

Nocton & Potterhanworth

Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2036

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

1.1.1 Neighbourhood Plans are an important part of the Town and Country planning system and enable local communities to have a greater say and influence over how their area can grow and develop in a sustainable way. Neighbourhood planning provides communities with the power to establish their own policies to shape future development in their area. Once made, a Neighbourhood Plan sits alongside the Local Plan, which covers the wider area, and carries significant weight in the determination of planning applications received by the local Planning Authority, which for the area covered by the Nocton and Potterhanworth Neighbourhood Plan ('the Neighbourhood Plan') is North Kesteven District Council ('NKDC').

1.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework ('the NPPF') states that neighbourhood planning "gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need."

1.1.3 It is, however, important to be aware that a Neighbourhood Plan does not cover areas which, while of great interest and concern to residents, fall outside of the planning system, and are the responsibility of other statutory Authorities and Agencies. These include:

- building control measures such as energy efficiency and green energy generation;
- the ability of local infrastructure, such as the bus services, to cope with additional development;
- traffic calming measures, such as on the B1188 and B1202;
- improvements to local bridleways and footpaths;
- improvements to local community services e.g. youth facilities;
- the provision of school places;
- minerals and waste matters, including specifically shale gas and oil extraction by fracking or any other method.

1.2 The Neighbourhood Planning Process

1.2.1 The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is largely governed by the provisions of the Localism Act (2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012), as amended.

1.2.2 Key to a successful outcome is the need for each and every aspect of the Plan to have been the subject of meaningful and transparent consultation with all parts of the communities to which it relates. Once a final version of the Plan has emerged from such consultation, it is then subjected to independent scrutiny by a competent planning professional before being voted upon in a local referendum. If the Plan receives a majority of the votes cast it then comes into force.

1.2.3 The Localism Act (2011) introduced a set of four "basic conditions" which all Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet. All Neighbourhood Plans must, therefore:

- 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 for the area;
- be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations.

1.2.4 A separate Basic Conditions Statement sets out how the Neighbourhood Plan achieves these 'basic conditions'.

1.3 Link to the Local Plan

Neighbourhood Plans are required to be consistent with the over-arching statutory Development Plan for the wider area. For Nocton and Potterhanworth, this means compliance with the saved policies of the North Kesteven Local Plan (2007), as this is the current Local Plan. An updated Local Plan for the Central Lincolnshire area is currently in the course of preparation and the Neighbourhood Plan has sought to take relevant information into account.

1.4 Background to the Nocton and Potterhanworth Neighbourhood Plan

1.4.1 In early 2014, Nocton and Potterhanworth Parish Councils agreed to join forces to produce a Neighbourhood Plan covering an area comprising the two parishes. It was considered that both villages were sufficiently similar in nature and faced similar challenges and opportunities regarding future development to benefit from the preparation of a joint Neighbourhood Plan (see Section 2 below). NKDC subsequently formally approved this proposal on 1 May 2014. For a number of reasons, however, work did not start in earnest on preparing the Neighbourhood Plan until mid-2015.

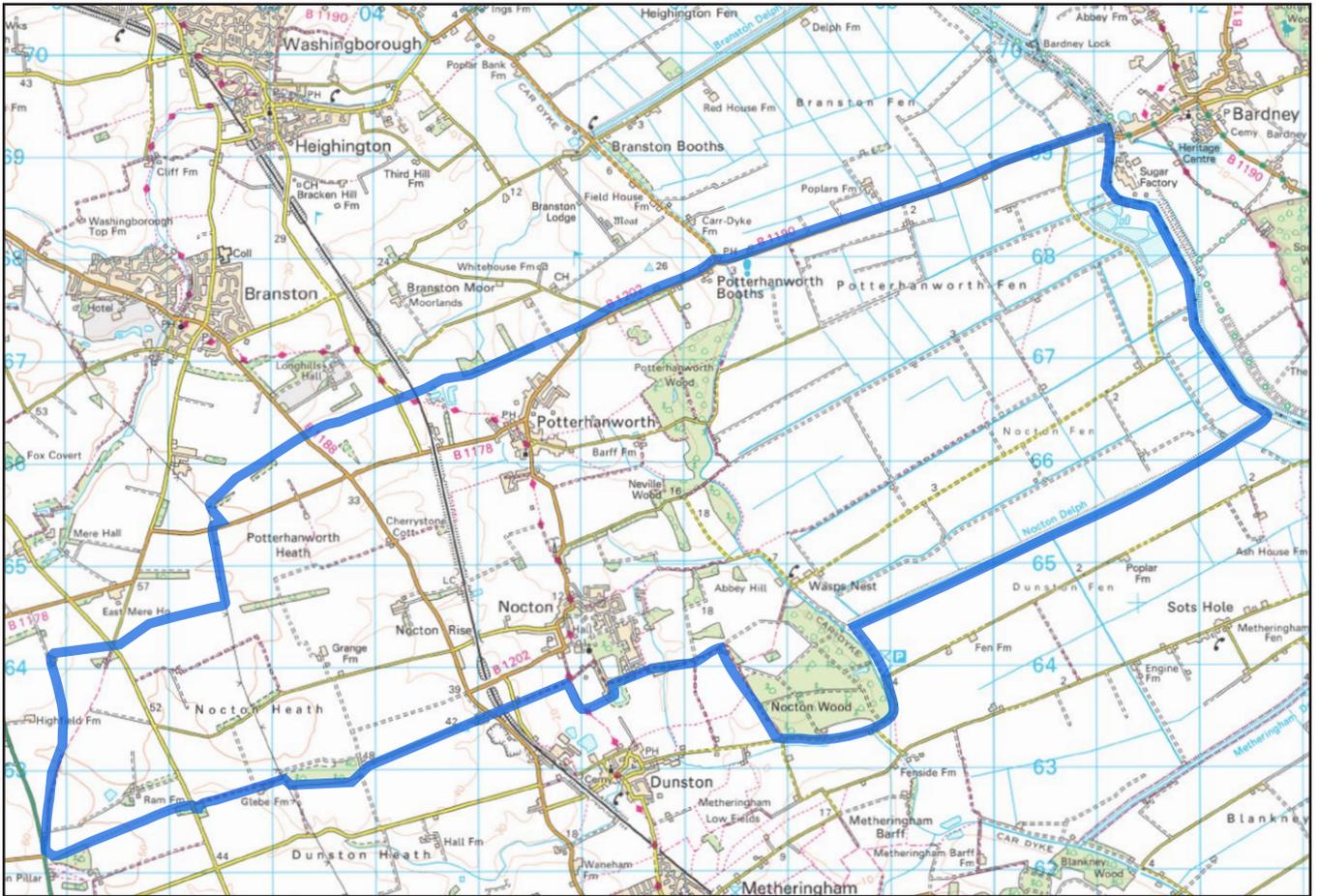
1.4.2 Although instigated and ultimately led by the two Parish Councils, Councillors were anxious that the process of actually defining the Neighbourhood Plan should be demonstrably community-driven. They thus facilitated the establishment of two “community groups” (one representing each village) comprised of local residents. Their work was co-ordinated and directed by a small Steering Group of representatives from each village. The Steering Group reported to the Parish Councils on progress. Initially, funding to support the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan was provided by the Parish Councils with the Steering Group seeking additional funds as the process developed.

1.4.3 This Neighbourhood Plan has, therefore, been developed from the comments and feedback from residents during a wide-ranging consultation process, described in more detail in Section 3 below and in the associated Consultation Statement. It has also taken account of the Nocton Community Plan (2013).

1.4.4 In line with the community’s stated wishes, the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan concentrate upon the provision of future housing within the area and associated issues.

1.4.5 The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of the parishes of Nocton and Potterhanworth, as shown in Map 1 below.

Map 1 – Nocton and Potterhanworth Neighbourhood Plan area



2 Brief Description of the Parishes

2.1 Landscape

2.1.1 Nocton and Potterhanworth are small, attractive villages of a very similar size (categorised as “Medium Villages” in the Draft Local Plan), in a rural setting surrounded by farmland. They have a considerable number of features in common (see 2.2 to 2.4 below). They are situated some seven miles to the south east of Lincoln and connected to each other by a short stretch of the B1202. The villages are two of a line of settlements running in a north-south direction along the slope of the Lincoln Heath.

2.1.2 The size of Nocton has increased considerably in recent years following the private development of two large housing estates on land to the north of the village. Unfortunately, neither development has brought with it any resources to enhance the local infrastructure which has remained exactly as it was at the time Nocton was an “estate” village. During that time it has lost its only shop, as has Potterhanworth.

2.1.3 Each parish also has an outlying smaller settlement within its boundaries – Wasps Nest and Potterhanworth Booths in the parishes of Nocton and Potterhanworth respectively. There are also a number of isolated dwellings, mainly on Nocton Heath.

