



# Stanwick Neighbourhood Plan

## Housing Policy Options

Stanwick Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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July 2015



# **Stanwick Neighbourhood Plan Housing Policy Options Report July 2015**

Prepared by Stanwick Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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## Purpose of this Report

The Stanwick Neighbourhood Plan “Vision and Aims” states the aspiration to have small sustainable timely developments that meet the needs of residents and that do not distort the shape and essence of the village; to evolve and expand whilst retaining its unique and distinctive character.

The purpose of this report is to examine the possible policy options that the Neighbourhood Plan could incorporate to achieve these aspirations and to identify what other factors exist that may influence the policies options available to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

## Introduction

In the 1990s Stanwick grew rapidly with the building of 180 new houses. These came without any supporting infrastructure and the village took a considerable period of time to integrate into a cohesive community.

To avoid this situation being repeated it has been decided to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan, utilising opportunities presented by the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework to enable Stanwick to develop in a sustainable manner for the benefit of everyone who lives in the village.

The future of housing development has been a key concern for the residents of Stanwick. This has been shown in the Stanwick Parish Plan 2007 and the Stanwick Parish Plan 2013 -2018 an outcome of which is the objective:-

“To ensure that any new housing is of high quality design that respects Stanwick’s local distinctiveness and enhances the historic character and setting of the parish”.

An application for a “Neighbourhood Plan Area” was submitted to East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2014 and this area was approved by ENC on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014. The area encompasses the entire area of Stanwick Parish, as shown on the map on page 2.

When determining Housing Policy options for the Stanwick Neighbourhood Plan, higher level planning policies need to be taken into consideration. These include

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- North Northamptonshire - Core Spatial Strategy (adopted June 2008) (CSS)
- North Northamptonshire (Emerging) Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031. (JCS)
- 1996 East Northamptonshire Local District Plan (retained policies only)

In addition, a number of reports have been prepared by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (NNJPU) and East Northamptonshire Council that contain pertinent information for the future of housing development within Stanwick. These include:

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) for North Northamptonshire
- Interim Housing Statement on Housing Requirements in the North Northamptonshire Housing Market Area
- Stanwick Housing Needs and Mix Requirements Assessments (Hargrave and Stanwick Parishes)

It should be noted that East Northamptonshire Council has not undertaken a Housing Needs survey for affordable housing since 2006. In the 2006 survey it was identified that 6 affordable houses were required. This need has been partially met through two new properties built in Dolben Avenue and a bungalow built in Cumberland Avenue.

Another key factor for housing policies within the Neighbourhood Plan is the settlement boundary which will delineate where it is permissible to build new dwellings. For Stanwick the settlement boundary is being reviewed at East Northamptonshire Council as part of the Four Towns Plan Site Specific Development Plan however, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group may independently determine the settlement boundary for the village.

Stanwick Parish Plan 2013-2018 includes data collected as part of the Parish Plan process that is relevant to housing policies for Stanwick.

## Higher Level Planning Policy

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It requires that Neighbourhood Plans support the strategic developments needs identified in Local Plans (Policy 16).

Policies 50 and 54 of the NPPF specifies that a wide choice of high quality homes should be provided and in rural areas, should reflect local needs.

Policy 58 requires that neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics.

*“The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people”*

## **North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS)**

The CSS was adopted in June 2008 and formed a key part of the Local Development Framework for North Northamptonshire replacing the County Structure Plan and the Local Plans for each member council.

The CSS is comprised of 17 policies that provide a framework for new development.

Policy 10 relates to the distribution of housing. Within Policy 10 Stanwick is not specified as having a housing target. East Northamptonshire Council has a total rural housing target of 1460 for the plan period. New dwellings on windfall sites in Stanwick contribute towards achieving this target.

Policy 13 of the CSS sets out the general sustainable development principles that must be adhered to.

## **North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS)**

The JCS is an emerging plan that will replace the CSS. The JCS is in its final stages of preparation and it is expected that it will be adopted early in 2016.

Within this JCS there are a number relevant policies that assist in the preparation of the Stanwick Neighbourhood Plan and its policies. The JCS draws attention to the need to balance new housing with the change in overall household numbers, the housing requirements of households and the anticipated changes in employment trends.

JCS Policy 11 sets out where development will be permitted in rural areas. Policy 13 allows for rural exception sites.

Policy 28 provides information on the total housing requirement for East Northamptonshire and this is expanded in Policy 29 which allocated 820 rural houses for the plan period to 2031.

