Towersey Neighbourhood Plan

2023 to 2040

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5. Policies - Building for Life

5.0.1 The following policies relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area of Towersey. They focus on specific planning matters that are of greatest interest to the local community. There are many parts of the Parish that are not affected by these policies, and there are many other policy matters that have been left to the Local Plan to cover. This has avoided unnecessary repetition of policies between the two plans, though they have a mutual, helpful inter-dependence.

5.0.2 Each policy is numbered and titled, and it is shown in bold italics. Where necessary, the area to which it will apply is shown on the Policies Map (pages 63 and 64). After each policy is some supporting text that explains the purpose of the policy, how it will be applied and, where helpful, how it relates to other development plan policies.

5.1 TOW1 Village boundaries and infill development

A. The Neighbourhood Plan defines a Village Boundary at Towersey, as shown on the Policies Map.

B. Proposals for infill development within the settlement will be supported, provided they accord with the design and development management policies of the Development Plan. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location.

C. Proposals for development outside the Village Boundary will only be supported where they are considered appropriate rural development as defined by the NPPF, and are consistent with other policies in the development plan including the other policies in this Plan.

5.1.1 This policy is intended to distinguish between the built-up area of the village and the surrounding countryside in order to manage development proposals accordingly. The boundaries have been drawn using the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal and the conventions deployed by other local planning authorities that use this development management tool, but essentially, it follows

the observed settlement edge formed by buildings, which have a clear functional relationship to the settlement.

5.1.2 In defining the boundaries on the Policies Map, applicants, the local community, and the local planning authority have certainty of how the policy should be applied when preparing, commenting on, and determining planning applications respectively. This is consistent with a number of Local Plan policies to encourage sustainable forms of development in the rural areas.

5.1.3 Most new development will be acceptable in principle within the defined boundaries, subject to being appropriate in terms of design and other arrangements. Local Plan Policy (Policy H16) defines the term 'infill' and establishes that the scale of infill should be appropriate to its location. This may be infill housing and other uses that are appropriate in scale to small villages with a limited road network and public transport services.

5.1.4 The policy requires that development proposals outside the defined boundaries are in line with the relevant policies of the Local Plan (Policies H1 and Policy H8) and Neighbourhood Plan in respect of protecting local landscape and character of the natural environment character. This recognises the valued function of the countryside and working farmland in shaping rural character.

5.1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan does not make any housing site allocations as the District Council has confirmed that the 'indicative housing figure' for the Parish is zero (as per NPPF §67). However, the boundaries will allow for infill opportunities for smaller homes (see Policy TOW2) on suitable sites as expected of a 'smaller village' by Local Plan Policy H16, enabling access to homes in the Parish suited to younger people and 'downsizers'.

5.3 TOW4 Design

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should sustain and where practicable enhance the character of the Parish and, where appropriate, the character and appearance of the Towersey Conservation Area and its setting as shown on the Policies Map.

Development proposals should also have full regard to the Towersey Character Appraisal and the following design principles:

- *Maintain the prevailing character of one to two storey, detached and semidetached dwellings with consistent building lines in rectangular plots fronting onto main roads;*
- *Respond to and compliments the prevailing material character which primarily consists of: red-facing brick, colour through render, some buff brick and stone, plain clay tile roofs with some Welsh slate, and a small number of thatched roofs;*
- *The appearance in the streetscene of several Local Heritage Assets, notably The Old Bakery, Manor Cottage/Cobblers Cottage, 1 Church Lane, 11 Church Lane, Greenway, which either terminate or punctuate key views along the main roads;*
- *Maintain the setting of informal and formal open space as intimate and tranquil areas in the village providing glimpse views to several listed buildings and local heritage assets whilst their openness contributes to the setting of these heritage assets, especially:*
  - *~ the Three Horseshoes PH garden;*
  - *~ land at The Duck Pond;*
  - *~ the Village Green;*
  - *~ White's Field;*
- *The openness of land adjacent to Towersey Manor in its contribution to the setting of Towersey Manor and to the buildings at Upper Green Farm and at Home Farm;*
- *The prominence of mature trees and tall hedges along frontage boundaries and the common use of grass verges, occasionally with ditches, in the space in front of buildings, in defining the rural character of the area and helping to punctuate views in the street scene;*
- *The pattern of strongly defined edges to the countryside with clear rear plot definition by way of boundary walls, hedges, fences and/or trees;*

