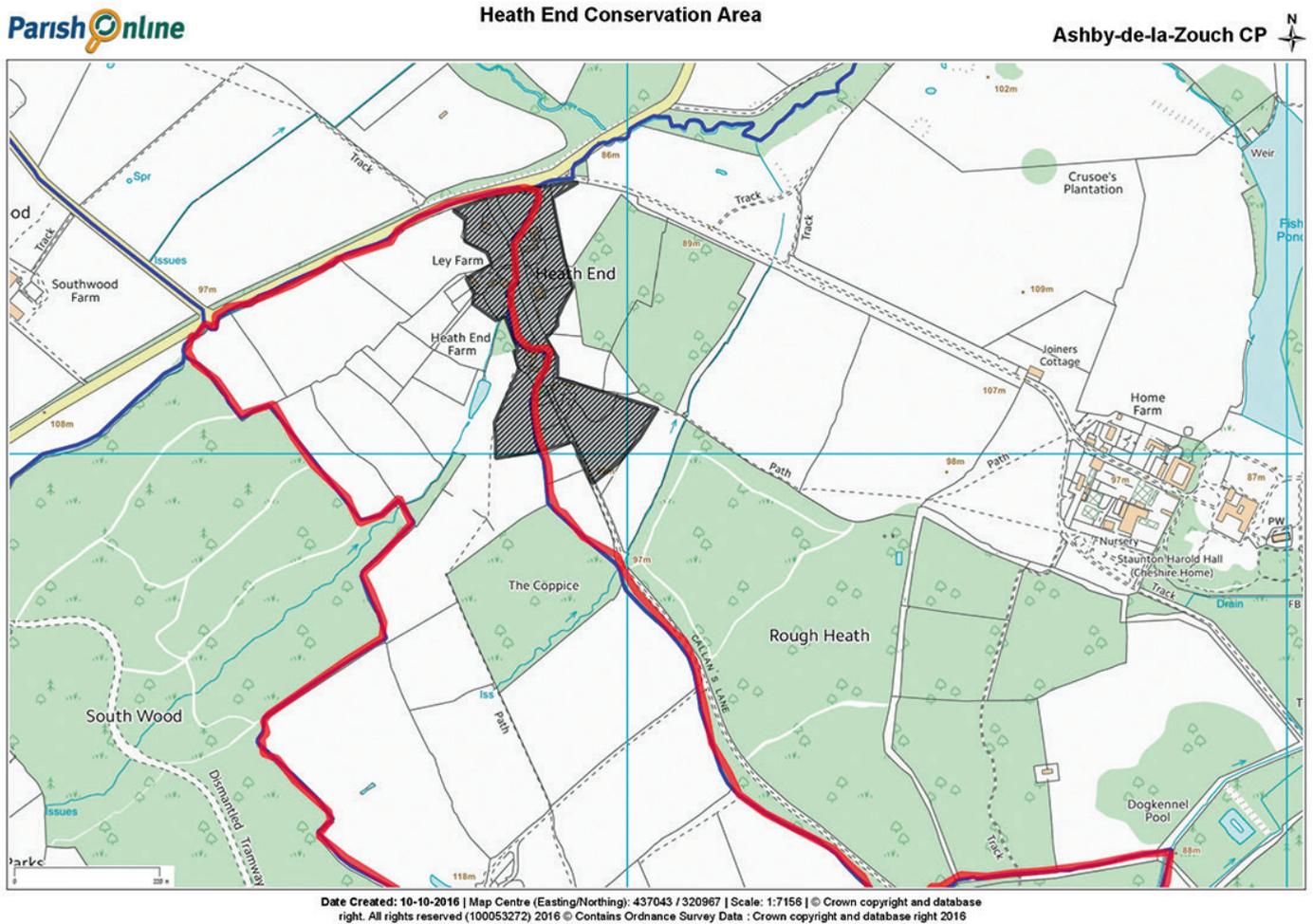
The current Ashby de la Zouch Conservation Area boundaries are shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2 – Conservation Area boundary map



The Neighbourhood Plan area also contains part of the more rural Conservation Area of Heath End, which was first designated in 2002. The Heath End Conservation Area boundaries are shown in Figure 3 and are partly in the neighbouring parish of Staunton Harold Parish Meeting:

Figure 3 Heath End Conservation Area



Development within the Conservation Areas is carefully managed through the planning system and the Neighbourhood Plan reinforces this approach.

The town has experienced significant growth in recent years with planning permission for 2508 dwellings being granted since 2003 in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The attractiveness and location of the town means developers can achieve higher prices for properties in Ashby than in neighbouring towns. Average property prices within the Ashby LE65 postcode area are £290,106* compared with £200,637* in the Coalville LE67 postcode area, £235,446* in the Castle Donington postcode area and £162,659* in the Swadlincote DE11 postcode area.

(*Figures are taken from Zoopla website for prices paid in 12 months up to 11th July 2018)

A review of 2011 census data (for the Neighbourhood Plan area) shows that:

- There is a high level of home ownership (70.8%), but this is lower than the average in the District (72.5%).
- There is a larger proportion of detached properties (42.6%) than on average in the District, regionally and in England (22.4% in England) and fewer terraced properties (14.9%).
- There are more 4 & 5 bedroom properties (30.4%) than in the District, region and in England (19% in England).
- There is a high level of car ownership 43.9% of households having two or more cars.
- 49.4% of households are not deprived in any dimension, compared with 46.2% in the District and 42.6% nationally.
- The proportion of residents aged 16-64 (61.9%) is lower than the proportion in the District, region or England (64.8% in England).
- The majority of residents enjoy good health (82.5%).
- Educational attainment is high with 33.8% of residents over 16 having a level 4 qualification or above, this compares with 27.4% in England.

Note: Census figures based upon the Neighbourhood Plan area, consisting of the wards Ashby Holywell, Ashby Ivanhoe and Ashby Castle, as defined in 2011.



SECTION 3: WHAT IS THE PLAN TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

3.1 The Vision

The Town Council has identified a vision for Ashby to help describe how the Plan area should look in the years to come.

“Ashby de la Zouch is a prosperous attractive and historic market town at the heart of the National Forest. Our vision is to build on that uniqueness and create a town that meets the needs of local people in terms of their enjoyment, health and wellbeing whilst making the most of its special qualities to attract businesses, visitors and shoppers from further afield.

This will be achieved by the Plan's vision and objectives providing an aspirational and positive planning framework to deliver housing and economic development to meet local and District-wide needs and thereby creating a safe, clean, accessible and attractive town and countryside in which people can shop, work, live and pursue their leisure activities.

The town and surrounding countryside should offer something for everyone regardless of their age, lifestyle or status”.

3.2 Key objectives the Plan will address

Following on from the identification of the vision, a range of ‘Theme Groups’ were established comprising residents, business and service personnel, each looking at a specific area of interest. Through this process, a number of key objectives emerged to be dealt with through the Neighbourhood Plan to help deliver the vision:

- Protecting and enhancing the town’s heritage
- Maintaining a vibrant, attractive and sustainable Town Centre
- Designating settlement development limits
- Offering locally appropriate housing mix and design at defined sites
- Enhancing the provision of and protection for parks and green spaces
- Enhancement of environmental aspects including measures to prevent flooding
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Protecting community assets
- Improving traffic management and road infrastructure
- Promoting walking and cycling
- Promoting employment, business growth and encouraging tourism

- Supporting enhanced community facilities in line with growing population
- Identifying priorities for section 106 funding

It is important to note that when using the Neighbourhood Plan to form a view on a proposed development all of the policies contained in the plan must be considered together.

SECTION 4: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

4.1. Towards a Sustainable Ashby de la Zouch

a) Introduction

Having developed over several centuries, Ashby de la Zouch is an attractive and historic settlement which retains many of its original features and is characterised by a bustling Town Centre with many independent shops.

There are many significant buildings of great importance within the Plan area which include both designated and un-designated heritage assets. Its economy is varied with a range of employers being based on the employment sites within the town and recent years have seen a growth in out-of-town retail outlets which pose a threat to the traditional shopping patterns of the town.

Ashby de la Zouch boasts a good range of recreation facilities including tennis, Hood Park Leisure Centre and Swimming Pools, football, rugby, cricket and golf as well as parks and play areas.

Ashby de la Zouch is within the local planning authority area of North West Leicestershire District Council in the County of Leicestershire and is well located being within 9 miles of East Midlands Airport. It has a bypass to serve traffic passing from Birmingham to Nottingham (A42) or Leicester to Stoke. There are bus services to Coalville and Burton-upon-Trent, but the transport system has failed to keep pace with the requirements of the town. There is congestion at peak times and pressure on car parking spaces, which can make the roads within the Town Centre congested and can diminish the cross town commuting and shopping experience for residents and visitors.

b) A Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development

The purpose of the UK Planning System as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is to achieve sustainable development in economic, environmental and social terms.

The NPPF defines sustainable development as follows:

Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations. Development means growth we must accommodate the new ways by which we earn our living in a competitive world. We must house a rising population, which is living longer and wants to make new choices. We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate.

This Neighbourhood Plan is a key part of securing sustainable development. It is at its heart. This includes how much new development is required, where it should go, how it should be designed and how it impacts upon the Town. This encompasses all proposals for development from the very smallest, such as a minor extension to a house, to major housing, employment and infrastructure developments and seeks to safeguard environmental, health and social features, particularly walking and non-motorised transport as well as housing development.

The Neighbourhood Plan takes a positive approach to sustainable development within the Plan area. The Town Council will work with the District Council, County Council, the local community, developers and other partners to encourage the formulation of development proposals which clearly demonstrate how sustainable development has been considered and addressed, and can therefore be approved.

POLICY SI: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - The Town Council will work proactively with developers to find solutions which mean that sustainable proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the Plan area.

Planning applications or other land-use related decisions that accord with the policies in this Plan should be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, North West Leicestershire Local Plan, or supplementary adopted planning guidance relevant to a planning application or other land-use related decision, the policies in the NPPF shall apply.

c) Directing Development to the most Sustainable Locations

One of the key ways to achieve sustainable development is to direct development to the most appropriate and sustainable locations.

The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan comprises the primary urban area of Ashby Town and smaller villages and hamlets interspersed with large areas of open countryside. Outside of the primary urban area it is mainly open and rural in nature.

North West Leicestershire has defined a settlement hierarchy to “distinguish between the roles and functions of different settlements and to guide the location of future development”. The general principle is that the further up the hierarchy a settlement comes, the more sustainable it is and therefore the more suitable it is for development. The Local Plan states “with the general principle being that those settlements higher up the hierarchy will take more growth than those lower down and that the type of development proposed is appropriate to the scale and character of the settlement and its place in the hierarchy”.

Ashby de la Zouch (along with Castle Donington) is categorised as a ‘Key Service Centre’ in the Local Plan. This is the second highest in the hierarchy (after Coalville which is classed as a Principal Town).

The Local Plan describes Key Service Centres as being “Smaller than the Principal Town in terms of population and also the range of services and facilities they provide, they play an important role providing services and facilities to the surrounding area and are accessible by some sustainable

transport. A significant amount of development will take place in these settlements but less than that in the Principal Town”.

The Neighbourhood Plan has some concerns and reservations with regard to the scale of development envisaged for Ashby de la Zouch as set out in the Local Plan. The consultation shows that people are not opposed to new development. They recognise the benefits it brings in terms of creating and supporting jobs and meeting the needs of the community for more affordable housing, for example. There is concern however that too much development will damage the countryside, encourage more (already very high) levels of journeys by car and place additional pressures on already stretched services such as schools and health care as well as local roads. It is also noted that Ashby de la Zouch has been the focus of considerable new development, especially housing and employment related, and that there are further commitments in the pipeline.

A key aspect of the Neighbourhood Plan (and of the Local Plan) is to identify the amount of new development (including the provision of new sites) needed in the Plan area and ensure that it is proportionate, sustainable and meets local and District needs and requirements.

d) Limits to Development

The purpose of Limits to Development is to ensure that sufficient sites for new homes and economic activity are available in appropriate locations that will avoid overloading the transport infrastructure and impinging into the local countryside.

Limits to Development were established by North West Leicestershire District Council in 2002 and they made it clear that such a measure was important to clarify where new development activity was best located. They are used to define the extent of a built-up part of a settlement. They distinguish between areas where, in planning terms, development would be acceptable in principle, such as in the main settlements, and where it would not be acceptable, generally in the least sustainable locations such as in the open countryside. Such growth would risk ribbon development and the merging of hamlets to the detriment of the community and visual amenity of the Plan area’s surroundings.

A desire to preserve the integrity of the villages and hamlets within and adjacent to the Plan area and to maintain separation between each other and the built up area of Ashby de la Zouch was highlighted as an important consideration through consultation.

