

# Duddington with Fineshade Neighbourhood Plan – Executive Summary

## 1. Background

The opportunity to prepare a neighbourhood plan (NP) was established through the 2011 Localism Act. Once the NP has been formally ‘Made’ by East Northants Council, it will sit alongside the District’s Local Plan and all planning decisions taken by East Northants Council will need to take the Plan’s policies into account. It adds Duddington with Fineshade-specific detail to the strategic policies contained in the Local Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The NP has to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the District’s Core Strategy and have regard for the NPPF. It cannot promote policies that do not accord with these requirements.

NPs are opportunities for local people to shape planning policy in their area and helps to make sure that planning decisions taken by North Northants Council (NNC) reflect local issues and not just District-wide concerns. They add local detail to District-wide strategic planning policies.

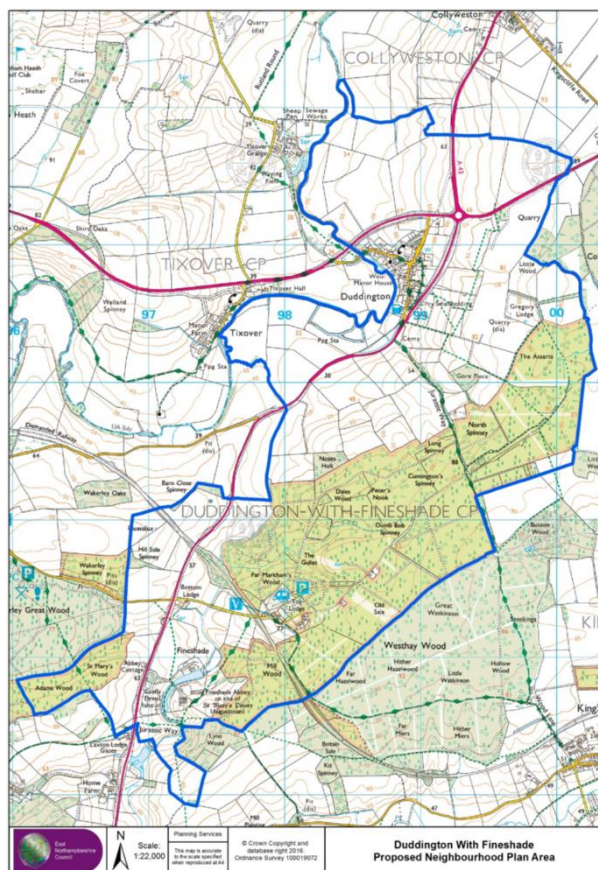
## 2. Introduction

The process of creating the Duddington with Fineshade Neighbourhood Plan has been driven by Parish Councillors and members of the community. The aim of this NP is to put forward the wishes of the community regarding future development and to deliver local aspirations within the context of the strategic planning framework. The whole of the parish was formally designated by East Northants Council (now NNC) for neighbourhood planning purposes on 23 August 2016.

An initial consultation day was held on 24 November 2018. Over 30 people attended and shared their thoughts about the Parish and what the NP should consider.

A Community Questionnaire was distributed to every household in the parish in the autumn of 2018. There were 44 responses representing 19% of the adult population.

Two Theme Groups were established to identify the policies needed to deliver an effective NP for the Parish, looking at areas such as housing and the environment. Other issues were dealt with through the Advisory Committee. They continued to meet into 2019 and until the policies were drafted.



*Neighbourhood Area*

This work is now concluded. We planned to hold an Open Event to share the emerging policies but were unable to do so because of the Coronavirus. It is hoped instead that this Executive Summary of the NP helps to reach everyone in the parish and explains in plain English why we are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and how we are doing it. There are still opportunities to shape the final document as there are more formal consultation stages still to be undertaken.

Our vision for the parish up to 2031 (a timescale deliberately chosen to mirror that of the Local Plan) is as follows:

Our vision is to ensure that by 2031 Duddington and Fineshade will be thriving, vibrant rural communities, both with a strong sense of place and individuality. The neighbourhood will have evolved to meet the social needs of the 21st century, whilst retaining a strong sense of history, grounded in the tranquillity of the rural surroundings, in particular the large woodland areas and river landscapes.

