

# Welford-on-Avon

## Neighbourhood Development Plan

Welford-on-Avon Parish Council



Submission Version

*4 August 2015*

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## Foreword

Recent changes to planning laws in England have given parishes like Welford-on-Avon a greater say in how planning decisions which affect our communities are made. At the same time, there is a presumption in favour of 'sustainable development' in order that the national shortage of housing can be remedied. Once approved, the specific policies in The Welford Plan will ensure that all development in the village and wider parish is undertaken in a way that meets the expressed wishes of the residents.

Under Stratford's emerging Core Strategy there is a requirement to build a significant number of new dwellings by 2031. The most recent proposal on new housing distribution which SDC submitted in January 2015 to the Examination Inspector of their Core Strategy indicated that 700 homes would be allocated to Category 2 Local Service Villages (which includes Welford) with no more than 12% to any one settlement. This equates to 84 homes. This was supported by the Inspector.

As of July 2015, applications for 109 new dwellings in Welford-on-Avon have been approved since the start of the Plan Period in 2011. A further 9 applications are waiting determination by Stratford and 36 more are at appeal. Whilst Welford-on-Avon Parish Council does not wish to rule out any further development in The Plan Period (which runs to 2031), we believe strongly that - for reasons of sustainability - future applications should conform to the Policies set out in The Welford Plan.

The Welford Plan has been developed on behalf of Welford-on-Avon Parish Council by Welford residents who volunteered to participate in the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee. The Parish Council is extremely grateful for all the work that they have done. Without them, the Plan would not exist and the essential protections for our historic village would not have been developed.

After extensive consultation with residents and the wider community, and using evidence from previous planning activities and surveys, the Committee has developed a Vision and set of Strategic Objectives for Welford-on-Avon up to 2031. This date was chosen to ensure that The Welford Plan was consistent with SDC's emerging Core Strategy. The Vision and Strategic Objectives are supported in many instances by specific planning policies. These are either complementary to SDC's emerging Core Strategy, existing saved policies of the Local Plan or address matters special to Welford. None of Welford's policies can or do conflict with national or district planning policies.

Immediately prior to submission to SDC the Committee submitted The Welford Plan for an independent 'health check' carried out by one of the same body of examiners responsible for the formal Examination. I am delighted that the report said that, "The Plan and its supporting documents is of a very high standard...there is nothing...making the Plan unfit for purpose". The health check suggested improvements, together with the resultant changes, can be viewed in the [change log](#) on the project website.

The Welford Plan will be an important and influential document for Stratford-on-Avon District Council, developers and Welford residents alike, and will ensure that the village continues to develop in a manner which best meets the wishes and aspirations of all interested parties.

Simon Carter. Chairman, Welford-on-Avon Parish Council  
28 July 2015

## **Welford-on-Avon. A Pen Picture**

Welford-on-Avon is a picturesque village set in the heart of Warwickshire. It lies within a loop of the Warwickshire Avon about four miles west of Stratford-upon-Avon. The village is four miles south of Alcester and four miles east of Bidford-on-Avon.

The 2011 census showed that Welford Parish had a population of 1402 living in 605 households. The median age was 51, slightly older than that for Stratford District at 46. Data from Warwickshire County Council indicates that there is a far higher proportion of detached houses in Welford than Stratford District (55.1%/36.8%), higher caravans/mobile homes (11.0%/1.9%) but concomitantly lower semi-detached and terraced houses as well as flats.

Formerly part of Gloucestershire, but a Warwickshire village since 1931, Welford like most rural parishes, has its historical roots firmly based in agriculture and is still predominantly bordered by arable farmland, with commercial horticulture also very much in evidence. The population will have grown quite slowly until it reached 516 at the time of the first census in 1801. By 2011 it had grown by a further 275% to over 1,400 and a little over 600 houses with the fastest growth rate occurring since the 1960s.

The Village has three public houses, four shops, a garage, a primary school, a children's play area, an indoor bowls club, a private marina, allotments and two Churches. The churches are the Parish Church of St Peter's and a Methodist Chapel. There are a number of Societies and Clubs run by local volunteers which include sports, gardening, history, scouts, brownies, painting and yoga.

Welford-on-Avon has been a desirable place to live for millennia, with a plentiful supply of water and fertile alluvial soils. The first settlements in Welford-on-Avon are believed to date from the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, possibly as outposts from the fortified encampments lower down the Avon valley such as at Bredon Hill. The oxbow curve of the river would also have been seen as offering an easily defended site.

Following on, the Romans had a presence here, evidenced by many Romano-British artefacts; other archaeological finds demonstrate continued settlement through to the present day. Parts of our church, St Peter's date back to the early eleventh century with evidence of earlier foundation. After 1066 and the Domesday Book, the benefice of Welford was gifted to the Priory of St Denis near Paris. In addition to St Peter's church, other well-known historic landmarks include the southern portion of Binton Bridges (C13th), and the Maypole site (C14th). The 17th century saw the introduction of the many timber-framed cottages and the Wesleyan Chapel was constructed late in the 18th century.

The road system as we know it today was also largely in place by 1800. The original village school was built in Victorian times and housed the first Parish Council meeting in 1894. More recently the Memorial Hall building was erected in 1924 and the Allotment Trust was established in 1940. The Conservation Area containing 65 listed and 80 non-listed buildings was designated in 1969.

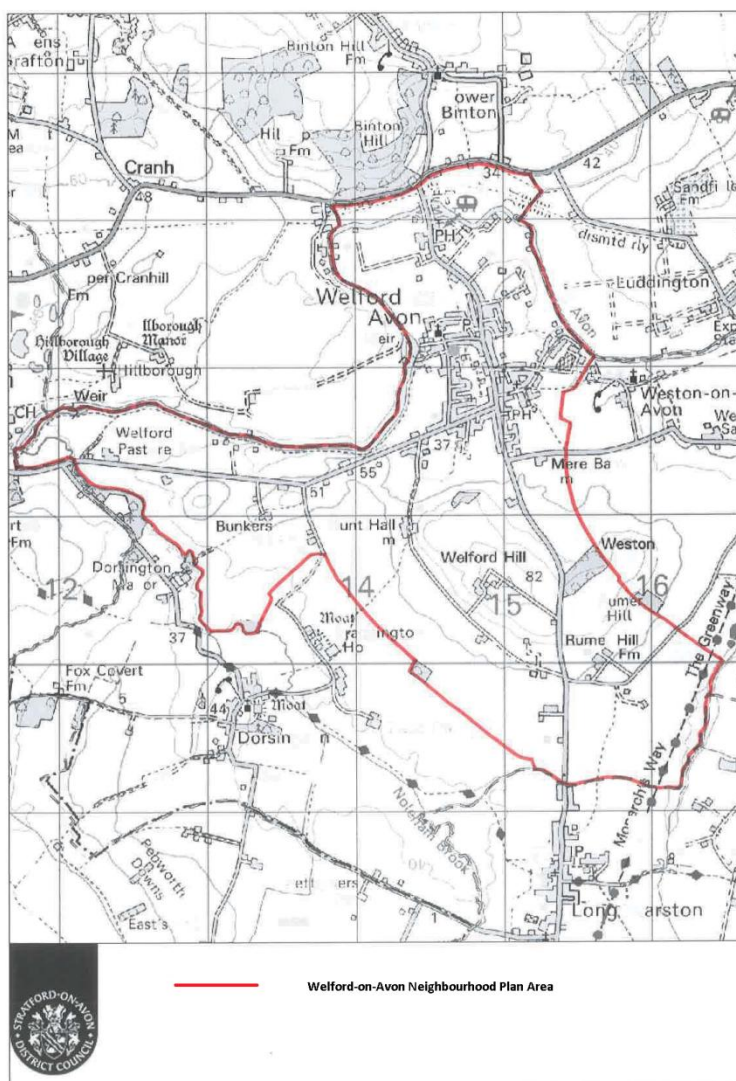
The River Avon represents a major environmental dynamic in our Parish, with a significant area of its land within the flood zone. Shakespeare's Avon Way, a national hiking route, crosses the parish and is to be protected along with the views of the village and the surrounding countryside from the route. Similarly the Greenway cycle path (formerly the route of the Stratford to Honeybourne railway line) provides a route into Stratford-upon-Avon for cyclists and hikers/pedestrians.

## Introduction

The Welford-on-Avon Neighbourhood Development Plan (The Welford Plan) has been prepared by Welford-on-Avon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee on behalf of Welford-on-Avon Parish Council.

The Welford Plan is a new type of planning document that will set out the direction for development in the Parish of Welford-on-Avon from 2011 to 2031. It is part of the Government's new approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. This is set out in the Localism Act 2011 which came into force in April 2012.

The whole Parish of Welford-on-Avon has been formally designated as the Neighbourhood Area through an application to Stratford District Council (SDC) on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013 under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (part 2 S6). This was approved by Stratford District Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013.



The Welford Plan sets out a Vision for the Parish up to 2031, defines the Objectives to achieve that Vision and sets out clear Policies to support those Objectives. The Welford Plan has been developed through extensive consultation with local people, businesses and community groups, Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC) and other regulatory and statutory bodies.

The Welford Plan sets the acceptable framework for development within the Neighbourhood Area in terms of housing type and design including protection of our heritage assets and the environment.

The Welford Plan provides an opportunity for local people to influence and take more control over the use of land within the Parish and to decide how they want the village to be in 2031.

**Figure 1 - The Civil Parish Boundary and designated Welford on Avon Neighbourhood Area**

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## **How the Neighbourhood Development Plan fits into the Planning system**

### **National Policy**

In the past local parishes and villages have only been able to influence planning decisions which have been taken at the district level (for us Stratford-on-Avon District Council or SDC) through individual representation, statutory consultation with the Parish Council and input to our elected district and county councillor(s).

Changes to the planning system set out in the 2011 Localism Act gave residents new rights to shape the future of their local area through a Neighbourhood Development Plan. At the same time, many hundreds of pages of planning guidance were consolidated into a single document, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). SDC is required to develop a Local Plan for the District which is consistent with the NPPF.

### **What is a Local Plan?**

A Local Plan is a set of documents used by Stratford on Avon District Council as the Local Planning Authority to control the use and development of land. A key document within the set is the Core Strategy which sets out a vision and key policies to achieve that vision. SDC is in the process of producing its Local Plan for the period 2011 – 2031 of which the Core Strategy is a key component. This was first examined in January 2015 but was referred back to SDC for further amendments which will probably take the rest of this year to complete. The Core Strategy will probably be adopted in the first half of 2016.

The current Development Plan for the District includes the saved policies in the Local Plan Review 1996 – 2011.

### **What is a Neighbourhood Plan?**

‘Neighbourhood Plan’ is shorthand for a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. A Neighbourhood Plan is about the use and development of land and may contain planning policies and proposals for improving the area. These policies may cover issues such as housing, employment, heritage and environment. The policies should support the overall objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and these objectives should in turn support a vision that describes how the community should be at the end of the plan period.

Neighbourhood Plans are subject to independent examination and to a local referendum where a simple majority will determine the outcome. A Neighbourhood Plan carries equal weight to its Local Plan in making planning decisions and will be taken into account for all planning applications that are submitted within the Neighbourhood Area.

A Neighbourhood Plan can be ‘made’ in advance of the Local Plan, but should there be any discrepancy between the two the Plan which was made later will take precedence.

### **Basic Conditions**

All Neighbourhood Plans must meet certain basic conditions:

- Have appropriate regard to national policy
- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan for the area
- Contribute to sustainable development
- Be compatible with EU obligations

The national policy is that defined in the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance.

The basic conditions stipulate that the Neighbourhood Plan has to be in general conformity with both the current Local Plan for the area (SDC Local Plan Review 1996-2011) and the emerging Local Plan, particularly its Core Strategy.

The third basic condition of all Neighbourhood Plans is that they contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three dimensions of sustainability as defined in the NPPF:

- **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy
- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities
- **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment

## **The Welford Plan; Sustainability, the Local Plan and EU Directives**

In order to demonstrate the consistency of the policies of The Welford Plan with the saved policies of Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Local Plan, the Statement of Basic Conditions contains Table 4 which cross references the two. Because the Core Strategy is in an advanced stage of development, the policies of the Welford Plan also have regard to the policies of the emerging Core Strategy. These consistencies are shown in the explanations of individual policies in the Welford Plan.

The Welford Plan is in full conformity with the SDC's emerging Core Strategy. As The Welford Plan does not include Site Allocation an independent sustainability appraisal is not required.

All Neighbourhood Plans are required to comply with EU directives covering Strategic Environmental Assessments and Habitats. SDC have confirmed that neither a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment nor a Habitats Directive Assessment is required to be undertaken for The Welford Plan in order to comply with the EU Directives.

## **How was the development of The Welford Plan managed?**

In October 2012, Welford-on-Avon Parish Council resolved to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish. The Parish Council drew up the constitution for a steering committee which would manage the production of The Welford Plan. Volunteers with a passionate interest in the future well-being of Welford-on-Avon were sought to form the committee which first formally met on 20th November 2012. During the development of the Plan the committee membership maintained the project website (<http://www.welforward.org.uk>) where a large amount of project support material can be found.

In broad terms, the tasks that the Steering Committee have undertaken have been to:

- Produce and review a substantial evidence base from the village, district and national policy (which can be found on the Welford-on-Avon Parish Council website (<http://welfordonavon.com>))
- Conduct surveys and consultations with local residents, businesses, land-owners and statutory consultees
- Obtain grants, both financial and in direct support, from Locality, a government funded body
- Interface with the officers at SDC responsible for Neighbourhood Planning
- Keep informed of the many changes to the planning process through the duration of the project
- Write, edit and format The Welford Plan document
- Project manage all activities.

## **Evidence from previous village surveys**

Welford-on-Avon is fortunate to have had a number of previous village surveys which have informed us on the issues, concerns and aspirations of residents. These included the 1998 Village Design Statement, the 2007 Parish Plan, the 2008 Housing Needs Survey and Warwickshire Observatory analysis of the 2011 census. These surveys have enabled the Steering Committee to make a fast start on the development of the Neighbourhood Plan by not

having to set off with a blank sheet of paper. Together they enabled the survey work to build on results without having to undertake more primary research.

The [Village Design Statement](#), adopted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council as a material consideration in determining planning applications, produced with support from the Countryside Commission, conducted an audit to determine what was good and what was less successful in the built environment. The survey also highlighted the importance to the residents of:

- Connecting spaces through internal and external footpaths
- Open community spaces
- Other important open spaces
- The rich array of trees
- High quality design of both new build and extensions

The Village Design Statement defined design principles covering landscape setting, buildings and the community.

The [Parish Plan](#), similarly adopted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council for determining planning applications, addressed the topics of:

- Traffic
- Transport
- Housing
- Access to health services
- Local business
- Recreation and leisure
- Public utilities and services
- Crime and disorder
- Local environment

Special questionnaires were developed for children and for young people for the Parish Plan.