The Local Plan updates the Limits to Development for Ashby de la Zouch taking into account:

- a) Existing commitments by virtue of extant planning permissions for residential development on the fringes of the settlement;
- b) Residential and employment allocations within the Local Plan;

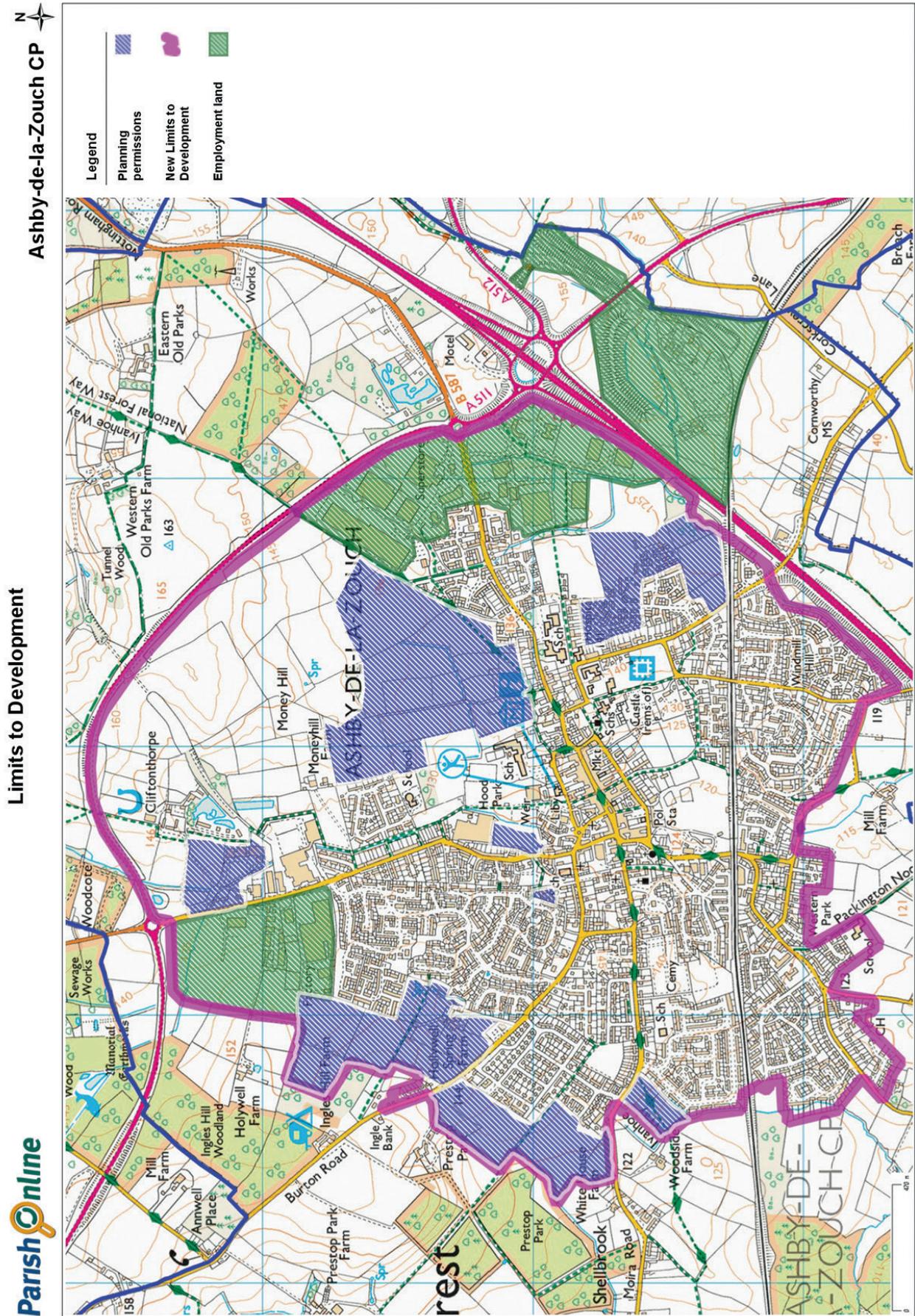
The Neighbourhood Plan supports the Limits to Development provided in the Local Plan. Within the defined Limits to Development an appropriate amount of suitably designed and located development will be acceptable in principle, although some sites within this area are protected from development.

Focusing development within the agreed Limits to Development will help to support existing services

and facilities within the Town Centre and help to protect the countryside and the remainder of the Plan area from inappropriate development. They will also help retain the physical separation between settlements in order to maintain the physical identity of communities, and by so doing to help preserve the character of those communities.

POLICY S2: LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT – Within the Limits to Development as identified in Figure 4, development proposals will be viewed positively where they are in accordance with the other policies of this Neighbourhood Plan and relevant District and national planning policies and subject to accessibility, design and amenity considerations.

Figure 4 Ashby De La Zouch Limits to Development



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e) Development outside the Built-Up part of the Plan area

In planning terms, land outside of defined Limits to Development is treated as countryside. This includes the small villages and hamlets within the Plan area.

It is national and local planning policy that development in the countryside (and outside of the Limits to Development) will be carefully controlled. The Local Plan recognises the importance of maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the environmental, economic and social value of the countryside. This approach is also supported by this Plan in order to prevent urban sprawl and less sustainable forms of development and also to protect the open countryside for its own sake as an attractive, accessible and non-renewable natural resource.

POLICY S3: DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS OUTSIDE OF THE LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT

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

In all cases, where development is considered acceptable, it will be required to respect the form, scale, character and amenity of the landscape and the surrounding area through careful siting, design and use of materials.

f) Design

This Plan seeks to ensure that new building in the Plan area benefits from high quality design so that it blends sympathetically with existing architecture, has a low carbon footprint, avoids excessive use of other resources both during building and operation, and suffers neither from flood risk nor increases the flood risk to other premises. Innovative means of restricting water run-off including sustainable urban drainage systems will be supported, particularly those providing protection to the River Mease Special Area of Conservation. Proposals to enhance broadband facilities are welcomed by the community.

The built form of Ashby de la Zouch boasts an interesting mix of architectural styles which adds to the town's vibrancy and informs its character. In line with the NPPF, the Neighbourhood Plan encourages the use of innovative materials and design that is in keeping with the character of the area. Sustainability is increasingly a key issue in determining planning policy and development proposals. It is crucial for its future success that Ashby de la Zouch embraces the need for sustainability and that it becomes a prime consideration in design proposals, for its economic value to residents as well as environmental benefits.

Through consultation, the importance to the local community of ensuring that development enhances biodiversity and meets high standards of energy and water efficiency, was apparent, as was the need to ensure adequate parking. Similarly, the desire to minimise the impact of noise, odour and light was recognised in consultation responses.

The Neighbourhood Plan expects that housing developments will be attractive, functional and sustainable places, having regard to Building for Life 12 - the industry standard for well-designed homes and a standard adopted by North West Leicestershire District Council. The 12 requirements are:

- **Connections**

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?

- **Facilities and services**

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs and cafes?

- **Public transport**

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

- **Meeting local housing requirements**

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

- **Character**

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

- **Working with the site and its context**

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?

- **Creating well defined streets and spaces**

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?

- **Easy to find your way around**

Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?

- **Streets for all**

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allows them to function as social spaces?

- **Car parking**

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?

- **Public and private spaces**

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?

- **External storage and amenity space**

Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?

Consultation has identified the importance of development reflecting the character of Ashby de la Zouch, particularly within the Conservation Area and reflecting the National Forest throughout the plan area.

The overall character of the Conservation Area retains its established Georgian/early Victorian visual context, but there are areas of poor townscape quality as identified within the Conservation Area Character Appraisal - primarily infill/redevelopment schemes undertaken in the second half of the twentieth century; the installation of late twentieth century shop fronts to earlier buildings and some past building repair work which was carried out without due consideration to good conservation practice. All of this has served to detract from the overall impact of the Conservation Area.

It is important that future development builds on the positive aspects of Ashby's character, and avoids the mistakes of the past.

The National Forest covers 200 square miles of the Midlands with Ashby de la Zouch at the centre of this designation. The aspiration is to create a new multi-functional forest to show the benefits that can come from having woodland near to where people live and work and to make the countryside more accessible. Ashby de la Zouch Town Council is working with the National Forest Company on the aspiration for Ashby de la Zouch to become a 'Forest Town'.

The National Forest Design Charter identifies General Design, Built Design and Green Infrastructure Principles to be incorporated into development, including the need for development to be: distinctive, sustainable, inspiring, integrated, people focused and connected. The position of Ashby de la Zouch in the heart of the National Forest has led consultees to promote the need for development to reflect these design principles. The Local Plan recognises the importance of the National Forest and through Policy En3 seeks to ensure that new developments contribute towards the creation of the forest through the inclusion of tree planting; appropriate siting and scale of development and respect for the character and appearance of the countryside.

A concern expressed through consultation is that development on a large scale within Ashby de la Zouch would not only be of a 'standard' design that was not reflective of the local character, but that this would be compounded by different developers introducing their own house styles across different parts of the same development site, leading to a potentially fragmented scheme. It is important to residents that a consistent approach to design is adopted, particularly in large scale development.

The section on transport identifies parking as a significant issue for Ashby de la Zouch. Development will be required therefore to ensure that adequate off-road parking is provided in accordance with Leicestershire County Council standards.

The NPPF promotes the use of innovative design and the Neighbourhood Plan supports this aspiration as long as it does not detract from the historic context of Ashby de la Zouch.

The provision of high speed broadband connectivity was a consistent theme through consultation as was the importance of biodiversity and environmental enhancements. It is seen as being important that development should incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques and enhance biodiversity wherever possible, also avoiding development within areas of high flood risk.

POLICY S4: DESIGN - Design Principles

All new development, where appropriate, will need to satisfy the following design principles:

- 1. New development should enhance and reinforce the local distinctiveness and character of the area in which it is situated, particularly within the Conservation Area and take into account the design principles set out in the National Forest Design Charter. Proposals should clearly show how the general character, scale, mass, density and layout of the site, of the building or extension fits in with the aspect of the surrounding area. Care should be taken to ensure that the development does not disrupt the visual amenities of the street scene and impact negatively on any significant wider landscape views;**
- 2. All new development should reflect the character and historic context of existing developments within the Plan area. Contemporary and innovative materials and design will be supported where they have due regard to the context into which they are introduced. New buildings should follow a similar design approach to ensure consistency in the use of materials, layout of windows and the roofline to the building. Materials should be chosen to complement the design of the development and add to the quality or character of the surrounding environment, of the Conservation Area and of the National Forest;**
- 3. Adequate off road parking should be provided to ensure highway safety and to enhance the street scene in line with Leicestershire County Council standards;**
- 4. High quality superfast (of at least 30Mbps) broadband connectivity will be encouraged;**
- 5. The provision of electrical car charging points will be supported;**
- 6. Proposals should minimise the impact on general amenity and give careful consideration to noise, odour, light and loss of light to existing properties. Light pollution should be minimised wherever possible and security lighting should be appropriate, unobtrusive and energy efficient;**
- 7. Development should protect and enhance biodiversity and landscaping. The use of native plants in landscaping schemes; the incorporation of swift or bat boxes in the design on new buildings and the addition of a green roof to buildings is supported. The restoration or creation of high quality priority habitats in developments to support local wildlife sites, local priority habitats and the National Forest project will be supported;**

8. **Where possible, enclosure of plots should be of native hedging. Where enclosures are of wooden fencing, or brick wall, they should be of rural design, sympathetic to the local area and include measures to mitigate the habitat fragmentation that they can cause;**
9. **Development should incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques to meet high standards for energy and water efficiency, including the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology, as appropriate (including small-scale domestic renewable energy generation); Development within the River Mease SAC will need to demonstrate that there is sufficient headroom capacity available at the Wastewater Treatment Works to which it is proposed that flows from the development will go, and that the proposed development is in accordance with the provisions of the Water Quality Management Plan including, where appropriate, the provision of infrastructure or water quality improvements proposed in the Developer Contribution Scheme. In the event that there is no headroom capacity available at the appropriate wastewater treatment works, or there is no capacity available within the Developer Contributions Scheme in operation at the time that an application is determined, or exceptionally where as part of the development it is proposed to use a non-mains drainage solution for the disposal of foul water and this is supported by the Environmental Agency, development will only be allowed where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development, on its own and cumulatively with other development, will not have an adverse impact, directly or indirectly, upon the integrity of the river Mease SAC. Development will be phased in line with the provision of capacity to treat wastewater to a suitable level.**
10. **Development should be avoided in areas of medium and high flood risk (flood zones 2 and 3) and where this is being considered, the sequential test should apply. Where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage, development should incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) with maintenance regimes to minimise vulnerability to flooding and climate change unless they are not financially viable and alternative mitigation methods are available, or the SuDS scheme will itself adversely affect the environment. Where appropriate, SuDS should be linked into wider initiatives to enhance green infrastructure, improve water quality and benefit wildlife or contribute to the provision of the ecosystem service. Arrangements in accordance with national policy will need to be put in place for the management and maintenance of the SuDS over the whole period during which they are needed.**
11. **Where appropriate development should incorporate appropriate provision for the storage of waste and recyclable materials;**
12. **Housing proposals should demonstrate how the criteria identified within Building for Life 12 have been taken into account. It is recognised that greater conformity will be achievable in large developments; and**
13. **New development should take into account risk from land instability and/or contamination and where necessary incorporate appropriate mitigation and/or treatment measures.**

g) Support for Development on Brownfield sites

Derelict sites and empty buildings remain across the Plan area and these often create a drag on its vibrancy and attractiveness. The consultation shows that redevelopment of derelict and redundant 'brownfield sites' and the refurbishment of empty buildings instead of building on greenfield sites should be supported.

This is also a core principle of the NPPF (paragraph 17) which is to "encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value".

POLICY S5: SUPPORT TO BE GIVEN TO BROWNFIELD SITES – Within the Limits to Development, development proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of redundant land or buildings will be supported provided they have limited environmental, amenity or ecological value

4.2 Housing

a) Introduction

According to the 2011 Census, Ashby de la Zouch (Neighbourhood Plan area) had a population of 12,530 and 5,422 homes. This represents 13.4% of the dwellings in North West Leicestershire. Ashby de la Zouch has been the focus of much new house building, and it is reasonable to expect, if growth was determined by demand alone, that this trend would be likely to continue.

This chapter, along with the other chapters in the Plan, sets out the strategy and policies by which the housing needs within the Plan area over the Plan period will be met in a sustainable manner with due attention to good design, appropriate mix, preservation and improvement of the environment and sensitivity to the wider needs of the community. Provision of a high proportion of good quality affordable housing targeted to local demand is a priority.

b) Sustainable Housing Growth

The Local Plan for North West Leicestershire sets out a need for at least 9,620 new dwellings over the plan period for the District as a whole, equivalent to 481 dwellings each year. At the time that the Local Plan was being prepared it was estimated that allowing for completions, commitments and the likelihood that some sites would not be built out in the Plan period that there was a residual need for 600 dwellings.

This overall target is not apportioned to the various communities that make up North West Leicestershire. The Local Plan does make it clear however, that as one of the identified Key Service Centres, Ashby de La Zouch will be required to take “a significant amount of development”. The Local Plan then proposes a number of new housing sites in the Plan area in support of its role as an identified Key Service Centre.

These comprise 2,050 new houses on land north of Ashby de la Zouch (Money Hill), including the 605 homes on Money Hill and 70 homes at Woodcock Way approved on appeal and up to 153 homes at Arla Dairy which have been granted planning permission.

This total exceeds the residual housing target of 600. NWLDC anticipate 600 homes being built on the site up to 2025 as a result of measures that are required to mitigate the impact of development in this location on the River Mease Special Area of Conservation.

The Town Council recognises the importance of meeting local housing demand and providing affordable housing opportunities especially for young people as well as considering the growing housing requirements for older people.

The Neighbourhood Plan accepts the need to meet the housing target set through the Local Plan but draws attention to the consultation findings that have revealed that the growth ambitions of the residents of the Plan area are not significant. People value the historic and compact nature of the Plan area and have been concerned by the increasing amount of development which has occurred over recent years that has reduced the level of open space and placed increasing pressure on the already overburdened transport network as well as other key services such as schools and health care, only partially mitigated by recent enhancements to these services, leading also to unsustainable levels of commuting by car.

