

2022 - 2031

Submission Draft

ABBOTS BROMLEY PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



October 2022

ABBOTS BROMLEY PARISH
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
2022 – 2031

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Neighbourhood Plan

On a number of occasions in 2015, the Abbots Bromley Parish Council discussed the need to create a parish Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

On the 31st August 2015 the Parish Council applied to East Staffordshire Borough Council (ESBC) for designation of the Abbots Bromley parish as a Neighbourhood Area (NA).

[Designation Letter](#)

ESBC consulted on the proposed Neighbourhood Area for a 6-week period during September and October 2015.

Following the consultation period ESBC approved Neighbourhood Area designation for Abbots Bromley parish on 8th October 2015, thus paving the way for the Parish Council to begin preparation of the Abbots Bromley Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

The purpose of the plan is to present the parish residents' contribution towards informed decision making on future Planning Applications affecting the local area.

At this time, the plan does not seek to identify or allocate land for development.

The plan is not able to affect outcomes for areas beyond its remit (eg schools, healthcare provision, and transport infrastructure).

The plan covers the period up to the end of 2031, corresponding to the plan period for the adopted East Staffordshire Local Plan (LP) 2012-2031. When "made", the Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan for East Staffordshire and will be used in determining planning applications in Abbots Bromley Parish.

The boundary of the Neighbourhood Area corresponds to the Parish boundary as indicated by **Figure 1** below.

1.2 Establishing a Planning Group

Following successful Neighbourhood Area designation, the Abbots Bromley Parish Council as the appropriate 'Qualifying Body' for production of the NP held a public meeting inviting volunteers to form a Neighbourhood Plan Group (NPG).

Once formed the NPG made up of 10 parish residents and including 3 parish councillors and 1 district councillor, was tasked to work on the formulation of the Neighbourhood Plan through a simple 'Terms of Reference' which set out the purpose and remit of the process.

The original NPG operated until 2018 after which a new group of 7 parish residents was formed including 1 parish councillor and 1 district councillor.

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Figure 1 - Abbots Bromley Neighbourhood Area



2. Overview of the Neighbourhood Area

2.1 Abbots Bromley Parish

The civil parish of Abbots Bromley is situated in the central region of Staffordshire. It is essentially comprised of the core village of Abbots Bromley. There are also nearby settlements of Heatley, Bromley Hurst, Bromley Wood, Seedcroft and Radmore Wood. Many scattered working farmsteads, and converted redundant farm buildings throughout the parish, point to the rich agricultural heritage of the area.

The parish forms part of the Uttoxeter Rural Ward on Staffordshire County Council, and part of the Bagot Ward on East Staffordshire Borough Council. The Parish adjoins the neighbouring parishes of Uttoxeter Rural, Kingstone and Marchington to the north, Colton and The Ridwares to the south, Newborough and Hoar Cross to the east, and Blithfield to the west.

The linear village of Abbots Bromley lies to the south of the parish. A once busy market town, it is now a thriving Conservation Area commuter village. The parish is served by three 'B' Classification non-principal county roads that connect Abbots Bromley to the nearby larger towns of Lichfield, Burton on Trent, Uttoxeter and Rugeley.

From the middle of the 20th century, new homes were built on estates to the East and West of Goose Lane, the North of Bagot Street, the North of the village centre, the North of Ashbrook Lane. This major uplift in homes heralded the arrival of new residents, enhancing the outlook of the community and wider parish to the present day.

Abbots Bromley retains some important local services (eg doctors' surgery, fire station and Community First Responder Unit). Additionally, there are a number of small business outlets (eg convenience store, a number of public houses, Indian restaurant, cafes, a brewery, and other rural retail outlets). A number of businesses also operate from home.

Towards the eastern end of Bagot Street, an eighteenth-century building (formerly recorded as the Abbots Bromley Hospital) provides a link to local history. Almshouse accommodation units are currently situated within this Grade II Listed Building. The facility is managed by trustees as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

The Richard Clarke First School provides state education for children aged 3-9 prior to their move to secondary education in the nearby towns.

The Abbots Bromley School (a large 'Woodard Corporation' Independent School for ages 3-18) is located within the heart of the village and has contributed much to the local history over the past 150 years. The school closed in 2019, and there are ongoing discussions regarding its future ownership.

The school facilities (eg playing fields; sports hall; swimming pool; assembly and theatre rooms) have all been used by the local community on a regular basis prior to closure. The closure has created a noticeable loss of amenity to the community as a consequence, as well as the loss of local employment opportunities at the school.

The Abbots Bromley Sports Association (ABSA) is a recent multi-sports initiative that has secured a long-term lease to develop sporting facilities on part of the Abbots Bromley School land to the south of the Settlement Boundary.

The imposing St Nicholas Parish Church is a most important place for worship and reflection. Furthermore, it houses the ancient horns used by the unique Abbots Bromley horn dance troupe.

There are various clubs and groups covering all ages and interests, providing a broad resident interaction leading to an inclusive and diverse close-knit community.

2.2 Settlement Boundary and Conservation Area

Abbots Bromley Settlement Boundary encompasses the vast majority of the village, creating a definite boundary line between the built environment and the open countryside. The Settlement Boundary is used as a policy tool to reflect the area where some Neighbourhood Plan policies are to be applied.

Staffordshire County Council designated Abbots Bromley village as a Conservation Area (CA) in November 1969. A Conservation Area re-appraisal occurred in November 2005.

The latest iteration of the Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) was published in July 2015 and may be found through the following ESBC link:

[Abbots Bromley CAA \(2015\)](#)

Figure 2 below, indicates the relationship between the Settlement Boundary and Conservation Area.

The majority of the Conservation Area sits within the heart of the Settlement Boundary.

Some pockets of land (to the North and South) sitting outside the perimeter of the Settlement Boundary, are also covered by Conservation Area status.

Figure 3 below, indicates the townscape view of all heritage assets in relation to the Conservation Area.

Most of the designated Listed Buildings are contained in the Conservation Area. A small number of non-designated heritage assets (known as Buildings of Townscape Merit) are also contained within the Conservation Area. More details of these may be found in the table in

Appendix 1 at the end of this document. These buildings are recognised for their contribution to the history and character of the local environment.

There are a few designated listed buildings that sit outside the Conservation Area.

- Three are located to the North West of the village (at Leafields Farm on Uttoxeter Road).
- Two are located to the South West of the village (on Goose Lane).
- One is located to the South (Town End farmhouse on Lichfield Road).

Figure 4 below, highlights the land associated with the former Abbots Bromley School, and its relationship to the Conservation Area.

Most of the school built environment straddles the High Street to the east of the village and is contained within the Conservation Area. As also indicated in Figure 3, there are a number of Listed Buildings associated with the school site, as well as two Buildings of Townscape Merit.

A number of other landmark buildings, and their settings within the school site, have evolved into becoming a major part of the village townscape and street-scene over the last century.