The Parish Plan contributed significantly to the Vision and Objectives sections of The Welford Plan. Although several of the areas covered by the Parish Plan are outside the scope of The Welford Plan, its data on housing and land use, sports, leisure and recreation, and environment were particularly valuable in informing and setting a baseline for the initial Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey.

The adopted **Housing Needs Survey**, initially conducted by Warwickshire Rural Community Council in 2008, was updated by an addendum in April 2012. Together, they showed a need for 17 affordable and 4 local market houses of specified sizes and tenures. As of July 2015, planning permission had been granted for 26 affordable houses with a further 8 affordable houses granted subject to completion of a section 106 agreement.

The **Warwickshire Observatory** analysis of the 2011 census provided invaluable demographic data including the age profile of the parish, modes of travel, and type and tenure of housing and enabling comparison of these data with the District as a whole (see **Appendix C** for this data).



Figure 2 – The Maypole and Maypole Green (in the Conservation Area)

## How was the community involved?

The Steering Group have regularly consulted and liaised with residents, local businesses and the wider community in order to ensure that, within the statutory constraints placed on Neighbourhood Plans, The Welford Plan accurately

reflects the views and aspirations of the majority of consultees. A full [Consultation Statement](#) is one of the key documents submitted for Examination highlighting consultations conducted and responses received.

In addition, as part of the formal consultation on The Welford Plan, over one hundred statutory and other formal bodies have been consulted as required by the Localism Act. The bodies relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan have been identified by SDC. All these views have been analysed and included as appropriate in the submitted Plan.

## Welford Plan policy or Parish Council project?

As community input was received, particularly from the April 2013 Community Survey, it became clear that the Vision and Objectives of The Welford Plan will be achieved in two distinct ways:

- 1) Through planning policies defined in The Welford Plan which, together with the Local Plan, will control land use throughout the parish. These policies are grouped into related areas addressing:
  - Heritage and environment
  - Infrastructure
  - Economic development
  - Housing and land use
- 2) Through projects that are not easily achieved through the planning process but may be taken forward at the discretion of the Parish Council (see Appendix B). These projects address:
  - A multi-purpose community meeting place with sports and recreation facilities
  - Traffic management
  - Public transport, footpaths and cycle ways
  - Green initiatives
  - Flood prevention

## Future governance of The Welford Plan



Figure 3 - Church Street (in the Conservation Area)

Throughout the process of developing The Welford Plan responsibility for it has remained with the Parish Council. Once The Welford Plan has been submitted to SDC for examination, responsibility for the Plan will pass to SDC and the role of the steering committee will cease. SDC will be responsible for commissioning an independent examination, incorporating any changes recommended by the examiner into The Welford Plan, and for conducting the referendum to determine its acceptance by the community. Once the referendum has shown acceptance and The Welford Plan is formally 'made', it becomes part of the Local Plan.

There is no process for making minor amendments or updates to The Welford Plan – any changes would require the whole process to be repeated. It will be the responsibility of the Parish Council to keep the effectiveness of The Welford Plan under review.

The Parish Council will report on the operation of The Welford Plan to the Annual Parish Meeting. Every 5<sup>th</sup> year the Parish Council will appoint a broadly based group of parishioners to advise the Parish Council on whether changes required to The Welford Plan are of sufficient magnitude to justify developing a new Neighbourhood Plan.

Two years before the Plan's expiry in 2031, the Parish Council will appoint a broadly based group to produce the next Welford Plan for the parish.

## The Vision for Welford-on-Avon in 2031

In 2031, Welford on Avon

- Will be a thriving, inclusive community, which
- Conserves and enhances the village and surrounding parish, and
- Meets the aspirations of those who live, work and visit here.

## The Welford Plan Objectives for the period 2011 – 2031

1. The Heritage Assets of the village and the surrounding countryside, its character and street scene will have been conserved. These assets include listed buildings, conservation areas, important views and open spaces, sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), river amenities and other specified sites.
2. The rural nature of the parish with open countryside, mature woodland with pleasant views set in a green environment will have been preserved.
3. The separate identity of Welford-on-Avon and adjacent settlements will have been maintained.
4. Excellent infrastructure will support an expanded range of community and business activities including a flourishing home working economy.
5. Infrastructure to meet the needs of all new developments which impact on the parish will have been secured in advance of their construction. This includes the provision of primary school places at Welford School and the provision of adequate waste water systems.
6. A mix of market and affordable housing developments that achieve the ambition of the SDC Local Plan in the period to 2031 will have been provided in a sustainable, phased manner and sympathetically integrated into the village environment.
7. Excellent design of all new development reflecting the character of the village will be championed.
8. *A multi-purpose community meeting place and sports facilities will support recreational and sporting activities for all age groups.*
9. *Traffic will have been managed and through traffic will have been controlled thus ensuring the village roads are safe for all residents. Any development will minimise commuting and traffic movements.*
10. *Public transport will have been improved, and the extensive network of footpaths and cycle ways further developed and maintained.*
11. *Sustainable green and low energy consumption using existing and emerging technologies will have been championed.*
12. *River and surface water flooding will have been controlled.*

**Note:** Objectives 1-7 will be delivered primarily through The Welford Plan whilst the italicised objectives 8-12 will be delivered primarily under the auspices of Welford-on-Avon Parish Council.

## Welford Plan: Planning Policies

### A. Heritage & Environment

Welford-on-Avon understands that it has a major responsibility to protect, preserve and enhance the village's distinctive character and the built and natural environment under our stewardship. The consultation on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2014 on the initial Welford Plan policies demonstrated over 95% support for all Heritage and Environment policies.

#### The Welford Plan Objectives supported by Heritage & Environment Policies

- Objective 1      The Heritage Assets of the village and the surrounding countryside, its character and street scene will have been conserved. These assets include listed buildings, conservation areas, important views and open spaces, sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), river amenities and other specified sites.
- Objective 2      The rural nature of the parish with open countryside, mature woodland with pleasant views set in a green environment will have been preserved.
- Objective 3      The separate identity of Welford-on-Avon and adjacent settlements will have been maintained.
- Objective 6      A mix of market and affordable housing developments that achieve the ambition of the Local Plan in the period to 2031 will have been provided in a sustainable, phased manner and sympathetically integrated into the village environment.
- Objective 7      Excellent design of all new development reflecting the character of the village will be championed.



Figure 4 - Cleavers - Grade II\* listed building circa 1740 (in the Conservation Area)

## **HE1. Important Views**

*The important views around the parish will be protected by resisting development that will be obtrusive by virtue of its shape, size or material. The following are to be protected:-*

- *View towards St Peter's Church and over the village from Cress Hill*
- *View downstream from Binton Bridges*
- *Views over the Glebe Lands towards St Peter's Church and the river*
- *Views north-west from the Milcote Road towards Welford and Weston villages.*
- *Views north from the public road on Rumer Hill towards Welford village*
- *View south from the crest of the public road on Rumer Hill to the southern boundary of the parish towards Long Marston and the Cotswolds*

*These specific locations and precise direction of important views can be found on the Parish Council and [project team websites](#).*

Distant vistas from key viewpoints are a major asset to the parish. Glimpses of the tower of St Peter's Church rising above the village scene are a key asset to the parish and underscore our history and heritage. New developments should enhance or maintain the green and rural nature of these views across Welford-on-Avon village and should not draw the eye to any development as, for instance, the poor choice of roofing material on Welford Bowls Club currently does.

## **Justification**

- NPPF section 11 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment), paragraph 109 requires that the *"planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes"*
- SDC Local Plan Review July 2006 Section 3 PR1. *"Proposals that would damage or destroy features which contribute to the distinctiveness of the local area will not be permitted. The value attached to such features by the local community will be taken into account."*
- SDC Local Plan Review July 2006 Section 4 EF12 (e), *"the character of spaces the form of enclosure and the nature of views into and out of the area."* (g) *"the relationship of the built environment to the surrounding landscape and countryside."* & EF13 *"Development proposals which do not preserve or enhance the character or appearance.....or its setting will not be permitted"*.
- SDC Local Plan Review July 2006 Section 5 DEV1. (a) *"the characteristics that define the locality"*, (c) *"the interrelationship between the component making up the development...open space etc"*, (f) *"the extents to which important existing features are retained.."*
- SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.5 (Landscape) Section B, *"Proposals for development should include, dependent on their scale, use and location, an assessment of the likely visual impacts on the local landscape or townscape, and the site's immediate and wider setting. Applications for major developments must be accompanied by a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment."*
- SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.8 (Historic Environment) Section A, *"Priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the wide range of historic and cultural assets that contribute to the character and identity of the District, including: ... (4) the distinctive character of the market towns, villages and hamlets, including their settings, townscapes, streets, spaces and built form;"*
- SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.9 (Design and Distinctiveness) Section B (2), *"Proposals will reflect the context of the locality, ... making best use of on-site assets including landscaping features as well as public views and vistas and not harming existing ones."*
- Village Design Statement 1998 Design Principles *"New development must recognise and be sympathetic to established variants of design, silhouette, scale, density, materials and colour."*
- 2014 Neighbourhood Plan Draft Policy Consultation: 98% of those responding approved of this policy (HER2 when surveyed).

- The Stratford on Avon District Design Guide.
- The April 2013 Community Survey supports the general protection of all our green assets.

## **HE2. Important Green Spaces**

*The following areas (including their flora and fauna) are of particular importance to the local community and are designated as Local Green Spaces:*

- **LGS1 - Cress Hill and Shakespeare's Avon Way**
- **LGS2 -The Glebe Lands (including the SSSI 'Welford Field')**
- **LGS3 - Millennium Project to the north of the River Avon at Binton Bridges**
- **LGS4 Village Greens at:**
  - **Maypole Green**
  - **'The Greens' in Boat Lane and Church Street**
  - **'The Pound' to the south of the Churchyard at the junction of Boat Lane and Church Street**
  - **'Bell Green' at the junction of Church Street and High Street**
  - **'Bird Green' in Long Marston Road**
- **LGS5 - Verges in the Conservation Area**
- **LGS6 - Islands in the River Avon abutting Binton Bridges**
- **LGS7 – Shakespeare's Avon Way from Bell Green to the parish boundary with Weston-on-Avon.**

*Development on the Local Green Spaces designated in the Welford Plan will only be permitted under 'very special circumstances' (NPPF: para 76) where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh any harm.*

*The sensitive management of these areas will be actively encouraged.*

*The boundaries of the Local Green Spaces are shown in Figure 5.*

These areas have been demonstrated to be of significance to the local community and by designating them as **Local Green Space**, the approach to managing development should be consistent with the national policy for Green Belt. This protection shall extend to the flora and fauna of each area.

- LGS1 From the field to the west of Cress Hill and including all of Cress Hill and land to the head of the Weir at the bottom of Boat Lane. Cress Hill is owned by Welford-on-Avon Parish Council. It was dedicated to the public in perpetuity for recreational purposes under the Queen Elizabeth II "Fields in Trust" scheme to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.
- LGS2 From the head of the Weir, as above, following the river to the bend downstream of Binton Bridges including the wetlands and SSSI (shown on Figure 8). This also includes all of St. Peter's Glebe Lands and the permissive footpath from Boat Lane to Binton Road.
- LGS3 The Millennium Project to the north of the river.
- LGS4 [Village Greens are already protected and in most cases registered.](#)

The village greens within the settlement form part of the character and aesthetic of the street scene throughout the village. The conservation and protection of these valuable asset and their immediate surroundings form part of this Plan. They are extensively used as the centrepiece for many village communal activities. The grade II listed Maypole and surrounding Maypole Green are at the heart of the village with use including the traditional Maypole dance performed by Welford School children at the beginning of summer, the summer fete, street parties and remembrance events.

Other registered village greens include the grassed areas adjacent to the cottages in Boat Lane and Church Street and "The Pound" to the south of the Churchyard at the junction of Boat Lane and Church Street.

The village greens at the junction of Church Street and High Street known as “Bell Green” and the grassed area in Long Marston Road known as “Bird Green” are maintained by Welford on Avon Parish Council as village greens.

LGS5 Verges in the Conservation Area.

They form an integral part of the character and aesthetic of the street scene

LGS6 Islands abutting Binton Bridges.

LGS7 The public bridleway and footpath known as the Shakespeare’s Avon Way from Bell Green to the parish boundary with Weston-on-Avon including the Designated Local Wildlife Site Ref. SP15L8 of SDC’s Ecological and Geological Study of Local Service Villages.

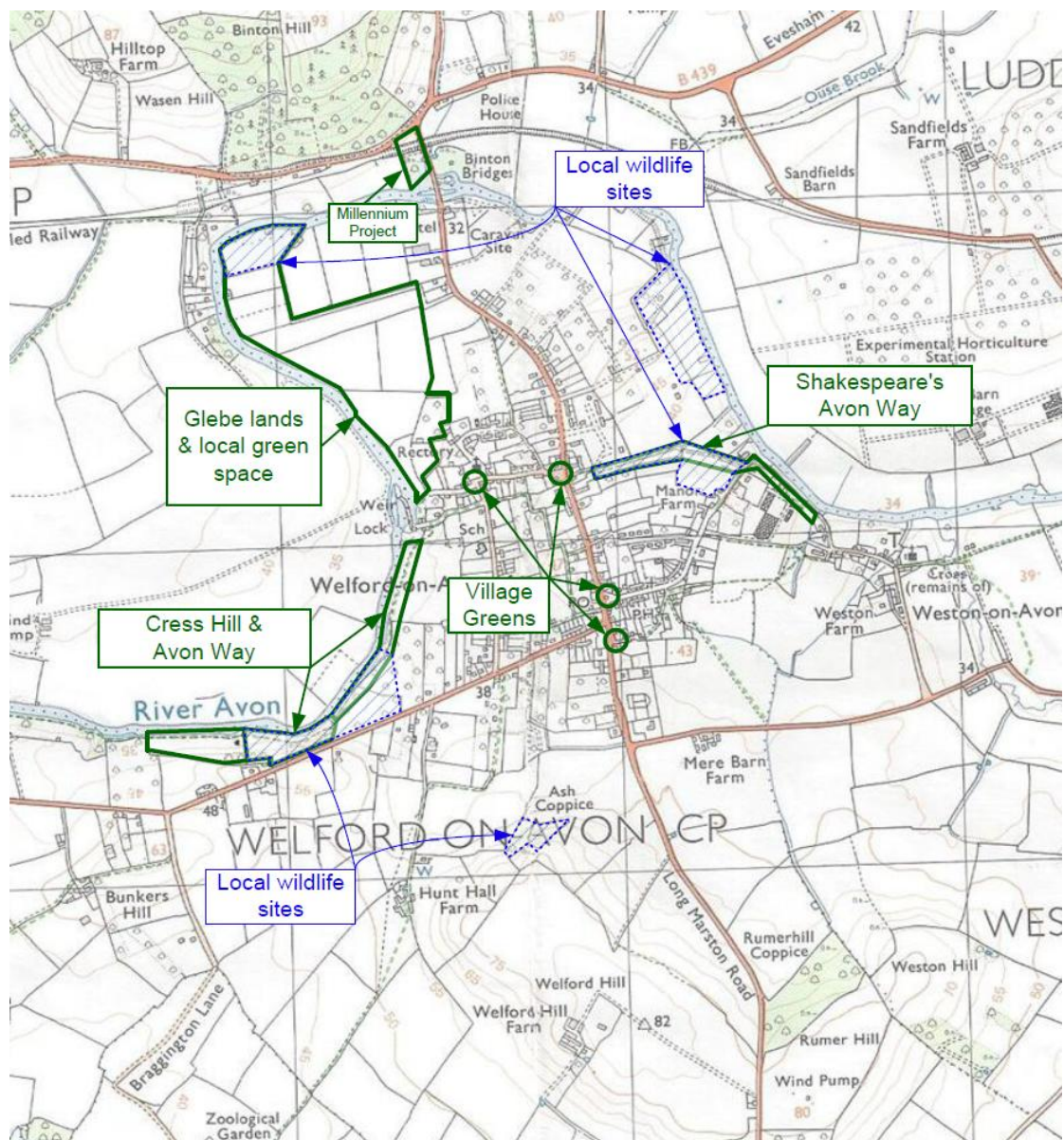


Figure 5 – Welford-on-Avon Local Green Spaces, Designated Village Greens and Local Wildlife Sites