The need to deliver the housing target identified within the Local Plan is understood and reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan, and this will involve housing development of about 2,050 identified in the Local plan for Ashby. 828 of the required allocation already have planning permission resulting in a net additional requirement of 1222.

Development in Ashby will be shaped by the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan, taking into account the restrictions on development imposed by the River Mease Water Quality Management Plan and reflected in the Local Plan Policy En2 River Mease Special Area of Conservation.

Ashby de la Zouch is required, through the Local Plan, to meet a significant proportion of the residential development for the District up to 2031. The provisions contained within the Neighbourhood Plan will help to ensure that the required development, with associated improvements in infrastructure, is undertaken in a manner that provides a mix of high quality sustainable homes to meet the needs of the community as its size, economic activity and aspirations grow during the period of this Plan. Infrastructure requirements will need to take into account ongoing maintenance as well as capital costs.

North West Leicestershire District Council have launched an early review of the Local Plan, the review is required to address:

- A shortage of employment land up to 2031 compared to what is needed (as identified in the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment)
- The possible need to accommodate additional housing arising from unmet needs in Leicester City

The review will also consider the draft Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan.

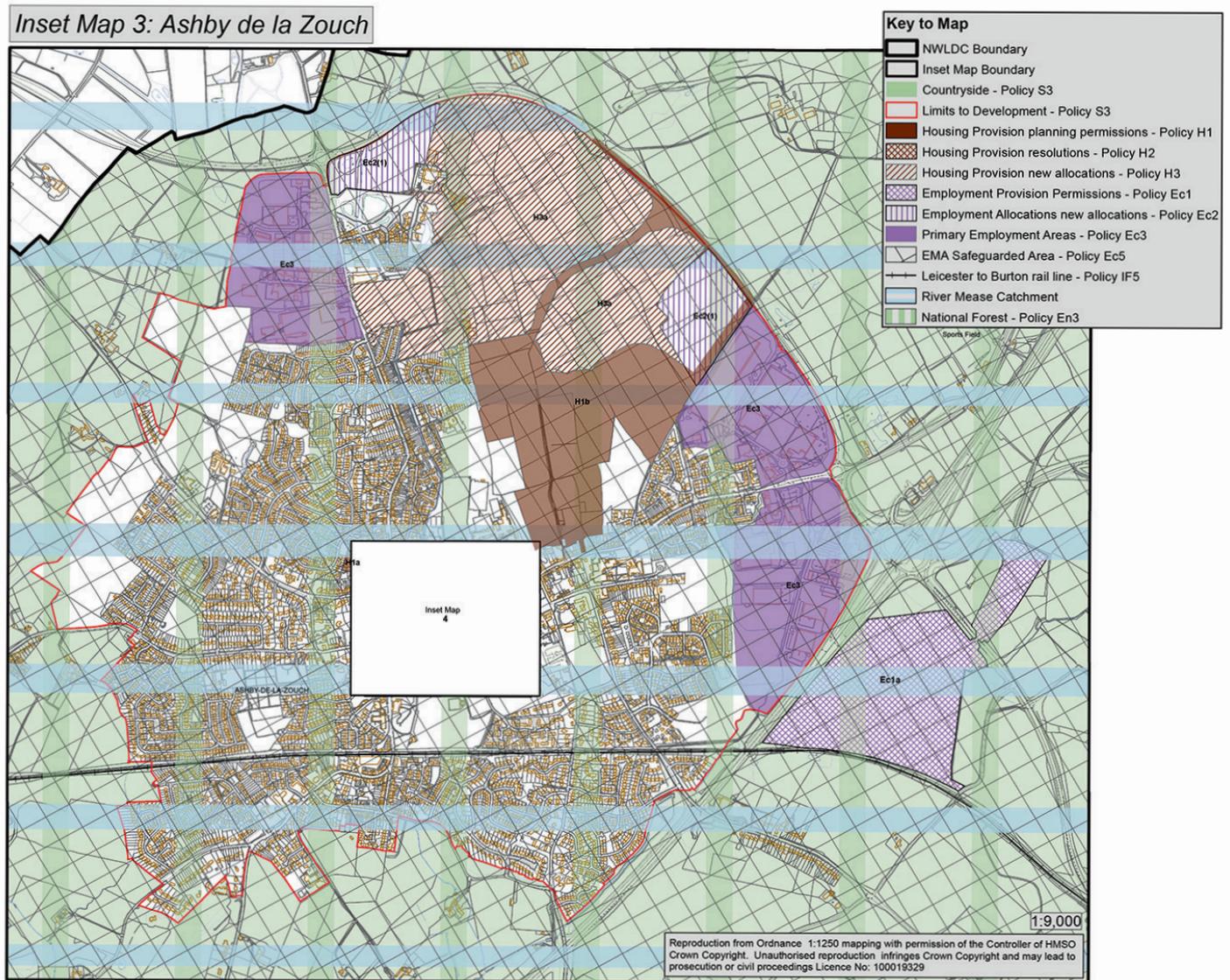
The review will extend the Local Plan horizon to 2036 and is likely to have implications for the Ashby de la Zouch Neighbourhood Plan.

POLICY HI: SUSTAINABLE HOUSING GROWTH – The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the need to provide new housing to meet the identified needs of the Plan area and contribute to the District wide housing target. Homes already delivered between 2011 and 2016, existing commitments and the housing provision for Ashby de la Zouch are set out in the housing trajectory in Appendix 2 of the North West Leicestershire Local Plan. The development of 2,050 dwellings on the land north of Ashby de la Zouch at Money Hill and appropriate windfall sites that come forward in the period up to 2031 will be supported.

Given the scale of development agreed for Money Hill, a Masterplan will be required to steer the overall layout of the site and to ensure the delivery of a range of facilities to serve the new community and its relationship with the Plan area. The Masterplan will address how it will meet the requirements contained within the Neighbourhood Plan and will involve the Town Council in its

production along with the developers and North West Leicestershire District Council. Of particular importance is the need to ensure that the design principles are consistently applied across the Money Hill development.

Figure 5 – Money Hill



POLICY H2: REQUIREMENT FOR MASTERPLAN –The allocation at Policy H1 will be supported if;

- 1. the requirements listed in Local Plan Policy H3 are agreed through the planning process;**
- 2. the relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies, including Policy S4 ‘Building Design Principles’ are met; and**
- 3. in conjunction with the Town Council, for residential development:**
 - a) A Spatial Masterplan is agreed incorporating urban design objectives and demonstrating connectivity with the surrounding area, including traffic movements;**
 - b) A Landscape Masterplan is agreed covering the use of green spaces, to include an area for allotments;**
 - c) Compliance with Policy H4 on Housing Mix and Policy H5 on Affordable Housing;**
 - d) Measures to be incorporated into the development to ensure all properties have convenient locations for individual waste and recycling bins;**
 - e) An ecological survey is to be undertaken and its findings and recommendations adequately incorporated into the design;**
 - f) The stream corridor through the site is retained as natural open space with a 10m buffer either side. This should be managed as a high quality riparian habitat to ensure continuity; to retain connectivity and to help secure water quality and biodiversity benefits;**
 - g) A Design Code is agreed to ensure the delivery of the urban design objectives and demonstrating consistency in design between all the developers on the site and across the different phases of development.**

Issues to be addressed within the Design Code include:

The character, mix of uses and density of each phase, sub – phase or parcel identified on the Master Plan to incorporate:

- i) The phasing of the development, taking into account, where appropriate, the need to provide water quality improvements through developer contributions to ensure that there will be no adverse impact, directly or indirectly, on the integrity of the River Mease Special Area of Conservation;**
- ii) The layout of blocks and the structure of public spaces;**
- iii) The character and treatment of the perimeter planting to the development areas;**

- iv) The building height, scale, form, design features and means of enclosure that will form the basis of the character of each phase, sub-phase or parcel;**
- v) The street form and hierarchy and the features that will be used to restrict traffic speeds and create legibility and requirements for street furniture;**
- vi) The approach to car parking and cycle parking within the phases, sub-phases and parcels and the level of car and cycle parking to be provided to serve the proposed uses in line with Policy S4;**
- vii) The materials to be used within each phase and area of the development;**
- viii) The treatment of the hedge corridors and retained trees and local areas of play within each phase, sub phase or parcel and the planting of new trees and woodlands as part of the National Forest and arrangements for their future maintenance;**
- ix) Measures to ensure the retention of rural footpaths through the built development and its enhancement for walkers;**
- x) The measures to be incorporated to protect the amenities of the occupiers of existing properties adjacent to the site;**
- xi) A satisfactory scheme to prevent flooding;**
- xii) A satisfactory scheme to provide walking and cycling connectivity to the town and to existing paths leading to the open countryside across the A511 to the outstanding country side area of the Pistern Hills, Staunton Harold and towards Calke Abbey but not extending beyond the designated area.**

c) Windfall sites

In addition to the site identified in Policy H1, 'windfall sites' are expected to come forward over the lifetime of the Plan. These are small infill or redevelopment sites that come forward unexpectedly and which have not been specifically identified for new housing in a planning document. These small sites often comprise redundant or under utilised buildings, including former farm buildings, or a restricted gap in the continuity of existing frontage buildings and can range from small sites suitable for only a single dwelling to areas with a capacity for several houses (up to 10).

This type of development has provided a source of new housing in Ashby averaging about 7.5 dwellings a year. Though these sites cannot be identified, the high land values in the Plan area coupled with the level of vacant and under utilised land and buildings mean that they will continue to provide a reliable source of housing supply. However, if not sensitively undertaken and designed, such development can have an adverse impact on the character of the area. Such new development will generally increase car ownership and there is a need to ensure that it does not worsen traffic and parking issues.

POLICY H3: WINDFALL SITES – Development proposals for windfall housing will be supported where they are in accordance with relevant policies in the Plan, especially S4 and relevant national and District wide policies, and:

- **help to meet the identified housing mix for the Plan area;**
- **respect the shape and form of the Plan area in order to maintain its distinctive character and enhance it where possible;**
- **retain existing important natural boundaries such as trees, hedges and streams;**
- **provide for a safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the site and that traffic generation and parking impact including mitigation measures does not result in an unacceptable impact on its own, or in combination with other development proposals, or road and pedestrian safety;**
- **do not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring occupiers by reason of loss of privacy, loss of daylight, visual intrusion or noise; and**
- **do not reduce garden space to an extent where it adversely impacts on the character of the area, or the amenity of neighbours and the occupiers of the existing dwellings.**

d) Housing Mix

Recent housing development in Ashby de la Zouch has been primarily larger homes which meet the needs of a limited section of the community. In order to offer a greater and more balanced range of different housing types, especially smaller homes that meet the present and future housing needs of Ashby de la Zouch, it is necessary to ensure that future housing development should contain a mixture of housing types that fulfill the needs of a broad range of the community.

The Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) recommends the following housing mix to meet the needs of residents of the District over the Plan period and these are reflected in the Local Plan:

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Market	0-10%	30-40%	45-55%	10-20%
Affordable	30-35%	35-40%	25-30%	5-10%

The Local Plan also allows for local variation allowing for ‘population profiles, location, balancing recent local delivery, rebalancing the current mix and the turnover of properties at the local level as well as the nature of the development site and the character of the area’.

In Ashby, the housing mix since 2011 where approvals are known is as follows:

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Market		16 (4.6%)	92 (26.5%)	239 (68.9%)
Affordable	29 (19.6%)	81 (54.7%)	36 (24.3%)	2 (1.3%)
Total	29 (5.9%)	97 (19.6%)	128 (25.6%)	241 (48.7%)

The 2011 Census identified the housing mix in Ashby as being as follows:

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Ashby	370 (6.2%)	1222 (20.5%)	2448 (41.1%)	1404 (23.6%)
NWLDC	2210 (5.5%)	9119 (22.5%)	18533 (45.8%)	7419 (18.3%)

This shows that as at 2011 Ashby de la Zouch had a greater proportion of 4 bed houses than the District as a whole. In the approvals since 2011 the proportion of 4 bed homes has increased further, which demonstrates that there is a need for smaller house types (primarily 2 and 3 bed) within future housing developments across Ashby de la Zouch to ensure that the mix of housing across the Neighbourhood Plan area remains appropriate to the needs of the community into the future.

Census data also reveals that Ashby de la Zouch's population is generally older than that across North West Leicestershire as a whole. The proportion of residents aged 65-74 in Ashby, at 9.8%, is only marginally bigger than that of the District as a whole (9.6%). However, in the 75-84 (6.4% Ashby/5.5% District) and 90+ brackets (0.85% Ashby de la Zouch and 0.72% District), the difference is greater and indicates a need for more age-appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of the ageing population within Ashby de la Zouch.

The Local Plan emphasises in Policy H6 the need for a mixed and balanced range of accommodation. The NPPF supports this approach. Paragraph 50 promotes a mix of housing based on demographic data and reflecting local demand.

POLICY H4: HOUSING MIX – In order to meet the future needs of the residents of the Plan area, new housing development proposals should:

- a) Provide a range of housing suited to local need and appropriate to their location;**
- b) Ensure that at least 60% of new market housing in developments of 5 dwellings or more shall comprise 2 and/or 3 bedroom dwellings to redress the shortfall of smaller houses available locally; and**
- c) Provide a balance of accommodation, including bungalows, which meets the needs of people of all ages, including older people, subject to monitoring and review.**

e) Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is described in the NPPF as comprising 'Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market'.

The 2017 Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) indicates a potential need for 60% of the new housing required across the District to be affordable, however the current District Policy is for a minimum of 30% of new homes on greenfield sites in Ashby de la Zouch in developments of 11 or more to be affordable, and a minimum of 15% of new homes on previously developed land in Ashby de la Zouch in developments of 30 or more to be affordable. Consultation responses expressed concerns about the viability of schemes with this high level of affordable housing provision. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore supports the position expressed in the Local Plan.

The HEDNA indicates that, for the District as a whole, 30-35% of affordable housing need will be for 1 bedroom properties. However, for Ashby de la Zouch, there are currently 171 households on the affordable homes waiting list, 86 (50%) of which require 1 bedroom properties.

Analysis shows that in recent years of 148 affordable homes currently negotiated on Ashby de la Zouch sites with planning permission only 29 or 19.6% are 1 bedroom. If this trend continues, it can therefore be expected that there will be a large shortfall in affordable 1 bedroom homes in Ashby over the plan period.

This Policy H5 is aimed at redressing the historic under provision and disproportionate demand for affordable housing in Ashby de la Zouch. 25% of the current social housing waiting list across North West Leicestershire is for homes in Ashby de la Zouch. The objective is to offer more, and a greater range of, affordable housing that meets the present and future needs of Ashby and prioritise the needs of the town and its residents.