Our objectives in meeting this vision are as follows:

- a) To conserve the best and improve the rest.
- b) To develop access to open spaces while ensuring that our special wild places and wildlife continue to be protected.
- c) To preserve Duddington's special built environment, retaining and enhancing the character and appeal of the existing conservation area.
- d) To ensure that woodland areas remain accessible to all to enjoy.
- e) To develop and endorse policies and to support developments that have a positive effect on the sustainability of the two communities, including those that remove or minimise flood risk, mitigate climate change and reduce the communities' carbon footprint.
- f) To strengthen both communities by encouraging a balanced demographic mix.
- g) To encourage our rural economy by providing an environment in which small local businesses and home working can flourish, taking advantage of new technologies while encouraging innovative transport links to neighbouring towns.
- h) To ensure that tourism developments are commensurate with the neighbourhood's tranquillity and rural character whilst ensuring the neighbourhood's special qualities to attract visitors is preserved, at the same time as providing employment opportunities that benefit the local economy.
- i) To seek methods of protecting the neighbourhood's unique habitats, ensuring that woodland areas (ancient and others), fields, hedgerows, streams and ponds are not destroyed, and the resident species are allowed to flourish.
- j) To enhance and strengthen the pathways, bridleways and other communications between Duddington and neighbouring villages.

### 3. Housing policies

The policies in this section seek to shape residential development in line with locally important issues.

The Parish will be required to contribute to the supply of new housing across North Northants irrespective of whether it prepares a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan can shape the type, size and location of new housing in the Parish – executive houses, family houses or starter homes. It can specify expensive or affordable homes, specialist housing for older people or people with support needs. It can also influence housing design and protect locally important buildings from inappropriate development.

Although no “formal” housing target is required by NNC up until the end of the current planning period, ‘strategic Guidance’ indicates that around 20 dwellings may be needed during this period. The Parish Council has confirmed its desire to support community aspirations by allocating 2 sites for approximately 24 units. NPs which allocate sites for residential development have greater power than NPs that do not and are better able to control development into the future.

The principal aim of the NP has therefore been to consider the current housing situation and deliver the future housing provision that is required to meet the needs of the parish in a holistic fashion.

The Neighbourhood Plan defines a Settlement Boundary which demarcates between the built-up area of Duddington and the countryside, where development will be carefully controlled. The Settlement Boundary is marked by the red line in the figure above.

Policy HBE1 states that development proposals within the Settlement Boundary will be supported where they comply with other policies in this Plan. Land outside the Settlement Boundary will be treated as open countryside, where development will be carefully controlled in line with local and national strategic planning policies.

Policy HBE2 allocates two sites for small-scale residential development within the Settlement Boundary: Site 1 the redundant building yard off Mill Street for about 12 dwellings and site 2, at Manor Farm for about 12 dwellings including 4 from the refurbishment of the derelict buildings.



*Residential allocations and Settlement Boundary*

Allocating these sites helps to protect more sensitive areas from inappropriate development in the future.

In relation to housing mix, there is a higher than average share of detached housing and houses with more than 4 bedrooms in Duddington with Fineshade. Home ownership levels are also high. There is evidence of under occupied dwellings particularly those with 4+ beds.

The high level of under occupancy suggests a need for smaller homes 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 which would be suitable for growing families.

Policy H3 says new housing development should provide a mixture of housing types specifically to meet identified local needs in Duddington with Fineshade. Priority should be given to dwellings of 3 or fewer bedrooms and to homes suitable for older people. 4+ bedroom dwellings may be included in the mix of dwellings where they are subservient in number to two or three bedrooled accommodation.

Windfall, or infill, sites are small-scale sites which come forward unexpectedly. These sites often comprise previously developed land or a gap between existing properties in a built- up street scene.

Policy H4 supports small residential development proposals on infill and redevelopment sites subject to proposals meeting relevant requirements set out in other policies in the NP and the North Northants Core Strategy, and where such development:

- a) Is within the Settlement Boundary;
- b) Helps to meet the identified housing mix for Duddington with Fineshade;
- c) Allows safe pedestrian and vehicular access;
- d) Does not adversely impact on the Conservation Area and its setting;
- e) Does not reduce garden space such that it adversely impacts on the character of the area or amenity of neighbours.

The Parish of Duddington with Fineshade has a long and interesting history, resulting in a wide array of heritage assets, attractive landscapes and a distinctive local character. A policy on design helps to maintain this.

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

Policy HBE5 on design seeks to reflect the design principles which the community believes will help to achieve this. The overall aim is to protect Duddington with Fineshade so that it retains its character within a unique and distinctive Parish. This can be achieved by the use of the planning system to respond sensitively to the range of historic buildings, structures, landscapes and archaeology situated within the Parish.

