

Farndon

Neighbourhood Development Plan



2010 to 2030

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- Policy 2 - Homes to Meet the Needs of the Village
- Policy 3 - Protecting the Built Environment
- Policy 4 - Facilities for Local People
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Farndon is a village sitting on the border of England and Wales. Historically an important crossing point of the River Dee, the 14th century bridge (on cover) is a treasured monument and still in daily use.

A church has stood on this hill for over a thousand years. Around it are architecturally important houses and buildings which give the village its personality and style.





There is an eclectic mix of building styles from different ages. Tudor, timber frame, Georgian and modern are mixed together, ranging from the functional to the down-right quirky.



1. Introduction

In March 2012 Farndon Parish Council established a small Steering Group to consult local residents and based on the opinions of the village, prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the 20 years from 2010 to 2030.

During most of the time the Neighbourhood Plan was in preparation Farndon Parish was more or less limited to the village itself plus half the hamlet of nearby Crewe-by-Farndon. However, in April 2015 the Parish boundaries were extended to include the settlement of Kings Marsh to the east and all of Crewe-by-Farndon. Community consultation was broadened to cover the larger area as soon as the Parish Council was notified of the new boundaries.

Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan provided an opportunity to connect the Localism Act (2011), the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan designation of Farndon as a '*Key Service Centre*' (2012) adopted in the Chester Local Plan Part One, 2015, with the views and opinions of Farndon residents about the future of the village.

Farndon residents were involved in the development of the Plan from the very beginning through the distribution of a series of information leaflets, village meetings, coffee mornings and afternoons, drop-in discussion events and completion of two household and one business questionnaire. Alongside the consultations information was gathered about possible development sites, brownfield sites, the scope and structure of the local economy and associated employment opportunities. Traffic and wildlife surveys were conducted, natural and scientific limitations across the Parish investigated, the developing Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan read and commented upon, the robustness of local services discussed with providers and the distribution of the local population, demographics and travel to work patterns researched.

The Farndon Neighbourhood Plan is therefore based on both legislative requirements and the views of the local community. Every attempt has been made to provide a local planning document on which to base a realistic approach to future growth in Farndon, be it for housing, service provision or economic development, whilst recognizing the limitations imposed by the flood plain to the east and the high speed road to the south.

Farndon – History

Farndon lies eight miles south of the city of Chester and is set on a sandstone outcrop above the River Dee, which forms a natural border between England and Wales. Dee Cliffs are an important Site of Special Scientific Interest because at this point the river has cut down into the Bunter Pebble Beds and exposed a sequence of river-laid rocks formed within the Triassic period 205 million years ago when England was a low-lying desert region close to the equator. Here the Dee, tidal in those days, becomes shallower and the ford just above Farndon was used from ancient times as an important strategic crossing place between the two countries and was fought over from Roman times until the English Civil War.

Ferentone, as Farndon was originally named, means '*fern-clad hill*' and the results of excavation in the churchyard and the curved nature of the defensive ditch – now the High Street - suggest that Farndon was originally a Bronze Age settlement. The circular churchyard is indicative of an important early monastic site and an indication that the site has been a place of worship since Anglo-Saxon or even Celtic times. No trace of the monastery remains.

Roman roads criss-cross Cheshire and Farndon lies near the junction of Watling Street, the Roman road between Chester and Wroxeter and the Dee crossing from England into Wales. The Roman record in Farndon is scanty but Roman fragments have been found in the churchyard and the Roman tiles stamped '*Legio XX*' – the logo of the Twentieth Legion (Valeria Victrix) based at Chester – found at Crewe Hill, were probably from the Roman tile factory in Holt (Bovium).

Farndon church is dedicated to St Chad who in AD 669 became the first Bishop of the Kingdom of Mercia and was famous for touring his diocese establishing churches wherever he went. St Chad probably visited Farndon and founded the church, along with the five other churches dedicated to him across Cheshire, as well as the St Chad's over the Welsh border in Holt.

Cheshire, especially the area around Farndon, was of military importance because of proximity to Wales and the on-going wars between the two countries. The first Earl of Chester – known locally as Hugh Lupus – made responsible by William the Conqueror for keeping the peace in the area, created a secular sanctuary for outlaws at Kings Marsh to the east of Farndon around 1071. Criminals could stay for a year and a day if they paid a fine, built a shelter overnight and had smoke rising from the chimney by dawn. Not surprisingly many brigands were attracted to the area from all over England and provided local, indentured manpower for the Earl's army in his wars with the Welsh.

In 1086, the Domesday Book recorded a population of 37 in Farndon, land for 16 ploughs, a mill, a fishery and a given value of, in total, 180 shillings. The importance of St Chad's was demonstrated by the presence of a village priest and two other priests, all with land. The church at that time would have been of timber construction but the foundation outline of the present building and the tower, both of which date from the 14th century, is of stone.

At the same time as the church tower was built - about 1338 - the monks of St Werburgh's Abbey in Chester built Farndon bridge. The wars with the Welsh had finished and the road through Farndon and over the bridge supported the lucrative trade in salt between Nantwich and Wales. In 1485, a Lancastrian force of 3,000 marched across it on the way to the Battle of Bosworth Field. Farndon bridge is now a Grade I listed building and also a Scheduled Monument.

John Speed the Elizabethan historian and map-maker was baptised at Farndon in 1552. It is said that he first began to study '*land that is afar off*' from the tower of Farndon church. He later moved to London where he became an eminent cartographer and in 1598 presented maps to Queen Elizabeth I. One of the roads in Farndon, Speed's Way, is named after him.

During the Civil War of the 17th century, the church was a garrison outpost for the Roundheads whereas Holt Castle just across the river was held for the Cavaliers. 1643 saw a Civil War skirmish known as the Battle of Farndon Bridge when Farndon was destroyed by fire and St Chad's left derelict. In September 1645, the army of Charles I crossed the Dee at Holt on the way from mid Wales to raise the siege of Chester. They were defeated at the Battle of Rowton Moor and Chester fell to the Parliamentarians. In 1658 due to the damage wreaked by the Civil War the church, excepting the tower, was completely re-built with the addition of the Barnston Chapel and at the same time, the bells were re-cast.

Four years later in 1662 following the Restoration, William Barnston the local landowner and a supporter of Charles I during the Civil War, commissioned the '*Civil War Window*' in the Barnston Chapel to commemorate the Royalist defenders of Chester. It is a fascinating illustrative record of the times depicting some of Cheshire's leading Royalists and is a military memorial.

Farndon has its share of war memorials. The Barnston obelisk on Churton Road was erected to the memory of Roger Barnston who died of injuries sustained during the Indian Mutiny at the relief of Lucknow in 1857 – the family having lived in Farndon for 600 years. Many young men from the village served in the Boer War and both World Wars. Those 23 residents who died in the World Wars are commemorated on the War Memorial in the churchyard and the Memorial Hall close to the church was built by public subscription in memory of the fallen.

During the 19th century Farndon church re-instated the ancient custom of Rushbearing, a tradition which is celebrated each July, installed a new peal of eight bells and made alterations to the church interior to resemble the lay-out seen today. It is now a Grade II* listed building.

Rock Chapel at the corner of the High Street and Church Street, opened in 1889, burned down in 1957 and was rebuilt and re-dedicated in 1958. It continues to this day serving worshippers of the United Reform Church.

The 19th century also saw an annual influx of people who came to pick the famous Farndon strawberries and the first ten years of the 20th century brought a telephone service to the Post Office and gas to the village. Electricity came in the late 1920s and piped water by the early 1930s but mains drainage did not arrive until the 1950s. The horse bus to Chester, Malpas and Wrexham survived until the motorbuses of the 1930s.

In 1664 Farndon was a small village with an estimated population of 225. More precise figures can be found in the ten-yearly censuses rising from 357 residents in 1801 to 560 in the late 1930s when council houses at Crewe Lane and private houses on Churton Road were built. Over the next years further housing developments appeared and during the 20 years between 1951 and 1971 the population of the village doubled to 1,162. In 2011 the population was 1,517.

There have been a surprising number of schools in Farndon since the first one – the Parish School – was built by subscription in 1629. Two private boarding schools, the Academy and Farndon Hall existed by 1850, Farndon House and Farn Hill schools by 1864, Holly Bank catering for eight young ladies by 1870, an Infant school by 1896 and Kings Lee school by 1897. Of these eight schools, Farndon Parish School is the only one that still exists and is now on its third site. There is some interesting 1859 graffiti scratched onto the wooden window shutters of the Lodge, Church Lane, which was once the boarding house for students attending Farndon Hall.

At one time Farndon supported ten public houses catering for day-trippers, strawberry pickers, the Welsh on Sundays when Wales was ‘dry’, as well as the local population. Of these, the Greyhound and the Farndon Arms remain to serve the village along with the restaurant at Top Farm, a coffee shop, the butcher’s, the paper shop, the pharmacy and Post Office, the flower shop, the chandler’s, hairdressers, beauty salon and a number of small commercial businesses. Brewery Motors is no longer the brewery it was during the 19th century but is now a motor garage.

Farndon grew as a village because it commands an important crossing into Wales and this may be reason that it was overlooked by the merchants of Chester and Nantwich and few large houses are found in the village. Holly Bank is one of them and is Grade II listed as are the Black and White Cottages, The Chimes, Tudor House and others and some cottages in the High Street are listed as Grade II.

