



Misterton with Walcote Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031

Submission Version

June 2020

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Foreword from the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee

Welcome to the Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Misterton with Walcote.

The current Neighbourhood Plan process was originated by Misterton with Walcote Parish at a Council meeting on 12 January 2017 when it was decided to set up a joint Parish Council/Community Advisory Committee.

The impetus for producing a Neighbourhood Plan was not to prevent development, but to ensure that it is of an appropriate scale and character. We are fortunate to live in an area of great beauty both in terms of the natural landscape and the built environment.

As the Neighbourhood Plan was being written, the new Local Plan for Harborough was being finalised. It was adopted in April 2019. A key element of the Local Plan is the proposal to establish a Strategic Development Area (SDA) for Lutterworth, a significant proportion of which is in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

We understand that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot directly influence the SDA which represents a strategic policy in the Local Plan. We have tried to ensure, however, that the Neighbourhood Plan mitigates the impact of the SDA locally and that development is sensitive to the special characteristics of the Parish of Misterton with Walcote.

The underlying premise of the Plan is to seek to ensure sustainable development within the parish that meets the needs of current and future generations, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. These goals are mutually dependent. Conserving and enhancing the natural and built environment will not only improve the lives of people but can further strengthen the economy through tourism activities.

I would like to thank the members of the Advisory Committee, other Parish Councillors and the many other individuals and bodies for their support as we have undertaken this work, and for the grant funding received from Locality and the Big Lottery Awards for All, without which the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan would not have been possible.

Councillor Liz Marsh

Chair Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee.

1. Introduction

The Misterton with Walcote Neighbourhood Plan (The 'NP') has been prepared by the Misterton with Walcote NP Advisory Committee, which brings together members of the local community and Parish Councillors.

A key part of the Government's Localism agenda, a NP is a new type of planning document that gives local people greater control and say over how their community develops, now and in the future. This includes, for example, where new homes, shops, etc. should be built, what new buildings and extensions should look like and which areas of land should be protected from development.

As the Plain English Guide to the Localism Act 2011 states, "Instead of local people being told what to do, the Government thinks that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live".

The NP covers the whole of the Parish of Misterton with Walcote. It sits alongside Harborough's Local Plan (LP) to provide more detailed development 'planning' related policies to help achieve locally identified aims and objectives.

Figure 1 Misterton with Walcote NP Area



The NP sets out a long-term approach for the development of Misterton with Walcote, and clear development related policies to realise this.

In preparing a NP, a community is not working from ‘a blank piece of paper’. Legislation requires that the NP, and the policies it contains, must be prepared in a certain manner; in particular, the policies must be in general conformity with relevant national and local (i.e. Harborough) planning policies.

The NP is now at the submission stage. It will now be submitted to Harborough District Council and sent out for further consultation before being subject to an independent examination and ultimately a referendum.

Once made, the NP will form part of the Statutory Development Plan for Harborough. This means that it must be taken into account when considering planning decisions affecting Misterton with Walcote Parish.

2. How the NP was prepared

The Misterton with Walcote NP Area was formally designated on 3 April 2017.

The NP has been prepared by the Misterton with Walcote NP Advisory Committee comprising members of the local community and local parish councillors, with the support of Harborough District Council and consultants YourLocale, and under the direction of Misterton with Walcote Parish Council (the Accountable Body for the NP).

Effective and extensive consultation have been at the heart of its preparation. This is key to ensuring that it fully reflects local needs and priorities. There have been a variety of consultation exercises, at which many local people have taken part. A questionnaire was sent to all the households in the Parish in November/December 2017, to help define the priorities for the NP. There was a response rate amounting to 11% of adults and around 22% of households (44 actual responses) and the findings were used as the basis for three ‘Theme Groups’ involving members of the local community meeting throughout 2018 to consider in detail issues such as housing, the environment and



amounting to 11% of



sustainability (community facilities, employment and transport).

As well as the Community Questionnaire, an Open Event was held with the community in November 2017 to explain the purpose of the NP to residents and to raise awareness. It was from this event that members of the community came forward to become involved in the Theme Groups. A further open event took place on 1 February 2020 where residents were invited to view the emerging policies. There was significant support for the draft policies and the NP proceeded to formal pre-submission consultation as a result.

Further details regarding community consultation are provided in the Consultation Statement to be made available with the Submission version of the NP.

3. How the NP fits into the planning system

The right for communities to prepare NPs was established through the Localism Act 2011, which set out the general rules governing their preparation.

A NP forms part of the Statutory Development Plan for the area in which it is prepared. This statutory status means that it must be taken into account when considering planning decisions affecting that area.

A NP is required to meet a set of basic conditions if it is to proceed to referendum. Firstly, it must not breach, and be otherwise compatible with EU obligations, including the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive and European Habitats Directive.

It also needs to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan. In the case of Misterton with Walcote, this is the Harborough LP.

A NP must also have regard to national planning policy and advice. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF requires the planning system (including NPs) to encourage sustainable development and details three dimensions to that development:

- An economic dimension – they should contribute to economic development;
- A social dimension – they should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by

providing the right supply of housing and creating a high-quality built environment with accessible local services; and

- An environmental dimension – they should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

4. The NP, its purpose and what we want it to achieve.

The NP area encompasses the whole of the Parish of Misterton with Walcote and covers the period up to 2031, a timescale which deliberately mirrors that for the Harborough LP.

A vision statement has been prepared by the Advisory Committee based on community input

Misterton with Walcote is a geographically large but sparsely populated parish with deep historical roots. Misterton is now only a few houses, an historic Hall and mediaeval church. Most of the residents of the parish live in the village of Walcote, a mile and a half from the small but expanding town of Lutterworth and close to the major transport links of the M1, M6, and A14. The parish retains a rural character and Walcote has a garage providing a small range of goods, a thriving village hall and community-owned pub.

Whilst we acknowledge the significant changes that will follow the Strategic Development allocation on land to the East of Lutterworth but within the NP area, our vision seeks to ensure the retention of the rural character and green spaces of the remainder of the NP area although incorporating small-scale expansion in conjunction with the existing settlements of Walcote and Misterton. Future housing provision should be in keeping with the village character and should include a mix of housing to cater for the young to the retired including affordable homes to allow younger families to live in the parish and to contribute to its development. Public transport provision, a wider range of employment opportunities, adequate broadband speeds to encourage home working, and a managed traffic system are part of the vision for the future.

The vision is for strengthening further a healthy community spirit and for future development to enable the overall rural identity of the parish to be retained.

In 2031 Misterton with Walcote parish will have retained its existing character, friendliness and sense of community that parishioners are so proud of. Outside the SDA it will remain two unique rural settlements with distinct areas of separation from other local villages and towns enjoying open views of the countryside and increased access to areas of natural beauty. In addition, the plan seeks to protect the countryside from inappropriate change and development whilst enhancing its role as a home for wildlife and a place for contemplation and quiet enjoyment.

Misterton and Walcote's future as two distinct and separate rural settlements will

require a continued investment in its community in order to maintain the spirit, quality of life, economic well - being and safety of its parishioners. This vision will be delivered by high quality, characterful residential development that meets the community's proven needs. Development will be environmentally and economically sustainable in the long term, ensuring that all age groups and all local people have access to the countryside. Housing will reflect the economic aspirations and needs of the community whilst being accessible, maintaining current sustainable, quality design. Connecting the settlements through adequate pedestrian routes both to Lutterworth and from the settlement will remain important. Investment in the economic life of the community will be an ongoing commitment with support for existing services and facilities and developing opportunities.

The main purpose of the NP is not to duplicate national or district- wide (i.e. Harborough) planning policies, but to sit alongside these, to add additional or more detailed policies specific to Misterton with Walcote Parish. Where there are national and district-wide planning policies that meet the needs and requirements of the Parish they are not repeated here. Instead, the NP focuses on those planning issues which consultation shows matter most to the community, and to which the NP can add the greatest additional value.

It is important to note that when using the NP to form a view on a development proposal or a policy issue the whole document and the policies contained in it must be considered together.

While every effort has been made to make the main parts of this NP easy to read and understand, the wording of the actual policies is necessarily more formal, so that it complies with statutory requirements.

The NP will be kept under review and may change over time in response to new and changing needs and requirements.

5. Sustainable Development

According to the key national planning document; the NPPF, the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development.

The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people to satisfy their basic needs and to enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own social, economic and environmental needs.

The NPPF carries a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: social, environmental and economic, all of which are important and interrelated. In accordance with this, the NP's aims and policies are centred on the achievement of sustainable development, including by, for

example:

a) Social

- To safeguard existing open space for the enjoyment of residents;
- To protect existing community facilities; and
- To deliver a mix of housing types, so that it can meet the needs of present and future generations.

b) Environmental

- To ensure that housing development is of the right quantity and type in the right location, so that it does not harm but instead positively reflects the existing and historic character of the area;
- To protect important open spaces from development;
- To ensure that the design of development protects the distinctive local character and identity;
- To conserve and, where possible, improve biodiversity and important habitats; and
- To make provision for improved pedestrian and cycling facilities.

c) Economic

- To protect existing employment uses;
- To support appropriate small-scale business development and expansion; and
- To encourage appropriate start-up businesses and home working

6. About Misterton with Walcote Parish

The 'The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester' by John Nichols is mainly concerned with the extent of individual landholding. 'As the parochial limits of Minsterton (now called Misterton) include the lordships of Poultney and Walcote, this seems to have been a place of no inconsiderable repute.'

Nichols notes that 'Minster' was prefixed to the Anglo-Saxon word 'tun' signifying a town. In ecclesiastical terms it indicates that the church situated there was a 'mother church' and there were in fact separate chapels at Poulteney and at Walcote under the church at Misterton. It is clear that for centuries Misterton – known variously as Misterton, Minsterton, and Minestone - was the main centre of population.

The church of St Leonard had chapels in Poulteney (which also has a variety of spellings) and at Walcote (which was in existence at the time of Edward the Confessor and 'gave its name to a family of some repute in former times'). By 1335 Sir John Poulteney - Mayor of London 5 times in the 14th century - had obtained the whole of manor of Misterton, which has 'exceeding good ground' and was 'breeding a fair and thick wooled sheep.' The church building also dates from around this time and is now a Grade II* listed building. The chancel of the church has two alabaster tombs - the one topped by the figure in armour is that of Michael Poulteney Esq 'sometime Lord of Misterton and Poulteney' who died in 1567 and the other chancel tomb commemorates his grandson, John Poulteney, and is dated 1637.

The once considerable village of Misterton has disappeared by about 1507, by 1564 records indicate that it consisted of only three families. There is nothing in the county histories to support the local understanding that it was wiped out in the Black Death plagues of the 14th century but the histories do indicate a fall in the population of 40% by 1377 and it appears that plague was a contributory factor to Misterton's demise. The village of Poulteney has also disappeared and the site is now occupied by Great Poulteney farm. Misterton Hall was long the residence of the Poulteney family but by the 17th and early 18th centuries it became the residence of the Crewe-Offley family and by the late 18th century it was owned by Naphthali Franks and his descendants. The Franks family were generous benefactors of the area (and are commemorated by Franks Road in Walcote). The hall was subsequently owned by the Cromwells (commemorated by Cromwell Close) and since 1967 by the Cravens. Mrs Craven continues to be a generous local benefactor.

There is also evidence that Walcote was the centre of an important thoroughfare for many years until its 18th century decline. There were two turnpike routes, the shorter running from Lutterworth to Walcote then branching right to South Kilworth through to the Leicester Road in Welford. This was less popular, probably due to its steeper gradients. The longer route was used by the London to Holyhead mails until improvements caused the transfer of traffic to a Coventry/Birmingham route. It reached Welford via North Kilworth and remains largely the route of the A4304 as it passes through the Parish today.

There are various recordings of the level of population - 1801 the parish had 341 persons; 1863, 541; 1911, 435; 1931, 541, 2011, 486. A school was built in 1858 and it seems to have been part of the great influence over education possessed by the Church of England. The school was in operation until 1984 and the eventual sale of land on which it stood gave rise to the Walcote Church of England Religious Education Fund (still in use today). Walcote was obviously a part of the Leicestershire hosiery tradition since it included framework knitters. The Victoria History of the County of Leicester notes that there were 70 framework knitters in Walcote in 1840.

In the first half of the twentieth century Walcote was still very much a rural village. It had a saddler, a carter, a basket maker, a blacksmith, a shoemaker, a baker (a house on Franks Road is 'The Old Bakehouse'), and there were two shops (in Brook Street) and it had its own Post Office. A major claim to notoriety was in 1911 when it was the scene of the 'The Threepenny Bit Murder.' A short account -written in 1989 by a local resident - tells us that a Mrs Harris, resident of one of

the cottages behind the Black Horse, was found strangled and her hoard of threepenny bits (each then worth 3d) was stolen. William Palmer was subsequently hanged in Leicester Prison for the murder. Accounts vary on the details, but it is common ground that Mr Palmer was caught as a result of liberal spending of threepenny bits.

In the later twentieth century, the village began to change. In the 1960s and 1970s the houses in Cromwell Close were built, as was the Rutland Room in the grounds of Misterton Hall (a venue for the Leicestershire Old People's Welfare Association) but the shop and Post Office and the United Reformed Chapel (in Chapel Lane) were closed and the school soon followed. The village of Walcote changed in that it became a dormitory village from which the majority of people travelled to work, aided by the proximity to the major transport links of the M1, M6, and A14. The petrol station was constructed in the 1970s. Since 2000 there has been piecemeal building of new properties in different parts of the village, though not extensively in the rest of the parish.

