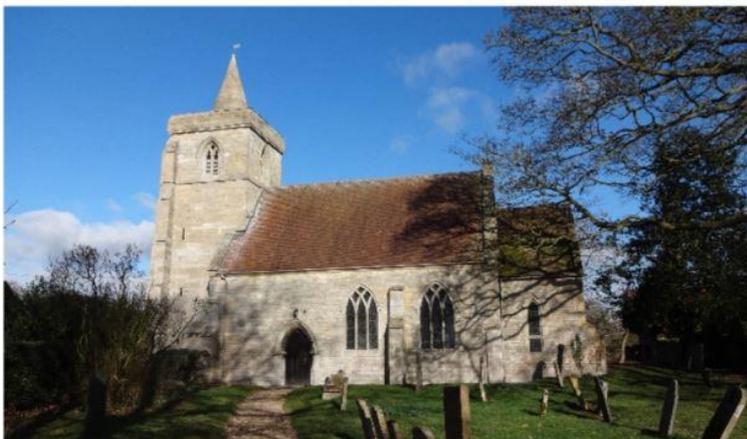


Ropsley & District Neighbourhood Plan

2020 - 2036

Adoption Version July 2021



Churches of Ropsley Parish

Adoption Version July 2021

Message from the Parish Council

Following the sterling work undertaken by the Steering Committee in preparing a high quality and compliant Neighbourhood Plan, the Referendum in May 2021 resulted in an 87 % “Yes” vote. The Ropsley & District Neighbourhood (Development) Plan was subsequently formally adopted by South Kesteven District Council on 29th June 2021, and it is now part of the Development Plan for the area which means that it will be given legal weight in planning decisions by the District Council. This document is, therefore, the Adoption Version of the Ropsley & District Neighbourhood (Development) Plan

It is an important planning document which will shape the future of our community over the next decade and beyond. It is relevant to all parishioners and those who value our long history, heritage and sense of community. The Localism Act, 2011 provided parish councils with the ability to have a vital say in shaping the future of their communities through a neighbourhood plan. To take advantage of this opportunity our Parish Council set up the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee with volunteers from the local community. Their work is complete, and the Parish Council will now use the Neighbourhood Plan policies as reference points to comment on planning applications. It will also pursue means to fulfil the informal Community Aspirations in the document.

By preparing the Neighbourhood Plan the Parish Council took the opportunity to influence the type, scale and design of any development takes place within our parish and to achieve the vision for how the future of the Parish, namely:

Our ambition for Ropsley & District as we progress through the next couple of decades is to have the five villages distinctly separated by natural countryside and ancient woodlands, alive with wide varieties of flora and fauna. Public footpaths, bridleways and green lanes making all areas accessible, and connecting the villages within the parish.

-The villages themselves will inevitably have to grow, but development being blended sympathetically between traditional and more modern building styles. Not allowing the villages to become sprawled and eventually merging into each other. Sensitive infilling and possible updating of some currently unused, decaying buildings.

- On a community level, Ropsley itself has a new village hall to cater for the sporting, cultural and educational requirements of the district. It also would be a huge boost to have a village shop with parking, and maybe to incorporate a café or local meeting place. - To protect the areas of green open space that the District currently enjoys. Making the most of such places by the placement of information boards, picnic tables or benches, all of which should have good access and facilities for people with more limited mobility.

- Finally, the roads will be in a good state of repair with motorists taking care over their speed as a result of gentle traffic calming measures.

This will help to ensure that Ropsley & District remains a pleasant, inclusive community to live in, surrounded by protected countryside and woodland. Thank you for taking part in the Referendum and for helping to get this important planning document in place.

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1. Introduction - What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan?

1.1 Communities have powers to shape development through Neighbourhood Planning, a right introduced by the Localism Act 2011. A Neighbourhood Development Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'Neighbourhood Plan') can set out a vision for an area and establish planning policies for the use and development of land. It forms part of the Statutory Planning Framework for the area (The Development Plan) and its policies will be used in the determination of planning applications. The Plan period for the Ropsley and District Neighbourhood Plan is 2020 to 2036, reflecting that of the South Kesteven Local Plan.

1.2 This is the Adoption Version of the Neighbourhood Plan which was formally adopted by South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) on 29th June 2021. An independent examiner had earlier considered representations and checked that the Basic Conditions, including conformity with national and local planning policy, were met. There were a number of recommended changes by the examiner and to the District Council was informed that, subject to amendment, the Plan could proceed to a referendum. A Referendum Version, with the modifications suggested by the examiner, was put to the vote on 6th May 2021.

1.3 Legislation required a simple majority (over 50%) of voters to support the plan, but the "Yes" vote was 87.6% on the day. This enabled the Neighbourhood Plan to be adopted and become part of the Development Plan as a major consideration in planning decisions. The question asked at the referendum was: *"Do you want South Kesteven District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Ropsley and District to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?"*

Brief Outline of Ropsley & District Parish

1.4 Ropsley & District Parish is situated in the district of South Kesteven in England's East Midlands. It extends to approximately 2,450 hectares (6,050 acres) of attractive rolling countryside and includes the village of Ropsley and the hamlets of Braceby, Great Humby, Little Humby and Sapperton. The northern edge of the parish is formed by the A52 Grantham to Boston road, and to the western edge the former line of the Roman road, King Street. Further to the east is the A15 and the west the A1. The traditional vernacular is limestone under pantiles, but this diversified to different materials during the 20th century.

1.5 The parish is between 66m to 117m above sea level and includes the source of the East Glen River, which drains south east. The landscape is open, gently rolling arable countryside of Lincolnshire limestone (north) and boulder clay (south) in the shallow valley bottoms.

1.6 Three large agribusinesses, predominately cropping wheat, barley and rape and a handful of smaller family farms run stock (beef cattle & sheep). The fields are typically large and hedged with mixed hawthorn and elder, interspersed with ash standards. There are four deciduous woods.

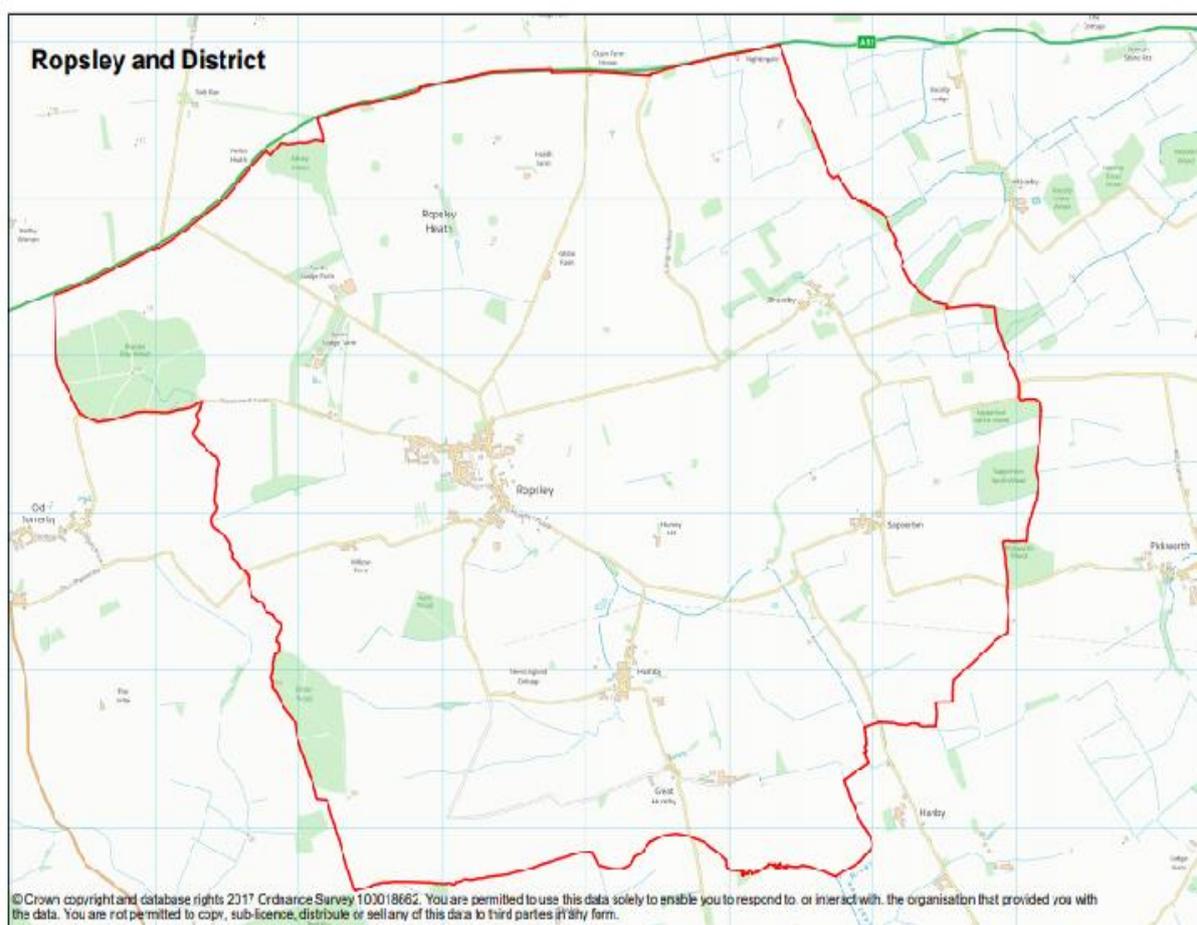
1.7 The parish falls within the administrative area of South Kesteven District Council, the Local Planning authority. Services such as education and transport are provided by Lincolnshire County Council, which also deals with minerals and waste planning.

2. Neighbourhood Area Designation

2.1 The Parish Council considered putting together a Neighbourhood Plan so that local people would have more influence on any development coming forward in the area. A parish meeting was held on 12th November 2015 and those present voted in favour of the Parish Council commencing the formal process.

2.2 The first stage in the statutory process is for the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan, (the Neighbourhood Area), to be formally designated by the Local Planning Authority. As the appropriate 'Qualifying Body' Ropsley & District Parish Council applied to South Kesteven District Council to designate the neighbourhood area on 28th July 2016. The proposed boundary of the neighbourhood area followed the parish boundary. The application was advertised in accordance with statutory requirements and representations invited on the proposed boundary. No responses were received. The designation was approved on 13th October 2016

Fig. 1 Boundary of the Ropsley & District Parish/Neighbourhood Plan Area



2.3 A follow up meeting was held on 8th November 2016 and at the meeting a Steering Committee was formed to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the Parish Council. In the interest of openness, breadth, independence and getting people with a range of skills and interests involved, the Committee includes other local residents, who are not Parish Councillors, from several of the settlements in the Parish.

3. National and Local Planning Context (Also see The Basic Conditions Statement)

The Basic Conditions

3.1 It is a statutory requirement that a Neighbourhood Plan meets The Basic Conditions:

- it has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- it is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area;
- it contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- it does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations; and
- the prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan and wider prescribed matters have been complied with, (e.g. the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012).

National Policy

3.2 The Ropsley & District Neighbourhood Plan has therefore been developed with appropriate regard to national policy, most notably the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The NPPF first came into effect in March 2012 but revised versions issued in July 2018 and Feb. 2019 must be taken into account. It states that Neighbourhood Plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in Local Plans and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies. It adds that Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than that set out in the strategic policies or undermine them. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

The Neighbourhood Plan has also been mindful of the Planning Practice Guidance which explains how national policy should be applied. The Guidance can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Sustainable development

3.3 The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It states that sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching aims relating to economic, social and environmental objectives to be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, where it does not conflict with the policies in an up to date Local or Neighbourhood Plan.

EU Obligations

3.4 Some EU obligations may remain relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan. The District Council will check whether the policies and proposals give rise to significant environmental effects that trigger the need to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required.

The Development Plan

3.5 The Development Plan is the name for the collection of adopted local development documents or planning policy documents that shape development and manage land use in a particular area. It contains the policies and proposals against which planning applications are determined. To meet the Basic Conditions, a Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic planning policies for the area as set out in the Development Plan. Following recent approval, the District Council element of the Development Plan is now The South Kesteven Local Plan (adopted January 30th, 2020). It also includes the adopted minerals and waste plans prepared by Lincolnshire County Council. In the former, Ropsley & District is a Minerals Safeguarding Area (Limestone) but it is noted that Minerals Planning lies outside the scope of Neighbourhood Plans.

3.6 The Local Plan, which covers the period 2011 to 2036, sets out the strategic vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the District, as well as the planning policies which will guide future development. The Plan includes policies maps for Ropsley and Braceby, but they are limited to the definition of Conservation Area boundaries and the extent of a minor floor risk zone of both levels 2/3, with little other specific local detail. This supports the need for a locally focused Neighbourhood Plan within the strategic context of the Local Plan.

3.7 There are some important new measures in the Local Plan. In Policies SP 3, 4 & 5, there is the introduction of a policy relaxation to allow some homes to be built for local people, in even the smallest villages, paragraph 2.12 states...*“In the small villages, there is limited capacity to accommodate new development, and whilst previously planning policies strictly limited development in these locations, it is the intention of the Local Plan to allow small, sensitive infill developments (generally expected to be no more than 3 dwellings) so that these smaller communities can positively respond to the housing needs of their people and fulfil their role as sustainable communities”*.