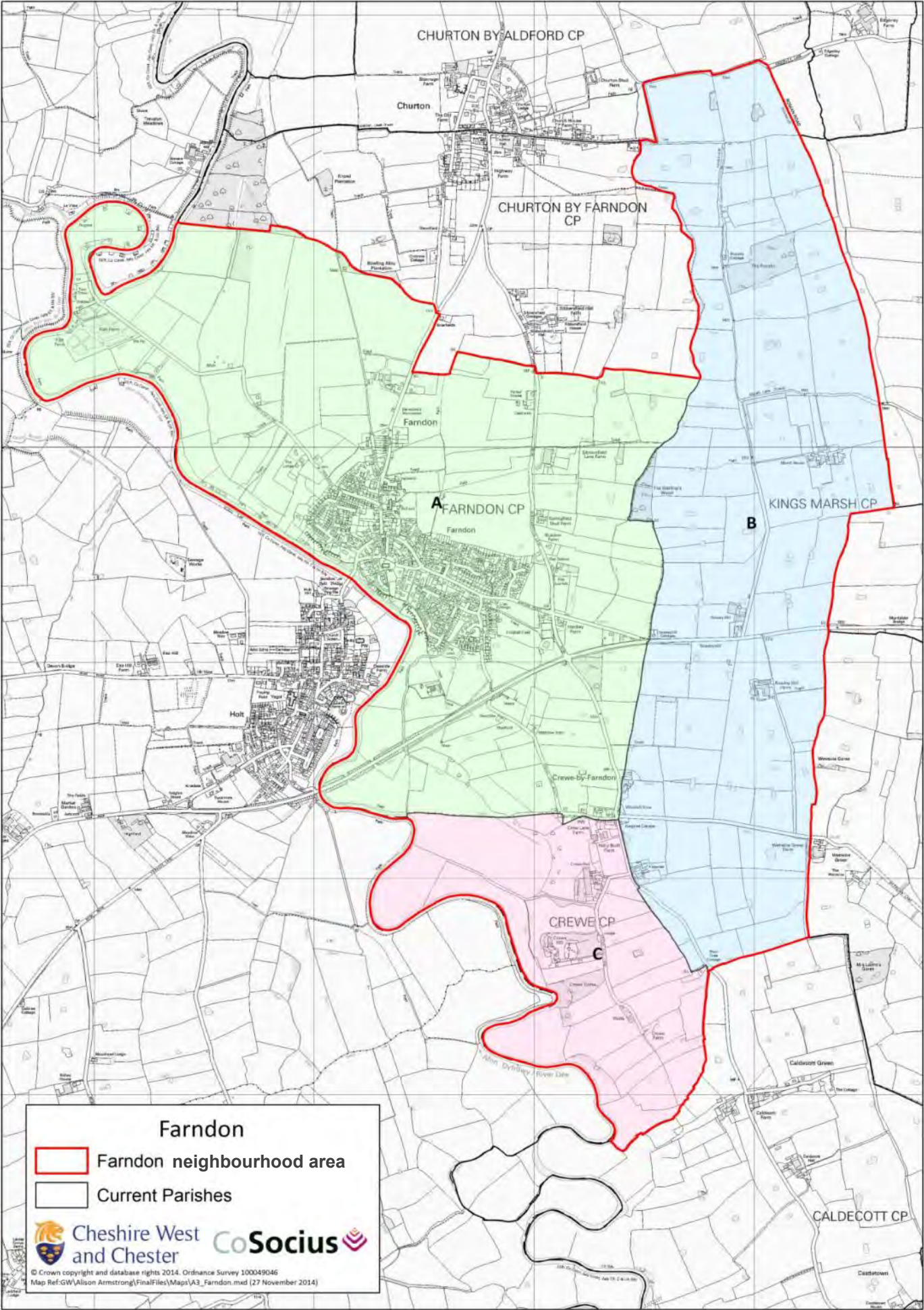
The existing housing stock dates from the 17th century with much of the High Street built during the 18th century. More modern style housing is found behind the principal roads and Farndon has been described as a ‘*pleasant intermixing of buildings of various styles and periods*’.

Farndon Parish Council dates from 4 December 1894 and Farndon itself has been under the jurisdiction of Cheshire West and Chester Council since it was established on 1 April 2009.

On 1 April 2015, Farndon Parish boundaries were extended to include the settlement of Kings Marsh and the entire hamlet of Crewe-by-Farndon. See *Map 1* page 9.

Bibliography

- Domesday Book 1086 – Phillimore 1978 – 263a (B1) and 266d (14-1)
- History and Gazetteer of Cheshire – Francis White and Co -1860
- The King's England, Cheshire – Arthur Mee - 1938
- Cheshire Before the Romans – W.J.Varley - 1964
- Farndon – The History of a Cheshire Village – Frank A Latham – 1985
- The Parish Church of St Chad Farndon – Cheshire County Council – 1989
- Hidden Highways of Cheshire – RJA Dutton – 1999
- Cheshire Historic Towns Survey – Cheshire County Council - 2003
- Farndon A Gateway Village – Chester City Council
- Dee Cliffs Farndon Site of Special Scientific Interest – English Nature.



2. Plan Development, Vision and Objectives

Residents of Farndon – of all ages - were closely involved in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and chose each of the six policies through a process of community consultation involving the distribution of information leaflets, open drop-in events, village meetings, discussions with primary school children, discussions with business owners and the analysis of one business and two household questionnaires.

Consultations and preparation of the Plan were interrupted during 2013 and the second household questionnaire delayed by some months whilst the residents and Parish Council fought against a planning application for 105 houses on the edge of the village. This would bring the number approved in less than four years to 231 – substantially in excess of the 200 allocated by Cheshire West and Chester Council for the whole period 2010 to 2030. The appeal was lost; the development approved and work on the Neighbourhood Plan recommenced.

Community feedback – of course – reflected the disappointment felt by residents about the large and rapid increase in the size of the village, high stress levels on public services, loss of agricultural land and the absence of an opportunity to grow the village incrementally and sustainably.

Nevertheless, residents continued to support the development of the Plan and their feedback, when taken alongside the background information about Farndon and the national legislative basis of neighbourhood planning, led to the development of a vision, of achievable objectives, and sustainable policies for the years until 2030.

The Vision and Objectives for Farndon were agreed at the “*Drop-in Consultation*” held at Farndon Memorial Hall on 17 April 2013.

Vision

“ In twenty years time Farndon will still be a rural village with a strong community ethos. It will value its heritage, river and surroundings while providing people with a safe and sustainable environment. Farndon will be a welcoming place providing local employment and encouraging visitors.”

Objectives

- Protect and maintain the rural character of the landscape and the natural environment.
- Protect the built environment, heritage assets and the Conservation Area.
- Strengthen existing economic activities and support new opportunities for local employment.
- Strengthen public facilities.
- Ensure that housing growth reflects the needs of residents.
- Support future development on ‘*previously developed land*’ in sustainable locations.
- Respect the distinctive local character (of the historic buildings) with regard to new development in relation to building materials, building lines and density, height, massing and design.

Policies

- The local economy.
- Homes to meet the needs of the village.
- Protecting the built environment.
- Facilities for local people.
- Transport and communication.
- Protecting landscape and environment.

