

Warmington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2031

**A report to East Northamptonshire District Council
on the Warmington Neighbourhood Development
Plan**

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Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by East Northamptonshire District Council in June 2019 to carry out the independent examination of the Warmington Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by written representations. I visited the neighbourhood plan area on 2 August 2019.
- 3 The Plan includes a range of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. There is a very clear focus on safeguarding local character and providing a context within which new dwellings can be accommodated within a proposed Village Boundary. It proposes a series of local green spaces. In the round the Plan has successfully identified a range of issues where it can add value to the strategic context already provided by the adopted Local Plan. It has a particular focus on maintaining the rural identity of the neighbourhood area and includes a Design Code.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. It is clear that all sections of the community have been actively engaged in its preparation.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report I have concluded that the Warmington Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum should be held within the neighbourhood area.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
28 August 2019

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Warmington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2031 (the 'Plan').
- 1.2 The Plan has been submitted to East Northamptonshire District Council (ENDC) by Warmington Parish Council in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and its updates in 2018 and 2019. The NPPF continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether or not the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative plan, or a potentially more sustainable plan except where this arises as a result of my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope. Any plan can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The submitted plan has been designed to be distinctive in general terms, and to be complementary to the development plan in particular. It has a clear focus on maintaining the integrity of the village and ensuring good design standards.
- 1.6 Within the context set out above this report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.7 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then be used to determine planning applications within the Plan area and will sit as part of the wider development plan.

2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by ENDC, with the consent of the Parish Council, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both ENDC and the Parish Council. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. In previous roles, I have over 35 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level. I am a chartered town planner and have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service.

Examination Outcomes

- 2.4 In my role as the independent examiner of the Plan I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the Plan is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (b) that the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
 - (c) that the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 2.5 The outcome of the examination is set out in Sections 7 and 8 of this report.

Other examination matters

- 2.6 In examining the Plan I am required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
 - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and
 - the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.
- 2.7 I have addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.6 of this report. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan complies with the three requirements. In paragraph 7.97 I recommend a modification to the Plan so that it specifies a start date for the Plan period. This was discussed and agreed with the Parish Council and ENDC during the examination process. Its end date remains unaffected.

3 Procedural Matters

3.1 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:

- the submitted Plan;
- the Basic Conditions Statement;
- the Consultation Statement;
- the ENDC SEA screening report;
- the ENDC HRA screening report;
- the Parish Council's responses to my Clarification Note;
- the representations made to the Plan;
- the adopted North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031;
- the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan;
- the saved policies of the East Northamptonshire District Local Plan;
- the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2017;
- the emerging Replacement District wide Local Plan Part 2;
- the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019);
- Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014 and subsequent updates); and
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the neighbourhood area on 2 August 2019. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular. My visit is covered in more detail in paragraphs 5.9 to 5.16 of this report.

3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan, I was satisfied that the Plan could be examined without the need for a public hearing. I advised ENDC of this decision early in the examination process.

4 Consultation

Consultation Process

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 the Parish Council has prepared a Consultation Statement. This Statement sets out the mechanisms used to engage all concerned in the plan-making process. It also provides specific details about the consultation process that took place on the pre-submission version of the Plan (January to March 2019). It captures the key issues in a proportionate way and is then underpinned by more detailed appendices.
- 4.3 Appendices 1-5 are particularly helpful in the way in which they reproduce elements of the consultation documents used throughout the plan-making process. They add life and depth to the Statement.
- 4.4 The Statement sets out details of the comprehensive range of consultation events that were carried out in relation to the initial stages of the Plan. They included:
- the launch event;
 - the organisation of a parish-wide survey;
 - the organisation of a public event at the beginning of the survey period;
 - the development of a neighbourhood plan website and the use of Facebook; and
 - a workshop/open meeting after the survey.
- 4.5 The Statement also provides details of the way in which the Parish Council engaged with statutory bodies. It is clear that the process has been proportionate and robust.
- 4.6 The Statement provides specific details on the comments received as part of the consultation process on the pre-submission version of the Plan. It identifies the principal changes that worked their way through into the submission version. This process helps to describe the evolution of the Plan.
- 4.7 It is clear that consultation has been an important element of the Plan's production. Advice on the neighbourhood planning process has been made available to the community in a positive and direct way by those responsible for the Plan's preparation.
- 4.8 From all the evidence provided to me as part of the examination, I can see that the Plan has promoted an inclusive approach to seeking the opinions of all concerned throughout the process. ENDC has carried out its own assessment that the consultation process has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

Representations Received

4.8 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by ENDC for a six-week period that ended on 29 July 2019. This exercise generated comments from a range of organisations as follows:

- Natural England
- OCS Developments
- Northamptonshire County Council (Lead Flood Authority)
- Northamptonshire County Council (Highways)
- Northamptonshire County Council (Development Management)
- Northamptonshire County Council (Minerals)
- National Grid
- Anglian Water
- Gladman Developments Limited
- Ingrebourne Valley Limited

5 The Neighbourhood Area and the Development Plan Context

The Neighbourhood Area

- 5.1 The neighbourhood area consists of the parish of Warmington. Its population in 2011 was 939 persons living in 425 houses. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 8 August 2017. It is an irregular area running in a north-west to south-east alignment with the A605 running through its middle part in a north-east to south-west direction. It is located between Peterborough to the north-east and Oundle to the south-west. The neighbourhood area is predominantly a rural parish and much of its area is in agricultural use.
- 5.2 The principal settlement in the neighbourhood area is Warmington. It is located to the immediate south of the A605 in the centre of the neighbourhood area. It has three distinct parts. The first part is the traditional village core based on Church Street, Church Lane and Stamford Lane. This part of the village is dominated by the Church of St Mary and includes an attractive range of vernacular buildings. The second part of the village lies to the immediate north of the traditional village core. It is based on the more modern buildings in Bunting's Lane and off Dexter Way. The third part is Eaglethorpe which sits to the immediate north-west of the village. It includes several very distinctive buildings. Its historic association with the water mill to the west is now visually affected by the construction of the A605.
- 5.3 The remainder of the neighbourhood area consists of a very attractive agricultural hinterland. The part of the neighbourhood area to the north and west of the A605 and between Warmington and Fotheringhay (outside the neighbourhood area) is dominated by the River Nene and its floodplain. It includes the attractive water mill and dovecote.