The limited information from newspaper cuttings in Lutterworth library indicate that in the second half of the twentieth century the village was concerned about planning matters and about traffic and transport (with campaigns to get a speed limit established on the main road, campaign to get a better bus service, and seeking to make Franks Road a one-way system). While the context changes – the concerns remain the same!

Moving forward to the present day, at the time of the 2011 Census, Misterton with Walcote was home to around 486 residents living in 202 households. Analysis of the Census suggests that between 2001 and 2011 the parish population increased by around 19% (76 people). During this period, the number of dwellings rose by 10% (20).

The area has a high proportion of residents aged between 50 and 59 and evidence of an ageing population with the share of residents aged 65 and over increasing from 15% in 2001 to 17% in 2011. In line with national trends the local population is likely to get older as average life expectancy continues to rise.

Home ownership levels are high with around 73% of households owning their homes outright or with a mortgage or loan. At 13% the share of households living in private rented accommodation is low when compared with the national rate.

There is evidence of under occupancy suggesting a need for smaller homes of one to two bedrooms which would be suitable for residents needing to downsize, small families and those entering the housing market. Providing suitable accommodation for elderly residents will enable them to remain in the local community and release under-occupied larger properties onto the market which would be suitable for growing families.

There is a predominance of detached housing with a high number having 4 or more bedrooms.

Deprivation is not a significant issue in the parish. However, the area is ranked within the most deprived 2% in England in terms of barriers to housing and services which is largely due to its physical proximity to local services. The high price of housing in the area will make it difficult for those on lower and middle incomes to enter the local housing market.

7. MISTERTON WITH WALCOTE NP POLICIES

A. Housing and the Built Environment

Introduction

Whilst the Parish of Misterton with Walcote is geographically large, it is relatively sparsely populated with the exception of the village of Walcote where most residents live. The Parish is essentially rural in character and is keen to preserve its distinct identity and maintain an area of separation from its nearest neighbours, Lutterworth to the West and North Kilworth to the East.

The Harborough LP was adopted in April 2019. The LP identifies a number of sites that the District Council considers suitable areas for housing and employment growth including a Strategic Development Area (SDA) East of Lutterworth. Over the period of the new LP it is proposed that the SDA will provide some 2750 additional dwellings and about 13 hectares of storage and distribution facilities including about 10 hectares of business uses within Use Class Orders B1 and B2. A significant portion of the SDA falls within the Parish of Misterton with Walcote.

This NP does not seek to replace or supersede the LP but it is clear from the consultations with residents, carried out in preparing this NP, that parishioners regard the retention of the integrity of the settlements at Misterton and Walcote as key to their future. The Parish has an active community spirit where residents have combined to make notable improvements to village life including the provision of a thriving village hall and the purchase and re-opening of a village pub by a community benefit society. It is a core aim of this NP to maintain the physical separation of Misterton from the SDA and to sustain and enhance the existing community spirit and discrete identity of the Parish's two stand-alone settlements of Misterton and Walcote.

Housing Objectives

The principal objectives the NP wishes to address from a housing perspective are as follows:

- To provide housing choice across a range of tenures and housing types for all relevant age groups;
- To provide affordable homes in financial terms – in terms of build/size/type including starter homes and also e.g. co-ownership/ mixed tenure/ socially rented – available to existing residents of the parish to meet existing and future village needs;
- To maintain separation of the parish from neighbouring communities;

- To encourage the right quality of design and development to ensure that needs are 'future proofed' for an ageing population and also those with a disability;
- To promote residential development that respects the character of neighbouring properties and preserves the rural aspect of the villages providing a strong 'sense of place';
- To reflect the wishes of the community.

Housing Provision

The NPPF is the overarching strategic document for planning policy in England and Wales and two of the key areas it sets out to address are the poor rate of housing delivery and a lack of affordable housing supply.

The NPPF states that 'To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay' (para 59) and further, that 'To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for' (para 60).

In order to ensure that the NP addressed this approach, a parish wide housing needs survey was commissioned, and this was completed by Midlands Rural Housing between September and November 2018. A copy of the final report is attached at appendix 4. The survey was very well supported with 33% of parish residents returning a detailed questionnaire on housing need.

The conclusion of the report is that 3 additional dwellings will be required to 2023. Having considered this report, windfall units are considered sufficient to make up this requirement.

In addition, the Strategic Land Availability Assessment undertaken by HDC on an ongoing basis does not apply to settlements the size of Walcote and Misterton. The submission version of the LP establishes a hierarchy of settlements to determine the most appropriate locations for residential development. On the basis of this hierarchy Misterton and Walcote are classified as, "rural villages and other settlements which do not meet the criteria for identification as Selected Rural Villages" and are not considered (apart from the SDA) sustainable locations for development. There is no specific housing requirement for the Parish of Misterton with Walcote.

Historically, communities like Misterton with Walcote have been protected against

unsustainable or insensitive development by the designation of a Limits to Development. This was originally defined by Harborough District Council in consultation with the relevant Parish Council through a statutory 2001 LP designation. With the Limits to Development in place, development was only permitted within the red-line area. Only in exceptional circumstances (for example - to provide affordable housing) was development allowed outside of the envelope and it was therefore strictly controlled. In the recently adopted LP, Harborough District Council has removed settlement boundaries in favour of criteria-based policies.

The community wishes to retain the former limits to development, allowing further development only where the proposal meets the criteria set out in the policy section on windfall sites and, outside those limits, where the terms of the rural exception policy can be met.

Limits to Development

This NP has reviewed the limits to development around Walcote, as referred to in Policy HS/8 of the 2001 Harborough District LP and as shown on the map below, and considers them still to be appropriate:

Figure 2. Revised Limits to Development



Misterton is too small to require a Limits to Development and is to be considered as countryside for planning purposes.

Within the defined Limits to Development an appropriate amount of suitably designed and located development will be acceptable in principle on a windfall basis, although some windfall sites within this area are protected from development through other policies contained in the LP and the NP.

Focusing development within these Limits to Development will help to support existing services within the village centre and help to protect the countryside and the remainder of the NP area from inappropriate development. The countryside around Walcote and elsewhere in the NP area is an attractive, accessible and non-renewable resource.

POLICY HBE1: LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT - Development proposals will be supported on sites within the Limits to Development as identified in the above plan where it complies with the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan and subject to design and amenity considerations.

Subject to the Rural Exception Site provisions set out below (HBE6), areas outside the defined Limits to Development and the allocated SDA will be treated as open countryside, where development will be carefully controlled in line with local and national strategic planning policies.

East of Lutterworth Strategic Development Area (SDA)

The East of Lutterworth Strategic Development Area (SDA) is a significant development for Harborough District Council. As stated above the NP does not seek to replace or supersede the LP but, as a significant portion of the SDA falls within the NP area, the Parish and residents welcome the opportunity for their voices to be heard during the development process. Although the other policies in the NP address many of the issues thrown up by the proposal, it is also appropriate to address them separately in view of their significance to the future of the Parish.

Whilst acknowledging the need for housing and endorsing the allocation of a site of sufficient size to provide the infrastructure needed to support sustainable living, the NP is concerned to ensure that the proposed development is not unduly detrimental to the environment and landscape of the remainder of the parish.

Of particular concern is the visual integrity of Misterton as a separate settlement. Situated on the higher ground above the River Swift and visible from Lutterworth and the M1 motorway, much of its character is derived from its isolated position surrounded by traditional English fields and parkland. To the north and west of the village are a number of sites identified as historically significant by Leicestershire County Council, ranging from prehistoric finds to post mediaeval parkland and gardens. The encroachment of modern buildings into this landscape would irrevocably change its character and should be avoided, both through the separation of Misterton from its new neighbour and by the inclusion of suitable landscaping. Development to the north of the A4304 adjacent to junction 20 of the M1 motorway needs to be designed with particular care, as does the access road also to the north of the A4304 and the revised access

arrangements for Misterton village as these will have huge potential to adversely impact on the landscape. To this end, the NP would further seek to avoid the construction of any additional roads directly linking Misterton or Walcote with the housing in the SDA, as the construction of these links would create a visual bond which the NP wishes to avoid. In addition, the important vista between St Leonard's Church, a grade II* listed building, and St Mary's in Lutterworth (grade I listed) should also be protected through sensitive design and landscaping.

The speed and density of traffic on the A4304 is already a concern. It is inevitable that the construction of two new junctions, both controlled by traffic lights, will impact on traffic flows. The volume of traffic on the A4304 regularly creates tailbacks from junction 20 of the M1 and it only takes a small incident for these to stretch several hundred yards, or, on occasion, as far as the village of Walcote. New junctions must be designed to ensure that traffic flows are maintained. Stationery traffic is detrimental to the environment: it reduces air quality and contributes unnecessarily to global warming. Long processions of moving vehicles make it difficult for residents of Walcote to join the traffic stream or for pedestrians to cross the road. While it seems unavoidable that traffic volumes will increase, neither Walcote nor Misterton has the capacity to absorb this without exacerbating existing traffic problems. Therefore, the NP will encourage both the retention of the existing average speed cameras to ensure traffic adheres to the speed limits within the built area, and the introduction of appropriate traffic calming measures and signage, suitably policed, to prevent the creation of 'rat runs' along minor roads within the parish.

With their proximity to Lutterworth, both Misterton and Walcote are well placed to encourage residents to walk and cycle into the town. An existing cycle way alongside the A4304 is a useful resource appreciated by the local population. As we are all encouraged to leave our cars at home, use of cycle paths is likely to increase. Therefore, the NP expects that this resource will be maintained and expanded, including through the specific provision of safety features at all new road junctions. In addition, high quality cycle resources should be included within the SDA, linking it to the existing cycle network.

Not all residents are able to cycle, but most can walk. The Parish Council has invested considerable resources sustaining and improving the network of footpaths which link Misterton and Walcote with Lutterworth and crisscross the SDA, skirting Misterton Marshes SSSI and Thornborough Spinney. These footpaths are the main recreational and fitness resource for many residents. In order to make them more easily accessible for the old and young, grants have been secured to replace stiles with kissing gates across a majority of the site ensuring these footpaths are well used and are a popular local resource. Consequently, all existing statutory and permissive footpaths should be retained and developed to be enjoyed by old and new residents of the NP area.

A majority of Misterton Marshes SSSI falls within the NP area. It is noted that no detailed designs have yet been agreed, but an indicative plan has shown the SSSI surrounded by planned, landscaped and planted 'green' buffer zones. These are narrow and include a road and footpaths. Natural England, as the relevant statutory body, will require the special interests of the SSSI to

be protected, both on-site and as part of its wider biodiversity context. This Plan further notes that because of the narrowness of the buffers the medium- to long-term survival of the marsh and other habitats, and the complex ecosystems they support, appear to be at risk from:

a) disturbance and vandalism; b) loss of habitat and species connectivity; c) the proximity of areas of land use detrimental to wetland species; and d) unpredicted hydrological changes and pollution. Also, unless there are robust management plans supported by long-term resourcing, the landscaped and planted buffer zones will evolve or deteriorate in ways that may be inimical to the biodiversity of the SSSI. These risks should be addressed in detail and the approved mitigations must be assured in proposals and designs and enforced – in perpetuity if necessary – by the Local Authorities or their successors. We face a global extinction crisis; it should not be exacerbated by this development close to a vulnerable site.

During the preparation of the NP it was recognised that there is a parcel of open land between the SDA and the villages in the parish. It is hoped that over time this land can be classified as a country park and the Parish Council will have further discussions on this with the County Council.

Figure 3 Indicative map of Swift Country Park



Identification of Thornborough Spinney for protection is welcomed. Unmanaged woodland can develop into valuable habitats but these are not necessarily appropriate as part of a planned, mixed-use residential settlement. Maintaining the woodland habitat as a safe, accessible but controlled amenity with undiminished biodiversity value will require a robust management plan and resources in perpetuity. However, the Plan is concerned that the Priority Habitats close to the spinney and the SSSI are not currently accorded similar protection.

In order to protect existing species, create new habitats and further enhance biodiversity across the scheme, the Neighbourhood Plan expects development to be in full conformity with Harborough District Council's obligations under English legislation and European directives. Long-term resourcing is essential. Binding provision should be made through development consent conditions and arrangements for developer funding to ensure that a) the biodiversity protection and habitat creation measures in the proposal are carried out and completed fully and effectively; b) management plans are in place for all 'undeveloped' and designed semi-natural habitat areas; and c) a capital sum of adequate size is set aside, ring-fenced and invested to support staffing and management of the SSSI, all the planned semi-natural areas and for the creation of country park for a minimum of 25 years.

NP area residents strongly support the creation of Swift Valley Community Park. Their aspiration is for the designated area, and its management and funding, to be extended eastwards from the southeast corner of the development site in a strip incorporating Rye Close Spinney, footpaths Y97 and 98, bridleway Y31 and Chapel Lane. This would enhance well-being, allow peaceful enjoyment of the footpaths, maintain separation and protect biodiversity.

Currently land designated as the SDA is undeveloped and wholly rural in character. The existing farmhouses on the site cause no disturbance due to light or noise and any odour produced is that which would be expected in a rural area. Developments, both residential and industrial, will expect lighting. This is likely to affect surrounding residents and existing wildlife, particularly bats. However, the use of suitable lighting, such as that suggested by the Bat Conservation Trust (<https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>) can minimise the detrimental impact. Furthermore, light pollution can be a problem both within and adjacent to developments. Well-designed lighting, suitably directed, timed and shaded can ensure public safety, while still allowing the enjoyment of dark skies. This approach is expected in any new development, but particularly in those parts of the SDA closest to the A4304 and the villages of Misterton and Walcote.