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Figure 3 - Townscape view of all heritage assets in relation to the Conservation Area

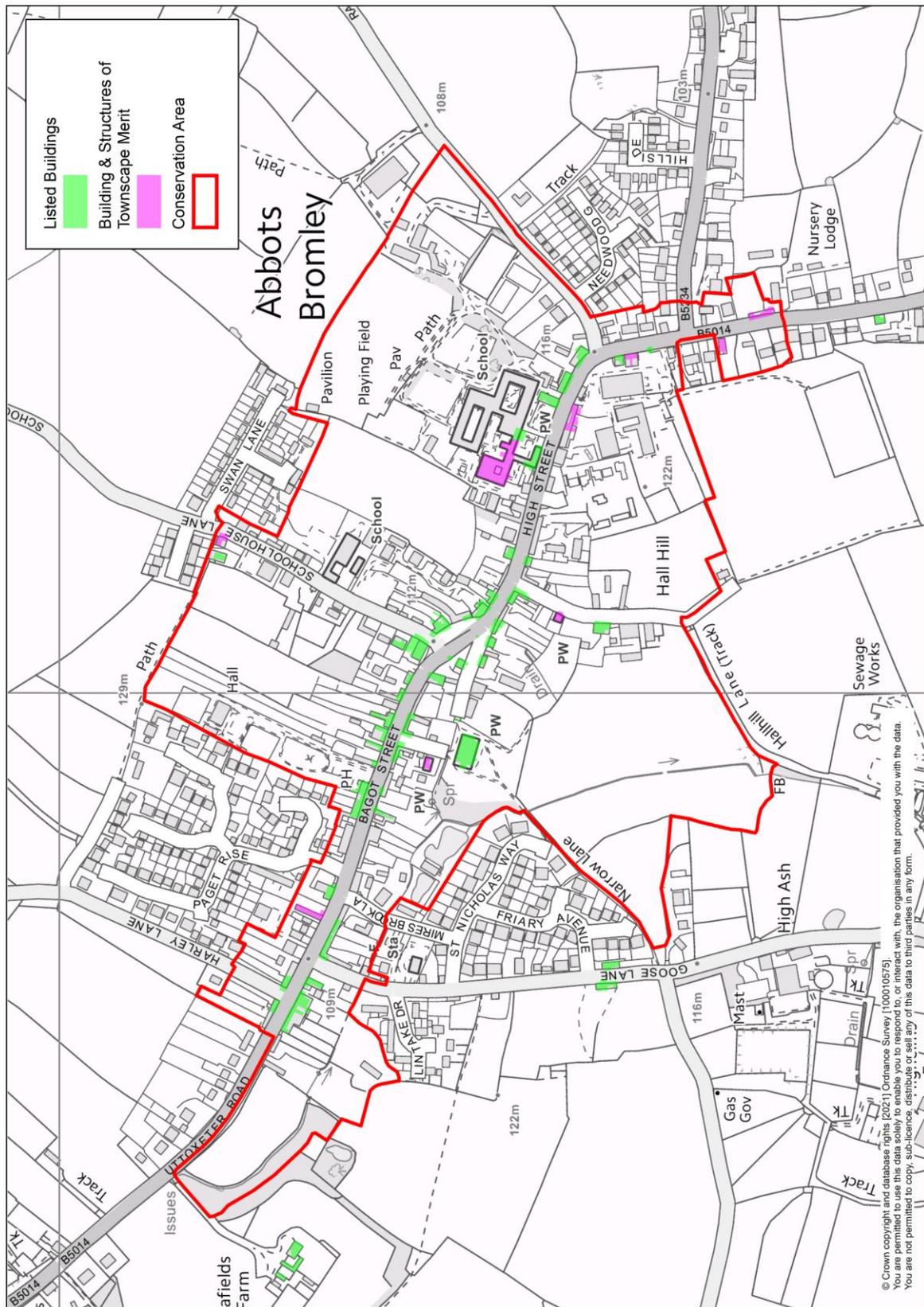
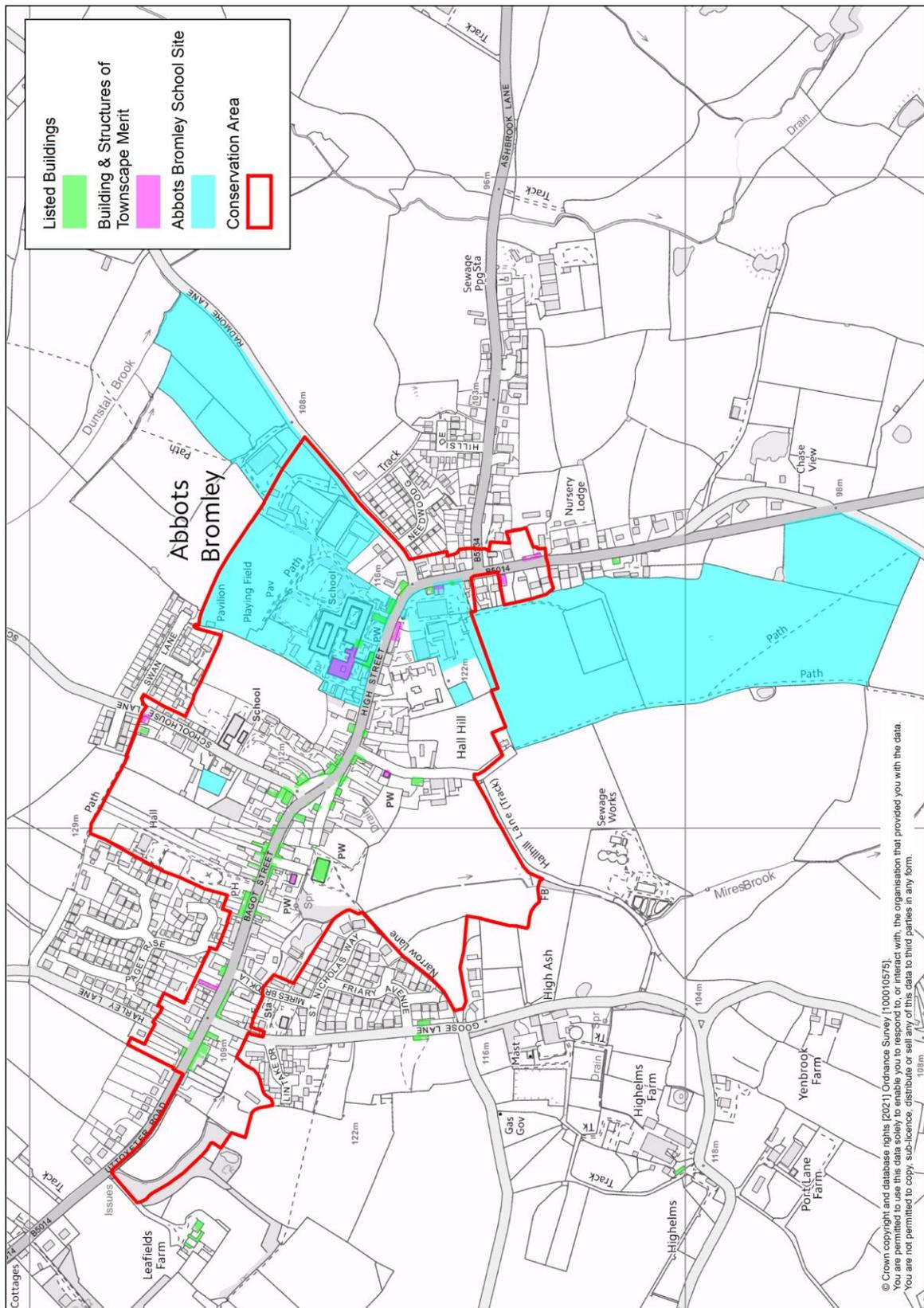


Figure 4 – Former Abbots Bromley School Site in relation to the Conservation Area



3. Community Engagement

3.1 Methodology

At all stages of production, the Neighbourhood Plan remains a fully inclusive community led document as consultation remains ongoing. Community engagement is essential in assisting progress of the plan through to the time of referendum. The Neighbourhood Plan Group has invested significant resource and effort in achieving this.