2.2 Ecology

2.2.1 The land surrounding the two villages is largely used for arable farming and grazing. There are, however, significant tracts of woodland (including Nocton and Potterhanworth Woods) within the parishes which contain a wide range of native species of trees, including oak, ash, beech, small-leaved lime and silver birch. The woodlands and surrounding fields also support a wide variety of wildlife including deer, hares, foxes, badgers, grass snakes, adders, lizards and butterflies, whilst the various water courses which cross the parishes are also home to otter, water voles, newts, frogs and toads.

2.2.2 The fenland to the east of the area is noted for the wide and diverse range of woodland and other birds, some 30 species, which both visit and reside on the land, including various species of swan, geese, duck, owls and raptors. The parishes are also visited by a large range of migratory birds including swallows and swifts.

2.2.3 A small area of ancient woodland on the northern edge of Nocton village is currently maintained as a natural burial ground. Potterhanworth Wood is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a number of other sites in the area are recognised as Local Wildlife Sites.

2.2.4 There are several colonies of resident bats in Nocton Church, the adjacent Nocton Hall site and in many areas of Potterhanworth and Potterhanworth Booths.

2.2.5 Beeswax Farming, a major landowner in the area, is currently engaged in the development of “wildlife” corridors linking key wildlife habitats and has also planted wild flower “strips” adjacent to fields under cultivation which encourage a rich diversity of insect life.

2.3 Transport

The villages are served by a local bus service with connections to Lincoln, Boston and other towns and smaller settlements in the area. However, the service does not run during the evenings or on Sundays. The absence of a more frequent and seven day a week service thus makes reliance on cars essential for travelling to and from work, shopping and entertainment. Apart from the B1202, which has no footway outside the villages, the only access between the two villages is an uneven public footpath across a field which provides a limited pedestrian link. There is also no footway into Nocton for the residents of homes along the B1188 ('Nocton Top'), who therefore have no choice but to either walk along the road to access the village, or use a car. As would be expected, therefore, there are high levels of car/van ownership in the villages with only 7% of households without access/use of a vehicle (shown below).

	Total
All Households	633
No Cars or Vans	45
1 or more Car or Van in Household	588

(Unless otherwise stated, all data are taken from the 2011 Census (ONS))

2.4 Demographics

The population of each village is almost identical, the total of which broken down by age group is shown below.

	Total	%age
All Usual Residents	1658	
Age 0 to 17	426	26%
Age 18 to 29	157	9%
Age 30 to 59	725	44%
Age 60 to 74	256	15%
Age 75 and Over	94	6%

2.5 Housing Related Data

Number of Dwellings

2.5.1 The total number of dwellings in each village as at March 2016 is broadly similar.

Parish	No. of dwellings
Nocton	338
Potterhanworth	335
Total	673

Source: Revenues and Benefits, NKDC – March 2016

2.5.2 Of these dwellings, 75% are owner-occupied, 13% socially rented, 11% privately rented and 1% shared ownership/living free. Again, rates are almost identical between the two villages for owner-occupied accommodation and rented. There is, however, a higher rate of socially rented property in Potterhanworth, reflecting the larger number of Council and other socially-owned housing in that village, and a correspondingly higher rate of privately rented property in Nocton.

Household Composition

	Total
One Person Household: Aged 65 and Over	54
One Person Household: Other	60
One Family Only: All Aged 65 and Over	40
One Family Only: Couple; No Children	169
One Family Only: Couple; Dependent Children	185
One Family Only: Couple; All Children Non-Dependent	43
One Family Only: Lone Parent; Dependent Children	44
One Family Only: Lone Parent; All Children Non-Dependent	18
Other Household Types; With Dependent Children	8
Other Household Types; All Aged 65 and Over	0
Other Household Types; Other	12
All Households (Total)	633

2.5.3 It should be noted that the above data are from the 2011 Census and therefore differ from the more recent 2016 data. It should also be noted that the total household number will also be different to a “dwelling” in that a shared dwelling can represent a number of households, depending upon the facilities that are shared.

Council Tax Bands

Band	Total	%age of Total
A	194	29%
B	104	16%
C	84	12%
D	102	15%
E	108	16%
F	67	10%
G	14	2%
H	0	0%
Total	673	

Source: Revenues and Benefits, NKDC – March 2016

Number of Bedrooms

	Total
1 Bedroom	11
2 Bedrooms	117
3 Bedrooms	257
4 Bedrooms	195
5 or More Bedrooms	53
All Households	633

2.5.4 Occupancy ratings provide a measure of whether a household’s accommodation is overcrowded or under-occupied. The number of bedrooms required (based on a standard formula) is subtracted from the number of bedrooms present to obtain the occupancy rating. A rating of -1 implies that a household has one less bedroom than required, whereas +1 implies that it has one more bedroom than the standard requirement.

Occupancy Ratings

	Total
Occupancy Rating (Bedrooms) of +2 or More	327
Occupancy Rating (Bedrooms) of +1	227
Occupancy Rating (Bedrooms) of 0	69
Occupancy Rating (Bedrooms) of -1	9
Occupancy Rating (Bedrooms) of -2 or Less	1
All Households	633

2.5.5 With only 1.6% of dwellings experiencing any degree of over-occupancy, the villages do not have a problem with over-crowding. Furthermore, a substantial number (86%) of dwellings in the villages are under-occupied.

2.6 Employment Data

2.6.1 Employment levels are set out below. They compare favourably with the national and county averages; the main difference is that the percentage of residents who are full-time students is significantly lower in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

	Total	%age (Plan area)	%age (Lincolnshire)	%age (UK)
All Usual Residents Aged 16 to 74	1186			
Economically Active; Total	799	67%	77.4%	77.9%
Economically Active; Full-Time Student	33	3%	19.6%	26.1%
Economically Active; Unemployed	32	3%	5.5%	5.1%
Economically Inactive; Retired	167	14%	15.6%	13.6%
Economically Inactive (Other)	155	13%	10.3%	10.5%

(source: www.nomisweb.co.uk, June 2016)

2.6.2 There are no major employers located within the parish boundaries although some employment opportunities are available in the surrounding agricultural establishments, the two primary schools and The Cottage Residential Care Home.

2.6.3 From the responses to the questionnaire survey of residents, it is apparent that at least 48 residents run some form of business from their home. The survey also reveals that the majority of economically active persons travel to and from their place of work by car.

2.7 Community Resources

2.7.1 The village hall in Nocton is in relatively poor condition and the Parish Council is currently developing a major project to secure its replacement. In contrast, Potterhanworth has a large and well-equipped Memorial Hall, although this is not available to the public during school hours, and a modern sports pavilion serving a playing field maintained by the Parish Council. There is also a Local Education Authority (LEA) maintained playing field in Nocton for the use of the local primary school and, by arrangement, the community. Potterhanworth also has a modern play park and a small skateboard park. A small playground is also situated at Nocton Park.

2.7.2 Each parish has a Church of England church with shared services and congregations. Both villages have village greens, maintained by the Parish Councils for the community's benefit, and large and well-supported allotment sites. Each village has a primary school providing a range of pre- and after school activities.

2.7.3 Neither village has a public house since The Chequers, in Potterhanworth, closed in 2015. Nocton, however, has a Social Club, based in the Village Hall which, with its own separate bar facilities, serves as a de facto 'pub' for the village. All residents of Nocton are automatically enrolled as members of the Club free of charge whilst residents from outside the village may join for a small membership fee.

2.7.4 Many good walks can be easily accessed from both villages and both are situated on the Spires and Steeples Arts and Heritage Trail which is a way-marked walk from Lincoln Cathedral to St Denys' Church in Sleaford.

2.7.5 There are no longer any shops in either village. There is a small part-time Post Office in Nocton, located in a private dwelling, which is used by residents of both parishes. However, under current Post Office Ltd policy, once the existing franchise ceases, it is unlikely to be renewed and the Post Office in Nocton will close.

