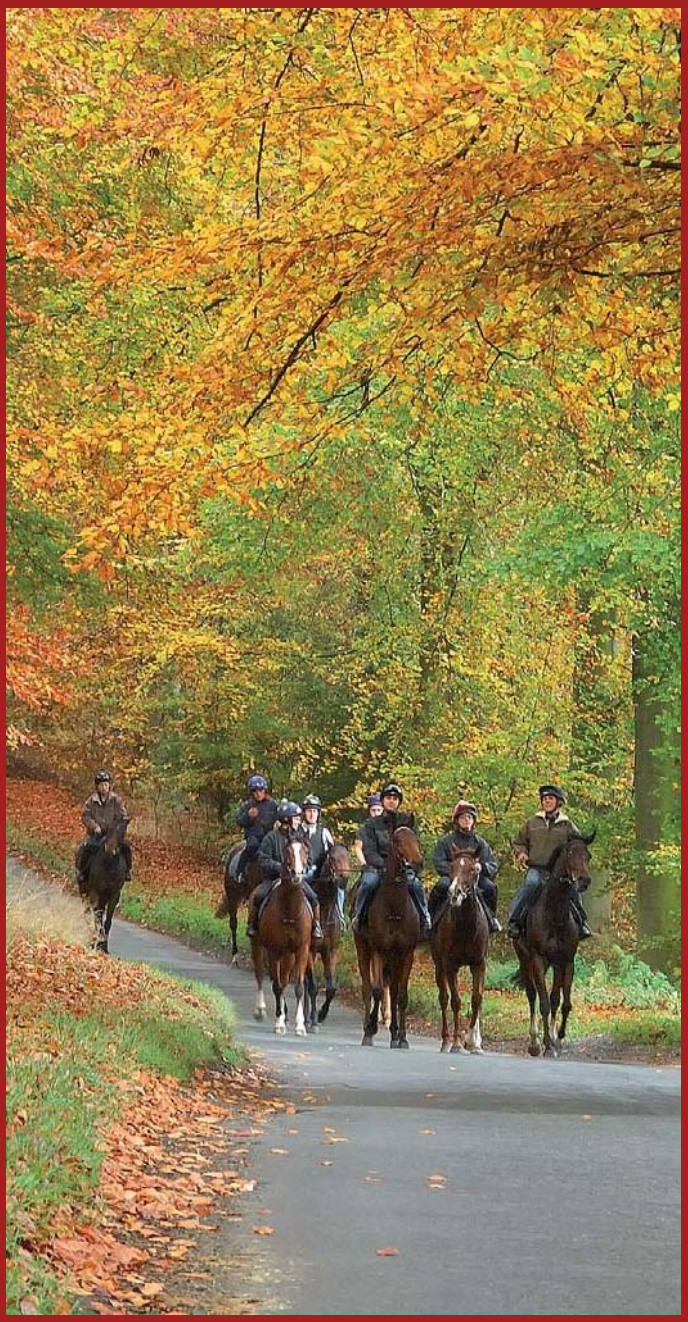






Longdon Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2029

Referendum Version



Foreword

This draft Plan is submitted to Lichfield District Council (as the local planning authority) under regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, 2012, having been revised following pre-submission consultation undertaken during the summer of 2016.

Details of the consultation process, stretching back to 2013 (following the Area Designation), are contained in the Consultation Statement submitted with this Plan.

This document has been produced by a working group of Longdon Parish Council, seeking to prepare land use guidance for Longdon Parish. The final version (amended if necessary, following examination) will become the Neighbourhood Plan for the whole of Longdon Parish. If successful at a Parish wide referendum, it will become a key part of the planning framework of Lichfield District Council, to help those making future decisions on land use investments and planning applications.

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Introduction

The opportunity to have a Neighbourhood Plan, and to reap the powerful benefits s it can provide, has been eagerly grasped by the residents of Longdon Parish. In responding to initial questionnaires, at many public meetings and briefings to Parish organisations, residents clearly indicated their support for, and wish to have a say in, the future of their home Parish.

Over 90% of respondents identified with the Parish, enjoying the rural setting, the beauty, the tranquility, and with a clearly expressed desire to want to help shape any physical change in the area over the next 12 years.

Maintaining the status quo is the 'comfort option'. However, this valid stance can quickly lead to complacency, as stagnation sets in and villages ossify. Instead, small managed change can maintain vitality, family groups, and integration. This plan provides for that. In short:

"Enjoy continuity, accommodate change."



What a Neighbourhood plan is

A Neighbourhood Plan, introduced under the Localism Act, gives to members of the community a “hands-on” role in the physical planning of their neighbourhood. It grants strong rights and powers, which allow the community to have a say as to the land use and shape of any new developments – housing, facilities, infrastructure, conservation. By joining together to share a common vision, the community can help create the policies it wants, for where residents live, work and play.

It has a strength not hitherto enjoyed, based on its origin in community aspirations. It will be a statutory document, part of the local authority’s Local Development Framework, to be observed and adhered to by developers, and will be instrumental in the determination of planning applications for the area.

Benefits of the Neighbourhood Planning process

Having a Neighbourhood Plan in place:

- Ensures that the Parish communities are involved in any land use decisions which affect them.
- Helps meet the foremost local needs and wishes.
- Recognises what is precious to the residents, workers and visitors in the Parish.
- Helps safeguard the Parish villages and hamlets from uncontrolled piecemeal development.
- Influences the type and style of allowable development.
- Supports the provision of, or improvement to, village facilities.

An adopted Neighbourhood Plan, will enable Longdon Parish Council (the Parish Council) to have increased influence and leverage in dealings with;

- Lichfield District Council (the District Council).
- Staffs County Council (the County Council).
- Landowners and developers.
- Infrastructure organisations/ utility providers in land use matters affecting Longdon Parish (the Parish).


Gentleshaw
Primary School
Tel: 01543 682476
www.gentleshawstaffs.sch.uk
SCHOOL
FAYRE
SLOW

Setting the scene

Longdon is a rural Parish lying on the north-western boundary of Lichfield District. It is predominantly Green Belt farmland abutting Cannock Chase.

Within the Plan area there are four main settlements, namely Longdon, Upper Longdon, Longdon Green and Gentleshaw, which are identified in the District Local Plan's hierarchy of settlements as 'other rural.' The small villages are inset into the Green Belt.

The A51 runs south east to north through the Parish, passing to the east of Longdon Green, west of Longdon and to the north of Upper Longdon. The highway gives good access to the A38, M6 and M6 Toll; the remainder of the roads within the area are rural. The West Coast Main Line railway runs to the east of the Parish, with stations at Lichfield and Rugeley, providing regular services to London and the north- west. HS2 will make a visual impact on part of the Parish.

Our history

The Parish has been mostly rural throughout history. Up to the Bronze Age, the area was heavily wooded. Gradual clearance during the Bronze and Iron Ages allowed the development of farmsteads and dispersed settlements. The Iron Age fort at Castle Ring to the west of the Parish, would have defended the surrounding area, providing protection to local residents, their livestock and produce.