POLICY HBE 2: EAST OF LUTTERWORTH SDA - In relation to the part of the Strategic Development Site lying within the Plan Area, the Plan adds local detail to the LP and requires:

- a) An area of green open space shall be maintained as an area of separation between the new dwellings and the settlement of Misterton and landscaping be provided to create and maintain a visual barrier between these two areas of built development, as required by LP Policy L1;
- b) Access into the strategic Development Areas to the north and south of the road is designed to minimise delays and disruption to traffic travelling east and west on the A4304;
- c) Adequate measures are put in place to mitigate disturbance caused by any significant increase in traffic through the villages of Misterton and Walcote, including signage, traffic calming and measures to prevent the creation of 'rat runs' along Swinford Road, South Kilworth Road and Washpit Lane;
- d) No direct vehicular access is created between the Strategic Development site and the villages of Misterton and Walcote, other than any necessary changes to the access arrangements into Misterton village;

- e) The extensive network of statutory and permissive footpaths within the site be maintained and links to the wider countryside be protected and maintained;
- f) The existing cycleway alongside the A4304 be retained and further cycle paths be created with the proposed development site;
- g) Existing greenspaces be protected and where possible enhanced, including Misterton Marshes SSSI, Thornborough Spinney and other Priority Habitats identified by Natural England (see pp 26 -28) including the designation of an adequate undeveloped buffer zone around each sensitive site;
- h) Development of high-quality design and layout which minimises its impact on the surrounding landscape, respects the topography and maintains and enhances existing woodland trees and hedgerows;
- i) Development avoids harm to St Leonard’s Church Misterton, a grade 2* listed building, respects its setting and maintains the important vista between St Leonard’s Misterton and St Mary’s Lutterworth, as required by LP Policy U;
- j) Land shall be allocated along the valley of the River Swift, north of Misterton and west towards Walcote, to link in with the land designated by LCC as a Country Park in the SDA;
- k) Proposals should minimise the impact on general amenity and reduce to a minimum the impact of noise, odour and light particularly when developing land for distribution to the south of the A4304. Light pollution should be minimised through the use of carefully installed and directed light fixtures and the adoption, if possible, of a lighting curfew to ensure the site is lit only when necessary. The impact of development on air quality in the Plan area will be measured and mitigated. Proposals which will result in the improvement of air quality or minimise reliance on less sustainable forms of transport will be supported.

Housing Mix

Misterton with Walcote is a rural parish. At the time of the 2011 census it was home to around 486 residents living in 202 households across 1527 hectares. The median age of residents was 44 and there was evidence of an ageing population when compared to 2001 census data. The average number of bedrooms per household stood at 3.2, higher than the district, regional and national rates. Home ownership levels in the Parish are relatively high with around 73% of households owning their homes outright or with a mortgage/loan. Around 13% of households live in private rented accommodation, higher than district levels but lower than regional rates, and around 9% of households live in social rented accommodation, which is low compared to regional and national rates. There is an underrepresentation of housing for single people, with just 3% having one bedroom, against 6% for the district, 8% for the region and 12% for England as a whole. There is evidence of under occupancy that is higher than district, regional and national rates, suggesting a need for smaller homes of one or two bedrooms, suitable for residents needing to downsize, small families and those entering the housing market.

Providing suitable accommodation for elderly residents, beyond the existing Housing Association bungalows on Franks Road, will enable them to remain in the local community and release under-occupied larger properties onto the market which would be suitable for growing families.

The ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas reveals that a low to mid-priced property (for the

year ended June 2016) cost on average £215,000, somewhat higher than the national average. The Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) 2017 noted that Harborough District has the highest median house prices in the Housing Market Area (HMA) covered by the Assessment and the joint highest average rents in the HMA. The HEDNA also indicated that the number of residents aged over 65 is projected to increase by 75% over the period to 2036.

A housing needs survey has been recently completed and this has shown a need for only three additional dwellings in the next five years, to 2023. 75% of respondents were in support of a small number of homes to meet local people's needs, with most identifying a need for homes for young people, small family homes and homes for elderly people. 17% of village residents who completed the questionnaire were aware of other household members who had had to leave the villages in the last five years with at least 3 cases involving a lack of affordable housing. A further housing needs report commissioned through the delivery of the NP supports the requirement for smaller dwellings (Appendix 5)

These conclusions were supported by the feedback from the Open Events held as part of the neighbourhood planning process. Residents told us that housing for rent was needed with affordable homes for young people, particularly those with village links. However, even "affordable" housing could be too expensive for young people.

As part of the process a questionnaire was sent to residents and responses received from 22% of households. Only 7% of respondents expressed the wish for a few more large homes and no one wanted a lot more with 20.5% saying that there were too many already. Whilst the majority considered that the number of medium-sized (2-3 bedrooms) properties was about right, 32.5% wanted more. 48.8% wanted a few more affordable starter homes (1-2 bedrooms) and 14.6% wanted a lot more. The majority of respondents wanted more eco-friendly homes.

POLCY HBE 3: HOUSING MIX – New development should provide for a mixture of housing types having regard to identified local housing needs as evidenced by the above local consultations, the November 2018 housing needs survey and the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) 2017 or more recent documents.

Dwellings of three bedrooms or fewer and single-storey accommodation suitable for older people will be supported where they are in accordance with other policies. Dwellings of 4 or more bedrooms should not comprise more than 50% of new dwellings in any multi-house development.

Promoting community led and self-build housing

The NPPF calls for 'custom build' opportunities to be included in LPs as part of the housing mix. This is accommodated within the NP 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 NP promotes this approach and encourages self-build opportunities to be incorporated into new housing developments. Community led housing is defined as “local people taking a leading and lasting role in creating genuinely affordable housing”. Local people support this approach.

Windfall development

A windfall site is defined in the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) as one which has not been specifically identified as available through LP or NP processes. The following windfall policy will meet the future requirement to achieve a minimum of three additional units of property within the next five years.

Windfall sites are often identified as redundant and run down or vacant buildings which are ‘ripe’ for replacement. Such buildings can include barns but windfall sites more often arise as a gap between existing residential properties in the built area of the parish and within the Limits to Development. These sites have made a regular contribution to the improvement of the housing supply in the Parish. The benefit of developing brownfield sites in particular is that they deal with redundant or derelict premises or land and add to the supply of new dwellings.

POLICY HBE 4: WINDFALL SITES - Small (i.e. four dwellings or less) and well-designed residential development on infill and redevelopment sites within the Limits to Development will be supported where such development:

- a) Respects local character;
- b) Retains existing important natural boundaries such as trees, hedges and streams;
- c) Does not reduce garden space to an extent where it adversely impacts on the character of the areas or the amenity of neighbours and the existing and future occupiers of the dwellings; and
- d) Does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring occupiers by reason of loss of privacy, loss of daylight, visual intrusion or noise.

Rural Exception Sites

The NPPF defines Rural Exception Sites as small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Such sites have been used to provide homes for local people.

The Housing Needs Survey provides evidence that a rural exception site policy in the Parish is needed. In any proposal for affordable homes, the emphasis should be on properties for social rent and a restriction of no more than 33% open market homes in any rural exception site is proposed subject to viability. This is required because of the local need for affordable housing as demonstrated through the housing needs survey and the high price of housing in the parish.

POLICY HBE 5: RURAL EXCEPTION SITES - Development proposals for affordable housing on small sites in the parish in areas that would not normally be permitted for housing will be supported as rural exception sites where:

- a) the site is visually and physically connected to a settlement;
- b) the scale of the development would be in-keeping with the role and function of the settlement;
- c) the type and scale of affordable housing is justified by evidence of need;
- d) the development would accommodate households who are either current residents of the parish or have a connection to the Parish;
- e) planning conditions will be used to ensure that the market and affordable housing is available with priority in perpetuity for people with a connection to the Parish; and
- f) Small numbers of market homes, up to 33% of the total, may be permitted where they are essential to enable the delivery of affordable units, meet an identified and proven element of local need, such as starter homes or units to enable local 'downsizing'.

Design standards

The Parish of Misterton with Walcote has a long and interesting history, resulting in a wide array of heritage assets, attractive landscapes and a distinctive local character.

The biggest challenge facing the future of the Parish is to balance the desire to protect the character of each village with the need for them to grow and evolve in a sensitive and proportionate manner in order to sustain the community and its facilities.

The policies in this section seek to reflect the design principles which the community believes will help to achieve this aim. They reflect the outcome of consultations of all age groups, of community organisations and of the Housing Theme Group which specifically focused on relevant issues – all of which showed broad unanimity of views. The overall aim is to ensure that Misterton and Walcote villages retain their character within a unique and distinctive Parish. This can be achieved by the use of the planning system to respond sensitively to the wide range of historic buildings, structures, landscapes and archaeology situated within the Parish. These assets form many of the key characteristics of the Parish, and future development should seek to enhance, reinforce and preserve this distinctive historic environment.

The NP therefore sets out design requirements which seek to identify and protect the distinctive elements which together provide the special qualities of the landscape setting and built heritage of Misterton with Walcote Parish.

New development proposals should be designed sensitively to sit within the distinctive settlement patterns of the villages of Misterton and Walcote. Existing settlement patterns have grown incrementally over time. The buildings date from many different periods, providing a

richness and variety of styles and materials. This traditional rural character should be enhanced by new development and schemes should be designed to ensure that new buildings sit comfortably within the existing settlement pattern and are respectful of their surroundings.

The community consider it to be important that new residential development is of the highest standard to ensure that it is in keeping with residential properties in the village. This too is an aim of the revised NPPF (2019). It is not considered necessary to have a uniform series of properties that all look the same, rather to ensure that new developments respect the features of buildings which make the villages of Misterton and Walcote desirable places in which to live.

New development proposals should be designed sensitively to ensure that the high-quality built environment of the Parish is maintained and enhanced. New designs should respond in a positive way to the local character through careful and appropriate use of high-quality materials and detail. Proposals should also demonstrate consideration of height, scale and massing, to ensure that new development delivers a positive contribution to the street scene and adds value to the distinctive character of the area.

Developers must demonstrate how their proposed development reinforces the Parish's character and fits within its neighbourhood. All new proposals for developments must illustrate how the character, size, density and layout of the proposed site will not cause an adverse negative impact on the local beauty of the countryside from both within and outside the village.

New buildings are expected to maintain the integrity of the village character. Building scale, styles and materials must therefore be coherent with, and complementary to, the neighbourhood in terms of visual impact. Building densities should be concomitant with surrounding residential properties and provide space for greenery and planting if common to the area.

The policy should apply throughout the Parish, including the East Lutterworth SDA where developers, where appropriate, will be required to consider the impact of development on the Parish in line with the NP policies, and in relation to the SDA will be required to consider these proposals into any design brief.

POLICY HBE 6: DESIGN STANDARDS - Development proposals including one or more houses, replacement dwellings and extensions are encouraged to have regard to the following building design principles to a degree that is proportionate to the development:

- A. All developments should incorporate adequate provision for vehicular access, constructed to minimise surface water run-off. All new dwellings must be provided with a charging port for electric vehicles. Adequate off-road parking should be provided as a minimum of two car parking spaces for dwellings of three bedrooms or less and three spaces for dwellings of four bedrooms or more, in line with Highways Authority requirements;
- B. The creation of safe spaces for access and movement around the development, taking into account expected vehicle numbers and movements must be catered for;

- C. All new housing and extensions should be built to minimum of Building Regulations standard M4(2) Category 2, or subsequent increase in standards in recognition of the potential change in Building Regulations
- D. Development, where appropriate, should incorporate sustainable drainage systems with maintenance regimes. Appropriate provision for the secure storage of waste bins and recyclable materials out of sight of public areas should be made. All new dwellings must incorporate infrastructure to enable connection to the local fibre-optic network. Cabling, pipework and telephone lines must be discreet and protected from damage;
- E. Any new development must demonstrate how it will minimise the impact on local flora and fauna. Existing trees, hedgerows and topography should be preserved as far as possible. Existing grass verges and banks should be retained where possible and provision made for the upkeep of any new grass areas within the development;
- F. Applications should incorporate measures for the protection and enhancement of local biodiversity, where appropriate, as follows:
- Roof and wall construction should follow current technical best practice recommendations for integral bird nesting boxes and bat breeding and roosting sites;
 - Hedges (or fences with ground-level gaps) should be used for property boundaries to maintain connectivity of habitat for small ground-based animals such as hedgehogs.
 - Lighting design, location, type, lux levels and times of use should follow current best-practice as well as legislation by applying the guidelines in *Guidance note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK*: Bat Conservation Trust/Institution of Lighting Professionals, 2018.
 - Existing trees and hedges of ecological or arboricultural value on and immediately adjacent to new development sites should be retained and protected whenever possible. When this is demonstrably not practicable, the developer should be responsible for arranging new plantings on a one-for-one or better ratio, particularly in the case of mature trees, using diverse native species, either on site or elsewhere in suitable locations in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Heights and density at maturity should be considered when planning tree planting; and
 - 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 and, where appropriate, grey water systems.
 - Sustainable drainage (SUDS) and landscaping schemes in developments of over 10 dwellings should be designed to incorporate measures for habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement and should include a resourced management plan to maintain the designed biodiversity value of these features for at least ten years after the whole site's completion by the developer.