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### **Justification**

- NPPF Section 8 (Promoting healthy communities), Paragraph 76 states “By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.”
- NPPF Section 8 (Promoting healthy communities), Paragraph 78 states “Local policy for managing

*development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.”*

- NPPF Section 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural environment) *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes”* Para 118 *“when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity”* SDC Ecological and Geological Study of Local Service Villages, Settlement assessment Welford-on-Avon provides additional information.
- Local Plan Review July 2006 DEV.3 & 4 support the Conservation and Provision of accessible amenity open space. COM 4 & 5 Support the provision and protection of open space generally COM6 (b) particularly protects open space. CTY10 & 11 support and protect recreational and, leisure facilities, footpaths and bridleways in the countryside.
- SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.5 (Landscape) Section A (2), *“Development should protect landscape character and avoid detrimental effects on features which make a significant contribution to the character, history and setting of a settlement or area.”*
- SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.10 (Green Belt) *“The purposes of the Green Belt will be upheld by resisting inappropriate development within it, except in cases where very special circumstances are justified in accordance with the provisions of national planning policy.”*
- Village Design Statement 1998 Design Principles *“Protect existing grass verges and encourage all new development to incorporate this village feature.”* and *“Ensure open spaces are maintained to reflect the character and evolution of the settlement pattern”*
- 2014 Neighbourhood Plan Draft Policy Consultation: 96% of those responding approved of this now aggregate policy (ENV1, ENV3 & ENV5 when surveyed).
- [SDC Ecological and Geological Study of Local Service Villages - Welford-on-Avon Settlement](#)

### ***HE3. Development which impacts Local Green Spaces***

***Development will only be supported if it does not in any way detract from the character or setting of any Local Green Space as designated in Policy HE2.***

### **Justification**

- NPPF Section 8 (Promoting healthy communities), Paragraph 73 states *“Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.”*
- SDC Local Plan Review July 2006 PR1&5 Support the protection of Local green spaces *“value attached to such features by the local communities will be taken into account”; “developments will be expected to minimise depletion of irreplaceable resources such as.....habitats”; EF10 “ the landscape, amenity and nature conservation value of trees woodlands and hedgerows will be preserved and enhanced”; COM6&9 “the development would not entail the loss of open space of significant amenity and/or ecological value,...development on open space which is valuable for its contribution to the amenity and character of the area will be resisted”; “Proposals will not be supported if the function of existing walking and cycling would be compromised”.*
- SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.10 (Countryside and Villages) *“All proposals will be subject to a thorough assessment to make sure their scale, nature and location are appropriate, including the need to: minimise impact on the character of the local landscape, communities and environmental features...”*
- English Heritage (now Historic England) guidance received through consultation feedback.

#### **HE4. The Conservation Area and other Heritage Assets**

**Development within or adjacent to the Conservation Area and/or within the setting of a listed building will be supported providing it:**

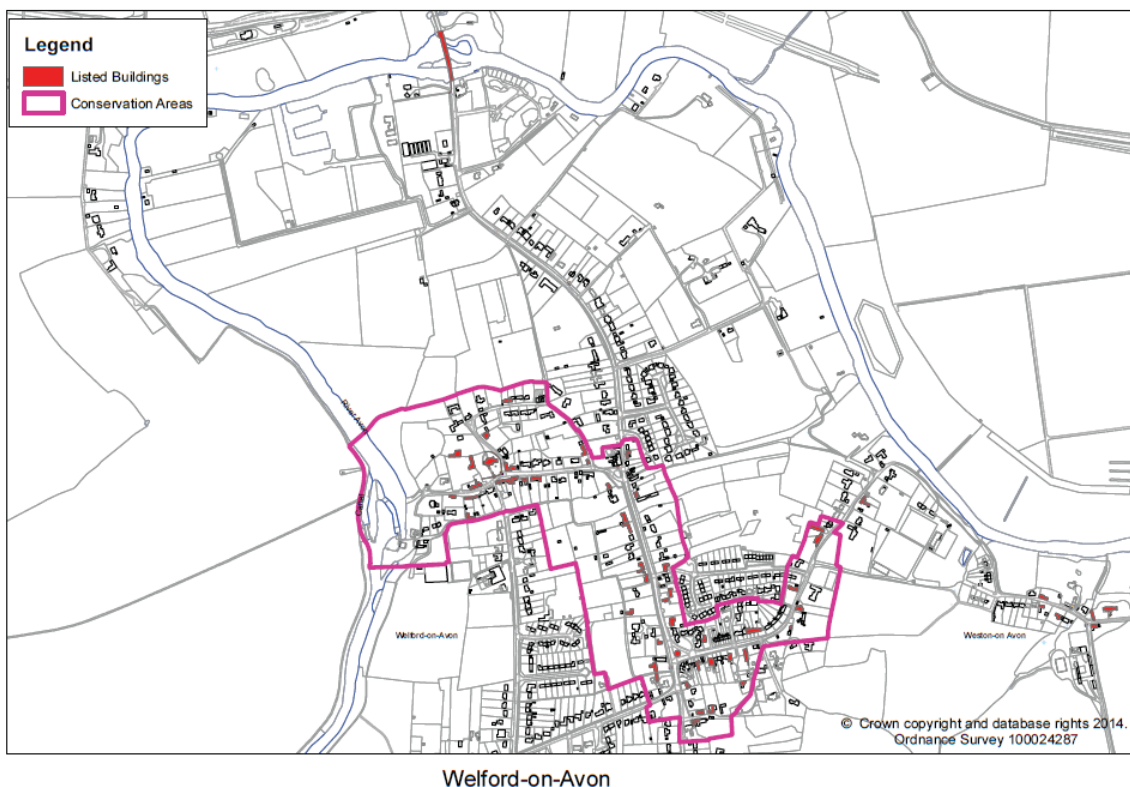
- **Conserves or enhances the positive attributes of the heritage asset;**
- **Has no negative impact on the character, setting, views, vistas and street scene of the heritage asset;**
- **Is in conformity with the Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide; and**
- **Fully supports the protection of listed properties through consultation with their beneficial owners and Stratford-on-Avon District Council.**

**Development in close proximity to other heritage assets will be required to have regard to their setting and significance, and be designed such that there is no adverse impact on these assets.**

The criteria for developments within the Conservation Area are:

- a) NPPF Para 126-135 requires that development proposals must conserve and enhance the character of a Conservation Area.
- b) In order to be supported, development proposals must be to the highest design standards as laid out in Welford Plan policy **HLU3** and SDC's Core Strategy policy **CS.9**.
- c) Mature trees over 100mm diameter in a Conservation Area are considered to have the same protection as afforded by a Tree Preservation Order. Permission for their removal will only be granted in exceptional cases and only after consultation with the Stratford District Council designated Tree Officer.

Any developments in the Conservation Area must fully conform with the design principles included in The Welford Plan Housing and Land Use (HLU) policies which incorporate the Stratford on Avon District Design Guide.



**Figure 6 - Conservation Area Map**

## **Justification**

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- NPPF Section 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment), Paragraph 131 states “... *local planning authorities should take account of ... the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality....*”
- NPPF Section 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment), Paragraph 137 highlights “*Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.*”
- NPPF Section 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment), Paragraph 138 emphasises “... *Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, ....*”
- SDC Local Plan Review July 2006 EF13 Supports the protection and preservation of Conservation Areas
- SDC Local Plan Review July 2006 EF14 Supports the protection and preservation of Listed Buildings and the requirement that development on adjoining land will not have an adverse impact on the special quality of the listed building or their setting.
- SDC Local Plan Review July 2006 DEV1(a),(b),(c),(d),(e),(f)&(h). Support and require sympathetic high quality layout & design of any development that may impact of the surrounding area.
- SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.8 (Historic Environment) Section A “*Priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the wide range of historic and cultural assets that contribute to the character and identity of the District, including: ... , Conservation Areas, .... and their settings;*”
- SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.9 (Design and Distinctiveness) Section B(2) “... *Proposals will reflect the context of the locality, ensuring a continuity of key design features that establishes the identity of the place, making best use of on-site assets including landscaping features as well as public views and vistas and not harming existing ones.*”
- Village Design Statement 1998 Design Principles “*Allow sufficient space between properties to reflect this village characteristic.*”
- 2014 Neighbourhood Plan Draft Policy Consultation: 93% of those responding approved of this policy (HER1 when surveyed).
- The Community Survey from April 2013 demonstrated overwhelming support for the Conversation Area.

#### **HE5. Open Countryside**

*Open countryside is everywhere outside the built up area boundary (see Figure 8) and will in principle be protected for its intrinsic character and beauty.*

*Development in the open countryside will be supported providing it:*

- *is a brownfield site; or*
- *contributes to the local economy; or*
- *is for the reuse or extension of an existing building; or*
- *is for sport and recreation; or*
- *is for a new isolated dwelling where there are special circumstances such as the need for a rural worker to be close to their place of work; or*
- *is a single dwelling of exceptional quality and design making a positive contribution to the character of the local area.*

*Any such development should not cause demonstrable harm to:*

- *landscape quality;*
- *sites of ecological value;*
- *Scheduled Monuments and other sites of archaeological interest.*

*The specific area of open countryside between Welford-on-Avon and Weston-on-Avon is covered by policy HE6.*

#### **Justification**

- NPPF Section 11 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment), Paragraph 109 “*The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*”
- NPPF Core Planning principles, Paragraph 17 includes “*contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value*”
- NPPF Core Planning principles, Paragraph 17 lists them and includes “*encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value*”
- Paragraph 55 of the NPPF requires Local planning authorities to ‘*avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:*
  - *the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; or*
  - *where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or*
  - *where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting*’
- SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.10 (Countryside and Villages) sub-section b onwards highlights the limited conditions under which development may be acceptable in principle.
- Saved Policy CTY.1 of the Local Plan Review generally resists all forms of development in the countryside except if in accordance with provisions elsewhere in the Plan. For example, saved Policy CTY.2 supports the re-use of rural buildings.
- English Heritage noted, in response to the pre-submission consultation, that there were historic farmsteads in the area outside the built-up area boundary and that any development proposal should be sensitive to these and associated non-designated heritage assets and thus maintain local distinctiveness

The latest map produced by Stratford-on-Avon District Council to include the built up area boundary for Welford-on-Avon is the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2012 (see Figure 8). This was based on the original SDC Local Plan Built up area boundary map of May 2000.

If need be the built up area boundary will be updated by Stratford-on-Avon District Council as part of their forthcoming work on the Site Allocation Plan.

#### **HE6. Gap between Welford and Weston**

***Development outside the built up area boundary of Welford-on-Avon which results in the reduction of the gap with Weston-on-Avon will not be supported.***

Welford-on-Avon and Weston-on-Avon are settlements that are proud of their separate identities which have been maintained since before the time of the Domesday Book. From medieval times the two villages have centred on their Grade 1 listed churches, St Peters and All Saints respectively. Currently, a significant green buffer is provided between the two settlements mostly by actively and productively managed farmland or, at the northern boundary toward the river, by a horticultural business.

Development will not be permitted in the land between the villages so as to preserve the identity and integrity of the settlements and the immediate natural environment.

#### **Justification**

- The NPPF Section 11 () Paragraph 112. *“Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land.”*
- SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.15 (Distribution of Development) expects all development to protect and enhance the character of the settlement and its setting. Amongst the principles against which new development will be assessed is at CS.15.7e and is that *“ the location and extent of the development would not result in the identity and/or integrity of the settlement being undermined as a result of the reduction in the gap with an adjacent settlement”*
- 2014 Neighbourhood Plan Draft Policy Consultation: 96% of those responding approved of this policy (ENV2 when surveyed).
- This policy is consistent with the decision of the Inspector at the Gladman Inquiry who noted at paragraph 65 of her report:

*‘The open agricultural land between Welford and Weston is a feature of the historic and current relationship between the two settlements. The perception of openness between Welford and Weston would inevitably be reduced as a consequence of the development proposed... with consequent harm to the established character and appearance of the area. I share the concerns of local residents and English Heritage in this regard.’*

## **HE7. Landscape Design**

### **Development must:**

- *Preserve the existing mature tree population and support the planting of new trees and shrubs as defined in the Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide;*
- *Use natural hedging in preference to timber based panel or board fencing or any solid walls for boundaries and*
- *Ensure that landscape aspects of a development proposal form an integral part of the overall design.*

Welford-on-Avon is blessed by a rich diversity of mature trees which provide a rich backdrop to the village and its street scene. The advice of the SDC Tree Officer must always be sought as part of the planning application process where such trees may be affected.

### **Tree Planting**

Tree planting schemes should be an essential pre-requisite for all new building developments as part of sustainable development. These tree planting schemes should incorporate species approved by SDC. Sufficient land to provide appropriate space for these trees is to be provided by the developer. The trees are to be maintained for a period of 5 years at the expense of the developer, landowner or resident as agreed in advance between the interested parties.

### **Tree Preservation**

Where development is agreed great care is to be taken to ensure that existing mature trees are retained. Should it be agreed that a mature tree is to be removed the developer is to plant semi-mature trees (minimum girth 20cm measured 1m above ground BS3936-1). The species must be approved by SDC and be planted on sites to be provided by the developer or at the Parish Council's discretion.

This policy is also supportive of HLU7 where the built environment blends with the agricultural/rural surroundings of the village.