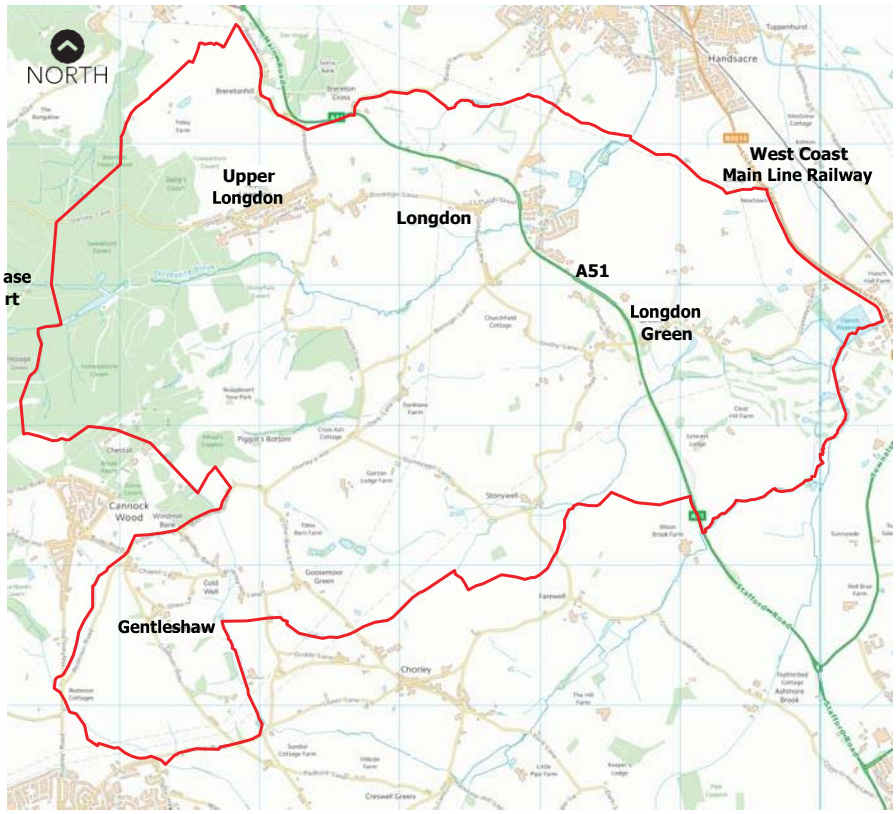
There is little evidence of any material increase in population until the 14th Century when, due to the influence of the Church, Longdon became a manor in its own right. Bishops were active in enhancing the economic productivity of the area by clearing the woodland and creating fields for farmland. The Bishops of Lichfield held the manor of Longdon up to 1546, when it was surrendered to Henry VIII. In the same year, ownership was granted to Sir William Paget, an ancestor of the Marquis of Anglesey.

In 1563, Longdon was recorded as having 102 households, which had grown to 178 by 1665. Population increase continued, with records showing that by 1851, there were 1183 inhabitants, 4452 acres of land, a number of small hamlets, and several gentlemen's seats. This included Beaudesert, the residence of the Marquees of Anglesey, and Lysways Hall, home of the Villiers-Forster family.

The Marquees lived at Beaudesert Hall until 1919, when family debts and taxes prompted a move to their other ancestral home at Plas Newydd, Anglesey, Wales. The 6th Marquis sold 2000 acres of the land, giving villagers the opportunity to buy or build their homes. He also commenced the demolition of the Hall, parts of which can be found locally in Abbots Bromley and as far away as Austrailia.

Sir Villiers- Forster gave funds to erect a community hall in 1919, to celebrate the allied victory in the Great War.

A dispersed settlement pattern remains the dominant landscape feature across the Parish, although most of the villages have seen some development during the 20th century, especially in Longdon and Upper Longdon.



Longdon Neighbourhood Boundary

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Licence No : 100017765
not to scale

The Parish today

The 2011 Census records 1,505 people (647 households) living in Longdon Parish. There are two Church of England churches, five pubs, a shop and post office, two state Primary schools, two private schools and four community halls. There are many clubs and societies run via the halls, and in terms of sport Longdon Cricket Club currently play 'club' cricket at the Red Lion Ground in Longdon Green.

The Parish contains 4 Grade II* and 27 Grade II listed properties. Longdon Green is the only designated Historic Conservation Area within the Parish. Castle Ring, a Scheduled Ancient Monument abuts the south-western boundary of the Parish.

The Parish adjoins Cannock Chase, a biologically and historically important landscape that can be traced back thousands of years – long before it became known as a royal hunting area. It is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It also falls within the Forest of Mercia boundary, only one of ten such forests of significance in the country.

Gentleshaw Common, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), is also within the Plan area. The Common is an area of lowland heathland - one of the largest surviving areas of this much reduced habitat in Staffordshire. There are a number of priority species which directly benefit from the sites statutory protection, including the 'Adder', 'Common Lizard', 'Tree Pipit', 'Nightjar', 'Woodlark', 'Neglected' and 'Heath Rustic' moths, ground nesting solitary bees and wasps, 'Small Bordered Fritillary' butterflies and the 'Bog Bush Cricket'.

Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) are located at:

- Georges Hayes, Piggots Bottom and Square Covert.
- Longdon Hall / School.
- Longdon Green.
- A51 road embankment at Cleat Hill.
- Morry Meadow.
- An area immediately to the west of the A51 (Longdon village).

Today, the Parish has become an aspirational place in which to live. A higher than normal percentage of elderly residents reflects that desirability, choosing to remain in the family home after children have grown up and left. However, because of the ease of access to the 'A' road and rail network, and the proximity to larger areas of employment, such as Lichfield, Birmingham, Stafford, Burton on Trent, and wider afield, the Parish has increasingly become a 'dormitory' area.



The Vision

Following the initial gathering of ideas and opinions at the many consultation events held through 2013/2014, five major themes emerged;

- People like living in a rural area and that the character of the villages (and Parish in general) is very important.
- problems with traffic (its speed and volume) pose a danger to all road users.
- large scale housing development is not wanted.
- improved community facilities would be welcomed.
- whilst some change may be necessary to secure improvements, residents want to be able to influence that change.

Taking on board those messages, the Parish Council-led Working Group drafted the **VISION** statement (set out in the flyer delivered to all properties in the Parish and considered at community engagement events in June and July 2014), encapsulating the general feelings regarding land use in the Parish over the next 15 years;

'Longdon Parish will continue to be a collection of rural villages where people aspire to live.

The principal settlements of Longdon, Longdon Green, Upper Longdon and Gentleshaw, will retain their individual identities, with any respectful, small scale development designed in such a way as to integrate into the village's character, helping to strengthen their sustainability. Acknowledging the special nature of living adjacent to Cannock Chase, the Neighbourhood Plan will ensure that what residents enjoy about the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is maintained and enhanced.

Measures to address concerns regarding the volume and speed of traffi c travelling through the villages will be considered to improve overall safety for all road users. Public and community transport links to and from the villages will also be considered.

The design, appearance, scale and massing of any new development, will be carefully woven into the fabric of the villages, in a sustainable way that adds to the local rural feel of the area.

Community cohesion and integration is a critical element of the Plan. The balanced community, will see young families living alongside older residents, who have enjoyed and cherished the peace and beauty of the area for many years. The need for additional community facilities will be reviewed and, if appropriate, created.

Agricultural and equine activities are key features in the Parish. Support for local employment opportunities in this sector will be contained within this Plan, provided they sympathetically enhance, and do not detract from, the appearance of the landscape.'



Principles and objectives

Based upon the **VISION**, the Principles and Objectives were also consulted upon in 2014. Following that, they have been further defined, to provide for sustainable growth, maintaining traditional values in a modern setting - managing change whilst respecting our heritage.

Please note, the numbering of the Principles and Objectives are not in any priority order – they are equally important.

1. We will retain and enhance our green spaces and the Green Belt to ensure we avoid the merging of Longdon/Longdon Green with Armitage, Upper Longdon with Brereton, and Gentleshaw with Burntwood. Such a suburban sprawl is not in anyone's interest.

2. We will protect the relationship between Upper Longdon and Cannock Chase and Gentleshaw with Cannock Chase/Gentleshaw Common by resisting inappropriate development that would impact negatively on the environment of these Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

3. We will strive to ensure that the community facilities and amenities are appropriate for the needs of the Parish, allowing residents of all ages the opportunity to take part in activities that lead to a sense of individual and/or community well-being.