Throughout the process the group has sought the views and opinions of local residents and businesses through a wide range of communication techniques. These include questionnaires; surveys; public meetings/forums; regular parish wide News Bulletins; noticeboards; social media; direct conversation with residents.

The Abbots Bromley Parish Council has produced minuted update reports of the engagement process. These may be found on the Parish Council web page link:

[Abbots Bromley Parish Council web page](#)

The Neighbourhood Plan Group produced minuted reports of their work throughout the engagement process to production of the initial draft plan. Amongst other detail, the minutes record issues relevant to public engagement that were available for consideration when producing the plan. These may be found on the Neighbourhood Plan web page link:

[Abbots Bromley Neighbourhood Plan web page](#)

3.2 Initial Engagement

The Neighbourhood Plan Group obtained initial public opinion at an early stage during January – March 2016. A simple questionnaire was created and sent to the 750 households in the parish.

The main enquiry was to determine what residents and businesses considered to be the community's current strengths and weaknesses; and what improvements/changes they would like to see that would benefit the parish wide community in the future.

96 households responded to the questionnaire and a number of key areas emerged that guided development of the 'Vision' and 'Aims' for the Neighbourhood Area. In turn, this informed the basis for creation of the 'Policies' and overall plan content.

The key areas are: Heritage and Conservation; Housing; Community Facilities; Natural Environment; Traffic and Parking.

Further mid-stage public engagement, designed to gain a deeper understanding of the identified key areas, made it clear that the public wished to be represented by a Neighbourhood Plan.

The public were eager to ensure that a Neighbourhood Plan reflected due consideration for their wishes/opinions in future planning decisions affecting the Neighbourhood Area.

Evidence of additional significant community engagement can be found in the Consultation Statement that forms part of the plan documentation.

On the NDP web page, minutes of the following public engagements are recorded:

Minutes for 2018 for background awareness:

- 11th Feb 2018 – Feedback and progress discussed.
- 2nd July 2018 - For info the new group conducted meetings from this date in preparation of being ratified by the Parish Council.
- 29th Nov 2018 – Discussions for meeting with the public (amongst other things). Parish Council members in attendance.
- 6th Dec 2018 – Public in attendance.

Minutes for 2019: These minutes outline all comments from the 'Topic' related public sessions:

- 7th Feb 2019 – Traffic & Parking.
- 7th Mar 2019 – Heritage & Conservation.
- 4th Apr 2019 – Young Peoples forum + Q&A's.
- 25th Apr 2019 – Contains some relevant feedback from Young People.
- 2nd May 2019 – Housing Need.
- 6th June 2019 – Next Steps (policy headings etc).

On the NDP web page these folders contain info/evidence of engagement:

- Consultation.
- Document Library
- Archived Documents

3.3 Vision and Aims

The Neighbourhood Plan 'Vision' and 'Aims' are formulated as follows:

Vision:

To shape appropriate sustainable development of scale and design that protects and preserves the historic and natural environment, whilst encouraging socio-economic growth of the Neighbourhood Area.

Aims:

The initial feedback from engagement with the public and analysis of evidence informed the production of the following Aims that ultimately translated to the plan Policies:

- **A1.** To achieve a balanced mix of uses and facilities for the community, creating more sustainable work-life patterns.
- **A2.** To help ensure that new residential development meets the diverse needs of the current and future parish residents.
- **A3.** To support local businesses and employment.
- **A4.** To ensure that new development is well-designed, sustainable and adds to the distinctive identity of the parish.
- **A5.** To conserve the parish's built heritage.
- **A6.** To protect and enhance the parish landscape setting, green spaces, natural features and wildlife.
- **A7.** To ensure that future development schemes provide safe and effective solutions to transport-related issues that may arise.

4. Producing the NP

Following extensive public engagement (2016-2019) the Neighbourhood Plan Group focussed all their effort on production of the plan.

With all the evidence to hand, and with the public view well understood, the group felt it appropriate to keep the plan simple and clear.

The support services of ESBC planning department have been utilised throughout the process, proving invaluable in guiding the group through the complex legislative requirements.

The independent consultant “AECOM” was commissioned to report on the socio-economic factors affecting the area, with particular emphasis on local housing need.

Access to the full AECOM Housing Needs Assessment may be found on the Neighbourhood Planning web page link under ‘Document Library’.

[Abbots Bromley Neighbourhood Plan web page](#)

In order to accurately rationalise and express the vast amount of gathered evidence into clear and achievable planning policies, the Parish Council obtained further funding support to engage the services of an additional consultant “Urban Vision Enterprise CIC”.

Definition of affordable housing

Where the term ‘affordable housing’ is used in the plan the definition in the appendix of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) is to be used.

East Staffordshire Borough Council has provided a screening opinion on the draft plan and concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be required.

5. Future Reporting

Abbots Bromley Parish Council will produce an annual monitoring report on the future made Neighbourhood Plan. The report will include a listing of all planning applications (and the decisions made relevant to them) for the Abbots Bromley parish.

The report narrative will describe the extent to which the plan has been successful in influencing planning decisions made by East Staffordshire Borough Council.

A more comprehensive review and assessment on the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken at five yearly intervals, or as required, to ensure that it remains 'fit for purpose'.

National changes in legislation and Local Authority changes in the Local Plan for the area, may ultimately determine deeper review/re-write of the plan, potentially requiring all the formal stages for production of a Neighbourhood Plan be repeated.

Public interest for the potential creation of a policy in relation to 'Local Green Space' has not been taken forward at this time. It is recommended that further work to create an effective policy in support of 'Local Green Space' be undertaken for inclusion in a future review of this plan and/or the ESBC Local Plan.

6. Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The following Neighbourhood Plan Policies have been drafted with the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' to meet local need throughout.

This has been achieved through full regard to the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Strategic Objectives of the ESBC Local Plan (2012-2031).