3.8 However, paragraph 2.13 provides further clarification on edge of settlement developments, stating that...*“Development proposals on the edge of a settlement will only be supported in the following specific circumstances: where they are supported by clear evidence of substantial support from the local community or; where they form a Rural Exceptions scheme which meets a proven local need for affordable homes. In all cases the site must be well located to the existing built form, substantially enclosed and where the site edge is clearly defined by a physical feature that also acts as a barrier to further growth (such as a road). The proposal should not visually extend building into the open countryside.”*

3.9 In the settlement hierarchy, Ropsley is a “Smaller Village” but Braceby, Sapperton and Great Humby and Little Humby are classed as open countryside and will be subject to policy SP5 of the new Local Plan.

3.10 Amongst other detail, Policy SP2 (Settlement hierarchy) states that: *“In the Smaller Villages.....development will be supported in accordance with Policy SP3, SP4 and all other relevant policies, **where development will not compromise the village’s nature and character.**”*

3.11 Policy SP3 provides a basis to assess infill development and, as modified, it reads:
In all settlements defined in Policy SP2, infill development, which is in accordance with all other relevant Local Plan policies, will be supported provided that:

- a) it is within a substantially built up frontage or re-development opportunity (previously development land);*
 - b) it is within the main built up part of the settlement;*
 - c) it does not cause harm or unacceptable impact on occupiers' amenity of adjacent property;*
 - d) it does not extend the pattern of development beyond the existing built form; and*
 - e) in keeping with character of the area and sensitive to the setting of adjacent properties.*
- The Council is preparing a Design SPD to assist with the submission of applications against the above criteria SP3. This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Design SPD, and any development proposals will be expected to have regard to the Design SPD.*

3.12 For Ropsley (village) the Steering Committee intends to use the Neighbourhood Plan to add clarity and detail about the circumstances in which new residential development will be acceptable, including the definition of the built up part of the settlement, drawing on local knowledge and criteria in the new Local Plan Policies SP3 (see above) and SP4:

“Development on the Edge of Settlements - Proposals for development on the edge of a settlement, as defined in Policy SP2, which are in accordance all other relevant policies, will be supported provided that the essential criteria a – f below are met. The proposal must:

- a. demonstrate clear evidence of substantial support from the local community* through an appropriate, thorough and proportionate pre-application community consultation exercise. Where this cannot be determined, support (or otherwise) should be sought from the Town or Parish Council or Neighbourhood Plan Group, based on material planning considerations;*
- b. be well designed and appropriate in size/scale, layout & character to the setting and area;*
- c. be adjacent to the existing pattern of development for the area or adjacent to developed site allocations as identified in the development plan;*
- d. does not extend obtrusively into the open countryside and be appropriate to the landscape, environmental and heritage characteristics of the area;*
- e. in the case of housing development, meet a proven local need for housing and seeks to address a specific targeted need for local market housing; and*
- f. enable the delivery of essential infrastructure to support growth proposals.*

** the term ‘demonstration of clear local community support’ means that at the point of submitting a planning application.....there should be clear evidence of local community support for the scheme, with such support generated via a thorough, but proportionate, pre-application consultation exercise. Where demonstratable evidence of local community support or objection cannot be determined, there will be a requirement for support from the applicable Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Plan Group.....”*

3.13 It is considered that Policy SP4 provides an adequate basis to develop and consider proposals for small scale affordable housing. In addition, the provisions of the NPPF (paragraph 77) that Local Planning Authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

3.14 The new Local Plan contains two large scale strategic housing allocations which will bring the edge of the built up area closer to Ropsley and may give rise to increased traffic on rural roads. Policy GR3-H1 allocates land for housing to the south of Grantham on a site known as Spitalgate Heath Garden Village, with an indicative target of 3700 new dwellings (2,150 anticipated to be constructed by 2036). The Prince William of Gloucestershire Barracks is covered by Policy GR3-H4 and is set to deliver a minimum of 3500 to 4000 units in total (with an estimated 1775 being delivered in the New Local Plan period.)

3.15 In addition to the Local Plan policies considered in detail above, the following are acknowledged as part of strategic planning context for this Neighbourhood Plan. These policies will not be duplicated or added to unless there is a need to add local detail.

- SD1: Principles of Sustainable Development
- SP1: Spatial Strategy
- SP5: Development in the Open Countryside
- H5: Gypsies and Travellers
- H6: Travelling Showpeople
- SP6: Community Services and Facilities
- E7: Rural Economy
- E9: Visitor Economy
- EN1: Landscape Character
- EN2: Protecting Bio (and Geo) diversity
- EN6: The Historic Environment
- OS1: Open Space
- RE1: Renewable Energy Generation
- ID3: Broadband and Communications

3.16 Based on the above context, and with reference to housing, this Neighbourhood Plan does not include a numerical housing requirement or make site allocations. It is considered that Ropsley is a small village with limited services and facilities. Development on the periphery would involve incursions into the surrounding open countryside and would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the settlement, and the landscape quality of the surrounding Kesteven Uplands. However, recognising the less restrictive approach in the new Local Plan, this Neighbourhood Plan includes a settlement boundary and a criteria-based policy to enable small, sensitive infill developments (generally up to 3 dwellings) in appropriate locations in Ropsley, but not outside the existing built up part of the village. This will avoid incursions into the open countryside and protect the setting of the settlement.

4. History and Local Character

4.1 The Parish of Ropsley & District, is a comparatively sparsely populated and quiet rural backwater, situated in the district of South Kesteven in England's East Midlands. It extends to approximately 2,808 hectares (6,939 acres) of attractive rolling countryside, including the village of Ropsley and the hamlets of Braceby, Great Humby, Little Humby and Sapperton.

4.2 There are three main agribusinesses that crop the land predominately with wheat, barley and rape. A few smaller family farms run stock (beef cattle & sheep) farms. Although agriculture is the major industry relatively few people work in the sector and most residents earn a living locally and in Grantham. Overall, however, farming is important to the local economy. The fields are typically large and hedged with mixed hawthorn, elder and ash. There are 5 deciduous (predominately ash) woods but these form less than 10% of the area.

4.3 The Parish has three Anglican churches and a chapel. Ropsley village benefits from an excellent primary school and the award winning Green Man public house and restaurant, a Village Hall and sports field and a 12 hole golf course. The parish caters well for walking, cycling and for riding, offering many quiet and lovely country walks/rides.

4.4 There is human evidence from c 8000 BC in the Parish, through the Stone Ages, Bronze Age, Roman conquests and settlement, Anglo-Saxon and then the Danish conquests and settlement. The population reached its zenith in the 17th century around the wool trade, which then collapsed to today's levels. The census in 2011 recorded c. 816 residents living in a total of c.367 houses and whose average age was c. 44 years old, but it did not include the hamlets of Braceby or Sapperton and it is reported that no records were available.

4.5 In 2019 the pressing challenges/issues facing the parish include community cohesion and sustainability, connectivity to essential services, and the potentially devastating effects on the look and feel of the parish from Ash dieback. The findings of this Neighbourhood Plan show that the people value the peace and quiet, the open countryside and woodland, continuity and a desire for community.

4.6 The traditional vernacular is limestone under pantile, but this diversified to different materials during the 20th century.

Character assessment

4.7 Based on the historical development of the District there are five very distinct villages with their own individual characters. Below is a short summary for each of them.

Ropsley



4.8 Ropsley is roughly between 81m and 93m above sea level. The land undulates, with the middle of the village sitting in a hollow. It is surrounded by views over farmland and some woodland areas. The village is centred around a large church which dates back to 1380, and other historic buildings. Buildings throughout the village are set in a fairly random way with some lining the roads and others set back and at irregular angles. There are many different styles of building. Later buildings are interspersed amongst the old buildings, and there are some newer areas of development. The village is well served with mains drainage, fibre optic high-speed broadband and a regular bus service.

4.9 The Danelaw Way is a Viking road that runs from Lincoln to Stamford for a distance of approximately 59 miles, and this road runs through the middle of Ropsley. It is a well walked route that is generally across fields and along green lanes.



4.10 Half a mile south east of Ropsley are the remains of an unusual 300 years old ring dam once used as a sheep-wash and now identified by a group of trees. Blue brickwork that formed the sheep-wash can still be seen.

4.11 There is a primary school in the village, one public house (The Green Man) which also houses the Post Office for two hours a week, and a Garage. The village also boasts a very well used Village Hall, now housed in a new building, a children's play area and a playing field. There is also a nine hole (18 tee) par 60 golf course. These amenities are all shared with the other four villages within the parish, and they form an important part of the parish cohesion. There is a Conservation Area in the village. The older buildings are of stone and pantile/slate construction, but later buildings of several different styles.



4.12 There is a large village green and a smaller one upon which the War Memorials stand, a number of public footpaths and woodland areas that are easily accessible to all residents, and a number of the footpaths connect the villages to each other. These facilities offer the opportunity for good dog walking, horse riding and cycling.

4.13 There is a wide road through the village that comes from the Sapperton end through to the Roman Road towards Grantham, and there are lanes that go through the village and out connecting Ropsley to the other villages in the parish (and also to Old Somerby which is included in the next parish). The main road through Ropsley is generally kept in a good state of repair as it takes a large amount of traffic. However, the upkeep of the lanes is rather sporadic, and winter sees these lanes deteriorate. Some repairs are made during the rest of the year to keep the lanes at a tolerable standard of repair. There is a local concern about the speed at which some traffic travels through the village and a traffic calming measure would be welcomed.

4.14 In 1979, an Archaeological Field Survey was undertaken in Ropsley and Humby and there were some significant findings. It is believed that there is, amongst other findings, a Saxon Burial Ground in Ropsley. The report was published, and it is entitled ***'The Archaeology and Developing Landscape of Ropsley and Humby, Lincolnshire'*** and a copy may be obtained from Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire.

Braceby

4.15 Braceby is a tiny hamlet comprising 11 dwellings and a church dating back to the 13th century. There is a fairly straight road that connects Ropsley and Braceby, with large fields and on both sides of the road. There is a clear distinction between the two villages.

Braceby sits on gently rounded plateau, at around 83m, with the land falling away to Long Hollow on the west and with a slight dip down to Sapperton Beck on the south.

4.16 Braceby is a designated Conservation Area with 11 Listed Buildings including the Church, several houses, a dovecote, the telephone box and a water pump. There is one (600 acre) working farm (J Limb and Sons), whereas in the 1960's there were three.



4.17 In the 1940's there was a tarmacked lane known as Back Lane, that led to several houses, but these have been demolished, except the one nearest the road. In 1998 a row of three cottages was demolished. The lane still exists but it is little more than a track.

4.18 Today, most of the houses are stone with a couple brick built. They line the road through the village which also curves around the Norman church in the middle. The lane is generally in an acceptable state of repair, and the residents of the village all seem to be content with village life there. The village is kept to a high standard by the residents. The three small open spaces, alongside the road, west of the church and adjoining it, (behind a wall) are maintained by the local community and have high landscape value and contribute to the character of the area. The District Council has commented that they are unsuitable for Local Green space (LGS) designation. However, the larger, "Village Green" (see below) satisfies the NPPF tests and is proposed to be designated as an LGS in this Plan.



4.19 There is a large herd of fallow deer in the village, and these, together with other wildlife, can be seen frequently in and around the area. Braceby is a little over a mile from Ropsley, and the two villages are closely connected in terms of amenities.

Sapperton

4.20 Sapperton, like Braceby, is a very small hamlet. The surrounding countryside is level, open farmland with hedgerows and some woodland areas. The road through the village curves in front of the church, and many of the buildings are stone built and sit along the road. The road is generally kept in a good state of repair. There are no amenities in the village, so residents regularly use those available in Ropsley. The 12 to 15th Century church is Grade II listed. The tower is 13th century and there is a 12th century font. The 16th Century Hall is also Grade II Listed, with 17th & 18th century (and minor later) alterations.



4.21 The village is close to Braceby. The verges each side of the road by Sapperton North Wood have been designated by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust as a Roadside Nature Reserve (No.41). There are 250 species and the most notable are Early Purple Orchids, Common Orchids, and Cowslips. In 2013 it was extended because of the Early Purple orchids and other plants/grasses. It begins close to Braceby and ends beyond the Pickworth turn.



4.22 'Causennis' is a Roman settlement site less than 1 mile to the south of Sapperton, on the East Glenn River, near its source. It was excavated in 1973 and 1981, and again in 1984 to 1988, revealing stone buildings, iron smelting furnaces and various other artefacts.

Great Humby

4.23 Great Humby has only 15 or so residents. It is surrounded by farmland at around 76m altitude. Most of the village itself is a farm and there is a turkey business on the outskirts. There are no amenities in the village. Great Humby has a small chapel, and in 1885 it was recorded that the chapel consisted of a nave only. Prior to that date it was a private chapel of the Brownlow family who were the former possessors of the nearby hall. The chapel, an 'ashlar' building with bellcote, was restored in 1874, following an earlier rebuild in 1692.



4.24 Great Humby is a very old village and in the Domesday Book it was written that 'Humbi' had 1 villager, 1 smallholder and 15 freemen. In 1086 it was in the manor of Old Somerby. The Archaeological Survey (see Ropsley) undertaken revealed that the manor's deserted medieval village (see Little Humby) and hall with moats and fishponds are still evident today.



Little Humby

4.25 Little Humby lies amidst pastoral surroundings, mainly grazing and arable fields. It is of ancient foundation, its present name being of Viking origin, although nearby archaeological discoveries suggest there were pre-historic settlements dating back to the Mesolithic age (8500-4000 BC). The Domesday Book records a now extinct village called Ogarth or Overton located between Little and Great Humby.

4.26 The village sits at approximately 76m above sea level and there is a mixture of very old buildings and newer houses that are placed randomly. There is a newer development towards the outer boundary of the village, that consists of a small collection of houses.