The need for this Policy is evidenced by the NPPF, paragraph 50, which requires local authorities to identify the required tenure of housing in specific locations and to plan for meeting this need. Policy H4 in the Local Plan for North West Leicestershire District Council sets specific targets for the delivery of affordable housing across the District, but allows for variations according to locally identified need.

POLICY H5: AFFORDABLE HOUSING – To support the provision of mixed, sustainable communities and meet an identified need within the community:

- a) **Subject to viability, a target of 30% of high quality affordable homes shall be delivered on new greenfield housing developments in the designated area, comprising 11 or more dwellings. On previously developed land the target shall be 15% above a threshold of 30 dwellings or 1ha. The Council’s preference is for on-site affordable housing provision which should:**
- **include a mix of types and tenure that reflects the type and nature of identified need; and**
 - **be integrated within the design and layout, such that they are externally indistinguishable from market housing on the same site. In exceptional circumstances commuted sums may be acceptable provided that such commuted sums shall be used to provide suitable affordable housing in Ashby de la Zouch or specialist accommodation in the wider district;**
- b) **At least 40% of the affordable homes provided shall be 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings; and**
- c) **Affordable housing delivered in the designated area will be encouraged to contribute to the provision of affordable homes that are suited to the needs of older people and those with disabilities.**

f) Promoting Self-Build

The NPPF calls for ‘custom build’ opportunities to be included in local plans as part of the housing mix. This is accommodated within the Neighbourhood Plan and referred to as ‘self-build’. These opportunities offer benefits in terms of affordability, local engagement and encouraging bespoke design appropriate to the area. This will ensure the fit within the overall design of the scheme and provide flexibility to meet a range of different needs.

In this type of development, new homes are built either by the future homeowner themselves (self-build), or to their specification by a small developer or local builder (custom build). The Neighbourhood Plan promotes this approach and encourages self-build opportunities to be incorporated into new housing developments.

The national self-build website - <http://www.nasba.org.uk/> - identifies a number of benefits to this type of development model when compared to conventional development:

- Better quality homes.
- More individual and contemporary architecture (but the style must still be in accordance with local planning policy).
- Cheaper to build than to buy the equivalent.
- More likely to be undertaken by local residents – thereby enhancing a sense of community.
- More likely to include sustainable and green technology.
- Homes that are tailored to the needs of their owners.
- More likely to involve local tradespeople in the construction.

POLICY H6: PROMOTING SELF-BUILD – Development proposals for self-build or custom build schemes will be viewed positively.

4.3. Employment and Economic Growth

a) Introduction

Employment and economic growth are key to sustainable, vibrant and prosperous communities.

The Plan area has a strong and competitive economy and work force as evidenced in the high and growing number of companies based there as well as the sustained levels of investment in its economy and low levels of unemployment.

The Plan area is a very attractive and supportive location for businesses to be based and grow. It enjoys a strategic location with excellent road and air networks. It also benefits from a high quality business infrastructure, including a number of purpose built and modern industrial estates. Its distinctive, historic and attractive built and natural environment, set within the heart of the National Forest, is also a major plus.

As a consequence, it is home to many hundreds of businesses and offers employment and business opportunities not only for the Parish but the wider area. It is also close to key economic growth areas such as East Midlands Airport and Donington Park. These growth areas provide opportunities for jobs, trade and investment for Ashby de la Zouch residents and businesses, which the Plan seeks to maximise.

The population is skilled with the proportion of the population with a degree being about half again the national average, for example. The population is also entrepreneurial as reflected in the high number of people self-employed and business startups. Many residents, however, who wish to work in the plan area struggle to do so many have been unable to find work in the Plan area and have to travel long distances, often by car, to their workplace.

Consultation shows that residents, businesses and other stakeholders wish to see Ashby de la Zouch continue to offer a high quality and sustainable business environment and infrastructure, that allows businesses to form, grow and prosper. There should also be a focus on supporting residents to benefit from the employment and investment opportunities, including through self-employment.

b) Employment Land and Buildings

The Plan area is home to many hundreds of businesses spanning a wide and diverse range of sectors including the services sector, manufacturing and a growing number in the warehousing sector. The vast majority of these are small, employing less than ten people, but include some very large employers.

To make sure that the Plan area continues to provide sustainable, accessible job opportunities and to benefit from economic growth, it is important to ensure the continuing availability of a choice of sites and premises. To achieve this, the Plan seeks to protect suitable employment sites. This is especially important as recent years have seen a gradual loss of employment sites to other uses, such as the former ARLA dairy site, which was granted planning permission for about 150 homes and the former biscuit and soap factories.

Employment uses are generally to be found scattered across the Plan area. This includes sites which have been granted planning permission for employment use, such as a major (26 hectares) site of the former Lounge disposal point, but on which development has yet to commence and is likely to be impinged upon by the route of HS2. For the purposes of the Plan, employment land and buildings includes existing employment uses as well as commitments.

Whilst it is important to protect the existing stock of employment land and buildings, the Plan recognises that there may be circumstances where this may not be appropriate, for example, where a site or building was not designed, nor can be easily adapted, to modern business needs. This also accords with national and local planning policy which advises against the protection of employment sites where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose.

In 2010 an independent assessment of the main employment sites (both existing and commitments) in North West Leicestershire was undertaken on behalf of the District Council. This included some sites in the Plan area. This looked at sites in terms of a number of factors to assess whether the sites continued to meet market requirements:

- accessibility by road;
- accessibility by public transport;
- external environment; and
- internal environment.

This concluded that the vast majority of the existing major employment sites in the Plan area were worthy of retention, a conclusion the Plan supports

- Ashby Business Park, Nottingham Road (south);
- Ivanhoe Business Park, Smisby Road;
- Flagstaff Industrial Estate, Nottingham Road (north);
- Smisby Road Industrial Estate; and
- Nottingham Road Industrial Estate.

It is also noted that in addition to the major employment sites considered as part of the 2010 study, the site Land north of Ashby de la Zouch (Money Hill) is to include a major (16 hectare) employment area. The precise extent and scope of this employment area has yet to be fully established, but will have a significant impact on employment provision in the Plan area.

The Plan recognises that in addition to these major employment areas there are several smaller employment sites to be found across the Plan area. Many of these businesses are situated in residential areas or in the countryside where they operate and flourish without issue. These sites play an important, and growing, role in the economy of the Plan area. It is national and local planning policy that they should be retained for employment purposes wherever possible and appropriate. A policy stance this Plan supports.

POLICY E1: EMPLOYMENT LAND AND BUILDINGS – The Plan supports the retention of sites or buildings that provide employment (B1, B2 and B8) or future potential employment opportunities, as set out in Policy Ec3 in the Local Plan.

c) Small and Start-Up Businesses

Within the Plan area there is a small and growing number of small businesses. They are key to a sustainable, diverse and vibrant economy and community, and the Plan is keen to encourage their establishment and growth in appropriate locations.

Often these can operate in residential areas from a home office or a small workshop without causing nuisance or detriment to the environment.

Though such types of development do not necessarily need planning permission, where it is required the Plan is generally supportive of their provision when it is in a suitable and appropriate location. In special circumstances, this could include the conversion of existing or redundant buildings outside of the defined Limits to Development for uses such as agriculture, tourism, and home-working uses that are appropriate to a rural location.

POLICY E2: SMALL AND START UP BUSINESSES – Development proposals for new or the expansion of existing small businesses, where in conformity with other provisions in the Local Development Plan will be encouraged. The Plan encourages developments and initiatives, which support small and start-up businesses such as the provision of start-up units.

d) Connecting Local People to the new Job Opportunities

In addition to supporting businesses to create jobs and investment, there is a need to ensure that all local people, especially in the Plan area and the wider Parish, have the opportunities needed to access jobs and meet the needs of employers. This is key to a sustainable economy and a vibrant community.

The Plan supports actions aimed at connecting local people to the new job opportunities and preventing the barriers such as training or transport that restrict them doing so. This benefits both businesses and local people.

POLICY E3: CONNECTING PEOPLE IN THE PLAN AREA TO THE NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT – New employment development proposals will be supported which meet local needs, by:

- a) Providing a range of employment units of varying sizes, where appropriate; and**
- b) Providing safe and attractive transport links, especially by foot, cycle and public transport such as through Travel Plans and enhanced bus provision with the main employment areas in the Plan area;**

4.4. Ashby de la Zouch Town Centre

a) Introduction

A strong town centre is vital for vibrant, sustainable and thriving communities. It is at the heart of a community. Ashby de la Zouch Town Centre is the main destination for shopping within the Parish and further afield. It has a distinctive retail offer with a high proportion of independent retailers and a monthly Farmers Market. As well as shopping, the Town Centre provides a range of uses which contribute to its character.

It provides a valuable service in meeting the day to day shopping, social and other important needs of residents as well as providing opportunities for investment and local employment, close to where people live. It also reduces the need to travel, and acts as a focal point for local life and interaction.

The NPPF seeks to ensure that town centres remain vibrant, diverse and healthy. It states that “town centres should be seen as the heart of communities” and that policies should “support their viability and vitality”.

Ashby de la Zouch is an historic, vibrant and attractive town. It is where the majority of the shops in the Plan area are concentrated, and has a good range of other centrally located facilities with a leisure centre, library, museum and very popular primary and secondary schools. Although these cater well for the everyday needs of local residents and help to make the Town Centre an attractive venue for visitors, these facilities are under increasing pressure. The growth in on-line retail, the cost of travel, lack of Town Centre parking and the proliferation of out of town retail centres have all had an impact on the Town Centre.

Over the years, the town has retained its traditional character and street pattern. This is reflected in much of it being designated as a Conservation Area reflecting its historic and architectural interest.

In 2015, North West Leicestershire District Council as part of the development of the Local Plan commissioned independent experts to undertake an assessment of the vitality and viability of the main centres in the District, including Ashby de la Zouch. The conclusions were that “Ashby was shown to be performing well, with a low vacancy rate, a well maintained town centre and a good variety of retailers with a mix of national multiples and specialist independents”. This view was supported by the Leicestershire Market Towns Research which concluded in 2016. The review concluded that there is scope to enhance the centre’s offer in terms of its service provision, particularly hotels, restaurants and cafes, which are increasingly sought to complement the overall shopping experience and will help increase dwell times.

This Local Plan has Ashby, alongside Coalville, at the top of the retail hierarchy in the District, although Coalville town centre is the District Council’s priority for further retail development.

Consultation reveals that ensuring that Ashby de la Zouch Town Centre remains an attractive, and sustainable place in which to work, live and shop and with a vibrant night-time economy remains a top priority.

Residents, however, have expressed concern over the appearance of new or rebranded shop fronts, which are out of keeping, and transport issues, in particular car parking, loading, unloading and congestion. They are also concerned that core shops are being replaced with other uses such as office accommodation and hot food take-aways, and this is having an adverse impact on the role and attractiveness of the Town Centre.

It is also apparent that the amount of out of centre retail floor space in Ashby has roughly doubled in the last 5 years with the extension of Tesco and developments at Dents Road such as Aldi, Wickes and Pets at Home. These stores all sell products previously the preserve of Town Centre shops and have provided a retail offer in competition with the Town Centre.

b) Town Centre Uses

Town Centre boundaries are important, because they help to define the character of an area and control the uses within and outside of the boundary.

Their use is encouraged in the NPPF as well as local planning policy, including the Local Plan, which proposes that a Town Centre boundary be defined for Ashby de la Zouch to reinforce and protect its key Town Centre role and function.

The Town Council, in conjunction with the District Council, have reviewed the Town Centre boundary and a new one is included within the Local Plan that better reflects the extent of the Town Centre in Ashby de la Zouch.

The Plan also supports other complementary uses such as food and drinking establishments where they would not adversely affect the key role and function of the Town Centre and the amenities of residents and other people visiting the Town Centre. This includes evening and night time uses. Care however needs to be taken that this would not lead to an over concentration of such uses. The consultation shows that there is a concern that there is already an over concentration of hot food takeaways and this is having an adverse impact on the amenity of the Town Centre.

POLICY TCI: TOWN CENTRE USES – Ashby de la Zouch is and will remain a retail, leisure and service Town Centre.

Development proposals for retail uses across the Town Centre (as defined in figure 6 on the Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area map), and for uses outside the Primary Shopping Area such as leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, and community, will be supported where they:

- a) Are of a scale appropriate to the character of Ashby de la Zouch and the role and function of its Town Centre;**
- b) Conserve, and where possible, enhance the character and distinctiveness of Ashby de la Zouch in terms of design; and**
- c) Protect, and where possible, enhance its built and historic assets, and its wider setting.**

Community Action TCI: Retail mix – The Town Council will liaise with North West Leicestershire District Council on an annual basis to update the record of the retail mix in the Town Centre.