The Policy (HBE5) requires development to reflect the guidance in the Village Design Statement and should respect local character, having regard to scale, density, massing, height, landscape,

layout, materials and access, as appropriate (for example, stone and Collyweston slate at Duddington). Where appropriate, development proposals should provide safe and attractive public and private spaces, and well defined and legible spaces that are easy to get around for all, including those with disabilities.

Development proposals should aim to protect and enhance biodiversity by maintaining connectivity of habitats for hedgehogs; provide integral bird nest boxes and ensure that lighting design meets best practice guidelines. Where possible and appropriate, development proposals should incorporate sustainable drainage systems with maintenance regimes to minimise vulnerability to flooding and climate change.

### **Environment policies.**

The policies in this section seek to identify and protect the most important environmental aspects of Duddington with Fineshade from inappropriate development. They have been informed by the completion of an ‘environmental inventory’ of fields in the parish, compiled by local people who have measured each field against national policy criteria, resulting in a comprehensive catalogue of environmental features.

Policy Env1 designates the most important local environmental sites as ‘Local Green Spaces’. These areas will be protected from inappropriate development in perpetuity and will be given the same level of protection in planning terms as the Green Belt.



*Local Green Spaces in Duddington (left) and Fineshade (right)*

The fields selected for this designation are as shown on the figures above and comprise Stock’s Hill (Duddington) and Fineshade Meadow and the Community Orchard and Green in Fineshade.

Policy Env2 identifies other significant features that are present elsewhere in the Parish. The features are detailed in the Environmental Inventory and represent features of environmental or historic significance. Any development proposal will need to take these features into account and will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the benefit of the development outweighs the harm caused.

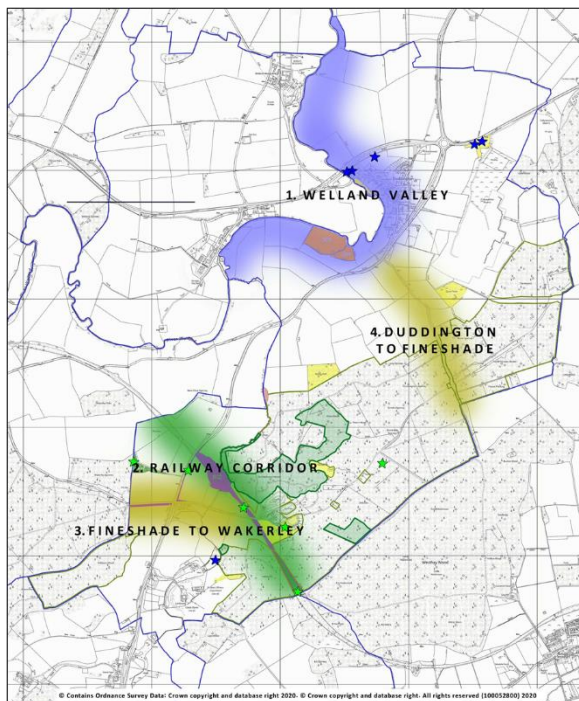
Important Open Spaces in the Parish are identified in policy ENV3. They include St Mary’s Churchyard; War Memorial Green; Duddington Cemetery; Highfield Play Area (all Duddington); Top Lodge Play Area, Top Lodge Approach and Verges and Top Lodge Garden (all Fineshade). Development resulting in the loss of any of these sites 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 that the open space is no longer required by the community.

Neighbourhood Plans can designate 'local heritage assets' for recognition in the planning system.

Policy Env4 highlights local buildings and structures which have heritage value in the Parish. There are 5 structures identified as 'non-designated heritage assets' and afforded a degree of protection in the planning system against inappropriate development either to the structure itself or to its setting. These are the former forestry workers houses (Fineshade) and Duddington Village Hall; The Royal Oak Public House; K6 telephone box and bus shelter (Duddington).