4.27 The village clusters around a green which contains a pinfold which protected livestock which at one time freely roamed the village and adjacent pastures pre enclosure. There is a ford just beyond the green which crosses the original lane from Humby to Ropsley. There is a traditional red telephone box (purchased by the residents) which houses a defibrillator.



4.28 Currently there are 39 houses with a population of about 100 mainly occupied by professional or executive level or self-employed. The residents comprise a mixed age group of about 25 retirees and 27 young people under the age of 18. The housing stock is mixed but mainly consists of detached residences, nearly all owner-occupied. The village benefits from fibre optic high speed broadband and since 2017 is connected to mains drainage, but mobile phone coverage can be weak. Nearly all households have cars which are virtually essential to travel to work locally, regionally and via the East Coast main line to London. A minor road connecting Ropsley to Ingoldsby and Corby Glen passes through the centre of the village. It is used by increasing traffic including HGV, buses and agricultural plant. As a result, verges are continually eroded, and the road is uneven with potholes. Surface water can also be an issue, as is vehicle speeding.

Surrounding landscape character

4.29 A Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken by South Kesteven District Council in 2007. This indicates that the parish predominantly falls within the Kesteven Uplands Character area, which extends from Grantham in the north across a large part of the District to the south. The boundary of the Parish on the A52 is just in the Southern Lincolnshire Edge character area. The Kesteven Uplands character area is described as:

- a relatively unified, simple, medium-scale agricultural landscape with a high proportion of historic woodland;
- undulating landform around the Rivers Witham, East & West Glen and Welland;
- picturesque villages built of local limestone, with Collyweston slate roofs to the south, and pantiles to the north;
- high concentration of houses and parks, with farmland under estate management;
- a dispersed, nucleated settlement pattern with fields enclosed by hedgerows;
- modern human influences include airfields and the A1, Great North Road.

4.30 Within the parish there are 5 defined woodlands (Ropsley Rise, Kirton Wood, Hurn Wood, Abney Wood and Sapperton North Wood). Kirton Wood, Sapperton and Pickworth Woods are designated as SSSIs. Ropsley Rise, Hurn Wood and Abney Wood are designated at least in part as Local Wildlife Sites. all these woods except Hurn Wood, are designated at least in part as Ancient Woodland. The woods are enjoyed by walkers and local residents, and part of the area is a designated as a County Council Nature Reserve. Abney Woods and Hurn Woods are owned by Ropsley Farms Ltd. Kirton Woods are privately owned, and Sapperton North Woods are owned by Welby Estates.

4.31 In terms of its sensitivity, the landscape of the Kesteven Uplands is described in the Landscape Character Assessment as medium in scale with a strong landscape pattern of woodland and hedgerows. It contains areas of sensitive landscape including the historic parks and areas around the edge of the often picturesque villages. Away from the main transport corridors it is a relatively tranquil landscape. Landscape sensitivity to new employment or residential proposals is described as being medium to high because of the high proportion of valuable landscape elements and relatively undisturbed character.

The landscape management objectives for the Kesteven Uplands are to:

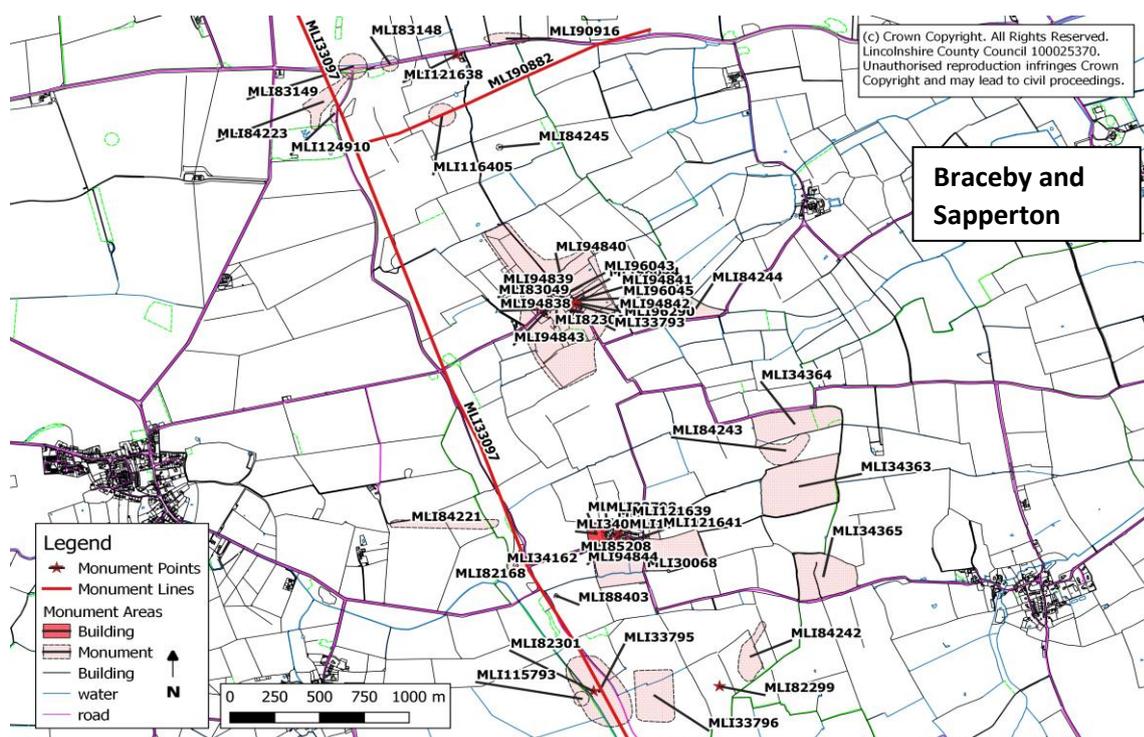
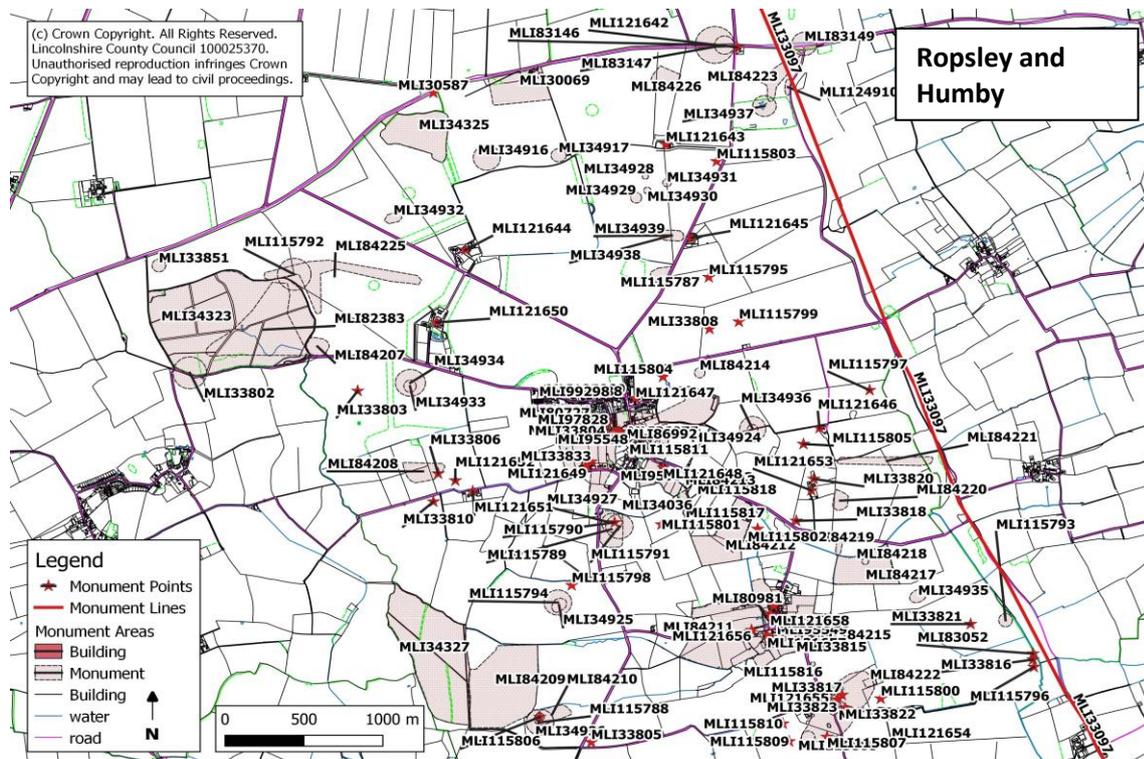
- protect and improve field boundary condition;
- protect existing hedgerow trees and plant new hedgerow trees;
- maintain important grassland areas;
- protect important and distinctive woodland cover;
- protect historic parkland;
- protect field trees, particularly in parkland and in large arable fields;
- maintain traditional village forms;
- use of limestone for new construction in the villages and countryside;
- use new planting to minimise the visual impact of major roads and industry;
- pay special attention to sensitive spaces around the edge of historic towns such as Stamford and the villages and maintain open areas extending into towns and villages

The District Council's Landscape Character Assessment can be found here:

<http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2417&p=0>

Archaeology

4.32 As noted above, there were significant findings in the 1979 report ‘The Archaeology and Developing Landscape of Ropsley and Humby’. Details of the rich and important archaeology of the Parish can be found in the County Council Historic Environment Record (HER). This data forms a separate Evidence Paper (Heritage & Archaeology), but a flavour of the extent of archaeology around is given on Fig. 2 (the overview/summary maps) below.



Biodiversity

4.33 In commenting on the Consultation Draft, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust provided valuable information on the biodiversity of Ropsley and District. Extracts are presented below and are relevant to the Vision and Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan. The information also supports Planning Policies (e.g. local character, key view, open spaces, countryside and nature conservation) and several of the Community Aspirations).

4.34 In addition to the woodland designations (see para. 4.30), there are two designated Roadside Nature Reserves at Ropsley and Sapperton. As a result of countywide road verge surveys undertaken by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust since 2009, we would stress that a significant length of rural lanes throughout the parish now have verges which are designated as Local Wildlife Sites due to their limestone grassland flora. This designation, although not statutory, is nevertheless a material consideration in planning, referred to in the NPPF 2019 and NERC Act 2006. A map of road verge designations for habitat value can be obtained from the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership: <https://glnp.org.uk/contact/>. More information on Local Wildlife Sites and the designation process can be found here: <https://glnp.org.uk/partnership/local-sites/>. The Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping Study for Central Linc.(2013) also included areas of South Kesteven District. As can be seen from the Calcareous (limestone) Grassland Habitat Opportunity Map <https://glnp.org.uk/admin/resources/fig-3.4-calcareous-grassland-habitat-opportunity-mapping.pdf> the whole of Ropsley and District Parish was identified as a Calcareous (limestone) Grassland Opportunity Area.

4.35 In addition, all road verges designated for habitat value (i.e. both Roadside Nature Reserves and roadside Local Wildlife Sites) were identified as 'targeted opportunities for the creation and restoration of calcareous grassland habitat, calcareous grassland buffer zones, linear calcareous grassland corridors and calcareous grassland steppingstones.

4.36 The Trust stresses that opportunities should be taken to incorporate semi-natural elements within the public green spaces in the villages with the creation and enhancement of wildflower-rich limestone grassland and native trees and hedgerows as a priority. This would benefit both wildlife and the health and wellbeing of residents. See the LWT website: <https://www.lincstrust.org.uk/wildlife/wildlife-gardening/wildflower-hub> For advice on hedgerows, see: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/publications/2014/06/wood-wise-hedgerows-and-hedgerow-trees/> (especially pages 6+7). Further advice on managing ponds can be found here: <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/>

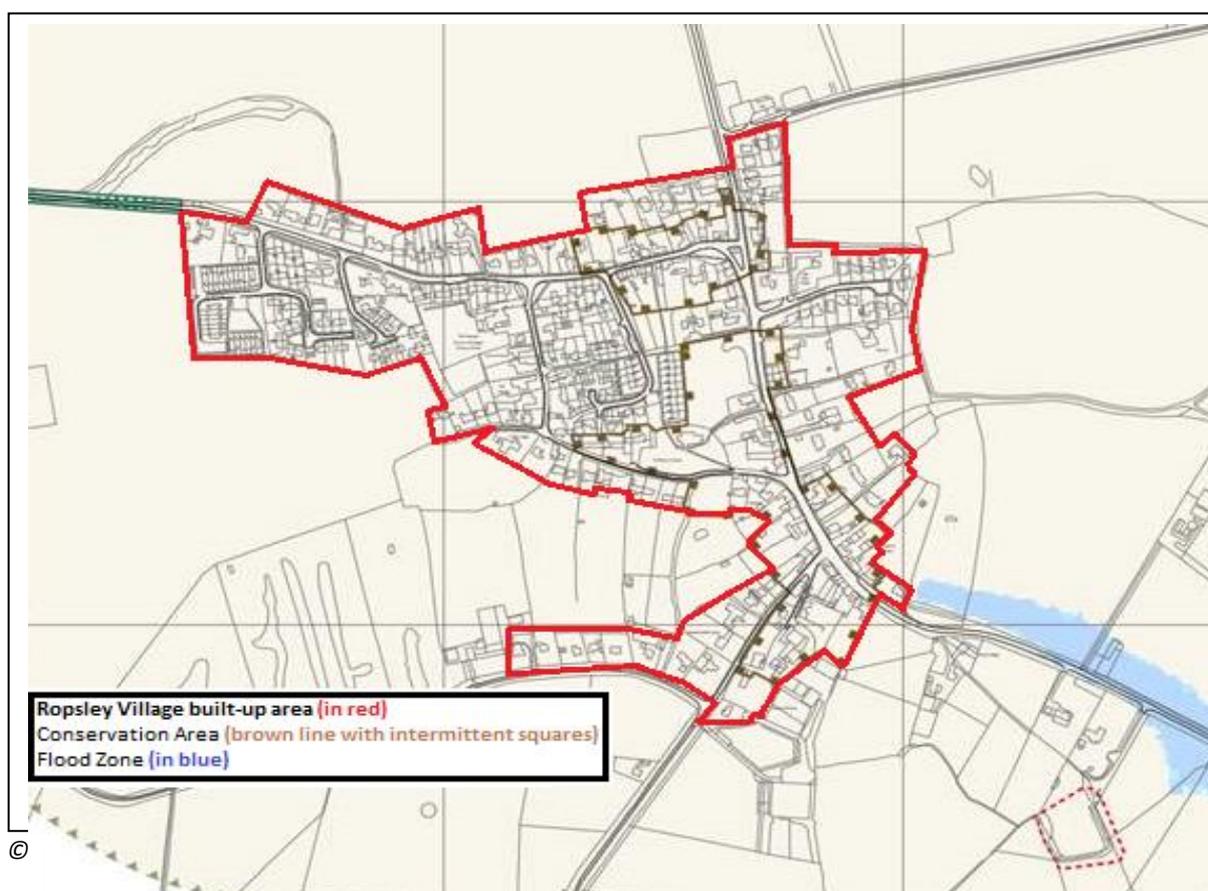
4.37 There is a dual purpose served by some of the roadside verges (designated and non-designated). For example, the two roadside verges in the hamlet of Braceby (to the West of the church) have nature conservation and landscape value and are important to the distinct character and high quality environment of that Conservation Area hamlet