Development Plan Context

- 5.4 The development plan covering the neighbourhood plan area is comprehensive. It consists of the adopted North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031; the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan and the saved policies of the East Northamptonshire District Local Plan. The Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted in 2017.
- 5.5 The Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP) includes a comprehensive range of policies. It establishes a settlement hierarchy which sets out to focus new development within the larger and more sustainable settlements. Warmington is identified as one of two Smaller Service Villages (Policy W1). In this context the policy comments that the limited service centre role of Warmington will be strengthened. Development opportunities are identified.
- 5.6 In addition to Policy 1 following policies in the RNOTP have been particularly important in influencing and underpinning the various policies in the submitted Plan:

Policy 2	Windfall Developments in Settlements
Policy 5	Transport Network
Policy 6	Residential Parking Standards
Policy 15	Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities
Policy 23	Rural Buildings – General Approach
Policy 24	Replacement Dwellings in the Open Countryside
Policy WAR1	Eaglethorpe Barns, Warmington

- 5.7 The submitted Plan has been prepared within its wider adopted development plan context. In doing so it has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned existing planning policy documents in the District. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.
- 5.8 It is also clear that the submitted Plan seeks to add value to the different components of the development plan and to give a local dimension to the delivery of its policies. This is captured in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Unaccompanied Visit

- 5.9 I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the neighbourhood area on 2 August 2019.
- 5.10 I drove into the neighbourhood area along the A605 from the south-west. This gave me an initial impression of its setting and the character. It also highlighted its connection to the strategic road system and to Oundle to the south.
- 5.11 I parked in Church Street. Given the compact nature of the village I was able to carry out the majority of the visit on foot. I looked initially at St Mary's Church. I saw its importance in the village and its impressive scale. The scale and maintenance of the churchyard was immediately evident. I took the opportunity to look at the other community and commercial facilities in this part of the village. I saw the School, the Village Hall and the post office/shops in Hautboy Lane.
- 5.12 Thereafter I looked at that part of the village between Church Street, Spinney Close, Taylors Green and Broadgate Way. In particular I looked at the proposed local green spaces. I saw the importance of Long Lane (proposed as a local green spaces), and Taylors Green (proposed as a Quiet Lane). I saw the building works taking place off Spinney Close, and the different components of the proposed Local Green Space 17.
- 5.13 I then walked along Bunting's Lane. I saw that the houses were more modern than those in the historic core. I saw the attractive grass verge and bench (proposed local green space 9) and the Moat. The combination of the Moat and the Football Ground to its north provide an attractive and open gateway to the village to the north.
- 5.14 I then looked at Eaglethorpe Barns and Eaglethorpe itself. The historic importance of the hamlet was self-evident. I also saw the attractive Orchard Pocket Park. I continued under the A605 to the water mill and the Elton Boat Club. The character of this part of the neighbourhood area was very different to that of the village itself. It

has an inevitable strong functional and visual relationship with the River Nene floodplain to the north and west. I saw several walkers and cyclists enjoying the Nene Way.

- 5.15 In order to understand the neighbourhood area better I drove to Fotheringhay. I saw the attractiveness of the agricultural landscape within the River Nene floodplain.
- 5.16 I finished my visit by driving to Elton along the A605. This highlighted the relationship between the two villages in the wider landscape.

6 The Neighbourhood Plan and the Basic Conditions

6.1 This section of the report deals with the submitted neighbourhood plan as a whole and the extent to which it meets the basic conditions. The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has helped considerably in the preparation of this section of the report. It is a well-presented and informative document. It is also proportionate to the Plan itself.

6.2 As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area;
- be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations; and
- not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (7).

6.3 I assess the Plan against the basic conditions under the following headings.

National Planning Policies and Guidance

6.4 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in February 2019. This approach is reflected in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

6.5 The NPPF sets out a range of core land-use planning issues to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following are of particular relevance to the Warrington Neighbourhood Plan:

- a plan led system– in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and the adopted Joint Core Strategy and the RNOTP;
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- building a strong, competitive economy;
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving local communities;
- taking account of the different roles and characters of different areas;
- highlighting the importance high quality design and good standards of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings; and
- conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

- 6.6 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 13 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the development plan.
- 6.7 In addition to the NPPF I have also taken account of other elements of national planning policy including Planning Practice Guidance and ministerial statements.
- 6.8 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance in general terms. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the neighbourhood area within the context of its size. In particular it includes a series of policies on the scale and nature of new development. It identifies a Village Boundary and proposes local green spaces. It includes a Design Code. The Basic Conditions Statement maps the policies in the Plan against the appropriate sections of the NPPF.
- 6.9 At a more practical level the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraph 16d). This was reinforced with the publication of Planning Practice Guidance in March 2014. Paragraph ID:41-041-20140306 indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.10 As submitted the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. The majority of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

