

## Houghton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

### Report on parishioners' feedback on initial draft NDP · August 2020

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#### Introduction

1. The first draft of the Houghton NDP was prepared by planning consultant David Nicholson for the Houghton NDP Steering Group in March 2020. To ensure inclusivity, the Steering Group then sought views from parishioners on this initial draft, particularly as to how their views expressed in earlier surveys for the NDP had been reflected and incorporated. In this way, the Steering Group sought to meet the requirements of Planning Practice Guidance<sup>1</sup> to ensure that the wider community:
  - is kept fully informed of what is being proposed
  - is able to make their views known throughout the process
  - has opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the emerging neighbourhood plan
  - is made aware of how their views have informed the draft neighbourhood plan.

#### Background

2. The results of a residents' questionnaire and of parish housing needs and village traffic surveys had previously been shared with parishioners in two well-attended presentations in March 2019. One meeting was held on a weekday evening, the second on a Saturday morning in the hopes that anyone interested could be available to attend one or other. The meetings were advertised on the Village email, Village magazine, noticeboard and website. Full details are available on the Parish Council website.<sup>2</sup>
3. At the conclusion of each meeting it was explained that the Steering Group was seeking volunteers to further examine four aspects of the results of the questionnaire which were of particular concern to parishioners: housing, traffic, environment/green spaces, and community. A good number and cross section of parishioners agreed to take part in this piece of work.
4. However, receipt of the initial draft NDP from David Nicholson in March 2020 coincided with the Covid-19 lockdown. At an NDP Steering Group zoom meeting it was decided that it would not be possible to invite the volunteers to any such reference group meetings. The Steering Group decided that an alternative strategy would be to offer the opportunity to the community for them to read the initial draft NDP and provide feedback. To this end, an invitation was sent via the village email, and personal invitation/word of mouth, to all parishioners to review the initial draft NDP. Subsequently, a reminder to participate was sent out to all parishioners, again via the village email, to ensure everyone had a chance to review the document. The draft NDP, the original questionnaire, housing and traffic surveys, and all results and reports were made available on the Parish Council website.

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph: 047 Reference ID: 41-047-20140306

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.houghtonparishcouncil.org/community/houghton-parish-council-13622/neighbourhood-development/>

5. The Steering Group decided that a full and balanced view across the wider community could be obtained in this way, and that this was a balanced and pragmatic response to both progressing the NDP in the circumstances and to meeting the requirements of Planning Practice Guidance as to consulting on, and publicising, the plan at this stage.
6. The request to the parishioners was to either review a section of the initial draft NDP or the entire document. Most respondents chose to undertake a full review. Ten parishioners took part in the exercise and submitted their reports. A summary of their findings is documented below.

### **Summary of feedback received**

- Nine parishioners commented that the draft NDP reflected parishioners' responses and comments on the surveys.
- One parishioner used the opportunity to air his views/thoughts on a variety of planning issues; these were his personal reflections on historic planning issues in the parish and do not directly relate to the remit of the NDP.
- Another parishioner raised two questions:
  1. *"3.2 the NDP is encouraging a MIX of type and size of properties, the question is what are they?"*. Steering Group response: this was a general reflection of views on this issue as expressed in the residents' questionnaire survey.
  2. *"section 7 I see that green areas have been highlighted, LGS5 as an example. Who decided these and if necessary can they be challenged?"*. Steering Group response: the proposed Local Green Spaces were identified in drawing up the Village Design Statement and are now in the process of being incorporated in the NDP. The preparation of the NDP provides several opportunities for comment and challenge, notably through the forthcoming regulation 14 consultation on the draft NDP.
- One parishioner undertook an extremely thorough review and produced a very detailed document with his feedback and comments. He concluded the draft NDP positively reflected parishioners' views and agreed how important the document was.

### **Conclusion**

7. The overall feedback from parishioners was overwhelmingly positive, with many praising how comprehensive and thorough they found the draft NDP. The Steering Group concluded that the draft NDP provides a sound basis for the further formal consultation required by the neighbourhood planning regulations, and agreed to move on to the next stage on this basis.