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> - ***Views into the village, including the Conservation Area, at public vantage points to the west, north-west and east and from the former railway embankment in the south;***
> - ***The importance of plot arrangements in the setting of the Conservation Area, as shown on the Policies Map, and local heritage assets, as set out in Policy TOW5, in defining the essential character of the Conservation Area.***

5.3.1 The policy establishes the importance of design of new development in the village to maintaining its strong rural character. In doing so, it refines the design quality principles of Local Plan policies DES1 and DES2. It also defines the key characteristics of its heritage assets for the application of Local Plan Policies ENV6 – ENV8. Of particular note is the importance of local heritage assets, as set out in Policy TOW5, in defining the character of the Conservation Area, due to their prominence in the street scene.

5.3.2 The policy highlights a series of development principles that are drawn from the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal of Towersey included in the evidence base. Those principles set out those features of the village that make it distinctive from its neighbouring villages and help define the significance of the Conservation Area. It therefore informs the Design & Access Statements prepared for planning applications in demonstrating that, where relevant to the nature and location of the proposal, regard has been paid to those principles. It does not require that each proposal slavishly adheres to each principle, but applications will be required to demonstrate they have acknowledged, understood and responded to the relevant characteristics in drawing up their schemes, and to justify where proposals depart from the policy.

5.3.3 Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being (NPPF para 118). Consideration should be given to the fact that any new homes or commercial premises planned to be built have 21st digital infrastructure installed at the build phase. Developers should be required to engage with a telecommunications network provider to provide a full fibre connection to each residential/business premise. This will significantly mitigate environmental impacts of any proposed development. People will be able to work from home, reducing unnecessary journeys. Moreover, digital infrastructure provides the backbone for digital technologies' role in building a low carbon economy.

5.7 TOW7 Green infrastructure and biodiversity

Development proposals should have full regard to maintaining and, where practicable, improving the functionality of the green infrastructure and biodiversity assets including Local Green Spaces, public rights of way (footpaths and bridleways), woodland, trees, hedgerows, ponds, and land of biodiversity value, in the design of their layouts and landscaping schemes, including delivering a net gain to general biodiversity assets.

Development proposals that would lead to an increase of green infrastructure and biodiversity assets will be supported where they are consistent with all other relevant policies of the development plan.

Proposals that would lead to an unacceptable loss of green infrastructure or biodiversity assets will not be supported.

5.7 1 The policy defines the presence of Green Infrastructure assets in the Parish. The Parish contains a variety of Green Infrastructure that provides an environmental support system for communities and wildlife. By doing so it supports Local Plan Policies ENV1 – ENV5. Its purpose is linked with the vision and principles of green infrastructure in the District - defining a network of green infrastructure assets in the neighbourhood plan area as a means of providing environmental support for the community and wildlife. The policy requires that all development proposals that lie within the Network, or that adjoin it, should consider how they may improve it, or at the very least do not undermine its integrity of connecting spaces and habitats. Where proposals include provision for landscaping, new means of access or new layouts, there may be opportunity to relate the land better to the Network, e.g. in complementing existing biodiversity value through the design of the landscape scheme. At the very least, the policy requires that proposals that will undermine the existing value of the Network will be refused permission.

5.7.2 The Network will become more valuable over time, and although the majority of these features are physically attached to enable habitat connectivity, some features of the Network are not. This does not devalue their integral biodiversity or recreational value and at some point in the future an opportunity may arise to achieve similar connectivity. As appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the development proposal a full survey of any affected green infrastructure or biodiversity assets should accompany the planning application concerned.

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