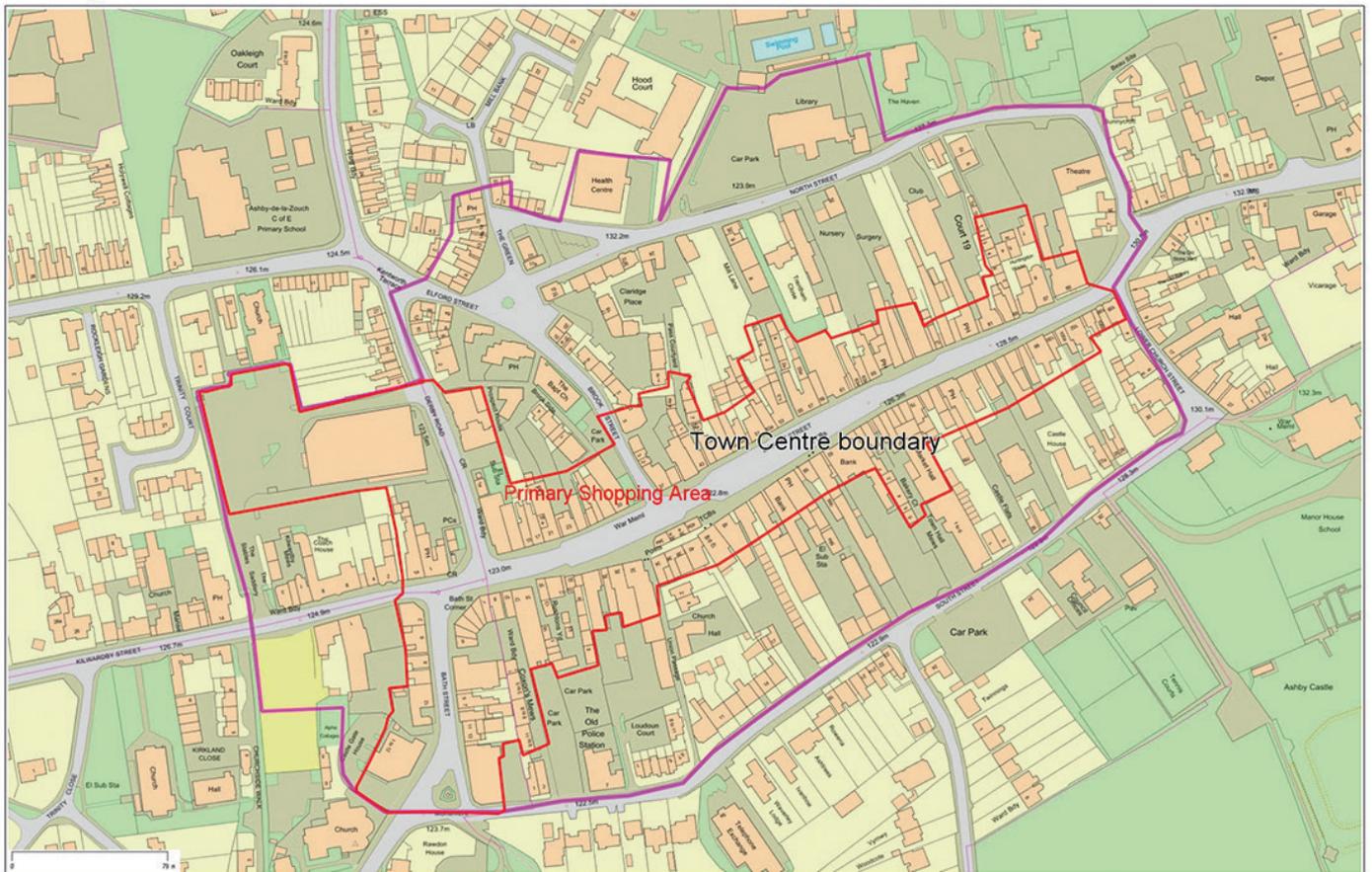
c) Establishing a Primary Shopping Area for the Town Centre

The NPPF requires the extent of primary and secondary areas (paragraph 23) to be defined. A Primary Shopping Area is an area where core (A1) shopping uses such as greengrocers; bakers etc. will be principally concentrated. The Primary Shopping Area in Ashby de la Zouch has been defined within the Local Plan and this definition is supported by the Neighbourhood Plan, as are Policies Ec10 and Ec11 within the Local Plan.

In Ashby de la Zouch Town Centre, the concentration of retail shopping is along Market Street, in the Market Hall, along Bath Street, Bath Corner and parts of Derby Road and Brook Street. The development of 'Mews' style shopping areas has been a particular feature of Ashby Town Centre over recent years with Coxon Mews, Mill Lane Mews and Pass Courtyard in particular proving to be popular places to shop. The development of further 'Mews' style courtyards is seen as offering an attractive addition to the retail offer within the Town Centre and will be supported.

The Local Plan provides a detailed schedule of existing retail uses within Ashby Town Centre and specifically addresses the clustering of hot food takeaways within the Town Centre.

Figure 6 Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area



Date Created: 29-11-2016 | Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 435762 / 316780 | Scale: 1:2500 | © Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (100053272) 2016

d) Shop Frontages in the Town Centre

Concern has been expressed that the visual appearance of shops and businesses in the Town Centre has declined, resulting in a less attractive street scene and diminishing the impact of the traditional buildings within it.

Well designed shopfronts and frontages to buildings make an important contribution to the character of the Town Centre as well as to individual buildings across it. The retention of historic shopfronts, is particularly important. Alongside high quality contemporary design, they make an important contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the retail area.

Where existing shopfronts are of indifferent or poor quality design, replacement with shopfronts of high quality design and materials which complement the design and proportions of the host building will be encouraged.

Run down or broken shopfronts should be repaired rather than replaced where they make an important contribution to the local distinctiveness of the building or area.

POLICY TC2: SHOP FRONTAGES – Development proposals to alter or replace existing shopfronts, create new shopfronts or to alter the frontages within the defined Town Centre will be supported where they:

- a) Conserve or enhance the special qualities and significance of the building and area; and**
- b) Relate well to their context in terms of design, scale and material**

Poorly designed development proposals to remove, replace or substantially alter shop fronts or the frontages of buildings will not be supported.

e) Residential Development in the Town Centre

The Plan also recognises the importance of residential development within the Town Centre to ensure its vitality and promote sustainable living.

Many people already live within the Town Centre, and the Plan wishes to encourage more people to do so.

It is considered that residential accommodation on the upper floors of retail, commercial and other uses in the Town Centre could make an important contribution. Vacant space over shops and other uses in the Town Centre is commonplace within Ashby de la Zouch. Their re-use would prove a cost-effective means of creating additional housing in the Town Centre. There would also be wider benefits to sustainability and the vitality of the Town Centre whilst complementing its core role and function. These benefits would however need to be balanced against other considerations such as the amenity of the proposed residential property and adjoining properties, as well as design, access and parking issues, which need to be in accordance with Leicestershire County Council standards as specified in Policy S4.

POLICY TC3: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT – Within the Primary Shopping Area and outside flood zones 3 or 3a, proposals to develop upper floors of premises for residential use will be supported subject to parking, design and amenity considerations and , where it would not result in the loss of, or adversely affect an existing retail use.

f) Promoting Tourism in the Town Centre and across the plan area

Leicestershire's tourism strategy recognises the importance of tourism in providing 'sustained and sustainable growth and playing an increasingly significant role in the success of the economy, creating a strong sense of place and improved quality of life for Leicestershire people'. (Draft tourism strategy for Leicestershire, 2016). The North West Leicestershire: Local Growth Plan 2014-18 supports the 'development and enhancement' of the tourism offer and the Local Plan highlights the role of Ashby Castle and the Ashby Canal in attracting visitors.

Tourism includes facilities and services designed to encourage people to come to Ashby. They can include hotels, restaurants, parks and visitor attractions such as the Castle, St Helen's Church, the St Helen's Heritage Project, Holy Trinity Church, the Museum, the Bath Grounds, Hood Park Leisure Centre and Hicks Lodge Cycle Centre. The Georgian Royal Hotel is a prominent Grade II* Listed Building close to Ashby Town Centre and is the only town centre accommodation of any size. The Royal Hotel has traditionally catered for weddings and other meetings. Unfortunately the Royal Hotel closed in Spring 2018 and the owner is preparing plans for redeveloping and upgrading the building and its facilities. There is generally a shortage of tourism and leisure facilities. This is particularly important given Ashby's location at the centre of the National Forest. In particular, it has a deficiency of hotels to accommodate visitors.

The development of new tourism and leisure facilities will help to promote the Town Centre and increase footfall to the shops, strengthening the business community and the town itself.

This is also in accordance with Section 3 of the NPPF which encourages planning policies that support sustainable rural tourism and Policy Ec13 of the Local Plan that recognises the role that planning can play in promoting tourism and makes a link between tourism and economic development of an area.

g) Signage and lighting

The majority of the shop premises within the Town Centre are of Georgian and Victorian origin and reinforce the strong visual characteristic of the locality. Consultation has shown that there is a desire to retain and maintain the traditional appearance of the buildings and this is supported by an approach of strictly controlling signage and lighting.

The Town Centre is located within the Conservation Area and the requirement to maintain the traditional appearance will ensure the existing heritage assets are conserved and enhanced.

Consultation has also indicated a concern that signage within the town has developed in a piecemeal fashion.

As a consequence, it is cluttered and uncoordinated. This means that visitors to the Town Centre and residents living on outlying estates often do not understand how to best get around it.

Some of the signage is also unattractive and detracts from the special character of the town.

A number of towns and cities have introduced 'Legible Signage Policies' to help to reduce the amount of street clutter and better understand how to get between places; an approach this Plan supports,

as well as a general improvement in signage in the town to provide a more corporate and consistent image.

The use of inappropriate external lighting has the potential to erode the traditional feel of the Town Centre.

All signage should be kept to a minimum and must be designed to fit sympathetically with the local character. Internally illuminated box signs that are fixed externally to a building are not in keeping and will not normally be permitted.

POLICY TC4: LEGIBLE SIGNAGE – The ‘de-cluttering’ and provision of signage in keeping with the character of the area will be supported.

Proposals for new development incorporating ‘Swan neck’ external lighting or the use of signs with internal illumination (either of the whole sign or of the lettering) will not be permitted.

Community Action TC2: Legible signage - the Town Council will work with the District Council, County Council as well as businesses and residents in the town to introduce a ‘Legible Signage’ Strategy for the town.

4.5. Transport

a) Introduction

Transport is primarily a means to an end, and the fundamental purpose of all modes of transport (by foot, cycle, car etc.) is to enable people to access those locations, goods and activities they want or need.

Good quality, accessible and sustainable transport is key to supporting the vitality and viability of a community, and of achieving a good quality of life.

The Plan area is strategically and conveniently located on the main transport network with good road connections, including the M1, M5, M42, M40 and M6 motorways. It is also less than 10 miles away from a major airport – East Midlands. It has a reasonable network of footpaths and cycle ways, as well as some forms of public transport such as buses and taxis (though it does not have a rail station). Levels of car ownership are relatively high (84% of households had access to a car in 2011 compared to 74% for England) and growing. Consultation feedback has indicated concerns about inadequate Town Centre car parking.

It is also noted that the proposed route of HS2 will cut through the Plan area, adjacent to the A42. This is a national strategic project that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot directly influence, but if the current proposed route is implemented it will have an impact.

b) Traffic Management

The traffic situation within the Plan area has been identified as a significant issue for many involved in the development of the Plan, not only residents, but also employers, visitors and other interested parties. The road network in the Plan area has developed over many years, and much of it was not designed for, nor suited to, modern vehicular movements. At the same time, a significant and a growing amount of vehicular traffic, including heavy goods vehicles, passes through the Plan area. Therefore, many of its roads are congested, particularly along the A511 and the main roads into and through the Town Centre. This is one of the main negative aspects of living, visiting and working in the Plan area.

Whilst it is recognised that there has been significant investment in the transport network and further improvements are planned such as Junction 13 of the A42, there is concern that this investment in the transport infrastructure has failed to keep up with the growth of the Plan area.

In addition, planned and anticipated further development, if not properly managed and planned, will put the transport infrastructure, especially the road system, under even greater pressure especially along the A511 and in and around the Town Centre.

Improvements in access and safety on Nottingham Road, Wood Street and Market Street (including the potential introduction of a 20 mile per hour zone) have also already been highlighted as a priority should the Money Hill development scheme go ahead.

The need for a Zebra Crossing on Kilwardby Street, if there is further development off Moira Road; possible one way or cul-de-sac and safety measures at the bottom of South Street/ Brook Street

and improved pedestrian access to the Bath Grounds on South Street, if there are additional developments serviced by South Street or Prior Park Road, have also been highlighted as priorities.

Whilst the formulation of transport policy at the local level is primarily a matter for North West Leicestershire District Council and Leicestershire County Council (as the highway authority), the Plan does support and strongly encourage actions that can be taken to improve vehicular and highway safety especially along and around existing and future hot spots, including those identified above.

POLICY T1: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT – Traffic management measures that improve vehicular and road pedestrian safety will be encouraged.

c) Promoting Travel Plans

Travel Plans are a commonly used and proven means to reduce travel by car and promote more sustainable means of travel especially by public transport.

They are a package of actions specifically designed by, and tailored to, a workplace, school or location such as a new housing development.

Travel Plans generally include measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport, but can include car sharing schemes; cycling facilities; a dedicated bus service or restricted car parking allocations.

There is an emphasis on reducing reliance on the private car, particularly single occupancy car travel.

It is considered that the characteristics of the Plan area, including higher levels of congestion especially at peak times and relatively poor public transport network (especially between the Town Centre and nearby residential and employment areas) mean that it is especially suited to a Travel Plan based approach to help achieve a shift to walking, cycling and public transport.

POLICY T2: TRAVEL PLANS – The Plan promotes and encourages the use of Travel Plans, including proposals for housing, employment and educational uses to deliver sustainable development. Development proposals, which the Highway Authority considers would generate a significant amount of travel, should be supported by a Travel Plan designed to deliver opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes tailored to that development and the wider travel needs of the Plan area, including where appropriate, a reduction in Town Centre traffic.

d) Safer Routes to Schools Scheme

The consultation identified a need for school pupils to be encouraged to walk, cycle or use bus services to get to school.

This would help reduce the peak traffic volumes arising at the start and end of the school day and minimise the environmental, safety and accessibility issues arising from the high number of cars parking near schools, including at and close to the school gates.

This could include initiatives such as Safer Routes to School Schemes, or similar, which bring together a package of measures such as 20 mph zone, safer crossing points, cycle storage facilities and enhanced signing, lining and lighting in an area.

POLICY T3: SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOLS SCHEMES – The Plan will encourage ‘Safe Routes to Schools’ schemes where appropriate. Development proposals for a new school or a significant expansion in an existing school’s capacity should be accompanied by a Safer Routes to Schools Scheme.

e) Promoting Walking and Cycling

Reliance on the car in the Plan area is very high and many of the journeys (even short ones) are made by car.

Encouraging people to walk or use a bicycle for short journeys and leisure purposes can bring significant benefits not only in terms of reducing congestion on roads, but also cutting carbon emissions and creating healthier communities.

Cycling and walking has great potential in the Plan area. It is relatively compact and has a reasonable network of footpaths and cycleways. There is some evidence that residents are increasingly taking up walking and cycle riding for leisure and other purposes.

The consultation has shown these footpaths and cycleways are highly prized and cherished by residents, who wish to see them protected and, wherever possible, enhanced.

The consultation and the analysis undertaken as part of the development of the Plan highlighted some areas for improvement in the present network. Through this work, gaps in the network have become apparent; especially between residential areas and the Town Centre, as well as between residential areas the main employment sites, essential community facilities, such as schools, and the countryside. It has identified the desire and strong case for a dedicated joint footpath and cycleway that circumnavigates the Parish. Another significant area of improvement highlighted was the maintenance and condition of some footpaths and cycleways, which can hinder their use. Also, where possible cycleways should be made available for horse use. The Sustrans guidance on Horses on the National Cycle Network (Technical information note No. 28 September 2011) provides recommended design criteria regarding cycleways and the width needed to permit horses to safely share paths with walkers and cyclists.