B. The Natural and Historic Environment

Introduction

This section of the NP deals with the environmental component of *sustainable development*, as described in the NPPF. It balances the requirement for appropriate development in Misterton with Walcote against the value of environmental sites and features that can be shown to be both significant (for wildlife and history) and appreciated, in their own right and as community assets, by local people. It also deals with the broader environmental issues of concern to the community, like enhancing biodiversity in new developments and renewable energy generation.

The MAPS in this chapter have been reduced to fit the document page size. Full-size versions are available as supporting documents. All base maps from Parish Online: © Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (0100059732) 2018.

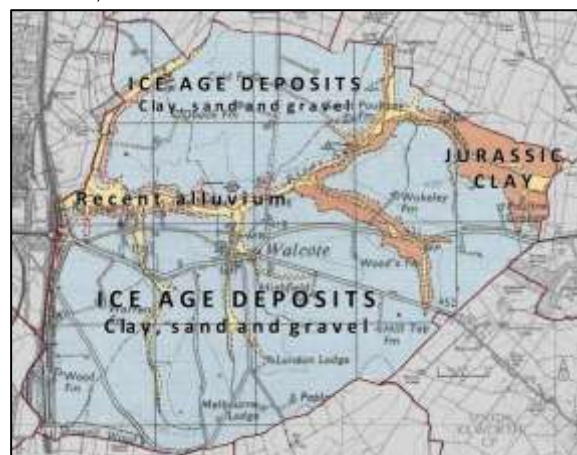
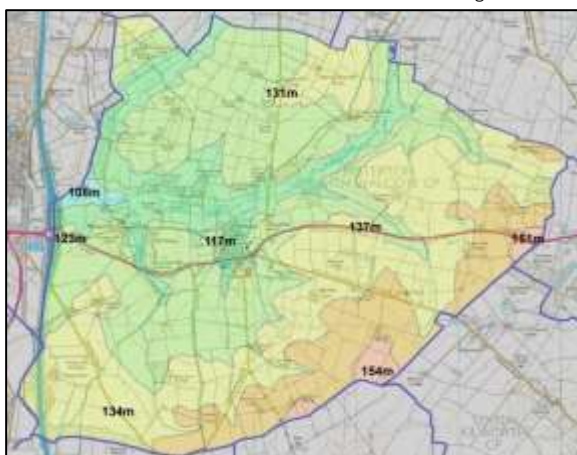
Care was taken during preparation of the NP to ensure that the policies (and the sites and areas of environmental significance covered by them) were not unduly restrictive on development during the NP's lifetime. Only 7.6 % (approximately) by area of the open, developable land in the parish has been earmarked for environmental protection:

Area of undeveloped land in Misterton with Walcote parish = 1502 ha

Area earmarked for environmental protection in the parish = 115ha (7.6%)

Figures 4.1 Topography (left) and 4.2 Geology (right) of the Plan Area

Maps based on DEFRA, Ordnance Survey and British Geological Survey online resources, all © Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (0100059732) 2018



Landscape, geology and setting

The NP Area (which coincides with the Civil Parish of Misterton with Walcote) is, gently undulating being about 140m (460 feet) above sea level, sloping gradually from higher ground in the east to the west. Only about 20m (66 feet) separates the highest point, on the South Kilworth

Road, from the lowest close to the junction of the M1 motorway. Although the underlying rock comprises Jurassic clay and mudstones, most of the Parish is covered with glacial till (boulder clay).

The parish lies within the catchment of the River Swift, which in turn flows into the Avon, eventually issuing into the Bristol Channel. Surface deposits within the river valley include both glacial sand and gravel and more recent alluvium.

Most of the land within the parish is used for agriculture, both arable and pasture. It is primarily grade 2 agricultural land with the best quality soil south of the A4304, close to its junction with the M1 motorway.

Historic environment

Like every parish in the Midlands, Misterton with Walcote has its own unique version of English history. Archaeological evidence of human presence dates back to Palaeolithic times, with numerous flint finds, but extends through the Roman era to a World War 2 bomb crater.

Much history is written into the landscape: ranging from a Scheduled Ancient Monument Bronze Age Bowl Barrow to the north of the A4304, to the Grade II* St Leonard's Church and the extensive tracts of ridge and furrow earthworks, legacies of local farming practice before land in the Parish was enclosed in 1797, but written records are needed to complete the story.

The first written evidence of the parish predates the Norman Conquest, but by the time of the Domesday Book, in 1086, Ralph, a Norman, held lands for the Bishop of Peterborough. At that time Misterton comprised 10 households, while smaller Walcote had only 7, but did include a mill and generated a slightly higher tax income. (Further information about the history of the Parish can be found in section 6 pp9-11).

Today Walcote has a petrol station incorporating a small shop, a well-appointed and heavily used memorial hall and a community owned pub, The Black Horse, while Misterton boasts the Parish Church. In 2011 the parish population was 486, a majority of whom lived in the settlement of Walcote.

Natural environment

Although a majority of the parish is agricultural, within Misterton lie a number of areas of ecological interest. Misterton Marshes is a Site of Special Scientific Interest designated for its unimproved wetland habitat. The Parish also contains areas of Priority Habitats for floodplain grazing marsh, semi-improved grassland, deciduous woodland and traditional orchards. These resources are valued highly by local residents who enjoy access to much of their tranquil beauty through an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways.

Other areas, such as Swinford Road, have exceptionally wide and diverse verges and hedges which provide homes to many species found on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. These species

are the most threatened nationally and residents are keen that the NP offers these species protection, allowing them to spread and recolonise other areas.

Particularly noteworthy are the number of hedgehogs, house sparrows and grass snakes found within the village of Walcote; a thriving tree sparrow colony to the west of South Kilworth Road and a number of skylarks, yellowhammers, reed buntings and chequered skipper butterflies close to both Swinford Road and Gilmorton Lane. It is considered imperative that the NP identifies areas for particular protection.

Existing environmental designations

The NP Area is located in National Character Areas (NCAs) 94 *Leicestershire Vales* and 95 *Northamptonshire Uplands* as defined by Natural England for planning purposes. Two Harborough District Council Landscape Character Areas cover the parish: *Lutterworth Lowlands* and *Laughton Hills*; the boundary between them coincides with that between the national LCAs.

One SSSI (Misterton Marshes) is located in the NP Area and is included within the planned East of Lutterworth strategic development site. There are 22 areas of *priority habitat* (Natural England designations), together with five *Local Wildlife Sites* (LWS).

The NP Area also includes one *Scheduled Monument*, six *Listed Buildings*, and ten further sites and features of historical significance with visible expression in the modern landscape.

Environmental inventory

An environmental inventory (Appendix 6) was carried out between May and July 2019. The work comprised two complementary elements:

The review compiled information from many sources, including: DEFRA, Natural England, Historic England, Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Records, Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Record Centre records (biodiversity and geology), Environment Agency, British Geological Survey Old maps (Ordnance Survey, manuscript), British History Online, Local history and archaeology publications, local knowledge.

Fieldwork involved a review of all open and currently undeveloped land in the NP Area. Significant species, habitats, landscape characteristics, earthworks and other extant features, and viewpoints were also recorded.

These data, along with all relevant site-specific information from the existing information review, were mapped and tabulated, and each site was scored and evaluated using the nine criteria for Local Green Space selection in the NPPF

Table 1. Environmental inventory scoring system used in the NP

1. LOCAL IN CHARACTER, NOT AN EXTENSIVE TRACT OF LAND	Yes/no	Yes is essential for LGS designation.
2 PROXIMITY	Max 5	<p>5 = an open space <u>within</u> a settlement</p> <p>Other scores should reflect <i>perception</i> of nearness, e.g. footpath access extends this out from the village:</p> <p>4 = adjacent to the settlement boundary (Limit to Development line when defined) – ‘at the bottom of the last gardens’</p> <p>3, 2, 1 = successively farther from settlement</p> <p>0 = most distant main settlement(s) <i>within the NP Area</i></p>
3. SPECIAL TO COMMUNITY	Max 10	
3.1 BEAUTY	0-3	Only the most attractive land in the NP Area should qualify - most sites should get 0.
3.2 TRANQUILLITY	0-2	<p>Most sites should get 0.</p> <p>2 will probably be limited to e.g. churchyards, well-designed memorial gardens, managed semi-natural habitats.</p>
3.3 RECREATIONAL VALUE	0-5	<p>5, 4 = Public Open Spaces designed for sport and recreation or as facilities for children and young people</p> <p>3 = Membership sport facilities (tennis, bowls, etc.). Very well used park or other recreational space with full or comprehensive public access. Managed wildlife site with public access. Semi-natural parkland (trees, grass) with public footpaths and no restriction on access.</p> <p>2 = Paddock or grazing field with 1 or more public footpath, e.g. well-used for dog-walking, traditional sledging field</p> <p>1 = arable farmland with public footpath but no other access. 0.5 = adds to the recreational value of a walk as adjacent part of its surroundings</p> <p>0 = private property with no public recreational value or access</p>
4. LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE – History and Wildlife	Max 10	<p>Must be evidence-based and the data included in the NP or appendices.</p> <p>History and wildlife scores are cumulative, i.e. if multiple historical features or ages are represented, or if biodiversity (numerous species of conservation concern (BAP) in several higher taxa) is demonstrable, the score rises by 1 or more points to a maximum of 3. All sites scoring 3 or above will qualify in this NP for protection at appropriate level.</p>
4.1 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE	0-5	5 = statutory site, includes or comprises Scheduled monument, Listed Building, feature or structure. National Trust or English Heritage site

4.2 RICHNESS OF WILDLIFE	0-5	<p>4 = site with features in the County <i>Historic Environment Record</i>, Historic England <i>PastScape</i> records. <i>Registered park or garden</i>. Well-preserved <i>ridge and furrow</i>.</p> <p>3, 2 = site includes feature, earthworks or building with known local historic environment significance – history includes 20th century. Fainter <i>ridge and furrow</i></p> <p>1 = site of local oral or recorded history importance, no actual structure</p> <p>0 = No evidence for historical environment significance</p> <p>5 = Statutory site, includes or comprises SSSI (biodiversity or geology) or other national or European designation.</p> <p>4 = County Wildlife Trust, etc. <i>nature reserve</i>, <i>Country Park</i> with importance for biodiversity, etc.</p> <p>3 – site with National, county and local biodiversity features, e.g. <i>Priority Habitats</i>, occurrence of one or more <i>Species of Conservation Concern</i> (use national or county Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Species lists), mapped Gt Crested newt ponds, bat roosts and foraging areas. County or local site designations e.g. <i>Local Wildlife Site (LWS)</i>, <i>Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)</i>, <i>Local Nature Reserve</i>, <i>Community WildSpace</i>, etc.</p> <p>2 = other site of known local biodiversity importance not recorded elsewhere with e.g. BAP species, species-rich hedgerows, watercourse, pond</p> <p>1 = (parish background level), moderate or potential wildlife value</p> <p>0 = no evidence for natural environment significance</p>
Maximum possible	25	

Local Green Space

Of the approximately 375 inventoried parcels of open land in the parish, some 70 were identified (using the nine criteria for Local Green Space designation noted in the NPPF paragraph 100) as having notable environmental (natural, historical and/or cultural) features (see Table 1 for the criteria and scoring system adopted for this NP).

Of these 70, two sites score 70% (17.5/25) or more of the maximum possible (this being a threshold agreed by the community as appropriate to reflect the NP Area’s quantity and quality of undeveloped land) *and* meet the criteria for designation as Local Green Space (as outlined in NPPF, paragraph 100). Their statutory protection will ensure that these most important places in Misterton with Walcote’s natural and human environment are protected for the enjoyment of future generations and for the intrinsic value of the environmental features they include.

Figure 5: Local Green Spaces



POLICY ENV 1: PROTECTION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE – Development proposals that would result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, the following Local Green Spaces (details in Appendix 7; map figure 5) will not be allowed other than in exceptional circumstances.

- Misterton churchyard and meadows (inventory site 1026)
- Walcote parkland (1117)

Sites of environmental significance

A group of inventory sites scores highly for ‘history’ or ‘wildlife’ (scoring at least 4/5 under either of these criteria) but, because their community value scores are not high they are not eligible for Local Green Space designation and (except those sites already designated as SSSI or Scheduled Monument) not statutorily protected. The features for which the identified sites have been selected and notified are detailed in the environmental inventory (Appendix 6). The map (figure 6) shows their locations.

The selection of these sites has been rigorous and based on the demonstrable presence of a) existing, visible historical features or b) existing, living habitats with their associated species. Neither is amenable to mitigation, replacement or compensation as a condition of development – development on these sites means the history and wildlife will be gone forever or reduced to remnants of low significance. For this reason, Policy ENV 2, below, expects future development in Misterton with Walcote to avoid these sites, and for alternative sites with low (or no) extant historical or natural significance to always be preferred.

The **historical environment** sites comprise a) sites with *extant and visible* archaeological or

historical features recorded in the Leicester& Rutland Historic Environment Records database and mapped by Historic England and b) other sites of historical and social significance identified in local records and during the inventory process. Areas of ridge and furrow (medieval field systems) are also of high historic environment significance; they are covered by Policy ENV 5.