Group headings and policy headings are as follows:

DAH: Design and Heritage

DAH1: Sustainable Design and Character

DAH2: Extensions

DAH3: Abbots Bromley Conservation Area

DEC: Dwellings, Employment, and Community

DEC1: Residential Development

DEC2: Employment, Tourism and Community Facilities

DEC3: Former Abbots Bromley School Site

NGE: Natural and Green Environment

NGE1: Natural Environment

NGE2: Drainage and Flooding

TIN: Transport and Infrastructure

TIN1: Sustainable Transport Provision

TIN2: Transport Impacts

TIN3: Local Energy Schemes

TIN4: Broadband

DAH: Design and Heritage

Purpose:

- a. To ensure that new development is sustainable and well-designed.**
- b. To preserve or enhance local heritage.**

Rationale and Evidence:

Abbots Bromley is a historic village originally of linear design. Most of the built environment contained within the settlement boundary has been granted Conservation Area (CA) status.

The main street, and the ancient drovers' lanes which branch off, contain 51 Listed buildings and structures (three of which are Grade II*) and one Scheduled Monument.

The majority of these buildings lie within the identified CA, many having been constructed from locally sourced materials such as timber, bricks, mortar and tiles. This uniformity of construction gives the village its unique character.

Users of this Plan are directed to the "Staffordshire Historic Environment Record" and the "Abbots Bromley Historic Character Assessment Report", both of which are available online.

Abbots Bromley's Conservation Area status has been determined through a significant heritage that should be protected and preserved. In order to achieve the capacity to accommodate change, a fine balance has been struck between conserving and enhancing the existing stock of mainly historic older buildings with the residential housing needs of a popular commuter village. For this reason, it is essential that future design and materials are complementary to the original buildings in order to preserve the unique character of the village. This may be achieved through sensible decision making for sustainable housing and housing design now and into the future.

Conversion of current buildings to residential or commercial use must retain the original facades and rooflines.

Open green space is easily eroded forever. It is important to consider the negative impact of infill extensions on congestion and loss of the existing open space.

Featuring heavily alongside this is the need to meet (or exceed) the current environmental protection requirements.

'Building for Life 12' (BfL 12) - The industry standard for design of new housing developments has significantly informed the content of this policy.

Community opinion in support of this policy was primarily obtained from an initial questionnaire and separate survey (2016) and a series of topical open forums (2018-2019).

These important opinions provide an evidenced and demonstrable 'local need':

- Protection for the street scene, conservation area and classic countryside views.
- Building design and materials should be in keeping with the heritage and character of existing buildings and overall street-scene.
- Use of solar panels, underground heat-source pumps, installation of charging facilities for electric powered vehicles and future-proofed domestic boilers should be made.
- Local need should influence design and scale in order to achieve sustainability within the village and wider parish.
- Encouragement and protection of wildlife flora and fauna must be planned.
- The local heritage and rural location provide a sense of belonging amongst residents. These characteristics must be conserved.

The rationale for this Policy in relation to the protection of heritage is supported by the NPPF (**Sections 12; 15; 16**):

- Defining characteristics should be determined and reflected in developments.
- Developments should be sympathetic to the built environment and landscape setting.
- Designs should take into account the views and opinions of the local community.
- Consent for development with poor designs which do not improve character, nor take into account local design standards, should be refused.
- It should be recognised that small-scale developments can cut greenhouse emissions through their design.

Further endorsement for the protection of heritage is contained in the ESBC Local Plan (2012-2031) (**Strategic Policies 1; 24; 25; 27; 30**) (**Detailed Policies 1; 3; 5; 6; 8**):

- Promotion of distinctive local identity.
- Designs that generate positivity towards traditional design and materials.
- Utilisation of sustainable construction techniques and materials.
- Promotion of renewable energy sources.
- Recognition of the value for health and well-being.
- Reduce and mitigate against the risk of air, noise, water, and light pollution.

ESBC's current Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) of March 2009 for Abbots Bromley is also very supportive in this context. It also makes reference to the Abbots Bromley Village Design Statement (March 2007).

The Abbots Bromley Village Design Statement (March 2007) captures a number of similar important points in relation to the protection of the village heritage:

- Developments and improvements should be designed to enhance the main elements: rural nature, heritage and community.
- Individual development should respect the settlement character of that part of the village in which it occurs, and adopt a sensitive and co-ordinated approach to design and layout.
- Any new development must sit comfortably with its neighbours, taking into account footprint area, shape, proportions and material of older buildings.
- Visual interest can be created by sensitive design detailing of windows, roof lines, and chimneys.

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DAH1: Sustainable Design and Character

1. New development must be well-designed, sustainable and maintain the distinctive identity of Abbots Bromley, meeting the following requirements of this policy proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposed development:

a) In order to create a satisfying relationship between built and open areas, the existing character of the village and the immediate context of the development site must respect the surroundings in terms of scale, massing, height, distance of setback from the road, garden spaces, design and character and materials.

b) “Active” frontages (elevations with windows and doors) must be provided to road facing elevations, to provide natural surveillance.

c) High quality and durable materials, in keeping with the surrounding built environment, must be used. Use of locally sourced materials is highly encouraged, as is use of reclaimed materials.

d) Schemes involving new layouts must include high quality streets and public realm, with landscape as an integral part of the design, to support and create a safe and convenient environment for pedestrians and for a range of social activities.

e) Design accounting for the specific site and context is required. Layout and form must respond to local features within and adjacent to sites including local topography, landscape and water features, trees and plants, views, wildlife habitats, existing buildings and microclimate.

f) Front boundaries comprising hedges or historic brick walls or railings should be retained as part of any new development. New front boundary treatments must complement the existing character of the area, based on the use of low brick walls or hedges.

g) All designs for new homes or commercial premises must include features and materials which actively reduce the impact of carbon emissions.

2. Development on the edge of the village must incorporate planting and landscape design to create a natural transition between urban and rural areas. Hard boundary treatments such as high walls and fences must be set back and be screened by suitable landscaping.

3. Creative and innovative design solutions will be considered, especially where they incorporate high environmental protection performance.

Interpretation and Guidance:

Developers should engage with local residents and the Parish Council at an early stage in the design process, as advised by the NPPF.

Design and Access Statements provide an opportunity to explain how the design of the proposed development responds to this policy and other design policies and guidance.

The policy requires new development to complement existing character.

The policy requires site specific design to complement the specific context. Being sensitive to context is not about stylistic imitation, but complementing the distinctive townscape characteristics of the area. Stylistic imitation or parody can be especially harmful in the case of new buildings within the setting of historic buildings.

Users of this Plan are directed to Section 16 of the NPPF and Detailed Policies 5 and 6 of the Local Plan, which identify various aspects of the historic environment as a material consideration within the planning system.

The requirement for high quality building materials is especially important within the conservation area. Traditional materials such as timber, bricks, mortar and tiles (or high quality modern materials) should be used, but not mock traditional materials (such as plastic components in place of timber).

Features and materials that actively reduce carbon emissions could include the use of heat pumps and solar panels, improved insulation and the use of sustainable and locally sourced materials wherever possible.

Development could respond to “microclimate”, for example, by taking into account the orientation of properties in relation to solar gain.

“Traditional landscape” means in keeping with the existing appearance of the village and its surroundings.