An Ashby de la Zouch cycling strategy has been developed in partnership with Leicestershire County

Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and the Heart of the Forest Forum 'Access and Connectivity sub-group'. This sets out proposals for promoting and supporting cycling in Ashby de la Zouch and the wider area; the findings of which this Plan supports.

New developments should seek to promote and enhance the network of linked footpaths and cycle ways within the Plan Area. Using the opportunities created by developments to protect 'green lungs' that connect the Town Centre with the surrounding countryside.

A number of rights of way in the Plan area are affected by the planned route for HS2. The impact and implications of HS2 construction will be dealt with when the plan is reviewed.

POLICY T4: WALKING AND CYCLING

The provision of new and/or the enhancement of existing footpaths and cycleways appropriately associated with new development will be actively encouraged in the designated area of the Plan. Where appropriate, priority should be given to (i) the creation or improved links between the main residential areas and the Town Centre, surrounding countryside and facilities such as schools (ii) creation or improved links between the main residential areas and the main employment areas; (iii) the joining up footpaths and safe cycleways into a comprehensive network.

f) Supporting the use of the Leicester to Burton Railway Line for passenger transport

The Leicester to Burton railway line is an important train line, part of which runs through the Plan area. It currently serves freight trains and has not carried passengers for many years.

No mainline or branch passenger railway stations are present in the Plan area. The nearest railway station is at Burton upon Trent, approximately 15km from Ashby de la Zouch Town Centre.

The reintroduction of passenger services would make an important contribution to a reduction in motor vehicle usage and would enhance Ashby's position as a transport hub and a tourism location. This Plan seeks to protect the line and its infrastructure so that it can be re-opened for passenger use in the future.

However, it is recognised that the decision whether or not the line should close is largely beyond the scope of this Plan. Should the line close, its route along the Valley adjacent to several towns, villages and employment areas, could make it ideal for a walking and cycling way.

The Plan does not support its closure for rail purposes, but, should it close, would support its use as a footpath, cycleway or for some form of public transport development proposal.

POLICY T5: LEICESTER TO BURTON RAILWAY LINE –The Plan supports the provision of public transport services on the former Leicester to Burton rail line. Proposals that threaten the integrity of the Leicester to Burton railway line and its infrastructure for potential re-use for public transport services will not be supported. However, should the line completely cease being used for rail purposes the Plan supports its re-use as a footpath, cycleway or for some other form of public transport.

g) Public Transport

Public transport, such as buses and taxis, provide a much needed and valued service for many residents, especially those without access to a car.

The Plan area has some public transport provision, including bus services and taxis, providing links to Burton, Swadlincote, Coalville and Leicester. The town service which connected outlying estates with the Town Centre has recently ended. Links with other key centres like East Midlands Airport, Tamworth, Derby, Nottingham and Birmingham do not exist. This limits the use of public transport in commuting to work across the Midlands.

Consultation suggests that public transport provision is generally not adequate, especially to persuade car owners to make use of it. Also, it does not meet the needs of all the community, in particular many of the Plan area's rural settlements which often have infrequent bus services and people with disabilities. Furthermore, given the current funding position of the County Council and the wider public sector, the risks of further reductions in public transport provision remain high, making improved service provision more difficult to deliver.

With the increase in housing it will be even more important to offer improved public transport to residents.

More effective publicity of the services available and better coordination of these services was also a major theme here.

COMMUNITY ACTION T1: PUBLIC TRANSPORT –The Town Council will support and encourage liaison with Leicestershire Highway Authority, Leicestershire County Council, Highways England, East Midlands Airport, Network Rail, the bus operators and other relevant bodies to try to achieve better planning, and improved provision, of public transport.

h) Car Parking

Action to improve car parking emerged as a top priority from the consultation on the Plan.

Despite actions by North West Leicestershire District, the Town Council and other agencies to improve the situation, car parking is a serious issue in much of the Plan area. Increased car usage and ownership and more residents, workers and visitors have led to a shortage of available spaces with the consequent detrimental effect on pedestrian and road safety and the ease by which traffic, including emergency and service vehicles, can travel within the Parish.

This is particularly true in the Town Centre, which essentially retains a tight, medieval street pattern and has not developed with modern parking needs in mind. It is also a serious issue in the older parts of the Plan area, where the roads and pavements tend to be narrower and the older houses lack off street parking.

Residents recognise the need to discourage the use of the car, but feel that unless the necessary investment in public transport is forthcoming, they (and visitors to the Plan area) will continue to depend on the car for the majority of journeys. This dependency will have implications for car parking provision.

Signage to the Town's car parks has also been highlighted as an issue and action to address this is outlined in the Town Centre section of the Plan.

North West Leicestershire District Council and Leicestershire County Council have developed important guidelines on transport infrastructure needs, including any car parking provision sought as part of a development proposal. The Plan supports this guidance. In addition, it urges the application of the highest levels for car parking provision as set out in the guidelines, especially in those parts of the Plan area where the general lack of car parking provision is having the greatest negative impact on the character and quality of life.

Furthermore, the Plan seeks to retain existing parking provision from other forms of development, unless there are strong grounds to justify its loss.

North West Leicestershire District Council have conducted a review of car parking in the District, and this has produced proposals to improving car parking. Following this review in 2018 a new Town Centre car park opened on North Street. A strategic multi-agency approach is required to improve car parking in the Town Centre and the wider plan area.

Many of the car parking issues that need to be addressed, for example, car parking charging policy, alternatives to car parking provision, or whether free on-street parking should be provided, are beyond the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan, which is essentially concerned with the development of land.

Discussions have already taken place with the District Council, County Council and other agencies about the need for a major multi-agency review of car parking provision and policy as well as the resulting action plan. The Plan supports and underlines the importance of a multi-agency approach to improve the situation.

COMMUNITY ACTION T2: The Plan supports a multi-agency approach to improving car parking provision and policies in the Plan area, especially in the Town Centre, and the Town Council will work with the Leicestershire Highway Authority, Leicestershire County Council, North West Leicestershire District Council, the local business community and other relevant bodies to achieve this.

4.6 Historic Environment

a) Introduction

The residents of Ashby de la Zouch are proud of its historic heritage which goes back over 900 years and wish to see this protected and enhanced. Ashby de la Zouch Castle, the Parish Church of St Helen's, medieval pubs and 19th Century buildings associated with the Town's history as a Spa resort are at the heart of its historic environment.

Outside the Town Centre there is evidence of the prehistoric settlements. Within the Money Hill area there is evidence of polygons and field names associated with kilns and also for a Saxo-Norman site, which are of archaeological interest. There is also the discovery of two urns filled with 3rd century AD coins which were ploughed up in 1818. Fields also display evidence of ridge and furrow earth works, which illustrate the relationship between the Medieval town of Ashby and the agrarian landscape which once surrounded it.

The conservation and appreciation of this historic environment is a priority of the Plan.



b) Buildings and other Assets of Historic and Architectural Interest

Ashby de la Zouch has a rich and diverse historic and architectural environment. It has a concentration of important heritage assets that span the urban development of the Plan area over the last nine hundred years. This includes landmark buildings such as the 12th Century Ashby de la Zouch Castle and St Helen's Church, as well as numerous other buildings of architectural and historic interest associated with its social and economic heritage and development.

These are highly valued by residents and visitors and make a major contribution to the Plan area's unique and distinct character. They play a significant role in defining it and setting it apart from other similar towns.

c) Nationally recognised buildings and other Assets of Historic and Architectural Interest

There are over 100 heritage assets (in 2016) within the Plan area that have been identified as being of national significance and importance.

The vast majority of these are 'Listed Buildings'. A building is 'Listed' when it is of special architectural or historic interest sufficient for it to be considered of national importance and therefore worth protecting.

Clustered in the historic centre of the Town Centre, these range in scale from iron bollards at the entrance to Union Passage to the Grade I Listed Ashby de la Zouch Castle (which is 'Listed' at Grade I as a building of exceptional interest). It also includes six Grade II* Listed properties - buildings of special importance - including three buildings along Station Road associated with the early nineteenth century spa development of the Parish.

The full list of Listed Buildings in the Parish can be found at http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/listed_buildings.

In addition to these Listed Buildings, the Plan area contains one Scheduled Ancient Monument – Ashby de la Zouch Castle.

The designation of these Heritage Assets as Listed Buildings and an Ancient Monument gives special legal protection beyond that which can be provided through a Neighbourhood Plan. It is important, however, that the Plan highlights them, especially to ensure that all interested parties are aware of their local importance, and the need to conserve and enhance their setting.

In addition to the Listed Buildings, there are several other assets of some architectural or historic merit, which make a positive contribution to the character of the Plan area.

National and district-wide planning policy enables a community to offer these some level of protection and appreciation by identifying them as non-designated heritage assets. Normally such assets are buildings, though, in principle, this can cover other structures such as monuments and geological and archaeological remains.

Following an assessment undertaken in 2001 as part of the Ashby de la Zouch Conservation Area Appraisal and Study over a 100 such unlisted buildings of interest were identified in the Conservation Area (these are listed in appendix 1). These include the substantial brick built (former) vicarage to St Helen's Church and the Saline Baths Infirmary of 1854, as well as the former Police Station/Magistrates Court.

Generally, the condition of these important heritage assets in the Plan area is good. There are, however, some which are not in such a good condition. In particular, the former Midlands Railway Station, Midland Road – is identified by Historic England (in 2016) as being 'at risk'. Another Grade II* Listed Building, The Royal Hotel on Station Road, is also considered by respondents to consultation to be 'at risk' owing to the recent deterioration in the fabric of the building.

d) Ashby de la Zouch and Heath End Conservation Areas

The Plan area's historic assets are concentrated in the Town Centre. This is reflected in its designation as a Conservation Area by North West Leicestershire District Council.

A Conservation Area is defined by law as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

The area covered by the Ashby de la Zouch Conservation Area incorporates the centre of the Town, with extensions southwards to include Ashby Castle and The Bath Grounds. The Conservation Area is described in a 2001 Appraisal and Study as being of a predominantly Georgian/early Victorian character.

In addition to the Ashby de la Zouch Conservation Area, part of the Heath End Conservation Area near Staunton Harold is within the Plan Area. This covers a small hamlet some 5.5 km to the north of the town of Ashby de la Zouch. The 2002 Conservation Area Appraisal and Study describes that “the character of the Area is essentially derived from the scattered grouping of the Saracens Head Public House and the farmsteads in the hamlet along Heath End Lane/Callan's Lane. In their origin the buildings range in date from the early post medieval period through to the late Victorian period”.

The Plan supports the national designation of much of the Town Centre and the Hamlet of Heath End as Conservation Areas and the protection this gives them from inappropriate development.

It is noted that the last appraisal of the Conservation Areas was undertaken by the District Council in 2001 and 2002. Legislation requires that Conservation Area appraisals be reviewed by the local planning authority from “time to time”. It is considered that some aspects of the appraisals are now dated. In particular, the recommendations for enhancement and mitigation of the Ashby de la Zouch Conservation Area. The Plan welcomes the intention of the District Council to review conservation areas every five years. It supports, and strongly urges, that the Conservation Area Appraisal for Ashby de la Zouch and to a lesser extent Heath End be urgently updated and that all partners with a strong interest in the Conservation Area be included as part of this process. The Town Council will have a key and important role to play here.

POLICY HEI:ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH AND HEATH END CONSERVATION AREAS – The Plan supports the continued designation of the historic core of Ashby De La Zouch and the hamlet of Heath End as Conservation Areas.

COMMUNITY ACTION HEI:The District Council, in consultation with the Town Council and other interested parties and stakeholders, are requested to undertake an immediate review of the Ashby de la Zouch Conservation Area Appraisal.

e) Archaeological Sites

The Plan area's richness in heritage assets is not confined to above the ground, it also encompasses significant under ground archaeological remains.

Important remains within the Parish are likely to range in date from the medieval period to the industrial period.

The best known archaeological site is Ashby de la Zouch Castle and its associated formal garden area 'The Wilderness' to the south. This is designated as a Scheduled Monument. Scheduled Monuments are those sites recognised as being nationally important, and having the highest priority for protection.

As bodies, such as English Heritage, have highlighted, there is potential for the survival of other important archaeology to be found across the Plan area, particularly in and around the Town Centre, around the Castle site and near St. Helen's Church, especially in view of the level of rebuilding that occurred along the principal streets of the town in the Georgian and early Victorian periods.

Leicestershire County Council maintains a consolidated database (the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record) of recorded archaeological sites in the Plan area and the wider county. The knowledge and understanding of the archaeology in the Plan area will be enhanced by the forthcoming Extensive Urban Survey of Leicestershire, the pilot study of which commenced in 2016. This has started with the historic market towns of North West Leicestershire, including Ashby de la Zouch. The Plan supports the inclusion of Ashby de La Zouch as a pilot as part of this study.

POLICY HE2:AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST - Where a development proposal may adversely affect the site of an heritage asset with archaeological interest , developers or their agents should seek guidance from the local planning authority at the pre-application stage to establish the material that will be required as part of any planning application, comprising either an appropriate desk-based assessment or, where necessary, a field evaluation, in order to appropriately assess the proposed development.

4.7. Natural environment

a) Introduction

The Plan area has a diverse mix of green spaces that exist around, within and between the town of Ashby de la Zouch and the other settlements that make up the Plan area.

As well as formal public green space such as parks, recreation grounds, allotments and children's playgrounds, there are other important less formal open spaces such as woodlands, allotments, and grassed areas, as well as areas of attractive accessible countryside.

These areas make a significant contribution to the distinctive and attractive character of the Plan area and provide opportunities for informal and formal recreation. They and the wildlife they support are highly valued by the local community.

They are especially important as studies have shown that whilst the Plan area has a good range of open space scattered across the Plan area, much of which is popular and well used, such as Western Park, the total provision is relatively low. In 2008, for example a study was undertaken by North West Leicestershire District Council looking at the provision of formal open space such as parks and recreation grounds across the District. This identified that the total amount of formal open space in the Parish was below recognised national and district standards. Furthermore, there is some evidence that this relative lack of open space has worsened since 2008 as new provision has not kept pace with new development.

Other studies such as the Ashby de la Zouch Conservation Area Appraisal and Study undertaken in 2001 have also underlined the important and unique contribution green spaces make to the townscape of Ashby de la Zouch.

b) Local Green Spaces

The Local Plan creates a strong presumption in favour of the retention of important open spaces and their protection from inappropriate development. In particular, Policy IF3 sets out the very special circumstances where the loss of an open space would be permitted. This Plan strongly supports Policy IF3 in the Local Plan.

