



BILLINGHAY: Vision document

October 2016

Final

Prepared for Billingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group by AECOM



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1. Introduction

Billinghay is a large village and civil parish situated in the North Kesteven district, in the County of Lincolnshire. It is surrounded by Fenlands and has a strong agricultural heritage.

The village benefits from a vibrant community, although the lack of transport connections to neighbouring towns and cities makes it isolated, which is believed to have led to the closing down of small businesses and local shops over the past few years. Residents are car dependant to reach facilities in neighbouring settlements and its population is on the rise.

To address these issues, the Billinghay Neighbourhood Plan working group was formed with the purpose to design and oversee the process that will result in the creation of a plan with the following vision:

"To enable sustainable growth and development, preserve and enhance the quality of life for the community, and safeguard and protect environmental quality, including special historical characteristics of the neighbourhood."

Through the Department for Communities and Local Government neighbourhood planning programme, AECOM has been commissioned to assist the Billinghay Neighbourhood Plan working group to explore masterplanning issues relating to the planning and development of the town.

Following an inception meeting and site visit with the group, a number of sites allocated to accommodate growth were chosen as worthy of further investigation.

This document aims to bring together baseline research, previously collected data and the information from the site visit to inform the group on the potential use of the sites as part of their vision.

The following steps were undertaken to produce this report:

- Initial meeting and site visit;
- Urban design analysis;
- Desktop research;
- Preparation of an opportunity framework masterplan; and
- Preparation of this report, revised with the neighbourhood planning working group to reflect feedback.

1.1 Locational analysis

The site analysis plan highlights the main issues and considerations around Billingham. The town centre is located within the village's conservation area which lies adjacent to the river Skirth. Having a flat topography and drain canals demarcating the grade 2 and 3 agricultural lands, flooding is the a threat to the area. This is largely why the site allocated for the expansion of the village are situated to the south-west.

Billingham benefits from a few of community facilities such the primary school and children's centre, surgery and sports fields. However, the nearest secondary school is in Ruskington, approximately 7.5km away. The site of former secondary school is one of the study areas shown in the site analysis plan.

The nearest designated employment area and retail centre are in Sleaford, approximately 10km from Billingham.

The main community asset is the swimming pool which has been running for 40 years and is taken care by local volunteers. The village hall to the south of the village provides the community with a multi-use events space and the sports fields behind it are also well used. These have been awarded some funding and have recently been upgraded.

Bus stops are provided along the main spine route of the town. There is a current shortage of public off-street parking and pressure on the existing road infrastructure is expected to increase with the envisaged growth of the village.

No pedestrian crossings facilities were observed during the site visit, and cycling parking is currently only provided at the community swimming pool.

Facilities which are understood to be in need of expansion include the medical centre and the Vauxhall car showroom and its associated amenities.