Policy 29 states that the preferred option of new housing being focussed on Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE) thereby concentrating housing land allocations within or next to towns.

The JCS continues the precedent set in the CSS whereby East Northamptonshire Council will not assign housing targets to specific rural settlements, but rather will allocate new rural housing based on the requirements of Policy 11 and Policy 13.

Policy 30 establishes the criteria for the mix and tenure of housing.

## Significant reports relevant to new housing

### **North Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**

2011 SHLAA for North Northamptonshire - Main Report (May 2013)

The SHLAA is a central list maintained by East Northamptonshire Council. It records possible sites for new dwellings as promoted by landowners and developers. The proposed sites are assessed in accordance with set criteria to determine how suitable each one is for development and is given a rating of category 1 – 4. Category 1 sites are most suited to sustainable development.

Stanwick has four sites listed in the SHLAA all of which are assessed as category 3

In order for category 3 sites to be considered appropriate for development or future allocation it would need to be clearly demonstrated that their significant constraints could be overcome in order to make them deliverable (Paragraph 8.6)

Category 3 sites have a greater number of constraints and perform least well against the assessment criteria. (Paragraph 8.4)

The report concludes in paragraph 8.11 that “In no scenario, is it necessary to use category 3 sites to meet the dwelling requirement for East Northamptonshire.”

### **Interim Statement on Housing Requirements in the North Northamptonshire Housing Market Area - Jan 2014**

This report was produced by the NNJPU and was determined to be sound by the Planning Inspectorate (appeal reference APP/G2815/A/13/2209113). The report examines the 5 year housing requirement for each of the districts within North Northamptonshire.

The report concludes that East Northamptonshire Council has an adequate land supply.

### **Stanwick housing needs and mix requirements Assessments (Hargrave and Stanwick Parishes)**

This report was prepared by East Northamptonshire Council.

“The information and analysis above shows that there is a demonstrable need for additional smaller dwellings in Stanwick Ward, particularly smaller houses and bungalows, to cater for the demand from emerging smaller households and ‘downsizers’ the supply is made up of predominantly larger properties and there is a lack of both affordable and privately rented properties becoming available, and this is something that will need to be addressed.

Options for older people are very limited

The limited pipeline development will not redress the imbalance between household and property size”.

## Summary of comments from Parish Plan survey 2013

The development of the questionnaire that resulted in the final issue of the Stanwick Parish Plan 2013-2018 took into consideration comments, aspirations and desires of a large cross section of parish residents.

From the 790 questionnaires sent out the replies totalled 460, a 57% response rate.

The results of the questionnaire, **relevant to housing** is reflected in the following summarised results.

Q2. How many years do you see yourself living in Stanwick?

81.2% of respondents have no plans to move out of Stanwick.

9.8% anticipated not to move within 5 years.

Q5. What is your main method of transport?

90% of Stanwick inhabitants use a car as their main means of transport.

Q9. What is your current housing situation?

85.2% of residents responding own their own home

10.7% live in Housing Association property

4.1% Rent from a private landlord

Q10. Do you know someone who has had to leave Stanwick due to unaffordable housing?

6.5% said that they did know someone who had to move from Stanwick.

87.7% were unaware of someone having to move from Stanwick.

Q11. Do you think that further homes should be built in Stanwick?

The overwhelming majority did not support further development in Stanwick.

Q13. In your opinion is there a shortage of any of the following types of property in Stanwick.