The **natural environment** sites comprise a) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), b) sites where *priority habitats* occur (Natural England mapping) or where *biodiversity action plan (BAP) species* have been recorded as breeding or as regular visitors; c) sites identified as ecologically significant by Leicestershire County Council or Harborough District Council, including *Local Wildlife Sites*, and d) sites identified during the inventory process as being of high biodiversity significance in the context of the NP Area.

Destruction of or significant harm to these sites should be avoided; failure to do so would effectively be non-compliance, at parish level, with the relevant sections of the *Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981*, the *Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2010* and European Council Directive *92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora*. The Policy helps deliver Harborough District Council LP policy G15(2) in the NP Area.

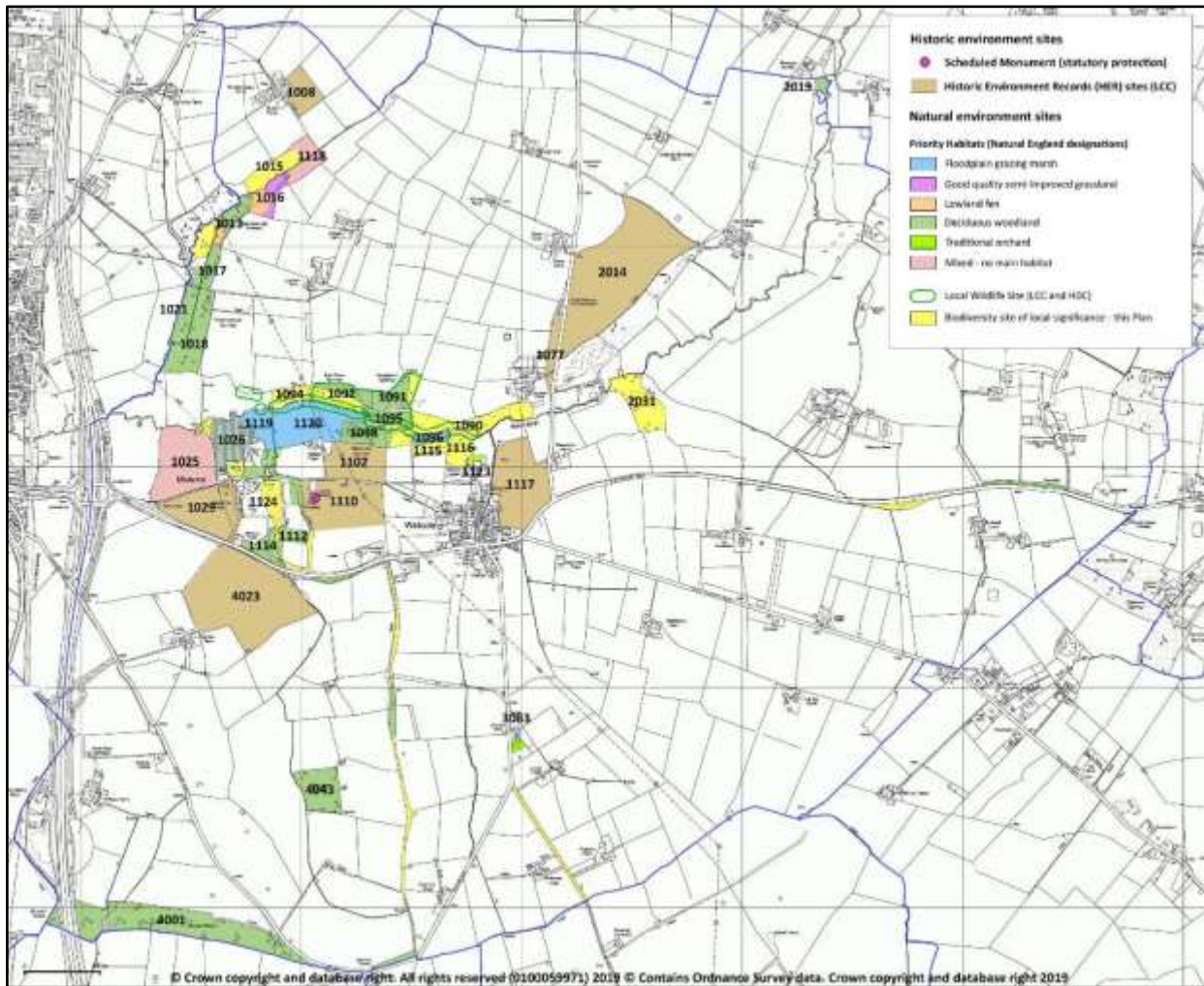
It might be argued that parish-level biodiversity makes such a small contribution to national biodiversity that it can be ignored when individual development proposals are under consideration. But the biodiversity of England consists *only* of the sum of all the significant wildlife sites in its parishes. Destruction of any one of these sites in Misterton with Walcote will reduce national, as well as local, biodiversity. The community is determined that inappropriately located development proposals do not contribute inadvertently to further loss of England's threatened natural heritage.

Some of the sites identified in this policy are within the boundary of the East of Lutterworth SDA. Their incorporation within this policy will help to ensure that the features identified are appropriately mitigated in the development.

POLICY ENV 2: PROTECTION OF SITES OF ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE – The sites mapped (figure 6) are of local (or higher) significance for their historical and/or natural environment features. Their historical features are extant and have visible expression, their species and habitats are ecologically important in their own right, and they are locally valued.

The historical and/or ecological significance of the features, species, or habitats occurring on these sites should be weighed against the benefits of a development proposal, or of a change of land use requiring planning approval, affecting them.

Figure 6: Sites of historical and/or natural environment significance



Open Spaces, Sports and Recreation Sites

A group of sites scored highly in the inventory (scoring at least 80% of the possible total under proximity and community value criteria) for their outstanding community value for sport, recreation, relaxation or amenity, or as open space defining the layout of the built-up area. They have been identified in fieldwork, community consultations and in Parish records.

In Misterton with Walcote these sites comprise:

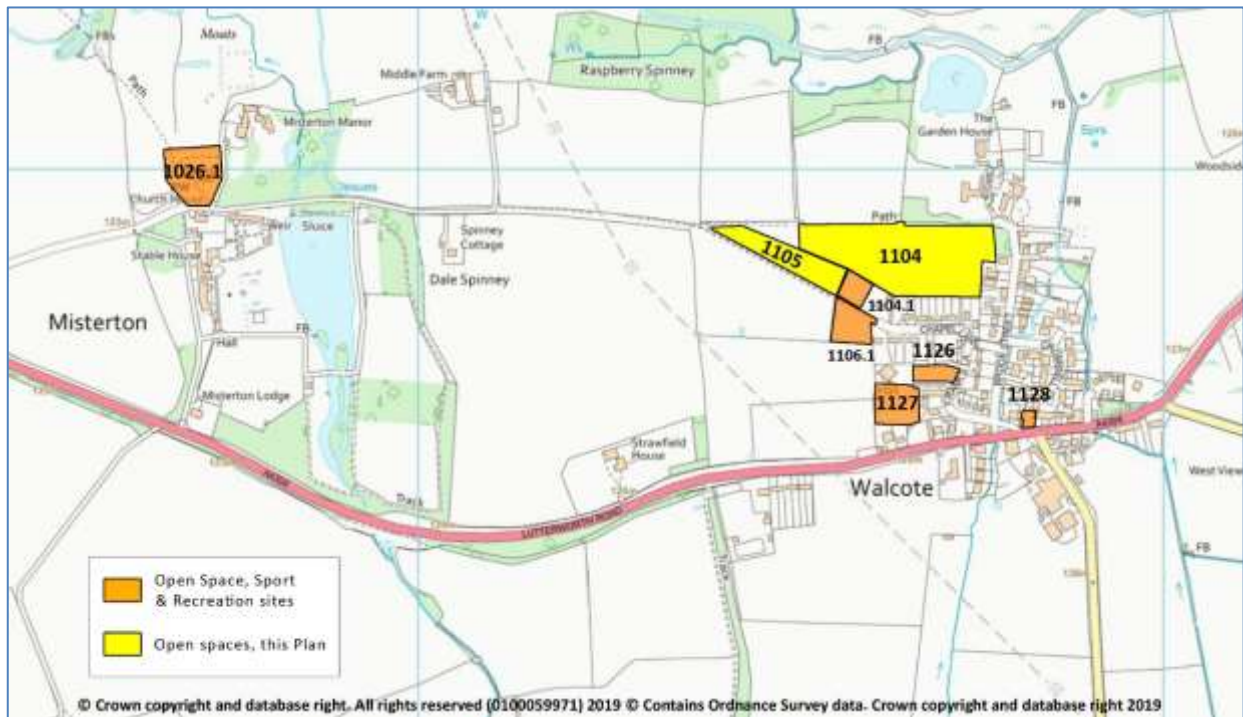
- Natural and semi-natural open space
- Amenity Green Space
- Provision for Children and Young People
- Outdoor Sports Facilities
- Allotments
- Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial sites

Their current, or potential, value, as community resources, including open space *within and close to the built-up areas*, is recognised in this Policy.

POLICY ENV 3: OPEN SPACES , SPORTS AND RECREATION SITES - Development proposals that result in the loss, or have a significant adverse effect on the following important open spaces will not be supported unless the open space is replaced by equivalent or better provision in an equally suitable location, or unless it can be demonstrated to the Local Planning Authority that the open space’s amenities are no longer required by the community.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1104 Open space (paddock) between Chapel Lane and footpath Y98 | greenspace |
| 1104.1 Bufton allotments, off Chapel Lane | 1026.1 Misterton churchyard |
| 1105 Chapel Lane spinney | 1126 Franks Road allotments |
| 1106.1 Bufton play area and amenity | 1127 Old School playing field |
| | 1128 Walcote memorial Garden |

Figure 7: Open Spaces, Sports and Recreation Sites



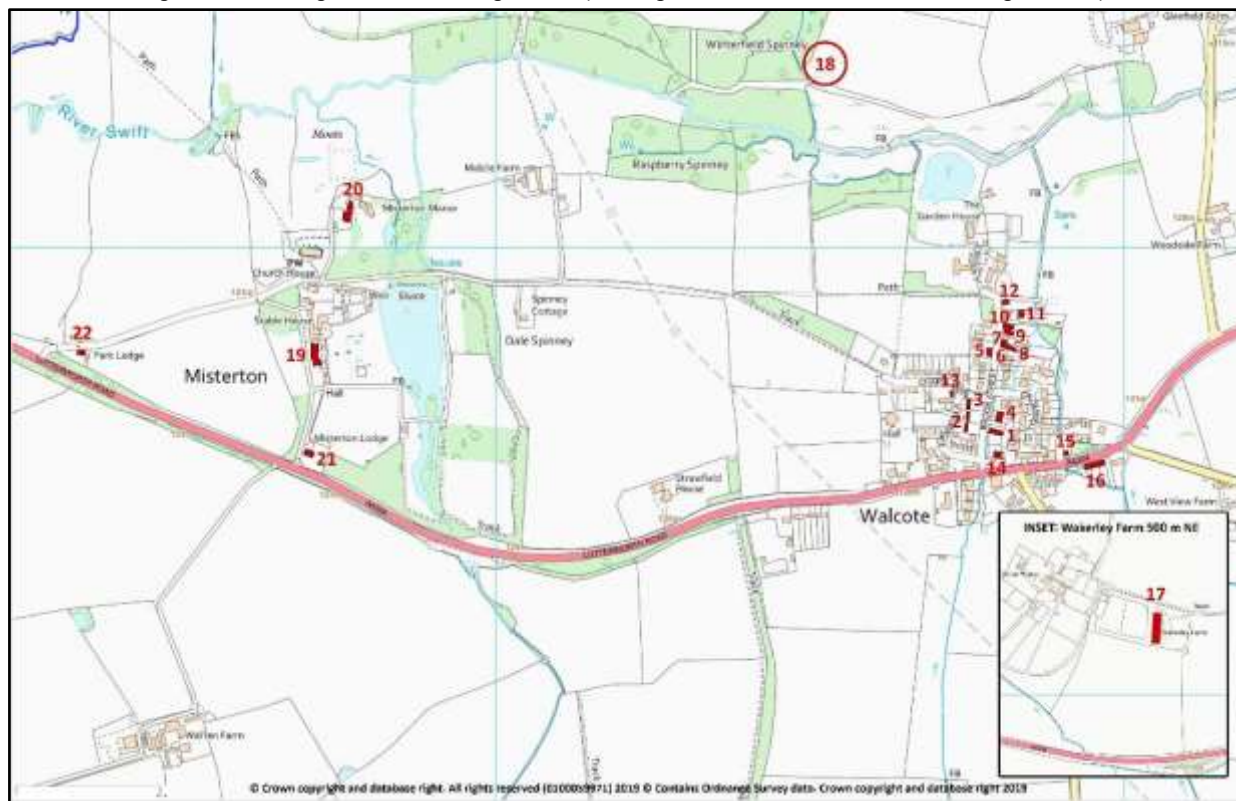
Buildings and structures of local significance

Seven buildings and structures in the NP Area have statutory protection through Scheduled Monument status or Listing at Grade II* or II. The NP lists them for reference, and to note that new development will be required to take into account their *settings* as defined, on a case by case basis, by Historic England. Their location within, or close to, sites designated or noted for protection in the NP’s Policies and Community Actions contributes to these sites’ evidence of significance. See Supporting Document 1 for details of the Scheduled Monument and Listed Buildings in the NP Area as designated by Historic England.