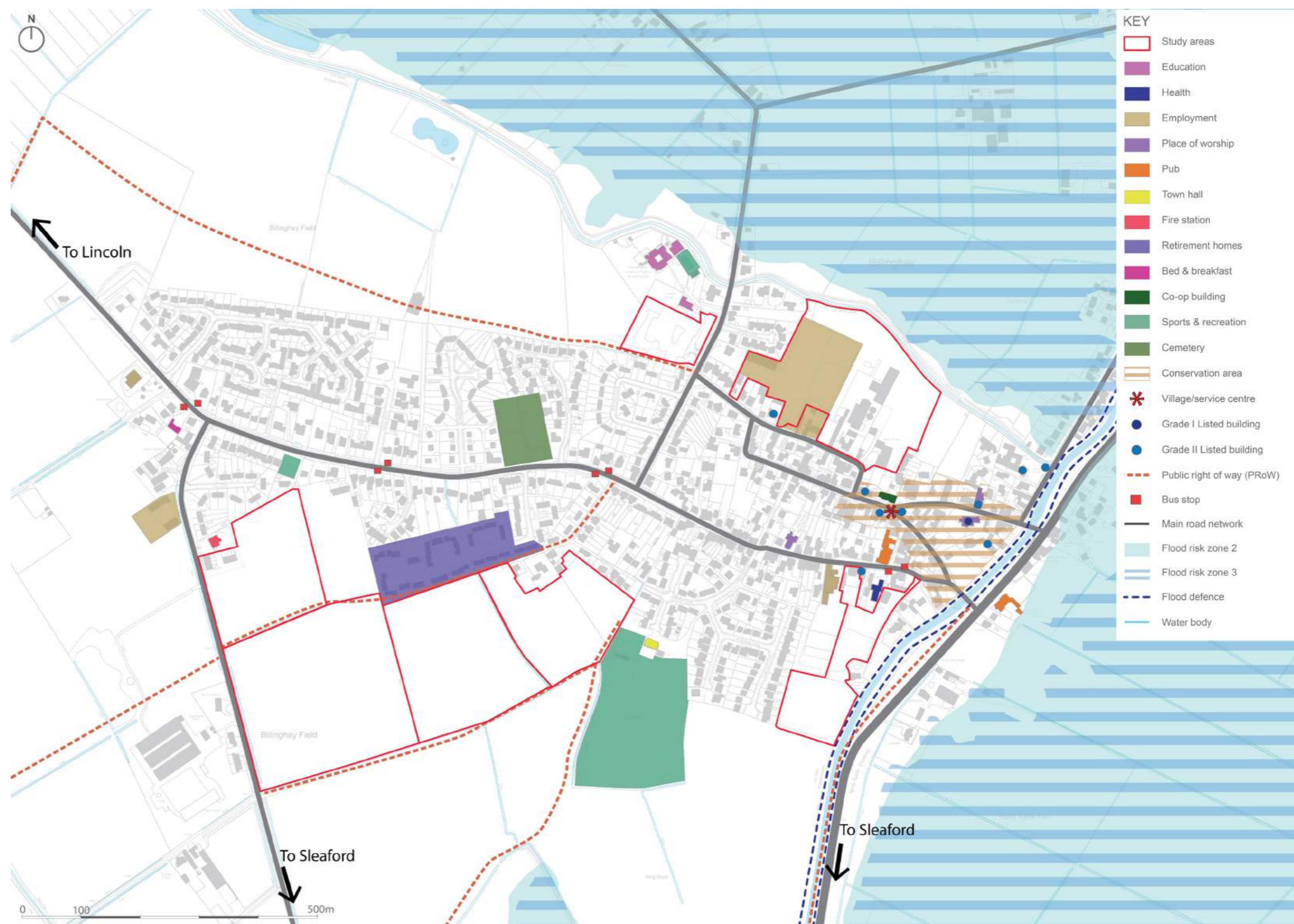


Figure 1.1 - Site analysis



Figure 1.2 - High Street



Figure 1.3 - Vauxhall showroom, High Street



Figure 1.4 - Community swimming pool, Fen Road



Figure 1.5 - The Skirth



Figure 1.6 - Children's centre, Fen Road

2. Background

This section reviews the baseline position with regard to local policy and physical context. It is included to ensure that the proposed framework is rooted in the opportunities that present themselves and respond to identified constraints.





2.1 Local Plan policy

The most relevant planning policy documents for this study are the North Kesteven Local Plan (adopted 2007) and the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Proposed Submission (April 2016). The Draft Billinghay Neighbourhood Development Plan document is another starting point (although still with little planning weight). Another document, which was consulted on, is the Interim Integrated Impact Assessment of the Central Lincolnshire Further draft Local Plan (October 2015).

The policies relevant to the sites available for the town's growth are summarised below.

North Kesteven District Council Local Plan (Adopted 2007)

Land with curtilage line:

Policy C1 – Development within settlement curtilages

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals within settlement curtilages (as shown on the Proposals Map), provided that they:

1. Will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the area;
2. Will not increase the pressure for similar development that would collectively cause adverse effects; and
3. Are in keeping with the provisions of the locational strategy.

Policy H6 – Affordable housing on rural exceptions sites

Planning permission will exceptionally be granted for development providing affordable housing for local people on sites within, or outside but closely related to, the curtilages of any settlement except Sleaford and North Hykeham (as shown on the Proposals Map), which would not otherwise be considered suitable for residential development, provided that:

1. A local need for affordable housing has been identified in the Council's housing needs survey or through another survey, the format and findings of which the Council has agreed;
2. The need cannot reasonably be met on sites with residential planning permission or through residential allocations in this Plan;
3. The development will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the area;
4. The development is of a scale that is in keeping with the identified need, and the role, status and service base of the settlement; and
5. The site is within a reasonable distance of local services and facilities and public transport services.