4. Should any minor amendment to village boundaries be required to accommodate small scale growth for local people, it must acknowledge the character of the village and be a logical extension to the existing footprint. Extensions that could lead to future creeping encroachment (merging settlements) will not be supported.

5. We will support the provision of new housing, primarily for local people, that provides homes for young families or the elderly, in suitable and sustainable locations within our village boundaries, so that future residents will have access to public transport, shopping and recreational provision.

6. If in the future development is necessary, to enable the villages to remain sustainable, any new development (in terms of their individual or collective appearance) must respect the local Staffordshire rural vernacular, or be of a high quality contemporary design and be fully integrated into the village settlement..

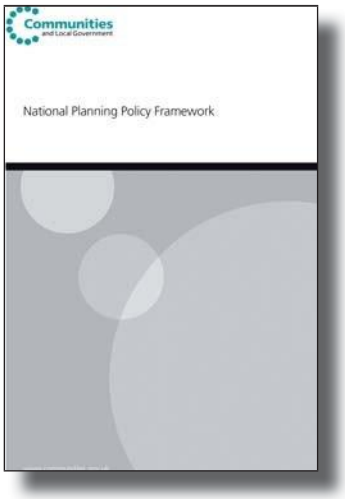
7. We will seek to deal with the issues of increased traffic flows (and speed) throughout the Parish and seek to maintain and improve highways, bridle paths and footways for all users. We will campaign for improvements to the network of public footpaths and community transport links.



The planning policy context

This Section sets out the Neighbourhood Planning process and the key documents with which the Neighbourhood Plan needs to accord.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

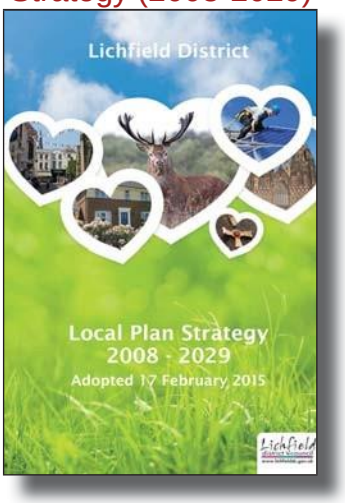


The National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 (NPPF) and the web based Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) outline the UK Government's policies for land use, at the heart of which is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The guidance advocates positive growth, with economic, social and environmental benefits being delivered through the planning system.

Neighbourhood Planning is an integral part of the NPPF, enabling local communities to engage in the process of shaping development within their area and identify any local needs and desires the land use planning system may be able to address.

A requirement of the NPPF is that Neighbourhood Plans must also be in general conformity with other strategic land use policies of the Local Authority including, where necessary, the provision of new housing.

Lichfield District Local Plan Our Strategy (2008-2029)



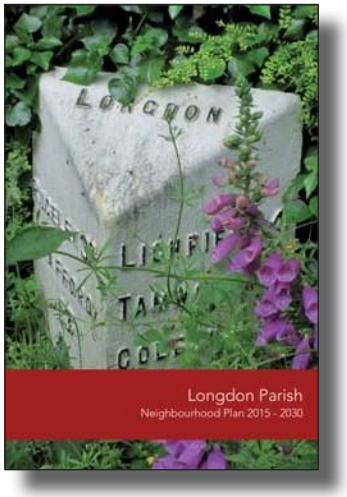
The Lichfield District Local Plan was adopted by full Council on 17th February 2015, providing the broad policy framework and long term land use strategy that will guide and manage development over the District as a whole for the next 15 years. This Development Plan Document adds a layer of detail to the generic NPPF guidance, setting out the overall approach to be followed for the provision of new dwellings, community facilities, employment opportunities and transport and communication infrastructure across the District. In so doing, it has helped inform the production of this draft Neighbourhood Plan.

As part of the required Public Inquiry process, the Lichfield District Council's Local Plan has been externally examined to ensure its policies are 'sound' and in compliance with relevant legislation and the NPPF. Provided this draft Neighbourhood Plan is consistent with these higher order plans and policies, it will, in turn, pass the test of compliance – the principal requirement for meeting the Basic Conditions of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

In addition to the higher order plans, Lichfield District Council has produced a series of generic Supplementary Planning Documents. Of specific relevance to Longdon Parish are:

- The Rural development SPD, 2015.
- The Historic Environment SPD 2015.

Draft Longdon Parish Neighbourhood Plan



Neighbourhood Plans provide the third strand to the local policy framework for Lichfield District; this Neighbourhood Plan will add a more detailed level of land use planning guidance for Longon Parish. Taken together, these three tiers of planning policy will form part of the suite of documents that will help in the determination of any planning applications for development in the Parish.

The relevant sections and polices in both the NPPF and the Local Plan, will be referenced in the appropriate sections of this draft Neighbourhood Plan.

In 2012, Longdon Parish Council resolved to apply to Lichfield District Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan to cover the whole of the Parish area. The District Council approved the application and designation in July 2013, enabling work on the draft Plan to begin.

A Parish Council-led Neighbourhood Planning Working Group was formed of Councillors and local people, from a variety of backgrounds across the Parish.

Immediately following the area's designation, wide ranging community consultation commenced, determining the local issues, the community wants - the do's and the don'ts. Through various means (posters on notice boards, household flyers, public meetings, briefings with the numerous Parish organisations, a dedicated part of the Council's website, the Parish magazine, face-to-face contacts, and regular progress reports at Parish Council meetings) opportunities were opened up for parishioners to get involved and express their thoughts.

Local engagement has been continuous since then, resulting in an initial draft Neighbourhood Plan being consulted upon for a period of 6 weeks in October/November 2015.

That initial draft Plan was amended to reflect comments made during the informal consultation. The ongoing process has been explained to residents, land owners and interested parties.

The formal Regulation 14 consultation took place between July 11th and August 21st 2016.

The draft Plan was again revised following the consultation exercise.

No other Neighbourhood Development Plan is in preparation in Longdon Parish.

The Policies

None of the policies contained within this document are to be read in isolation. They should be viewed as an integral suite, reflecting the views and wishes of the local communities living and working in Longdon Parish. In that way, change can be accommodated and managed, whilst still retaining the aspirational nature of the area.

Landscape and the Built Environment

How the buildings fi t into the landscape, the views and vistas, are all essential components of what makes the Parish so special – an 'aspirational' place in which to live.

By highlighting the positive aspects of the local countryside, considering development in the round, and emphasising the importance of its impact on the landscape, it should be possible to avoid poor building decisions of the past creeping into the landscape of the future

The views of local people were;

The rural setting and natural environment are amongst the most valued elements of this area. Open space, woodland, trees and hedgerows should be maintained, with existing wildlife habitats preserved and protected for future generations; school children, farmers, businesses, land owners and residents should be encouraged to support wildlife.

Access into and through the countryside should be improved, by the creation of new public footpaths, bridle paths etc.

Any new development should be small scale, not intrude unduly into the countryside, and should not result in over development; adding to, rather than detracting from, the rural character of the area.

Justification and Evidence

The layout, design and appearance of individual (or collections of) buildings, adds interest and colour to the rural backdrop of the Parish.

New development can prompt much local debate and is examined in detail during the planning application process. However, in the past, focusing too heavily on the appearance and relationship of a new development to its immediate neighbours, has led to some regrettable situations, where the impact on the wider landscape setting has not been sufficiently considered - the spaces between buildings are as important as the buildings themselves.