Documentary Evidence

The vision, objectives and policies are based on: -

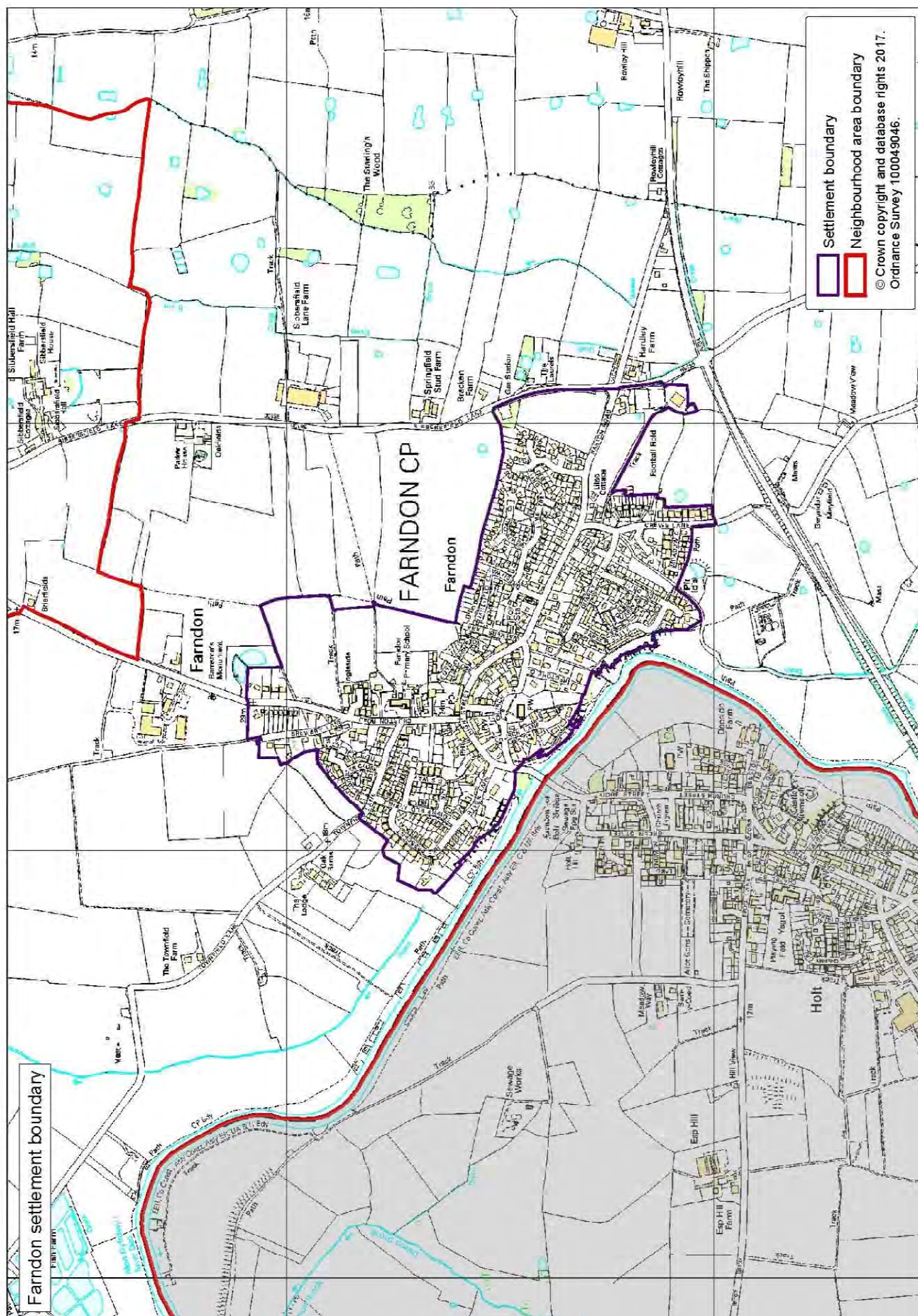
- Questionnaires - two household and one business questionnaire with records of responses, narrative and graphic analyses.
- Information leaflets and posters.
- Meeting notes - from information sessions, drop-in meetings, discussions with local businesses, local landowners, the Women's Institute and with pupils at Farndon Primary School.
- National legislation plus local plans and reports prepared by Cheshire West and Chester Council and predecessors, Natural England and other environmental organisations.
- Census data shows the population of Farndon to be stable during the 21st century. In 2001 the population was 1,517 and in 2011, with the addition of two local hamlets, 1,665.
- Evidence contained in "*Farndon Ward Snapshot*" May 2015 CWaC.
- Evidence produced by CWaC as part of the work on Local Plan, such as the Landscape Strategy and conservation area appraisal.

Process

Neighbourhood Planning regulations require that the proposed plan be subject to a six week '*Pre-Submission Consultation*' before formal submission to the local authority. The period ran from 13 March 2016 to 28 May 2016 when the plan was publicised locally and brought to the attention of residents, local landowners, people who worked in or ran businesses in the parish, statutory consultation bodies, the local authority, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England and others.

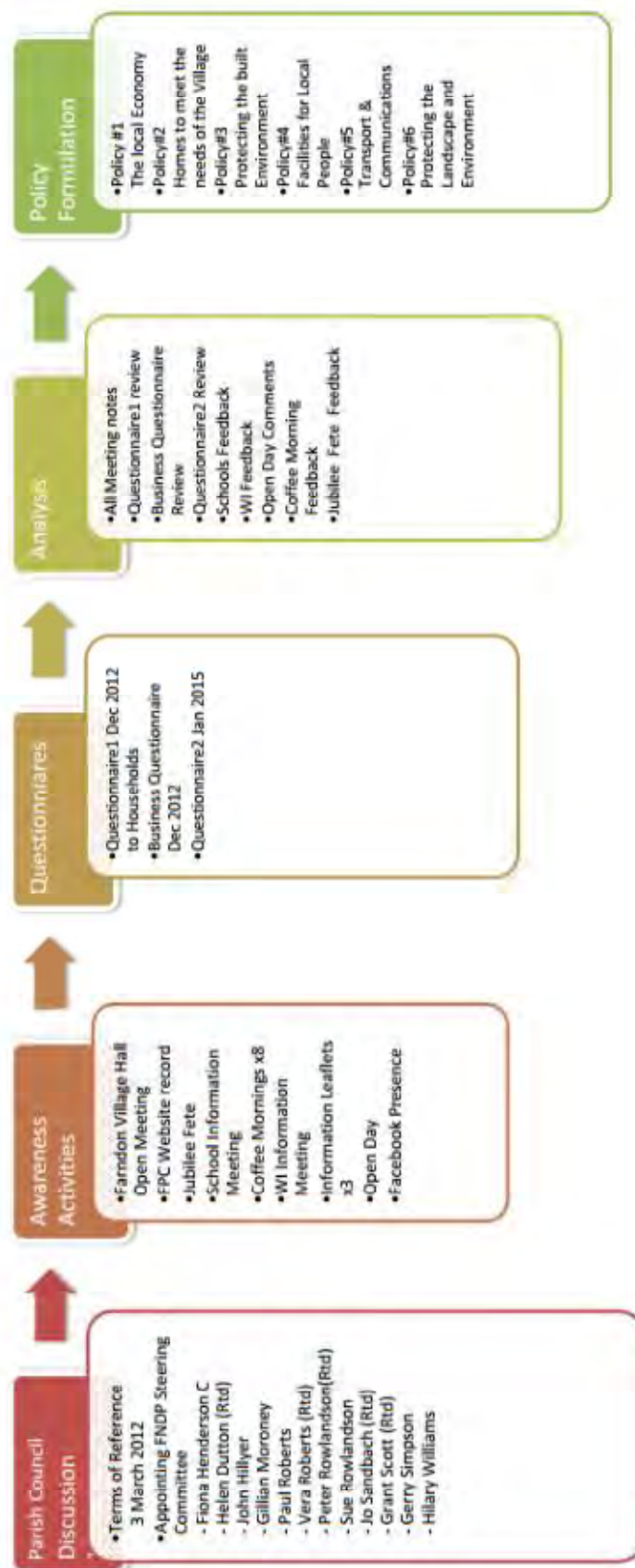
An explanatory leaflet was delivered to each house in the Parish describing how, where and when comments could be made. The Plan was posted on the Parish Council website, was available at twelve public locations in the village including the Post Office, surgery, public houses and the shops and salons along the High Street and in hard copy at village '*drop-in*' events.

Comments were analysed and the Plan revised and submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council in April 2017 for the mandatory six-week publicity period, the independent examination and ultimately, a Parish referendum.



Policy Development

Section 3 Policy Development



3. Policy Development

The policies in the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan follow directly from consultations held around the Parish ranging from discussions with local businesses and school children, to the results of two household and one business questionnaire and comments made at a number of meetings with residents from all age groups.

It is appreciated that the government has set pre-conditions for the policies to be included in Neighbourhood Plans which are land-use and development related, and it is in this context that six local policies – economy, homes, built environment, facilities, transport and communication, and landscape and environment - have been developed.

Each policy is described separately and each is considered in the context of the Parish; its location, history, residents and their views, relevant national legislation, local planning policies and advice from bodies such as Natural England. For ease of reference, the legislation is listed at the end of each policy along with a note of linked annexes.

Residents believe that when taken together the six policies support development that is sustainable and consequently, planning proposals must conform to them. The Parish Council will work with Cheshire West and Chester Council and developers to ensure that Farndon remains a rural village with a growing economy and a vibrant sense of self and belonging.

A number of issues raised during community consultations are somewhat indirectly linked to land use – they are aspirations - and are included for the sake of completeness as '*Actions for the Parish Council*', who will pursue the subject separately on behalf of the village.

