



Wigginton Hopwas and Comberford Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2029

*Made 13th December
2016*

5. PROPOSED POLICIES

5.1 Policies have been designed to meet the objectives set out above related to the Neighbourhood Plan Area as a whole and for each of the communities of Wigginton, Hopwas and Comberford.

POLICIES RELATING TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA AS A WHOLE

5.2 The Hopwas Wigginton and Comberford Neighbourhood Plan area is situated in the eastern part of the District of Lichfield adjacent to the north and north-western boundary of Tamworth. It is rural in character and consists of the village of Hopwas in the west, the village of Wigginton in the east and the village of Comberford in the north. There are designated Conservation Areas within both Hopwas and Wigginton. The area is predominantly farmland except for Hopwas Wood, which is ancient woodland, all of which provide the area with a strong sense of identity which is important to sustain for the future. The relationship between Hopwas and Wigginton with the urban area of Tamworth is unique in that both retain a village character and yet are only a short distance from a large urban area. It is in this context that the relationship is therefore precarious due to the demands of housing need both in Lichfield and Tamworth. It is important that to preserve the character of Hopwas and Wigginton as villages, new development does not cause coalescing.

5.3 For Hopwas the current River Tame floodplain provides an effective barrier in this regard even allowing for the fact that the National Planning Policy Framework allows development in the floodplain as long as the Sequential Test has been passed and there is sufficient flood risk mitigation proposed. This together with the green belt to the west of the village will ensure the character and open nature of its setting will be preserved.



5.4 For Wigginton the situation is more precarious due to the pressure for development to the north of Tamworth. Whilst the “Policy: North of Tamworth” in the LDLPs states that there shall be no coalescence with Wigginton by any new development this is not clearly defined. However the LDLPs does state that the land to the North of Tamworth Borough will be considered through the Local Plan Allocations document and will therefore need to take account of Policy WHC1.

5.5 Comberford is a small community isolated by its single access from the A513 with limited development opportunities and therefore not subjected to development pressures but its setting is important to preserve.

POLICY WHC1

The existing rural environs of the Neighbourhood Plan Area shall be maintained to ensure that there is a clear distinction between the villages of Wigginton, Hopwas and Comberford and the urban area of Tamworth. Any proposed development shall have regard to this distinction and shall only be allowed where it is supported by evidence that the distinctiveness as defined is not adversely affected. There shall be no coalescence with Tamworth.

Hedgerows and trees

5.6 Having regard to the rural character of the Neighbourhood Plan area trees and hedgerows are one of its key characteristics. Not only does this provide a visual characteristic but also supports various habitats and corridors for wildlife. There is the potential for some hedgerows to be historically significant as identified in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and therefore due consideration should be made of a hedgerows significance as a prerequisite of any proposal to remove hedgerows within the Plan area. This is an important requirement particularly as the central section of the Plan area is covered by the Central Rivers Initiative along the Tame Valley which is a partnership initiative which includes the aim to provide a wildlife-rich landscape with extensive wetlands, healthy rivers and sustainable mixed farming. This supports the vision of the Plan and trees and hedgerows are therefore an integral part of this initiative.

POLICY WHC2

Existing trees and hedges are an integral part of the character of the Neighbourhood Plan area and shall be retained wherever possible. Where removal is proposed due consideration shall be made of the Hedgerow Regulations, and in particular the hedges historic potential, and the Central Rivers Initiative, and where removal is justified the impact of removal shall be mitigated against by the provision of additional appropriate planting.

Heritage Assets

5.7 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan Area is dominated by its rural character there are important heritage assets, such as listed buildings and Conservation Areas, which should not be adversely affected by new development. Such development should enhance and reinforce the local distinctiveness of each area and show clearly how the general character, scale, mass, and layout of the site, building or extension fits in with the character of the surrounding area within Design and Access Statements.

POLICY WHC3

New development throughout the Plan Area should protect assets of the historic environment and enhance and reinforce those characteristics, qualities and features that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the Plan Area`s environment. In particular:

(i) New development should be of a scale, mass and built form that responds to the characteristics of the site and its surroundings, care should be taken to ensure that building(s) height, scale, and form, including the roofline, do not disrupt the visual amenities of the street scene and impact on any significant wider landscape views.