DAH2: Extensions

1. Extensions to existing residential, commercial and community properties must:

- a) complement and not dominate existing buildings.**
- b) not cause any significant adverse impact on the amenities of adjacent properties.**
- c) maintain adequate functional garden space for residential properties.**

Interpretation and Guidance:

To avoid dominating the existing buildings, it is often useful for extensions to be set back or to be of a lesser height or smaller scale.

The question of whether to continue the existing style of the building or to contrast depends on the specific circumstances and has to be determined on a case by case basis, demonstrating why mirroring existing styling or deviating from it is appropriate in each case. For example, for historic buildings, use of lightweight modern or transparent construction for an extension or link section can have a lesser impact on the original buildings than using heavy masonry construction.

Garden space should be adequate for amenity considerations such as privacy and leisure use. Effective separation between buildings and adjacent sites must be provided.

The planting of trees and shrubs is encouraged to soften and screen new developments and reduce the effects of greenhouse gases.

DAH3: Abbots Bromley Conservation Area

1. Development should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area, including:

- a) avoiding harm or loss of mature trees and hedges;**
- b) in the main street, complement the predominant townscape characteristics based on the strong sense of enclosure and definition created by building frontages;**
- c) avoiding harm or loss to buildings and structures that contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the area.**

2. In exceptional circumstances, where the removal of trees or hedges is justified, replacement trees or hedges must be provided to create a similar level of amenity and to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Interpretation and Guidance:

The policy highlights the importance of certain buildings and features in considering impacts on the conservation area.

The policy draws attention to all buildings that make a contribution to the special interest of the conservation area, creating a collective impact that draws on the local vernacular and contributes to the townscape character of the area. Mature trees are also an important part of the area's character.

The policy should be applied together with Policies DAH1 and DAH2, which are of particular relevance within the conservation area and setting of listed buildings.

ESBC Local Plan Policy DP5 refers - Protecting the Historic Environment: All Heritage Assets, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Archaeology.

DEC: DWELLINGS, EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY

Purpose:

To ensure that new residential and employment development caters for local need.

To maintain and expand the range of local community facilities

Rationale and Evidence:

Abbots Bromley's inclusive sustainability lies in the building/adaptation of a range of development types suitable for:

- An ageing population
- Residents with disability/mobility needs
- The retention of young residents in the community
- Young families
- Employment opportunities
- Community use

Approximately 2000 residents reside in the parish, with the majority living within the village of Abbots Bromley. ESBC's key points from its analysis of the most recent available census figures (March 2011) show Abbots Bromley has a significantly above-average number of elderly inhabitants (26.5% compared to 19% nationally), and an above-average proportion of home-owners (81% compared to 68.9% nationally)..

The settlement boundary was extended in 2015 to the west along Uttoxeter Road and to the south along Lichfield Road. Accordingly, two development sites were created in order to accommodate the stipulated sustainable allocation of 40 homes contained in the East Staffordshire Local Plan. The Lichfield Road site has been developed with 11 large homes, which are exclusively market-value. The site on Uttoxeter Road has yet to be developed.

The development requirement identified in Strategic Policy 4 of the 2015 Local Plan can be met through these two developments. It is also the case that none of these developments have been specifically for the disabled/elderly or to lifetime home standards.

In order to provide early direction as to what development may be required to meet the local need, the NDP group conducted an audit of Abbots Bromley's current housing stock in January 2019. The results provided a clear indication that the majority of properties (were they to come onto the market) are not of the scale that would provide affordable or suitable homes for specific groups of local residents (eg first-time buyers) during the remainder of the Plan period.

The views and requirements of the community were expressed through the following channels:

- A series of minuted Open Meetings held between Dec 2018 and June 2019 (available on the NP web page)
- Written statements
- Responses to proforma made available at local outlets
- Comments made on a dedicated NP web page
- Oral comments to members of the neighbourhood plan group and parish councillors
- Residents in the parish were given an opportunity to participate in questionnaires (see the NP website for details)

The community's clearly expressed requirements that there should be:

- Provision of a range of homes for the elderly
- Provision of certain types of affordable homes
- Attention paid to sympathetic/measured planning and design
- Some small office units
- Some small rural craft units
- Development of facilities to enhance tourism
- Maintenance/improvement of facilities for a wide range of community groups.
- No more market-value homes of 3 bedrooms or more
- No development of open green spaces
- No heavy industry
- No development that would significantly increase the volume of traffic along the main street
- No change to the street scene in the conservation areas
- No over-development or infilling of open spaces
- No extension to the settlement boundary

The policy for future housing draws heavily on the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) independently prepared by AECOM for Abbots Bromley Parish Council in 2019 (the conclusions of which were subsequently revised by AECOM on 10/6/2021).

The original full AECOM report may be viewed on the Neighbourhood Plan web page link under "Document Library".

The HNA's conclusions support the views of the community (see minutes of Open Meetings 15/3/2019, 2/5/2019), and help put figures on future housing need.

The revised HNA concludes with the following:

- Between 13-30 Affordable Homes "with a true need falling somewhere between". (This figure failed to take into account the 8 units available at the Abbots Bromley Hospital, although only two of these may be able to accommodate a small family.)
- An aspirational figure of 110 units for the elderly, some of which would be Affordable Homes, some adapted from current housing stock, some provided by Rugeley and Uttoxeter on a hub-and-spoke model, and some new builds.
- No additional market-value 3+ bedroomed homes are required.

Housing needs for the elderly should be met with a mix of market-value and social housing, ranging from independent living accommodation to warden assisted units, to perhaps a care/nursing home.

Given that there are already 51 social housing units in Abbots Bromley, Affordable Housing for the younger generation has been set at 10-12 units. A site within the settlement boundary, provided by a Housing Association, is the preferred route. Through legal agreements these homes should be occupied by people with local connections (or who contribute to the sustainability of the village) and must remain affordable in perpetuity. They should be a mix of social rent and shared ownership homes.

These objectives **can be met** through current development sites already within the settlement boundary, but only if these sites are used to meet the HNA's perceived housing need. By far the largest potential development site is the former Abbots Bromley School. Residents recognise that this brownfield site offers considerable potential. A separate policy, DEC3 has been written to give guidance about the sort of development that would be supported on the School site.

The rationale for the DEC policies in relation to housing development is supported by NPPF (mainly, but not exclusively sections 8,11,12.)