Landscape

Apart from the four village settlements, a few farmsteads (much reduced following the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001) and individual isolated properties dotted throughout, Longdon Parish is primarily an agricultural landscape.

The Parish adjoins Cannock Chase, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Gentleshaw Common (a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for lowland heathland) is also within the Plan area. There are a number of individual Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within the Parish, with a large number clustered around the main settlements. A number of non-statutory Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) exist across the area.

The traditional field systems within the Parish were generally subject to boundary alterations during the second half of the 20th Century, in response to an increased demand for agricultural productivity. The recent 'horsification' of the area (with paddocks becoming more prevalent), has begun to impact upon the more established farming patterns, to meet the needs of the equine industry, or the leisure pursuits of local horse riders.



The network of public footpaths that cross the Parish, enable users to appreciate the landscape features and wildlife. However, these are limited in certain areas, in particular from Bardy Lane/Dark Lane/Lower Way (Upper Longdon) through the Beaudesert and Chestall estates and into Cannock Chase.

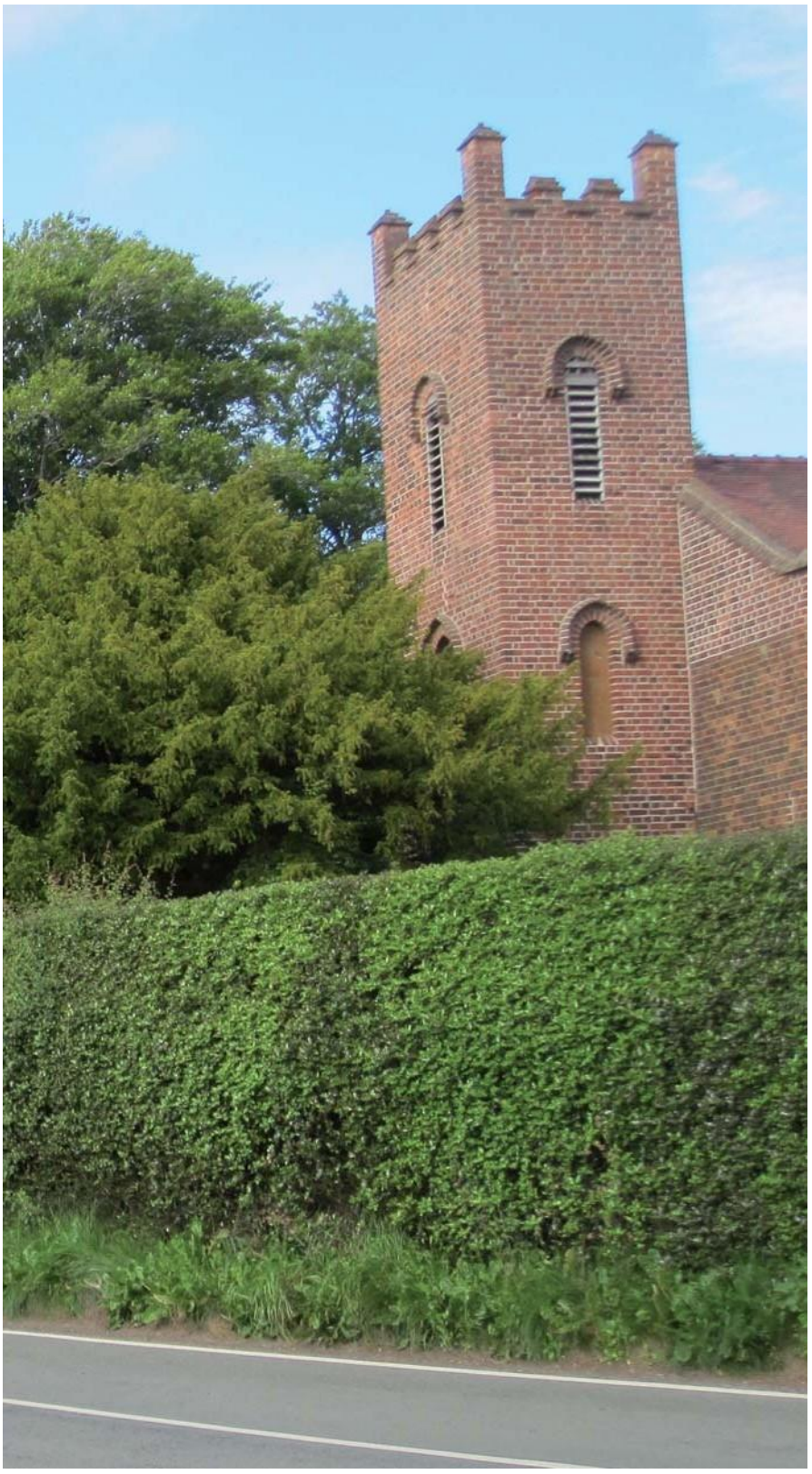
There are no main rivers within Parish. However, a number of smaller brooks flow through it and into the River Trent. Stream habitat corridors should be maintained and where possible improved, with the aim of restoring natural features alongside and within the watercourses, whilst at the same time removing invasive species where possible.

Built Environment

The four principal settlements in the Parish all differ in size, each with its own character and architectural styles.

Longdon Green is a historic Conservation Area; a few listed buildings are dotted throughout the Parish; their locations can be found at www.historicengland.org.uk.

In order to develop meaningful polices for the future that respect the areas character, design and appearance, one must firstly consider the past.



Longdon

Originally a small linear settlement straddling the main road between Stone and Lichfield, the village expanded considerably from the late 1960s onwards (following the construction of the A51 by-pass), with properties of varying size and layout. Much of this was typical of the "speculative" design for the era, and can be seen in virtually any village/suburb, anywhere in the country. The expansion was developer influenced, formulaic, with very little embellishment to enhance the design, and rarely acknowledged the local village vernacular.

A few gems from the past do remain. These buildings pre-date the 1960- 80's development era and sit on either side of the former A51 (now Brook End). By and large, these tend to be characterful properties, such as those between the 'Swan with Two Necks' public house and the eastern side of Brook End, between Mill Way and Church Way, and a few cottages on the opposite side, between the southern boundary of the school playing fields and the shop/Post Office.

With the benefit of hindsight, it would have been desirable for the new developments to have been influenced by the form and proportions of the existing dwellings; the modest details of the older buildings would have sufficed to present simple, but effective designs. Recent developments (Hawcroft) have "nodded" in the direction of more traditional styling, but the cul-de-sac layout and inclusion of overbearing detailing, detracts from their aesthetics. Any new development, or future sustainable expansion of the village, must deserve a more respectful class of design, to prevent a recurrence of the "mock" styles which developers claim to appeal to prospective purchasers: they may well do, but should be resisted.

Any new development must have regard to the visual and functional well-being of the village, rather than being merely a pretty building.

Any new development within the village, or as part of any future expansion, must be based on a good understanding of local character and circumstances. As expressed above, the space between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. This will ensure that design will be informed by the wider context of the site. Any infilling should also respect the immediate spatial dimension of the part of the village where development is proposed.

Upper Longdon

Upper Longdon was also the subject of expansion in the recent past, with mainly linear development along the northern boundary of Upper Way. There were other locations on the southern side, developed at about the same time (or slightly later) and again, it would seem that these were developer influenced - the way of things in those days.

Other development in the last couple of decades of the twentieth century, such as infill building on Lower Way was again speculative, but small-scale and landowner led.

As with Longdon village, any new development, must be based on a good understanding of local character and circumstances; the space between buildings being as important as the buildings themselves. This will ensure that design will be informed by the wider context of the site, and influenced by the villages linear pattern and older/original properties, for instance those along Lower Way. Any infilling should again respect the immediate spatial dimension of the part of the village where development is proposed.