Contributing to sustainable development

- 6.11 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social and environmental. It is clear that the submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension the Plan includes policies for housing and employment development (Policies W2/3/4/6 and W13/14 respectively). In the social role, it includes policies on community facilities (Policy W10) and on sustainable transport (Policy W12). In the environmental dimension the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built and historic environment. It has specific policies on design (Policy W5), on local green spaces (Policy W7) and on landscape character (Policy W9). The Parish Council has undertaken its own very impressive assessment of this matter in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

- 6.12 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in East Northamptonshire in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.
- 6.13 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context. The Basic Conditions Statement helpfully relates the Plan's policies to policies in the development plan. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

European Legislation and Habitat Regulations

- 6.14 The Neighbourhood Plan General Regulations 2015 require a qualifying body either to submit an environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or a statement of reasons why an environmental report is not required.
- 6.15 In order to comply with this requirement the Parish undertook a screening exercise on the need or otherwise for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be prepared for the Plan. The report is thorough and well-constructed. As a result of this process it concluded that the Plan is not likely to have any significant effects on the environment and accordingly would not require SEA.
- 6.16 The Parish Council has produced a separate Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan. It concludes that the Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects on a European nature conservation site or undermine their conservation objectives alone or in combination taking account of the precautionary principle. As such Appropriate Assessment is not required.
- 6.17 The HRA report is very thorough and comprehensive. It took appropriate account of the significance of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar site. It provides assurance to all concerned that the submitted Plan takes appropriate account of important ecological and biodiversity matters.
- 6.18 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination, I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various regulations. ENDC scrutinised the work on the SEA/HRA assessments. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am entirely satisfied that the submitted Plan is compatible with this aspect of European obligations.
- 6.19 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. In addition, there has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. An Equalities Impact Assessment has helpfully been prepared. On the basis of all the evidence available to me, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

Summary

- 6.20 On the basis of my assessment of the Plan in this section of my report I am satisfied that it meets the basic conditions subject to the incorporation of the recommended modifications contained in this report.

7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. In particular, it makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that they have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 My recommendations focus on the policies themselves given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the Plan area. The wider community and the Parish Council have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in their Plan. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance (41-004-20170728) which indicates that neighbourhood plans must address the development and use of land. The Plan includes a series of Parish Aspirations. They are appropriately distinguished from the principal land use policies.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted plan. Where necessary I have identified the inter-relationships between the policies. The Parish Aspirations are addressed after the policies.
- 7.6 For clarity this section of the report comments on all policies whether or not I have recommended modifications in order to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

The initial section of the Plan (Sections 1-3)

- 7.8 These initial parts of the Plan set the scene for the range of policies. They do so in a proportionate way. The Plan is presented in a professional way. It makes a very effective use of well-selected photographs and maps. A very clear distinction is made between its policies and the supporting text. It also highlights the links between the Plan's objectives and its resultant policies.
- 7.9 The Introduction comments about the development of the Plan. It also provides background information on the wider planning policy context. It helpfully comments about the distinction between its policies and the Parish Aspirations.
- 7.10 Section 2 comments about the neighbourhood area and a range of matters which have influenced the preparation of the Plan. It has a particular focus on its landscape and natural environment and how Warmington has evolved as a place. It is a very helpful context to the neighbourhood area.

- 7.11 Section 3 comments about the Plan's Vision and Objectives. It is well-constructed. It describes how the Vision and the Objectives of the Plan were developed. Its key strength is the way in which the objectives directly stem from the Vision. As with other elements of the Plan it makes an appropriate distinction between the land use policies and the Parish Aspirations.
- 7.12 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of this report.

Policy W1: Community Engagement in Planning

- 7.13 This policy comments about the ambition that developers preparing planning applications should make contact the Parish Council to discuss their proposals. The policy then goes on to identify the process which would be followed. The fifth of five criteria comments that applicants who demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement should be looked on more favourably than those that do not do so.
- 7.14 I sought advice from the Parish Council on the reasoning behind the development of this policy. It pointed me to sections in the NPPF which refer to pre-application engagement and achieving well-defined spaces.
- 7.15 In this context I have sympathy for the approach which the Parish Council has taken. However as submitted the policy is not a policy. Rather it simply encourages developers to contact the Parish Council at an early stage. In this context it is a process rather than a policy matter. In addition, there is no need for a neighbourhood plan policy to repeat national policy. In any event ENDC will continue to need to take decisions on planning applications based on an assessment of development plan policies and a consideration of any other material considerations.
- 7.16 In these circumstances I recommend the deletion of the policy. However, in recognition of its importance to the local community as captured in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.5 of the Plan I recommend that the policy is repositioned so that it becomes a replacement for Parish Aspiration 2 as both refer to Local Liaison Groups. Nevertheless, in this context the supporting text in the Plan on this matter can remain unchanged.

Delete the policy

Reposition the deleted policy so that it directly replaces Parish Aspiration 2.

Policy W2: Warmington Village Boundary

- 7.17 This policy seeks to re-establish the settlement boundary as included within the RNOTP. It is shown on Map 5. The effect of the policy is to resist new development outside the identified boundary other than where that development would deliver rural exception sites.

- 7.18 The policy itself establishes a relationship with Policy W4 later in the Plan. That policy proposes a series of criteria that rural exception sites would need to meet.
- 7.19 I sought clarification from the Parish Council on both these matters in general, and their interrelationships in particular. Having considered all the relevant information and given the overlaps between the two policies I recommend that they are combined into a single policy.
- 7.20 The two policies raise the following related matters, and which I address in paragraphs 7.21 to 7.38 of this report:
- the definition of the settlement boundary itself;
 - the approach taken in Policy W2 and the specific exceptions identified;
 - the criteria identified in Policy W4; and
 - the specific representations made by OCS Developments on the proposed village boundary.