- Promotion of sustainable development to support the needs of current and future generations. (Paragraphs 61,93,119,124 of NPPF)
- Provision of a sufficient number and range of homes to meet current and future need. (Paragraphs 61,194 of NPPF)
- Planning and development policies to account for the character, needs and opportunities of the area. (Paragraphs 98,100,120,124,125,126,207 of NPPF)
- Any approved housing developments which are in conflict with the made Neighbourhood Plan will likely cause an adverse impact that far outweighs any intended benefits. (Paragraphs 98,120, 130,207 of NPPF)
- Rural housing planning policies should reflect local need. (Paragraphs 92,127 of NPPF)
- Substantial weight is given to the value of utilising brownfield land. (Paragraphs 120,121,123 of NPPF)
- The Local Authority should take a proactive role in helping bring forward brownfield land suitable for meeting development needs and better development outcomes. (Paragraphs 120,121,123 of NPPF)

Further endorsement of the housing development rationale for DEC policies is contained in the ESBC Local Plan (2012-20341) (**SP 1,2,3,4, 14,15, 16,17, 21,22, 32, SO 1,4,8,9,12, and DP 1,3,5,6,8**):

- Development is encouraged within the settlement boundary of Tier Two Local Service Villages
- A Housing Need Analysis is encouraged for determining the mix, scale and local need for housing development because it is evidence based.
- Homes suitable for the elderly support the borough-wide identified housing shortage.
- The community has positively influenced where development is located, through a “made” NP.
- Facilities and businesses to be encouraged in order to support the local community and economy.
- There is potential for improved access for housing, facilities, services and jobs.
- Important assets protected.
- Where practicable, reuse to be made of redundant buildings sympathetically integrated with the character of the landscape.
- Brownfield land development will be encouraged as it has the potential to create new neighbourhoods, adding value to the existing community.
- Connection with local heritage conserved and enhanced.

ESBC’s current Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) for Abbots Bromley is also very supportive in this context. It also makes reference to the Abbots Bromley Village Design Statement (March 2007) which captures a number of similar important points in relation to the protection of the village heritage:

- Developments and improvements should be designed to enhance the main elements: rural nature, heritage and community.
- Individual development should respect the settlement character of that part of the village in which it occurs, and adopt a sensitive and co-ordinated approach to design and layout.
- Any new development must sit comfortably with its neighbours, taking into account footprint area, shape, proportion and material of older buildings.
- Visual interest can be created by sensitive design detailing of windows, roof lines and chimneys.

DEC1: Residential Development

1. Residential development will be supported within the existing settlement boundary or otherwise in accordance with the development plan.

a) Development must address the identified local need in terms of the mix and type of sizes of accommodation. The accommodation must predominantly include a mix of the following:

- **smaller housing and First Homes (1-2 bedrooms)**
- **homes for young families (3-bedrooms)**
- **housing suitable for the elderly, which could include a mix of market-value and social housing**

b) Any affordable housing provision should focus on these types of housing.

c) Proposals for bungalows and smaller terraced housing will be supported.

d) Housing infill development for gaps in existing frontages must have no significant adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

e) New housing within existing domestic garden space will only be supported where the existing dwelling would maintain adequate functional garden space and where adequate functional garden space would be provided also for the new dwelling(s). Development in historically important garden spaces, such as burgage plots, will not be supported.

f) Self-build schemes, co-housing and other community-led housing projects that meet the local need, whilst satisfying all the requirements of this policy are encouraged.

g) Housing internal layouts should be flexible to meet changing needs including home working.

Interpretation and Guidance:

The Local Plan sets out locations for new housing development, housing scale and housing mix and where residential development may be considered outside the settlement boundary. Local need will be considered against the latest evidence available. This policy recognises the relative lack of smaller properties in Abbots Bromley and the need for housing suitable for the elderly. The focus of this policy is to ensure that new housing delivered in the Parish can contribute to meeting a range of identified local needs. Housing design should be compliant with Nationally Described Space Standards.

The requirement for the retention and creation of adequate functional gardens applies everywhere, including within the settlement boundary. "Adequate functional garden space" is not defined in terms of area (given the varied character of the parish) but should include sufficient space for external table and chairs, recreation, outdoor play, drying of washing

and other typical private garden uses. The size of the garden will also depend on the need to meet the requirements of design and heritage policies.

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DEC2: Employment, Tourism and Community Facilities

- 1. New-build, extension, expansion and/or intensification of employment (Use Class E), tourist facilities and community facilities will be supported, subject to there being no significant adverse impact on the amenities of residential properties by reason of noise, vibration, disturbance, dust, noxious fumes or other impacts.**
- 2. Development involving the loss of existing community facilities will be supported only where similar or better facilities are provided within reasonable walking distance, or it can be demonstrated that such facilities are no longer needed.**
- 3. The use of brownfield sites to effect this policy would be supported.**

Interpretation and Guidance:

The Local Plan sets out policies on the location of new employment and community facilities and is augmented, but not replaced, by this policy.

In the context of DEC2 para1, small office units, rural craft units, artisan retail units, tourist facilities and community facilities will be supported.

DEC3: Former Abbots Bromley School Site

1. Any development on the former Abbots Bromley School Site must be based on the following principles:

- a) The built development must be within the Abbots Bromley settlement boundary.**
- b) A mix of uses must be provided. This may include housing that meets the requirements of Policy DEC1, but must also include the retention or replacement of community use facilities within the site, as well as the creation of new employment opportunities, which could include new small independent retail uses.**
- c) The listed school buildings and other buildings of townscape merit must be retained and refurbished as a key element of development, thereby maintaining their contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area.**
- d) Existing open space, including recreational space, must be retained, or replaced by a similar or better level and quality of provision elsewhere in the site.**
- e) Trees and hedges should be retained in the interest of development being in keeping with the village environment.**

Interpretation and Guidance:

The policy recognises the possible future redevelopment of the Former Abbots Bromley School site as brownfield land within the settlement boundary, but sets out principles to ensure that such redevelopment achieves a sustainable mix of uses, including employment and community facilities, and preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Open space within the development site could be provided on the part of the site outside the settlement boundary.

Developers should carry out tree surveys prior to any site works to allow for consideration of Tree Preservation Orders by the local planning authority.

The policy sets out some considerations to assist in applying the special statutory duty set out in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

NGE: Natural and Green Environment

Purpose:

To protect and enhance, the area's natural and green environment.

Rationale and Evidence:

Abbots Bromley parish benefits from a number of accessible public open spaces that are in character with their rural setting. Many spaces fall within the conservation area of the village and provide for sporting and leisure opportunities. Similarly, networks of public footpaths are well used by the local community and by tourists to the area.

The Staffordshire Way long distance path traverses North to South, and the Cross Britain Way long distance path traverses East to West. Both paths pass through the centre of Abbots Bromley.

There are many rural lanes that encircle the parish. Unlike the public footpaths, the lanes provide a year round healthy recreation opportunity for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders. Many residents who are not able to fully utilise the public footpath system, are able to gain health benefits from using the lane networks.

There are significant wooded areas within the parish, such as the Bagot Forest to the North and the Duckley Plantation to the West. A number of smaller wooded areas are located in the Bagot's Park and Bromley Park regions. These woods are essential to the identity of the area, and for the maintenance and protection of the area's local ecology.

The River Blithe flows to the south of the parish and was used to create Blithfield Reservoir, a 790 acre expanse of open water set in the rolling hills of the Blithe Valley. The area containing rare ancient woodland and an abundance of local wildlife was first designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) in 1968. It was re-designated in 1987 in recognition of its national importance as a habitat for wildfowl.

There are a number of tributaries flowing through the Parish which pose an evidenced regular flood risk to pastureland (eg Ash Brook; Dunstall Brook; Mires Brook). However, natural flood management methods are now preferred and allowing flood plains to flood is an important part of the strategy. Other parts of the parish are at risk from both surface water and sewerage flooding.