Unless the affordable housing is to be managed by a registered social landlord, any planning permission will be subject to conditions or agreements to ensure that local people in need of affordable homes will occupy the dwellings, and that all the benefits of low-cost provision will pass to the initial and to all subsequent occupants.

Policy RST3 – Local recreational facilities

Planning permission will be granted for the development of new recreational open space or indoor sports facilities within, or outside but well-related to, the curtilage of any settlement (as shown on the Proposals Map), provided that the development will serve the recreational needs of the immediate area only.

Existing employment area

Policy C8 – Safeguarding allocated sites

Planning permission will be granted for a proposal to develop an allocated site for any use other than that for which it is allocated, provided that the benefits of the proposal to the community outweigh the importance of the allocated use.

Policy E1 - Employment development sites

Planning permission will be granted for development falling within Classes B1 (b) and (c), B2 or B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 on Existing Employment Areas, Employment Allocations or Employment Sites with Planning Permission (as shown on the Proposals Map), subject to the phasing proposals for the Lincoln Policy Area set down in this Plan. Planning permission will be granted for retail development on these sites, provided that:

1. The use proposed is minor in scale and caters primarily for the needs of the area's workforce; or
2. They have satisfied the sequential approach set out in Policy R1 if considered to be bulky goods retail developments.

Policy E7 – Protection of existing employment sites or buildings

Planning permission will be granted for the establishment of a non-employment use on land or buildings that were last used for employment purposes, only if:

1. The loss of the land or building will not adversely affect the employment opportunities both in the short term and over the remainder of the plan period, and also the immediate locality and wider area.
2. Continued use of the site or building for employment purposes would adversely affect the character or appearance of its surroundings, amenities of neighbouring land-uses or traffic conditions, that would otherwise be significantly alleviated by the proposed use; or
3. The existing site or building is no longer capable of providing an acceptable standard of accommodation for employment purposes.

2.2 Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan policy

The group conducted a number of surveys and its results were collated in the draft Billinghay Neighbourhood Development Plan. Following this consultation process, a number of policy areas were identified and related policies were drafted to support Billinghay's growth strategy. These include:

- Environment;
- Heritage and tourism;
- Travel and transport;
- Employment and economic growth;
- Community facilities and assets; and
- Housing.

This document also assesses the proposed sites for housing allocations as presented in the Local Plan (Figure 2.4) and Policy H4 below combines guidance for new housing.

Policy H4

- Developments should be a maximum of 35 properties to create smaller groupings broken up by green space and include access to neighbouring developments.
- Where possible properties should use local materials and should be designed with rural design and character.
- Within the Conservation Area any in-fills must be in line with existing traditional style properties using red and brown brick with slate roofs and plain verges. Windows are usually slightly recessed and would like to see this style wherever possible.
- Innovative, zero carbon self-build housing will be looked upon favourably for infills and developments outside the Conservation Area.
- Electric charging points or the most up to date and cost effective technologies to be included on all new properties
- Housing design should respond to the topographical character and work with