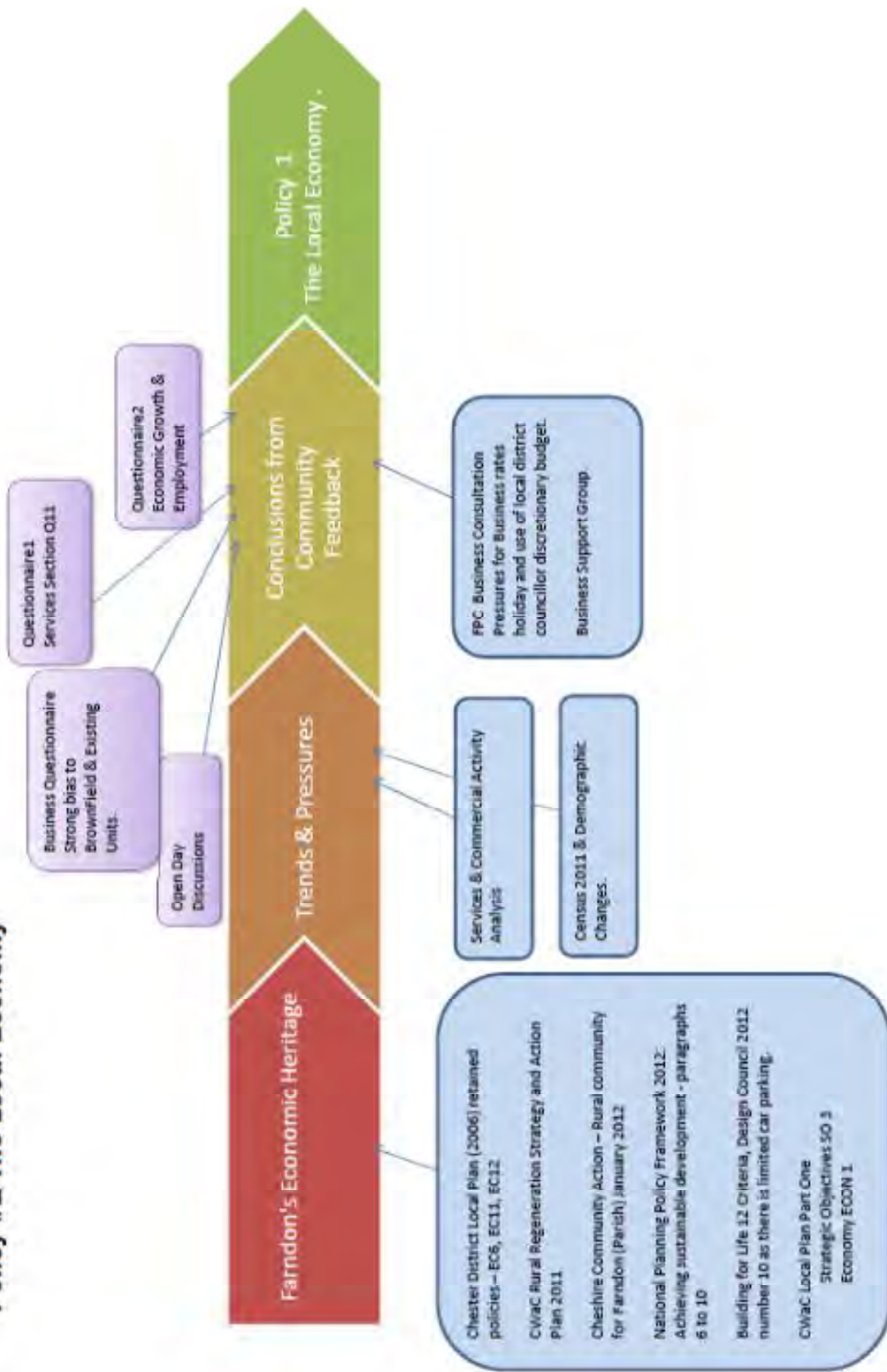
Summary of policies

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Policy</i>
1 - Economy	1.1 Protecting existing employment land and premises 1.2 Promote employment opportunities 1.3 Encourage a range of goods and services within the village 1.4 Protect common and other land along the riverbank.
2 - Housing	2.1 Site preferences for housing development 2.2 Mixed style housing development 2.3 Size and scale of housing.
3 - Built environment	3.1 New development to be low key and preserve views and vistas 3.2 Design and layout to new developments will be required to 3.3 Conservation Area, listed buildings and their settings.
4 - Facilities	4.1 Provision of facilities and services 4.2 Change of use/redevelopment ...
5 - Communication	5.1 Road safety and congestion 5.2 Pedestrians and cyclists.
6 - Environment	6.1 Conserve the landscape 6.2 Protect and conserve natural assets – including wildlife and trees 6.3 Protect local green spaces.

Topic 1

The Local Economy

Policy #1 The Local Economy

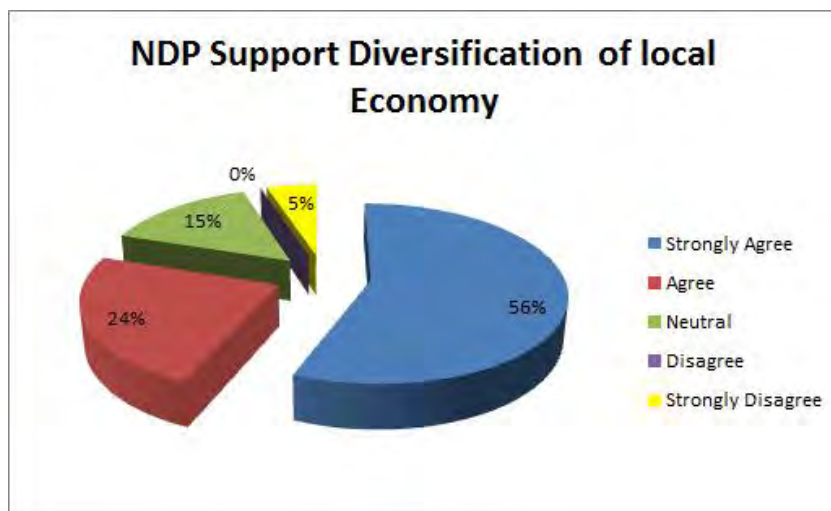


Local Economy – Leading to Policy 1

Background

Historically, agriculture - and in the 19th century education - was the most prominent business sector and employer in the area. The national decline in the size of the agricultural workforce has affected Farndon and although there are still a significant number of local people working in agriculture, there are many fewer employees.

Until the 1960s there were three working farms within the village itself. Bottom Farm and Church Farm have been converted into housing whereas Top Farm and the outbuilding are now a restaurant, small workshops and retail space although some of the units are recently empty. The Tile Shop ceased trading and the two grocery shops have closed, one of which has been converted into two houses. One of the three public houses, The Nag's Head, has been replaced by three retail units and eight dwellings and the riverside café has been demolished for safety reasons and the site is currently subject to a planning application. Monument Place, the small industrial estate on the edge of the village, is a thriving little business park employing about 30 people in the manufacturing of greenhouses. Dandelion Nursery is also proving a great success.



The pattern in Farndon Parish is one of agricultural buildings converted into homes and in a few cases into small workshops although some companies are relocating outside the village and the business is lost. There may be a cross-border effect from the Wrexham Industrial Estate although Farndon has more to offer to very small enterprises.

The local economy is almost a mirror of the local facilities which comprise a small range of shops, public houses, a restaurant, a coffee shop, a picture gallery, holiday homes and bed-and-breakfasts plus the surgery, Post Office, pharmacy and school along with personal services such as a beauty salon, hairdressing, personal trainer, florist and professional services including architecture, office services, kitchen design, building, heating, small scale manufacturing, car repair and leisure vehicle storage. And for our dogs, a kennels and a grooming salon. The Country Market on Wednesdays and the occasional Sunday Farmer's Market complete the picture.

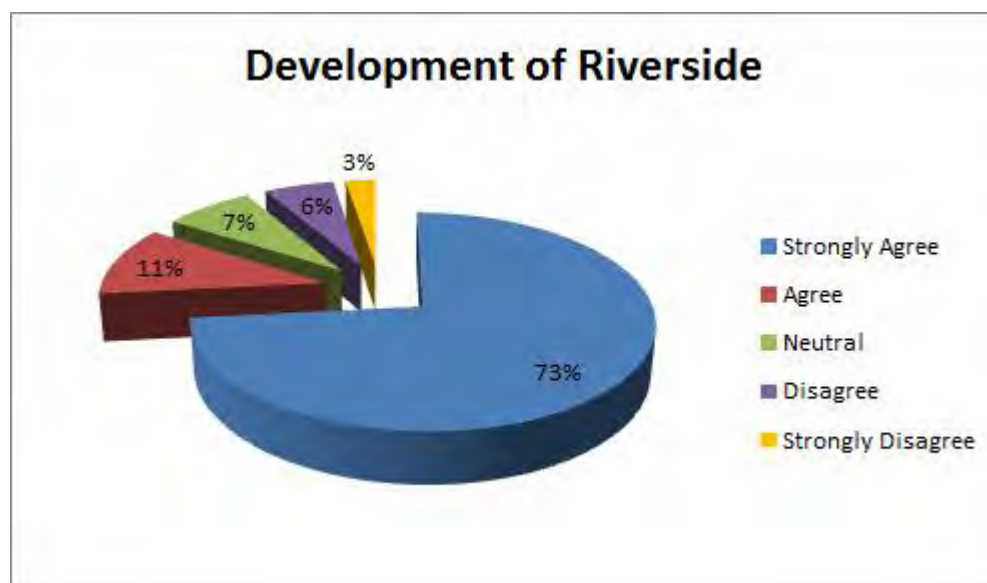
No suitable sites for renewable energy have been identified or proposed in the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan. Exploratory drilling for coal bed methane gas at a site at Kings Marsh took place in 2014 but following the test drilling there has been no further action. A planning application for a solar farm on 55 acres of grade 3b agricultural land near Shocklach about three miles south of Farndon, is not progressing at present. Any economic effects will be considered when the plans are made public.

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that while the majority of residents work outside the village, the local economy should be supported by encouraging the re-use, and thereby sustainable use, of currently vacant industrial spaces ranging as they do from small offices to workshops, rather than allowing new build commercial premises.

Community consultation

Farndon could be described as a '*gentle*' place to live – a country village that should be maintained and nurtured. It cannot be described as having a vibrant, thriving buzz and it is interesting to examine the responses made by residents to the suggestions that the Parish Council should promote Farndon in Chester and Wales – 47% strongly agree and 24% agree (71%) and promote tourism – 46% and 26% respectively (72%) – these are the two lowest scores on the proposed economic policy by some margin. In fact, they are the two lowest scores for any proposed policy except for one. The highest score under '*economic growth policies*', 89%, was support for high speed broadband, which came to Farndon in spring 2015.

There is evidence that residents would welcome improved facilities on the riverbank and to maintain that area for leisure and recreation (80%), that a local Business Support Group would be helpful (82%) and that current employment areas such as Top Farm, Brewery Motors and Monument Place should be protected and promoted (84%).



Consultation with the Farndon business community identified a desire for development of currently empty premises to expand the small businesses presence rather than build on green fields. There are other concerns about the lack of parking space and the inadequacy of high speed broadband which is well below acceptable speeds.