### **Justification**

- NPPF Core Planning principles, Paragraph 17 includes the principle to *"always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;"*
- NPPF Section 7 (Requiring good design), Paragraph 58 requires that *"Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:*
  - *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
  - *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping."*
- NPPF Section 11 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment), Paragraph 118 states *"local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles ... planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland,"*
- Paragraph 61 of the NPPF notes that 'securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address ... the integration of new development into the natural.... environment.
- SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.5 (Landscape) Section C *"Proposals that will have an impact on woodlands, hedges and trees should incorporate measures to protect their contribution to landscape character, public amenity and biodiversity. The loss of those trees which are of high public amenity value will be resisted and such trees will be protected by the use of Tree Preservation Orders."*
- Saved Policy EF.10 of the Local Plan Review requires that *'the landscape, amenity and nature conservation value of trees and hedgerows will be preserved and enhanced'*

- Public Health Warwickshire’s consultation response supported the fact that tree planting was encouraged and further noted that *‘this can help to reduce the impact of climate change and provide ecological habitats.’*
- Village Design Statement 1998 Design Principles *“Protect existing trees and encourage planting of appropriate species.”* and *“Review and update tree preservation orders”*
- 2014 Welford Plan Policy Consultation: 95% of respondents approved of this policy (ENV4 when surveyed).
- Q19 and Q20 of the Community Survey showed a significant number of respondents who wanted both more trees to be planted and existing trees to be preserved.

#### **HE8. Allotments**

***Development that enhances the use of the current site on Headland Road as allotments will be supported.***

***Any other development will not be supported unless:***

- ***Replacement provision (including the provision of associated facilities) of at least equivalent land quality, condition and area is made available, and is located at reasonable convenience for the existing plot holders;***
- ***Clear and significant social, economic and environmental community benefits would be derived from the proposal; and***
- ***Agreement is given by the Trustees of the Shorthouse Bidston Allotment Trust.***

#### **Justification**

- SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.7 (Green Infrastructure) is supported by section 3.6.6 *“Allotments are an important community facility and demand for them is growing steadily. They make a valuable contribution to biodiversity and healthy lifestyles, represent years of public and individual investment, and are worthy of protection.”*
- SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.24 (Healthy Communities) Section B” *Development proposals that would result in the loss of public or private open space, including allotments, without suitable replacement being made, will be resisted unless:*
  - *(a) it can be demonstrated that there is an absence of need or it is surplus to requirements; and*
  - *(b) it does not make a valuable contribution to the amenity and character of the area.”*
- Considerable amenity is provided by the allotments in Headland Road that are owned and managed by the Shorthouse Bidston Allotment Trust (Charity 216334) . Because of the contribution made by the allotments to economic and social sustainability it is important that this resource is strongly protected.
- 2014 Neighbourhood Plan Draft Policy Consultation: 92% of those responding approved of this policy (SLR3 when surveyed).
- The April 2013 Community Survey responses included substantial support for preserving the current environment and maintaining the green areas of the parish in addition to the Conservation Area.

#### **HE9. Flood Plain**

***Proposals for fluvial management which reduce the risk of flooding in flood zones 2 and 3 will be supported providing there is acceptable landscaping.***

***Development within these flood zones will be opposed unless:***

- It does not result in any additional properties being placed at risk of flooding, and***
- The risk of flooding to existing properties is demonstrably not increased.***

***Replacement development (residential or commercial) will be supported if it is demonstrably neutral or beneficial to the capacity of these flood zones and consistent with other policies.***

Welford is defined by the River Avon and it remains a major influence on our environment. History has shown that the river and its needs must be accommodated. Past development and policies have diminished the Avon's flood plain natural ability to cope with flood conditions. In particular Binton Bridges form a barrier to flood water when the arches are blocked by debris.

Under the Planning Practice Guidance for the NPPF less vulnerable commercial development is allowed in all flood risk zones except the functional flood plain. Any replacement development in the flood plain is required to at least be flood plain neutral and will require as a minimum a site-specific flood risk assessment.

Local Plans must undertake a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, NPPF Section 101 –“steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding”.

#### **Justification**

- NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change), Paragraph 100 states *“Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.”*
- NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change), Paragraph 104 also states *“For individual developments on sites allocated in development plans through the Sequential Test, applicants need not apply the Sequential Test. Applications for minor development and changes of use should not be subject to the Sequential or Exception Tests but should still meet the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments.”*
- NPPF Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph 18 states *“The aim should be to keep development out of medium and high flood risk areas (Flood Zones 2 and 3) and other areas affected by other sources of flooding where possible.”*
- NPPF Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph 61 states *“... neighbourhood planning should .... ensure policies steer development to areas of lower flood risk as far as possible; ...”*
- SDC Core Strategy Strategic Objectives include *“The flood plain will have been maintained and, where opportunities arise, restored. The risk from flooding will not have increased. Water bodies will have reached a good status or potential in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.”*
- SDC Core Strategy CS.4 (Water Environment and Flood Risk) Section A *“The flood plain will be maintained and, where opportunities arise, restored in order to maximise natural storage of flood water, reduce flooding problems and increase landscape and conservation value.”*
- 2014 Neighbourhood Plan Draft Policy Consultation: 96% of those responding approved of this policy (ENV6 when surveyed).
- 185 respondents (over 60%) to the April 2013 Community Survey specifically supported protection of the flood plain and the walks and wildlife around it.

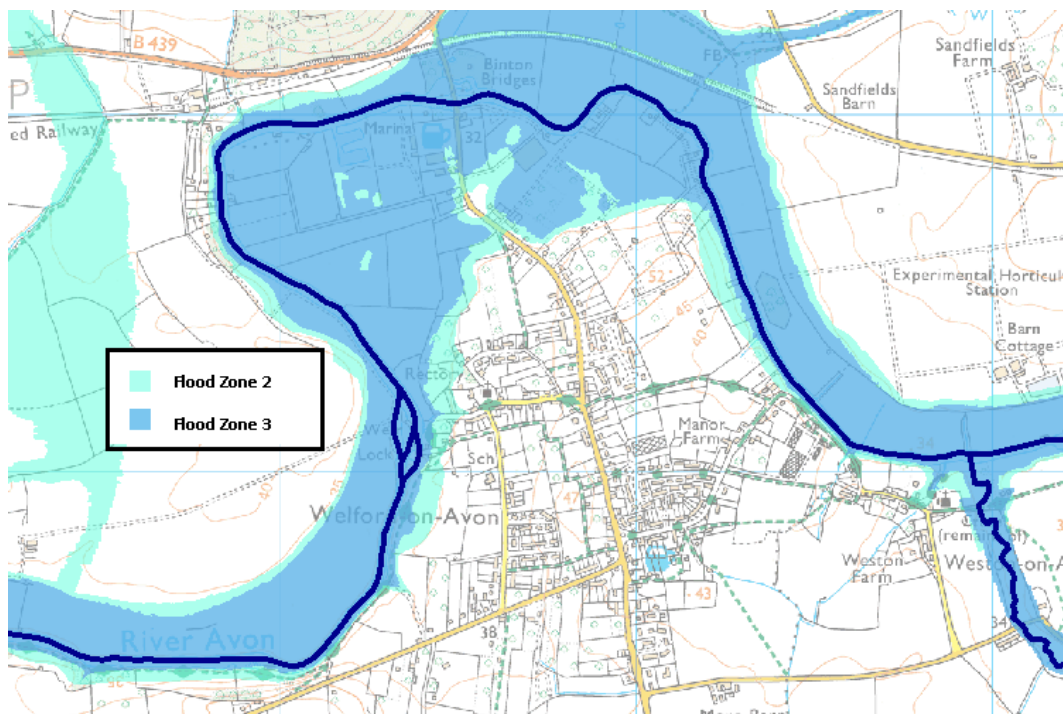


Figure 7 - Flood Zone Map (source: Environment Agency, July 2015)

| Flood Zone                           | Definition  |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Zone 1<br>Low Probability            | Land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding.<br>(Shown as 'clear' on the Flood Map – all land outside Zones 2 and 3)        |
| Zone 2<br>Medium Probability         | Land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding.<br>(Land shown in light blue on the Flood Map)                      |
| Zone 3a<br>High Probability          | Land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding.<br>(Land shown in dark blue on the Flood Map)                                   |
| Zone 3b<br>The Functional Floodplain | <b>This zone comprises land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.</b><br>(Not separately distinguished from Zone 3a on the Flood Map) |

Source: National Planning Policy Guidance, 6 March 2014

## **B. Infrastructure**

A number of services are critical to the successful development of a thriving village in 2031. Some services are already under strain whereas others are woefully inadequate and must be addressed. The key areas are:

- super fast broadband (wired and wireless)
- mains water pressure
- flood defence/protection from the River Avon
- surface water / waste water flooding
- electricity supply reliability & alternative energy supply options.

### **The objectives supported by Infrastructure policies**

- Objective 4      Excellent infrastructure will support an expanded range of community and business activities including a flourishing home working economy.
- Objective 5      Infrastructure to meet the needs of all new developments which impact on the parish will have been secured in advance of their construction. This includes the provision of primary school places at Welford School and the provision of adequate waste water systems.

#### ***INF1. Dark Skies***

***Development must minimise light pollution, avoiding obtrusive external property and street lighting.***

***Development must demonstrate how it will achieve Environmental Zone Lighting Level E1 (Intrinsically Dark).***

Welford is currently devoid of street lighting and has very few areas which are permanently lit overnight. It is not an easy village to negotiate for non-locals after dusk hence reducing the likelihood of burglaries.

All developments will adopt an environmentally sustainable approach, supporting a dark skies environment with no street lighting and responsible PIR based external property lighting. Existing property owners are strongly encouraged to adopt this approach.

Applications for developments which include external lighting will be subject to light control E1 both within the settlement boundary and in the countryside outside the settlement boundary. The applicant will be required to assess the need for the lighting scheme proposed, taking into consideration whether the development could proceed without lighting, whether the benefits of lighting outweigh any drawbacks and if there are any alternative measures that may be taken.

Any use of flood lighting for recreational facilities should be onto non-reflective surfaces using directional lighting.

Local Planning Authorities are recommended to distinguish between broad areas that merit different levels of lighting control, as outlined in the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP), Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution (2011). This can then be used to test the impacts of external artificial lighting.

| <b>Table 1: Light control zones as suggested by the ILP (2011)</b> | <b>Surrounding</b> | <b>Lighting Environment</b> | <b>Examples</b>  |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Zone</b>  |                    |                             |  |
| <b>E0</b>  | Protected          | Dark                        | Designated Dark Sky Zones                              |
| <b>E1</b>  | Natural            | Intrinsically dark          | Areas of darkest skies (see plan, below). Rural areas. |
| <b>E2</b>  | Rural              | Low district brightness     | Village or relatively dark outer suburban locations    |
| <b>E3</b>  | Suburban           | Medium district brightness  | Small town centres/ suburban locations                 |
| <b>E4</b>  | Urban              | High district brightness    | Town centres with high levels of night-time activity   |

### **Justification**

- NPPF Section 11 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) Paragraph 125 states *“By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.”*
- Ashford Borough Council, Dark Skies SPD, adopted in July 2014. Ashford is a borough sensitive to light pollution and this SPD outlines a planning policy context, describes the technical issues involved and defines standard planning conditions to achieve its Dark Skies ambition.
- Saved policy PR.8 of the Local Plan states that ‘planning permission will not be granted for development which could give rise to...light pollution...where the level of emissions is significant enough to cause harm to other land uses. The effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures will be fully taken into account
- SDC Core Strategy makes no reference to Dark Skies and as such this policy is the definitive policy for the Neighbourhood Area of Welford-on-Avon.
- The Gladman Inspector’s report paragraph 84 commends *‘the cherished ‘dark village’ environment that local residents have sought to protect’* She further notes that she was advised that there was no street lighting in the village.
- The Dark Skies policy was supported by over 90% of residents consulted in December 2013 and in the April 2014 Policy Consultation 95% of those responding approved of this policy.

### ***INF2. Infrastructure***

***Development will be supported providing it does not materially affect the core infrastructure services delivered to existing, neighbouring properties. A mitigation plan must be implemented when there is any scheduled interruption to these core infrastructure services.***

***Core infrastructure services are defined as:-***

- ***Mains Water Supply;***
- ***Comprehensive Water Management including flood defences, waste and surface water drainage;***
- ***Mains Electricity; and***
- ***High Speed Broadband.***

The four core infrastructure services listed in the policy have been designated as essential to the quality of life in Welford-on-Avon Parish in the second and third decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It would be desirable for a Comprehensive Infrastructure Plan for the Parish to be drawn up but it is recognised that this will require significant effort, skill and resources.

Where infrastructure problems already exist we will require developers and statutory providers to provide a solution to alleviate the existing problem or a mitigation prior to building work commencing.

Capacity or performance mitigation must be provided where the development could in the opinion of the Parish Council disrupt core service delivery to existing properties during the period the development takes place. Failure to produce an adequate mitigation plan could be a reason for rejecting a planning application.

### **Justification**

- NPPF Core planning principles, Paragraph 17 indicates planning should *“proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs.”*
- NPPF Core planning principles, Paragraph 21 states *“local planning authorities should: ... identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement;”*
- NPPF Section 5 (Supporting high quality communications infrastructure) fundamentally supports high speed broadband and its importance is emphasised in Paragraph 42 which states *“Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth.”*
- NPPF Plan-making section Paragraph 162 requires local planning authorities to work with other authorities and providers to *“assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure ..... and its ability to meet forecast demands;”*
- NPPF Plan making section Paragraph 177 highlights the fact that *“It is equally important to ensure that there is a reasonable prospect that planned infrastructure is deliverable in a timely fashion.”*
- SDC Core Strategy CS.4 (Water Environment and Flood Risk) Section B states *“Applicants should ensure foul and surface water from new development and redevelopment are kept separate. Where sites which currently connect to combined sewers are redeveloped, the opportunity to disconnect surface water and highway drainage from combined sewers must be taken.”*
- SDC Core Strategy CS.24 (Healthy Communities) Section A states *“With the release of land for development, suitable arrangements will be put in place to improve infrastructure ..... to mitigate the impact of development....”*
- SDC Core Strategy Appendix 1: Infrastructure Development Plan
  - 7.1 states *“STW (Severn Trent) are currently developing a plan to cover the period 2015-2040 which is due to be finalised in 2014.*
  - 7.2 states *“Support will be given to flood alleviation measures under consideration by the Environment Agency”*
  - 7.4 states *“The Core Strategy looks beyond the aims of the sub-regional broadband project and seeks all new development to have connections enabling download speeds of 30Mbps in accordance with the Government’s commitment to the EU2020 Digital Agenda.”*
- 2014 Neighbourhood Plan Draft Policy Consultation: 90% of those responding approved of this policy (INF2 and INF4 when surveyed).
- Flooding from River Avon, Surface Water Flooding and inadequate capacity of the foul water drainage were all highlighted through village feedback in the April 2013 Community Survey and the April 2014 consultation on the first draft of The Welford Plan.