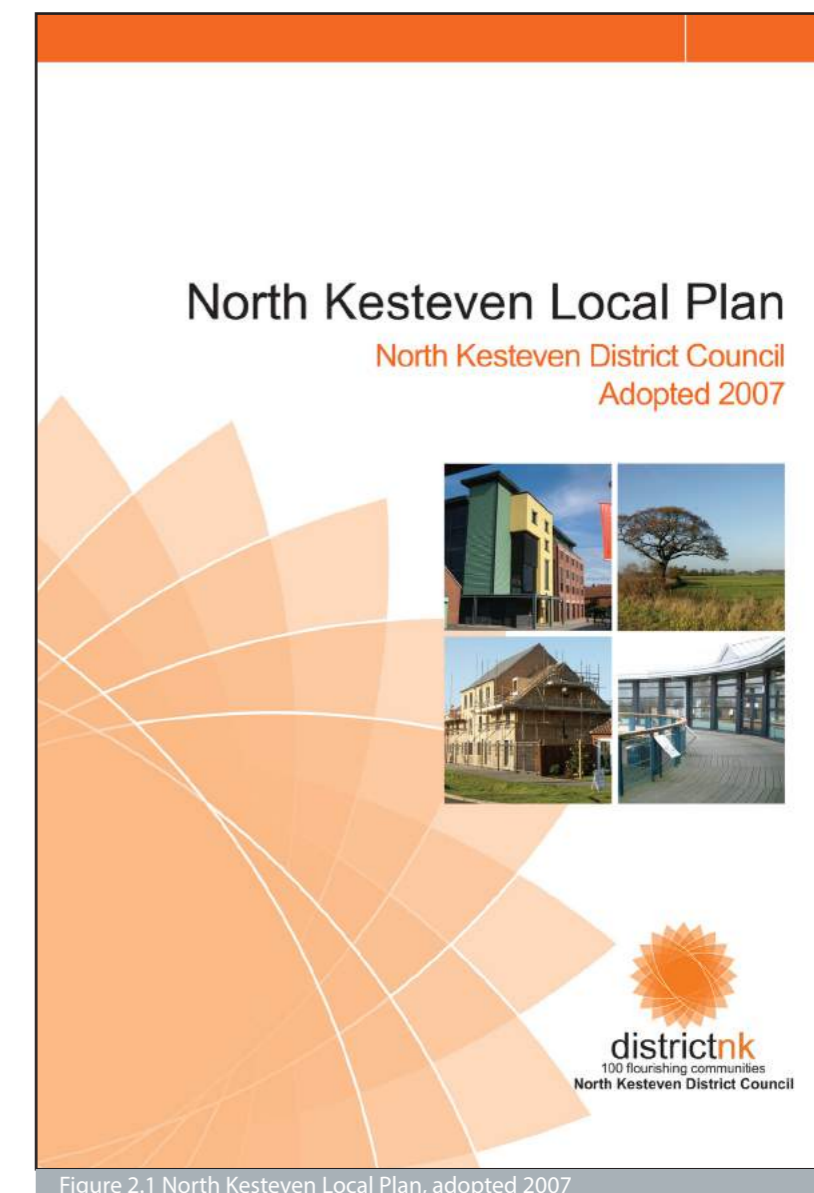


Figure 2.1 North Kesteven Local Plan, adopted 2007



Figure 2.2 - Houses along Victoria Street

- the contours of the land, particularly in the areas of flood risk.
- Garages and driveways must be ample for the size of property and have minimal impact on the street scene particularly in prominent locations such as end points, i.e. the main view up and down the street. The increase in multi-generational homes should be addressed. If planning permission of 2 spaces per house is insufficient any limitations imposed by developers are to be negated to allow new residents to create further spaces if necessary.
- Buildings must have active walls with windows that wrap around corners for surveillance and natural light in the homes. Front doors must face the street.
- Homes must have appropriate external storage in particular for bins and cycles so that neither are left in the open.
- All new developments must have an Energy advisor to support and educate residents to ensure energy use in properties is efficient and affordable, ensuring buildings operate as intended.
- Properties should orientate so that as many residents as possible can see the features and rural views from their homes. Furthermore they should benefit as far as possible from solar gain without compromising good design.
- Billingham Neighbourhood Plan will be signing up to the North Kesteven Low Carbon Charter
- Ensure new development provides high standards of design and sustainability.
- Encourage creative and innovative design.
- Housing mix must be broad based with starter homes, downsizing or properties for the elderly, and executive homes balanced on the Estate. This will ensure that the development has added elements of safety and security. Developments must be tenure blind.