Details of Policy 1 – Local Economy

Farndon currently has a number of vacant business premises – generally small – and the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Farndon offers a route for the improvement of local employment provision and for the support of additional local job opportunities within Farndon itself and on the farms outside the '*settlement boundary*'. (See Map 2 page 12)

Policy 1.1 Protect existing employment land and premises.

Proposals which result in loss of employment premises will be required to demonstrate that: -

- the premises have been empty and actively marketed for at least twelve months at a reasonable rate; and
- reasonable attempts have been made to preserve employment opportunities by relocating the works within the Parish; and
- the premises are no longer viable for any employment – commercial or industrial.

The loss of retail and other employment premises within Farndon itself to wholly residential use will be resisted subject to the right of development which would be permitted under the General Permitted Development Order.

The re-use of existing rural building outside the '*settlement boundary*', (as shown on Map 2) especially for economic purposes, will be supported.

The employment base in Farndon itself is varied and small scale and includes the professions, public services, commercial and industrial activities and retail.

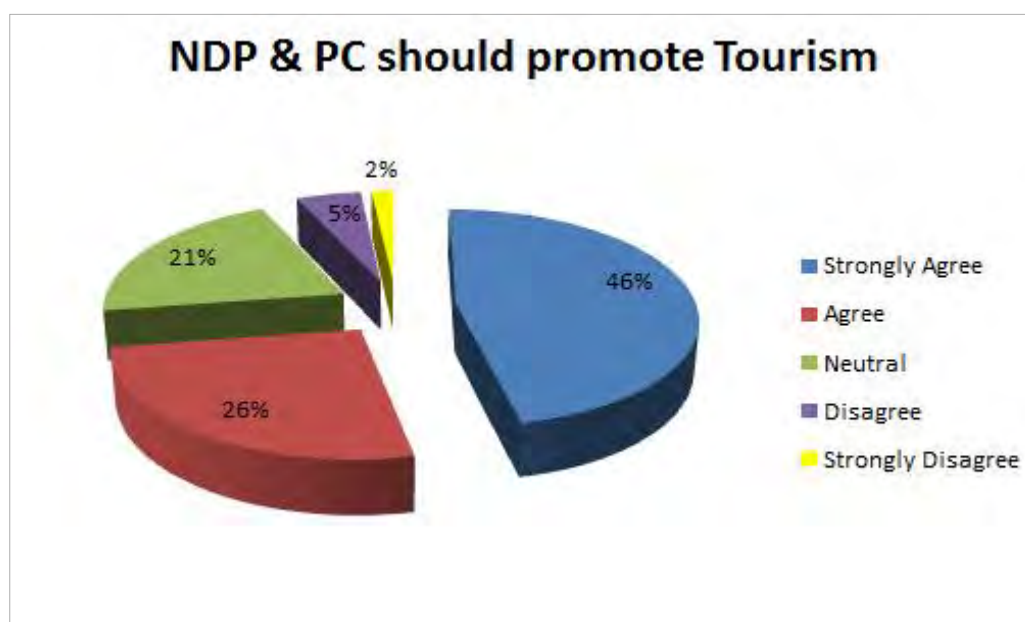
Responses to the questionnaires and consultations show that residents would welcome small scale commercial and retail development within the village to enhance the viability of the existing shops and services.

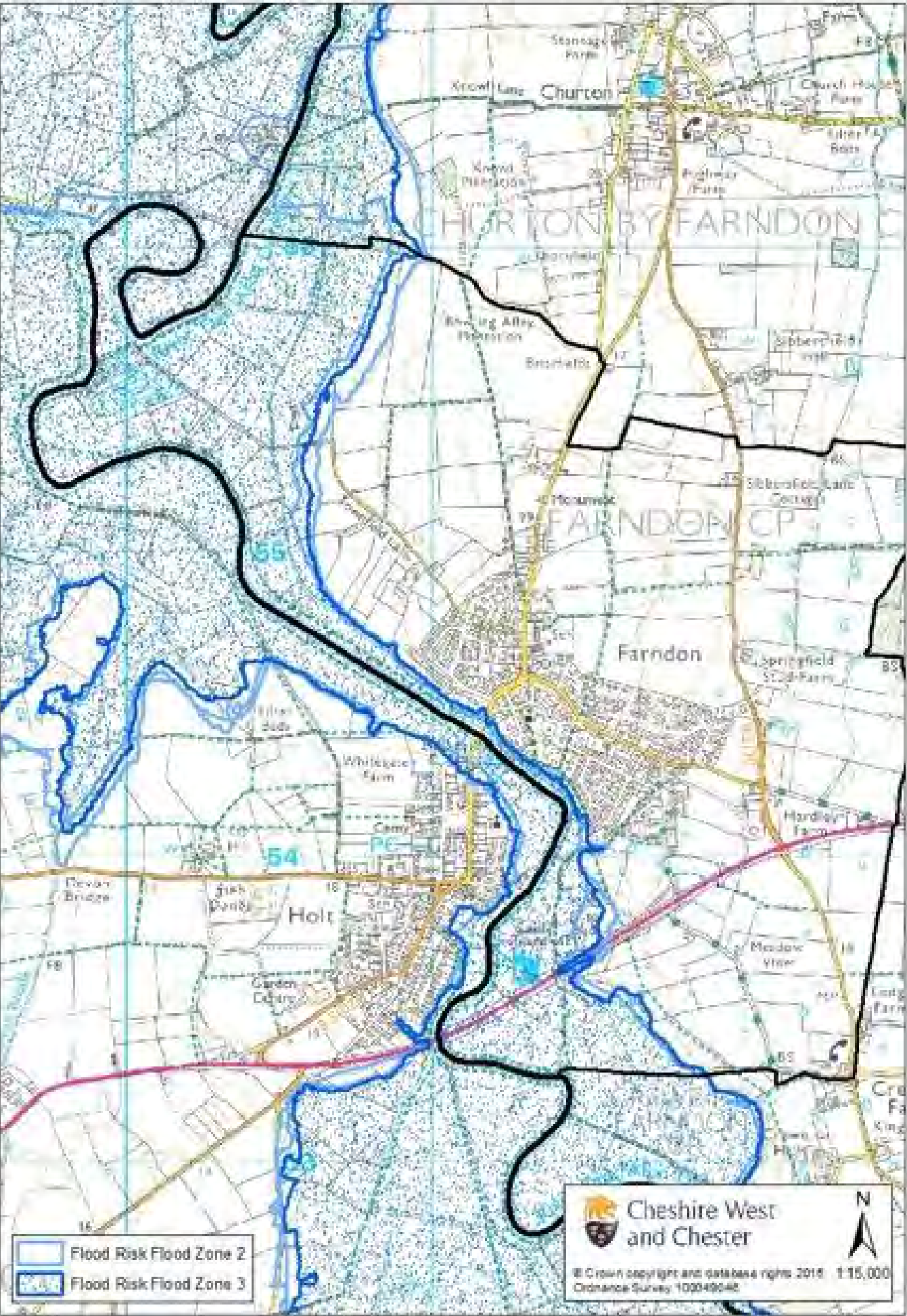
Policy 1.2 Promote employment opportunities.

Proposals for the development of new businesses or expansion of existing businesses will be supported where the development: -

- is located within the employment site at Monument Place as identified in Local Plan (Part Two); or
- involves the redevelopment of '*previously developed land*' within the settlement boundary subject to Local Plan Policy SOC5; or
- is a sympathetic conversion of existing rural buildings for employment purposes.

Proposals for new or expanded businesses should respect the local character of Farndon itself and especially of the Conservation Area.





And residents would also welcome additional small-scale retails and leisure facilities to increase the number of visitors to the village.

Policy 1.3 Encourage a range of goods and services within the village.

Proposals for new retail, service and leisure facilities will be supported which: -

- enhance the viability of the High Street area; and
- respect the Conservation Area; and
- do not detract from the local character of Farndon High Street; and
- are proportionate to the location in scale and type.

Many local people and visitors enjoy the riverbank.

The Dee itself and the nearby cliff areas are important natural and geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest which extend all along the Triassic sandstone cliffs south of Farndon bridge which is itself, a Grade 1 listed building and a Scheduled Monument.

Fishing pegs for licensed use are available, riverside footpaths run to the north and south of the bridge and further south, a boardwalk is maintained by the Parish Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council. The public toilets have been re-opened and the picnic area cleared to make the riverbank more attractive.

Further low-key recreational use of the river bank will be supported, and could include boat hire services (which at one time operated from Farndon), the rebuilding of the café, restaurant and dwelling. Subject to limitations of the flood plain (See Map 3 page 22)

Policy 1.4 Protect common and other land along the riverbank.

Low key recreational use or development of the river bank will be supported.

Any proposed use or development of the riverbank must be: -

- consistent with the objectives for conserving or enhancing the Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the River Dee itself; and
- comply with the requirements of Natural England with respect to the riverbank area; and
- have regard to the guidelines for built development and landscape management included in the Dee Valley CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016, and
- have regard to the need to protect Farndon Bridge and its setting.