### **INF3. Access to Primary Education**

***New Residential Development will be supported where there are adequate primary school places***

- ***at schools within a 6 mile journey by road and,***
- ***readily accessed by school bus or scheduled public transport***

***or***

- ***where the proposed development includes plans to create adequate places, ideally at Welford-on-Avon Primary School.***

Provision of primary school education is an essential resource for the community of Welford-on-Avon for the second and third decades of the 21st century. All children of primary school age should have the option of being educated in the local school to maximise sustainability through minimised travel, social cohesion, and a strengthened community.

The 6 mile upper limit to a choice of schools, (extended to a 15 mile upper limit to a school preferred on grounds of religion or belief) are not walking routes, and should therefore be measured along road routes.

Developers and statutory providers are required to ensure adequate provision is available at all times. It should be noted Welford School is full at the time of writing and creation of more places will necessitate a move from one form to two form entry which would require major investment in facilities.

#### **Justification**

- June Maw the Interim Service Manager at Warwickshire County Council was specifically asked to comment on this policy. Her feedback was ‘*Thank you for sight of the Neighbourhood Plan, especially INF3. My only comment would be a suggestion that the policy read “development will only be permitted where there are adequate places .... or where the proposed development includes plans to create adequate places.”*’
- NPPF Section 8 (Promoting healthy communities), Paragraph 72 “The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:
  - give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and
  - work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.”
- SDC Core Strategy Appendix 1: Infrastructure Development Plan states in Section 3 (Education) “*At primary age, WCC needs to consider how best to meet additional pressure in Stratford, Wellesbourne, Welford on Avon, Fenny Compton, Lighthorne Heath, Tanworth in Arden, Studley, Alcester, Napton, Southam, Ilmington, Shipston, Quinton, Henley in Arden, Harbury, Great Alne, Bidford on Avon, Ettington and Long Compton. This will not see expansions of all of the named schools but will require discussions with all local providers to ensure a sustainable solution.*”
- 2014 Neighbourhood Plan Draft Policy Consultation: 93% of those responding approved of this policy (HLU8 when surveyed).
- Home to school travel and transport guidance (Statutory guidance for local authorities) DfE, July 2014.

## **C. Economic Development**

The proportion of economically active residents who commute to and from the village is high. Over recent years, the number engaged in traditional rural activities has significantly reduced. Local businesses typically employ small numbers of people, for example Reids Storage, Kerr and Noble, Findons Nurseries, Welford Marina and the local public houses.

Encouraging local employment opportunities that enable Welford residents to work locally full or part time will enhance sustainability of the village:

- Economically: by increasing the use of local shops, pubs and other businesses
- Socially: by encouraging a more vibrant village during working hours
- Environmentally: by reducing the use of cars for commuting.

Local employment can be encouraged by a mix including:

- Home and remote working
- Live/work units
- Small business units
- Increasing employment at existing employees within the village
- Resisting the closure of existing shops and pubs
- Conversion of existing buildings to business use.

Home and remote working is supported by high speed broadband.

### **How the Local Plan supports the objectives:**

In general the SDC Local Plan amply provides policies to support economic development in a village such as Welford.

In principle the following are supported

- a. Maintenance of commercial property in the village even as a change of business category (SDC Core Strategy CS.24)
- b. New shops opening in Welford (SDC Core Strategy CS.22)
- c. New farm shops selling local produce (SDC Core Strategy AS.10 Category P)
- d. Conversion of non-residential buildings to other business use (SDC Core Strategy AS.10)

**NO SPECIFIC WELFORD PLAN POLICIES OVER AND ABOVE THOSE IN NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND THE EMERGING CORE STRATEGY ARE REQUIRED FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

## **D. Housing & Land Use**

### **The Welford Plan Objectives supported by Housing & Land Use policies**

1. The Heritage Assets of the village and the surrounding countryside, its character and street scene will have been conserved. These assets include listed buildings, conservation areas, important views and open spaces, sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), river amenities and other specified sites.
2. The rural nature of the parish with open countryside, mature woodland with pleasant views set in a green environment will have been preserved.
4. Excellent infrastructure will support an expanded range of community and business activities including a flourishing home working economy.
5. Infrastructure to meet the needs of all new developments which impact on the parish will have been secured in advance of their construction. This includes the provision of primary school places at Welford School, primary health care services and the provision of adequate waste water systems.
6. A mix of market and affordable housing developments that achieve the ambition of the Local Plan in the period to 2031 will have been provided in a sustainable, phased manner and sympathetically integrated into the village environment.
7. Excellent design of all new development reflecting the character of the village will be championed.
9. Traffic will have been managed and through traffic will have been controlled thus ensuring the village roads are safe for all residents. Any development will minimise commuting and traffic movements.
10. Public transport will have been improved, and the extensive network of footpaths and cycle ways further developed.
11. Sustainable green and low energy consumption using existing and emerging technologies will have been championed.

### **Principles for housing development**

As a general principle, housing developments will be supported which:

- meet established local housing needs
- comply with the Local Plan
- comply with policies (such as size and dispersal) identified in The Welford Plan
- are delivered in a sustainable way consistent with our village environment.

## **Housing context**

### **Local Plan Review 1996 – 2011**

The Stratford-on-Avon District Council Local Plan policy STR.2 provided for 1450 new houses in the period 2005 – 2011. The Local Plan also defines in policy STR.1 a hierarchy of settlements, including Local Centre Villages such as Welford-on-Avon.

New housing in Local Centre Villages is provided by policy COM.1 which supports such communities in identifying housing needs that they would wish to have satisfied at the local level. The views of the local community as

expressed preferably in a Parish Plan (or equivalent) will be taken into account in the planning process. Welford-on-Avon undertook such a Parish Plan in 2007 and a Housing Needs Survey in 2008 updated by an addendum in April 2012.

Policy COM.1 constrains residential development in the open countryside except in accordance with the provision of individual policies in the Local Plan.

Many of the policies of the Local Plan, including STR.1, STR.2 and COM.1 were saved when the Local Plan expired on 14 July 2009. However, SDC now consider that these three policies are out of date and are superseded by the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

### **NPPF references to rural housing**

Paragraph 55 of the NPPF requires that, in order *‘to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances.’*

### **Core strategy process**

The Submission version of Stratford-on-Avon District Council’s Core Strategy (June 2014) was submitted for Examination on 30 September 2014.

The Core Strategy was based on a total housing objective for the District of 10,800 homes for the period 2011 - 2031. However, following a Cabinet report **published on 1 Dec 2014, SDC proposed to increase the figures for housing supply in the Core Strategy from 10,800 to 11,300.**

A public Examination of the Core Strategy before a planning inspector was held from 6 to 29 January 2015. On 27 January, SDC submitted to the Examination a document titled ‘Main Modifications’ which proposed alterations, some significant, to the wording of policies of the Submission Core Strategy. The Inspector issued an interim report on 18 March 2015 in which he required SDC to revisit certain topics, including housing numbers.

A briefing note published by SDC in May 2015 ‘hoped that the resumed Examination hearings would complete before the end of the year’, and SDC have previously indicated that the Core Strategy may be adopted around April 2016.

In June 2015, an updated version of the Submission Core Strategy was published which included the proposed modifications and other corrections. Accompanying this document was a briefing note to Members produced by SDC’s Planning Manager

### **Housing numbers**

The Core Strategy designates Welford-on-Avon as a category 2 Local Service Village (LSV). This categorisation is based on the size and services of the village as follows:

- Size of settlement (i.e. within the physical confines of the village); 200 – 600 dwellings
- General store; medium or small with medium to long opening hours
- Primary school; large, 210 or more places
- Public transport; fair, less frequent than two hourly Mon – Sat but including a morning and afternoon work service.

Policy CS16 (Housing Development) of the Submission Core Strategy allocates the housing objective across the defined settlement hierarchy to LSVs and in particular ‘Category 2- approximately 51 to 75 in each.’

The June 2015 Core Strategy (including proposed modifications) significantly changes the wording of policy CS16 in respect of LSVs. In order to meet SDC’s objectively assessed housing need, policy CS16 distributes 2000 homes across the 4 categories of LSVs. Of these, it distributes to ‘Category 2 - approximately 700 homes in total, of which no more than around 12% should be provided in an individual settlement.’ This would result in a total of

approximately 84 homes in Welford-on-Avon for the plan period to 2031.

Note that policy CS16 potentially over-allocates homes in LSV's. Thus if each of the 10 Category 2 LSV's met its housing objective of 84 then 120% of the target of 700 would be achieved. This allows, for example, villages in the green belt that may be constrained for development sites.

In his June 2015 Members' briefing note, SDC's Planning Manager wrote at paragraph 2.6.4,

*'The Inspector has advised that he does not anticipate further change to the overall quantum of development to be delivered in the LSVs. He finds that there should be limits to the dispersal of development and that any increase beyond 2000 over the plan period would need to be robustly justified by the Council. Resulting from the discussions during the hearing sessions, the Inspector clearly favours an approach that he feels would be more flexible than that set out in the submission plan. This would involve setting a combined target for housing provision in each of the four separate categories of LSV, rather than a more specific range for each individual village. A guideline as to the approximate upper limit for growth in each settlement would be provided by establishing that no more than a specified percentage of the combined total should be built in any one village.'*

This would result in an Approximate Upper Limit of 84 new houses in Welford-on-Avon during the plan period.

### **Distribution of development**

Policy CS.15 of the Submission Core Strategy defines where development will take place. In particular, for LSV's it will be:

- 1) On sites to be identified in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document
- 2) On sites identified in a Neighbourhood Plan; and
- 3) Through small-scale schemes on unidentified but suitable sites within their Built-Up Area Boundary (where defined) or otherwise within their physical confines.

In relation to these 3 classes of sites:

- 1) Consultation on the Site Allocations Plan closed on 2 October 2014, and no further draft plan has yet been published. See below for the result of the 'call for sites' associated with this consultation.
- 2) As explained elsewhere, The Welford Plan has chosen not to include Site Allocation
- 3) Small scale schemes on unidentified (windfall) and sustainable sites would offer the opportunity for a modest scale of additional development in Welford-on-Avon phased across the remainder of the plan period to 2031 in line with Neighbourhood Plan policy HLU2, 'Phasing of Development'  
Paragraph 5.2.7 of policy CS.16 describes 'windfalls' as *'those homes that get permission and are built on unidentified sites such as small infill schemes and conversions, or where a larger site unexpectedly comes forward for development such as a former factory. The policy makes an allowance for windfalls across the plan period based on an analysis of the rate of windfalls on small sites i.e. less than 5 homes.'*

### **Site Allocations Plan**

The Site Allocations Plan regulation 18 consultation closed on 2 October 2014. Relevant points from the consultation document include:

- *'The purpose of a settlement boundary is to distinguish land within the boundary where new development is acceptable 'in principle' from land outside the boundary where, subject to certain exceptions, development is not acceptable. It is proposed that the Site allocations Plan will set settlement boundaries for Local Service Villages'*
- *'It is proposed that the Site Allocations Plan will include the following:*
  - *Background information including the number of homes already built since 2011 and the residual 'to-find' figure during the plan period to 2031,*
  - *Identified site allocations for housing development to meet the 'to-find' figure in Local Service Villages.*
  - *Phasing policy to ensure sites are built throughout the plan period.'*

### Welford housing numbers in the plan period

Since the start of the Welford Plan period (2011 – 2031) the following planning applications for 109 houses have been approved. As at 29 July 2015, applications for further 9 houses are awaiting determination or grant, and applications for a further 36 houses are at appeal. Thus applications for a total of 154 houses have been approved, are awaiting determination or grant by SDC or are at appeal.

Table 1 – Housing approvals in the Parish since start of plan period, as at 29 July 2015

| Application  | Address   | Net new dwellings      | Cumulative total |
|--------------|---|------------------------|------------------|
| 12/02405/FUL | Laurel House, Church Street                     | 1                      | 1                |
| 13/00616/FUL | Compass House, Binton Road                      | 1                      | 2                |
| 13/01178/FUL | The Oriel House, Church Lane                    | 1                      | 3                |
| 13/00612/FUL | Rumer Stud Farm,<br>Long Marston Road           | 1                      | 4                |
| 13/01918/FUL | Ashgrove, Long Marston Road                     | 20<br>(7 affordable)   | 24               |
| 13/02155/OUT | Hawkwood, Barton Road                           | 3                      | 27               |
| 13/02445/FUL | Land south of Barton Road                       | 12<br>(8 affordable)   | 39               |
| 13/03299/FUL | Tew Park, Binton Road                           | 2                      | 41               |
| 14/00609/FUL | Elm Close, Binton Road                          | 1                      | 42               |
| 14/00886/FUL | Mullions,<br>Binton Road                        | 1                      | 43               |
| 14/00985/FUL | Compass House<br>Binton Road (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) | 1                      | 44               |
| 14/01329/FUL | Welford Hill Farm Barn, Long Marston<br>Road    | 1                      | 45               |
| 14/01370/FUL | Land adj to Church Bank, Binton Road            | 1                      | 46               |
| 13/02054/FUL | Fairlea,<br>Barton Road                         | 18<br>(6 affordable)   | 64               |
| 14/01391/OUT | Station Works,<br>Evesham Road                  | 24<br>(35% affordable) | 88               |
| 13/02520/FUL | The Willows, Long Marston Road                  | 14<br>(5 affordable)   | 102              |
| 14/03310/FUL | Tew Park, Binton Road (2 <sup>nd</sup> )        | 1                      | 103              |
| 14/02817/FUL | Land adj to Daffodil Cottage, Keytes<br>Lane    | 1                      | 104              |
| 13/03334/FUL | Land off Millfield House, Binton Road           | 4                      | 108              |
| 14/01646/FUL | Withy, Boat Lane                                | 1                      | 109              |

Table 2 – Housing applications outstanding as at 29 July 2015

| Application  | Address                   | Net new dwellings | Awaiting -           |
|--------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 14/02810/OUT | N of Millers Close        | 30                | Appeal               |
| 15/01604/FUL | 238 High Street           | 1                 | Determination by SDC |
| 14/03173/FUL | Bramble Bank, Duck Lane   | 6                 | Appeal               |
| 15/02101/FUL | Rear of Tokoloshe House   | 5                 | Determination by SDC |
| 15/02391/FUL | Rear of Box Acre          | 2                 | Determination by SDC |
| 15/01410/FUL | Rear of Greenbank Cottage | 1                 | Determination by SDC |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |                           | <b>45</b>         |                      |

The call for sites associated with the Site Allocations Plan consultation described above resulted in 5 sites in Welford-on-Avon being put forward as follows:

- Two proposals for 24 houses at the former Welford railway station and for up to 15 houses on land at The Willows. Applications for both have already been approved.
- A proposal for 14 houses on land east of Weston House for which an application has been refused by SDC.
- An application for up to 95 houses on land north of Milcote Road was refused at appeal on 18 December 2014.
- There has as yet been no application submitted for 5 bungalows at Home Farm, Barton Road.