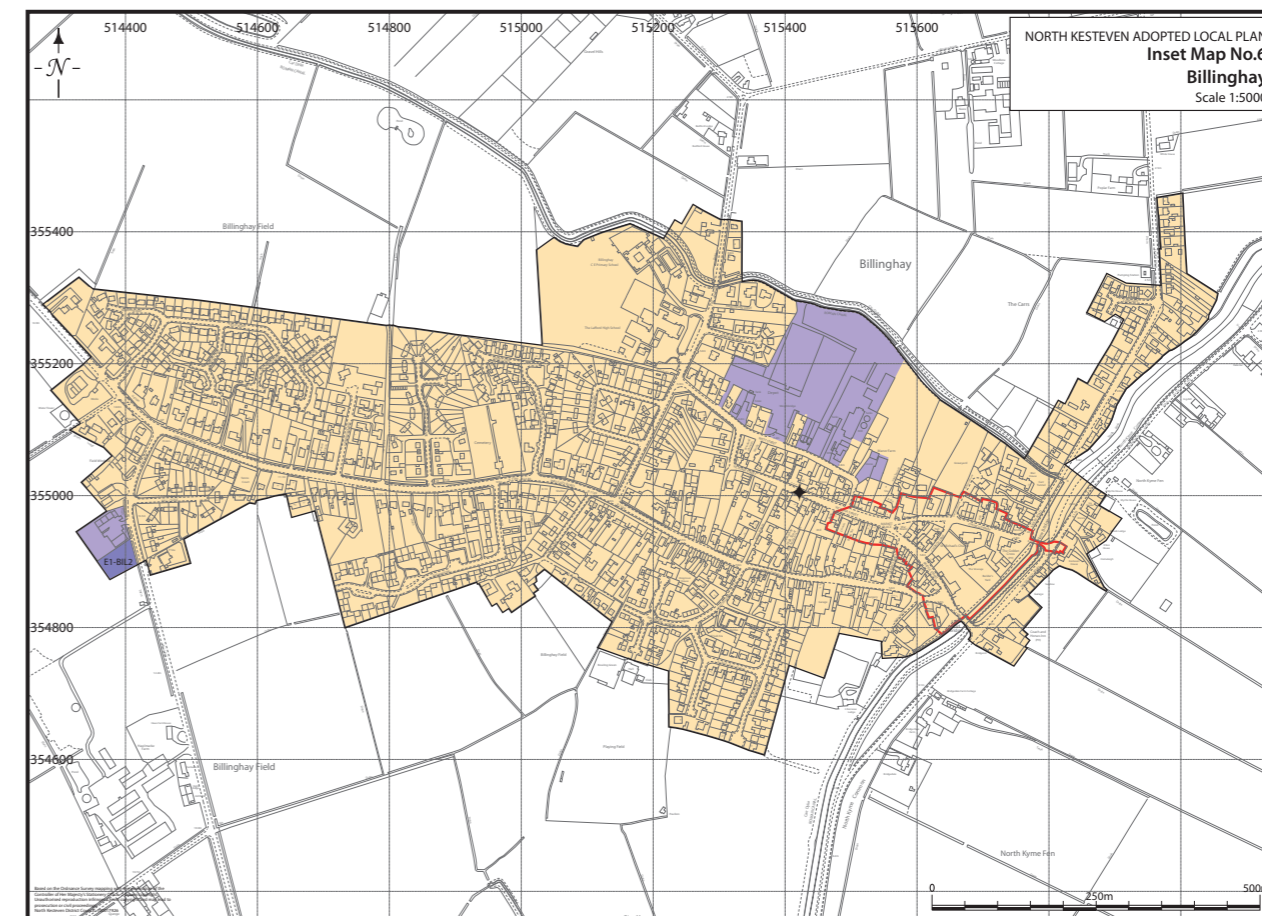


Figure 2.3 - Inset map no.6

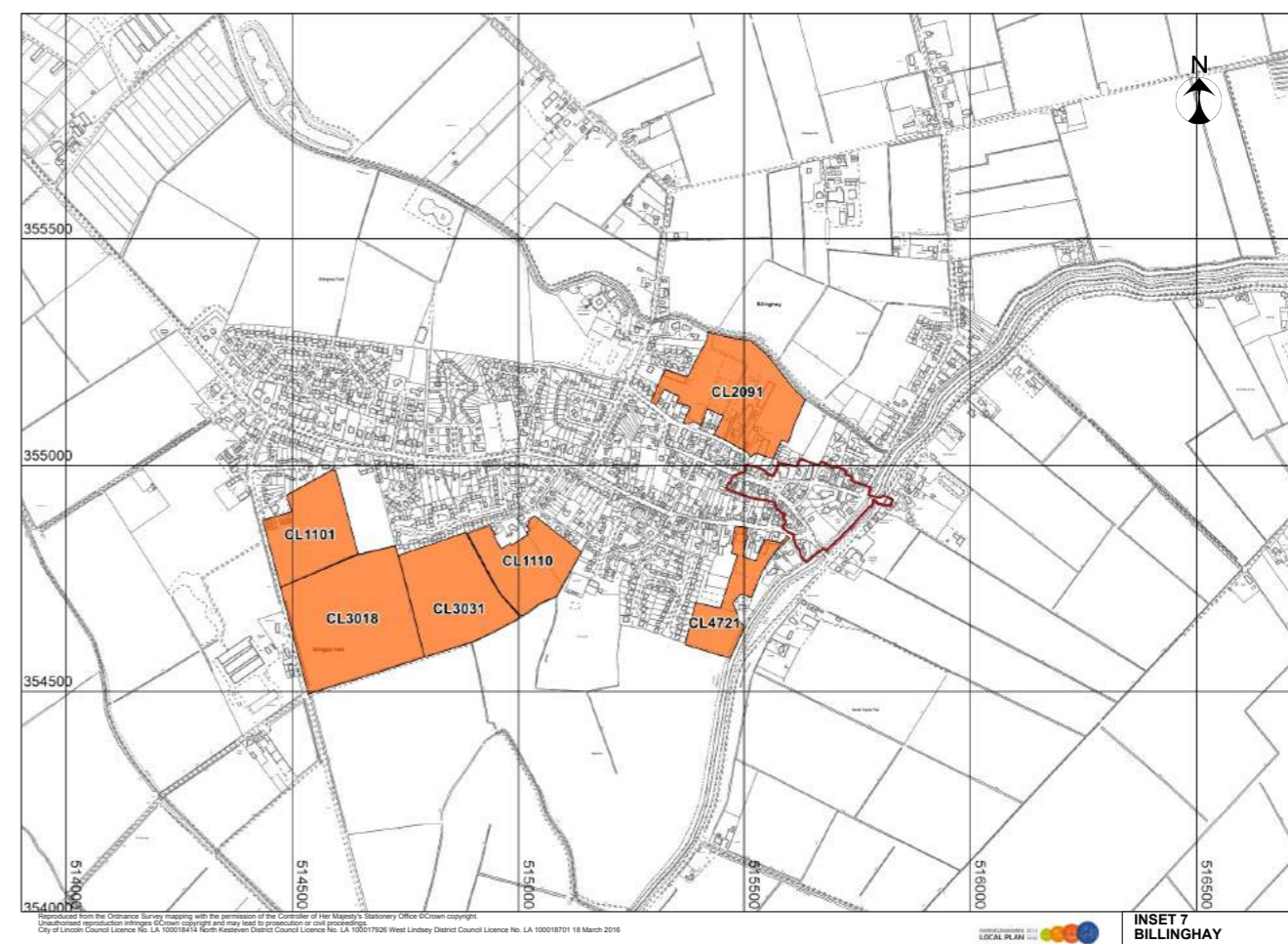


Figure 2.4 - Inset map no.7

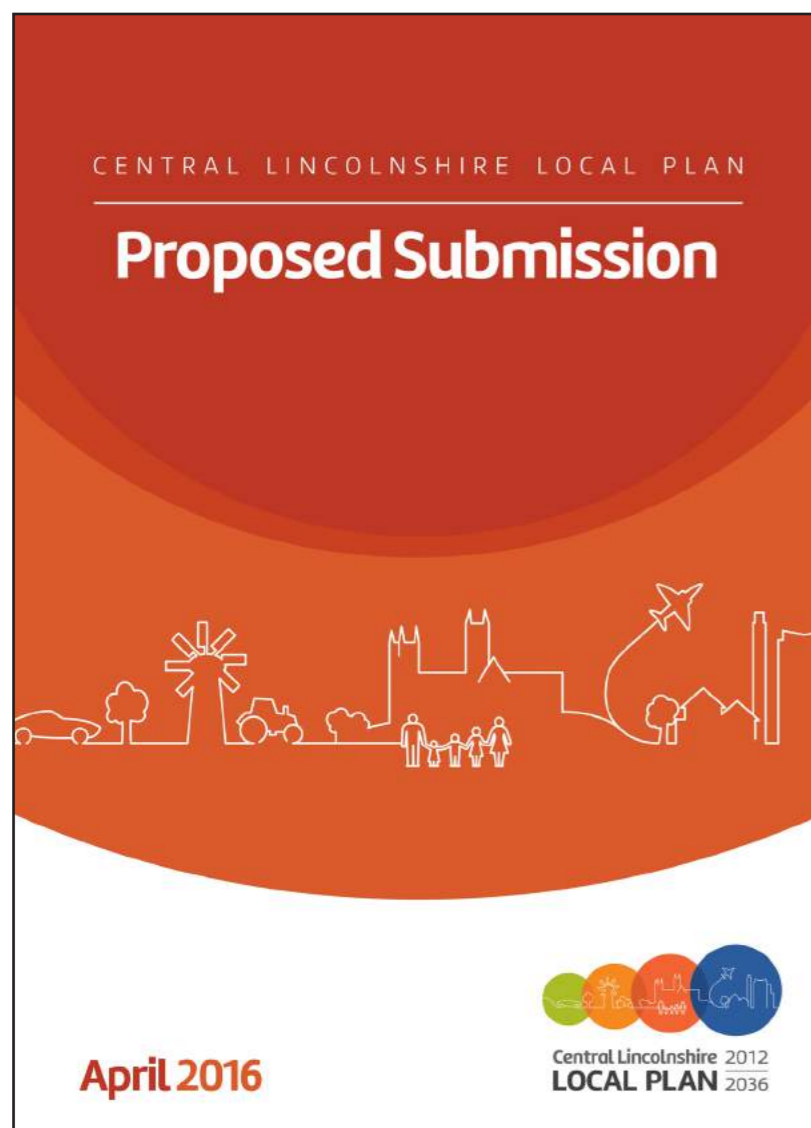


Figure 2.5 Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Proposed Submission, April 2016





3. Vision

Based on the analysis carried out and information gathered during the site visit, this section puts forward a proposed opportunity framework to illustrate a possible growth strategy for Billinghay.

3.1 Proposed opportunity framework

The plan illustrates the proposed strategic interventions to help deliver the growth vision for Billinghay. These opportunities for the consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan promote sustainability with improved connectivity and enhanced green infrastructure to create a high-quality environment for both current and future residents.

- Residential development to house 455 dwellings at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare. This density was chosen to integrate future development with that found in the adjacent residential areas while preserving the openness of the area and it also caters for on-plot car parking which reduces the need for communal off-street parking. It is also the density stipulated in the North Kesteven Local Plan (Adopted 2007).
- Detailed housing design should respect the local vernacular and in accordance with the policies stated in the emerging Billinghay Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2025.
- Access to the sites is provided by and from the existing roads, with new routes cutting through the proposed residential parcels. These should also provide space for green verges, bicycle lanes and adequate carriage width to allow for a maximum of 20mph vehicular speed.
- The provision of open space as recommended by the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Proposed Submission (April 2016), will include a variety of parks, amenity space and natural areas, with facilities catering for all age groups and allotments areas to enhance the health and well-being of the site and make the area more liveable.
- The existing sports fields and tennis courts were retained and new pedestrian and cycle routes should provide easy and direct access to these.
- The introduction of new community facilities which could house the expansion of educational and health facilities to serve the new and existing residents.
- The retention of the existing employment area which could boost local businesses and provide local employment.