It is most important to give full recognition to the natural and green environment and conservation value of the parish in order to:

- Link the open spaces around the Parish.
- Provide open spaces for a range of village events and activities.
- Create safe pedestrian routes away from the busy main road.
- Raise awareness of the current village green space assets.
- Mitigate for climate change environmental impacts (flooding).

Community opinion in support of this policy was primarily obtained from an initial questionnaire and separate survey (2016) and a series of topical open forums (2018-2019). These important opinions provide an evidenced and demonstrable locally held point of view.

- Protection of green spaces that enhance the built heritage environment of the area.
- Protect and enhance sporting and leisure related green spaces.
- Protect the parish rural culture and setting.
- Ensure retention of trees and hedgerows.
- Protect/promote all forms of wildlife.
- Open spaces, footpaths and lanes should remain accessible to all.
- Create 'Quiet Lane' designations to protect this unique countryside asset.
- Preserve the landscape setting of the village.
- Positive integration of landscape with development.
- Strong sense of personal 'well-being' through close proximity to the natural environment.
- Permeable ground surfaces, and balancing ponds to regulate run-off water used in management of flood risks.

The rationale for this Policy in relation to protecting the diversity of Green Infrastructure is supported by the NPPF (**Sections 8; 12; 14; 15**).

- Conserve and enhance the natural environment.
- Wider public benefits are created by the countryside.
- Walking routes/public rights of way are beneficial community assets.
- Contribution to quality/distinctiveness of local environment.
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity protection measures.
- Control of pollution (air, water, noise and light).
- Ecological compensation measures and net gains in biodiversity.
- Veteran trees and ancient woodland afforded heritage protection.
- Weight given to environmental and conservation associated settings.
- Protection for green areas of particular community importance, in keeping with promotion of healthy communities.
- Flood Risk Assessment.

Further endorsement for protecting the diversity of Green Infrastructure is contained in the ESBC Local Plan (2012-2031) (**Strategic Policies 1; 23; 24; 27; 29; 30; 32; 33; 34**) (**Detailed Policies 2; 7; 8**).

- Protect, conserve and enhance local countryside, character, distinctiveness, quality of landscape, and the diversity of wildlife and habitats.
- Guidance to achieve sustainable development.
- Plan for and reduce the impacts of climate change.
- New development not unnecessarily exposed to the risk of flooding.
- Avoid unintended risk of flooding elsewhere due to development.

ESBC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2013) records an occasion of flooding on Ashbrook Lane in 2012, whilst also making recommendations for further investigation.

- Developments in such areas as this may require further investigation into the causes of the flooding.

Abbots Bromley Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) 2015 reaffirms the village status as a Conservation Area.

- Abbots Bromley is of special architectural/historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

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NGE1: Natural Environment

1. New development must have no significant adverse impact on the open rural landscape of the parish and its wildlife and ecology. In particular, this includes consideration of impacts on natural features:

- a) The landscape setting of Abbots Bromley village.**
- b) The River Blithe and its setting.**
- c) Other watercourses.**
- d) Blithfield Reservoir and its setting and local ponds.**
- e) Bagot Wood ancient woodland and its setting, including Bagot Park.**
- f) Duckley Wood plantation.**
- g) Other woods, trees and hedges.**
- h) The Clump.**
- i) The Staffordshire Way and other footpaths and bridleways.**
- j) Species rich grassland.**

2. Development should provide biodiversity net gain so that any habitat lost or damaged is adequately mitigated with additional habitat also being provided.

3. Features to support wildlife and nature are encouraged such as bat bricks, bird and owl boxes and hedgehog runs.

Interpretation and Guidance:

The policy provides protection to the area's natural environment and highlights features of particular value and sensitivity. Planning applications should contain sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the policy.

"Habitats" in biodiversity net gain terms refers to almost all habitats except for hard surfaces.

Conditions may be considered to ensure protection/enhancement of trees, hedges, verges, footpaths and other green infrastructure features during construction. National Forest guidelines should be followed where relevant. Near veteran / old mature trees should be conserved to provide continuity in terms of landscape and as dead wood habitat.

Incorporation of features to support protection/enhancement of wildlife and habitats may be a means for partially offsetting adverse impacts.

Conditions may be considered for preventing the adverse effects of damage to verges and of light pollution.

NGE2: Drainage and Flooding

- 1. Driveways and other hard standing surfaces within a development should be water permeable.**
- 2. The extent of hard standing should be minimized, in the interest of regulating temperatures, and to support the drainage of surface water.**

Interpretation and Guidance:

New developments should demonstrate that all surface water discharges have been carried out in accordance with the principles laid out within the drainage hierarchy, whereby a discharge to the public sewerage system is avoided where possible.

Planning applications should provide sufficient information to demonstrate lack of adverse impact. Advice on flood risk assessment may be found in Planning Practice Guidance and from the Environment Agency or local authorities.

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TIN: Transport and Infrastructure

Purpose:

- a. To support a more balanced range of transport and parking options.
- b. To support renewable energy solutions in sustainable locations.
- c. To improve broadband connectivity.

Rationale and Evidence:

The village of Abbots Bromley sits at a cross-road in the movement of traffic within the parish. The B5013/B5014 connects Uttoxeter to Lichfield, and the B5234/B5014/B5013 links Burton to Rugeley/Stafford.

The main carriageway through the village is 5.5m wide, with predominantly narrow footways. The authorised speed limit for all vehicles passing through the village is 30mph (although speeds in excess of this are prevalent at some locations).

Authorised 'Speedwatch' peak time traffic surveys indicate movement of 300 to 400 vehicles per hour passing through the heart of the Conservation Area. During off peak times traffic movement is still of a regular volume consisting of domestic vehicles; HGV's; LGV's; and farm machinery.

Due to the historical design of the roadside buildings within the Conservation Area, off road parking is not always possible. On-street parking produces the effect of a natural deterrent to speeding traffic, but does create traffic congestion, and potentially increased risk of road traffic accidents. There are regular occasions of minor collisions and damage to parked vehicle wing mirrors.

Motorists often mount the footways in order to overcome a gridlock situation, or simply to continue with their journey, rather than wait for the opportunity to proceed at various give-way 'choke points'.

The majority of residents are highly dependent upon the use of private vehicles for attending places of work, attending entertainment events, shopping and general movement within the region.

The parish has a limited public transport bus system which provides an essential lifeline to all residents, particularly those without access to private transport options. The bus franchise undergoes periodic change with variations in the service provided.

The combined effect of all factors is to create an environment through the heart of the community that is both hazardous to residents, and extremely damaging to the fabric of the Conservation Area.

In Abbots Bromley, it is recognised that a significant number of people work from home. Improvements to broadband connectivity would significantly boost productivity for all by providing a more reliable service. Working from home has the positive effect of reducing the number of local commuter journeys. Residents are also able to access a wide range of online services for work, leisure and personal health.

This is also essential for the elderly population who are unable to commute to the larger towns in the area.