Bespoke Evidence on Local Character and Heritage

4.38 The Steering Committee believes that, based on consultation outcomes and analysis of the area, as described above, the protection and enhancement of local heritage and character should lie at the heart of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Steering Committee acknowledged that planning policies must be based on sound evidence and the following surveys were completed (Details are in the Neighbourhood Plan Appendices);

- Potential (non-designated) Local Heritage Assets,
- Potential Key Views, and
- Potential Local Green Spaces.

4.39. (Ropsley Village - extent of built up area). In recognition of the policy in the Local Plan, to enable limited residential development in small villages, a survey of the extent of the built-up area was undertaken which resulted in the drawing of Figure 3 (below).



4.40 This is based on the following principles:

- Countryside extending into the village is an important part of its heritage and character
 - Larger farm buildings on the edge relate to the countryside, rather than the village.
 - It represents the developed footprint or continuous built form of the village, excluding dispersed dwellings and other structures along linear routes radiating from the village.
- It is not intended that the map constitutes a settlement boundary, which is not established practice in South Kesteven and could give rise to a policy conflict with the Local Plan. However, it is felt that the map is a useful informal reference point for the implementation of Policy R&D 2 (New Housing in Ropsley Village) of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5. Statistical Profile of the Area

5.1 Ropsley and District has been defined as a collection of five separate and individual villages, with Ropsley in the middle and the other four 'satellite' villages all being closely connected by lanes. The profile was compiled using data from the 2011 Census but the small settlements of Braceby and Sapperton were counted separately as part of Pickworth. However, local estimates show that Braceby has only 23 residents and 12 dwellings and Sapperton 30 residents and 12 dwellings. They are known by local people to have similar characteristics to the remainder of the Parish. This means that the recorded figures for Ropsley, Great Humby and Little Humby can be regarded as being indicative of trends and characteristics for Ropsley and District as a whole. A copy of the full report for Ropsley can be found here: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04005936>

Social and cultural aspects

5.2 The report states the parish has a population of 816 people living in 367 households. Of this total 456 (56%) are working age adults. There are 184 (22%) over 65, which is higher than the national average of 16%.

5.3 The percentage increases in total population between 2001 and 2011 mirrors the average for Lincolnshire. However, inward and outward migration indicates that there were more aged 15-24 and 65+ moving out, but more aged 25-44 moving into the parish.

Equity and prosperity

5.4 The parish is not a deprived area. Only 12 people of working age were unemployed and 3% of working age adults received 'out of work' benefit, (half of national average).

Economy

5.5 There are 389 economically active residents, representing 67% of those aged 16-74, to mirror the national average. 191 were economically inactive (33%). Of those in employment:

- 224 were full time employees;
- 68 were part-time employees; and
- 69 were self-employed.

5.6 The largest employment sector is retail (15% of people), followed by education (11%) and construction (11%). In terms of the occupations of those in employment:

- 16% are managerial, which is slightly above the national average;
- 18% are professional, which compares to 30% nationally;
- 12% are administrative or secretarial; the same as the national average;
- 12% are skilled trades which compares to 11% nationally; and
- 13% elementary, which compares to 11% nationally.

5.7 The higher percentage employed in Elementary Occupations is of interest. It includes agricultural workers and "Skilled Trades" is likely to include technicians who work supporting farming. Consultation has highlighted the importance of farming to the local economy (and its influence on the landscape). It is estimated that Ropsley Farms employs 8 people directly and indirectly supports at least an equal number of local jobs.

Housing and the built environment

5.8 The housing stock comprises the following type of properties:

- 194 detached houses;
- 116 semi-detached houses;
- 54 terraced houses; and
- 2 flats.

5.9 The proportion of detached houses (52%) in the parish is just under twice the national average and that of terraced houses (7%) a little over half the national average.

5.10 In terms of tenure, the following breakdown applies:

- 261 houses are owner occupied;
- 43 houses are socially rented;
- 27 houses pay private rent; and
- 18 houses comprise other rented accommodation.

5.11 "Other rented" is likely to include farming related accommodation, e.g. Ropsley farms provides 7 dwellings. In terms of costs, Council Tax bands shows that properties range from A to F, see: <http://www.mycounciltax.org.uk/results?postcode=ng334be> (Nov. 2019).

Transport and connectivity

5.12 Car ownership is generally higher than the county/national averages and is as follows:

- 46 (13%) households had no access to a car;
- 133 (38%) households had 1 car;
- 128 (37%) households had 2 cars;
- 26 (7%) households had 3 cars; and
- 16 (5%) households had 4 cars or more.

5.13 The average travel times by public transport or walking from Ropsley & District to the nearest service or facility was estimated as follows, however the apparently reasonable accessibility has to be placed in the context of the limited frequency of bus services.

- employment centre – 16 minutes;
- further education facility – 37 minutes;
- GP – 25 minutes;
- hospital – 89 minutes;
- primary school – 0 minutes from Ropsley;
- secondary school – 28 minutes;
- supermarket – 15 minutes; and
- town centre – 24 minutes.

5.14 As regards commuting 10 people travel less than 2km to work. Conversely 15 travel more than 40km. Only 3 people travel to work by public transport.

Open Space

5.15 The Local Plan Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Report (2017) indicates the following provision in Ropsley & district (ha/1,000 - population 816): 3.25 ha. recreation ground; 0.07 ha of children's space, 1.20 ha of outdoor sports space and 0.57 hectares of churchyards. The lack of allotments and designated natural green spaces is a concern.

Planning Records

5.16 The planning application history from April 2012 to 1 September 2019 has been reviewed to identify any issues or trends which could inform/influence the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. 77 applications made/determined. A summary follows.

Category	Number (%)	Notes
Household	19 (25.5%)	Usual range
New Residential	6 (7.5%)	*See below
Trees	16 (20.5%)	10 in Braceby
Agriculture	10 (13%)	Mostly Ropsley Farms Ltd.
Equine	2 (2.5 %)	Related to ménage
School	6 (7.5%)	Temporary and new classrooms
Listed Buildings	3 (4%)	3 separate buildings
Public House	5 (5%)	4 (conversion) withdrawn and 1 approved
Renewables	2 (2.5%)	EIA Screening required for solar farms
Miscellaneous	9 (13%)	1 minerals, others are for discharge of conditions etc.
TOTAL	77 (100%)	

*Larger new residential development includes (from 2011):

- The Old Quarry (28 dwellings – refused and appeal dismissed).
- Grantham Road (11 affordable homes - withdrawn).
- Land rear of 43 Grantham Road (1 dwelling approved).
- Conversion of the Old Chapel (after several refusals or withdrawals), approved in 2014.
- In 2016 The Ropsley Fox gained permission for 2 dwellings and a community facility.

5.17 The reasons for refusal and Inspectors' report for the Old Quarry site will be pertinent to the identification of criteria for infill development and the definition of a settlement boundary. In addition, the type and spread of applications has some implications, see below.

- 1 - The highest proportions are Householder and Tree Works (the focus on Braceby is due to the Conservation Area/presence of trees within it).
- 2 - Agricultural applications reflect the importance of commercial scale farming, but two applications each for solar farms and equestrian uses suggest potential pressure for change.
- 3 - The school generates activity on a regular basis, possibly reflecting success and growth?
- 4 - The closure/re-use of the Fox PH and Change of Use for the Old Chapel involved multiple applications (up to 10) with several withdrawn or refused until schemes were approved.
- 5 - The two applications for larger residential development (28 and 11 dwellings) including the late 2011 Old Quarry refusal/appeal, reflect the (Local Plan) policy objections.
- 6 - Approvals for new residential development were restricted to conversion/replacement single dwellings and the occasional single infill plots.

6. Consultation Summary.

6.1 The Steering Group wanted to ensure that the local community was engaged throughout the plan preparation process so that the Plan’s aspirations could be shared and owned by all, in order to make it a success. Ultimately, the support of the local community was tested in the referendum, held on 6th May 2021, which resulted in a “Yes” vote of 87.6%. The need to engage statutory bodies and agencies and seek their support on the policies and proposals being put forward was also recognised.

6.2 This section is a short summary of the consultation that has been undertaken, along with the outcomes which underpin the Vision, Objectives, Planning Policies and Community Aspirations. The activity is summarised in Fig. 1 (below). Full details of all activity are available in the Consultation Statement.

Figure 1: List of consultation events and methods

Timing	Event	Attendance/Responses
12 th Nov. 2015	Parish Council Meeting – decision to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan	Parish Councillors and public gallery
28 th July 2016	Designation application and SKDC consultation	No specific comments (designation 13 th October 2016)
July 2017	Household survey (Total of 389 questionnaires, two/household)	100 questionnaires returned
3 rd Sept. 2019	Notice of NP preparation to 47 external consultees; invitation to make provisional comments	10 responses (5 substantive)
14 th Feb. to 28 th March 2020	Draft Plan Consultation (Regulation 14)	Newsletter and questionnaire Exhibition (attendance - 112) 30 External/Statutory Consultees 43 Questionnaires returned. Open PC Meeting.

6.3 **Household questionnaire:** The findings of the report are briefly summarised below

6.4 On why people enjoy living in the Parish, the following received most support:

- Ease of access to Grantham;
- Feeling safe;
- Peace and quiet;
- The beauty of the countryside and green spaces – beautiful walks;
- Village life – parks, great pub, clubs and school;
- Community feeling.

6.5 Amongst the additional comments there was a request that any development should be in-keeping with the character of the village. On the whole most people supported limited development (67%) but focused on 2-bed starter and 3 bed homes.

6.6 The responses showed that the following matters were things that people disliked and did not contribute to their enjoyment of living in the village:

- The condition of the roads;
- Isolating – not very much happens;
- Inconsiderate neighbours
- No shop in any of the villages;
- Poor broadband;
- Lack of public transport; and
- Environmental issues such as dog mess, litter and vacant properties.

6.7 People stated that the following issues and features of the natural environment should be regarded as important issues when development proposals are considered:

- Traffic and parking;
- Changes to the villages and the green spaces;
- Effect on the countryside around the villages;
- Effect on the school and leisure facilities;
- Nature conservation and biodiversity.

6.8 Most respondents were also keen to see both access to the countryside and footpaths protected when considering any development proposals. Additional comments related to:

- Better infrastructure;
- Sustainable development in keeping with the surroundings;
- Mindful that all communities contribute to the need for housing.

6.9 When considering development proposals in the Parish, respondents rated the following aspects of the built environment as being the most important to protect.

- Managing the size of the village, to retain its quality and identity;
- Maintaining historical quality;
- Taking accounts of the distinctive building style;
- Introduction of traffic management, notably the reduction of speed levels.

6.10 In terms of service improvements, respondents most wanted to see better:

- Internet/broadband provision;
- Improved public transport;
- Improved surface water drainage;
- Comments supporting the provision of a village shop.

External Consultees Ten responses were received. The substantive key points were:

6.12 Historic England: The area covered by your Neighbourhood Plan encompasses Ropsley Conservation Area and includes designated heritage assets. In line with national planning policy, it is important that the strategy area safeguards those elements which contribute to the significance of these assets so that they can be enjoyed by future generations.

6.13 Lincolnshire County Council: The guidance produced by LCC will be helpful towards our consideration of heritage.

6.14 **Natural England:** Advice on environmental issues and opportunities to consider in Neighbourhood Plans e.g. nature conservation, landscape character and Local Green Spaces.

6.15 **South Kesteven DC:** The emerging Local Plan and relevant constraints/designations:

- Parts of Ropsley are situated within a minor flood risk zone of both levels 2/3
- Ropsley & District is within a Minerals safeguarding area (Limestone)
- Ropsley and Braceby have Conservation Areas
- There is a Local Wildlife Site (Hurn Wood) south west of Ropsley
- There is a Scheduled Monument (Ring Dam medieval fishpond) east of Ropsley.