The NP identifies a number of other buildings and structures in the built environment of Misterton with Walcote that are considered to be of local significance for architectural, historical

or social reasons (details in Appendix 8). Their inclusion here records them in the Planning system as non-designated local heritage assets.

Figure 8: Non-designated local heritage assets (buildings and structures of local historical significance)



POLICY ENV 4 NON-DESIGNATED LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS – The structures and buildings listed here (and map figure 8) are non-designated local heritage assets. They are important for their contribution to the layout and characteristic mix of architectural styles in the Plan area. The benefits of a development proposal, or of a change of use requiring planning approval, should be judged against their significance as heritage assets either individually or as part of a coherent group.

WALCOTE

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. No. 2 Brook Street | 10. No. 28 Brook Street |
| 2. Nos. 5-11 Brook Street | 11. Fairview, No. 32 Brook Street |
| 3 No. 13 Brook Street | 12. Hall Cottage, Brook Street |
| 4. Brook Cottages, Nos. 4-10 Brook Street | 13. No. 1 Chapel Lane |
| 5. Yew Tree House, Brook Street | 14. Walcote Farmhouse, No. 23 Lutterworth Road |
| 6. Rowan Cottage, No. 20 Brook Street | 15. Gable Cottage, Lutterworth Road |
| 7. Rose Cottage, No. 24 Brook Street | 16. Estate cottages, 24-34 Lutterworth Road |
| 8. No. 22 Brook Street | 17. Wakeley Farm (MLE15772) |
| 9. No. 26 Brook Street | 18. WW2 bomb craters |

[NOTE: MLE 21558 'C19th chapel, Swinford Road' is recorded in the Leics. CC HER but is now derelict and partly demolished. Omitted from this list]

MISTERTON

19. Misterton Hall (MLE 2132)

20. The Old Rectory, Misterton (MLE12011)

21. Misterton Lodge, Lutterworth Road
(MLE23168)

22. Park Lodge, Lutterworth Road, Misterton
(MLE23169)

For detailed evidence for non-designated heritage assets see appendix 8

Ridge and furrow

Like other parishes in the English Midlands, the three townships of Misterton, Walcote and Poultney were farmed using the open field system from (probably) around 800AD. Centuries of ploughing of the arable lands, using ox-teams and non-reversible ploughs, produced deep furrows with ridges between them. The open field system continued almost everywhere until the late 15th century, when Misterton was emparked and Poultney was enclosed, but it ended completely in 1796 when Walcote's last open fields were Enclosed by Act of Parliament. Enclosure was the process by which the open fields were taken out of arable cultivation and converted to permanent pasture, either voluntarily or by order. The ridges and furrows were 'fossilised' under the new grazing fields, preserving a record of a medieval way of village life; a record that, it could be argued, in some ways is as important as the parish churches around which the fields lay.

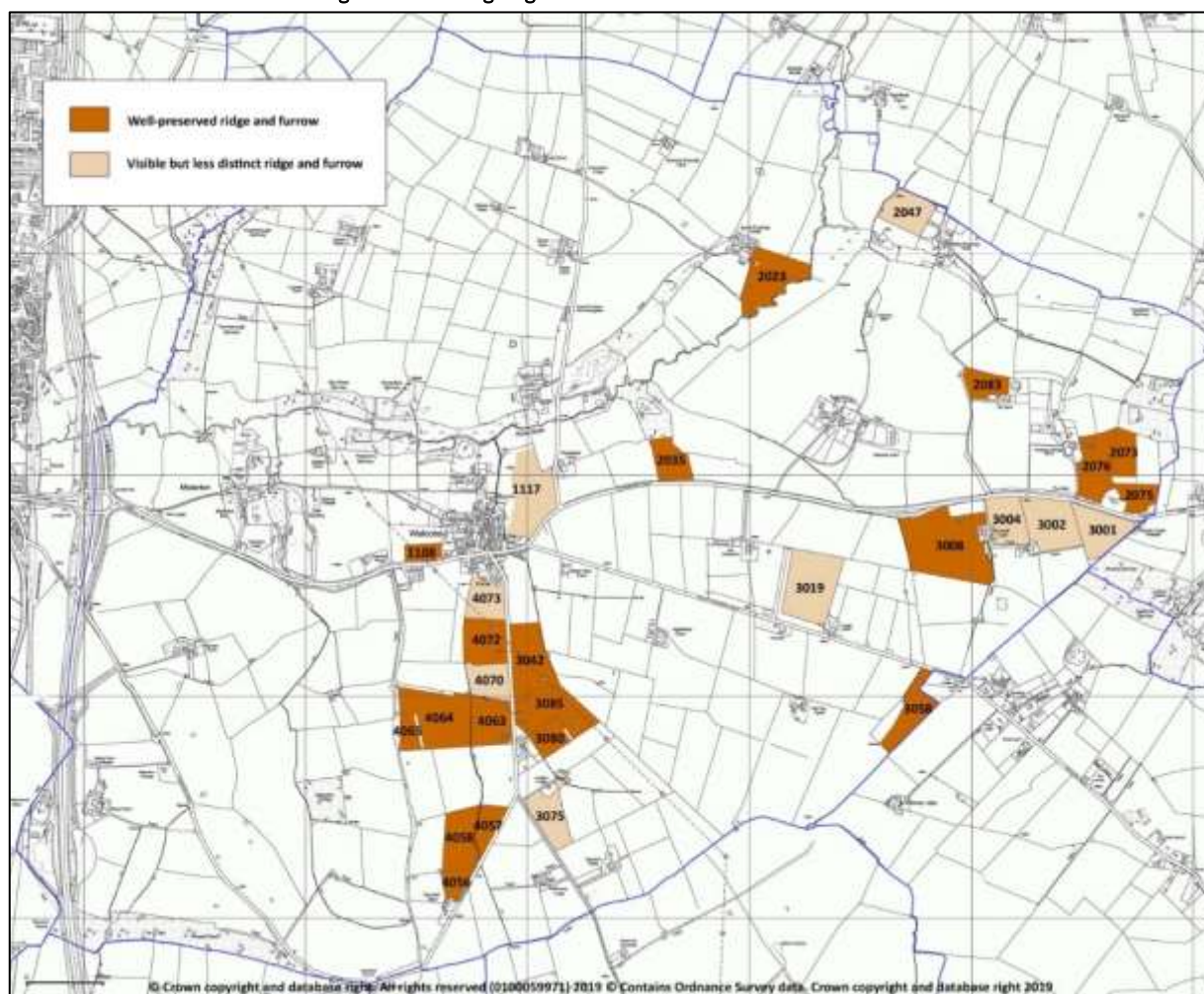
This ridge and furrow then survived until the middle of the 20th century, when a return to intensive arable production resulted in the destruction of most of this feature of Misterton with Walcote's historical heritage. Across England, the loss has been between 70% and 90% since 1950. In recognition of the threat to what still remained in the 1990s, English heritage (now Historic England) instigated a mapping project and made recommendations for protection of ridge and furrow via the Planning system. The situation in Misterton with Walcote is that only 24 fields (6.4% of 375) still show any trace of ridge and furrow.

Based on Historic England's recommendation and practice, this NP recognises all ridge and furrow fields in the NP Area as *non-designated heritage assets*. Every effort should be made to ensure that new development is located so that none of these few surviving areas is damaged or destroyed.

POLICY ENV 5: RIDGE AND FURROW - The areas of ridge and furrow earthworks (figure 9) are non-designated heritage assets.

Any loss or damage arising from a development proposal (or a change of land use requiring planning permission) is to be balanced against the benefits of such development.

Figure 9: Surviving ridge and furrow in Misterton with Walcote



Biodiversity and habitat connectivity

Although it has attractive countryside and one SSSI, Misterton with Walcote is not a parish known for outstanding biodiversity, even by comparison with the rest of Leicestershire. However, in addition to the SSSI, the NP Area has a group of fields still managed as floodplain meadow, areas of ‘parkland’ (pasture with trees) originating in 18th and 19th century ornamental landscaping schemes, spinneys, copses, shelter belts and species-rich hedgerows, and a small number of field ponds. These are locally important habitat areas but they are generally distant from one another. Overall, this situation raises the relative importance, in the context of the NP Area (which is the context in which this NP’s environmental policies apply), of the remaining sites of local biodiversity importance – whether natural or semi-natural – to ‘high and irreplaceable’.

While policy ENV 2 deals with identified individual parcels of land of high biodiversity value, this policy (ENV 6) covers the general principal of protecting all significant habitats and species, together with trees (in woodlands and hedgerows).

The policy also identifies a branching wildlife corridor, incorporating some of the best semi-natural habitat areas in the parish and passing close to the settlements. This will provide *habitat connectivity* to enable wildlife populations to move between the otherwise isolated surviving

places for living, breeding, foraging and feeding, and (because of its proximity to the village) give opportunities for local people to enjoy the benefits of appreciation of the natural world.

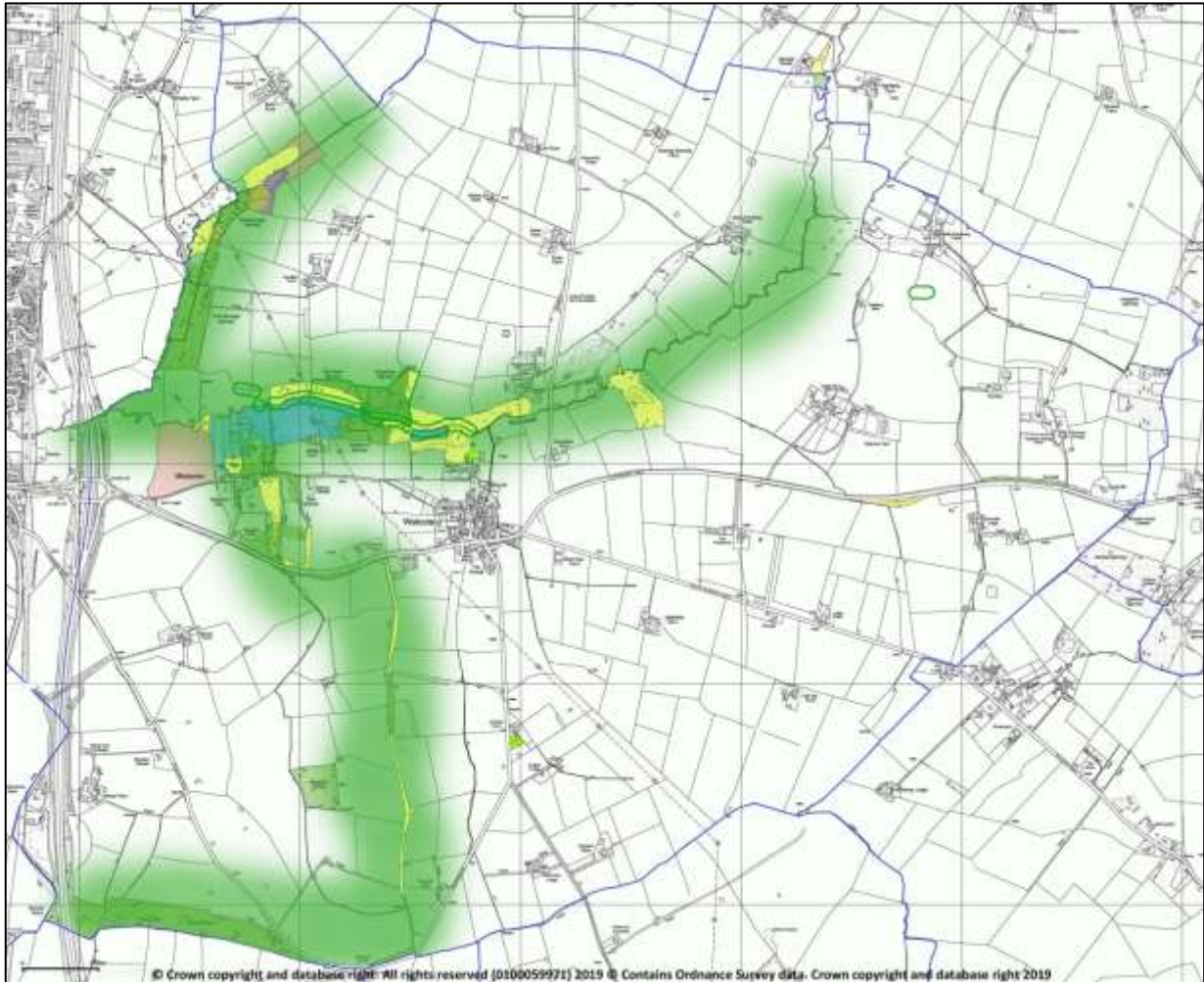
Protection of habitats and species in the planning system is an obligation under European directives (e.g. *Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora*) and the English legislation derived from them (e.g. *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* with later amendments). An individual planning decision affecting one parcel of wildlife habitat in Misterton with Walcote might feel too small to affect biodiversity more widely. But English biodiversity consists *only* of the sum of all such individual places; destruction of any one reduces English biodiversity – irreversibly – by that amount. The cumulative effect of this approach, allowing development to destroy local habitat sites, has played a significant part in the observed 70% decline of much of England’s wildlife over the past several decades. The residents of Walcote and Misterton want to play their part in discouraging this harmful approach to planning. In so doing they are explicitly supported by a number of paragraphs in the NPPF as well as by thoughtful interpretation of its definition of *sustainable development*.

POLICY ENV 6: BIODIVERSITY, WOODLAND, HEDGES AND HABITAT CONNECTIVITY- New development in Misterton with Walcote will be expected to safeguard and enhance locally significant habitats and species, especially those protected by relevant English and European legislation, and, where practicable, to create new habitats for wildlife.