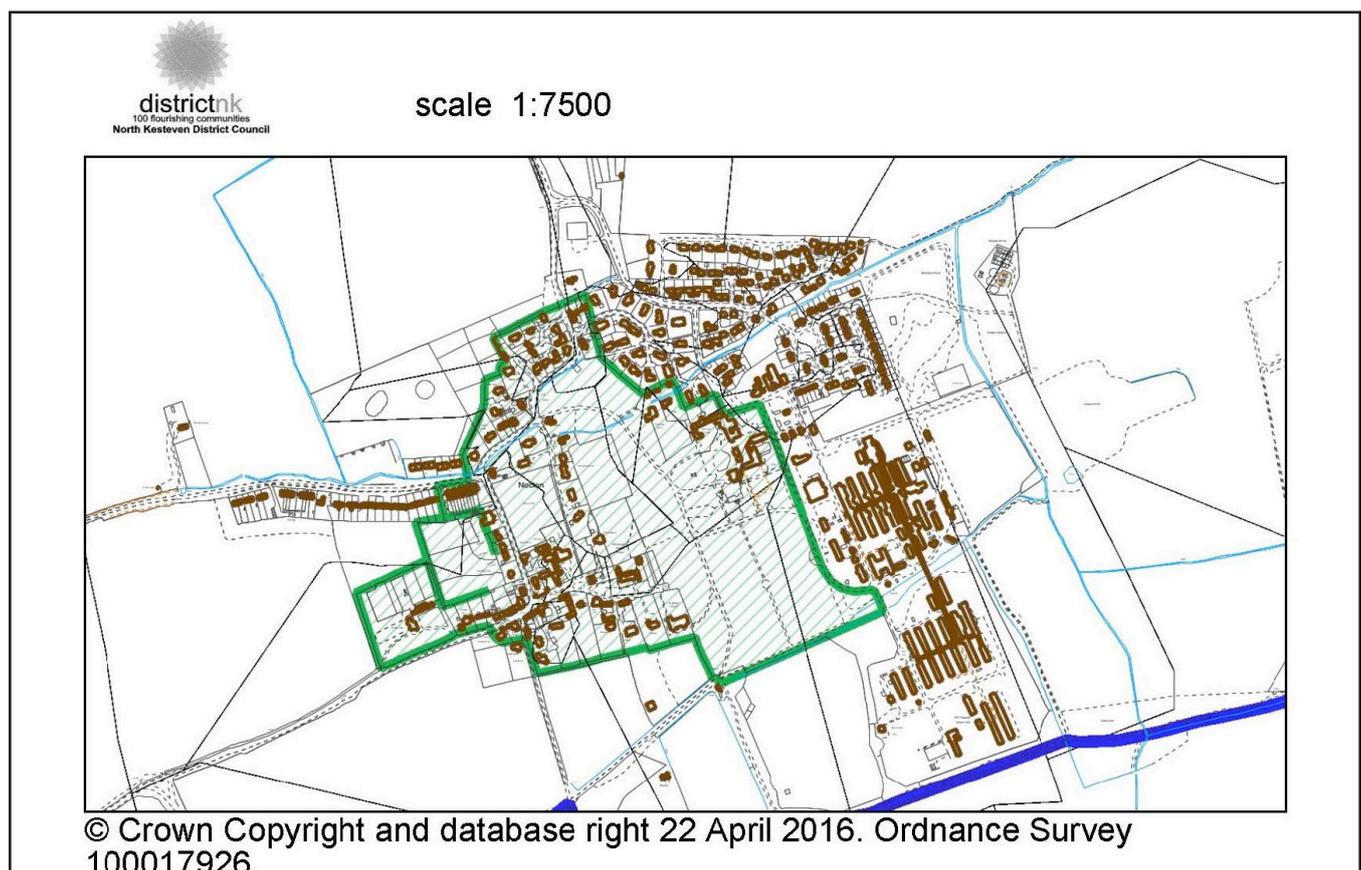
2.7.6 There are a wide range of local groups operating within each village with many (notably the Women’s Institute and Art Group) having members from each village.

2.8 Listed and Significant Unlisted Buildings

2.8.1 Significant parts of both villages (the historic “core”) are subject to Conservation Area status, each with a number of Listed and Significant Unlisted buildings. The latter category of buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character of each village, is defined in the Conservation Area Review as such because they relate by age, design, materials and siting to the architecture and vernacular detailing of the traditional buildings in the centre of the village. Adjacent to the Conservation Areas of each village are more modern and larger housing estates, both former Council-built and privately constructed, in addition to more general housing of varying ages. Nocton also has a stock of ex-Ministry of Defence housing; these homes are now privately owned. Buildings in the Nocton Conservation Area are generally of the traditional construction for the area with coursed limestone rubble walls and pantile roofs. The Conservation Area of Potterhanworth contains buildings with a mixture of materials and styles including stone and Victorian brick and slate.

2.8.2 The existing Nocton Conservation Area is defined in the Nocton Conservation Area Review adopted by NKDC in July 2008 and is shown in green in Map 2 below.

Map 2 – Nocton Conservation Area



2.8.3 The Grade II listed Nocton Hall and Grade II* listed All Saints Church are particularly important structures although the once impressive Nocton Hall is now derelict following a devastating fire in October 2004. The nearby All Saints Parish Church is recognised as the finest Gothic Revival church in the whole of Lincolnshire and is a valuable asset in the heart of the village.

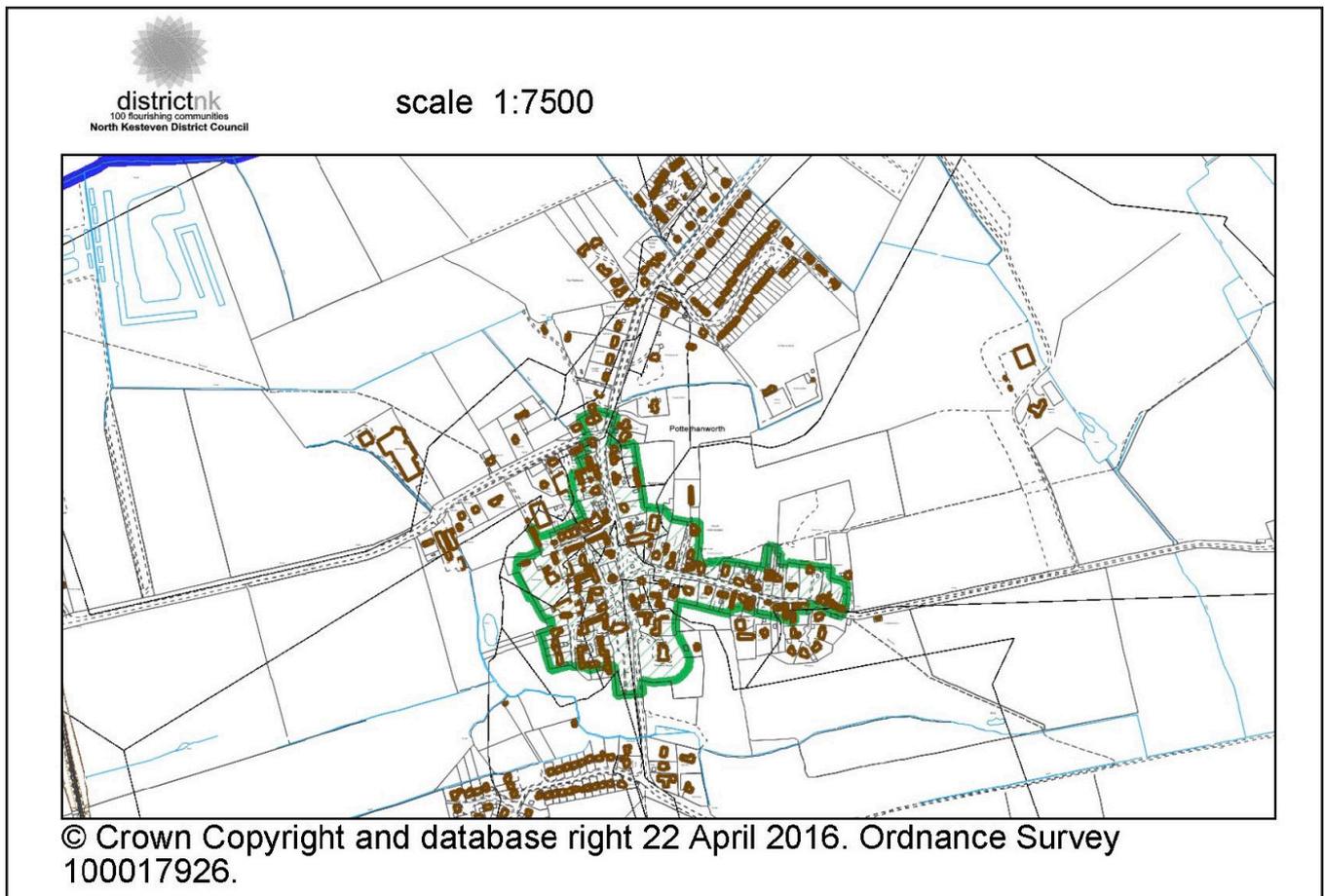
2.8.4 RAF Hospital Nocton Hall (on a site to the south-east of Nocton Hall itself) was formally closed on 23 June 1995. The site was acquired by a property investment company soon after its closure. Since then the buildings have deteriorated significantly due to theft, vandalism and exposure to the elements and the site has become overgrown and derelict.

2.8.5 Nocton Hall was used for many years as the Officers' Mess for RAF Hospital Nocton Hall but was sold in 1983 and became a residential home. This closed in 1998 and was subsequently acquired by the same property investment company that had already purchased the RAF Hospital site. No work has been undertaken since then to preserve the building or prevent further deterioration. In October 2009, the Victorian Society listed Nocton Hall in its top 10 endangered buildings list for England and Wales. The future of the site which comprises the Hall and adjoining former RAF Hospital forms a key part of this Plan.

2.8.6 In addition to some 13 listed buildings in Nocton, there are almost 50 Significant Unlisted other buildings and structures.