Longdon Green

Longdon Green did not suffer from the malaise of late 20th Century development and remains very much a traditional area consisting of a mix of conservative, local vernacular house types, with a significant percentage of large, detached dwellings, most of which benefit from ample outdoor amenity space. The smaller detached and semi- detached houses (some of which are former municipal housing) are of a more traditional nature, and where extended, have been done so thoughtfully.

It is difficult to imagine Longdon Green being developed on a "speculative" basis, as the current vogue for 'anywhere architecture' would be disastrously at odds with the character and appearance of the existing settlement and would ruin its character.



Principal settlements in the Parish

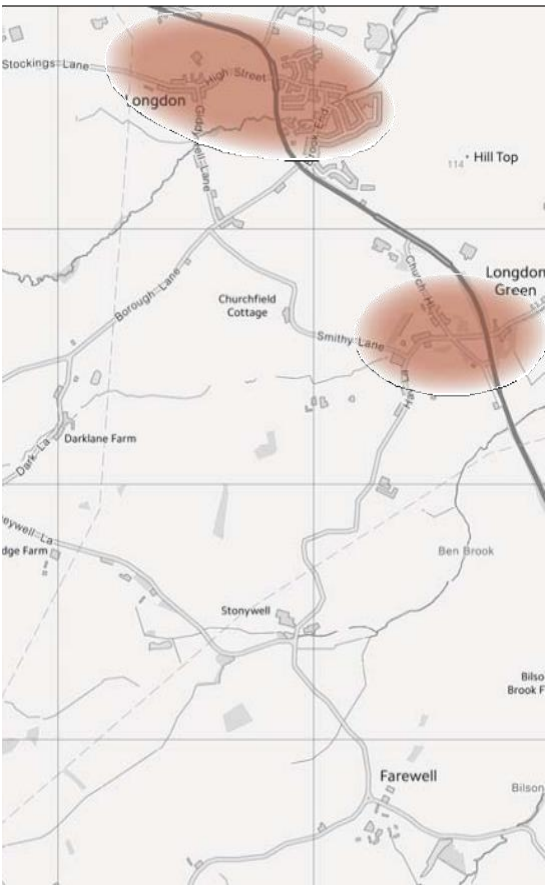
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not to scale

The village does not have a defined boundary and as such is 'washed-over' by Green Beltpolicies. However, if development accords with those policies and is acceptable, it should be of modest density and must take its influence from the existing properties, thus maintaining the character of the village.

Gentleshaw

Due to its location and topography, Gentleshaw has not been subject to over-development.

Gentleshaw Common is a protected site, providing an attractive visual amenity and open space for residents to enjoy. As with Longdon Green, Gentleshaw does not have a defined settlement boundary, and is therefore 'washed over' by Green Belt policies.



Most of the properties (including the church and school) are well scattered around the various lanes, reflecting the nature of historic development. Although many have been extended over time, they reflect the rural vernacular of the area.

The prevailing Green Belt policies will limit any development in Gentleshaw. However, if the stringent criteria for building in the Green Belt can be met, minor infill must reflect the nature of the area's properties which, on the whole, tend to be of a modest size.

Farmsteads, isolated, and individual properties

Although there is a general presumption against development in the Green Belt, any proposals that can satisfy the exemptions (as set out in paras 87 - 89 of the NPPF), must demonstrate that due regard has been paid to their impact on longer range views and vistas, as well as the immediate context; unsympathetic development in the past has had an adverse visual impact on the openness of the landscape.

In order to preserve the rural nocturnal landscape, external lighting, other than intermittent PIR's to illuminate isolated buildings (including stables, loose boxes etc.) should not be permitted.

Extensions

With regard to extensions to existing properties, it should be emphasised that in general, the extension should be designed so as to be subservient to the existing property. There is little point in allowing a property to be extended in such a way that the new works overwhelm, or detract from, the visual appearance of the existing building. Where buildings have been rendered to mask /blend-in extensions, the original building should remain dominant.

It is recognised, however, that in some cases, making a statement of an extension can be effective (for example by the inclusion of an entirely different design ethos). That said, this type of work is few and far between and must be considered on a case by case basis, and extremely carefully.

Car parking and access

Where possible, all new development must accommodate adequate car parking within the curtilage of a property, so as not to lead to a significant increase in kerb side parking. However, the level of car parking must be balanced against the aesthetic impact on the appearance of the property itself.



The Principles and Objectives that underpin the Landscape and Built Environment

Numbers 1, 2, 4, 5.

Planning Policy Context

NPPF – Paragraphs 17, 55-58, 75, 79 , 81, 87- 89 and 125.
Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy (2015). Chapters 2,3,5,11 and 12.



Landscape and Built Environment Policies

Policy 1

To protect and enhance the natural landscape and designated wildlife sites, developments which increase wildlife habitats and species, in accordance with the Staffordshire and Lichfi eld District's Biodiversity Action Plans, will be supported. Where possible, the removal of hedgerows will be resisted.

Policy 2

, The creation of new public footpaths/bridleways, to improve access to the countryside, will be encouraged where this does not cause confl ict with Policy 1.

Policy 3

There will be a presumption against built development outside of the village boundaries (rural exceptions notwithstanding) except for purposes set out in the relevant section of the NPPF and Core Policy 6 of the Local Plan. Proposals for new rural workers dwellings will need to be accompanied by a robust demonstration that the principal criteria set out in the Lichfield District Council Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document.

Policy 4

Applications for new development will be required to demonstrate how the design has regard to the traditional village vernacular (including the use of materials) and the impact such development could have on existing landscapes, and vistas. Any new buildings outside the village settlement boundaries must be appropriately landscaped to sensitively integrate the development into the surrounding countryside.

Housing

People 'aspire' to live in Longdon Parish because of its character, beauty and neighbourliness - qualities that villagers hold high…..and are passionate about protecting. This does not mean however, that this Plan is anti-development; change is a given.

There is a range of accommodation within the Parish, from single bedroom flats and alms houses through to more substantial multi roomed country homes. However, the price of properties in the area far exceeds the means of those on average earnings, disadvantaging families with young children. The availability of affordable rented properties is scarce, further compounding the issue. And the age profile of the Parish also suggests that under occupancy of private properties is disadvantaging starter families, that wish to remain, or move into the area.

If Longdon Parish wants to continue to thrive it is important to bear in mind that change does not, necessarily, equate to harm. Managed change, is both the aspiration of the plan and its objective.

The views of local people were;

Uncontrolled growth was a major theme expressed during the consultations. It was felt that the rural setting of the Parish was being eroded by unsympathetic development, and that a creeping encroachment into the Green Belt was threatening the character of the villages. There was an acknowledgement however, that the sustainability of village life was also under threat, due to the ageing demographic profile, under-occupation of properties, and the shortage of smaller house types for residents at both ends of the age spectrum. Some growth was therefore seen as acceptable, providing homes for local people, but in suitable locations; infilling, not estates.

Justification and Evidence

Development in the Parish prior to the 1960's evolved in response to the needs of the largely agrarian economy. Gentleshaw and Longdon Green typify the dispersed pattern of development, whereas Longdon Village and Upper Longdon experienced significant growth in the latter part of last century, of a more suburban fashion, featuring bungalows and culs-de-sac.

Conversion of existing non-residential properties (i.e. barn conversions and on brownfield sites), is likely to feature in the future, although it is acknowledged that the scope for this type of development is limited.

Lichfield District's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2015 (SHLAA) indicates that future housing growth targets for the District are likely to be met by development within the key urban and rural settlements. None of the 'smaller villages' (such as those in the Parish) currently have any identified allocations in the District Local Plan Strategy (2015). The 'Vision for Rural Areas' as outlined in the Strategy, gives emphasis to this, but enables neighbourhood planning to play a role in determining local growth, if considered appropriate

Whilst this draft plan supports Lichfield's District Local Plan Strategy, it is clear from the SHLAA that local landowners and developers consider that the villages do have some development potential.