The definition of the settlement boundary itself

- 7.21 On the first matter I looked at the proposed village boundary as part of my visit. I saw that in most places it was very sharp and well-defined. In general, it was defined where property curtilages met with the surrounding countryside.
- 7.22 This natural definition of the settlement boundary does not apply to the immediate south of Church Street. In this part of the villages the traditional curtilages of dwellings run up to 50 metres to the rear of the various properties. Historically the village boundary has been defined to exclude the garden land at the southern extent on these curtilage plots.
- 7.23 The supporting text at paragraph 5.20 describes the Parish Council's approach to defining a village boundary. It has carried out a review of the existing boundary and concluded that the most appropriate solution was to retain the existing boundary and translate it into the submitted Plan.
- 7.24 This approach is consistent with the approach within in the emerging Local Plan. Whilst that plan has decided not to continue with a comprehensive suite of village boundaries, its Policy EN3 identifies a series of criteria that will be used to determine whether or not development proposals fall within the built-up areas of the identified larger villages. Paragraphs 4.32 and 4.33 of the same Plan identify the circumstances in which a neighbourhood plan can identify its own particular village boundary.
- 7.25 In these circumstances I am satisfied that the approach taken is both appropriate and distinctive to the neighbourhood area. In reaching this conclusion I have taken account of the representations made by OCS Developments. This matter is addressed in more detail later in this report.

The approach taken in Policy W2 and the specific exceptions identified

- 7.26 The submitted Policy W2 takes a very matter of fact approach. It resists development outside the village boundary other than for rural exception sites and for any 'additional housing requirements imposed through overarching national or local planning authority policy changes.'
- 7.27 I recommend a series of modifications to this part of the policy. The first replaces 'resisted' with 'will not be supported'. This recognises that ENDC will remain as the local planning authority and will need to determine planning applications based on wider national planning policy and other elements of the development plan and on a case-by-case basis.
- 7.28 In this context I also recommend that the policy includes the other types of development which are considered as appropriate to a rural location as identified in national policy. As submitted the policy fails to recognise such types of development and as such their exclusion does not have regard to national policy. I also recommend that the policy supports replacement dwellings where they comply with existing local policies.
- 7.29 Finally I recommend that the second criterion in the submitted policy (on additional housing requirements) is deleted. Planning policy is subject to natural reviews and updates and there is no direct need for a neighbourhood plan policy to anticipate circumstances (or their scale or nature) which may or may not arise in the Plan period. In any event if local planning policies are adopted following the making of a neighbourhood plan greater weight would be given to the latter set of policies as they would be the most recently included within the wider development plan. At that point the Parish Council could consider reviewing any 'made' neighbourhood plan.

The criteria identified in Policy W4

- 7.30 As submitted this policy has been designed to provide a series of guiding principles for the location and development of exception sites (as already highlighted in submitted Policy W2).
- 7.31 However as submitted the policy is a schedule of criteria rather than a policy. Its preference is for small sites and brownfield sites. I sought advice from the Parish Council on how it had developed the policy. It acknowledged that the wording could be better applied and it proposed some alternatives for this purpose.
- 7.32 I have considered this policy very carefully both in general terms, and given the representations made by Gladman Developments in particular. Having taken all matters into account, I recommend that the policy is both modified and incorporated into Policy W2. This approach will provide a greater degree of clarity and consistency to all concerned.

The specific representations made by OCS Developments on the proposed village boundary.

- 7.33 Detailed representations have been made by OCS Developments in relation to the definition of the village boundary in and around 3 Spinney Close. My attention was drawn to recent determinations by ENDC in the part of the curtilage of the property that is outside the proposed village boundary. I was also advised about a pending appeal decision for another associated development proposal.
- 7.34 ENDC confirmed that it has approved a planning application and issued a certificate of lawful development in respect of the parcel of land to the immediate east of Spinney Close. It also advised about the current timetable for the outstanding appeal.
- 7.35 In a broader sense the representation relates to the nature of the Village Boundary and the way in which it reflects the layout of the village as described in paragraphs 7.21 and 7.22 of this report.
- 7.36 I have considered the representations very carefully. I looked at the site from the public highway when I visited the neighbourhood area and saw some of the proposed developments taking place. Plainly circumstances within the curtilage of the site and its relationship to the proposed Village Boundary have changed significantly as the developments have proceeded. Nevertheless, in the context of paragraph 1.4 of this report it is beyond my ability to examine a different plan or to recommend modifications to extend the village boundary. In addition, they have not been subject to public consultation and there is no evidence about how the Parish Council would have approached the matter if the Plan was being developed at this point. In any event the relevant decisions are unaffected by the definition of the village boundary in this Plan.
- 7.37 In the event that the Plan is made I suggest that the Parish Council takes the opportunity to revisit the village boundary to the area to the south of Church Street should it decide to review the Plan at some point in the future.
- 7.38 The representations from OCS Developments include an objection to the proposed local green space 17. I address this matter separately in Policy W7.

Summary

- 7.39 In summary I recommend that:
- policies W2 and W4 are combined;
 - the exceptions to the policy are broadened so that they reflect national and local policies and do not restrict development only to rural exception schemes;
 - the modified policy incorporates the key criteria from W4; and
 - that the supporting text is modified so that it appropriately reflects the recommended policy changes.