Consultation on The Welford Plan has progressed against the background of further planning applications being approved so that, only 5 years into the plan period, approvals have been already granted for houses, some 30% above the Approximate Upper Limit of 84 given in the June 2015 Core Strategy (including proposed modifications). This excess rises to 84% above the target if current applications were to be granted by SDC or allowed on appeal.

### **Approach to housing policy taken in The Welford Plan**

As a consequence of the housing approvals in Welford-on-Avon since the start of the Plan Period in 2011, The Welford Plan takes the following broad approach to further housing development:

- Inside the village boundary only small, infill sites of normally no more than 5 dwellings will be supported and all development proposals will have regard to the Approximate Upper Limit of 84 houses, see policy HLU1
- Outside the village boundary (and hence in the countryside) development will only be supported on brownfield sites or for clearly defined purposes, see policy HE6

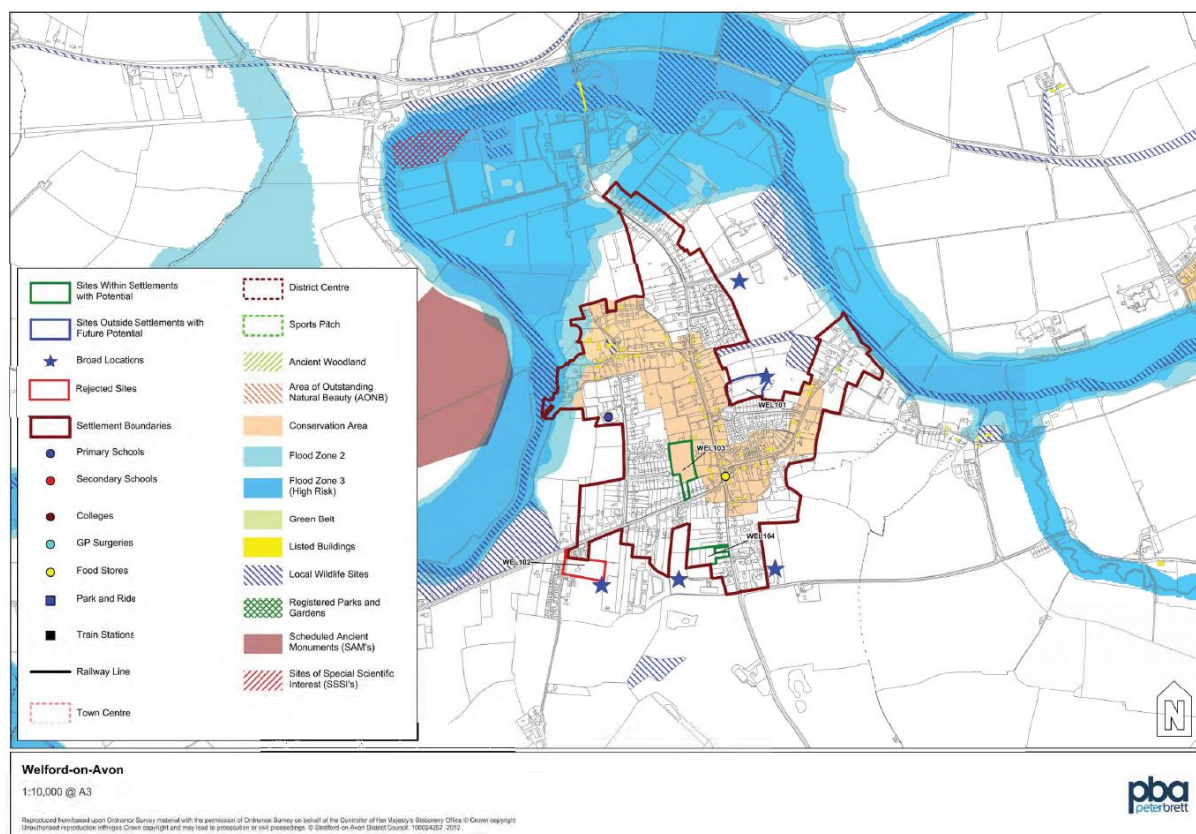
### **Definition of the village boundary**

The Welford Plan has adopted the 2012 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Map shown in Figure 8 as the definitive basis for the build-up area village boundary. This is the boundary which was included as evidence for the development of the Core Strategy. This boundary was itself based on that shown in Map 2.22 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan of May 2000.

SDC are preparing a Site Allocations Plan the current target for the adoption of which is March 2017. Welford Parish Council anticipates engaging proactively with SDC in developing this Plan but, given that the target number of new houses for Welford-on-Avon has already been achieved (see Housing numbers on page 30 & 31), it is expected that the main purpose for this village would be to review the built-up area boundary.

Until adoption of any changes recommended in SDC's Site Allocations Plan, the Welford built-up area boundary will remain that as shown in Figure 8.

Any planning application for development outside the village boundary will be considered against Welford Plan Policy HE5 - Open Countryside.



**Figure 8 - Welford-on-Avon Key Locations & Built-Up Area Boundary in 2012**

Once the Core Strategy has been adopted, and housing requirement finally identified, it may be that SDC will identify sites in a Site Allocations DPD and review the built-up area boundary for the village.

### Site Allocations in The Welford Plan

A Neighbourhood Plan may contain Site Allocations which precisely define sites for either a specified number of houses or for employment purposes, and which would be the outcome of an objective assessment of possible sites within the Parish. The Steering Committee, after detailed discussion, took the decision not to include Site Allocations in the Welford Plan. The reasons for this decision include:

- Sites with approved permission for housing development well in excess of the Approximate Upper Limit have already been allocated.
- To avoid a potential challenge to the Welford Plan, all possible sites would need to be fully evaluated against exacting criteria. Sites could not be arbitrarily excluded from assessment which is necessarily impartial and fully transparent. In the Steering Committee's judgement SDC are better resourced and skilled to perform this considerable task.
- The Community Survey showed a high degree of divergence as to the most and least preferred sites for development.
- A Site Allocation exercise may well trigger the need for a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment and possibly an assessment under the EU Habitats Directive, neither of which the Steering Committee has the skills or resource to undertake.
- SDC's announcement that it will be producing a Site Allocations Plan, including for Welford-on-Avon, provided the best available option for the village in the view of the Welford Plan steering committee.

### ***HLU1. New Residential Development***

***New Residential Development within the built-up area boundary will be supported providing it is on an infill site and is small scale, normally not more than five dwellings.***

***New Residential Development in the Neighbourhood Plan Area over the Plan Period must have due regard to the Approximate Upper Limit defined for Category 2 Local Service Villages.***

***Where an application is in close proximity to another site(s) where, during the plan period, permission has been granted or for which an application has been made, the aggregate number of dwellings on all these sites must not exceed small scale.***

***New Residential Development of greater than five dwellings should provide a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement identifying the impact the proposal would have on the highway network.***

***New Residential Development outside the Built-Up Area Boundary will be supported if it is in accordance with policy HE5.***

***The Built-Up Area Boundary is shown in Figure 8.***

Welford looks forward to playing its full part in supporting SDC in achieving its goals for sustainable housing within the District. Paragraph 184 of the NPPF which is echoed by emerging policy CS.16.C states that Neighbourhood Plans should not support less development than required by the Local Plan. Because of particular constraints of the village and weaknesses of its infrastructure, Welford would not be an appropriate location to sustainably deliver housing numbers in excess of the Local Plan. These constraints include the traffic pinch points at both the Bell Inn and at the grade 2 listed Binton Bridges. In addition the village sewerage system has known capacity and design issues.

The 'Housing Context' section above clearly demonstrates that Welford-on-Avon has already well exceeded any likely target in the emerging Core Strategy for housing provision within the Plan Period. Whilst it is reasonable, therefore to provide for small, windfall developments on infill sites, it is inappropriate that Welford should support larger developments through the remainder of the Plan Period.

The lower threshold for a Transport Assessment/Statement is a consequence of the traffic constraints in the village referred to above and significant developments at several sites to the south.

### **Justification**

- Saved policy STR.2 of the Local Plan requires that '*planning permission will not be granted for housing proposals which would lead to or exacerbate significant over-provision of housing in relation to the requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy, either individually or cumulatively*'
- NPPF paragraph 32 requires that '*all developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment.*' Because of the existing traffic constraints within the village, including pinch points at the Bell Inn and Binton Bridges, together with the significant volumes of additional traffic through the village from the several significant developments at Long Marston, it is appropriate that any new developments over 5 dwellings should be accompanied by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. These should demonstrate that sustainable transport modes have been taken up (NPPF paragraph 32 first bullet) and that improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development (NPPF paragraph 32 third bullet)
- SDC Site Allocation Plan consultation dated August 2014 states that the Site Allocation process needs only to identify allocations for housing development to meet the "To Find" figure, that is the difference between the number of homes already built since 2011 and the 'To Be Provided' number for the Plan Period to 2031.

- Significant numbers of respondents to the Community Survey wanted to see little or no development within the parish. Where development did occur there was a desire for the impact to be minimised.
- The Community Survey also asked in question 19 ‘what would you consider sustainable development and how would you like to see it implemented?’ 25 of the responses to this question focussed on ‘small developments’ as being key to the ongoing sustainability of Welford-on-Avon.

#### ***HLU2. Phasing of New Residential Development***

***Residential development will be supported if it is phased in line with the emerging Core Strategy***

The emerging Core Strategy phases developments over the Plan Period (2011-2031) for reasons of sustainability. CS.16 states that *“the provision of new homes will be monitored to ensure continuous delivery across the plan period, to avoid either over- or under-provision of housing against the overall District requirement. Allocated sites will only come forward ahead of their phasing timescale if monitoring shows a significant shortfall in housing delivery across the previous phases and there appears to be no reasonable prospect of earlier phased sites being developed within the plan period.”*

All new development in Welford-on-Avon should be phased across the Plan Period as described in the emerging Core Strategy policy CS.16.

#### **Justification**

- SDC Core Strategy policy CS.16 calls for a phasing policy to ensure sites are built throughout the Plan Period.
- The Site Allocations Plan consultation proposes that the Plan will include *‘a phasing policy to ensure sites are built throughout the plan period, taking into account the delivery of any Neighbourhood Plan Allocations’*. As noted above, The Welford Plan does not include Site Allocation.
- Over 80% of parishioners responding to the 2013 Community Survey supported phasing of all development across the 15 year period of The Welford Plan.

### **HLU3. Design Excellence**

***Development which demonstrates high levels of design excellence will be supported.***

***Development should:***

- *Respect established building lines and rhythm of the architecture including the separation between buildings, and between buildings and the site boundaries,*
- *Respect established plot widths, density, footprint and scale in the immediate neighbourhood of the proposed development,*
- *Not have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area, including the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties,*
- *Observe the Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide,*
- *Take into account Building for Life 12 criteria,*
- *Embrace design which reflects the vernacular and unique characteristics of Welford-on-Avon as highlighted in the Village Design Statement or demonstrate clear innovation (as contrasted with pastiche or off-the-shelf designs).*

### **Justification**

- Paragraph 58 of the NPPF requires that 'neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area.'
- Paragraph 64 of the NPPF requires that 'permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.'
- Saved policy PR.1 of the Local Plan requires that 'all development proposals should respect, and where possible, enhance the quality and character of the area.'
- Saved policy DEV.1 of the Local Plan requires that 'development proposals will be required to have regard to the character and quality of the local area through the layout and design of new buildings and the extension or change of use of existing buildings'
- Saved policy COM.12 of the Local Plan that a replacement dwelling in areas such as Welford-on-Avon may be permitted where its scale, design and location would cause no unacceptable harm to the neighbouring properties or to the character of the locality.
- Policy CS.9 of the emerging Core Strategy requires developments to improve the quality of the public realm and enhance the sense of place, reflecting the character and distinctiveness of the locality. It further requires design to be attractive, sensitive, distinctive, connected, environmentally sustainable, accessible, safe and healthy.
- Stratford District Design Guide addresses the challenge of managing change in order to foster and protect the identity of place.
- The Welford-on-Avon Village Design Statement contains many design principles which support the elements of this policy.

#### **HLU4. Footpaths & Cycle-ways**

*Development that abuts footpaths and cycle ways should use natural hedging in preference to timber based panel or board fencing or any solid walls in order to enhance the intrinsic environmental quality and public amenity of these paths.*

*Development in the vicinity of this network shall, where possible, include proposals to connect to, extend and develop footpaths to improve access and safety for all users.*

*New footpaths should be a minimum of 2 metres wide and have the same boundary treatments as specified in the first paragraph of this policy.*

A much valued characteristic of Welford is its network of footpaths and rights of way, many of which are at the heart of the village. Views can be partially or totally hidden by close board fencing and the effect of such fencing on both sides of narrow footpaths can result in a claustrophobic tunnel effect cut off from the surrounding landscape.

The network has significant amenity value for residents and visitors alike. The aim of extending it is to maximize road safety for pedestrians of all ages and abilities as well as cyclists by ensuring safe access to the centre of the village. This could be achieved in many ways, for example by providing pavements where required, improving existing pavements and road crossing points or including the provision of dropped kerbs.

Developers should ensure that boundaries next or adjacent to footpaths should predominantly comprise natural planting and that there are provisions to ensure that this is maintained.

A safe pedestrian network will enhance the environmental sustainability by minimizing the need for local car journeys.

The Parish Council will continue to exercise their voluntary role in maintaining the entire network of footpaths and cycle ways and encourage landowners to discharge their statutory duty to adequately maintain boundaries abutting them.

#### **Justification**

- Saved policy COM.9 of the Local Plan expects that *‘the layout and design of development proposals will incorporate facilities for walking and cycling that are safe and convenient to use, and well connected to other parts of the settlement. Proposals will not be supported if the function of existing walking and cycling facilities would be compromised’*
- Policy CS.9 of the emerging Core Strategy requires development to enhance the network of footpaths and retain existing rights of way.
- Stratford on Avon District Design Guide (section 7.4.1 to 7.4.6) addresses boundary features
- Community Survey: respondees to Q16 prioritised the improvement and maintenance of footways, cycle ways and bridleways as an area for focus.
- Village Design Statement noted that *‘Welford is very fortunate in having many pathways through and round the village and it is to be hoped that these are not reduced in any way. Hedges must also be retained’*



**Figure 9 – Part of the extensive network of footpaths**

#### ***HLU5. New Residential Development Mix and Type***

***New Residential Development should reflect the mix defined in the Emerging Core Strategy  
Proposals for the following types of development will be particularly supported:***

- ***Local Choice schemes based on objectively assessed local housing needs***
- ***The provision of dwellings appropriate to older residents wishing to down-size, including bungalows***
- ***Houses specifically designed for first-time buyers***
- ***Extra Care accommodation, as defined by Warwickshire County Council.***

The Community Survey identified key issues in respect of housing mix and type:

- The mix of new market homes should support a change in the village housing stock towards smaller, family homes thus encouraging a re-balancing of village demographics towards one more in line with the district as a whole.
- The mix of housing should enable the elderly to move more easily into appropriate housing within the village both through 'down sizing' and by moving into sheltered accommodation, and so not be obliged to move out of the village. This is particularly important given the age profile of Welford-on-Avon which shows a higher median age (51 compared with 46) and a higher percentage of residents over 65 (29% compared with 22%) than the district as a whole. See the Demographics data in Appendix C.
- The building of bungalows should be encouraged, not least because many bungalows have been taken out of the village housing stock in recent years by their re-development as 2 storey houses.

