

KIRK LANGLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The KLNP was launched in January 2017, following consultation by the Parish Council. As a first step The Committee was formed which, with the support of the Parish Council and several professional advisors, undertook the detailed research and carried out the processes required to support the policies contained within the plan. The area covered by the plan matches the parish boundary. The plan period starts from 1 April 2019 and is intended to last until 1 April 2032.

In formulating the plan, the Committee initially followed local (borough) and national planning policies. The Local Plan for Amber Valley had been submitted for examination when this plan was written, but had not yet been adopted. In anticipation of the Local Plan passing examination and being made in due course, our plan was submitted to Amber Valley for formal screening in May 2019. This was only a matter of days before the withdrawal of the Local Plan by Amber Valley Borough Council. Although the committee decided our policies were still valid, this sudden change of circumstances meant that we had to re-write our draft plan and obtain some additional expert input from Richard Silson, a Consultant Planner we have consulted as we developed our policies. Hence it took longer than anticipated to reach this stage on the development of our plan.

The Committee has consulted and listened to the community throughout the process with the well-being, sustainability and long-term preservation of our rural community as a focus. Every effort has been made to ensure that the policies in this document reflect the views of the majority of residents, wherever those views can validly be taken into account. There are legal requirements for neighbourhood plans which mean that such plans must provide for housing and business development. Where the views of the community conflict with these legal requirements, the views of the community have to be overridden.

We have involved experts to make sure our reasoning is sound and based not only on good evidence but also on sound planning principles. We have also worked with the planning department at Amber Valley. We believe our plan not only sets out the vision and objectives of the community, which will ensure Kirk Langley Parish is protected for the enjoyment of future generations, but also reflects the importance of retaining our heritage and sense of community whilst also providing space for new homes and businesses. We have established local principles and policies to make sure that whilst we continue to grow steadily as a community and businesses continue to thrive, we do not lose sight of what makes our area so special. We want it to continue to be a wonderful place to live and to work.

One of the key objectives of the plan concerns the delivery of new homes over the plan period. This issue has been complicated due to the number of planning applications which have come forward since this process began and due to the withdrawal of the Local Plan by Amber Valley Borough Council. In reaching our target figure of 54 homes up to 2032 we have been assisted by a formal housing needs analysis. Although this document refers to the withdrawn local plan as part of the justification, an additional expert report by Richard Silson explains why this figure remains valid for us, in spite of the change of circumstances.

If we take account of 18 homes which are at or near completion and the planning permissions recently granted for 30 homes on Ashbourne Road/Flagshaw Lane, it leaves a total of 6 additional homes to be built up to 2032. Due to this small additional number, land has not been allocated for building within the plan. We expect sufficient sites will come forward to fulfil this requirement. One other issue dealt with by the housing needs analysis concerns the appropriate housing mix for the area, which is dealt with in one of our housing policies. There is a lack of smaller homes within the parish, which suggests this should be the emphasis for new homes in the future.

Our housing policies place an appropriate emphasis on good design and appearance. In addition to the design principles described in our housing policies, developers are assisted by a number of character studies which have been undertaken and which cover the conservation area, Langley Common and the Village and its surrounding areas. These describe the appearance, layout and design of these settlements, making it easier for interested parties, including developers to understand what will be allowed.

The other key issue to be considered is where housing should be situated. There are two key planning issues which have a bearing on questions of location, firstly that there should not be any convergence of settlements and secondly that new development should not occur in open countryside. This means for example that Kirk Langley Village and Langley Common should be kept separate and distinct. This would avoid further building along Moor Lane which would link the two settlements. The two areas where new homes are permitted are within and adjacent to the Village and Langley Common. However, development should be more limited in Langley Common due to the distance from public transport and village assets. This is one of those areas where residents may have strong views but where legal requirements have dictated in general terms where building should take place. Barn conversions are permitted wherever they might be situated. Allowing conversion of redundant farm buildings is one way of ensuring these key buildings, which are a key element of local heritage, are not lost forever.

The other area where development must be encouraged relates to business. Residents were very clear about what would be acceptable and what would not be acceptable and to the extent these views complied with national policies, these have been taken into account. Thus, new business and expansion of existing businesses will be encouraged when the environmental and visual impact is properly assessed and is acceptable. No land has been allocated for business development within the parish, although this does not prevent business development which is in accordance with our environmental policies.

The value of the environment is an issue upon which there was almost universal agreement. This gave the committee a clear steer on how the policies in these areas should be crafted, subject to the legal constraints referred to above. There are also legal obligations to consider in relation to protected species and habitats. There are several environmental issues which must be considered:- the visual impact, the ecological impact, the flooding and draining impact, the use of agricultural land and the human impact.

The visual impact is considered from two perspectives; the view(s) from public spaces which might be affected and how the specific development might look, now and in the future.

In looking at the first of these issues, the committee considered those areas which would be most affected by development. These are Langley Common and Kirk Langley Village. A policy was therefore designed which protects views into and out of these areas. Photographs of those particular views were displayed at our consultation event at the village hall on 16 December 2017 and the views selected for inclusion in our environmental policy received appropriate public endorsement.

The environment also includes ecology. Key assets for wildlife are the mature native trees and hedgerows in the area. Hedgerows in particular create wildlife corridors for insects, birds and bats. These features are protected by primary legislation, regulation and national policies and are also referred to specifically in our policies. Other local assets which need protecting are our streams and ponds. Impact assessments, countermeasures and opportunities for improvement are all contained within our environmental policies.

Public consultation demonstrated the extent to which our residents enjoy and value the “village atmosphere”. This human environment is also dealt with and involves specific reference to the importance of preserving and, where possible, improving our village assets. These assets such as the village hall, church, pub, playing fields and village orchard provide important opportunities for people to meet and underpins the feeling of being connected to each other and the place we live in. Our field paths, lanes and byeways all provide opportunities for physical exercise. Taken together, this all helps to foster physical and mental well-being in our community.

The other environmental policies relate to avoidance of flooding and specific reference is made to local issues caused by run-off. Developers have to ensure development does not add to existing problems. Finally, reference is made in our environmental policies to the intrinsic value of agricultural land. The best land should be retained for agriculture, not building.

The heritage of our area is contained within our older buildings and structures. This is also valued by our community. However not all our heritage can be seen but is also worthy of preservation. For example, a recent application for planning permission in Langley Common led to the unearthing of an untouched stretch of ancient Roman road. There is also a likelihood of other important discoveries in that area. The Conservation Area report also alludes to the possibilities of below-ground archaeology. Old maps show the scale of ancient development along Church Lane, now buried and lost over time. All these below-ground assets should be taken account of and appropriate steps taken to preserve them. This is what our Heritage Policies aim to do as well as preserving our visible heritage.

The heritage assets we know about are listed in county and borough records. We also have a number of listed buildings and a conservation area. The planning authority has not issued a formal character statement for our conservation area and so, in order to be able to identify more clearly what it is we are trying to preserve, the committee obtained an expert report to analyse its key characteristics. This should guide development in the future.

Climate change is addressed in our housing and business policies by encouraging green energy sources and the installation of EV charging points.

In conclusion, our neighbourhood plan is designed to keep what we value and improve what we can. Further development should not spoil what we have but strike a balance between providing new homes and businesses and protecting the environment and heritage. This is what we have striven to do.