The NPPF enables Neighbourhood Plans to provide special protection for green areas of significance to local communities through their designation as a Local Green Space. This designation should only be used where specified criteria are met such as where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, and is not an extensive tract of land. The Local Plan does not designate any areas of Local Green Space in the District, leaving such designations to be considered as part of Neighbourhood Plans.

Based on the criteria set out in the NPPF and following consultation with the local community, local green spaces have been identified as being of significance to the local community and requiring special protection.

POLICY NE1: LOCAL GREEN SPACES – The sites listed below and shown on the accompanying plans are protected as Local Green Space, where new development is ruled out other than in very special circumstances:

Allotments, Wilfred Gardens;

Ashby Cemetery, Kilwardby Street;

Memorial Field, Prior Park Road;

Bullen’s Field, Prior Park Road;

Bath Grounds Playing Field, Station Road;

Hood Park;

The former Grammar School playing field on land adjacent to Prior Park Road;

Western Park;

Westfield Recreation Ground; and

Willesley Recreation Ground.

Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the designated space by reason of the inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The construction of new buildings on Local Green Spaces is inappropriate.

Exceptions to this are:

- The provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries, as long as it does not conflict with the purpose of designating the Local Green Space; or
- The extension or alteration of the building, provided that it does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building, or
- The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

Figure 7 – Local Green Spaces



c) Open Space in New Housing Developments

Ensuring that there is sufficient open space to meet a variety of local needs is a key objective of the Neighbourhood Plan.

This is important as studies such as the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Assessment (2008) by North West Leicestershire District Council show that there is a general lack of open spaces in the Plan area especially recreation grounds, allotments and children's play areas.

Where new housing is developed, providing open space on-site is often the best way to cater for the immediate recreational needs of new residents that could not be met by existing open space, and to ensure that the needs of the new residents do not worsen the existing provision. There are also wider benefits, for example, ensuring that open spaces are close to where people live and supporting bio-diversity.

It is district planning policy that in all new major (presently 50 or more dwellings) housing developments the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities will be sought as part of this development. This Plan supports this.

Where open space, sport and recreational facilities are provided as part of a development, it is important that its provision reflects the local context, needs and priorities. Traditionally the focus has been on provision for children and young people. This remains important.

Recent years, however, have seen major changes in the population profile within the Plan area. It is important that any open space provision reflects these changes. In particular, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of the population aged over 50, being about half again the national average.

It is important that any open space, sport and recreational provision and associated infrastructure is designed and provided to encourage all age groups to take part in recreation and exercise.

There is evidence that 'trim trails' and community gardens are particularly effective in promoting activity and recreation in people across all age groups, and the Plan supports and encourages the provision of these facilities.

Special mention should be made to the provision of allotments. The primary purpose of allotments is to provide opportunities for people to grow their own produce. There are, however, wider benefits, for example, bringing people together and providing a source of recreation and exercise.

Under the Small Holdings and Allotment Act of 1908, a Parish or Town Council has a duty to provide sufficient allotments, where there is evidence of demand. There are currently approximately 100 allotment plots across Ashby de la Zouch. North West Leicestershire District Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, 2016 identified a requirement for 4.6 hectares of allotments in Ashby de la Zouch. Currently 100 allotments represents approximately 2.5 hectares, leaving a shortfall of 2.1 hectares.

Despite efforts to increase supply to meet demand by splitting existing plots, as they become available, the waiting list has remained stable in recent years.

New development provides an opportunity to meet this demand for allotments by requiring the provision of allotments as part of the development. It is important though that any land brought forward for allotment use meets certain criteria, in terms of suitability for cultivation, convenient access, availability of basic services and potential to be secure against theft or vandalism. Such criteria are best met by identifying suitable locations rather than relying on piecemeal use of residual or unsatisfactory corners of larger development sites. Sufficient plots should be available on any site to make site acquisition and management viable.

POLICY NE 2: OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION PROVISION IN NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT – The Plan supports that the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities will be sought as part of new housing development of 50 or more dwellings. It is important that this includes a mix of provision specifically to meet identified local needs in the Plan area, this includes following the National Forest Company’s Planting Guidelines. Priority should be given to meeting the needs of all age groups, including cross age provision such as outdoor fitness facilities.

POLICY NE 3: OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION PROVISION IN NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT: ALLOTMENT PROVISION – The Plan especially supports the identification of suitable site (s) dedicated to the provision of allotments. Appropriate and suitable allotment provision will be sought in new housing developments of 50 or more homes either through direct provision or a commuted sum towards allotment provision.

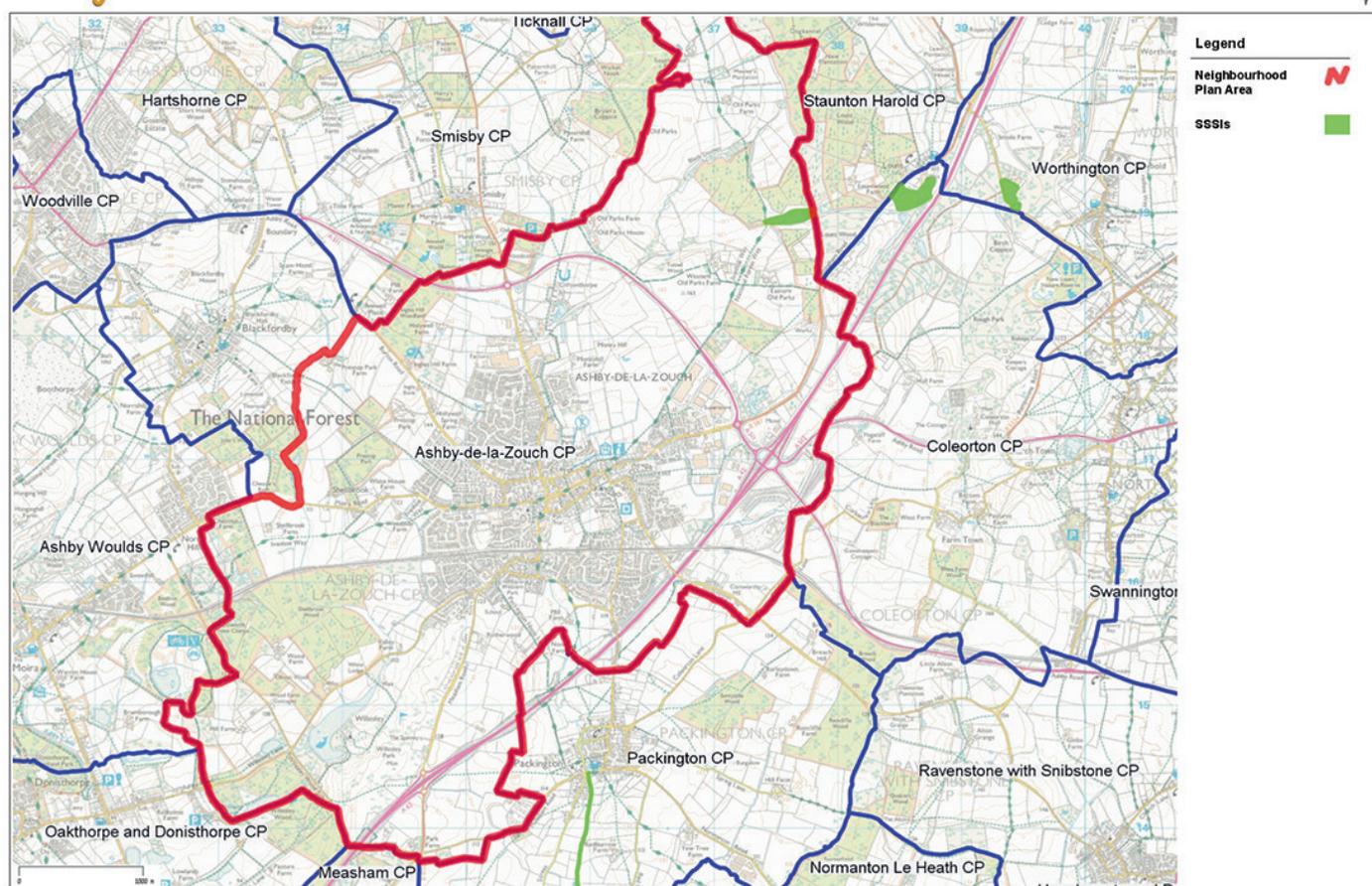
d) Nature Conservation

Nature conservation includes all kinds of species and plants, from the commonplace to the endangered, as well as the habitat, which supports them.

The Plan area contains some sites that provide important habitats for fauna and flora, including rare and declining species. This notably includes the Gilwiskaw Brook and along the Leicester to Burton line railway. Part of the Lount Meadows, a nationally important Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), is also in the Plan area. Figure 8 shows SSSI’s.

Protected and notable species that may be found in the Plan area include birds, such as the tree sparrow, grey partridge and corn bunting as well as animals, such as grass snakes, water voles and bats.

Figure 8



Date Created: 3-11-2016 | Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 436043 / 317054 | Scale: 1:40215 | © Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (100053272) 2016 © Contains Ordnance Survey Data : Crown copyright and database right 2016

Special mention here should be made to the river Mease. Though it is not located within the Plan area, it is within 500m at its closest point and the whole of the Plan area lies within the catchment of the river. The river Mease is a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a European level designation, as well as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These designations reflect the important species, such as the spined loach, and the habitats it supports. As a SAC and SSSI, the river Mease is a strictly protected site. Environment Agency monitoring has revealed high phosphorous levels in the river Mease. This has required restrictions on development in the catchment area, including the Plan area.

The District Council is working with a range of partner organisations (The Environment Agency; Natural England; Severn Trent Water; South Derbyshire District Council; and Lichfield District Council) to address this problem, including plans and strategies which will allow development to take place within the river Mease catchment area whilst ensuring that the integrity of the river Mease is protected. Policy En2 in the Local Plan reflects this joint approach and is supported by this Plan.

Across Leicestershire, important places for wildlife and bio-diversity have been identified. These include several 'Priority habitats', which are characteristic of Leicestershire and which Leicestershire makes a significant contribution to the UK aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan. Key areas of Priority Habitat within the Plan area include wood-pasture and parkland; ancient woodland, deciduous woodland and lowland meadow.

The consultation shows that the community prizes the bio-diversity to be found in the Plan Area, and wishes to see these sites, species and habitats conserved and enhanced, something the Plan supports. The scarcity of designated nature sites in the Plan area underlines that existing sites should be protected and enhanced.

The Plan also recognises that new development often offers the opportunity to increase levels of biodiversity through, for example, appropriate design and landscape measures.

Some suggestions that Natural England has made for improving a local environment through planning (and which the Plan encourages) include:

- Using native plants and trees in landscaping schemes including for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds;
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings;
- Thinking about how lighting can best be managed to encourage wildlife; and
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

POLICY NE4: NATURE CONSERVATION: Development proposals that conserve or enhance the network of important local biodiversity features and habitats (such as hedgerows, tree-lines and water courses, including the River Mease) will be supported. Development proposals should promote preservation, restoration and creation of high quality habitats especially to support local wildlife sites, local priority habitats and the National Forest Project.

The Plan supports Policy En2 River Mease Special Area of Conservation in the Local Plan which commits the District Council to work with Natural England, the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water, other local authorities and the development industry to improve the water quality of the River Mease and sets out measures to achieve this.

e) Trees and Hedgerows

Trees and hedgerows form an important part of the Plan area's distinctive and attractive character and landscape, lying as it does at the heart of the National Forest.

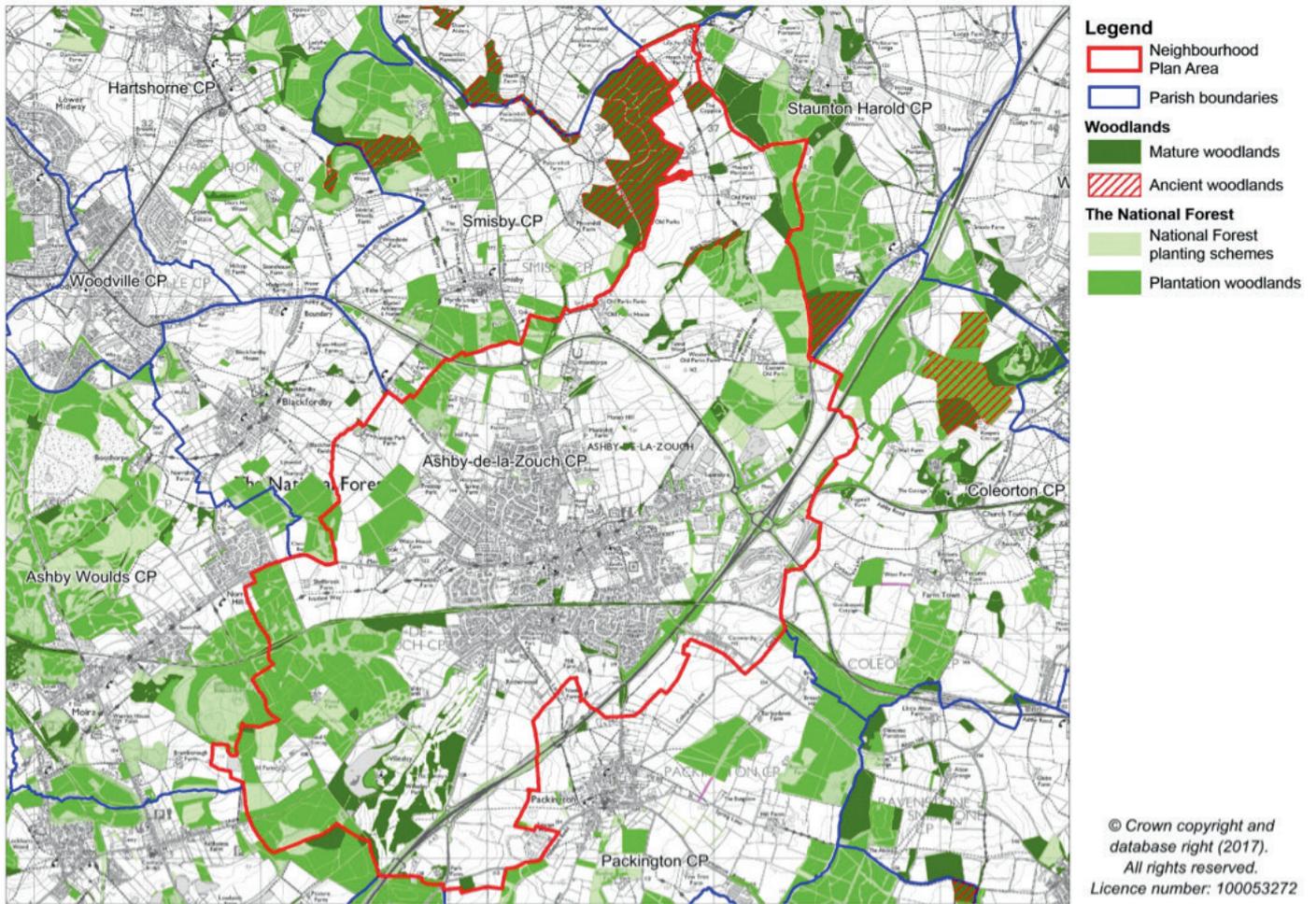
They are important for promoting relaxation and community activity, as well as supporting wildlife and flora.