2.8.7 The existing Potterhanworth Conservation Area is defined and described in the Potterhanworth Village Appraisal 1978 and is shown in green in Map 3 below.

Map 3 – Potterhanworth Conservation Area



2.8.8 In addition to 8 listed buildings, there are some 25 Significant Unlisted other buildings and structures in Potterhanworth.

3 Development of the Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 The proposal to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan was launched formally at the respective Annual Parish Meetings held by the Parish Councils in May 2015. This was supplemented by wide publicity throughout the villages including articles in each magazine circulating in the villages at that time. In addition, reference to the Neighbourhood Plan was made in the Parish Councils' Annual Reports, that for Nocton being circulated to all households.

3.2 A leaflet explaining in more detail about how and why a Plan was to be produced and setting out how residents could feed into the process was circulated to all households in July 2015. An information stall was also provided at the Potterhanworth Autumn Festival to which residents of both villages were invited.

3.3 A Community Group comprising local residents from all areas of the village was established in both Nocton and Potterhanworth, each of which met in August 2015 to agree the areas, issues and policies which the Neighbourhood Plan should address. From this initial work, a comprehensive questionnaire was developed by the Steering Group to obtain residents' views and this, again, was distributed to all households in the area. In the event a high return rate of 43% (267) questionnaires was achieved. This provided a sound basis on which to prepare an outline of policies aimed at responding to those issues which residents felt to be of most concern/interest and providing a blueprint for future growth and development.

3.4 A document setting out the proposed Aims, Objectives and specific Policies to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan was then circulated in December 2015 to all households inviting further comment. This was supplemented by a public meeting in each village in January 2016 at which further comments were made and collated.

3.5 This wide-ranging consultation was supplemented by a dedicated and interactive "blog site" ("nocpotplan") where progress was mapped at each stage of the process and key documents made available for information and comment. Information was also included at relevant stages on the (privately run) "Nocton Blog" and made available on the Parish Councils' own websites and through regular progress reports to each of their meetings. This widespread consultation informed the direction of the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies.

3.6 Following amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan after informal review by an independent planning officer, a Strategic Environmental Assessment scoping study was carried out by NKDC (report dated 2 August 2016) which concluded that there were no significant environmental effects resulting from the Plan. A Consultation Draft was then produced and the Parish Councils carried out a six-week consultation between 19 September and 30 October 2016. Parish residents, businesses and landowners together with neighbouring local authorities and parishes, service providers and other interested parties were invited to comment. Copies of the Consultation Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan were made available on-line on the Parish Council websites and on the dedicated 'nocpotplan' blog. Printed copies were available to view at four "drop-in" sessions (two in Nocton and two in Potterhanworth). A response form containing the nine Neighbourhood Plan Policies was delivered to every household.

3.7 Seven people attended the 'drop-in' sessions. 57 written responses were received from residents, either on the response form or by email; the majority were strongly supportive.

3.8 After a detailed review of all comments on the consultation by the Steering Group, the Plan was amended and submitted to NKDC, as the Local Planning Authority.

4 Purpose and Aims

4.1 The Vision

The Vision sets out how the people of Nocton and Potterhanworth have said they wish their parishes to be in 2036. These are the guiding principles which underpin the Neighbourhood Plan:

- The people of Nocton and Potterhanworth wish to maintain the peaceful and rural character of their villages.
- They wish to promote a sustainable and friendly community where people feel safe and have a high quality of life.
- They wish to maintain and enhance the surrounding countryside with its local wildlife habitats and recreational opportunities.

4.2 Objectives

These are the key themes based on the Vision and provide the context for the Policies in Section 5. In order to achieve the Vision, policies have been developed which support the following Objectives:

- To preserve and enhance the landscape setting and character of the villages and outlying settlements.
- To promote the integration of the various neighbourhood areas within the villages, and between all the settlements in the parishes, through new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle links.
- To support limited additional sustainable high quality housing development in appropriate locations in order to promote the 'semi-rural' character of the villages through the adoption of appropriate building styles, low densities, and green infrastructure.
- To facilitate a sustainable solution for the former RAF Hospital Nocton Hall site which allows for limited development in order to make safe the remains of Nocton Hall, clear the hospital site of derelict buildings and other infrastructure, and manage the Hall grounds as a publicly accessible green space.
- To promote improvements to non-motorised and public transport, utility infrastructure and digital connectivity.
- To have a positive effect on the environment, by promoting actions that contribute to mitigating climate change and reduce our carbon footprint.