6.16 **Anglian Water:** There is existing water supply and sewerage and sewage treatment infrastructure within the Parish.

Six Week (Regulation 14) Consultation on the Draft neighbourhood Plan

6.16 **Community.** In accordance with the Regulation, this consultation ran from midday Friday 14th February 2020 to midnight Saturday 28th March 2020. A newsletter with a questionnaire was delivered to all households and businesses in the parish, giving a summary of the Draft Plan and details of exhibitions and an open session at a Parish Council meeting. The Draft Plan was available on the Ropsley & District Parish Council website. Hard copies could be inspected at the Green Man PH or loaned from Steering Group members. Drop off points for the questionnaire were made available at the PH, at the exhibition and residents were able to scan and email them in. The NP Facebook page was regularly updated on; how to access documents, exhibition dates and drop off points.

6.17 There was no disagreement with the Vision and Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and no basis for amendments to these elements of the Draft Plan. For Objective 6 (*To enable appropriate small-scale residential development, with a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs and aspirations of local people*), there was an agreement level of 67%. Eight respondents (19%) were neutral and one (2%) form was left blank and five respondents (12%) disagreed. Despite the higher level of disagreement to this objective, there was still a substantial measure of support. Noting that the Objective is in accordance with the intent of the new Local Plan, there was no basis for amendment.

6.18 There was over 80% agreement on 15 of the 18 Planning Policies and there was no need for amendment. 3 policies had lower levels of support, albeit with majority support: R&D 2 New Housing in Ropsley Village: 31 agree (72%), 6 (14%) disagree & 2 (5%) neutral. R&D 3 Housing in other settlements: 26 agree (60%), 5 (14%) disagree & 12 (28%) neutral. R&D 4 Residential Extensions: 34 agree (79%) 3 (7%), disagree & 6 (14%) neutral. With almost 80% support for R&D 3&4 (now entitled residential extensions & conversions) and only 7% disagreement, amendment was not considered necessary. 86% of respondents supported/felt neutral about Policy R&D 2. However, the policy is in accordance with the new Local Plan, the intention of which is only to enable very limited new development means that changes are not necessary.

6.19 The five community aspirations were well supported and remained unchanged. Some of the comments made at the exhibition and or submitted with questionnaires led to minor changes concerning the extent of proposed Local Green Spaces, roadside verges and electric vehicle charging points.

6.20 An email notification was sent to 29 organisations and individuals on 14th Feb. 2020 There were 14 responses and a meeting with notes taken, was held with Ropsley Farms. The main comments and any changes arising from the consultation responses are summarised below. Full details are set out in the Consultation Statement.

- Healthwatch. Increased reference to the importance of access to health services.
- Historic England. Support for Heritage Policies.
- LCC. Support for policies on Rights of Way.
- Highways England. General support, no specific comments.
- Natural England. General support, no specific comments.
- Anglian Water. Increased reference to utility infrastructure needs in the countryside.
- Environment Agency. General support and reference to the emerging Environment Bill.
- Sport England. General support and increased reference to their role, guidance & NPPF.
- District Councillor. General support and reference to impact of institutions in rural areas.
- Ropsley Farms. Increased reference to economic and landscape importance of farming.
- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. General support and increased reference to importance of roadside verges.

6.21 South Kesteven District Council submitted a comprehensive set of supportive/helpful comments, the majority of which (other than the extent of a potential LGS and reference to the removal of Permitted Development Rights) resulted in the amendments listed below.

- Updating in relation to the new Local Plan (adopted 30th January 2020).
- Ensure consistency in policy wording.
- Minor wording changes to R&D 1.
- Refer to “Built up part of the settlement” rather than “Settlement boundary” in R&D2.
- Clarify intention of R&D 3 - New Housing (and other development) in other locations.
- Minor amendments to R&D 4, 5 & 6 to clarify meaning.
- Rewording of R&D 8 to improve clarity.
- Refer to sources of information for archaeology in Policy R&D 9.
- Various points of clarification on Policy R&D 10 (Open spaces).
- Simplification and clarification of R&D 11 (LGS) removal of 3 proposed LGS in Braceby.
- Revision of policy wording in R&D 13, amendment to explanation.
- Confirmation of how community support may be demonstrated in R&D 14.
- Clarification of criteria for home based working in R&D 15.
- Simplification and clarification of wording in Policy R&D 17.
- Removal of references to Community Infrastructure Levy in Implementation section.

7. Key Issues and Policy Themes

7.1 The key issues to emerge from the evidence gathering and community engagement are summarised below, categorised under the three elements of sustainable development (Environmental, Economic and Social). They provided the context for the formulation of the Vision and Objectives, Planning Policies and Community Aspirations.

Table 2 - Assessment of Key Issues

Category	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Environment (& Landscape)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The villages are very attractive with rural and open character surrounded by open countryside. - There are two Conservation Areas and many Listed Buildings. - The District is in the Kesteven Uplands Landscape Character Area. - The District is physically separated from nearby Grantham, which is not visible because of topography. - There are extensive views across surrounding farmland available from many residential properties. - Pedestrian accesses available in the villages and via the public rights of way to adjoining countryside. - Local people value the tranquillity and rural nature of the villages. 	<p>There is concern amongst the local community that any inappropriate development would result in the loss of environmental features.</p> <p>There was support for the introduction of traffic management measures, most notably the reduction of speed levels through the villages and on the rural lanes.</p>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There are churches (including one chapel) in 4 of the villages. -There is a public house in Ropsley that is enjoyed by the whole parish. -Extensive services/facilities available nearby in Grantham, including for health services. -A mixture of house types in the village, of varying size and tenure. -The village hall in Ropsley is well used by many local organisations which encourage involvement by various members of the parish. 	<p>Approximately 22% of residents are over 65.</p> <p>Only limited services facilities: no local shop or health provision. Comments support the provision of a local shop. There is a high rate of car ownership.</p> <p>Respondents wanted to see better broadband provision.</p> <p>There were also requests for improved public transport and surface water drainage.</p>
Economic	<p>It is not a deprived area.</p> <p>There are low unemployment levels.</p> <p>There are employment opportunities available in nearby Grantham and further afield (e.g. commuting to London on the East Coast Mainline).</p>	<p>There are very few employment opportunities within the Parish.</p> <p>People are very dependent on the car to access work, with few people using public transport.</p> <p>Concern over road maintenance.</p>

Emerging Policy Themes

7.2 The key priorities for the Plan can be grouped around a number of themes, to form the basis for formal planning policies. Some other ideas can be categorised as being “aspirational” projects which are in keeping with the general themes.

7.3 **Social (Community cohesion).** There is a strong desire to further build community cohesion and a sense that this could be achieved by focussing on some of the existing facilities such as the school, pub, village hall and church with rectory. Specifically, there is a strong desire to retain and enhance these critical facilities. They are interconnected and play a central role in the community. Improved broadband speeds and mobile phone signals would support cohesion, especially Braceby and Sapperton and create a better environment for people looking to run businesses, either home-based or in other properties.

7.4 **Environment.** The survey revealed a strong desire to retain the current sense of openness and green space, limiting developments to those that would enhance the local environment. Support for environment initiatives such as green energy, but within existing buildings or as part of limited infill new housing. That is, for example, solar roof panels, as opposed to extensive solar or wind farms which would not enhance the local landscape.

7.5 **Economic.** Reflecting the strong sentiment of retaining the rural nature of the area, there was a support for only limited new development which would enhance and be in keeping with the status quo. Give priority to brownfield sites in existing built up areas, with infill sites as a secondary priority and a focus on the development of 2-3 bed homes.

7.6 **Planning Policy Headings.** Based on the above, a series of policy headings was identified.

- Protect and enhance openness and green space;
- Retain/enhance village facilities (school, pub, village hall);
- Limited development in keeping with and enhancing the local environment, with housing to meet local market needs/aspirations (e.g. a focus on 2-3 bed homes);
- Encourage small businesses/self-employment and enable improved broadband;
- Set criteria to ensure that solar/wind farms do not have an adverse impact on the character and quality of the countryside and the setting of the five villages;
- All new development to meet high level sustainable development and energy standards;
- Protect and enhance local heritage features;
- Protect and enhance the rich archaeology of the Parish;
- Protect and enhance the landscape quality of the Kesteven Uplands, including key views;
- Protecting and enhancing the cycling/walking network;
- Protect open land between Ropsley & Grantham (No development is wanted South West of A52 and the High Dyke).

7.7 **Other Community Aspirations.** It is recognised that some issues fall outside the scope of formal Neighbourhood Plan Policies. These form the basis of the Community Aspirations:

- A Community shop, managed and run by community volunteers;
- A Resource Guide to include transport (shared), medical resource, local services;
- A Scheme working with local farmers to plant trees/hedges;
- A wider Volunteering Scheme building on “The Big Clean” a twice yearly village clean up;
- Developing a local heritage trail.

8. Vision and Objectives

The Vision for Ropsley and District is that: In 2036 Ropsley & District (comprising Ropsley, Braceby, Sapperton, Little Humby and Great Humby) will be five distinct, sustainable and vibrant rural settlements, surrounded by attractive open countryside. Ropsley & District will contain communities that value and look after their historic buildings and the natural environment. Whilst physically separate from Grantham there will be good links to the employment, services and facilities that the town offers.

Objective 1 - To protect the distinct identity of Ropsley and District and within it, the individual nature and setting of its five settlements.

Objective 2 - To define, protect and enhance the distinctive landscape of Ropsley and District.

Objective 3 - To protect and enhance built environment (heritage) assets, archaeological sites and natural environment assets, including biodiversity.

Objective 4 - To maintain and develop local services and facilities to ensure a sustainable and viable community.

Objective 5 - To encourage and enable sustainable development including energy efficient buildings, active travel and access into the countryside.

Objective 6 - To enable appropriate small scale residential development, with a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs and aspirations of local people.

The basis for the Planning Policies and Community Aspirations

8.1 The Vision and Objectives will be achieved by the planning policies set out in Section 9 and the following table indicates which policies will deliver each of the objectives.

Table 3 – Relationship between Objectives and Policies

Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Objectives
<i>R&D 1 - Sustainable Development Principles</i>	All
<i>R&D 2 - New Housing in Ropsley Village</i>	Objective 6
<i>R&D 3 - New Housing in the other settlements</i>	Objective 6
<i>R&D 4 - Residential Extensions & Conversions</i>	Objectives 1 and 6
<i>R&D 5 - Landscape Character and Openness</i>	Objectives 1 and 2
<i>R&D 6 - Key Views</i>	Objectives 1 and 2
<i>R&D 7 - Designated heritage assets</i>	Objective 3
<i>R&D 8 - Local (non-designated) heritage assets</i>	Objective 3
<i>R&D 9 - Archaeology</i>	Objective 3
<i>R&D 10 - Open space and recreation</i>	Objective 4
<i>R&D 11 - Proposed Local Green Spaces</i>	Objectives 1, 2 and 4
<i>R&D 12 - Countryside management</i>	Objectives 2 and 3
<i>R&D 13 - Nature conservation and biodiversity</i>	Objective 3
<i>R&D 14 - Community facilities & local services</i>	Objective 4
<i>R&D 15 - Local businesses and employment</i>	Objective 4
<i>R&D 16 - Telecommunications and broadband</i>	Objective 4
<i>R&D 17 - Transport and active travel</i>	Objective 5
<i>R&D 18 - Countryside access and rights of way</i>	Objective 5
<i>Community Aspirations</i>	
<i>CA 1 - Community assets (including a shop)</i>	Objective 4
<i>CA 2 - Resource and services guide</i>	Objective 4
<i>CA 3 - Volunteering</i>	Objective 4
<i>CA 4 - Local heritage trail</i>	Objective 3
<i>CA 5 – Tree & hedge planting and habitat creation</i>	Objective 3

8.2 The Community Aspirations are listed here for ease of cross reference with the relevant objective and planning policies thereby avoiding repetition and duplication. They address the issues raised in consultation which are related to, but cannot be addressed by, land use planning policies in a Neighbourhood Plan. However, these issues can be listed and addressed in a separate document or as an appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan. Section 9, which follows the planning policies, is therefore entitled 'Community Aspirations'. Technically this does not form part of the statutory Neighbourhood Plan and will not be considered by the Examiner or the District Council.

9. Planning Policies

9.1 The policies are designed to deliver the Vision and Objectives and as part of the adopted Neighbourhood Plan, they form part of the Development Plan and will be used by the District Council to determine planning applications in the parish. Each policy is followed by an explanation to substantiate the adopted stance. In accordance with the statutory requirements, each policy must meet the Basic Conditions. Where appropriate, the accompanying justification to each policy will therefore refer to:

- the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG);
- strategic policies in the South Kesteven Local Plan;
- the findings from research and the evidence base; and
- the views of the local community and other interested parties from consultations.

Overall Sustainable Development

R&D 1 - Sustainable Development Principles

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:

- a) Be appropriately located;***
- b) Be of an appropriate scale and demonstrate a high standard of design;***
- c) Have regard to their setting and the character of the local area;***
- d) Take account of the key landscape views identified in Policy R&D 6;***
- e) Not unacceptably affect the amenity of nearby residents;***
- f) If appropriate, provide for sustainable transport modes (e.g. walking & cycling);***
- g) Respect the local built, social, cultural, historic and natural heritage assets, and***
- h) Demonstrate practicable efforts to achieve (or preferably exceed) design and construction standards for sustainable development, to minimise CO2 emissions.***

Explanation

This policy provides a positive framework for decision making, as required in the National Planning Policy Framework. Development will only be encouraged where it can be shown that the scheme will help to achieve the Purpose and Objectives outlined in Section 7. Locally, the concept of sustainability relates particularly to the need for sensitive design such that development reflects the character of the surroundings; meeting environmental, social and economic objectives and better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, all of which contribute to the quality of life for residents in Ropsley and District. The policy applies to new development and changes of use. It is felt that these should detract from the quality of life and amenity in residential areas in Ropsley and the four hamlets.