Actions for the Parish Council

1. The Parish Council will approach Cheshire West and Chester about the option of a '*business rate holiday*' concession for Farndon to encourage new employment opportunities and thus reduce the possibility of conversion of empty units into housing.
2. A request will be made to the local Borough Councillor for the allocation of some of his discretionary annual budget to fund a professional study on how tourism can be appropriately developed in Farndon.
3. The Parish Council will actively encourage the establishment of a Business Support Group based at the Farndon Community Club to advise on issues such as increasing car parking spaces, encouraging the re-use of empty commercial premises, monitoring '*protected green spaces*' and walking and cycling routes into the village.

Supporting Legislation and Advice

- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained – EC6, EC11, EC12
- CWaC Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan 2011
- Cheshire Community Action – Rural Community Profile for Farndon (Parish) January 2012
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012: Achieving Sustainable Development - paragraphs 6 to 10
- Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 number 10
- Local Government Information Unit 'Administration of Business Rates in England. Discussion Paper' – May 2014
- CWaC Local Plan Part One, 2015
 - Strategic Objectives SO3
 - Economy ECON
 - STRAT 9 – reuse of existing rural buildings
- CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016 – Landscape Character Area 15f - Dee Valley.

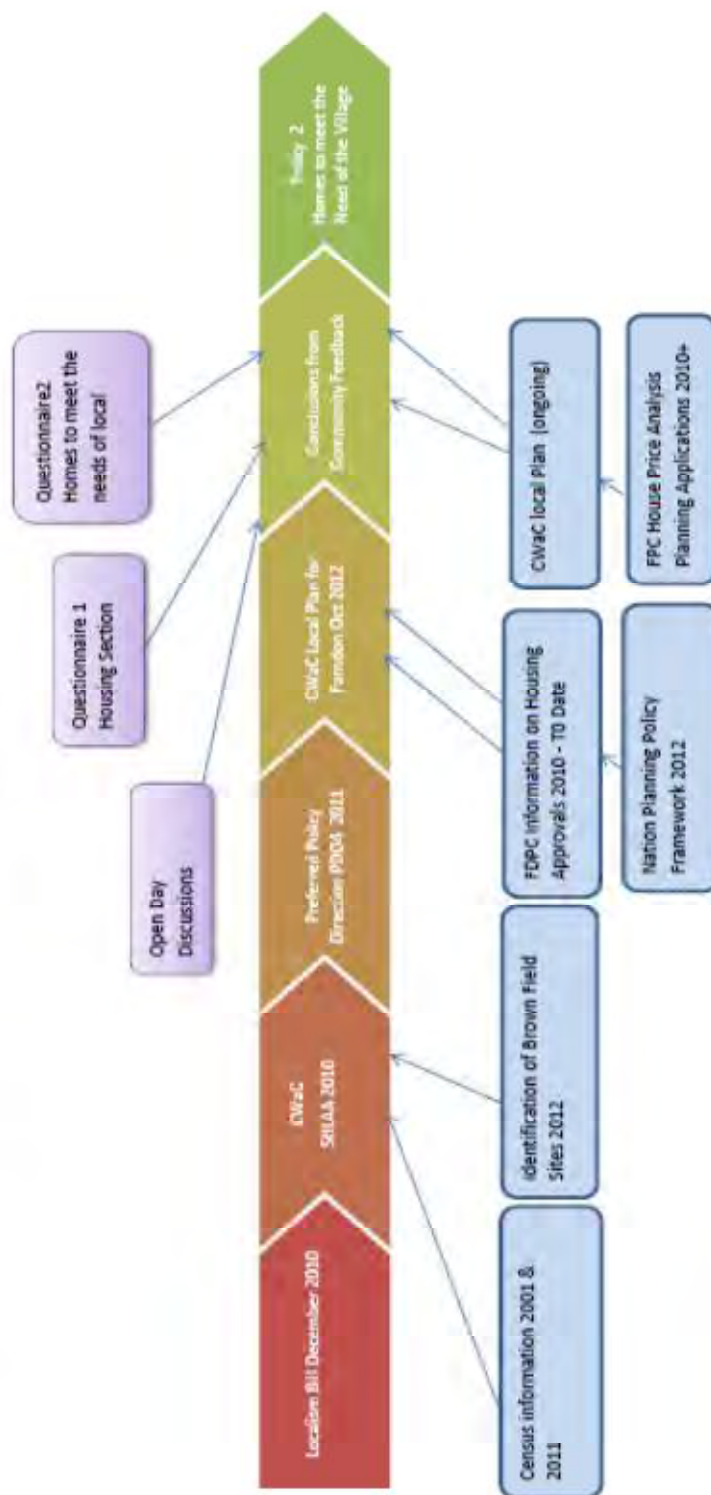
Annexes

- Household Questionnaire1 (December 2012)
 - Actions on Dee Area
 - What impacts will development have?
- Business Questionnaire (December 2012)
 - Analysis – text
 - Analysis – graphic
- Household Questionnaire 2 (January 2015)
 - Promoting economic growth and employment opportunities
 - Protecting the built environment
- National Census 2011 – Summary for Farndon.

Topic 2

Homes to Meet the Needs of the Village

Policy #2 Homes to meet the Needs of the Village



Homes to Meet the Needs of the Village – Leading to Policy 2

Background

Farndon Parish now covers the village itself, the settlement of Kings Marsh to the east and the hamlet of Crewe-by-Farndon to the south. The 2011 census recorded a total of 740 houses in the new Parish the majority of which are in the village centre, then spread along the High Street to Barton Road and to the north on Churton Road.

In 2010, Cheshire West and Cheshire Council published Preferred Policy Options – PD04 Rural Area, in which Farndon was identified as a '*Key Service Centre*' with a proposed level of new housing provision 2010 – 2030 (annualised) as 200, (10 dwellings per annum), confirmed by the adopted Local Plan Part One, 2015 – with the justification: -

- *Considered a reasonable level of growth due to size and function of settlement and flood risk constraints and*
- *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2010 identifies sufficient sites to meet this requirement'.*

Villages can be fragile environments and development should be carefully considered for settling and style and volume. The most appropriate approach to building, especially in villages, is considered to be incremental growth harmonising with the existing character and scale of the area. These are requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) policy STRAT 8, and reflect the principles of sustainable development combined with respect for the natural and historic environment of the locality.

Sustainable communities rely on a variety of local services to accommodate the needs of the existing residents and able to absorb or expand to meet stresses of an increased population. Incremental housing growth ensures that services gain time to respond.

Although Farndon has an ageing population with a higher average than the United Kingdom as a whole, there are many young people born or raised in the village who would like to stay and bring up families. The current housing mix and cost – house prices being higher than the Cheshire West and Chester Council average - makes the choice of down-sizing or first-time buying very challenging and there is a need where possible, to accommodate changing personal circumstances.

Census 2001 and 2011 showed the population of Farndon to be stable i.e. 2001 population 1,517 and 2011, 1,665 following the addition of two small hamlets to the Parish. Population increase in 10 years was 148. There was not deemed to be a housing shortage.

It was thought that incremental housing growth over the 20 year period at the rate of build advised by Cheshire West and Chester Council and taking account of the differing sizes of the '*brownfield*' and SHLAA sites would allow for cottage type and family homes on small sites, with '*affordable*' units incorporated into the larger mixed-size build sites. Over time, Farndon would develop but not change in character.

However, during the period 2010 to 2015, planning permission was awarded for a total of 231 houses, implying a possible 41% population increase within four years. It is with this background and in this environment that the community consultations have been undertaken and the Neighbourhood Plan developed. (See Map 4 page 29 for situation at 1st January 2017)