Tourism to the area would also benefit from improvements to the broadband system.

With a large part of the main village designated as a Conservation Area, the installation of renewable energy technology is restricted. Such facilities are gradually being installed into those properties that sit outside of the Conservation Area. Residents recognise the importance of appropriate and sustainable installation of renewable energy technology.

Community opinion in support of this policy was primarily obtained from an initial questionnaire and separate survey (2016) and a series of topical open forums (2018-2019). These important observations/opinions provide an evidenced and demonstrable 'local need'.

- Settlement boundary sites used to provide off street parking.
- Improvement to road traffic management.
- Change to highway designation.
- Residents/fabric of the community, adversely affected by high traffic volumes.
- Failure to drive to the environmental conditions within the community.
- 20mph speed limit through the village.
- Creative road layout to manage/deter traffic volumes.
- Future development must not cause further negative impacts by vehicles.
- Residents feel 'blighted' by road vibration damage to their street side properties.
- Protection of rural/heritage environment.
- Direct traffic away from passing through the community to follow more appropriate road network routes in the area.
- Consideration of a road by-pass to the Conservation Area.
- Vehicle emissions high due to traffic congestion.
- Provision of sustainable methods of transportation.
- Support for renewable energy initiatives where appropriate.
- Support for 'Quiet Lane' designation on popular exercise routes.
- Poor public transport facilities disadvantage older and younger residents alike.
- Appropriate infrastructure to support working from home.
- Provision of high quality internet connection.
- Additional development is likely to result in increased traffic requirements, therefore consideration should be given to additional public parking in the village.

The rationale for this policy in relation to transport and infrastructure is supported by the NPPF (**Sections 9; 10; 12; 15; 16**).

- Control on environmental/safety impact of traffic.
- Provision of a wider choice of transport options.
- Appropriate parking provision.
- Environmental protection is paramount.
- Support/guidance for renewable/low carbon energy initiatives.
- Guard against impact on heritage assets.
- Benefits of reliable/advanced communications.

Further endorsement of the transport and infrastructure rationale for this policy is contained in the ESBC Local Plan (2012-2031). (**Strategic Policies 1; 24; 25; 28; 30; 34; 35**) (**Detailed Policies 1; 2; 7**).

- Effectively managed transport network.
- Specific recognition of congestion within the Conservation Area.
- Sustainable modes of travel.
- Reduced harm to safety/amenity and character of area.
- Renewable/low carbon energy generation.
- Overall reduction to carbon emissions.
- Sustainable economic growth through high quality broadband facilities.

TIN1: Sustainable Transport Provision

- 1. Development likely to generate car trips must include a balanced provision of transport and parking options, meeting the requirements of this policy, proportionate to the scale and nature of the scheme.**
- 2. The design and layout of development should allow for ease of movement of pedestrians and cyclists, with links to the surrounding footway network and provide a convenient and safe environment.**
- 3. Power supply points for electric vehicle charging must be provided as part of new parking provision, with one point per dwelling with associated parking.**
- 4. Covered and secure storage for cycles and scooters should be provided, including for all new dwellings.**

Interpretation and Guidance:

Whilst public transport options are limited, the policy places emphasis on pedestrian convenience, cycling, and the move to EV design. The policy should be applied with regard to the public realm requirements set out in the design policy.

A “balanced provision of transport” would include facilities to support active travel (cycling and walking).

Curtilage parking with dwellings should be proportionate to the size of the property.

ESBC Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Parking Standards 2020.

TIN2: Transport Impacts

- 1. Where highway infrastructure works are necessary to enable development to take place, they must be designed so as to preserve or enhance the rural and historic character of the area, including rural lanes.**

Interpretation and Guidance:

In consideration of impacts on safety and congestion, the application of the policy will be proportionate to the scale of the development. Planning applications for larger schemes should contain sufficient technical information to demonstrate sufficient road capacity.

For development affecting heritage assets, the special duties in Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act would apply to infrastructure improvements associated with development, in addition to the development itself.

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TIN3: Local Energy Schemes

1. Renewable and low carbon energy schemes will be supported, provided there is no significant adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties or businesses, or on the rural or historic environment. This includes visual impacts, noise, vibration and other impacts.

Interpretation and Guidance:

Whilst the focus of the policy is on amenity, local energy schemes will also be tested rigorously against other policies, including those relating to design, heritage and the natural environment.

Visual impacts include the immediate locality but also wider impacts in the case of larger structures. This includes impacts on heritage and sensitive landscapes.

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TIN4: Broadband

1. New development must include high speed broadband provision and ensure the property will be able to benefit when local services are upgraded.

Interpretation and Guidance:

This policy applies to broadband infrastructure within development sites. This ensures that new developments can benefit when local services are upgraded.

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Appendix 1 - Buildings of Townscape Merit

Building	Description	Townscape Merit
Town Top and Hurst Villa, Lichfield Road	Former farmhouses (now dwellings) and adjoining brick cart shed. Hurst Villa is fronted by distinctive iron railings, Town Top has low brick wall. Both farmhouses have stone lintels and sills. Cart shed has arched entrance and semi-circular opening to loft.	Example of mid-19 th C farmhouses of local orange/red brick. Positive contribution to street scene and Conservation Area.
Chapel House, Lichfield Road	Former chapel (now dwelling) gable end facing highway; set back on an elevated base behind low brick wall and iron railings.	Example of late 19 th C chapel building. Dominates the street scene due to its height and steep pitched roof. Positive contribution to street scene.
Row of 4 terraced houses adjacent and to south of Bank House, Lichfield Road	Former AB School guest accommodation with large first floor sash windows extending to roof level. Orange brick and Staffordshire blue hipped tile roof.	Prominent feature of the street scene and Conservation Area at north end of Lichfield Road.
St Benets and St Annes (part of) south side of High Street	Terraced former AB School accommodation, now refurbished as apartments. Part set back behind low brick wall. Red brick and blue tiles.	Positive contribution to street scene and Conservation Area.
Main AB School building, north side of High Street behind listed chapel and school master's house	3-storey Victorian red brick building with pitched and hipped blue clay tile roof.	Dominates the street scene at the south end of the High Street giving sense of enclosure.
Chapel south side of Hall Hill Lane	Early 19 th C former congregational chapel (now dwelling). Orange brick and blue tiles with porch. Large high windows.	Positive contribution to street scene and Conservation Area.
Chapel west side of Church Lane opposite Little Booth	Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Orange brick and Staffordshire blue tiles, with matching porch. Rendered south elevation.	Positive contribution to street scene and Conservation Area.
Bagot Barns north side of Bagot Street adjoining the listed Bagot Arms PH.	Former coach house and stabling to Bagot Arms (now dwellings). Part 2-storey, part single storey, painted brick with Staffordshire blue tiles.	Positive contribution to street scene and Conservation Area.

Based on buildings identified in Abbots Bromley Conservation Area Assessment by IBI Taylor Young on behalf of East Staffordshire Borough Council (July 2015). None of the buildings have a statutory listing but contribute to the appearance of the Conservation Area and heritage of Abbots Bromley.