5 Policies

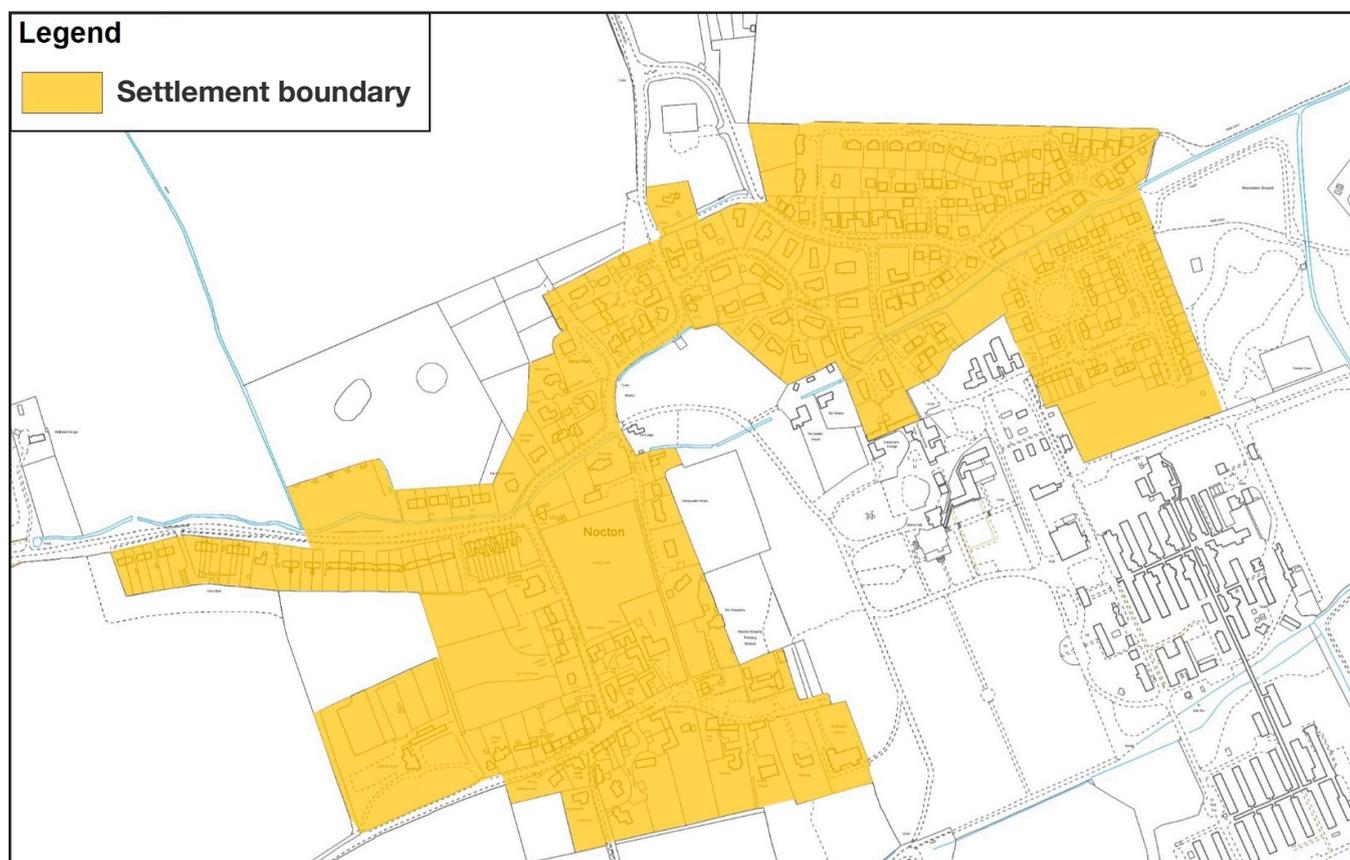
5.1 Housing and the Built Environment

Policy 1

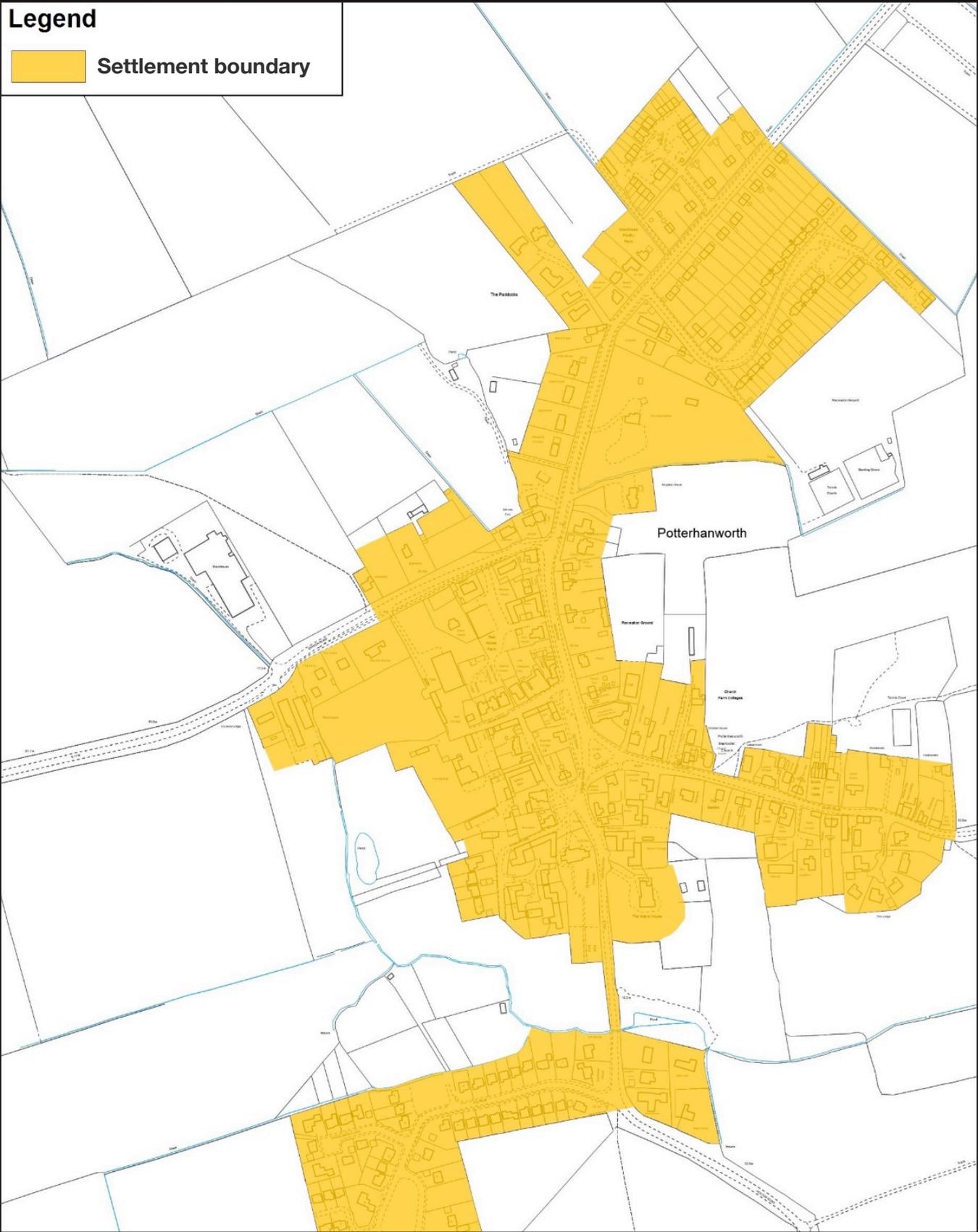
Proposals for the development of up to six dwellings on sites within the settlement boundary, defined on Maps 4 and 5, will be supported subject to demonstrating that such proposals are in keeping with local character. Proposals for more than two dwellings on any one site should seek to provide for a range of dwelling types, including smaller, typically one or two bedroom homes.

Note: the village settlement boundaries indicated in Maps 4 and 5 below are those identified in the North Kesteven Local Plan (2007), from which the maps are taken.

Map 4 – Settlement boundary of Nocton



Map 5 – Settlement boundary of Potterhanworth



Justification and evidence

5.1.1 Nocton and Potterhanworth are identified in the Draft Local Plan as ‘medium villages’, and are subject to the expectation of an increase in housing of 10% based on the existing number of dwellings in each village. The most recent information (as at April 2016) suggested that an additional 13 dwellings were required across the two villages. With planning approvals subsequent to this date, this number has been reached.

5.1.2 Responses to the questionnaire highlighted that the development of the countryside areas of the parishes was not supported.

5.1.3 In the September 2015 questionnaire, residents were asked their views on an increase of 24 houses (being the then understood “target” growth figure for the two villages). Approximately three-quarters of respondents felt that this number was ‘about right’; a higher number was considered likely to overburden existing facilities, services and infrastructure and to fundamentally change the rural nature of the parishes. There was a clear preference for any increase in houses to be on individual plots or small groups only and to be within the settlement boundaries. There was strong opposition to larger developments, particularly of more than 10 homes.

5.1.4 Potterhanworth is an area of identified housing need with the greatest need being for 2 bedroom units (NKDC Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer, May 2016). Responses to the questionnaire indicated that the type of housing preferred was smaller or low cost housing, including starter homes, to meet the needs of older people and first-time buyers, rather than larger houses or flats. No specific need for affordable housing has been identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.1.5 Data from Zoopla.co.uk (May 2016) show that in the last five years, of 121 sales in the two parishes, 65% were of detached houses, 22% were of semi-detached houses, 11% were of terraced houses and 2% were of flats. On Rightmove.co.uk (June 2016) 33 properties were for sale in the two parishes of which 16 houses were detached, 13 were semi-detached, and two were bungalows. None were flats. Of these, 15 had been on the market for more than 6 months and 13 for more than 18 months. One property had six bedrooms, two had five, 12 had four, 17 had three and one had two. These data indicate an over-supply of larger properties and an under-supply of smaller and lower cost properties, which are the property types identified as most required by residents in the questionnaire. These data are supported by the occupancy data in paragraphs 2.5.4 and 2.5.5 which indicate 86% under-occupancy of homes in the villages.

5.1.6 There was also a desire to minimise any increase in traffic levels and limiting new houses to within the settlement boundary will support this.

Policy 2

Proposals for additional housing units should:

- be of a design and materials which reflect the current architectural style and character of the villages; and
- be of design and materials that reflect local character and provide for integration with the surrounding area; and
- provide safe and suitable vehicular access between the site and an adopted highway; and
- provide safe and suitable pedestrian access between the site and a public footpath or footway; and
- not result in an unacceptable impact on the levels of daylight, privacy, and amenity which occupiers of the units or of neighbouring properties may reasonably expect.

Justification and evidence

5.1.7 In the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire, residents felt that new homes should ‘fit in’ with the existing housing and that the style and materials used should complement the character of the villages. Heritage assets such as Conservation Areas and listed buildings and their settings already receive protection from development that would cause them harm. Both villages have their own separate and distinctive character which respondents wished to see preserved.

Community Action: RAF Hospital Nocton Hall*

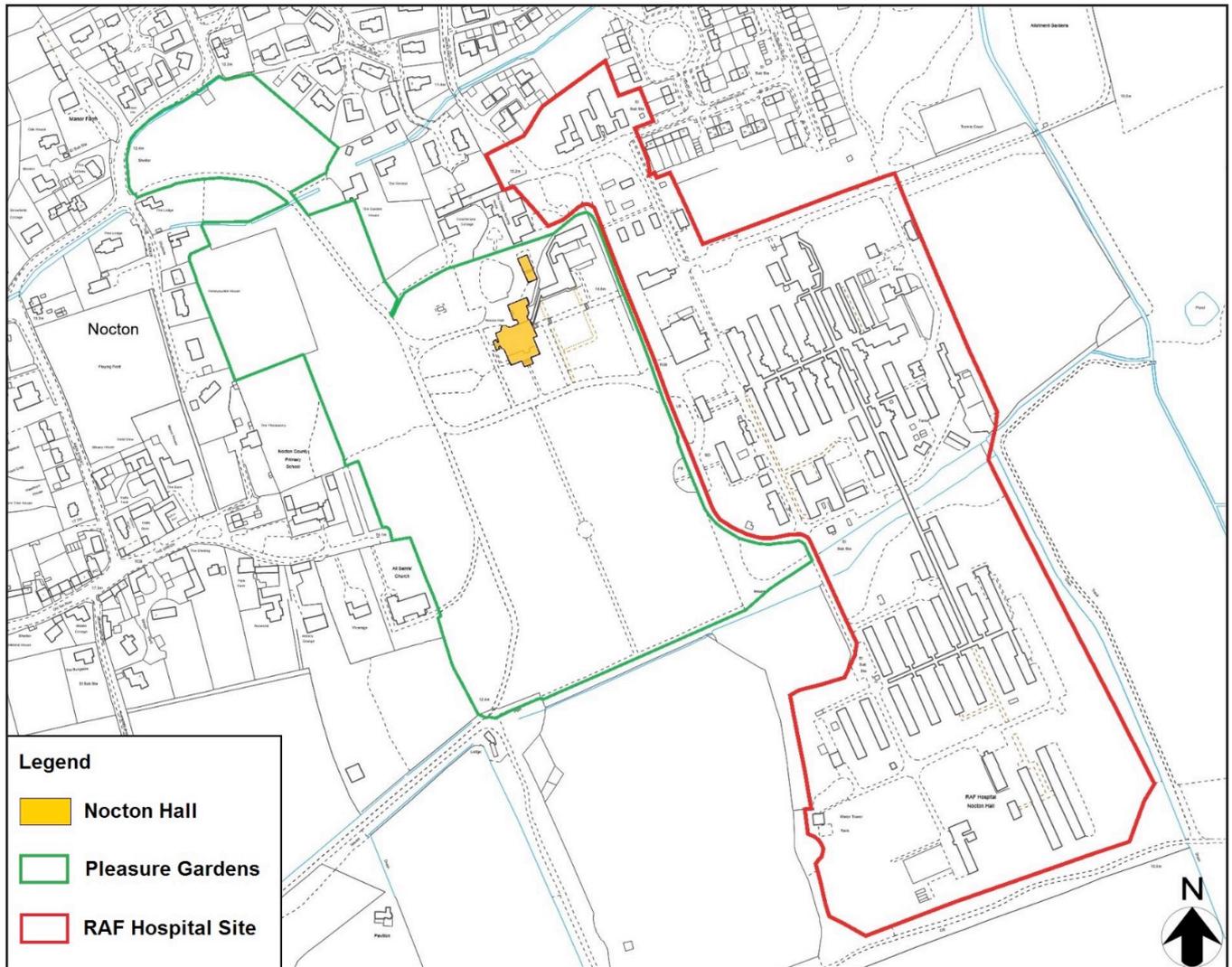
5.1.8 The Parish Councils will seek to work with other parties to promote appropriate development at Nocton Hall. The Parish Councils are keen to see that sustainable development at the site achieves the following:

- delivers an appropriate solution for Nocton Hall, in line with the agreed outcome of the 2011 Options Appraisal (or subsequent updated reports) to restore the main house as a ruin and fully restore the service wing, with an agreed management plan to ensure the proposals for the Hall are sustainable; and
- includes an agreed comprehensive masterplan to ensure the holistic planning of the site and to avoid piecemeal development; and
- delivers solutions for the currently empty outbuildings in Nocton Hall grounds that are appropriate to their heritage status and relationship with the heritage assets on the site; and
- appropriately restores the ‘pleasure gardens’ commensurate with being a local green space as part of the wider scheme and in relationship to the heritage assets on the site, ensuring that appropriate levels of public access is available; and
- includes proposals to clear the RAF Hospital site of the derelict buildings; and
- provides for safe and suitable vehicular access, as appropriate to the nature of the development, between the site and an adopted highway; and
- ensures that the increase in traffic generated by the development can be safely accommodated on the local road infrastructure; and
- provides for safe and suitable pedestrian access, as appropriate to the nature of the development, between the site and a public footpath or footway; and
- ensures that any such development is proportional to the character and size of the surrounding village and does not place an unacceptable burden on the existing (very limited) infrastructure; and
- be for ‘enabling development’* only

5.1.9 Any proposals will be expected to be subject to substantial discussion with Historic England and the Conservation Officer at NKDC, prior to being submitted as an application. To qualify as enabling development, any scheme must be in accordance with the Historic England Guidance on Enabling Development.

*A ‘Community Action’ is not a policy within the Neighbourhood Plan, but it is a statement of the community’s intent supported through consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan. Its purpose is to demonstrate that Nocton and Potterhanworth Parish Councils will seek to work with the landowner with a view to influencing any plans which may emerge for the site. Whilst the Community Action is a material consideration in determining planning applications it carries very limited weight.

Map 6 – Nocton Hall grounds and former RAF Hospital Nocton Hall



Background information

5.1.10 The Grade II Listed Nocton Hall is an important part of the heritage of the village; without the occupants of Nocton Hall, principally the first Earl of Ripon, the village of Nocton would not exist in its current state. The Hall and associated grounds have an area of approximately 12 ha. Nocton Hall's grounds are a popular location for walking and provide a haven for wildlife. The grounds of the Hall contain, in addition to Nocton Hall itself, four private dwellings, a residential care home and several outbuildings of the Hall. The latter are described in the Nocton Conservation Area Review as Significant Unlisted buildings due to their proximity to Nocton Hall and historic nature but are currently in a state of disrepair. Three of the private dwellings are former servants' homes and form an integral part of the Hall setting; two (The Lodge and The Garden House) are Grade II Listed and the third is a Significant Unlisted building. The Hall was rendered derelict by a devastating fire in October 2004 and has since become a magnet for ghost-hunters, urban explorers and thrill-seekers.

5.1.11 In October 2011 an Options Appraisal was produced for NKDC setting out the possible ways forward for Nocton Hall. This Options Appraisal contains detailed information on the history, heritage value and the then-current state of the building and its surroundings. A range of options were identified, from complete demolition to full restoration. Of these, the preferred options were full restoration (turning the building into apartments) or to restore the main house as a ruin and fully restore the service wing. NKDC, Nocton Parish Council and the residents of Nocton supported the outcome of the Options Appraisal and agreed to work towards restoring the main house as a ruin and fully restoring the service wing, as the more realistic of the two. The Options Appraisal acknowledged that the number of homes required to provide the necessary funding for full restoration would be 'significant'; at the time this number was considered to be 50-74. It should be noted that there has been further deterioration since the Appraisal was produced and it is likely that the number needed now would be greater than this and therefore at a level unacceptable to residents.

5.1.12 The adjacent former RAF Hospital site, like Nocton Hall itself, is now derelict and overgrown with vegetation and the poor state of both is a matter of ongoing concern to residents. The area of the site is approximately 17 ha. The Hospital site contains several roadways and a large number of pre-fabricated buildings of no heritage value, which have been extensively damaged by thieves, vandals and the weather. In the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire, 80% of respondents felt that 100-150 new homes on the hospital site was 'too high' and it is clear that there is very little, if any, local support for a large housing development on this site. There is, however, a strong desire to see the RAF Hospital site cleared of its derelict buildings, the overgrowth of vegetation managed, the remains of Nocton Hall made safe and the 'pleasure gardens' (the Hall grounds) managed as a public green space. Some kind of development on the RAF Hospital site is needed to enable these actions to be undertaken and residents accept this, but wish this to be the absolute minimum required to enable the above actions. Local residents have no objection to a sensitive restoration and rebuild of the Hall provided that this is not at the cost of an unacceptable number of houses. Since there is little support for housing on the former hospital site, residents have indicated that they would wish to see other uses explored, ideally those which support its use as a community facility such as (but not limited to) recreational use or a burial ground. There was also some support for the use of the site as a solar panel farm (see Policy 5 below).

5.1.13 Access to the former RAF Hospital site through Nocton Hall grounds is along a shared use drive lined by an avenue of redwoods and other mature trees, all of which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (as are many of the other trees in the grounds). This avenue, which is an attractive feature of the grounds, limits the potential width of the access drive and any development must include appropriate access arrangements which allow vehicles to pass safely without endangering pedestrians, and which do not impede access to the existing properties within the Hall grounds (including the care home). It should be noted that the shared use drive also gives access to the RAF Nocton Water Recycling Centre operated by Anglian Water. There are other, now disused, entrances into the RAF Hospital site but these are from private residential roads via a right of way and therefore access to the RAF Hospital site presents a challenge.

5.2 Quality of Life and Environment

Policy 3

In Potterhanworth, the playing field off Queensway and the allotment site (identified in Map 7 below), and in Nocton, the Village Green on School Road; the school playing field on Main Street; most of Nocton Hall grounds; and land to the east of Wegberg Road (Nocton Park playing field and allotments) (identified in green in Map 8 below) are designated as Local Green Spaces where development is ruled out other than in very special circumstances.