Development proposals that damage or result in the loss of woodland and hedges of historical and ecological significance and amenity value will be resisted where possible. Proposals should be designed to retain and manage, or replace (on site or elsewhere), all trees, woodland and species-rich hedges whenever possible.

Development proposals should not adversely affect the habitat connectivity provided by the wildlife corridors identified in figure 10.

Figure 10: Wildlife corridor providing connectivity between identified habitat areas

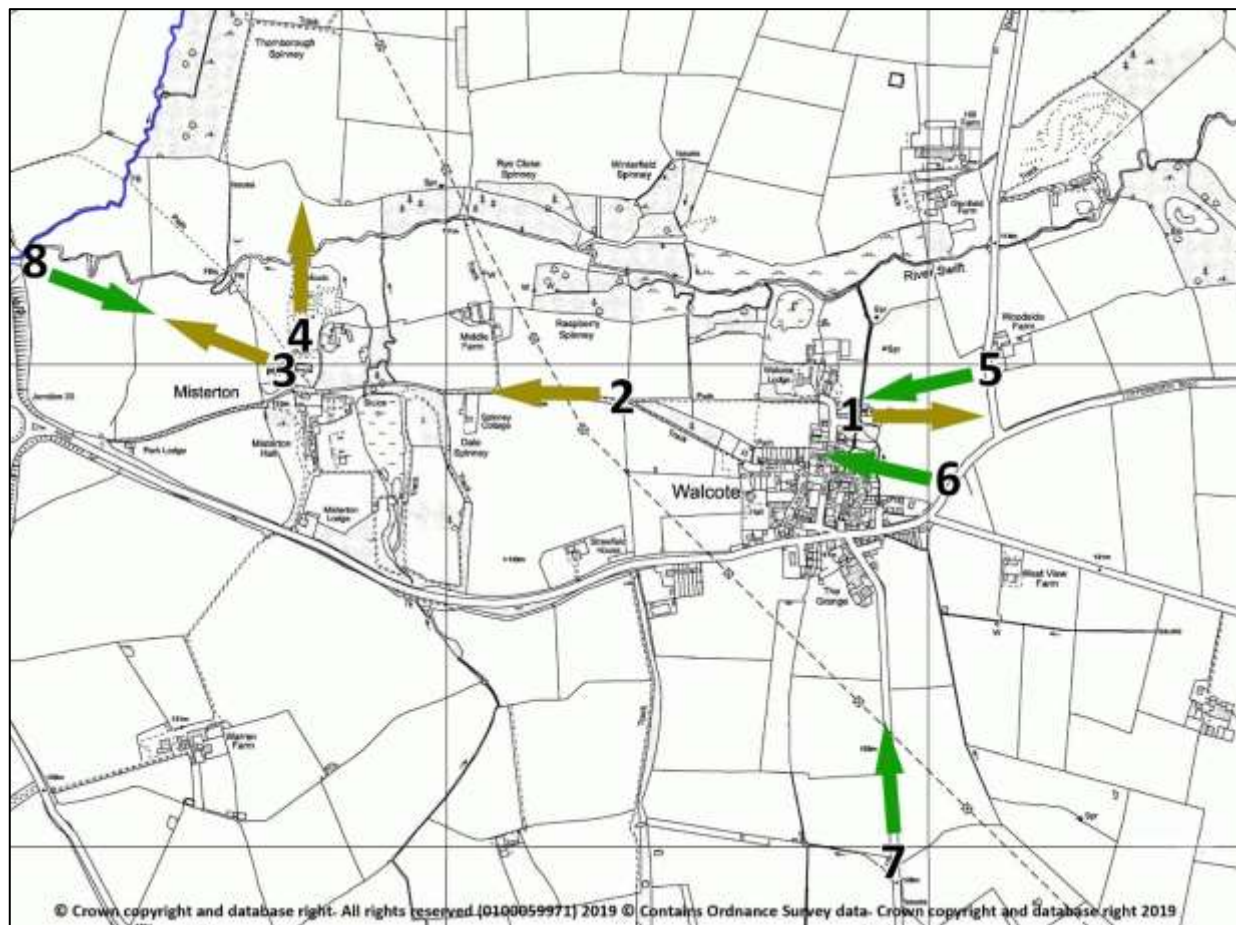


Important Views

Consultation during the NP's preparation identified a widely held wish to protect what remains of Misterton with Walcote's rural setting, and its relationship with the surrounding landscape.

One of the main ways in which residents expressed this wish was by describing a number of highly valued views within the village and toward it from the surrounding countryside. These consultation findings were supported by the environmental inventory, which although principally aimed at identifying sites of environmental significance also confirmed the sightlines of the suggested views and mapped them (figure 11). Photographs of the important views are in Appendix 9.

Figure 11: Important views. See text for explanation



POLICY ENV 7: PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT VIEWS – The following views (figure 11) are important to the setting and character of the village. To be supported, development proposals must not significantly harm them, and should include statements of proposed mitigation and/or protection.

1. East from the gate into field 1117 (the 'conker field') across the historic parkland (pasture with trees) and ridge and furrow earthworks to Gilmorton Lane.

2. From the village of Walcote along bridleway Y31 towards Misterton and across the fields to the north west of the

path.

3. From the churchyard of St. Leonard's church west and north toward Lutterworth.

4. From the churchyard of St. Leonard's church north over the Swift valley.

5. From Gilmorton Road west

across field 1117

6. Gateway view of Walcote village from the east ...

7. Gateway view looking north toward Walcote village.

8. Gateway view from the M1 south east into the NP area and Misterton Church.

Renewable energy generation infrastructure

Residents in the NP Area want to balance the need to mitigate for Climate Change, by supporting the move away from a reliance on fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, with their wish to protect the rural landscape, environment and views.

In conformity with NPPF paragraph 97, they recognise the responsibility of all communities to reduce emissions, in this case by supporting electricity generation with renewable sources rather than from carbon-emitting power stations. Some proposals for turbines and solar arrays, appropriately scaled and sited, will therefore be considered favourably. In determining appropriateness of scale and location, the community has taken both local realities (environmental protections, topography and views) and the relevant District-level strategies and policies into account.

The NP Area is in Harborough District Council Landscape Areas *Lutterworth Lowlands* and (a narrow strip in the far southeast of the NP Area) *Laughton Hills* (HDC *District-wide Landscape Character Assessment, 2007*). The published assessments on the detrimental impact of new development noted:

Laughton Hills LCA *“even minimal development which is inappropriate or poorly sited may impact on landscape character”*

Lutterworth Lowlands LCA *“any new development should be carefully assessed to avoid additional adverse or irreversible change to the remaining landscape character”*

The western part of the NP Area has also been assessed, using Local Landscape Character Areas, for sensitivity to renewable energy infrastructure (Lutterworth and Broughton Astley Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study, 2016).

The north-western segment of the NP Area north and east of the A4304/M1 (Bitteswell Historic Farmland LLCA) is assessed as of ‘Moderate to High sensitivity’. South of the A4304 is judged to be of ‘Moderate sensitivity’.

POLICY ENV 8: RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION INFRASTRUCTURE – Development that incorporates environmentally sustainable energy generation and/or storage technologies will be supported where it respects local character and residential amenity.

The development of small-scale renewable energy generation and energy storage facilities will be supported, subject to demonstrating respect for habitats and species, heritage assets, landscape character, residential amenity, visual and noise impacts

C. Community Assets

Existing Community Assets

The community facilities and amenities that exist in Walcote and Misterton Parish make a significant contribution to its vitality and sense of community. They have a positive impact on our sustainability, enhancing the quality of life for residents and providing the potential for social interaction. This is especially important as our Parish consists of two settlements and we believe that it is important to maintain their unity.

To promote the on-going prosperity and unity of the Parish, it is essential that we retain our existing community facilities and amenities and continue to provide local services that will sustain the vitality of the community.

The importance of the existing facilities and amenities was highlighted in the consultation questionnaire and events, which have taken place across the Parish through the preparation of this NP.

The Community assets of the Parish exist predominantly in the larger settlement, Walcote. However, Misterton is the location of the parish church.

Walcote Village Hall (Walcote Memorial Hall)

The Hall was re-built on its current location in Franks Lane in 2006. It is the site of the old school with playing fields attached. Inside the hall is a Roll of Honour; outside are Memorial Plaques. The hall is also known as 'Walcote Memorial Hall.' Since its opening, it has been used beyond original expectations.

The Village Hall is managed by the Misterton and Walcote Community Trust Management Committee who are all volunteers and strive to work towards continued benefits for the community. Regular user groups include dance groups, Lunch Club, Taekwon-do, quilting, indoor bowling, pre-school playgroup, dog training and natural healing. Additionally, organisations in the village use the Hall for their meetings.

The Hall also brings together the village and surrounding areas through one off community events such as fashion shows, race nights, harvest supper and specialist festivals.

The Playing Fields

Available to the whole community, these are attached to the Village Hall as they were when playing fields of the demolished school. They contain a mini-football pitch and skateboarding ramp.

Play Park

A valued community facility for local children. It is a traditional play park, which was designed by local children about ten years ago and is owned and maintained by the Parish Council.

Allotments

There are two allotment sites managed by the Misterton with Walcote Allotment Association:

Site One is on Franks Road and privately owned. A 30-year lease has been held by the Parish, of which there are only a few years left to run.

Site Two are the Bufton Allotments, adjoining the play park. *There is insufficient space to satisfy demand, should the lease on site one fail to be renewed.*

Public House – a community success story

As recently as 2012 Walcote had two functioning public houses, the Tavern and the Black Horse. Subsequently the Tavern closed and became a private home in 2013. Sadly in the meantime, the Black Horse closed and it remained empty from January 2012.

So, from 2013 the Parish found itself without a pub, regarded by many as the heart of the community. The Misterton with Walcote Community Trust, which runs the Memorial Hall, did its best to fill the void, running beer festivals and other social events but it was not the same and so the Parish Council asked Harborough District Council to register the Black Horse as an asset of community value, which it did in February 2014.

A village meeting in 2013 led to the formation of a group to investigate the possibility of re-opening/purchasing the Black Horse. In December 2015 the Black Horse Walcote Community Benefit Society Ltd was formed. It sought grants and advice and went on to launch a share issue and secure a loan to buy the pub, which it did in March 2016. There followed a period of refurbishment, largely carried out by volunteers. A tenant was found and a tenancy agreement was signed in November 2016.

The pub opened in December 2016 and has remained so since. The landlord has built up a successful business. In addition to providing good food and drink, the pub hosts a book exchange and has made itself available as a venue for quizzes, meetings and pub games.

Church and Burial Grounds:

The Parish church of St Leonard's is situated in Misterton. It was established in 14th Century and is a grade II* listed building.

Like many other rural parishes, St Leonard's is now part of a group of 11 parishes that form the Avon Swift Benefice. There are regular church services, special events and offers hospitality to others after church services. The church is well supported by the community and many of the congregation participate in village affairs such as the Parish Council and the Community Benefit Society that owns the pub and the Community Trust that runs the Memorial Hall.

Public Footpaths

The parish benefits from a range of public footpaths which are enjoyed by residents and visitors. These have been extensively improved in recent years by the Parish Council (with grants from a number of different sources), replacing stiles with kissing gates and improving conditions underfoot. Particularly important for community connectivity is a circular walk linking Walcote and Misterton, which can be made by following Brook Street and taking the footpath left which joins a track which passes the Misterton Hall and St. Leonards Church. On reaching the main road, turning left onto a cyclepath by the woods of Misterton Park brings you back to Walcote. The route across the fields to Lutterworth is also well used.

Pedestrian paths within the Parish are of differing widths. Those near to the Lutterworth end of Walcote have been appropriately widened. However, responses to the questionnaire indicate a need for the widening of footpaths along the mid-section of the A4304 and along towards Market Harborough, so residents can walk in safety and access their own vehicles on their own drives without fear of being knocked over by a passing vehicle.

POLICY CF1: RETENTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES, AMENITIES, ASSETS - Development leading to the loss of an existing community facility, including the village hall, church, Public House, allotments and recreation ground, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a) There is no longer any need or demand for the existing community facility; or
- b) The existing community facility is, demonstrably, no longer economically viable or able to be supported by the community; or
- c) The proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation of the existing community facility to an equally or more appropriate and accessible location within the Parish.

New or Improved Community Facilities

Consultation has demonstrated that the Parish would welcome new and improved facilities during the lifetime of this NP. For example, the community questionnaire showed that 20% of respondents would like to see a village shop/farm shop in the Parish.

POLICY CFA2: NEW OR IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES - Proposals that improve the quality and/or range of community facilities will be supported provided that the development:

- a) Will not result in unacceptable traffic movements or other disturbance to residential properties;
- b) Will not generate a need for parking that cannot be adequately catered for;
- c) Is of a scale appropriate to the needs of the locality and conveniently accessible for residents of the village wishing to walk or cycle;
- d) Takes into full account the needs of people with disabilities.

D. Transport and Road Safety

Traffic Management

Misterton with Walcote is a small rural Parish with a single main road (the A4304) forming the spine of the village and is a connecting route between Market Harborough, the M1 and the A5 with Lutterworth between. Smaller roads lead to nearby villages such as South Kilworth and Shawell.