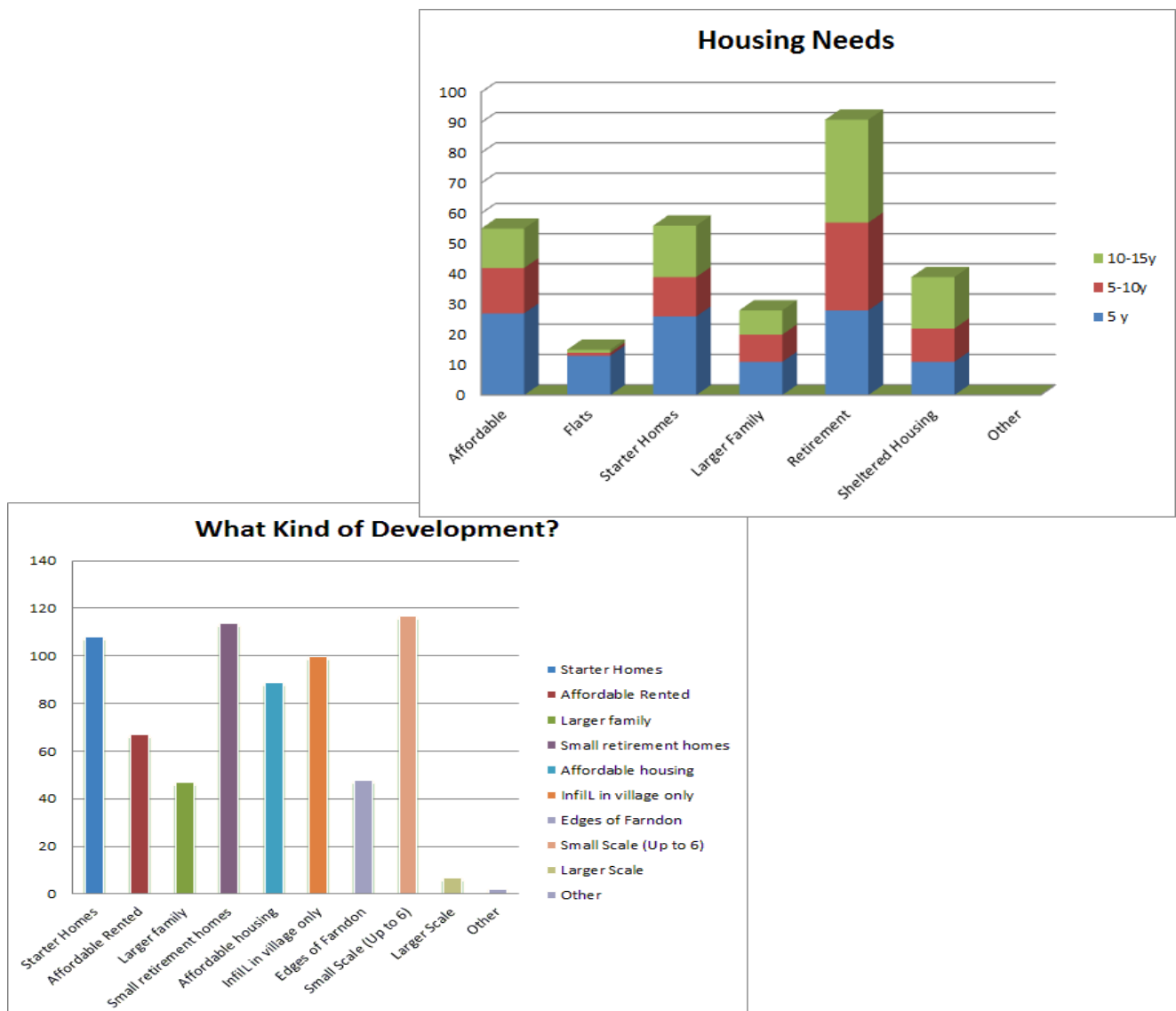
Community Consultation

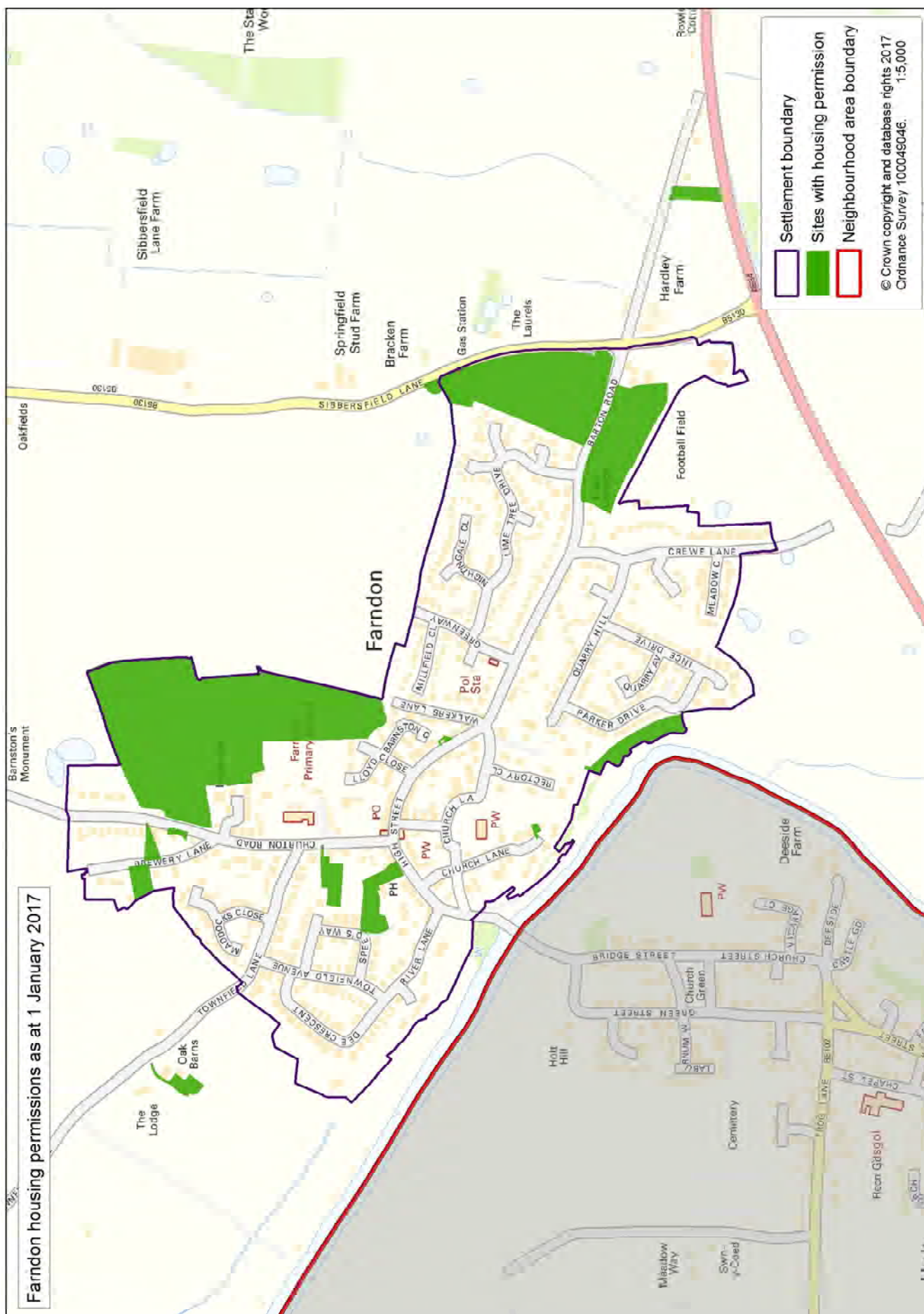
The issues identified by the residents during the initial consultations – undertaken before the approval of four large developments - were clear and can be summarised as follows:

- A better mix of housing and an increase in homes for first-time buyers; and
- No major developments in the village and all development to be phased over a number of years; and
- Small-scale housing and in-fill preferred.

Further village consultations followed the approval of 222 houses on four sites within two years and the realisation that on the two developments, Elan (32 properties) and Redrow (40 properties), the only properties for sale were four and five bedroomed houses with the smaller two and three bedroomed homes allocated for rent or shared ownership. That this mix did not meet the needs, or the previously expressed preferences of residents, can be seen in the responses to the second household questionnaire: -

- Future development to include smaller homes to buy outright – 83% agreed
- Developers must meet community ideals – 89% agreed
- Provide broader complementary development – 84% agreed
- New housing must meet the Farndon Plan criteria – 92% agreed
- Development to be restricted in Farndon to seven homes per year – 80% agreed
- Exemption from the seven homes per year rule for sheltered or starter homes – mixed results with 58% agreeing, 21% neutral and 21% disagreeing.

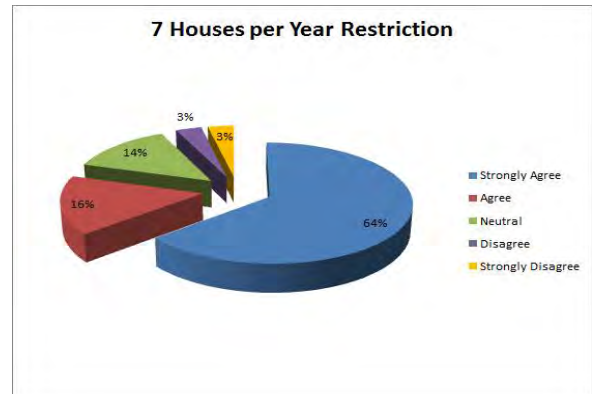
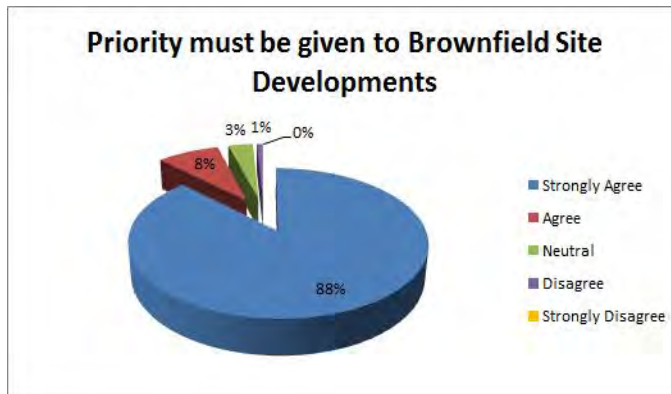




Details of Policy 2 - Housing

The Farndon Plan does not seek to allocate individual sites and it is the intention of the Plan to ensure that development is small scale, in-fill and does not impinge on quality agricultural land and be in accord with the flood risk policy.

It should be noted respecting sites near the River Dee, that the most southerly part floods regularly and is unsuitable for housing.



North of Farndon Bridge, the land drains directly into the Dee and so impacts on the river in terms of water quality particularly, therefore water run-off, supply and disposal, need to be considered in any proposed development.

There are three small '*brownfield sites*' now described as '*previously developed land*' - in Farndon and developers will be required to consider these sites before putting forward plans to build on other sites, or on the green fields and agricultural land which surround the village.

Policy 2.1 Site preferences for housing development.

- Building within the settlement boundary on previously developed land;
- Subsequently, on small-scale undeveloped land within the settlement boundary;
- Outside the settlement boundary, small-scale redevelopment of previously developed land in the open countryside consistent with emerging policy DM1 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two).