Replace Policies W2 and W4 with:

‘The Village Boundary for Warmington is defined on Map 5.

Proposals for residential development outside the village boundary will not be supported unless they provide:

- **rural exception sites for up to 10 dwellings which are evidenced by local need and remain as affordable housing in perpetuity; or**
- **there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; or**
- **the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or**
- **the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting; or**
- **the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or**
- **the proposal is for a replacement dwelling and otherwise complies with Policy 24 of the RNOTP.**

Where there is appropriate evidence for housing need outside the defined Village Boundary development proposals should meet the following criteria insofar as they relate to the proposed site:

- **they are located immediately adjacent to the Village Boundary;**
- **they would not result in the loss of any identified Local Green Space or Other Local Space;**
- **they would not have an unacceptable impact on a designated heritage asset; and**
- **they would not be in areas at risk from flooding.’**

Reposition paragraph 5.22 so that it precedes the modified policy and reads:

‘Policy W2 provides a context within which new development can be concentrated within sustainable locations. The definition of a village boundary has been designed to focus new development where it can secure access to the range of community, retail and commercial facilities within the village. Elsewhere development will be supported only where it is consistent with national policy and/or provides for rural exception sites. The final part of the policy identifies important criteria for the selection of proposed development sites outside the village boundary, and for their determination.’

Policy W3: Site Allocation for Future Housing Development

- 7.40 This policy largely repeats Policy WAR1 of the RNOTP. The supporting text comments about the uncertainty of the deliverability of the local plan proposals. It

also comments that the site will be incorporated within the submitted Plan subject to a review of the appropriate use of the site by the owners and the wider community.

- 7.41 I sought advice from the Parish Council on the nature of the policy given that it repeats a policy in the local plan on the one hand and questions the delivery of the site on the other hand. I was advised about the debate that had taken place between the Parish Council and ENDC on this matter. I was also advised about potential other alternative sites that had been considered.
- 7.42 I can understand the basis on which this policy has been developed. However, there is no need for a neighbourhood plan to restate directly an existing policy in a local plan. Similarly, the element of the policy which refers to a review of the most appropriate use of the site falls well short of the clarity required for a development plan policy by the NPPF.
- 7.43 I have considered these various matters very carefully. I recommend that the policy is modified so that it is a free-standing policy rather than a restatement of the existing policy in the RNOTP. In addition, the modification deletes any direct reference to the potential uncertainty around delivery. Associated modifications to the supporting text address this matter. In the event that the Parish Council wishes to undertake a review of this site/allocation it could be incorporated into a future review of any 'made' neighbourhood plan.
- 7.44 The package of recommended modifications incorporates commentary about developer contributions into the supporting text rather than within the policy as was the case in the RNOTP. This reflects that it is largely a process matter rather than a policy issue. It also provides an appropriate degree of flexibility to both the local community and ENDC as they seek to identify a locally-distinctive package of community benefits to accompany any emerging proposal.

Replace the policy with:

'Land to the south and east of Eaglethorpe Barns, Warmington is allocated for mixed use development and associated infrastructure to provide a minimum 12 dwellings and approximately 0.38 ha of Class B1 (office) use.'

Replace paragraph 5.21 with:

'Policy W3 allocates a parcel of land to the south and east of Eaglethorpe Barns for mixed housing and office use. It is an update of Policy WAR1 of the RNOTP. The development anticipated by that policy has not proceeded. Discussions are currently taking place on the deliverability of the proposals on the site. In the event that the Parish Council wishes to undertake a review of this site/allocation it will be incorporated into a future review of any 'made' neighbourhood plan. The development of the site should be accompanied by a legal agreement for an appropriate package of developer contributions. It also provides more scope than the existing RNOTP policy (which limits developer contributions only to affordable housing and open space) to allow an appropriate degree of flexibility to both the local community and ENDC. This may assist in identifying a locally-distinctive package of community benefits to accompany any emerging proposal.'

Policy W4: Criteria for the selection of housing site locations

- 7.45 This policy has been designed to provide a series of guiding principles for the location and development of exception sites (as highlighted in Policy W2).
- 7.46 However as submitted the policy is a schedule of criteria rather than a policy. Its preference is for small sites and brownfield sites. I sought advice from the Parish Council on how it had developed the policy. It acknowledged that the wording could be better applied and proposed some alternatives for this purpose.
- 7.47 I have commented in Policy W2 about my recommended modification to combine Policies W2 and W4.
- 7.48 In this context I also recommend a consequential deletion of paragraph 5.22.

Delete the policy as a free-standing policy

Delete paragraph 5.22

Policy W5: Design Code

- 7.49 This policy seeks to ensure that the character and appearance of the neighbourhood area is safeguarded during the Plan period. The supporting text comments about the ongoing work to update the Village Design Statement.
- 7.50 The policy has two parts. The first requires that new development should achieve net enhancements to the character of the village. The second part requires that proposals comply with the Design Code included in the Plan at Appendix 2.
- 7.51 The submitted Design Code has been sensitively prepared. It includes the following components:
- Site Design;
 - Building Design;
 - Material and details;
 - Landscape;
 - Energy Performance; and
 - Conversions of traditional agricultural buildings.
- 7.52 In general terms the policy meets the basic conditions. In particular the Design Code is both proportionate and distinctive to Warmington. It has been designed to ensure that new development is of an appropriate quality. It is an excellent local response to this important national initiative.
- 7.53 Nevertheless, I recommend modifications to the policy so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF and can be applied clearly and consistently by ENDC. The first recommends the reordering of the elements of the policy. Any net achievements in

the character of the neighbourhood area will be achieved through compliance with the Design Code. The second removes 'only' from the submitted second part of the policy. Whilst this will have no practical implications on the effectiveness of the policy it will ensure that it has a positive rather than a negative format. The third includes an element into the first part of the submitted policy to recognise that net enhancements will not always be practicable.