(ii) Due regard shall be had of all identified heritage assets to ensure that new development does not detract from the designated and undesignated components of the historic environment, particularly where heritage assets are part of the visual character of the area.

5.8 Consideration should be given to the fact that there are archaeological sites throughout the Neighbourhood Plan Area recorded in the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (SHER). Of particular note is the remains of `shifted villages` to the north east of Wigginton and around

Coventry Canal

5.19 Some 2.6 km. of the Coventry Canal runs through the Neighbourhood Plan Area of which some 900 metres falls within the Hopwas Conservation Area. Apart from the canal being a significant feature in the area it is also a community asset providing a leisure and recreation resource for boaters, walkers and cyclists. It provides an economic value to local business through boaters breaking their journey and using the local services.



5.20 Because of the significance of the canal it should be protected from inappropriate development whilst encouraging suitable new development associated with it, particularly where this encourages greater use of the canal by the community and increases the attractiveness of Hopwas for boaters to break their journey.

5.21 The canal offers an opportunity to meet the requirements of Objective 4.4 by providing a safer walking route to the Thomas Barnes School by use of the towpath. This would not only benefit the children attending the school but the wider community by providing a traffic free walking route as a means of getting through the village on a north-south route without having to cross a busy main road.

POLICY H4

The Parish Council will work with the Canal and River Trust to protect and enhance the waterway environment and promote its use by the community through the upgrading of the towpath through Hopwas particularly between Lichfield Road Bridge and School Bridge.

POLICIES RELATING TO WIGGINTON

The Impact of New Development

5.22 Lichfield District Council's LDLPS identifies the need to provide housing to meet the needs of Tamworth and has identified a Broad Development Location to the north of Tamworth for some 1000 houses. In doing so it states that there should be no coalescence between Tamworth and the village of Wigginton although this is not defined. (15 Policy: North of Tamworth)



5.23 It is considered that there should be a clear divide between the Wigginton Village Envelope and any potential new development that may impinge on the character of the village. In this respect the supporting document entitled "Heritage Statement" for the proposed housing development off Browns Lane for 165 houses, which has been granted planning permission offers some guidance as to what the separation should be. It states that the "Wigginton Conservation Area lies more than 500 metres to the north. The proposals are unlikely to affect this designated area's setting and a retained hedgerow and proposed further landscape planting will ensure its character is preserved."

POLICY W1

There shall be no coalescence of any development north of Tamworth with Wigginton and separation of new development should have regard to the need to maintain the visual separation and Conservation Area setting of Wigginton Village. Any new development must present a screen of trees and shrubs to the village view by new planting where necessary.

Drainage System

5.24 The existing sewage and surface water system does not adequately deal with the existing disposal requirements. This has caused problems not only in the Neighbourhood Plan Area but to adjoining areas in Tamworth, in particular to houses in the Sill Green area and to the western end of Gillway Lane. It is therefore important to ensure that any new development can be adequately dealt with.

POLICY W2

Any new development within the settlement boundary of Wigginton must ensure that their own foul and surface water drainage requirements are adequately dealt with. The provision of a drainage report is strongly encouraged which should show that the existing system is not compromised or that improvements can be put in place to ensure that the existing system is not overloaded.

Village Character

5.25 It is important that the character of Wigginton village is not compromised by any form of new development. It is recognised that some development could be an improvement in the village as evidenced by the barn conversions in Syerscote Lane, Wigginton. This was a site of little more than unsightly, unused buildings, which has now been converted into an attractive development. This type of development is to be encouraged where it is shown to improve the built environment of the village and provide new quality homes.

POLICY W3

New development within the Wigginton Settlement Boundary shall be supported where it is shown to add to the overall quality of the character and environs of the village.

Off-road Parking

5.26 The number of heavy lorries passing through the Village has increased considerably in recent years as these mainly service the business requirements of the farms in the locality. The major problem they cause is to the verges and banks adjacent to the road when there are vehicles parked in Main Road and the lorries have difficulty passing and this is often exaggerated by vehicles waiting to pass in the opposite direction. In order that this situation is not made worse, any new development that increases vehicular movements must provide off- road parking for the occupiers and visitors.