#### **Justification**

- Paragraph 50 of the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community
- Question 10 of the Community Survey also identified the requirement for accommodation within the village for elderly people. Of the responses to this question, 12.6% identified the need for sheltered accommodation and 18.4% for accommodation for the elderly, excluding sheltered, a total of 31%. One aim is to allow more elderly Welford residents to continue to live within the village close to their roots, friends and relatives. Appropriate warden assisted bungalows will therefore be strongly supported.
- The Community Survey showed that, in addition, 30% wanted to see housing being provided for people with Welford roots. The provision of a higher proportion of 1 and 2 bedroom homes should help existing residents who no longer wish to live in a large house but want to remain in the village to 'down size' to a smaller home.

#### **HLU6. Garden and Back-land Development**

*Development in residential gardens, back-land development and tandem development will be supported if it:*

- *Does not have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area and neighbouring properties;*
- *Does not have the potential for loss of amenity of neighbouring properties; through loss of privacy, loss of daylight, visual intrusion by a building or structure, loss of car parking, loss of mature vegetation or landscape screening; and*
- *Is of a scale and size suitable for the plot.*

Each application for such development will be assessed on its impact on the distinctive character of the village, impact on neighbouring properties and alignment with the Village Design Statement and the Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide.

#### **Justification**

- NPPF paragraph 53 resists inappropriate development of residential gardens where, for example, development would cause harm to the local area.
- Stratford District Design Guide addresses the challenge of managing change in order to foster and protect the identity of place.
- Community Survey question 11 showed a strong bias against building in domestic gardens, with 177 respondees being totally against whilst 25 were fully supportive.

#### **HLU7. Development at the village edge**

*Development at the edge of the village and visible from the surrounding open countryside will be supported providing it creates a sensitive transition from the countryside to the village.*

*Development should:*

- *Be of a similar density and scale to buildings in the immediate neighbourhood and 'round off' the village rather than create new, visually intrusive additions to it*
- *Not reduce the impact of distinguishing natural features (such as tree lines) or require any reduction of trees, hedgerows or other vegetation which changes the character of the surrounding landscape*
- *Use appropriate plant species in a comprehensive landscape scheme, conserve traditional boundary treatments wherever possible and use boundary treatments which integrate best with the rural character*
- *Mitigate any potential increased flood or surface water threat.*

A sensitive transition will allow a gradual visual transition between open countryside and the built up area. This will be achieved by sensitive use of the natural topography, the design, layout, density and height of building, and the shielding impact of existing and proposed tree and hedge planting.

Peripheral fencing should be shielded using traditional Warwickshire hedging to the same height bordering the development.

### **Justification**

- Paragraph 61 of the NPPF notes that ‘securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address ... the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.
- Village Design Statement highlights ‘Soft edges to the village are desirable – no large blocks of buildings on the periphery’.
- Stratford District Design Guide section 7.4 addresses the general treatment of boundaries facing open countryside and is particularly against the use of close board fencing.
- This policy is in line with the Inspector at the Gladman Inquiry who commented at paragraphs 63 and 64 of her report which dismissed an appeal of a proposed development close to but outside the village boundary that:

*‘ the density of development proposed would be in complete contrast to the established pattern at the edge of the village here. The existing strong vegetated boundary along the edge of the village here would prevent a development of the scale and density proposed from relating visually to the housing within the village. It would not be seen as a ‘rounding off’, or an appropriate or sympathetic expansion of the village. Rather, it would appear almost as a self-contained residential estate within an open countryside location. Although planting could help mitigate the visual impact of the development in views from the north, that would take at least 15-20 years to mature and even then, there would still be visual permeability in the winter months. The existing settlement does not require new planting to mitigate or soften its boundary with the adjacent countryside.’*

### **HLU8. Height of Buildings**

***Development of any building of more than two and half storeys will not be supported.***

A two and half storey house is defined as one in which the loft space between the ceiling of the first floor and the roof above is provided with natural light or ventilation either by dormers, ‘velux’ type windows or by windows in gable ends. Any habitable space therein must conform to the relevant Building Regulations.

Although there are currently a handful of two and a half storey and three storey older properties in the village, the vast majority of properties are currently one and two storey.

For the avoidance of doubt this policy applies equally to new builds and conversions.

This policy permits conversion of roof space to accommodation provided the ridge height of the property is not increased and the sloping roof is maintained.

### **Justification**

- The Community Survey showed strong support for smaller properties including bungalows versus large new housing developments.
- The two and a half storey limit has been distilled from the Community Survey and then confirmed in consultation with parishioners in April 2014.

#### **HLU9. Caravan sites**

***Proposals to amend permission for holiday caravan sites to allow permanent residency will not be supported.***

***New caravan sites for either holiday or permanent residence will not be supported.***

Currently there are 148 holiday caravans on four sites within the Village, in addition to 26 park homes on a single site, see breakdown in table 3 of Appendix C. Current planning permissions for the 4 holiday caravan sites in Welford have some combination of these conditions:

- To close for a number of months each year
- To be used only for holiday use
- Not to be used as a main residence

Removing these conditions and allowing permanent residence (commonly known as park homes) would be akin to building a development of new houses in terms of impact on the sustainability and resources of the village.

#### **Justification**

- Saved policy CTY.8 of the Local Plan states that *‘proposals for new sites in rural areas for positioning mobile homes or caravans for permanent accommodation will be resisted’*
- In reply to Q21 of the Community Survey, 99% of respondents thought that the quantity of caravan accommodation was either about right or too many.



**Figure 10 – Binton Bridges caravan site as seen from Binton Bridges**

## Glossary

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Affordable Housing                       | is provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market and involves some measure of public funding. They can offer a variety of tenure, for example rental or shared equity.   |
| Approximate Upper Limit                  | A guideline as to the Approximate Upper Limit for growth in each settlement would be provided by establishing that no more than a specified percentage of the combined total for housing provision for a Category of LSVs should be built in any one village in the Plan Period. In the case of Welford-on-Avon (a Category 2 LSV) this number of new dwellings is 12% of 700 which equates to 84 dwellings.   |
| Backland Development                     | Backland development is the development of land that lies to the rear of an existing property which normally fronts a road. Access is via a separate drive which can be from the road serving the original property, or a road to the side or rear of it.  |
| Brownfield ( previously developed land ) | Land that has previously contained a permanent structure. Domestic gardens, allotments and land that has been occupied by agricultural buildings are now explicitly excluded.  |
| Built-Up Area Boundary                   | A boundary drawn around a settlement such as Welford-on-Avon as part of SDC's Site Allocations Plan. The boundary will include within it adequate land allocated to development to meet the housing target defined for the settlement.   |
| Development                              | The carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land<br>New Residential Development – any new build of a residential dwelling.   |
| Emerging Core Strategy                   | is the first and most important of Stratford District Council planning policy documents, because it will set the course for everything to follow. It will present a vision of how they want the District to look and function in future years.<br><br>There are some big challenges facing the District, which the Emerging Core Strategy needs to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where should new homes be built and new jobs located?</li> <li>• How can we meet the housing needs of local people?</li> <li>• How can we reduce the impacts of climate change?</li> <li>• How can we make sure everyone can reach the services they need?</li> <li>• How do we protect our rich heritage and landscape?</li> </ul> |
| Development Plan Documents               | DPDs build on the foundations of the Emerging Core Strategy and provide more detailed planning guidance in specific areas. SPDs that are of particular relevance to Welford-on-Avon include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Site Allocations</b> DPD which will define specific sites for housing and employment.</li> <li>• <b>Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations</b> DPD which will define the location of sites for gypsies</li> </ul>  |
| Flood Risk Zones                         | These were defined in the Technical Guidance to the NPPF superceded by and reaffirmed in the Planning Practice Guidance of 6 April 2014. Welford has all four flood zone types:-<br><br>Zone 1 – low probability – less than 1 in 1000 year flood risk<br><br>Zone 2 – medium probability – between 1in 100 and 1 in 1000 year flood risk<br><br>Zone 3a – high probability – less than 1 in 100 year flood risk<br><br>Zone 3b – functional flood plain – typically flooding more than once in 20 years   |
| Gladman Inquiry                          | Appeal reference APP/J3720/A/14/2217495 by Gladman Developments Limited against a decision by SDC to refuse permission for a development of up to 95 houses at land north of Milcote Road, Welford-on-Avon. Decision date 18 December 2014   |
| Greenfield                               | Land that has not been previously developed. It is general planning policy that brownfield land should be used for development in preference to greenfield land.   |
| Local Development Framework              | is a 'folder' of local development documents which collectively will set out the spatial planning strategy, policies and proposals for the local planning authority's area. In the case of Welford the planning authority is Stratford District Council.   |
| Local Development Scheme                 | is a three-year project plan which sets out the current planning policy documents for the District and how these will be reviewed and developed.   |
| Local Green Space.                       | A green area that is special to the community and designated by a Neighbourhood Plan. It is  |

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
|                                      | <p>given the same protection in planning terms as Green Belt.<br/>The designation should only be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;</li> <li>• where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and</li> <li>• where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.</li> </ul> <p>Paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF define Local Green Space in more detail.</p>  |
| Local Market Housing                 | is built for sale on the open market, but with the restriction that it must first be offered to local people each time it is sold.  |
| Market Housing                       | Market housing is built for sale, without restriction, on the open market.  |
| Physical Confines                    | A boundary drawn pragmatically to show the current extent of development within a settlement such as Welford-on-Avon with the purpose of distinguishing the existing built-up area inside the boundary from countryside outside.  |
| Plan Period                          | The emerging Core Strategy will cover the period 2011 - 2031 superceding the previous Local Plan which covered 1996 - 2011  |
| Planning Practice Guidance           | PPG is an online resource which supports the NPPF and allows important information previously only published in separate documents to be accessed quickly and simply by any user of the planning system.  |
| Residential Gardens                  | Land within the curtilage of a residential building(s) and/or where the previous lawful use was for private residential gardens.  |
| Site of Specific Scientific Interest | Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are designated by Natural England as one of the country's very best wildlife and/or geological sites. SSSIs include some of the most spectacular and beautiful habitats. Welford Field SSSI is an unimproved field which lies in the flood plain of the River Avon on its south bank in a large river bend. Natural England's citation states that 'it is a herb-rich neutral grassland overlying alluvial clays which exhibit a distinct calcareous influence from the close proximity of the Lias limestone to the north. The field has a characteristic flood meadow community of meadow foxtail <i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> and great burnet <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i> , Welford Field is now one of the seven last remaining flood meadow sites known in Warwickshire.'   |
| Sustainable Development              | <p>Defined in the NPPF as:-</p> <p>There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●● <b>an economic role</b> – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;</li> <li>●● <b>a social role</b> – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and</li> <li>●● <b>an environmental role</b> – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.</li> </ul> |
| Tandem Development                   | Tandem development is a particular case of backland development comprising one home behind another served by the same driveway  |
| Upper Limit                          | See Approximate Upper Limit   |
| Village Green                        | An area of mown grass with or without trees which forms an essential part of the character of the village which may or may not be protected.  |

## **Appendix A - The Welford Plan Policies**

### **Heritage and Environment Policies**

#### **HE1. Important Views**

*The important views around the parish will be protected by resisting development that will be obtrusive by virtue of its shape, size or material. The following are to be protected:-*

- *View towards St Peter's Church and over the village from Cress Hill*
- *View downstream from Binton Bridges*
- *Views over the Glebe Lands towards St Peter's Church and the river*
- *Views north-west from the Milcote Road towards Welford and Weston villages.*
- *Views north from the public road on Rumer Hill towards Welford village*
- *View south from the crest of the public road on Rumer Hill to the southern boundary of the parish towards Long Marston and the Cotswolds*

*These specific locations and precise direction of important views can be found on the Parish Council and project team websites.*

#### **HE2. Important Green Spaces**

*The following areas (including their flora and fauna) are of particular importance to the local community and are designated as Local Green Spaces:*

- *LGS1 - Cress Hill and Shakespeare's Avon Way*
- *LGS2 -The Glebe Lands (including the SSSI 'Welford Field')*
- *LGS3 - Millennium Project to the north of the River Avon at Binton Bridges*
- *LGS4 Village Greens at:*
  - *Maypole Green*
  - *'The Greens' in Boat Lane and Church Street*
  - *'The Pound' to the south of the Churchyard at the junction of Boat Lane and Church Street*
  - *'Bell Green' at the junction of Church Street and High Street*
  - *'Bird Green' in Long Marston Road*
- *LGS5 - Verges in the Conservation Area*
- *LGS6 - Islands in the River Avon abutting Binton Bridges*
- *LGS7 – Shakespeare's Avon Way from Bell Green to the parish boundary with Weston-on-Avon.*

*Development on the Local Green Spaces designated in the Welford Plan will only be permitted under 'very special circumstances' (NPPF: para 76) where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh any harm.*

*The sensitive management of these areas will be actively encouraged.*

*The boundaries of the Local Green Spaces are shown in Figure 5.*

#### **HE3. Development which impacts Local Green Spaces**

*Development will only be supported if it does not in any way detract from the character or setting of any Local Green Space as designated in Policy HE2.*

#### **HE4. The Conservation Area and other Heritage Assets**

*Development within or adjacent to the Conservation Area and/or within the setting of a listed building will be supported providing it:*

- *Conserves or enhances the positive attributes of the heritage asset;*
- *Has no negative impact on the character, setting, views, vistas and street scene of the heritage asset;*
- *Is in conformity with the Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide; and*
- *Fully supports the protection of listed properties through consultation with their beneficial owners and Stratford-on-Avon District Council.*

*Development in close proximity to other heritage assets will be required to have regard to their setting and significance, and be designed such that there is no adverse impact on these assets.*

#### **HE5. Open Countryside**

*Open countryside is everywhere outside the built up area boundary (see Figure 8) and will in principle be protected for its intrinsic character and beauty.*

*Development in the open countryside will be supported providing it:*

- *is a brownfield site; or*
- *contributes to the local economy; or*
- *is for the reuse or extension of an existing building; or*
- *is for sport and recreation; or*
- *is for a new isolated dwelling where there are special circumstances such as the need for a rural worker to be close to their place of work; or*
- *is a single dwelling of exceptional quality and design making a positive contribution to the character of the local area.*

*Any such development should not cause demonstrable harm to:*

- *landscape quality;*
- *sites of ecological value;*
- *Scheduled Monuments and other sites of archaeological interest.*

*The specific area of open countryside between Welford-on-Avon and Weston-on-Avon is covered by policy HE6.*