Reverse the order of the two parts of the policy.

In the first part (as submitted) include at the beginning 'Where practicable to the scale and nature of individual proposals,'

In the second part (as submitted) delete 'only' and replace 'these' with 'they'

Policy W6: Backland or Tandem Development

- 7.54 This policy addresses backland or tandem development. Its inclusion within the Plan reflects the scale and nature of several properties in the village. It will also assist in ensuring that proportionate new development can take place within the identified Village Boundary (Map 5). It identifies five criteria that any such proposals need to meet.
- 7.55 The policy is appropriate to the neighbourhood area. It also meets the basic conditions in general terms. However, I recommend a modification that would remove 'only' from the submitted second part of the policy. Whilst this will have no practical implications on the effectiveness of the policy it will ensure that it has a positive rather than a negative format. I also recommend that in the fourth criterion 'Important Open Space' is replaced with 'Other Local Space'. This takes account of recommended modifications to Policy W8

In the opening part of the policy delete 'only'

In the fourth criterion replace 'Important Open Space' is replaced with 'Other Local Space'

Policy W7: Local Green Spaces

- 7.56 Policies W7 and W8 set out to provide protection for a series of open spaces in and around the village. Policy W7 proposes a suite of local green spaces (LGSs). Policy W8 proposes a suite of Important Local Spaces.
- 7.57 I sought advice from the Parish Council on the distinction between the two sets of spaces. I did so as the policies are very similar in their wording. Their practical effect would also be similar.
- 7.58 In relation to the LGSs I was advised about how the Parish Council had assessed the various sites against the criteria contained within the NPPF on this important matter. The Parish Council also provided information on the respective sizes of three of the

larger proposed LGSs. The Plan includes a well-developed Open Spaces Audit report. For the proposed LGSs it includes a proportionate assessment of each site against the NPPF criteria.

- 7.59 Having looked at the various LGSs when I visited the neighbourhood area, I am satisfied that they are all in close proximity to the community that they serve. They are also local in character.
- 7.60 I am also satisfied that the majority of the LGSs are ‘demonstrably special’. In their different ways they have the special character required by the NPPF and hold a particular local significance.
- 7.61 However I am not satisfied that this is the case with the northern part of the proposed LGS 17 Spinney Close-Taylors Green Fields. At the time I visited the neighbourhood area it was significantly affected by current development activity. It could not reasonably be considered as local green space. Plainly circumstances have changed on the nature of the site since the Parish Council produced out its Open Spaces Audit Report. On this basis I recommend the deletion of this part of LGS17.
- 7.62 The southern part of the proposed LGS meets the three tests included in the NPPF. As such it meets the basic conditions.
- 7.63 The policy itself designates the proposed LGSs. It then applies the restrictive policy approach as set out in the NPPF. However, it then seeks to identify the very special circumstances which may apply to warrant a departure from this restrictive approach. Whilst this approach is helpful it moves beyond the matter-of-fact approach included in the NPPF. On this basis I recommend that this aspect of the policy is deleted. Very special circumstances can be considered by ENDC on a case-by-case basis rather than a policy approach trying to anticipate future circumstances. Nevertheless, I recommend that the deleted element of the policy is repositioned into the supporting text.
- 7.64 I also recommend other associated modifications so that the policy has the clarity required by the NPPF. However, in the round the effect of the policy remains largely unchanged.

Replace the policy with:

‘The green spaces shown on Map 6 and in the supporting text are designated as Local Green Spaces.

Proposals for development on a Local Green Space will not be supported except in very special circumstances.

Within LGS 17 delete that part of the proposed designated LGS show on the map in Appendix 1 to this report.

At the end of the supporting text at the bottom of page 29 add:

‘Policy W7 applies the restrictive policy approach towards development proposals on designated local green spaces. Very special circumstances can be considered by

ENDC on a case-by-case basis rather than a policy approach trying to anticipate future circumstances. However very special circumstances may include [insert the two bullet points deleted from the policy]'

Policy W8: Important Local Spaces

- 7.65 This policy sets out a policy towards important local spaces (IOSs). In general terms they are larger than the proposed LGSs in Policy W7. In addition, two of the five sites are more remote from the village itself.
- 7.66 In its response to the clarification note the Parish Council comments that the proposed IOSs were 'a separate and weaker way of protecting the relevant local spaces from unnecessary development'. To this extent the Parish Council acknowledges that the designation of LGSs in Policy W7 is of a different magnitude and importance than the IOSs in Policy W8. It largely acknowledges that the IOSs do not meet the three tests for LGS designation.
- 7.67 However the effect of policies W7 and W8 is largely identical. In addition, the use of 'Important Local Spaces' reinforces the similarity between the two sets of policies. I recommend that the policy is modified to address these overlapping matters. To reflect the different nature and status of the LGSs and the IOSs I recommend that 'Important Local Spaces' is replaced by 'Other Local Spaces'. I also recommend that the format of the policy is recast so that it offers an appropriate means by which future development can be managed on the respective spaces.
- 7.68 The proposed Other Local Space 20 is located within the flood plain of the River Nene. The northern half of this area is allocated for mineral extraction in the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (the Elton Extension - M6). On this basis the proposed designation of the parcel of land has generated representations from both the County Council (in its capacity as the minerals planning authority) and from Ingrebourne Valley Limited. The County Council comments that 'the northern half of this area is allocated for mineral extraction in the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan and which as an adopted local plan has been through consultation and independent examination and been found sound. The county council as minerals and waste planning authority therefore objects to this designation. The neighbourhood plan has no remit to conflict with an allocation in a minerals local plan and as such it fails to meet the basic conditions requirement. The minerals planning authority has no objection to the southern half of the proposed area of important local space outside of the minerals allocation being included in the Neighbourhood Plan if this southern area has the necessary attributes for such designation'. Ingrebourne Valley Limited comment that the submitted Plan should take account of the Elton Extension (M6) as suitable for minerals extraction. In responding to the various representations, the Parish Council considers that there is

no direct conflict between the proposed Elton extension and its proposed designation of Other Local Space 20