It is also intended that the policy would support national efforts, based in part on local action, to address the very real threat of climate change to all communities.

In addition to the formal planning requirements of this policy, there is a wider intention to support the creation and maintenance of healthy and sustainable communities.

Housing Policies



R&D 2 - New Housing in Ropsley Village

Proposals for small scale residential development within Ropsley village will be supported where they meet the criteria in Policy SP3 of the South Kesteven Local Plan and, where applicable to the site concerned, the following criteria:

- a) it is appropriate to its' surroundings, taking into account, the Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and Local Heritage Assets, in accordance with Policies R&D 7, 8 & 9;***
- b) it is not located outside the described built form of the village such that development would harm its character;***
- c) the scale, layout and materials retain local distinctiveness;***
- d) it protects and enhances public rights of way;***
- e) there is suitable access with adequate off road parking provision;***
- f) it does not adversely affect views of value or significance (see policy R&D 6);***
- g) incorporates domestic scale renewable energy (such as electric vehicle charging, sustainable drainage and carbon minimisation features) where the design is appropriate to the location, and;***
- h) where applicable to the size of the development concerned, comprise a variety of types and sizes, including smaller houses for first time buyers.***

The settlement boundary is shown on the Proposals Map (Ropsley Inset).

Explanation

The purpose of this policy is to enable the application of the provision in the Local Plan to allow small, sensitive infill developments (generally expected to be no more than 3 dwellings) in small villages. There is no need for this plan to set a numerical requirement for new housing and intention of this policy is to enable Ropsley to respond positively to the housing aspirations of local people, as part of maintaining a sustainable community.

However, in recognition that any development must be sensitive and appropriate, the policy adds local criteria to the higher level Local Plan Policy: SP3 - Infill Development). The aim is to avoid incursions into the surrounding open countryside and to protect the setting of the settlement. It is accepted that settlement boundaries are not defined in the South Kesteven Local Plan, but it is considered that the character analysis and the resultant indicative map of the built up part of the settlement (Paras. 4.34 to 4.36) are useful reference points for the implementation of this policy. In addition, the following definitions which form part of the Local Plan Policy SP3, are intended to apply to the application of this policy.

Land and buildings will be classified as being **inside the existing confines of the built-up area** where they are contained in the settlement and visually separate from the open countryside. They should clearly be part of the network of buildings that form the settlement and may include any areas of land with an extant planning permission for built development

The following will be regarded as being **outside the existing confines of the built-up area**:

- A. Gardens which are visually open and relate to the open countryside.
 - B. Individual dwellings, groups, or agricultural buildings, that are detached from or peripheral to the settlement.
 - C. Employment or leisure uses, including public open space, that are detached or peripheral.
- In addition, the Local Plan Policy SP4 has a criterion within it that states that any edge of settlement development must be adjacent to the existing pattern of development.

This approach is also supported by the references to design in the NPPF (Ch. 12 – Achieving Well Designed Places). In addition, PPG states that proposals should consider scale, both the overall size and mass of individual buildings and spaces in relation to their surroundings. It adds that decisions on building size and mass, and the scale of open spaces around and between them, will influence the character, functioning and efficiency of an area.

R&D 3 - New Housing (and other development) in other locations

Proposals for new development in Braceby, Sapperton, Great Humby and Little Humby will be assessed against Policy SP5 of the Local Plan and should take account of the following local matters:

- a) The importance of respecting Braceby Conservation Area and its setting, such that it would be protected and enhanced by the proposed development.***
- b) The importance of respecting Listed Buildings and local (non-designated) heritage assets.***
- c) The importance of respecting known and potential archaeological assets.***
- d) The need to retain the gardens, open spaces, trees, hedges and water bodies which contribute to the character of each hamlet.***

Where it practicable to do so development proposals should incorporate sustainable drainage techniques (such as porous/permeable drives, domestic scale renewable energy and electric vehicle charging points) within their designs

Explanation

The settlement hierarchy classifies Ropsley as a “Smaller Village” but Braceby, Sapperton and Great Humby and Little Humby are identified as hamlets in the open countryside. Therefore, applications for new development will be considered under Policy SP5 of the Local Plan. However, based on the consultation responses and evidence on the extent of heritage and archaeological in and around the villages, this policy sets out other, locally based considerations. It is in accordance with the Local Plan countryside policies, reflecting the NPPF and PPG. It achieves a balance between the principle of enabling limited exceptional development to meet the essential needs of the rural economy and protecting/enhancing the quality of the environment of the hamlets reflecting consultation responses from local people, who place great value on the rural character of Ropsley. It is also intended to address concerns that new development should maintain historical quality

and local character, including distinctive building styles. Within this context, sustainable design feature should also be adopted, but respecting local character.

The removal of Permitted Development Rights, for approved schemes, may be justified based where the plot or building in question is tight, based on residential amenity, local character and the heritage/archaeology value that is present in and around the settlements. The removal of permitted development rights will be a matter for the District Council to determine on a case-by case basis.

Should rural exception sites be proposed, they must be based on an identified/quantified need, fulfilling the criteria set out in this Neighbourhood Plan Policy and the Local Plan.

R&D 4 - Residential Extensions and Conversions

Residential extensions and conversions should be designed to respect the character of nearby buildings and their setting. This will require particular attention to:

- a) The choice of materials;***
- b) The scale of development including roof heights;***
- c) Layout within the plot;***
- d) the provision and/or the retention of parking provision;***
- e) The relationship with adjoining and nearby properties in terms of the impact on the amenity of occupiers and the character of the area.***

Sustainable design features (e.g. sustainable drainage, porous/permeable surfacing for drives and domestic scale renewable energy and electric vehicle charging points) will be supported where they are incorporated into an overall design that complements the character of the area.

Explanation

Residential extensions comprise the majority of planning applications in the area. Permitted Development rights enable a wide range of types and sizes of extensions to be built without the need for planning permission. However, depending on the type of existing dwelling larger extensions or those at the front of a property require planning permission. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that, in addition to residential amenity, general design and local character is taken into account. It will encourage detailed design that is appropriate to the setting and character of the area whilst also enabling energy efficiency and water management features to be incorporated into detailed design. The District Council does not have any adopted parking standards, consequently, parking will be considered on a case by case basis by planning and highways officers, dependant on the application.

Landscape Policies



R&D 5 - Landscape Character and Openness

Proposals for development should respect the distinct identity of Ropsley & District, including the settlements of Ropsley, Braceby, Sapperton, Great & Little Humby, in the attractive open landscape of the Kesteven Uplands. Development will be supported, unless individually or cumulatively, it would:

- a) result in a reduction of the current physical separation of these settlements;***
- b) unacceptably affect the setting of heritage assets;***
- c) result in the creation of continuous built development north west across the A52;***
- d) have an unacceptable impact on an identified key view identified in Policy R&D6.***

Explanation

The open rolling landscape of the Kesteven Uplands NCA (No.75), before the landform slopes down into the Lower Trent and Belvoir Vales around Grantham, is fundamental to the character of Ropsley and District. It is summarised as “... a deeply rural landscape which has only a very small urban area (Stamford to the south)...Wide road verges with herbs and wildflowers characterise the area... much scattered woodland survives throughout the area with some important semi-natural and ancient woodlands.” The land reaches around 120m in Ropsley Rise Wood and largely remains at around 100m, but there are several valleys, including Long Hollow and streams around Great Humby. Locally, the higher land is known as the “Great Divide” reflecting the watershed between the Rivers Trent and Welland.

It is acknowledged that there be no large scale residential development in Ropsley, or neighbouring parishes (e.g. Old Somerby) but the Local Plan allocates two sites to the south and east of Grantham for around a total of 3425 houses over the plan period, including the Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, close to Ropsley. There is also to be a 118 hectare employment site west of the A1 at Spittlegate. The proximity of this extensive built development means that the openness of the Ropsley landscape is needs to be protected.

In addition, a policy stance is needed to address the potential impact of other large scale built development including, for example; solar farms and wind farms. Whilst the economic importance of modern farming and the way in which it can contribute to landscape quality, is acknowledged, great care must also be taken in the location and design of new agricultural buildings. Measures including: choice of materials, lowering ground levels, on and off site landscaping (including possible rewilding/reversion of other land) may be ways of minimising and/or mitigating the impact of proposals. However, this approach should not be used to make something that has an otherwise substantial adverse impact acceptable.

During the initial consultation members of the local community expressed the view that they enjoyed living in a distinct rural settlement with attractive views across the surrounding open countryside. Despite the proximity to Grantham, the identity of Ropsley & District is defined by being both physically and visually separate from the neighbouring town. It is considered that the A52/B6403 (the parish boundary) provides a logical, long term and defensible boundary for an expanded Grantham. This is clearly important to the local community and the intent of this policy, to preserve the separate identity and integrity of Ropsley and District Parish and its villages, is reasonable and justifiable.

R&D 6 - Key Views

The Plan identifies the following key views which contribute to the character and the appearance of the neighbourhood area.

In and out of the villages

- a) Ropsley: W and E on Grantham Road (KVs1,2 & 3)***
- b) Ropsley: N, E and W off the lane to Braceby (KV4,5 & 6)***
- c) Ropsley: NW and SE in the vicinity of Ring Dam and Mill Hill (KV7 & KV8)***
- d) Sapperton; W and E, SE and NW in and around village (KVs9,10,11 & 12)***
- e) Braceby: W and E, SE and NW in and around village (KVs 13,14,15 & 16)***
- f) Gt. & Little Humby: N and S with ridges and valleys (KVs 17,18,19,20,21,22,23 & 24).***

Key views across open countryside surrounding the settlements

- i) Ropsley: (KV1) East, (KV2) South and (KV3) North East, all across to the village.***
- ii) Ropsley: Risewood (KV1) South-East from Ropsley Rise Wood down to the village***
- iii) Gt. & Little Humby: (KV1 &2) North West over open rural landscape***
- iv) Braceby: (KV1 & 2) South from village to Ropsley and other villages.***
- v) Sapperton: (KV3 Village Green SE towards Gt.& Little. Humby, open rural landscape.***

Development proposals should respect the identified key views and should not compromise their significance in the neighbourhood area. Development proposals which enhance or improve the identified key views will be supported. Development proposals which unacceptably impact on the identified key views will not be supported.

Explanation

The policy aims to protect important countryside views and views into/from the five settlements. It is based on a local survey which is included as Appendix 1 to this Neighbourhood Plan (published as a separate document). A strong message from the community consultation was the need to retain the rural feel of the villages. Respondents valued the rural atmosphere, open views and access to the natural environment. The nature and qualities of these views reinforces the rural feel of the parish and adds to its charm and character. The NPPF states that planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: “a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...and....b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside...and trees/woodland”.

The new Local Plan states that development proposals in the open countryside which do not meet the criteria set out in Policy SP4 will be restricted, unless exceptional circumstances apply as outlined in Policy SP5. That policy provides a positive framework for; agriculture, forestry or equine development and rural diversification projects, but in terms of landscape character, it must be used alongside Policy EN1 (Landscape Character) which states that “...Development must be appropriate to the character and significant natural, historic and cultural attributes and features of the landscape.... In assessing the impact of proposed development... relevant Landscape Character Appraisals should be considered, including those produced to inform the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.”

This Neighbourhood Plan policy, based on local survey work on key views, can work alongside the Local Plan to provide an effective, locally focused, framework for decision making on rural development proposals. It demonstrates how Neighbourhood Plans can encapsulate the aspirations of a local community in a way that is difficult in a higher level Local Plan. The views are important to the character of the Parish and its rural feel, and it is appropriate to seek to protect them in order to maintain character and local distinctiveness.

Heritage and Archaeology Policies



R&D 7 - Designated heritage assets

Proposals affecting designated heritage assets, or their setting, should take account of Local Plan Policy EN6 and the following local factors:

- a) The need to reflect the concentration of assets and the links between them in the hamlets of Braceby, Sapperton, Great Humby and Little Humby;***
- b) The relationship between the asset, archaeology and local history;***

Development proposals should preserve or enhance the asset in question and contribute to the quality and character of its setting.

Where the above criteria can be met, proposals that sensitively promote and interpret heritage assets will be supported.

Explanation

The Parish has two Conservation Areas (in Ropsley and Braceby), 21 Listed Buildings and 3 Scheduled Monuments, see Appendix 2. Consultation revealed that the historic environment is one of the parish's most valued assets and that people wish buildings and structures to be protected from insensitive development. Individually and cumulatively, these designated heritage assets make a great contribution to the quality and character of Ropsley and District. In the new Local Plan Policy EN6 covers the historic environment providing a good overall context for the consideration of proposals affecting designated heritage assets. It is not intended to duplicate EN6, but a Neighbourhood Plan policy adds local detail, taking account of the concentration and nature of assets, in Ropsley District. This is in accordance with the NPPF (Chapter 16) which states that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment taking into account, in particular (Para. 185) "...Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to character" and "...the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring..."

R&D 8 - Local (non-designated) heritage assets

The Plan identifies the following buildings, structures and sites as non-designated heritage assets (and as detailed in Appendix 2).