The SHLAA indicated that despite the above, a number of sites outside the current village boundaries have been put forward for development by landowners/ agents.

If in the future (as part of the District Council's ongoing 'Call for Sites' to help inform the Local Plan Allocations), land owners are able argue successfully in favour of village boundary alterations, enabling their fields to be developed, the scale of such building must be carefully considered so as not to conflict with either LDC's 'Vision for Local Areas,' or this document's Vision and Objectives - the core of this Neighbourhood Plan.

Any adjustment to village boundaries to encompass rural exception sites, or in consideration of windfall sites in the Green Belt, will be considered as part of the Local Plan Allocations process.

In keeping with the Principles and Objectives of the Vision, the Working Group preparing this document considered such scenarios and strived to enshrine the overriding principles of good design into the policies, whilst at the same time being pragmatic to the potential for change:

- 'Infill' development could contribute to, and not detract from, the historic character of the villages.
- New residents will help improve the sustainability of the wider village settlements in terms of supporting the local shops, schools, churches and community facilities.
- New development will also help to deliver some of the other objectives contained within the Plan.

Striking a balance between known development ambitions, with the desire to manage any change in an acceptable and sustainable manner, is the key objective of the following housing policies.

It should be noted that village boundaries only exist for Longdon and Upper Longdon. Green Belt policies therefore continue to apply to Longdon Green and Gentleshaw and across the remainder of the plan area. Care must be taken to ensure future development does not lead to creeping encroachment into the Green Belt, leading to the merging of settlements.

The Principles and Objectives that underpin Housing

Number 5 and 6

Policy Context

NPPF - Paragraphs 50,55,58,60 and 87-89.
Lichfield District Plan Strategy (2015):
Strategic Priorities 2,5 and 12.
Core Policies 1 and 6.
Development Management Policy:
H2: Provision of Affordable Homes.
BE1: High Quality Development
Policy Rural 1: Rural Areas.
Rural Development SPD (2015).



Housing Policies

Policy 5

To assist the sustainability of the villages, infill residential development within the settlement boundaries of Longdon (as shown on Map 20 of the Lichfield Local Plan Strategy 2008-2029) and Upper Longdon (as shown on Map 25 of the Lichfield Local Plan Strategy 2008-2029) will be supported.

Any infilling should have regard to the immediate spatial dimension of the part of the village where development is proposed. To reinforce local distinctiveness, the size, scale and density of any new development (in terms of their individual or collective appearance) must respect the traditional local rural vernacular and be fully integrated into the villages.

Policy 6

New housing suitable for local people, especially for starter families and the elderly, will be supported within the settlement boundaries of Longdon and Upper Longdon.

Policy 7

Conversion of non-residential properties to residential use, and windfall residential development on previously developed 'brownfield land' will be supported, provided the general design principles of local character, massing, appearance etc., are respected and that such development does not adversely impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Movement

The volume and speed of traffic makes the A51 primary road a hostile environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. There is also a difficulty for traffic to safely access the main road from side roads, especially during peak periods.

The nature of the area means that the four principal settlements are not well connected to each other, other than by private transport along country lanes. Access to and from the surrounding larger urban /employment areas, like Lichfield and Rugeley (and further afield), again is mainly by private transport; 77% of commuters use private cars (2011 Census).

Addressing many of the issues identified with the road infrastructure are a matter for Staffs County Council as the highways authority. However, this section highlights the main local concerns and proposes measures that can help alleviate them.

The views of local people were;

The amount and speed of traffic travelling to and between the villages in the Parish, is a growing concern. The highway infrastructure is being put under increasing pressure in part due to increased traffic using the country lanes, the reduced levels of road maintenance, and the increased reliance on sat-navs. Heavy goods vehicles using roads not suitable for such are damaging the road surfaces, as well as leading to conflict with other road users

Pedestrian movement is inhibited by the lack of pavements, and speeding traffic is a danger for walkers, cyclists and horse riders alike, using the lanes for exercise, leisure and business (race horse 'road work').

Justification and Evidence

The speed of through traffic using the lanes in general is a specific concern, as is 'rat-running' traffic using Borough Lane between Burntwood and Longdon, Hood Lane from Armitage, and Upper Way / Stockings Lane from Cannock and Hednesford. A review of the speed limits throughout the plan area would be welcomed, as a means to identifying problem areas and thereby addressing them. Speed of traffic within the villages themselves is also a concern; this is unwittingly aided at certain locations by pavement parking. This practice (for understandable reasons), effectively widens the carriageway, improves visibility and thereby assists irresponsible driving habits (speeding), as well as creating difficulties for pedestrians, wheel chair and buggy users.

Although traffic moving along the A51 between Lichfield and Rugeley over the last few years has remained fairly constant, at around 15,000 vehicles per day, the volume of light and heavy goods vehicles has increased as a result of the growth of warehousing / logistics facilities at Fradley and Rugeley. Increased incidences of HGV's using the lanes, prompted by an increased reliance on sat-nav's, has led to signage being erected at certain locations to dissuade such traffic. An increase in the number of large horse boxes and trailers being driven through the lanes (as a result of the diversification away from agriculture), has also been noted - in some instances leading to conflicts with other road users.

Although the Longdons lie alongside the A51, through bus services between Lichfield and Stafford (via Rugeley) prefer to travel an alternative route through Armitage and Handsacre. There are currently no stopping commercial bus services between Lichfield and Stafford via the Longdons. Since 2016 however, Longdon residents have benefitted from a Ring and Ride initiative promoted by the County Council.

No bus service connects the Longdon and Gentleshaw settlements. Gentleshaw isn't served by a bus service, although buses from Cannock Wood travel to Cannock and Lichfield hourly, 7 days a week (no. 62 and 62A).

The poor level of public transport provision, coupled with a lack of dedicated walking and cycling facilities, means that the local population who do not have access to a car, have difficulties accessing education, health, leisure, social and employment opportunities. This concern was specifically highlighted in a survey undertaken by Lichfield District Council in 2008.

Country lanes without footpaths are understandably commonplace throughout the Plan area, but the parlous state of the footpath (and overgrown hedges) alongside the A51 between Lichfield and Brereton is inexplicable, deterring longer distance walking.

Pedestrian movement within the villages is generally adequate, although the lack of pavements on High Street, Borough Lane and Hood Lane (Longdon), Upper Way (Upper Longdon) and Commonside (Gentleshaw) and Church Hill, Longdon Green, makes for less than safe walking.

Cycling is increasingly popular, both for journeys to work and as a leisure activity, especially given the close proximity of Cannock Chase. However, there are no dedicated cycle lanes along the A51, and the speed of traffic along the lanes poses its own dangers for cyclists.

There is a concern over the general maintenance of highways (carriageway edges and pot holes in particular), footways and hedgerows. Some locations are in poor condition and vegetation is overgrowing verges, pavements and highway signage. Visibility for drivers exiting High Street onto the A51 for example, is much reduced during the summer months.

Signage on the A51 appears excessive at certain locations; measures to reduce the 'clutter' should be explored to improve appearance, as well as road safety.

Within the plan area there are three lay-byes along the A51. 'Over-nighting' by HGV's (prior to Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) limiting waiting times being introduced in 2015), led to concerns for the well-being of the drivers, but also the accumulations of rubbish etc, associated with the activity. Extended 'over-nighting' by continental hauliers, meant that space was unavailable to others wishing to take a short break from driving. The TRO's have inevitably led to displacement of the problem to other areas in the District; the TRO's will need to be monitored and enforced where appropriate, if the problem isn't to reoccur.