- 7.69 I have considered this matter very carefully. It is acknowledged by all parties, directly or indirectly, that minerals activity is ‘excluded development’ for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. Plainly the Parish Council holds strong views about the proposed Elton Extension as included in the adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Whilst Policy W8 has been designed to be of general application to the range of identified Other Local Spaces it would have the very clear ability to prejudice the effective implementation of the relevant policy in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. As such I recommend the deletion of the part of Other Local Space 20 that falls within the area allocated for minerals extraction in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. I am satisfied that the southern part of the proposed Other Local Space 20 can remain in the Plan. I am also satisfied that the existing supporting text in paragraphs 7.6 and 7.8 of the submitted Plan can remain. In relation to the former the Parish Council is entitled to comment about matters raised at an open event. In relation to the latter the comments about Flood Meadows equally apply to the recommended reduced area.

In the title and Map 7 replace ‘Important Local Places’ with ‘Other Local Spaces’

**Insert an additional paragraph at the beginning of the policy to read:
‘The open spaces shown on Map 7 and in the supporting text are designated as Other Local Spaces.**

In the first paragraph of the submitted policy:

- **Replace ‘Important Open Local Spaces’ with ‘Other Local Spaces’**
- **Replace ‘will be resisted’ with ‘will not be supported’**
- **In the third criterion replace ‘significant’ with ‘appropriate’**

Replace the second paragraph of the policy with:

‘Proposals for development in defined Other Local Spaces will be supported where they would improve the way in which the relevant space functions or provides enhanced outdoor recreational facilities for local residents’

On Map 7 delete the northern part of Other Local Space 20 where it overlaps with the Elton Extension (M6) as included in the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

Policy W9: Landscape Character

- 7.70 This policy sets out to ensure that new development will protect and enhance the special landscape character in the neighbourhood area. It includes the following matters:

- Views;

- Trees;
- Local features; and
- Wildlife Habitats

7.71 I am satisfied that the policy is a sensitive local response to Policy 3 (Landscape Character) of the NNJCS. In particular it identifies locally distinctive matters to which new development should respond. It meets the basic conditions.

Policy W10: Developer Contributions for Community Facilities

7.72 This policy identifies the type of developer contributions which are expected to be applied towards improvements to the village hall and to improvements to recreational facilities. Plainly these are important facilities in the context of the neighbourhood area. However as submitted the policy is not a policy – it simply comments about how developer contributions will be applied. In addition, it fails to identify the types of projects from which contributions will be sought and their relationship both to the ENDC Supplementary Planning Document on developer contributions or national policy on the relationship between development and developer contributions.

7.73 I sought advice from the Parish Council about the way in which the policy had been developed in general term, and the way in which it relates to Policy W15 in the Plan in particular. That policy sets out a more comprehensive approach to this matter. I was advised that the intention of these policies is that the Parish Council as representatives of the community are involved in any discussions and decisions regarding the allocation of developer contributions. It advised that may be more appropriate to have a single policy that states this intention and an aspiration which lists the areas which would benefit from any contributions. It also comments that this would provide a more flexible approach allowing easy amendments to the priority of spending to reflect changes in community needs whilst ensuring that the Parish Council is fully involved with Council and Developer discussions and decisions.

7.74 I have considered these comments very carefully. I recommend that this policy is deleted. Nevertheless, in order to safeguard its importance to the community I recommend that the policy becomes a further Parish Aspiration. Policy W15 will remain as the principal focus on this matter.

Delete the policy

Reposition the policy so that it becomes an additional Parish Aspiration

Policy W11: Traffic Management and Transport Improvements

7.75 This is the first of two policies on transport matters. Its focus is on traffic management and transport improvements. The policy has two related parts. The first offers support to road safety and traffic management initiatives. The second identifies the basis

against which development proposals will be assessed which would increase traffic flows onto the A605.

- 7.76 The first part of the policy relates to road safety and traffic management initiatives. Plainly such matters are important to the local community. However, they are highways rather than planning matters. As such I recommend that it is deleted and replaced with a Parish Aspiration.
- 7.77 The second part of the policy is well-considered. It meets the basic conditions.

Delete the first part of the policy

Replace the deleted first part of the policy with an addition Parish Aspiration

Policy W12: Sustainable Transport

- 7.78 This policy offers support to development proposals which include measures to improve sustainable transport. Its second part addresses circumstances where proposals would affect an existing footpath or right of way.
- 7.79 The first part of the policy takes no direct account of the scale and nature of development proposals. In particular it does not recognise that the vast majority of development in the Plan period will be of a minor or domestic nature and which would not be able to deliver the sustainable transport measures identified in the Plan. As such I recommend a modification that incorporates both a sense of proportionality to any particular development proposals, and the practicability or otherwise of the development being able to deliver the sustainable transport improvements.
- 7.80 The second part of the policy meets the basic conditions. However, for clarity I recommend that the three criteria in that part of the policy are renumbered from 4-6 to 1-3. This reflects that the two parts of the policy are free-standing, each of which has three criteria.