#### **HE6. Gap between Welford and Weston**

*Development outside the built up area boundary of Welford-on-Avon which results in the reduction of the gap with Weston-on-Avon will not be supported.*

#### **HE7. Landscape Design**

*Development must:*

- *Preserve the existing mature tree population and support the planting of new trees and shrubs as defined in the Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide;*
- *Use natural hedging in preference to timber based panel or board fencing or any solid walls for boundaries and*
- *Ensure that landscape aspects of a development proposal form an integral part of the overall design*

#### **HE8. Allotments**

*Development that enhances the use of the current site on Headland Road as allotments will be supported.*

*Any other development will not be supported unless:*

- *Replacement provision (including the provision of associated facilities) of at least equivalent land quality, condition and area is made available, and is located at reasonable convenience for the existing plot holders;*
- *Clear and significant social, economic and environmental community benefits would be derived from the proposal; and*
- *Agreement is given by the Trustees of the Shorthouse Bidston Allotment Trust.*

#### **HE9. Flood Plain**

*Proposals for fluvial management which reduce the risk of flooding in flood zones 2 and 3 will be supported providing there is acceptable landscaping.*

*Development within these flood zones will be opposed unless:*

- *It does not result in any additional properties being placed at risk of flooding, and*
- *The risk of flooding to existing properties is demonstrably not increased.*

*Replacement development (residential or commercial) will be supported if it is demonstrably neutral or beneficial to the capacity of these flood zones and consistent with other policies.*

## **Infrastructure Policies**

### **INF1. Dark Skies**

*Development must minimise light pollution, avoiding obtrusive external property and street lighting.*

*Development must demonstrate how it will achieve Environmental Zone Lighting Level E1 (Intrinsically Dark).*

### **INF2. Infrastructure**

*Development will be supported providing it does not materially affect the core infrastructure services delivered to existing, neighbouring properties. A mitigation plan must be implemented when there is any scheduled interruption to these core infrastructure services.*

*Core infrastructure services are defined as:-*

- *Mains Water Supply;*
- *Comprehensive Water Management including flood defences, waste and surface water drainage;*
- *Mains Electricity; and*
- *High Speed Broadband.*

### **INF3. Access to Primary Education**

*New Residential Development will be supported where there are adequate primary school places*

- *at schools within a 6 mile journey by road and,*
- *readily accessed by school bus or scheduled public transport*

*or*

- *where the proposed development includes plans to create adequate places, ideally at Welford-on-Avon Primary School.*

## **Housing and Land Use Policies**

### **HLU1. New Residential Development**

*New Residential Development within the built-up area boundary will be supported providing it is on an infill site and is small scale, normally not more than five dwellings.*

*New Residential Development in the Neighbourhood Plan Area over the Plan Period must have due regard to the Approximate Upper Limit defined for Category 2 Local Service Villages.*

*Where an application is in close proximity to another site(s) where, during the plan period, permission has been granted or for which an application has been made, the aggregate number of dwellings on all these sites must not exceed small scale.*

*New Residential Development of greater than five dwellings should provide a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement identifying the impact the proposal would have on the highway network.*

*New Residential Development outside the Built-Up Area Boundary will be supported if it is in accordance with policy HE5.*

*The Built-Up Area Boundary is shown in Figure 8.*

### **HLU2. Phasing of New Residential Development**

*Residential development will be supported if it is phased in line with the emerging Core Strategy*

### **HLU3. Design Excellence**

*Development which demonstrates high levels of design excellence will be supported.*

*Development should:*

- *Respect established building lines and rhythm of the architecture including the separation between*

- buildings, and between buildings and the site boundaries,*
- Respect established plot widths, density, footprint and scale in the immediate neighbourhood of the proposed development,*
- Not have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area, including the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties,*
- Observe the Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide,*
- Take into account Building for Life 12 criteria,*
- Embrace design which reflects the vernacular and unique characteristics of Welford-on-Avon as highlighted in the Village Design Statement or demonstrate clear innovation (as contrasted with pastiche or off-the-shelf designs).*

#### **HLU4. Footpaths & Cycle-ways**

*Development that abuts footpaths and cycle ways should use natural hedging in preference to timber based panel or board fencing or any solid walls in order to enhance the intrinsic environmental quality and public amenity of these paths.*

*Development in the vicinity of this network shall, where possible, include proposals to connect to, extend and develop footpaths to improve access and safety for all users.*

*New footpaths should be a minimum of 2 metres wide and have the same boundary treatments as specified in the first paragraph of this policy.*

#### **HLU5. New Residential Development Mix and Type**

*New Residential Development should reflect the mix defined in the Emerging Core Strategy*

*Proposals for the following types of development will be particularly supported:*

- Local Choice schemes based on objectively assessed local housing needs*
- The provision of dwellings appropriate to older residents wishing to down-size, including bungalows*
- Houses specifically designed for first-time buyers*
- Extra Care accommodation, as defined by Warwickshire County Council.*

#### **HLU6. Garden and Back-land Development**

*Development in residential gardens, back-land development and tandem development will be supported if it:*

- Does not have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area and neighbouring properties;*
- Does not have the potential for loss of amenity of neighbouring properties; through loss of privacy, loss of daylight, visual intrusion by a building or structure, loss of car parking, loss of mature vegetation or landscape screening; and*
- Is of a scale and size suitable for the plot.*

#### **HLU7. Development at the village edge**

*Development at the edge of the village and visible from the surrounding open countryside will be supported providing it creates a sensitive transition from the countryside to the village.*

*Development should:*

- Be of a similar density and scale to buildings in the immediate neighbourhood and ‘round off’ the village rather than create new, visually intrusive additions to it*
- Not reduce the impact of distinguishing natural features (such as tree lines) or require any reduction of trees, hedgerows or other vegetation which changes the character of the surrounding landscape*
- Use appropriate plant species in a comprehensive landscape scheme, conserve traditional boundary treatments wherever possible and use boundary treatments which integrate best with the rural character*
- Mitigate any potential increased flood or surface water threat.*

#### **HLU8. Height of Buildings**

*Development of any building of more than two and half storeys will not be supported.*

#### **HLU9. Caravan sites**

*Proposals to amend permission for holiday caravan sites to allow permanent residency will not be supported.*

*New caravan sites for either holiday or permanent residence will not be supported.*

## Appendix B - Parish Council Projects

The survey conducted as part of evidence gathering for The Welford Plan identified a number of projects that are not appropriate to be achieved through the planning process but which might be taken forward at the discretion of the Parish Council.

*Objective 8     A multi-purpose community meeting place and sports facilities will support recreational and sporting activities for all age groups.*

Current sporting and recreational facilities are considered to be inadequate to serve a village of Welford's size through to 2031. Located on the flood plain of the River Avon, the outdoor facilities at Synder Meadow have suffered rapid deterioration, especially the changing room provision and equipment storage areas. In addition there are no tennis courts. Apart from the bowling club there are no public indoor sports facilities. There was considerable support in the Community Survey for improved outdoor and indoor sports and recreational facilities although views were divergent on how and where these might be delivered. Many proposed improved sporting facilities and a new community centre or hall. The facilities should address the needs of all age groups and interests in the parish especially those for whom transport is difficult and for whom limited facilities currently exist.

Once CIL is introduced by SDC, developer contributions might be sought to help fund a new sporting and recreational complex. The project to deliver this must involve all interested parties in the parish. The resulting plan should demonstrate financial and environmental sustainability, including the provision of adequate parking. Such a project would be supported by CS.26 Infrastructure, Healthy Communities: 'the provision of new and enhanced community, cultural, sports and leisure facilities will be encouraged as a way of promoting healthy communities'.

*The Parish Council is re-engaging with Welford Sports Club and other interested parties to ascertain how this objective might be realised.*

*Objective 9     Traffic will have been managed and through traffic will have been controlled thus ensuring the village roads are safe for all residents. Any development will minimise commuting and traffic movements.*

The Welford Plan survey identified a number of issues that may be addressed by appropriate traffic management solutions whose implementation could be led by the Parish Council. These issues arise particularly from the increase in traffic flow from developments at Long Marston, congestion at the pinch points at Binton Bridges and The Bell and the constant abuse of the weight restriction on Binton Bridges by farmers and commercial vehicles.

Additional issues of concern include:

1. The area around the Maypole, including the village stores and butchers has inadequate parking which further creating traffic hazards particularly around the shop entrance and the junction of Barton Road with Long Marston Road.
2. The speed of vehicles entering the village from Long Marston, Barton and Milcote.
3. The single track part of Headland Road between Mill Lane and Church Street, with particular impact on school traffic.
4. The lack of a cycle way joining Welford-on-Avon to the Greenway via Weston-on-Avon.
5. The sheer size of vehicles passing through the village including over Binton Bridges (whilst also ignoring the bridge weight restriction)

*The Parish Council will continue to act both strategically and tactically in order to reduce traffic flow both emanating in Welford and passing through the village.*

*Objective 10 Public transport will have been improved, and the extensive network of footpaths and cycle ways further developed.*

The low frequency of public transport from the parish to the neighbouring towns of Stratford-upon-Avon, Bidford-on-Avon and Evesham is seen as an issue. A project to improve connectivity by public transport could be driven by the Parish Council. This would enhance environmental sustainability and improve a key facility particularly for those who do not have access to a motor vehicle.

*The Parish Council will continue to maintain footpaths and cycle ways. It will investigate what improvements in public transport might be achieved.*

*Objective 11 Sustainable green and low energy consumption using existing and emerging technologies will have been championed.*

Many respondents to The Welford Plan survey called for 'green initiatives', which could be led by the Parish Council and could make the parish more environmentally sustainable whilst reducing its carbon footprint. Examples that could be encouraged include solar power, heat pumps, anaerobic digesters and other sources of alternative energy.

*Responsibility for this objective, along with developing a comprehensive infrastructure plan, lies with Stratford District Council as identified in the developing Core Strategy.*

**Dark Skies**

The Parish Council may seek to have designated several Dark Skies Discovery Sites within the Parish by the UK Dark Sky Discovery Partnership including Cress Hill and land around Synder Meadow, although a broad dark skies policy will be adopted to minimise light pollution across the entire parish. Formal designation will provide an additional small level of protection from light pollution and demonstrate the commitment of the parish to environmentally sustainable use of energy.

*A decision on further action to be taken will be made by the Parish Council once the effectiveness of Policy INF 1 has been assessed.*

*Objective 12 River and surface water flooding will have been controlled.*

The Welford Flood Action Group (Welford FLAG) has now been established which pulls together all the key agencies including the Environment Agency and Warwickshire County Council alongside the Parish Council and residents to address issues of fluvial, surface and waste water flooding. Maintenance of Binton Bridges and the continued monitoring of the flow of water to ensure any potential blockages are removed are included in the remit of the Forum.

The Parish Council and Welford FLAG are currently working on a project to ameliorate the impact of flooding. When SDC have introduced CIL, the Parish Council might seek to obtain developer contributions to restore and enhance the flood plain, or provide flood defences.

It is clear from recent events the blocking of arches at Binton Bridges is a major contributory factor to residential property flooding. The modern part of the bridge is seriously flawed in its design with no attempt to increase the height of arches or the spans to prevent blockage. This is further exacerbated by the lack of river dredging by the Environment Agency.

*The Parish Council is already working with Welford-on-Avon Flood Action Group to mitigate the impact of fluvial and surface water flooding.*

## Appendix C - Demographics

The 2011 census shows that Welford Parish has a population of 1420 living in 605 households. The age profile of the village is:

|       |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 0-9   | 10-19 | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 |
| 10.1% | 10.3% | 9.9%  | 10.6% | 15.4% |
| 50-59 | 60-69 | 70-79 | 80-89 | 90 +  |
| 14.0% | 14.5% | 9.2%  | 5.0%  | 1.1%  |

The average age is higher than Stratford District as a whole with a median age of 51 compared with 46 for the District. The percentage of residents over 65 is 29.0% compared with 22.0% for the District, and the proportion of households comprising a single person households over 65 is 16.7% compared with 14.4%.

The proportion of children and young people age 19 and under, however, is similar to the District with 21.7% compared with 21.4%.



Figure 11 - Children's Play Area next to Welford Primary School

**Table 1: Tenure**

Housing tenure (Table 1) is based on 605 homes across the Parish with at least one resident whilst housing type is based on 661 'home spaces', 56 of which have 'no usual resident'. This difference, and the high proportion of caravan/mobile homes, may be explained by caravans used for holiday purposes but reporting in the census.

| Housing             | Welford | Stratford District |
|---------------------|---------|--------------------|
| Owned outright      | 55.2%   | 39.1%              |
| Owned with mortgage | 26.1%   | 32.7%              |
| Share ownership     | 2.1%    | 1.1%               |
| Rented - social     | 8.8%    | 12.9%              |
| Rented - private    | 5.6%    | 12.7%              |
| Rented - free       | 2.1%    | 1.5%               |

The profile of dwellings within Welford is highlighted in Table 2 with a far higher proportion of detached residences and caravans/mobile homes as might be expected in a rurally based settlement with far lower Terraced properties and Flats.

**Table 2: Type**

| Housing             | Welford | SDC   |
|---------------------|---------|-------|
| Detached            | 55.1%   | 36.8% |
| Semi-detached       | 23.6%   | 30.3% |
| Terraced            | 8.9%    | 19.4% |
| Flat                | 1.4%    | 11.7% |
| Caravan/mobile home | 11.0%   | 1.9%  |

In addition to the 26 park homes licensed at Long Cast, Hunt Hall Lane which are permanently occupied, 148 holiday caravans are licensed in Welford. Table 3 below outlines the sites

**Table 3: Holiday caravan sites**

| Site Name                                   | Location                    | Number of Pitches |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Avonside                                    | Binton Bridges (S of river) | 30                |
| Millfield                                   | Mill Lane                   | 12                |
| Welford Park (formerly West View Park)      | Barton Road                 | 67                |
| Binton Bridges (formerly Welford Riverside) | Binton Bridges (N of river) | 39                |
| <b>Total</b>                                |                             | <b>148</b>        |

Table 4 shows the modes of travel to work. Welford has a significantly higher proportion of retired people than the district as a whole. It can also be seen that both in Welford and the wider district, there is a high reliance on private transport to travel to work compared with the environmentally more sustainable modes of public transport, cycling or walking.

**Table 4: Modes of travel to work**

| Mode of transport              | Welford-on-Avon | Stratford District |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Work mainly at home            | 9.1%            | 6.9%               |
| Public transport               | 2.4%            | 2.6%               |
| Private car, van or motorcycle | 48.1%           | 50.5%              |
| Cycle                          | 0.6%            | 1.5%               |
| On foot                        | 3.4%            | 7.2%               |
| Other mode of transport        | 0.3%            | 0.6%               |
| Not in employment              | 36.1%           | 30.7%              |

References:

- Warwickshire Observatory produced by Warwickshire County Council
- Matthew Stead, SDC Caravan Licensing