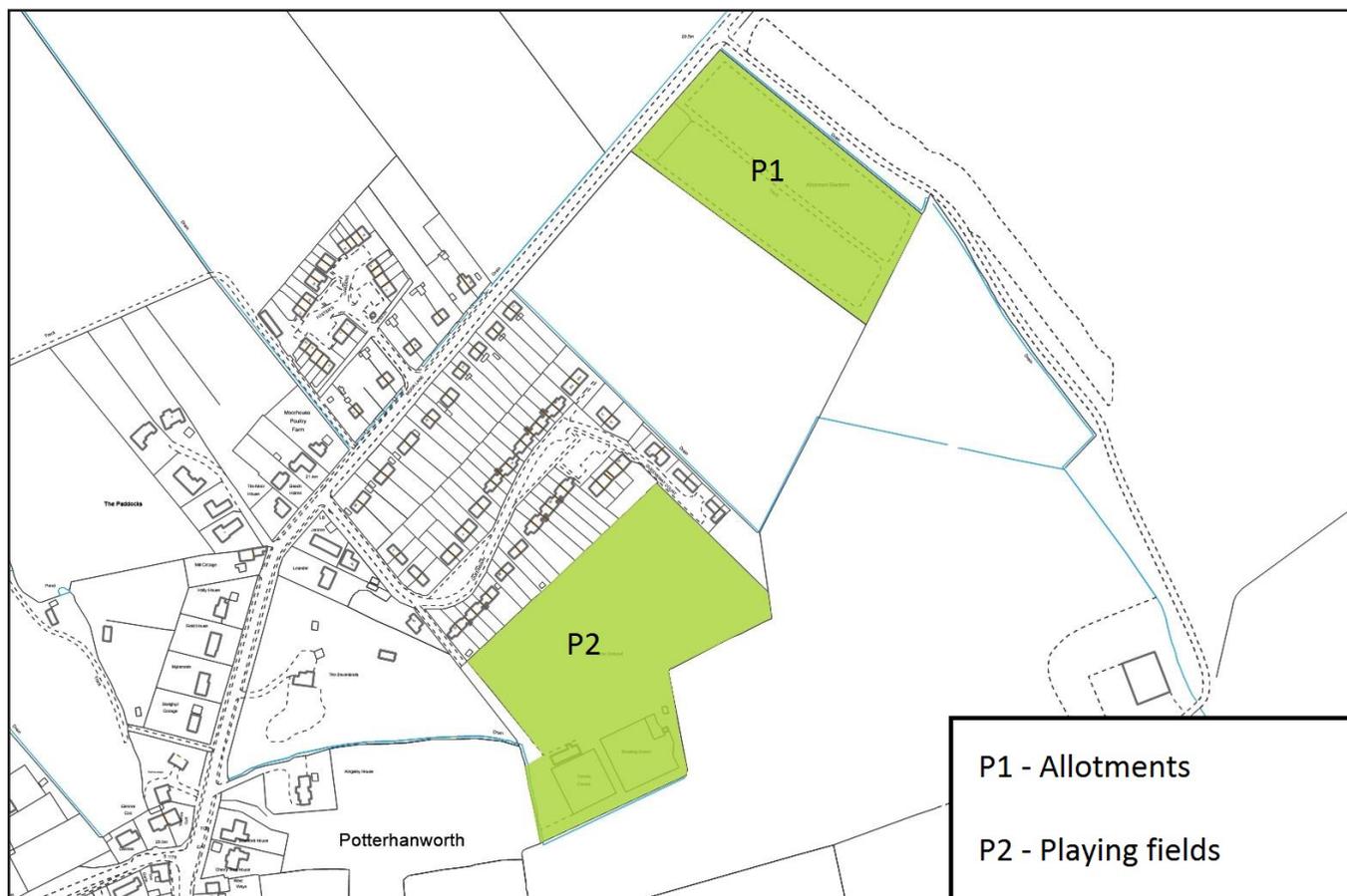
Justification and evidence

5.2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire responses showed that the open green spaces of the parishes were greatly important to many residents and rated most highly of all environmental aspects in the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire. It is, therefore, noted that development will not be permitted in areas designated as Local Green Spaces other than in very special circumstances.

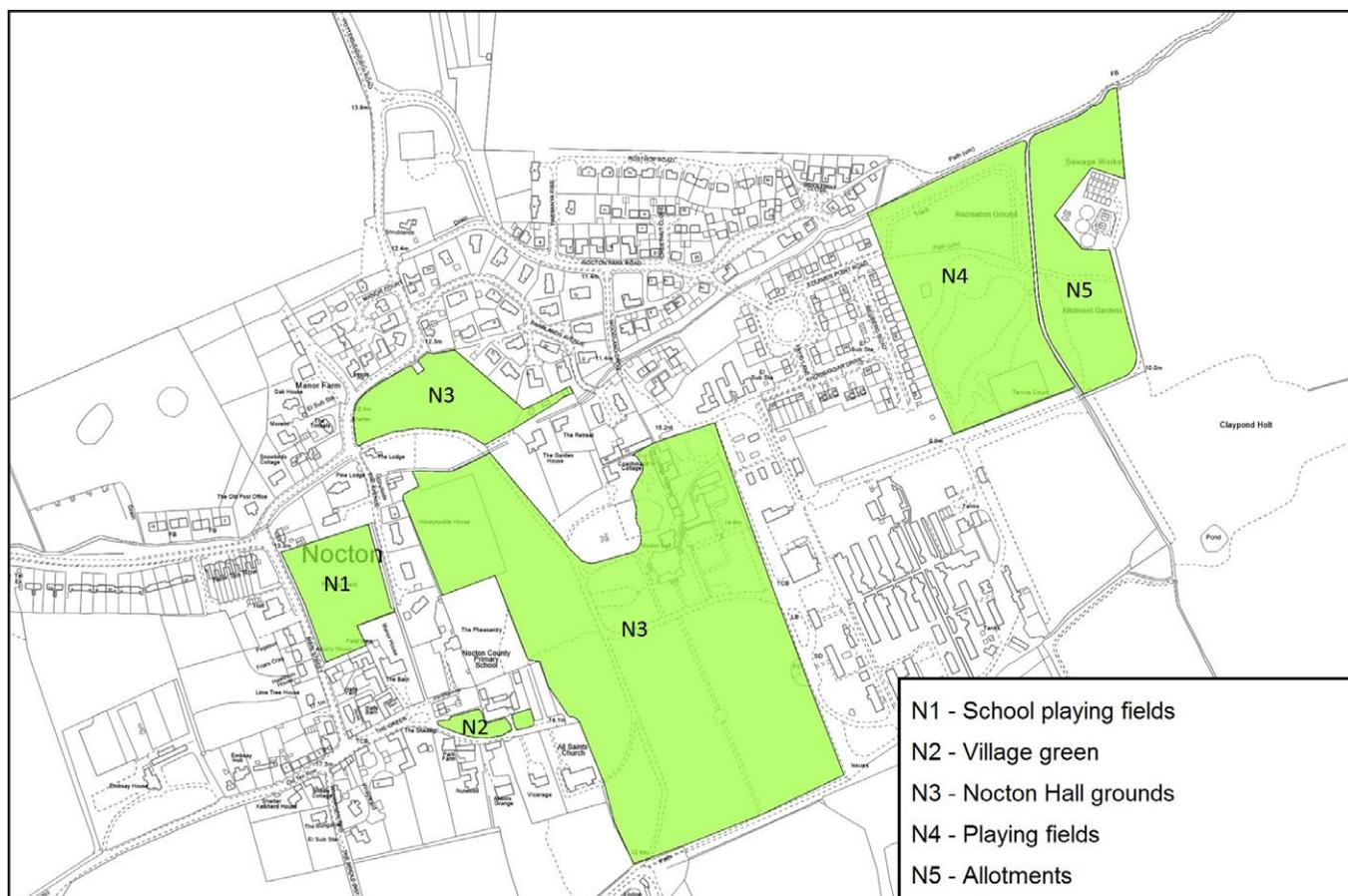
5.2.2 Residents wish green spaces to be preserved and to remain available for public use. Areas in Nocton designated as Local Green Spaces (and shown as such in the Draft Local Plan) are: the Village Green on School Road; the school playing field on Main Street; most of Nocton Hall grounds; and land to the east of Wegberg Road where Nocton Park playing field and allotments are. In Potterhanworth, the playing field off Queensway and the allotments are designated as Local Green Spaces (and shown as such in the Draft Local Plan).

5.2.3 These sites are demonstrably special to the local community. Information in respect of the tests for designating Local Green Space, as set out in Paragraphs 76-78 of the Framework, is provided in the “LP23: Local Green Space and Other Important Space Evidence Report,” forming part of the evidence base to the emerging Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Map 7 - Potterhanworth Local Green Spaces



Map 8 - Nocton Local Green Spaces



Policy 4

The enhancement of the Neighbourhood Area's biodiversity will be supported. Development proposals affecting mature trees, species-rich hedgerows, watercourses, and existing areas of woodland should demonstrate that such features will be preserved or enhanced. The preservation of wildlife habitats and the enhancement of public rights of way and/or of connectivity between green spaces will be supported.

Justification and evidence

5.2.5 The parishes contain large areas of arable farming land and fenland with smaller areas of woodland (including ancient woodland), along with hedgerows and many small watercourses (field drains). All these contribute significantly to the setting and rural 'feel' of the area as well as to its ecology and biodiversity. From the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire, the rural setting and local wildlife habitats of the parishes were highly valued and residents wished to see them supported. Countryside walks were the most highly rated 'amenity' in the questionnaire and many residents commented that this was one of the features that attracted them to their village.

Policy 5

Development relating to the provision of alternative sources of energy generation and high quality communications infrastructure will be supported where it respects local character, residential amenity and biodiversity.

Justification and evidence

5.2.6 There is massive local opposition to large scale wind farms, as shown by the recent response to the (withdrawn) Vattenfall proposal for 20 x 150m tall turbines at Nocton Fen. However, there was significant support in the questionnaire responses to domestic solar panels, and many homes in the villages already benefit from these. There was modest support for individual domestic wind turbines and a large scale solar farm; the RAF Hospital Nocton Hall site was suggested as a possible location for this.