The Principles and Objectives that underpin Movement

Numbers 7.

Policy Context

NPPF Paragraph 29 and 32.
Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy (2015):
Strategic Priorities 2 and 5.
Core Policies 5.
Development Management Policies:
ST1: Sustainable Travel.



Working with the Highways Authority and landowners, this Plan will in principle, support proposals within the plan area that improve safety, create footways where lacking, enhance public footpaths/bridleways and cycle routes across the area, including better facilities along and across the A51 for pedestrians and cyclists; Working with bus operators, this Plan will support improvements to public transport provision, providing bus services into the principal settlements, with supporting infrastructure.

Movement Policies

Policy 8 Supporting development

Any new development (inc change of use or conversion) within the Plan area must demonstrate that there would be no significant adverse impact on the safe and efficient operation of the local road network, including residential roads, rural lanes and parking.

Community Facilities and Leisure

Today's society faces major challenges, such as creating healthy lifestyles, combating mental health problems and alleviating isolation of the elderly, particularly in rural communities.

In seeking to make Longdon Parish a sustainable community, maximising community benefit from land use is a key priority - it is this concept of well-being which drives the community dimension of the Plan.

The views of local people were;

The Parish is a good place to live. However, there is also room for improvement.

There is a general consensus that for Longdon Parish to be genuinely sustainable, it needs this Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the community priorities.

Justification and Evidence

On the face of it, for a Parish with the bulk of its population living in four main settlements, Longdon is well served by community facilities. There are two state Primary schools, two private schools, two churches, five pubs and four community halls, although the one in Gentleshaw is technically part of Cannock Wood Parish (100m from the plan boundary). However, closer inspection reveals gaps in the range of facilities; this Plan seeks to address those gaps

Indoor recreation

Longdon village is quite well served with indoor recreation facilities. There is a thriving Village Hall, (which houses a successful pre-school as one of its many contributions to life in the village), a Womens' Institute Hall and the Longdon Memorial Hall. Additionally there is a community hall in Gentleshaw, although it is located just inside the Cannock Wood Parish boundary. Longdon Green and Upper Longdon have no community facilities, other than a pub in each and the Cricket Club in Longdon Green.

There is a case for additional facilities, if the challenge of creating a sense of well-being in the residents, whatever their age, is to be met. None of the current halls are big enough to allow more physical activities, such as badminton, indoor football, ballroom dancing etc. Consultation revealed that there would be a real demand for such activities if the Parish could house them.

Parishioners are keen to engage in local learning opportunities, such as classes in information technology. Additionally, they see opportunities to develop a range of social organisations like chess, bridge and youth clubs etc.

While the current halls would meet the requirements of the less physical activities, a new multi-purpose building would provide a Community Hub for the Parish which could address key challenges. The older population could enjoy social / intellectual / physical stimulation to help offset the risks of physical and mental health problems in old age, whilst the younger or more agile, could enjoy a greater choice of indoor sporting activities, contributing to their health and fitness.

Outdoor recreation

Longdon Parish is blessed in its location. It is part of a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which provides a wealth of opportunities for walking, horse riding and generally enjoying a beautiful landscape. Additionally, parishioners can easily engage in more active pursuits, like cycling and orienteering on Cannock Chase. Longdon Cricket Club enjoys excellent local support and currently has the use of a picturesque ground in Longdon Green.

On the other hand, there are certain outdoor amenities which one would expect to find, which are present in neighbouring Parishes (such as Colton, Streethay and Cannock Wood), but absent in Longdon. There is nowhere in the Parish which offers parents a purpose-built, safe children's playground for families to enjoy. Apart from the cricket ground, there is no publicly accessible playing field for running, team sports and community events. There is also a long standing desire to create a bowling green as a focus for sport and social activity for all ages.



The Principles and Objectives that underpin Community Facilities and Leisure

Numbers 3.

Policy Context

NPPF – Paragraphs 69, 70, 73 and 74
Lichfi eld District Local Plan Strategy
(2015).
Strategic Priority 11.
Core policies 4, 10 and 11.
Development Management Policies:
IP1: Supporting and Providing Our Infrastructure.
HSC1: Open Space Standards.
HSC2: Playing Fields and Sports Facility Standards.
Rural Development SPD (2015).



Community Facilities and Leisure Policies

Policy 9

There will be a presumption against the loss of the following existing community and recreational facilities unless it can be demonstrated that there will be a net gain in both the quantity and the quality of any new provision:

- The Red Lion PH, Longdon Green
- The Swan with Two Necks PH, Brook End, Longdon
- The Windmill PH, Gentleshaw
- The Redmore PH, Gentleshaw
- The Longdon Post Office and Store, Brook End, Longdon
- St James Academy, Brook End, Longdon
- Gentleshaw School, Gentleshaw
- Longdon Village Hall, Brook End, Longdon
- The Memorial Hall, Brook End, Longdon
- The WI Hall, Ford Lane, Longdon
- Longdon Cricket Club, Red Lion Ground, Longdon Green

Policy 10

Opportunities to create a purpose built, multi-functional community 'Hub' in Longdon Village will be supported.

Policy 11

To enable parents and children to play together outside in a safe environment, improving fitness and building confidence, support will be forthcoming for the development of a dedicated children's playground within the main village settlements.

Policy 12

To promote outdoor community activity and general fitness;

(a) Support will be forthcoming for the creation of a multi - purpose outdoor recreation ground (with appropriate equipment), capable of accommodating team games, creating opportunities for healthy competition, including any necessary small scale built facilities to support such use.

The Rural Economy and Infrastructure

It is essential that the Parish strives to sustain the vitality of the community, with modern infrastructure to support existing and new businesses playing a major part in this. The Neighbourhood Plan is intended to:

- support existing businesses wanting to expand current activities through the limited conversion of existing buildings, and small scale expansion
- encourage the improvement in the fundamental infrastructure/ services required for business activities
- attract rural tourism to benefit local businesses, residents and visitors
- support rural diversification through the addition of appropriate businesses and services, whilst resisting inappropriate land use for business
- encourage businesses to target the requirements of the Parish demographic

The views of local people were;

There are a considerable number of self employed in the Parish, but few local job opportunities since most are sole traders working from home. Farming employs very few these days, because of mechanisation and the reduced number of farms. Broadband speed is inconsistent; fibre optic cabling should be provided to all existing and new properties, to support local enterprise and entrepreneurs.

Justification and Evidence

Rural Economy

Today the Parish retains its historical, traditional, rural, country character, whilst many of its neighbouring communities are developing with associated urbanisation.

Outside of the main settlements, land use is dominated by agriculture and equestrian activity. The current profile has not changed significantly during the last 20 years. However, since the last major outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in 2001, many farmers have left the industry – outbreaks of Bovine Tuberculosis compounding the issue. Farming patterns have also changed, moving from dairy into arable and / or animal husbandry (primarily beef cattle and sheep), with contractor working becoming more prevalent. As is common across Lichfield District, there are now relatively few people employed in agriculture.

The reduction in farming activity resulted in farms changing hands, with the associated land and buildings changing use, with some fragmentation. This led to a range of new homes being created from the conversion of farm buildings, domestic owners buying parcels of land for equine use, and small holdings being established, including some for the rearing of herds / flocks of rare-breeds.

With the conversion and sub division of farms, the number of households in the Parish has increased. These are predominantly for commuters to the local major towns and cities. This has meant that the majority of the working age households are mobile and connected, and do not depend on the Parish for employment or the provision of trades and services.