- 1 Ropsley Church (stained glass window).***
- 2 Ropsley (from Long Lane & Old Somerby) Two concrete methane extraction pipes.***
- 3 Little Humby (SW corner of the Green) Pinfold.***
- 4 Little Humby Ford (at Little Humby Green Road/New England Road) A ford.***
- 5 Great Humby (N side of the junction between Humby Road and Church Lane) Pond.***
- 6 Braceby (N of Braceby, S of A52 and W of/Long Hollow) WW2 RAF decoy airfield.***
- 7 Little Humby Telephone Kiosk***
- 8 Great Humby triangle.***

Proposals involving non-designated heritage assets should demonstrate how they would contribute to the conservation, preservation and enhancement of the architectural/historic interest of the building/structure concerned. It should take account of local style, materials, detail and the character, context and setting of assets.

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Explanation

Local surveys have identified eight Local (non-designated) Heritage Assets which are part of the character and identity of the Parish. Such assets maybe buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which are not formally designated. This protection is in accordance with the guidance contained in paragraph 197 of the NPPF.

The buildings and features identified which may not be of sufficient architectural or historic merit to justify listing, are an important part of the character of Ropsley and District and have been highlighted as such through consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan. The policy will help to ensure they are protected and that works to them are designed sensitively, with careful regard to the historical and architectural interest of the building and its setting. Historic England identify that local lists play an essential role in building and reinforcing a sense of local character and distinctiveness in the historic environment and locally. The identification and protection of local assets is supported by the District and County Council.

R&D 9 – Protecting and enhancing archaeological sites

Development proposals affecting Scheduled Monuments, other archaeological sites and areas of archaeological potential, or their settings should demonstrate that they:

- a) have taken into account the impact on above and below ground archaeological deposits, as recorded by Historic England and Lincolnshire County Council;***
- b) identify mitigation strategies to ensure that evidence which could contribute to the understanding of human activity and past environments is not lost;***
- c) include an appropriate desk-based assessment or, if necessary, a field evaluation.***

In addition, measures should be taken to minimise impacts of development upon the historic landscape character of the area.

Explanation

The NPPF (Para. 189 states “...Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, **heritage assets with archaeological interest**, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation”. The Archaeological Field Survey ‘The Archaeology and Developing Landscape of Ropsley and Humby, Lincolnshire’ was undertaken in 1979 and there were some significant findings. In addition to this publication, further details of the rich and important archaeology of the Neighbourhood Plan area can be found in the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER). Extracts from the HER are included in Appendix 2. The extent of archaeology is a key element of the historic environment and character of the Parish and this policy will ensure that development takes proper account of recorded archaeological interest.

Open Space, Countryside and Nature Conservation Policies



R&D 10 – Existing open space and recreation facilities

The Plan designates the following facilities as open spaces and recreational facilities:

Ropsley

- a) Ropsley Recreation Ground/Village Hall Field***
- b) Ropsley C of E Primary School Playing Fields***
- c) St Peters Churchyard***
- d) Village Green off High Street (including land of Hall Close to the rear of the church)***
- e) Informal open space between Munton Fields and The Chase***
- (f) Braceby - Four incidental open spaces around and opposite St Margarets Church***
- (g) Great Humby - Church Green and The Triangle***
- (h) Little Humby - Village Green***
- (i) Sapperton - Village Green (at the village entrance from road leading to Ropsley)***

Existing open spaces, recreation facilities and school playing fields should be protected from development.

Development proposals which enhance or improve existing sites will be supported.

Development proposals which would reduce the quality or quantity of these facilities will only be supported if existing facilities are replaced at a better quality or quantity and in sustainable a location.

Explanation

Open spaces and recreation facilities spaces will be protected in line with Paragraphs 92(c) and 97(a,b&c) of the NPPF. Where development is proposed that affects playing fields and recreation areas, the Sport England guidance should be followed and, if necessary advice sought for that organisation, which is a statutory consultee. These spaces are well used and valued community assets which support social and recreational activity and help to define the landscape and character of the area adding to the quality of life for local residents. In addition, the Parish Council will support proposals to enhance and improve the local open space and recreation facilities in the Parish as and when opportunities emerge. Each of these spaces (except the school playing field) is detailed, with maps and photographs, in Appendix 1. Several spaces are also proposed as Local Green Spaces (Policy R&D 11 below).

R&D 11 - Proposed Local Green Spaces

The Plan designates the following green spaces as local green spaces:

- LGS 1. Ropsley War Memorial and grassed area opposite (with a seat and flagpole)***
- LGS 2. Ropsley Village Green***
- LGS 3. Great Humby Church Green***
- LGS 4. Village Green, Little Humby, in the centre of the village***
- LGS 5. Sapperton Green, at the village entrance from road leading to Ropsley***
- LGS 6. Braceby main village green, opposite St Margaret's Church***

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

The landscape quality of the Kesteven Uplands and the rural open countryside has been described and addressed through other policies. It is also important that open land in and adjoining the villages is identified and protected to maintain local character. Surveys by local people and research have identified spaces which are valued by the community and the way that heritage and archaeology are inter-twined with landscape and character. The Local Green Spaces proposed add to the areas of open space (R&D 10) but take further account of the value to the character, heritage and/or biodiversity of the villages.

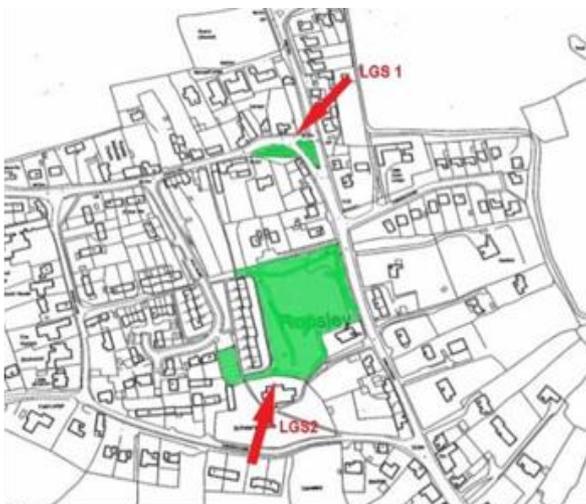
The NPPF (Paras. 99 -101) states that designating of Local Green Spaces in Neighbourhood Plans: *“allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.”* It also states that designating land as a Local Green Space should be consistent with sustainable development and complement investment in homes, jobs and essential services. It is considered that the six areas proposed fulfil the requirements of Para. 100, that:

“The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

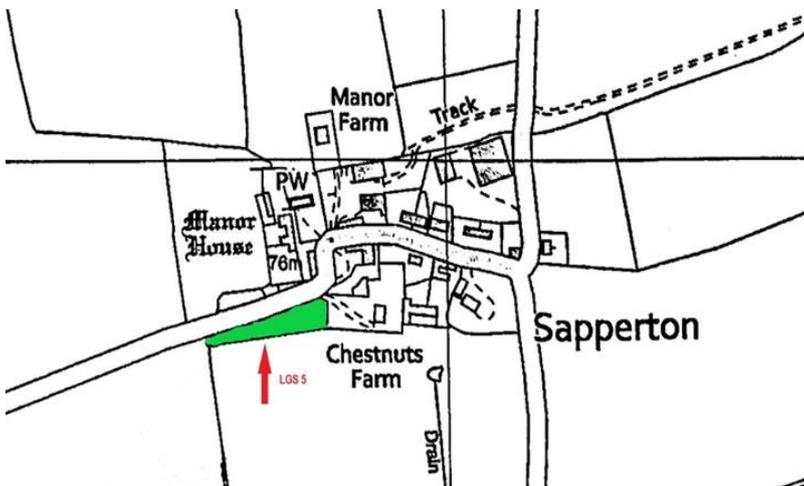
- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- b) demonstrably special to a local community, holding a particular local significance, e.g. because of beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or rich wildlife;*
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.”*

The policy is also in accordance with Para. 101, which state that *“Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.”* Policy R&D11 applies the restrictive policy approach towards development proposals on designated local green spaces. Very special circumstances can be considered by the District Council on a case-by-case basis. These tables/maps, comprising Fig. 4, describe and show the proposed Local Green Spaces.

Ropsley	Size in (Ha.)	Proximity to community	Site Description and Local Significance	Local in Character	Not Extensive
LGS 1 War Memorial Green, junction of Peck Hill and Chapel Hill	0.074	Centre of the village	Green and war memorial commemorating Ropsley folk who lost their lives in WW1&2. Also includes a grassed area over Chapel Hill (with a seat and flagpole and originally a village pond).	Yes	Yes
LGS 2- Village Green of main road and smaller area behind the church, near Hall Close.	0.922	At village centre with access from all sides	Larger public grassed area surrounded by trees, outlook from bungalows around it. Used for village celebrations. Includes a bench for quiet reflection.	Yes	Yes



Sapperton	Size (Ha.)	Proximity to community	Site Description and Local Significance	Local in Character	Not Extensive
LGS 5 - Sapperton Green, at the village entrance from road leading to Ropsley	0.641	At the entrance to the village. accessible to all residents, only a 2 minute walk for any resident.	Green space at a village, entrance with semi mature trees. The only green space in Sapperton, overlooking a listed manor (G2) with valued views across the parish. The community has planted fruit trees and share in keeping it mown and tidy. It is used for picnics and contemplation.	Yes	Yes



Braceby	Size (Ha.)	Proximity to community	Site Description and Local Significance	Local in Character	Not Extensive
LGS 6 – Braceby, The main green	0.22Ha.	In the centre of the village	Opposite St. Margaret’s in the Conservation Area with Listed Buildings it is the setting of a beautiful street scene. Residents care for the green. It is important to local identity and contributes to the physical form/layout of the village.	Yes	Yes



R&D 12 - Countryside management

Development in the open countryside, related to agriculture, forestry, equine, recreation, tourism, utility infrastructure and other rural land uses, will be supported provided that it does not cause unacceptable harm to:

- a) the landscape character and quality of the Kesteven Uplands;***
- b) sites of ecological value, including roadside verges;***
- c) heritage assets and other sites of archaeological interest; or***
- d) the intrinsic character, beauty and tranquillity of the countryside.***

The location, scale and the detailed design of development proposals should pay particular attention to the following matters:

- e) access arrangements to ensure that the rural quality and character of lanes and byroads (including verges), and;***
- f) lighting, such that the “Dark Skies” quality of the Parish is not unacceptably affected, and;***
- g) the design of boundary treatments respects the site’s countryside setting.***

Explanation

The Local Plan Policies SP4 and SP5 enable proposals for housing in the countryside, including exceptional circumstances, to be considered, but this policy address other forms of development. The community consultation revealed how rural attributes such as peace and quiet, the quality of the surrounding landscape and biodiversity protected from insensitive and inappropriate development. *The importance of roadside verges was highlighted in comments on the Draft Plan submitted by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.*

This policy builds on the wider planning context provided by Local Plan and applies it at the Neighbourhood Plan. Any proposal for development is expected to safeguard the landscape character, protect areas of wildlife interest and protect or enhance the historic environment of the surrounding open countryside.

It is recognised that farming leads to considerable investment in environmental improvements each year, including woodland improvement, conservation strips, hedgerow improvements. The local economic importance of agriculture is also acknowledged. Other policies require that care must be taken about the location and design of new agricultural buildings. There must be a focus on site based factors, but off-site works and wider mitigation measures may create countryside management opportunities. Measures including possible rewilding of areas or grassland reversion may also be ways of minimising and/or mitigating the impact of proposals.

In addition, it is recognised that essential utility infrastructure should be deemed acceptable in principle when located in the countryside subject to meeting other policy requirements.

R&D 13 - Nature conservation and biodiversity

Development proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on local wildlife sites, habitats and species networks has been considered. As appropriate to their scale and nature development proposals should incorporate appropriate measures to protect wildlife, habitats, enhance biodiversity and avoid fragmentation and take account of the following principles:

- Any consequent loss of biodiversity should be minimised and mitigated by the creation of new habitats or the enhancement of existing ones;***
- Development proposals which would result in the loss or damage to protected trees and hedgerows will be not be supported. Where the benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm caused a scheme for replacement trees, hedgerows or similar habitats should be incorporated within the development proposal;***
- Projects to enhance wildlife habitats & species and which respond positively to the Lincs. Biodiversity Action Plan & Natural Environment Strategy will be supported;***
- Tree planting and hedgerow creation aimed at providing a network of wildlife corridors across the Parish will be supported; and***
- Particular attention should be paid to any adverse impacts on roadside verges which have been identified as Roadside Nature Reserves or Local Wildlife Sites.***

Explanation

The policy covers, woodland, trees, hedgerows, ponds and watercourses, unimproved and semi-improved grassland. It is set in a context provided by NPPF Paras. 170,174 & 175; the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 (S40 & 41) and complements Local Plan Policies EN2 & EN3. The NPPF states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy. Plans should be proactive to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking into account long-term implications for flood risk, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes. This reflects the emerging Environment Bill (Mar. 2020) which proposes that development should lead to a net gain in biodiversity. Where it is practical, proposals should seek opportunities to enhance habitat connectivity.

Trees and Woodlands are important in the landscape, contributing greatly to conservation value and must be considered in development proposals. All except Hurn Wood, are designated at least in part as Ancient Woodland. Kirton, Sapperton and Pickworth Woods are SSSIs. Ropsley Rise, Hurn and Abney Wood are, at least in part Local Wildlife Sites.