27.9% thought there was a need for homes for the young

8.6% thought there was a need for large family homes

13.0% thought there was a need for small family homes

2.3% thought there was a need for executive style homes

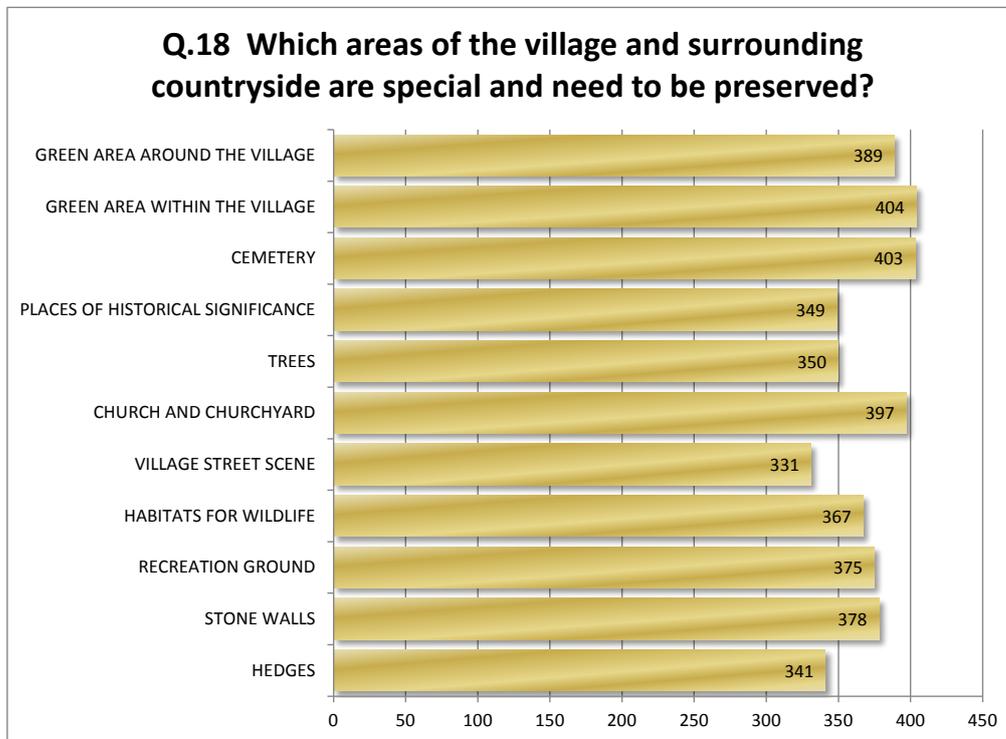
18.5% thought there was a need for Disability living homes

14.9% thought there was a need for single person homes

14.1% thought there was a need for care homes for the elderly

Q18. Which areas of the village and surrounding countryside are special and need to be preserved?

This indicates that the majority of areas surrounding Stanwick are considered special and should be preserved.



## Build for Life 12

This third edition of the guide was published in January 2015 by Nottingham Trent University on behalf of the Building for Life partnership (Cabe at Design Council, the Home Builders Federation and Design for Homes - the inside cover of the guide contains a full list of authors, editors and contributors). It is based on the new National Planning Policy Framework and responds to the Government's commitment to build more homes, better homes and involve local communities in planning.

## Summary of key points.

The NN JPU JCS Pre-submission Plan Housing Background Paper (January 2015) provides the context for the housing targets specified in policies numbered 28 and 29 of the JCS. The Housing Background Paper examines Employment Trends and Housing Requirements making the following statements:

- North Northamptonshire currently has: 3% vacant dwelling stock

- Paragraph 5.3 of the document states that "...North Northants struggled to provide new jobs to match labour force increases due to new housing".
- The report concludes that any further increase in housing targets are not justified by employment trends.
- Section 10 concludes that the distribution of housing will be based on objectively identified need.

Within the assessment covered by NN SHLAA, all areas identified as potential for future development are graded 1 to 4, with 1 being the more likely areas for development. Areas surrounding Stanwick village and within the parish are designate Category 3 and therefore less likely to be approved as potential for development.

Results from the Parish Plan suggest that development within Stanwick of any sort should be limited to the bare minimum and if there is to be any it should be sympathetic to the surroundings and be of a nature that would not impact on current services or impose further issues such as parking or access.

## Conclusions

The general feeling from the majority of residents of Stanwick is that development should be restricted to a minimum (in line with current higher policies) with preference given to those within the current settlement boundary that are small, affordable properties to include provision for bungalows located so as not to harm the character of the village

## Recommendations

There should be no increase in housing allocation target for Stanwick in accordance with higher level policies

Development on Windfall sites within settlement boundary will not be supported unless rural exceptions policy applies. For example:

"It is accepted that there may be some windfall developments over the life of the Neighbourhood Plan on previously developed 'brownfield' or unallocated sites with direct highways access. Small, well designed residential sites which do not have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area and neighbouring properties will be supported. The impact of such windfall development will be incorporated into the ongoing monitoring and review process."

As a last resort, consideration may need to be given to the extension of the settlement boundary so that the village could accommodate smaller affordable dwellings suitable for first time buyers or for rental. This kind of property in these

areas might be acceptable for rural exception policy to provide affordable housing or smaller units to improve the available housing stock.

Policies that the Neighbourhood Plan should consider:

- Designation of land for housing
- Policy for windfall sites
- Size and style of housing
- Settlement boundary
- Parking provision for new dwellings
- Quality of new dwellings - Building for Life 12 (BfL12)

### **Suggested policies**

These are being proposed in a separate document: Policy Options