The Parish is not, and is unlikely to have ever been, self-sufficient, relying on neighbouring towns for purchasing the majority of its goods and services. It is affluent, but with the majority of its 'earned' wealth originating from outside the Parish, and in turn mostly spent 'out of Parish,' there is limited local presence or benefit. The inward investment or local multiplier is therefore low. The Parish currently does not have business/office, e-units, small factories, distribution units, public sector service offices, medical facilities etc.

It is unclear exactly which goods and services the 'Longdon pound' is spent on. It is clear however, that the demand profile has been changing, as the demographic has significantly shifted to include a large percentage of over 55's – generally understood to be the most wealthy and with a range of demands. The Parish demographic also has an elderly, and frail-elderly segment (9 percentage points higher than Lichfield District, and 12% higher than the West Midlands – Census 2011), again with available means and particular demands. Therefore, there are opportunities for limited and targeted service offerings to be developed, which address the Parish 'needs and demands', and could help retain the 'Longdon pound.'

Recently, because of changes to licensing laws, shopping patterns and increased leisure opportunities, any local pub, club, business, etc., has faced a significant challenge to maintain itself as a viable commercial enterprise, rather than existing almost as a social convenience. Additionally, competition is increasing in the nearby towns as they develop their offering. This, coupled with the march of internet shopping (with various delivery options), means that the service sector environment within the Parish is exacting; there has been no evidence of new shops or meaningful services establishing themselves in the area in recent years.

The Parish does however attract 'other pounds', through visitors. Longdon is already a destination in its own right, for walkers using footpaths, lanes, fields and forest; cyclists using roads, lanes and off-road; people going to 'destination' pubs / eateries; visitors to ancient Churches; out-of-Parish school pupils and families; visitors enjoying the atmosphere of the villages and greens; attendees of Parish events and shows.

Therefore, the Parish has its own basic, intrinsic attractiveness, and local demand, as well as significant

surrounding demand. This helps maintain the few businesses and jobs which exist, but could support further enterprises.

Where appropriate in scale, and so as not to compromise the character of the villages or their surroundings, the development of existing and further services offered within Longdon Parish will be encouraged.

Infrastructure

Telecommunications.

The industry of telecommunications has seen significant change in recent years. The digital revolution with the introduction of the web/ internet, combined with an explosion of new devices, plus convergent technology, is causing a social and industrial revolution. This is an economic and social step change.

As a result, the Parish's demand for immediate, 'fast', contiguous access to both the internet/web, and communication networks, through all devices is now 'a given'. Users see these as basic utilities. Homes need to have either 'fibre-to-the-property' or some equally fast delivery method. Contiguous mobile phone signals need to be available throughout the Parish.

Mains Services.

Access to the main systems for both gas, and sewerage is still not fully available across the Parish, and water pressures are not particularly high.

Alternative means of power generation are not commonly seen in the Parish. However, this plan will not mitigate against appropriate applications.

Where possible, the Neighbourhood Plan will in principle ensure that developments offer substantial opportunities to enhance existing infrastructure, such as: distributing mains gas to parts of the village that are currently off-grid; improvements to water pressure; provision of mains sewage; provision of fibre broadband; opportunities for siting mobile masts.

Electricity generation from various alternative sources will be encouraged and sympathetically considered. However, it is recognised that there could be visual impacts and land use considerations.

It is noted that Staffordshire County Council (SCC) is already delivering a Superfast Broadband programme, which includes much of the Parish. The benefits of this are already being seen, as 'fibre' is installed to the cabinets. However, this does not cover all households. Therefore pressure will be maintained on the SCC programme to ensure full and enhanced coverage to as many households as possible is achieved.

The Principles and Objectives that underpin Rural Economy and Infrastructure

Numbers 2 and 5

Policy Context

NPPF – Paragraph 28
Lichfi eld District Local Plan Strategy
(2015):
Strategic Priorities 7 and 8.
Core Policy 7.
Rural Development SPD (2015).



Rural Economy and Infrastructure Policies

Policy 13

Development that creates local employment opportunities will be supported where they add to the diversification of the rural economy, provided that their impact does not compromise other policies contained in the development plan.

Policy 14

Delivery of a comprehensive Superfast Broadband network across the Parish (not only within the principal settlements) will be supported.

Delivery

For the guidance contained within this Neighbourhood Plan to achieve the objectives and aspirations set out in the Vision, a robust approach to managing development is essential. The underlying philosophy and policies contained within this document will be applied to manage growth over the Plan period, to ensure that inappropriate development is prevented from having a detrimental impact on the nature and appearance of the villages, the important vistas, and the rural character of the Parish.

Sustainable, organic growth will be allowed in principle, whilst at the same time protecting the very nature of the Parish, which is so important to its residents.

Partnership working

It is acknowledged that a land use plan is only part of the tool-kit necessary for Longdon Parish to remain the place where people aspire to live. With the Neighbourhood Plan as its Core Document and evidence base, Longdon Parish Council will work in partnership with Staffordshire County Council and Lichfield District Council to deliver the local government measures arising out of this Plan.

Community Action – Improve Access:

Working with the Highways Authority and landowners, this Plan will in principle, support proposals within the plan area that improve safety, create footways where lacking, enhance public footpaths/bridleways and cycle routes across the area, including better facilities along and across the A51 for pedestrians and cyclists; Working with bus operators, this Plan will support improvements to public transport provision, providing bus services into the principal settlements, with supporting infrastructure.

Community Action:

The Parish Council by working with stakeholders will seek to encourage good design in new development ensuring that artificial measures such as ground re-modelling are sensitive to the location of a proposed development.

Community Action:

Working with the highways authority and stakeholders the Parish Council will seek to explore opportunities to review the following:

- Speed limits throughout the Plan area and traffic calming measures;
- Creation of safer access at junctions with the A51; and
- The proliferation of traffic regulation signs along the A51.

In addition to the more statutory aspects, the Parish Council will also seek to engage with other public and private agencies and organisations (as appropriate), including the voluntary sector, to secure the improvements highlighted throughout this document.

In order for this to happen (and mindful of the enhanced Community Infrastructure Levy contributions that may accrue to the Parish Council, a more pro-active approach to the negotiations and determination of planning applications will be required. This will necessitate a commitment on the part of both Longdon Parish Council and Lichfield District Council (as the local planning authority), to develop a better understanding (through closer working at pre planning application stage) of proposed developments both inside and outside the plan area, which could impact upon it (including impacts on the highway infrastructure). Agreeing the nature and level of any community benefits that may result from the granting of planning permissions, would also be helpful.

To better facilitate this, a prioritised schedule of projects will be prepared by the Parish Council (and reviewed regularly), to help ensure that the community benefits are delivered from the accumulated funds of Parish-wide development.

In the first instance (2017), the following are identified for further exploration and prioritisation;

- A review of speed restrictions throughout the plan area.
- The introduction of a 20mph zone on School Lane (Gentleshaw) and traffic calming measures where appropriate.
- Where lacking, the creation and maintenance of safe public pavements at appropriate locations.
- Traffic management measures throughout the Parish.
- Creation and maintenance of public footpaths and bridleways.
- Promotion of (and contribution towards) a dedicated cyclepath along the A51 (within the Parish), as part of an enhanced cycle path between Rugeley and Lichfield.
- Assessment of the need for, and possible consolidation of, community halls to create a community Hub.
- Provision of, or improvements to, outdoor recreational facilities

at suitable locations across the Parish, including the provision of a Multi-Use Games Area within Longdon Village.

- An assessment of the need for mobile service provision e.g. health facility.



The Parish Council working group that has prepared this Plan, would like to place on record its thanks to everyone that has made a contribution to its making, regardless of how large or small. Without extensive community involvement, this document would not have been possible.


THE PARISH OF
LONGDON