Both Open Day and Questionnaire consultations provided clear evidence (over 60%) of residents' strong concerns regarding traffic safety and absence of appropriate traffic management arrangements. There are four particular concerns:

1. Excess traffic speed along the main road of the village.
2. The size of the vehicles travelling at high speed give the residents of the terraced cottages very little room to use their drive outside their houses without endangering themselves. The path along this side of the road is too narrow for even a pushchair to be used safely. Telephones wire have been snapped on multiple occasions because of the speed and height of vehicles.
3. The volume of traffic travelling at high speed makes it dangerous for pedestrians attempting to cross the (A4304) and create difficulty exiting from Brook Street.
4. HGVs parking on the main road along the front of the garage causes problems with children using the school bus stop, drivers and tailback of traffic.



A recent spot survey was taken to include in this NP. It took place at the point that the A4304 passes through Walcote and was carried out on different days and at different times of day to achieve a good sample spread. There was an hourly average of 720 vehicles, (one every 5 seconds), made up of 84% cars and motorcycles, 13% vans and small lorries and 3% HGVs and car carriers.

Parked cars and lorries making use of the pedestrian pathway dangerous

Residents would like a light controlled pedestrian crossing in the centre of the village to help residents crossing to the garage shop or trying to catch a bus to Lutterworth. They would also like to retain the average speed cameras, currently supplied by LCC on a one-year trial.

Public Transport

A bus service is the only means by which some parishioners can leave the Parish to shop and socialise. It is therefore an important factor in their physical and mental wellbeing.

In common with many rural areas, the bus service is poor and diminishing. A poor service isn't widely useful and so isn't well used. This, in turn, leads to it becoming less viable for commercial operators and it is reduced until it no longer exists. For example, while the 58-service linking Walcote with Market Harborough and Lutterworth remains in existence, its frequency has been reduced making it virtually impossible to use to access employment or to socialise in the evening.

There is currently a private taxi service providing community pick-ups in nearby parishes. The Questionnaire and Open Day revealed an interest in the possibility of a Local Bus Service or Taxi Service. It is therefore possible that this existing service or a community run service could be encouraged to meet transport needs.

Community Action T1: Community Transport - The Parish Council will work with the community and other organisations to explore the development of public/community transport options to meet the needs of all Parishioners.

Parking

The Questionnaire and Open Day revealed a wish for improved parking for residents, especially for terraced cottages, Brook Street, Chapel Street and Frank's Road. Residents living on the A4304 often have very limited drive space so, especially if they own multiple vehicles, have to park along the main road. Passing HGVs are consequently forced to pass centimeters from residents' cars. Inevitably there are incidents of damage to these parked vehicles.

Cycling

The Lutterworth Loop (40-miles) is an established route for cyclist that begins and ends in Lutterworth but involves Walcote and many surrounding villages (see cycle-route.com). Consequently, many cyclists frequent the Parish. This is broadly welcomed and causes no issues for the Parish.

POLICY TR1: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT - With particular regard to the rural highway network of the Parish and the need to minimise any increase in vehicular traffic all housing and commercial development must:

- a) Be designed to minimise additional traffic generation and movement through the village;
- b) Incorporate sufficient off-road parking;
- c) Not remove or compromise the use of any existing off-road parking areas unless a suitable equivalent alternative is provided;
- d) Provide any necessary improvements to site access, communal parking and the highway network either directly or by financial contributions; and
- e) Consider, where appropriate, the improvement and where possible the creation of footpaths and cycleways to enhance safety for pedestrians and to access key village services.

Electric vehicles

The number of electric vehicles on the road is set to increase rapidly and there is clear evidence this is already starting.

This raises the crucial question of battery recharging. Residential charging is preferable. It is important to include such requirements for new developments in locations such as Misterton and Walcote if rural communities are not to be left behind.

However, residential charging is generally only possible where off-road parking is available and there are many homes in the Parish where off-road parking is not possible.

Therefore, there will be demand and need for communal rapid charging facilities. These could be utilised in our Parish - for example by installation in a permanent parking area, providing re-charging for residents with no off-road parking, and allowing fast re-charge for all residents.

POLICY TR2: ELECTRIC VEHICLES – Where feasible, residential development of one dwelling or more should provide 7kW cabling, or better where possible, to the most practical point in the home to facilitate subsequent installation of a home electric vehicle charging point.

The provision of communal vehicular charging points within the Parish will be supported where there is universal access and their presence does not impact negatively on existing available parking in the Parish

E. Business and Employment

For a rural community to flourish, good employment opportunities are important. This generates commercial and social activity, as well as income, which promotes a sustainable community. It is important that our NP protects and strengthens the economic base within the Parish, existing employment should be proactively encouraged and supported to develop where appropriate reflecting the growth of Misterton and Walcote, and its residents.

There is a range of businesses currently operating within the Parish, including the petrol station with small shop and independent car wash, the Black Horse public house, bed and breakfast facilities, a riding school, dog training and farms with Caravan Club facilities.

Support for existing businesses and employment

The Black Horse is seeking to expand its catering business and bring in further trade from inside and outside the Parish. Some parishioners suggested additional services that might take place within the pub e.g. parcel drop and collection points for some of the courier companies such as Amazon. It was felt that this could also encourage trade for the pub.

POLICY BE1: SUPPORT FOR EXISTING BUSINESSES & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES- There will be a strong presumption against the loss of commercial premises or land that provides employment or future potential employment opportunities. Applications for a change of use to an activity that does not provide employment opportunities will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that:

- a) The commercial premises or land in question has not been in active use for at least 6 months; and
- b) The commercial premises or land in question has no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment generating uses and as demonstrated through the results both of a full valuation report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least six months.

Support for New Businesses and Employment

New employment initiatives can help to boost and diversify the local economy, thus providing more local employment opportunities. The community consultation welcomed more businesses to the Parish so long as they are appropriate in size and nature. As the population increases, this would be beneficial in enabling more people to work locally, diminishing the increase in traffic out of and into the Parish. Employment proposals should therefore only be approved if they avoid harmful impacts on other matters agreed to be locally important such as increased traffic flows, parking, residential amenity, the preservation of historic/heritage assets and the local environment.

The community consultation also identified the desire for a village shop. It is acknowledged, however, that such shops are seldom viable as standalone businesses, especially as supermarket

outlets, with their economies of scale, are situated in nearby towns. The petrol station has planning permission to expand its shop which may work towards this ambition.

POLICY BE2: SUPPORT FOR NEW BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYMENT - In supporting additional employment opportunities outside the SDA, new development will be supported if:

- a) It falls within the boundary of planned limits to development for Walcote, unless it relates to small scale leisure or tourism activities, or other forms of employment related development appropriate to a countryside location or there are exceptional circumstances;
- b) Where possible, development is sited in existing buildings or on areas of previously developed land;
- c) It is of a size and scale not adversely affecting the character, infrastructure and environment of the village itself and the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the countryside;
- d) It does not involve the loss of dwellings;
- e) It does not increase noise levels or light pollution or introduce any pollution to an extent that they would unacceptably disturb occupants of nearby residential property;
- f) It does not generate unacceptable levels of traffic movement and on road parking, provide off road parking; and
- g) It contributes to the character, the design of the local built environment and the vitality of the local area.

Home working

There are several parishioners currently working from home either employed or self-employed. These include animal feed providers, coach hire service, accountant, plumber, gardener, plasterer, manicurist and property investors.

There is an increasing National trend to home working and therefore, as the Parish develops and grows, it too will need to support residents who are working from home. This will include good broadband Infrastructure and also opportunities within the Parish to allow businesses to develop and grow. For example, the provision of business hubs, meeting spaces and workshops all would create opportunities for residents.

With this in mind it is clear that residents who wish to move to home working within their homes or within the village may need to make adaptations to their homes. Therefore, the construction of extensions, the conversion of outbuildings, and the development of new freestanding buildings in gardens from which businesses can operate will be supported. This is intended to maximise the opportunities for entrepreneurial activity and employment in our Parish. It will be important that any future housing and developments within the village should strongly consider accommodation that can promote home working and local employment.

POLICY BE3: HOME WORKING - Proposals for the use of part of a dwelling for office and/or light industrial uses, and for free-standing buildings within its curtilage, extensions to the dwelling or conversion of outbuildings for those uses, where planning permission is required, will be supported where:

- a) Such development will not result in unacceptable traffic movements and appropriate parking provision is made;
- b) No significant and adverse impact arises to nearby residents or other sensitive land uses from noise, fumes, light pollution, or other nuisance associated with the work activity; and
- c) Any extension or free-standing building should not detract from the quality and character of the building to which they are subservient by reason of height, scale, massing, location or the facing materials used in their construction.

Farm diversification

The NP seeks to support farming businesses within the Parish as they are considered essential to maintaining a balanced and vibrant rural community.

The conversion of farm buildings can enable diversification through sustainable re-use to provide opportunities for new businesses which can generate income and offer employment opportunities for local people. Subject to the proper consideration of residential amenity, visual impact on the countryside, heritage, environmental and highway safety issues, NP policies will support farm businesses by:

- Promoting a sustainable farming and rural economy in the Parish;
- Promoting the diversification of rural businesses;
- Encouraging businesses to provide a wider range of local produce, services and leisure facilities, to provide local employment and attract visitors to the Parish;
- Maintaining and enhancing the local environment of rural and agricultural lands.

The change of use of some rural buildings to new uses is already permitted under the General Permitted Development Orders. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014 allows, under certain circumstances, the change of use of agricultural buildings to residential use and change of use of agricultural buildings to registered nurseries providing childcare or state-funded schools, under the prior approval system. Diversification in local farming is essential to supplement incomes and to promote the sustainability of farms – especially the smaller locally owned ones, which still predominate in our Parish.

The community would support farmers in their potential to diversify (e.g. brewery, caravanning, bed and breakfast, unit hiring, farm shop etc.).

POLICY BE4: FARM DIVERSIFICATION - In order to support farm diversification and the sustainable growth and small-scale expansion of businesses, the conversion of existing agricultural and commercial buildings will be supported subject to:

- a) The use proposed is appropriate to the rural location;
- b) The conversion/adaptation works respect the local character of the surrounding area;
- c) The development will not have an adverse impact on any archaeological, architectural, historic or environmental features;
- d) The local road system is capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed new use and adequate parking can be accommodated within the site; and
- e) There is no significant adverse impact on neighbours through noise, light or other pollution, increased traffic levels or increased flood risk.

Broadband infrastructure

The Parish is supported by several broadband providers which allows households and businesses to have access to high speed connections. Results from the survey indicated that access to an effective broadband infrastructure was essential for residents of the village and other community facilities and also the range of small businesses that operate from our Parish to be able to take advantage of the latest communication technology.

In addition, the community would welcome improved mobile phone access as it is sporadic and in some areas of the village mobile access is not available for all. It is crucial that regular improvements to the current infrastructure must be in place to support future housing, employment and services in the village.

It is particularly important that, as our Parish grows and develops, an efficient and effective communications infrastructure is in place to maximise connectivity for businesses, services and residents alike. Such provision will reduce social isolation, ensure that not only residents, employers and services are well supported, but visitors to the village can also access good communications. All future developments in communication technology must be supported by the NP to ensure that all those in the Parish can take advantage of these developments fully.

POLICY BE5: BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE - Proposals to provide access to superfast broadband for all businesses and households in Misterton with Walcote Parish will be supported.

Improvements to the mobile telecommunication network that will serve all businesses and households within the Parish will be supported. Where new masts are installed, these should be shared where possible by more than one provider.

Any infrastructure improvements, possibly requiring above ground network installations, must be sympathetically located, designed to integrate into the landscape and not be in or near to open landscapes.

8. DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

New development can bring significant benefits to the local community, including new homes and jobs. It can also have negative impacts, for example, where additional demand is placed on facilities and services which are already at or near capacity. Planning obligations (also known as Section 106 agreements) may be used to secure infrastructure or funding from a developer. For example, a planning obligation might be used to secure a financial contribution towards improving existing recreational facilities or affordable housing. However, planning obligations can only be sought where they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

A new system is also being introduced alongside the use of planning obligations. This is known as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and it will require developers to make a payment to the District Council based on the size and type of development that is proposed. The proceeds of the levy will then be used to provide the infrastructure necessary to support growth across the District. A proportion of these CIL receipts will automatically be devolved to the relevant Parish Council for allocation to neighbourhood priorities. This proportion is set at 25% in areas where there is a Neighbourhood Plan in force. At this time the Harborough District Council is still considering whether to replace Section 106 agreements with CIL.

Through the preparation of the Plan, the Parish Council in conjunction with the community and other stakeholders has identified a small number of priority projects they wish to secure funding (either in whole or in part) through the use of planning obligations.

The Parish Council will seek, wherever possible, to use financial contributions obtained through the Community Infrastructure Levy or negotiated planning obligations, for the following:

- Measures aimed at improving parking, congestion and traffic calming in the Parish;
- Affordable housing;
- Pedestrian Crossing over the A4304; and
- The enhancement of public footpaths (and cycleways) to provide better connectivity within the Parish.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The NP will last for a period up to 2031. During this time, the circumstances which the NP seeks to address could change.

The NP will be monitored by Misterton with Walcote Parish Council with the support of Harborough District Council on an at least annual basis. The policies and measures contained in the NP will form the core of the monitoring activity, but other data collected and reported at the Parish level relevant to the delivery of the NP will also be included.

The Parish Council proposes to formally review the NP on a five-year cycle or to coincide with the review of Harborough LP, if this cycle is different.