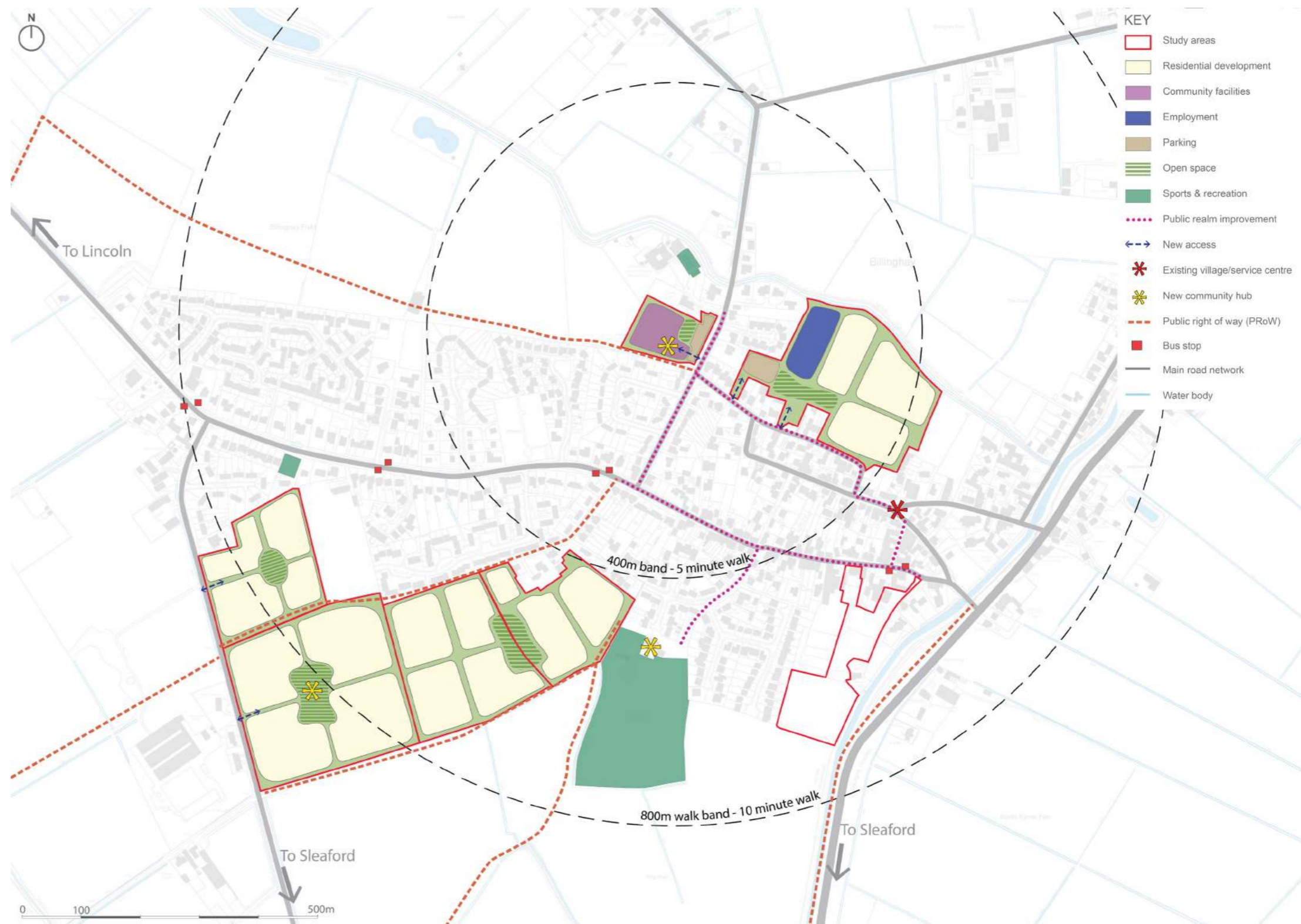


Figure 3.1 - Proposed opportunity framework plan



4. Next steps

Built around the passion and ideas of the Billinghay community, this document has presented a potential high-level framework for the sustainable growth of the village. A next stage should be to embed its findings into the Neighbourhood Plan and could then be to work with site promoters to agree a development strategy that should include the following objectives:

- An integrated access strategy which includes the public realm improvement of High Street and the route connecting the community facilities.
- An integrated flood defence strategy, which does not segregate the public realm and also considers drainage.
- A possible historical route throughout the village while promoting the Conservation Area as a local asset.
- New neighbourhood community hub and how these integrate with thin the new residential areas.
- A landscaping strategy which includes play areas and innovative forms of public open recreation areas.



My Community 

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