This includes woodlands mainly to be found to the west and east of the Plan area as well as individual groupings or specimens, which are to be found across it. Fig 9 shows the main areas of woodlands to be found across the Plan area. However, as a County Council assessment of the landscape of the Plan and wider area noted it is characterised by "generally low woodland cover".

Consultation shows that trees and hedgerows are highly valued by the local community, who wish to see them protected, wherever possible. Whilst many of the trees and hedgerows are protected through, for example, Tree Preservation Orders, some are not.

The value of trees and hedgerows is given added importance by the Plan area's location at the core of the National Forest. The whole of the Plan area lies at the heart of the National Forest including the town of Ashby de la Zouch. The creation of the National Forest is led by the National Forest Company working with a number of partners, including public, private and voluntary sector bodies, local authorities, the Town Council and the local community. The work includes the creation of publicly accessible woodlands and increasing tree cover within the Plan area itself. The Plan supports and endorses the National Forest and recognises the key contribution it can make in support of its aims and objectives.

Figure 9: Areas of Woodlands



The Plan seeks to protect all important trees and hedgerows.

The Plan also recognises that development proposals provide an opportunity to extend the provision of trees by seeking their provision as part of any development, where possible.

POLICY NE5:TREES AND HEDGEROWS – Opportunities to enhance the coverage of trees and hedgerows, including in partnership with the National Forest Company, will be encouraged and their planting guidelines should be followed.

Where appropriate, to protect trees and hedgerows of arboricultural, ecological or amenity value and to assist the evaluation of development proposals for planning permission, the Plan encourages preparation of arboricultural impact assessments following the guidance contained in “BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations”.

The Plan supports the introduction of Tree Preservation Orders to protect trees of appropriate arboricultural, ecological or amenity value, where not covered by such orders.

4.8. Community facilities

a) Introduction

The consultation shows that the Plan area has a good and wide range of community facilities such as churches, schools, sport centres, medical centres and sports related buildings, which generally meet the day to day needs of the community.

There was however some concern about the gradual decline in community facilities, such as the recent closure of the local hospital. This has resulted in residents having to travel further to access these facilities. This presents problems, especially for those who rely on public transport to access these.

There was a further concern about the impact that development will have on the capacity, especially of schools and medical facilities.

With a growing and ageing population and reductions in public transport, access to such locally based services will become increasingly important

b) Important community facilities

Consultation shows that these facilities are highly valued and prized by the local community. They are a key ingredient in the generally high quality of life in the Parish and its strong sense of community and identity. The community wishes to see them protected and enhanced. They would also like to see a greater range of facilities. Some facilities need to be refurbished or improved.

POLICY CF 1: IMPORTANT COMMUNITY FACILITIES – Development proposals that result in the loss of, an important community facility identified below will not be supported except where (i) the building or facility is replaced by an equivalent or by better provision in terms of quantity and quality in an equally suitable location, or (ii) it is demonstrated to the District Council in consultation with the Town Council, through a viability assessment that it is no longer required by residents in the Plan area or its continued community use is no longer viable and the site has been actively marketed for over a year as a community facility. In the event that independent verification of the Viability Assessment is required by the District Council, the applicant shall undertake to meet the fees and costs of an independent financial viability assessor in undertaking such peer review. The following facilities have been identified as being especially important to the community:

Post Office;

Library;

Town Council offices;

Churches including St Helens and Our Lady of Lourdes;

All secondary and primary schools;
Hood Park Skate Park;
Hood Park Leisure Centre;
Open air swimming pool/lido;
Lyric Rooms;
Ashby Museum;
Ashby Cemetery;
The Allotment Site, Wilfred Gardens;
Ascebi House Medical Centre;
North Street Medical Centre
Venture Theatre;
Ashby Tourist Information Centre;
Town Hall Market;
War Memorial and Gardens;
Hood Court Centre
and the Fire Station.

Development proposals that enhance and increase the provision of community facilities to meet a local need, including medical facilities, will be encouraged.

c) Provision of a New Community Centre

Consultation highlighted the potential for a new purpose built multifunctional community centre. Various groups use a scattered range of venues across the Plan area and more widely. These locations are not always ideal due to issues such as capacity, availability, design, equipment and facilities.

There is local support for a commercially sustainable 'Community Centre'. The Plan area lacks such a facility, which is perhaps surprising for a community of its size. There is a case for a new facility, combining all these elements, which would provide a hub and focus for cultural and related activity and the visitor economy.

COMMUNITY ACTION CFI: NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE - The development of an appropriately located new Community Centre will be actively encouraged.

d) Assets of Community Value

The Localism Act 2011 defines an 'Asset of Community Value' as "a building or other land (whose main use has recently been or is presently used to further the social well-being or social interests of the local community and could do so in the future)". The Localism Act states that "social interests" include cultural, recreational and sporting interests.

The designation of a community facility as an Asset of Community Value provides an important means to help protect buildings and land that are important to the local community and which they wish to protect from inappropriate development.

If formally designated as an 'Asset of Community Value', the Town Council and other community organisations will be given the opportunity to bid to purchase the asset on behalf of the local community if it comes up for sale on the open market.

Whilst there is no requirement to have a policy relating to Assets of Community Value in a Neighbourhood Plan, its inclusion can give such an Asset greater protection through the planning system. It also sends out a clear message that the community wishes to protect buildings and land that are important to them.

Some Assets of Community Value have already been designated in the Plan area, such as the Bath Grounds and Hood Park Leisure Centre, and other designations may come during the lifetime of the Plan.

POLICY CF2:ASSETS OF COMMUNITYVALUE – Development proposals that support the longevity, appreciation and community value of an Asset of Community Value will be encouraged. Development proposals for change of use that would result in the loss of an Asset of Community Value will not be supported.

4.9. Education Provision

a) Introduction

Education provision arose as a major concern during the consultation.

The Plan area is home to a range of good and popular secondary and primary schools, which cater for the needs of children from the Parish and the wider area.

b) Future Education Provision

There is currently a shortfall in education provision with demand for places out stripping supply. There is concern that this shortfall will worsen as the school provision fails to keep pace with an increase in children requiring school places arising from the new family homes being built, or planned to be built, in the Parish and the wider area.

There is also concern about the design and quality of some of the existing schools, which were not designed, nor can be easily adapted, to modern educational needs.

The Plan recognises the pressing need to support local schools and plan for their future.

The Town Council, as part of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, has started this process. It will continue to work with the County Council and other relevant authorities and bodies to address the issue of education provision and capacity and work in partnership to develop solutions in response to these.

COMMUNITY ACTION CF2: The Town Council will work with the County Council, local schools and other interested bodies and individuals, to promote good quality education provision that meets the existing and future needs and population profile of the Plan area.

4.10. Developer Contributions

a) Introduction

All development has the potential to impact on the environment and place pressure on local infrastructure and services. It is recognised that the planning system should be used to ensure that new development contributes positively to the local environment and helps to mitigate against any adverse impacts on infrastructure.

The Local Plan confirms that 'Infrastructure is critical to support the provision of all development ... supporting infrastructure must be in place for new development. This is not only to ensure that the new development is properly served in respect of essential day-to-day infrastructure required by the occupants of any new development (for example superfast Broadband which many businesses rely on) but also to minimise the impact upon existing infrastructure'. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016 identifies infrastructure that has a 'local' or 'strategic' influence.

However, the NPPF stresses that the need for infrastructure accompanying development must have regard for the viability of that development. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG 46) also recognises the ability of Neighbourhood Plans to identify the need for new or enhanced infrastructure, but requires the Plan to prioritise the infrastructure requirements.

Provision of the necessary physical and community infrastructure arising from proposed development is therefore a critical component of the Plan, which has identified a wide range of potential infrastructure requirements through its production.

Funding for new infrastructure is currently provided through a legal agreement (often referred to as a Section 106 Agreement) between the District Council and the applicant, along with other parties involved in the delivery of the specific infrastructure improvement. NWLDC is considering the introduction of what is known as a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where charges will be applied according to the scale and type of development, and these funds used to pay for the infrastructure requirements, subject to CIL tests.

b) Infrastructure Requirements

The provision of these diverse elements of infrastructure needs to be timely if deficiencies are to be avoided. The priority infrastructure requirements identified and detailed within the Plan are listed below, in the order in which they appear in the Plan:

- Improvements to footpaths and cycle-ways, including linked footpaths, footways and cycleways and a 'green lung' (H2);
- Water quality improvements to avoid adverse impacts on the River Mease Special Area of Conservation (H2);

- Open Space contributions including additional tree planting (H2);
- Enhanced requirements for affordable housing (H5);
- Enhanced leisure facilities;
- Travel Plans (T2);
- Transport improvements including off-street parking (T1);
- Pedestrian and road safety improvements (T1);
- Traffic management measures to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety and movement, especially along and around known hot spots, that will be exacerbated by further development.
 - 20mph zones on key routes in to the town affected by a development e.g. for Money Hill a 20mph zone on Nottingham Road, Wood Street, Market Street. For the wider scheme potential impact on traffic on Smisby Road.
 - Zebra crossing on Kilwardby Street will become necessary if there is further development off Moira Road.
 - Brook Street, possible one way or cul-de-sac and safety measures at the bottom of South Street if money available for Town Centre improvements.
 - Improved pedestrian access to the Bath Grounds on South Street, if there are additional developments serviced by South Street or Prior Park Road.
- Contribution to the provision of allotments (NE3);
- Community facility (CFI).

Developments should meet the infrastructure requirements arising from them provided either on site or through contributions towards new or improved facilities in the locality, secured through legal agreements.

SECTION 5: MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period to 2031. During this time, it is likely that the circumstances which the Plan seeks to address will change.

Ashby de la Zouch Town Council will review the Plan on a regular basis, at least on a five yearly basis commencing (2021) to make sure that it takes into account changes in national and District planning policy and generally ensure that it fit for purpose. If it is considered by the Town Council that changes are necessary to the Neighbourhood Plan it will commence a formal review in conjunction with the Local Planning Authority.

A further review will be undertaken in 2027, at which point consideration will be given, and if necessary processes commenced, to develop a further Neighbourhood Plan for the benefit of the residents of Ashby de la Zouch.

Annex 1: Unlisted Buildings considered to have a positive impact on the streetscape of the area identified in the Ashby De La Zouch Conservation Area Appraisal and Study (2001)

- Ashby Canal Tramway to Willesley Basin
- 2/3/4/5/6 Bakery Court
- 5/7 Bath Street
- 9 Bath Street
- Ashby House,
Bath Street
- 2-8 Bath Street
- The Vine (formerly the Hare and Hounds Public House), Bath Street
- 2/3/4/5 Brook Street
- 8/9a/10 Brook Street
- Burton & Ashby Light Railway (tramway)
- Bowling Green Public House, Brook Street/Elford Street
- 8/10 Derby Road
- 13/14/15 The Green
- 20 The Green
- Plough Inn, The Green
- 'Blaisdon', 4 Hill Street
- Former Ashby U.D.C Offices, Kilwardby Street (now demolished)
- 7 Kilwardby Street
- 11 Kilwardby Street
- 13 Kilwardby Street
- 22-24 Kilwardby Street
- 28 Kilwardby Street (Strawberry Hill)
- 32-42 Kilwardby Street
- 44 Kilwardby Street
- School House, Ashby Grammar School, Leicester Road
- Cottage Hospital, Leicester Road
- 2 Leicester Road
- 4/6 Leicester Road
- 8 Leicester Road
- 10 Leicester Road
- 13/15 Lower Church Street
- 23a Lower Church Street
- 6 Lower Church Street
- 8 Lower Church Street
- 1a Market Street
- 15 Market Street

- 17 Market Street
- 19 Market Street
- 19a Market Street
- 21 Market Street
- 37 Market Street
- 39 Market Street
- 41 Market Street (Zeus Bar - formerly The Old George Public House, now Betfred)
- 43 Market Street
- 45 Market Street
- 47 Market Street
- 49/49a Market Street
- Nos. 1-3, Court 19, off Market Street
- 8/10 Market Street
- 36/38 Market Street
- 36a/38a/40a Market Street
- 40 Market Street
- 54 Market Street (Nat West Bank)
- 96/98 Market Street
- 100/100a Market Street
- The Monkey Tree (formerly the Stag and Pheasant Public House), Mill Lane
- 3-11 North Street
- 24 North Street
- Trentham Close, North Street
- Park View/Ivanhoe Villa, North Street
- Venture Theatre, North Street (former Parish Rooms)
- 38 North Street
- 1/2 South Street
- Former Police Station/Magistrates Court, South Street
- 16/17 South Street
- 'Stable Mews', South Street/Market Street
- 26/27 South Street
- 28/29 South Street
- 30 South Street
- Ascott House, South Street (former Ashby R.D.C Offices)
- Ticknall Tramway
- Christadelphian Church, Union Passage
- Former Factory ('Hastings House'), Union Passage

- 1/3/5 Upper Church Street
- 2/4 Upper Church Street
- The Old Vicarage, Upper Church Street
- 7 Wood Street
- 9/11/11a /15 Wood Street
- 35 Wood Street (formerly The Flaxdressers Inn)
- 37 Wood Street (formerly The Bull Public House)
- 39 Wood Street
- 41a Wood Street
- 6 Wood Street (formerly Swan Inn)
- 28/30/32 Wood Street
- 36 Wood Street
- 38 Wood Street
- 40 Wood Street
- 42 Wood Street
- 44 Wood Street
- 46 Wood Street
- 48 Wood Street
- 56/58 Wood Street
- 62 Wood Street
- Nos. 3-5, Court 22, off Wood Street (between Nos. 36 & 38)
- Bracken Cottage (Heath End Cottage)
- Heath End Farm and its associated structures

The List prepared in the line with the criteria set out in the Appendix to the English Heritage advice note 'Conservation Area Appraisals' (English Heritage, 1997), which has since been updated.