Replace the opening section of the first part of the policy with:

‘As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals will be supported if they incorporate measures to improve sustainable transport where it is practicable to do so by’

In the second part of the policy replace ‘4/5/6’ with ‘1/2/3’

Policy W13: Support for Business

- 7.81 This is the first of two policies which addresses new business and commercial development in the neighbourhood area. Its focus is on two matters. The first is on the re-use, conversion, upgrading or extension of existing employment premises. The second is on the conversion of other buildings to employment uses.

7.82 The second part of the policy identifies six criteria with which development proposals should comply.

7.83 The policy is well-constructed and meets the basic conditions.

Policy W14: Sustainable Recreational and Tourism activities

7.84 This policy continues the approach taken in Policy W13. In this case it offers support for recreational and tourism activities.

7.85 The policy identifies four criteria with which development proposals should comply. It is well-constructed and meets the basic conditions.

Policy W15: Developer Contributions

7.86 This policy is the more substantive of the two policies on this matter in the submitted Plan. I have recommended that Policy W10 becomes a Parish Aspiration.

7.87 The supporting text highlights the importance of developer contributions both to the community in general terms, and to ensure that the impacts of development are mitigated in particular.

7.88 The resulting policy comments about two related matters. The first addresses general procedural matters. The second identifies the way in which the Parish Council will work with ENDC to secure a range of identified community facilities.

7.89 As submitted the policy does not have the clarity required by the NPPF. Firstly, it does not identify the types of proposals from which contributions would be sought. Secondly and importantly, it assumes that proposed developments will not naturally provide any required mitigation and that developer contributions (off-site) become the default position. I recommend modifications to the policy to address these matters.

As a separate paragraph at the beginning of the policy add:

‘Where it is practicable to do so new development should deliver appropriate community infrastructure on site that is proportionate to its type and size.’

At the beginning of the first part of the submitted policy add:

‘Where on site delivery is impracticable’

In the first part of the submitted policy replace ‘policies W8, W10, W11 and W12’ with ‘policies W8, W11, W12 and Parish Aspiration [insert number]’

In the second part of the policy replace ‘Policy W10’ with ‘Parish Aspiration [insert number]’

Parish Aspirations

7.90 The Plan includes a series of Parish Aspirations. They are non-land uses matters which have naturally arisen during the preparation of the Plan. This approach reflects the advice in Planning Practice Guidance.

7.91 The Aspirations are included in the topic chapters along with the land use policies. They are also listed separately in Appendix 1. National policy advice is that Aspirations of this nature should be captured in a separate part of the Plan (as is the case here in Appendix 1). However, I am satisfied that their additional inclusion in the main part of the Plan is appropriate for two principal reasons. Firstly, they identify the ways in which the Parish Council itself will seek to implement the policies in the Plan. Secondly, they are presented in a different colour from the land use policies.

7.92 The Aspirations are concentrated on the principal themes of the Plan as follows:

- Development Planning – Community Engagement
- Housing Development
- Built Environment – design
- Natural Environment
- Community Facilities
- Traffic and Transport
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure

7.93 I am satisfied that the various Aspirations are both relevant and appropriate to the neighbourhood area. They are distinctive to its environment, opportunities and challenges. The following Aspirations are particularly noteworthy:

Aspiration 1 – to maintain a three-year rolling review of the Plan. This will ensure that it is kept up to date and relevant within the development plan

Aspiration 7 – to work with owners and other agencies to designate community facilities as Assets of Community Value. Where appropriate this will help to retain the sustainability of the neighbourhood area

Aspiration 11 – to look for opportunities to improve public transport within and to/from the village. This will improve accessibility for local residents to surrounding towns with higher levels of services.

Other matters

7.94 This report has recommended a series of modifications both to the policies and to the supporting text in the submitted Plan. Where consequential changes to the text are required directly as a result of my recommended modification to the policy concerned, I have highlighted them in this report. However other changes to the general text may be required elsewhere in the Plan as a result of the recommended modifications to the policies. It will be appropriate for ENDC and the Parish Council to

have the flexibility to make any necessary consequential changes to the general text. I recommend accordingly.

Modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies.

The Plan period identified in the Plan

7.95 The submitted Plan identifies that it will run until 2031. This is entirely appropriate.

7.96 The Plan does not specify a start date. During the examination the Parish Council and ENDC agreed that it should be 2019. I recommend accordingly.

At the end of paragraph 1.3 add: 'The Plan period is 2019-2031'

Factual changes

7.97 Paragraph 9.1 of the Plan refers to the A605 as 'a major strategic highway'. The County Council comments that the reference to the road should be as 'a part of the principal road network'

7.98 Whilst this issue does not directly affect the integrity of the policies and/or the recommended modifications to the policies in the Traffic and Transport section of the submitted Plan I recommend a modification to correct this element of the Plan.

In paragraph 9.1 replace 'a major strategic highway' with 'a part of the principal road network'

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2031. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community.
- 8.2 Following my independent examination of the Plan I have concluded that the Warmington Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.

Conclusion

- 8.3 On the basis of the findings in this report I recommend to East Northamptonshire District Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report that the Warmington Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

Referendum Area

- 8.4 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Plan area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as originally approved by East Northamptonshire District Council on 8 August 2017.
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth and efficient manner.

Andrew Ashcroft

Warmington Neighbourhood Plan – Examiner's Final Report

Independent Examiner
28 August 2019