*Wildlife Corridor*

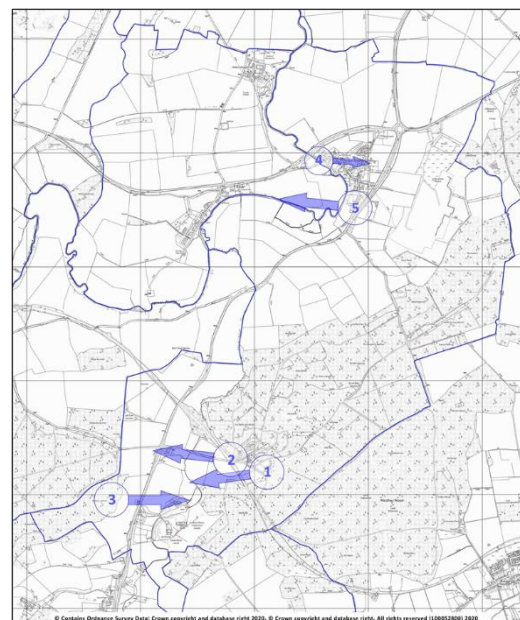
The safeguarding of habitats and species is addressed in policy ENV5 which requires significant habitats and species to be protected from development and where possible enhanced and contains proposals to safeguard the wildlife corridors shown in the figure opposite.

Notable trees in the parish are protected by policy ENV6 and policy ENV7 prevents development that results in the loss of, or significant adverse effect on, the public rights of way in the parish.

A policy on flood risk (ENV8) ensures that appropriate measures are taken to mitigate flood risk concerns in the Parish where new development is under consideration.

Policy ENV9 seeks to protect the parish against development which fails to minimise light spillage and glare, and therefore impact detrimentally on the darkness of the sky in the parish.

5 views are identified across the parish of being of local importance and policy Env10 is included that resists development that significantly harm the views listed, which are shown on the map alongside. They are West from Top Lodge, Fineshade, West from the railway bridge, Top Lodge, Fineshade, East from the edge of St Mary's Wood, East up Mill Street, Duddington and Southwest from the Royal Oak public house, Duddington.



*Important views*

Env 11 sets conditions that need to be in place before small-scale renewable energy generation infrastructure is supported.

#### **4. Community Facilities and Amenities policies**

The NP describes the range of community facilities in the parish and their importance to the community. Policy S1 resists the loss of these important facilities (Royal Oak Pub; Village Hall and Visitor Centre) unless there is no longer any need or demand for it, it is no longer economically viable or appropriate alternative provision is made available.

#### **5. Employment**

Supporting a healthy and diverse local economy is an important theme of the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy S2 supports the retention of existing businesses unless it can be demonstrated that the premises in question is neither suitable nor viable. The policy welcomes new businesses which are appropriate for a community the size of Duddington with Fineshade which are suitable for a countryside location, does not involve the loss of dwellings, create unacceptable levels of traffic movement or increase noise or pollution levels that impact on nearby residential properties.

#### **6. Review**

The NP will be subject to formal review to ensure it remains a helpful tool in determining planning applications. This is likely to occur when the Joint Core Strategy is updated or when housing need increases.

#### **7. Community Actions**

In addition to the planning policies described above, the NP also identifies a number of Community Actions. They reflect future work activities that it is proposed be undertaken within the Parish which will involve a wide range of parties including residents and the public and private sector alongside the Parish Council to help improve the Parish in line with the outcome of community consultation. They will be considered over the lifetime of the Plan and progressed in line with the degree of community support for each activity.

These include aspirations to engage with the Forestry Commission over plans to manage Fineshade and Wakerley Woods; to re-establish wooded links between disconnected sections of ancient and semi-natural woodland; to develop the network of Permissive Rights of Way; to seek to continue to reduce light pollution across the parish and to establish Top Lodge as a Dark Skies Discovery Site; to reduce traffic noise from the A43 and A47 and to reduce noise from the Quarry.

#### **8. What Happens Now?**

The NP is now in the process of formal Pre-Submission consultation. Residents and a range of stakeholders will be able to comment on the draft Plan. Once all comments have been considered, the NP will be amended accordingly and formally submitted to North Northants Council who will undertake a further six-week consultation and send the NP and all comments

received to an Independent Examiner, who will consider the NP against local and national strategic planning policies and make recommendations for any changes felt to be necessary.

Once the Examiner's report has been accepted and the changes made, the final NP will be put before the community of Duddington with Fineshade in a Referendum, and the NP will pass or fail on the basis of a simple majority. Everyone living in the parish who is on the electoral roll will be able to vote in the referendum.

Once the NP is 'Made', it will be used by North Northants Council to determine planning applications in the Parish.

The full NP can be found on the Duddington with Fineshade village website.