Many hedgerows were removed to enlarge fields. The Hedgerows Regulations (1997) now protect most, but the Parish has many mature trees, the protection of which is important. Some have Tree Preservation Orders, to safeguard trees which bring significant amenity benefits. This policy aims to prevent, development that would result in loss of or damage to significant trees or hedgerows which are a vital element in the character of the village and its surrounding countryside. The Wildlife Trust advises that rural lanes in the parish have verges designated as Local Wildlife Sites (for limestone grassland flora), although not statutory, it is a Material Consideration, referred to in the NPPF and NERC Act. The Gtr. Lincs. Nature Partnership has a map of verge designations : <https://glnp.org.uk/contact/>.

Community Facilities, Business and Telecommunications Policies



R&D 14 - Community facilities & local services

The Plan identifies the following community facilities and local services:

- Ropsley Village Hall***
- The Green Man Public House on High Street Ropsley***
- The Churches in Ropsley, Braceby, Sapperton and Great Humby***
- Ropsley Garage on Chapel Hill***
- Ropsley C of E Primary School***

The improvement and extension of these buildings and the creation of new facilities will be supported, subject to compliance with other Neighbourhood Plan policies. The Community facilities in the Parish will be protected. Where planning consent is required, the loss of such facilities will not be supported unless:

- (a) alternative provision of equivalent or better quality facilities (with community support evidenced by pre-application consultation and/or local surveys) is made; or***
- (b) it is evident that there is no reasonable prospect of the facility being retained; or***
- (c) it is evident that the service or facility is no longer economically viable; or***
- (d) there is no demonstrable evidence of local use of that service or facility.***

Explanation

To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs the NPPF (Para. 83d) states that planning policies and decisions should enable: *“the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”* In criterion (a) explicit community support would include the views of the parish councils and users of the facility in question. Applicants may also wish to undertake consultation with the local community to demonstrate support for a proposal.

The Local Plan Policy SP6 also states that local facilities are important to the sustainability of villages and that proposals that would result in the loss of existing facilities will be resisted. Whilst not acting as service centres, it adds that the small villages have services and facilities that also need to be protected. This, locally focused, Neighbourhood Plan policy complements the protective approach of the Local Plan. This requires that applicants must demonstrate that consideration has been given to re-using premises for an alternative community business or facility and that effort has been made to try to secure such a re-use. The potential impact that closure may have on the area and its community must also be measured, with regard to public use and support for both the existing and proposed use.

There is a strong sense of community within Ropsley District, but the Village Hall became run down and did not fulfil the needs of the Parish and a new Village Hall has been built. The playing field is well used and will be enhanced when the new Hall has been completed.

Reflecting suggestions from the community consultation there is a Community Aspiration later in this plan supporting the provision of a new, possibly community run, village shop. Where a loss (e.g. of the last public house) is promoted on market-based grounds, the Parish Council will consider seeking Asset of Community Value designation.

R&D 15 - Local businesses and employment

Proposals for the development of new small business units, the expansion or diversification of existing small units and tourism related development will be supported, providing that:

(a) there would be no unacceptable impact resulting from; increased traffic including the potential impact of HGVs on the rural road network, parking and servicing, noise, smell, lighting, vibration or other emissions or activities generated by the proposed development;

(b) it would not have an unacceptable impact on the character of the site and/or buildings, by virtue of scale or design, or on the landscape, including Key Views;

(c) where relevant, opportunities are taken to secure the re-use of vacant or redundant historic buildings (designated and non-designated)

Insofar as planning permission is required proposals for home-based working be supported where there is no unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties or on the character of the immediate area of the property concerned.

Explanation

The Government supports rural economic development and the NPPF states (Ch. 6 Para. 80) that *“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.”* Paras. 83 and 84 specifically concern the rural economy and the latter notes that; *“ Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads.”*

The Parish Council supports local business to help maintain a vibrant, balanced community. Local employment supports sustainability and the Neighbourhood Plan accommodates appropriate proposals for business. The conversion of former agricultural buildings enables diversification and opportunities for the establishment of small businesses, creating local jobs. However, reflecting the NPPF, matters such as: residential amenity, visual impact on the countryside and highway safety issues, need to be considered notwithstanding the principle in Para. 109 that *“..development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety..”* The economic importance of farming is acknowledged, but the location and design of new agricultural buildings must be carefully considered. However, design features or mitigation measures cannot be used to make something that has an otherwise adverse impact, acceptable. The impact of activity on rural lanes and roadside verges will also be a consideration.

The economic, environmental and social benefits of home based businesses, which contributes to sustainability is recognised, but with criteria to ensure that it does not lead to the erosion of character or residential amenity.

R&D 16 - Telecommunications and broadband

Proposals for development that improve electronic communications such as superfast broadband and the mobile phone network will be supported providing any adverse impact on the environment can be adequately mitigated and other Neighbourhood Plan policies on heritage, archaeology, open spaces and key views are satisfied.

Explanation

The Government recognises that reliable broadband internet access is essential for homes throughout the country if they are to benefit from online services. The NPPF states that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Superfast broadband access enables people to work from home and thus reduces the need to travel. Some businesses are run from peoples' homes and it is an essential requirement for education purposes. Superfast broadband also enables people in the village, especially those who have access limitations, to access services and facilities that would not otherwise be available.

However, the community consultation revealed that current provision is inadequate in the parish. In terms of service improvements, respondents most wanted to see better internet, broadband and mobile phone provision.

Transport, Active Travel and Countryside Access Policies



R&D 17 – Transport and Active Travel

Development proposals should avoid conflict between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists and take into account of the nature and rural character of the local highway network. Where other Neighbourhood Plan policies are met, development proposals that would increase local provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders will be supported.

Explanation

It is acknowledged that transport is the responsibility of the highway authority (LCC), working with the District Council and that a policy context is provided mainly in the Local Plan and Local Transport Plan. However, there are local issues which is it appropriate to address in this Neighbourhood Plan and externally focused elements of this policy highlight the need for a partnership approach. In addition, it is hoped to support an increase in safer walking, cycling and (given the rural location horse riding), which will help promote the social health and well-being of the community. The Parish Council will work with the County and District Councils to ensure that the transport needs and traffic issues present in Ropsley and District, including traffic management, are considered as part of the nearby large-scale development in Grantham. It will also investigate opportunities for improving cycling provision in the villages, surrounding countryside and further afield, with links to Grantham, but the wildlife and landscape value of roadside verges must be maintained and if possible, improved. Policy R&D 17 sets out a context within which local traffic profiles and the character of the local highways network will be managed in the Plan period. Development proposals which would generate a significant amount of additional traffic and/or which would generate HGV traffic should be supported by a Transport Assessment or Statement.

R&D 18 – Countryside access and rights of way

Development proposals (which meet other policy requirements) will be supported if they improve or extend the existing network of public footpaths and bridleways in and around the village, especially where they allow greater access to services and facilities or the surrounding open countryside.

Development that would result in the loss of existing footpaths and bridleways or create obstacles to the use of these routes by walkers and riders will not be supported.

Explanation

The NPPF states that opportunities to promote walking should be identified and pursued. It adds that planning policies should provide for high quality networks. The public rights of way network in and around the villages is extensive, and there is a local warden, who ensures that they are kept clear and easy to access. The paths are well marked. It is also acknowledged that the quiet lanes and grass verges in Ropsley and District provide opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding. The footpaths and bridleways may be seen on Ordnance Survey maps or, in more detail on the LCC definitive Rights of Way Map.

10. Community Aspirations



Throughout the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan some issues have been raised through consultation that do not specifically relate to land use or development. To meet the statutory requirement such issues cannot be considered through formal planning policies in a Neighbourhood Plan. In this section those other important aspirations which, although they are not formal planning policies, are linked to development. They are local aspirations and do not constitute or suggest agreement with South Kesteven District Council or other bodies to fund or act on them, but the Parish Council will consider ways of the fulfilling them as part of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Community Aspiration 1: Community Assets and Shopping Facilities

To complement the protection offered by Policy R&D 14 in this NP and relevant policies in the SKDC Local Plan, the Parish Council will work with others to maintain existing facilities and explore community based options to improve provision, especially a community shop.

Explanation

The local community values the (very limited) facilities available in the village and appreciates that reasonable proximity to Grantham offers choices for higher level facilities. The Parish Council intends, therefore, to consider requesting designation of buildings as Assets of Community Value and to look at opportunities to secure investment/funding for alternative means of provision, including links with existing business and facilities and farms.

Community Aspiration 2: A Local Resources and Services Guide

To complement the protection offered by Policy R&D 14 in this Neighbourhood Plan and relevant policies in the Local Plan, the Parish Council will seek to produce a local services directory covering the wider area.

Explanation

It is acknowledged that only a limited range of services and facilities can be maintained in the Parish and that most needs can be met in the wider rural area and in Grantham. To maximise awareness and use of facilities, the Parish Council (seeking partnership with adjoining parishes), will produce a Local Resources and Services Guide in hard copy and electronic form. The intention is to help maintain a good quality of life for local residents and contribute to the sustainability of rural life. Access to good quality health services is particularly important.

Community Aspiration 3: Encouraging Volunteering

To complement the protection offered by Policies in this Plan and support its' implementation, the parish council will work with others (including the County and District Councils and voluntary organisations) to organise and encourage local volunteering.

Explanation

The community consultation has shown that people value the environment but that they feel there is too much litter and dog fouling. Working primarily through education (e.g. take it home), backed up by bin provision and cleaning as secondary measures, the Parish Council will seek to address this concern. The Parish Council will also encourage volunteering on positive projects, for example, tree planting, wildlife sites and local heritage.

Community Aspiration 4 - Local history and heritage

Ropsley and District Parish council will work with the District and County Councils to interpret, enhance and increase the appreciation of the five villages, heritage assets (designated and non-designated), archaeology and social history.

Explanation

There is a strong feeling amongst local people, backed up by evidence from reports and surveys, that the Parish with its five villages, has a distinct character and identity. Archaeology, local history, the landscape and the built environment contribute to this character and are much appreciated by residents. In particular, it is intended to develop a local heritage trail for local residents and for visitors. Using the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base as a platform, this Community Aspiration is intended to add value to the formal policies in this Plan which aim to protect these assets, drawing on local community interest and seeking funding for activities from various sources, including the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Community Aspiration 5 - Tree & hedge planting and habitat creation/management

The Parish Council intends that woodland cover should be increased, and nature conservation sites/habitats created and enhanced through:

- (a) Working with farmers, other landowners to encourage tree planting and hedgerow creation/management through the take up of government environmental stewardship schemes and other locally based support, including the Woodland Trust;*
- (b) Working with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, County and District Councils and landowners to increase landscape and habitat connectivity in and beyond the Parish. There will be a continuing focus on road verges, using the Wildlife Trust "Life on the Verge" project, to seek further designation of roadside nature reserves and enhanced management for all of them.*

Explanation

Tree planting can be a valuable element, recognised nationally, in maintaining and improving the landscape quality of the Parish and addressing climate change. In the community survey, the benefits of access to adjoining countryside emerged as one of the main aspects that people like about living in Ropsley and District. This is a proactive, partnership-based approach and the consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan secured advice from Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, which will support future partnership working. Landowner and farmer engagement will also be critical, and the Post EU reform of farming subsidies may offer future opportunities.

In addition, the Parish Council will take opportunities to incorporate semi-natural elements within the public green spaces in the villages. The creation and enhancement of wildflower-rich limestone grassland and native trees and hedgerows would be a priority. This would benefit both wildlife and the health and wellbeing of residents.

The action will complement policies in the plan aimed at protecting and enhancing the quality of rural lanes, footpaths, cycle routes and Local Green Spaces.

11. Monitoring, Review and Implementation

The adopted Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored by the Local Planning Authority and the Parish Council. The policies in this plan will be implemented by South Kesteven District Council as part of their development management process. Ropsley and District Parish Council will also be actively involved, using the Neighbourhood Plan to frame representations on planning applications and where appropriate, as part of the pre-application process and. This Plan provides a 'direction of travel' through its Vision, Objectives, Policies and Community Aspirations. Flexibility may be needed as new challenges and opportunities emerge and it is intended to review the plan periodically (e.g. every 5 years), in line with the Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017), based on several strands of activity (see below) which will be considered in periodic monitoring reports.

- a) Private sector investment in the village. Securing the right type and nature of investment through adaptations and new development will be crucial; and
- b) The statutory planning process, in particular, how the Plan is used to determine local planning applications;
- c) The state of public services (and community assets), together with other measures to support local services for the vitality and viability of the five settlements.
- d) The eventual adoption of the review of the South Kesteven Local Plan.

The views of the District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, will be sought on these matters. Monitoring reports might conclude that a partial or comprehensive review of the Neighbourhood Plan is necessary at any time and accordingly trigger that process. In any event, and as acknowledged, the Parish Council will need to return to the plan and its replacement after five years, or so.

In addition, the progress on achieving the Community Aspirations, including partnership, project work and funding will be considered. Amongst other, the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust is likely to be an important partner in nature conservation policies and projects.

Funding Mechanisms

Where appropriate, financial contributions will be sought from developers, through either S106 Agreements. In addition, the Parish Council will seek to influence budget decisions by the District Council and the County Council, including on transport. The Parish Council will work with other agencies/organisations on funding bids to help to achieve Neighbourhood Plan aspirations, including; the Lottery, UK Government and LEP programmes.

Local Priority Projects

The list of infrastructure projects below reflects local priorities. This should inform the negotiation of Section 106 agreements and priorities attached to relevant spending programmes and external funding bids.

- Local heritage and social history;
- Countryside management, nature conservation and access to the countryside;
- A Community Shop.

Consideration will also be given to projects from other plans, strategies and projects prepared by the Parish Council or other partners which relate to local aspirations.