5.2.7 Poor broadband speed (2.4 Mbps average download speed) is a particular issue in the countryside areas of the parishes and Nocton village but less so for Potterhanworth village, where the average speed is 36 Mbps, although there are still some areas with a much lower speed. However, infrastructure to support high-speed broadband is currently being installed in Nocton (November 2016). Poor mobile telephone coverage is also a problem throughout the parishes. These services were the two most highly rated as requiring improvement in the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire responses. Respondents to the questionnaire who work from home found the poor telecommunications a particular problem and several people commented that they would consider working from home if the service were improved. Farming, the major local 'industry', increasingly uses GPS for accurate positioning of machinery and better communication infrastructure would support this.

5.3 Transport and Access to Local Services

Policy 6

The promotion of walking, cycling or use of public transport by

- improving public transport provision and making it more accessible; and
- improving the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and making the use of those modes of travel more convenient; and
- ensuring connectivity between walking, cycling and public transport routes will be supported.

Development should be located and designed where practical to provide safe and secure layouts, minimising conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians.

Justification and evidence

5.3.1 One of the main concerns residents raised in the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire responses was the level and speed of traffic within the parishes, particularly along the B1202 from Potterhanworth Booths through Potterhanworth and Nocton to the junction with the B1188. The danger from traffic is compounded by parking congestion in some areas. The B1202 has a number of tight bends which lead to restricted sight lines and force heavy goods vehicles either across the centre line into the path of oncoming traffic, or onto the footway or verge.

5.3.2 There is significant movement between the two villages: Potterhanworth residents travel to Nocton to use the Post Office; in the households which responded to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire, more children from Nocton went to school in Potterhanworth than attended school in Nocton; and there are shared church services with a joint congregation. If The Chequers were to re-open as a public house (an outcome strongly supported by respondents) this would increase the journeys between the villages as The Chequers was previously patronised by Nocton residents. Almost all the journeys between the villages are currently made by car due to the lack of an alternative perceived to be safe and convenient.

5.3.3 Improvements in non-motorised transport links between and within the villages were considered important by residents; they also wanted to see an improvement in public transport services. Measures to address these issues could reduce car journeys and enhance quality of life and personal health.

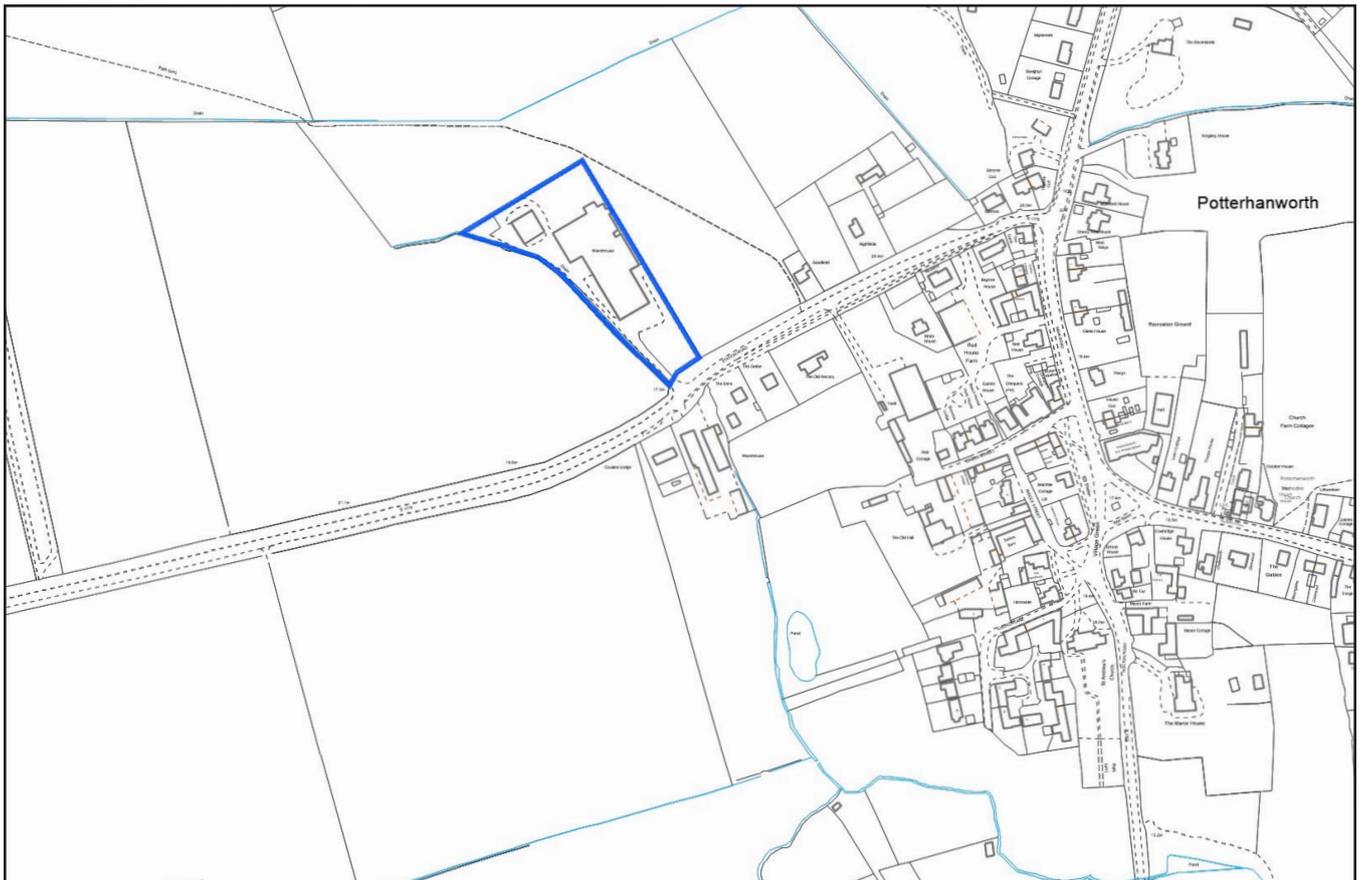
5.3.4 While the scale of any development in the Neighbourhood Area is unlikely to have a major impact on these issues (apart from the former RAF Nocton Hall Hospital site), it would still be considered essential that all reasonable measures are taken to minimise car use and ensure road safety.

5.4 Local Economy

Policy 7

Development proposals for business development, light industrial or agricultural uses on the brownfield sites at the former RAF Hospital Nocton Hall and Station Road, Potterhanworth, identified on Map 6 on p 22 and Map 9 below, will be supported subject to their respecting local character, residential amenity and highway safety.

Map 9 – Brownfield site, Station Road, Potterhanworth
(plot edged in blue, central upper map)



Justification and evidence

5.4.1 Few local residents work in the village where they live and there are limited employment opportunities locally. Just over half the respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire wanted to see land in the Neighbourhood Plan area identified for businesses which would support the local economy and two-thirds of those who suggested a site, proposed the (then vacant) brownfield site on Station Road in Potterhanworth. It is understood, however, that a local agricultural concern has recently purchased this site for use in furtherance of its business activities. Such use would conform with the proposed Policy. Any future proposals for the site which are consistent with this policy would, therefore, be supported, but not those involving the provision of housing.

5.5 Community Wellbeing

Policy 8

The provision of new community facilities will be supported where they respect local character and residential amenity.

Proposals that would reduce or result in the loss of any current community facility should:

- provide for a suitable replacement facility that will either maintain or enhance the existing public provision in a location that is at least as accessible to the community residents; or
- provide evidence to demonstrate that there is no longer a demand for its current permitted use, or any other appropriate community use; or
- provide evidence to demonstrate that the current use is no longer viable.

The retention of the Chequers as a Public House is supported. Any change of use must demonstrate, further to twelve months active marketing, that its current use is unviable.

Justification and evidence

5.5.1 Respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire particularly supported development of the following:

- access to primary care medical services in the villages
- enhancement of facilities of Nocton Village Hall, Potterhanworth Memorial Hall and Potterhanworth Pavilion
- expansion and improvement of play and recreational facilities
- retention of The Chequers in Potterhanworth as a public house
- provision of a community shop

5.5.2 There is strong support for the existing community facilities in the parishes and the lack of others, such as a shop and a public house, are keenly felt. There are no primary medical services in either parish. A burial ground will be required in Nocton in the future; burials currently take place at All Saints' Church but this will run out of space during the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan. Provision of a replacement facility locally would be beneficial to the community and reduce journeys by car to visit the graves of loved ones.

Nocton & Potterhanworth

Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2036

Prepared by the Nocton and Potterhanworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on behalf of Nocton and Potterhanworth Parish Councils. Designed and produced by North Kesteven District Council.

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