All are in preference to granting planning permission for new residential development in open countryside.

Proposals which meet the above criteria must also meet the requirements of Policies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. of the Plan and Policy SOC 5 of the Local Plan.

For any planning application for housing development which would fall within the second and third of the site preferences, applicants would be required to demonstrate that there were no appropriate sequentially preferable sites deliverable. If this could be adequately demonstrated, then development within bullet points 2 or 3 could be considered favourably.

Consultation on the draft Farndon Plan has demonstrated the strong preference of residents that any development enhances the natural and built environment of Farndon with an appropriately, well designed, non-standard site layout complying with Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012. This is the strong preference (96%) expressed by residents.

Above all, houses should respect the local vernacular and avoid the anodyne style '*estate-type*' buildings that surround many rural villages, including Farndon.

CWaC strategic housing assessment 2013 identifies a serious mismatch between housing needs and current developments in Farndon. There is a lower proportion of 1-2 bed homes and higher proportion of 4+ bed homes in Farndon than the county average.

Policy 2.2 Mixed style housing development.

New housing development should provide a mix of housing to meet local needs including;

- smaller two and three bedroomed homes for outright purchase to allow for downsizing as well as first time buyers; and
- Affordable housing provided in accordance with Policy SOC 1 of the Cheshire West and Chester local Plan (Part One) should remain affordable in perpetuity. When allocating affordable sheltered housing, priority should be given to those with a local connection.
- Sheltered accommodation where there is a demonstrable need within the local area.
- When allocating affordable sheltered housing priority should be given to those with a local connection.
- housing schemes should reflect updated information on local housing needs in Farndon, as defined by the five yearly review done by the Parish Council.

The approval of a total of 222 houses on four sites surrounding the village since 2010 which is far in excess of the numbers designated by Cheshire West and Chester Council at that time, has led residents to state a preference for a marked slow-down in the size and pace of development for the duration of this Plan. Cheshire West & Chester Council Housing Land Monitor 2015-2016, Number 1014 confirms that as of 1st April 2016 a 7.8 year housing supply has already been identified.

Policy 2.3 Size and scale of housing.

- house building in Farndon will be limited to small scale developments, respecting the character of the village.
- developments should be well integrated into the existing settlement and with good pedestrian connections.
- developments should reflect the criteria set out in Building for Life 12.

The Neighbourhood Plan housing policy is designed to ensure that Farndon remains a rural village, offers a mix of properties in small developments to suit the local population, is sustainable with respect to services and facilities and does not become a dormitory village.

Action for the Parish Council

The Parish Council should work with Chester West and Cheshire Council and prepare an annual census of Farndon Parish so that builders, when planning the size and scope of developments, can be made aware of the possible needs of the local population with respect to downsizing, starter-homes, '*affordable*' housing and supported living arrangements.

Five yearly review of housing need, within the Parish.

Supporting Legislation and Advice

- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified (Under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act) 1981
- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained – EC6, EC11, EC12
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA 2010)
- Localism Act 2011
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012: Achieving sustainable development - paragraphs 6 to 10
- Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 – all
- Cheshire West Strategic Housing Assessment 2013
- CWaC Local Plan Part One 2015
 - Preferred Policy Option Rural Area (Key Service Centre) PD04
 - Strategic Objectives SO 3
 - Economy ECON 1
 - Previously Developed Land – STRAT 1
 - Development in Farndon itself – STRAT 8
 - Development in the countryside – STRAT 9
 - Affordable housing – SOC 1
 - Flood risk – ENV 1
- Housing and Planning Act 2016.

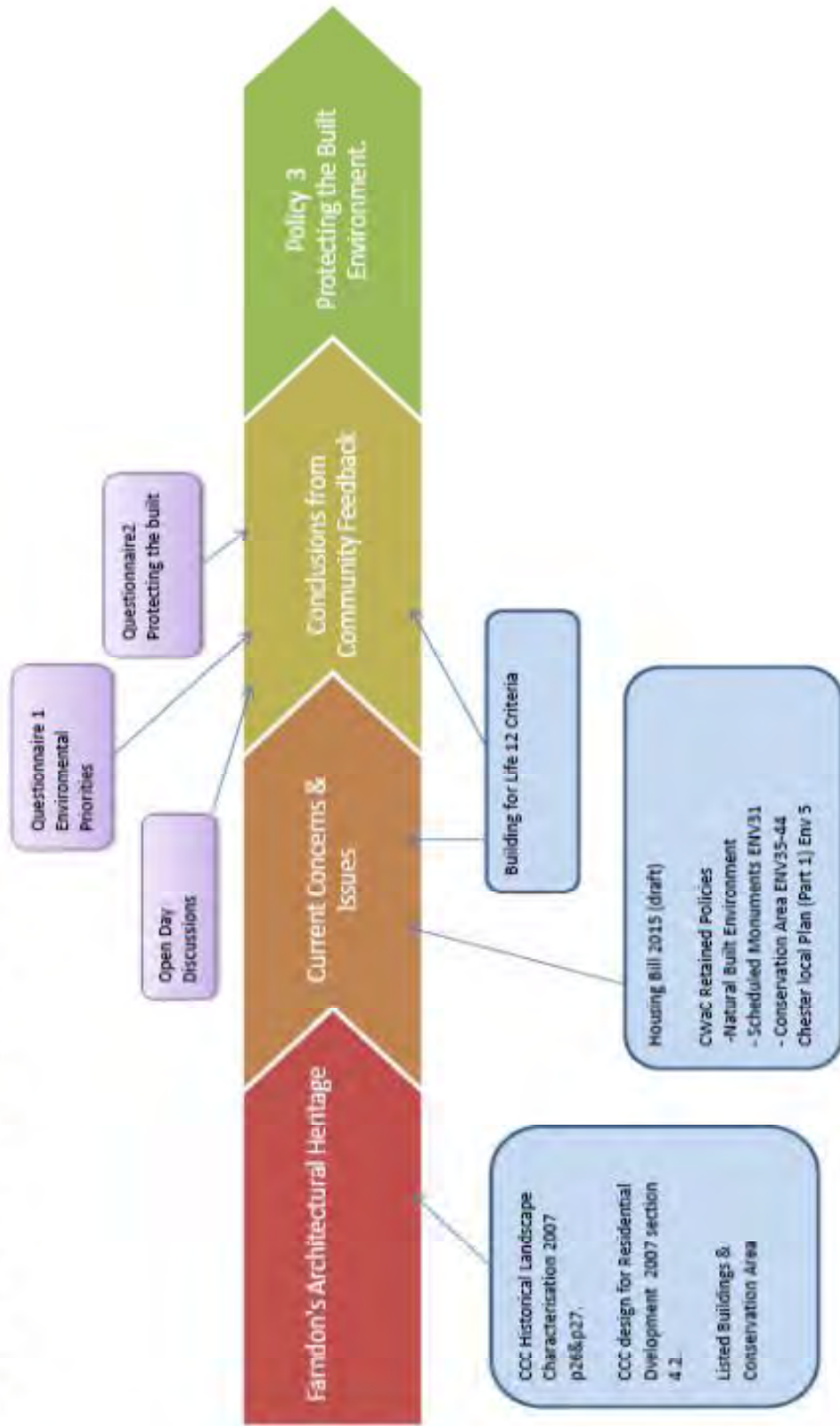
Annexes

- Farndon/Cheshire House Prices 1996 to 2010
- National Census 2011 – Summary for Farndon
- Household Questionnaire 1 (December 2012)
- Household Questionnaire 2 (January 2015)
- Farndon, Planning Applications 2010 to 2015.

Topic 3

Protecting the Built Environment

Policy #3 Protecting the Built Environment



Protecting the Built Environment – Leading to Policy 3

Background

Farndon is an ancient village dating back to pre-Saxon times with Roman undertones and consequently has a long history and a rich built heritage dating mainly from the 14th century.

Roman roads run close to Farndon and Roman fragments have been found in the churchyard and at Crewe Hill but there is no evidence of a settlement, although there was a Roman tile factory over the bridge in Holt.

It is with the bridge and the present St Chad's church tower that the present visible built environment in Farndon begins. Both were built in 1338/9 AD by the monks of St Werburgh's Abbey in Chester. The bridge is a Grade I listed building and a scheduled ancient monument and the Church, where the nave dates from 669AD, is listed as Grade II. In total, there are 15 additional Grade II buildings in Farndon ranging from the Barnston War Memorial to cottages on the High Street and two table tombs in the churchyard. The centre of Farndon, mostly but not exclusively the High Street, is a designated Conservation Area and interestingly, the High Street describes a semicircle as it is built on the line of the ancient defensive ramparts.

The combination of listed buildings and the Conservation Area define Farndon as a settlement of great value and interest and this heritage is very important to the residents. It must be protected so that Farndon, set as it is in an agricultural landscape, remains essentially a rural village with ancient roots. (See Map 5 page 37)

Farndon contains a large number of heritage assets uniquely combined with its high landscape qualities and topography to create a village core of high townscape value. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect these assets and promote an overall high quality setting for them and to sustain and enhance their significance for the enjoyment of the local community and visitors alike.

Farndon's character and local distinctiveness is due as much to the numerous small, repetitive details as it is to individual historical assets. The cumulative negative impact of small-scale development, such as extensions, window replacement, etc. can destroy the uniformity and commonality which makes the area more than a collection of individual buildings.

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the contribution which small elements make to the character of the area and seeks to protect them.

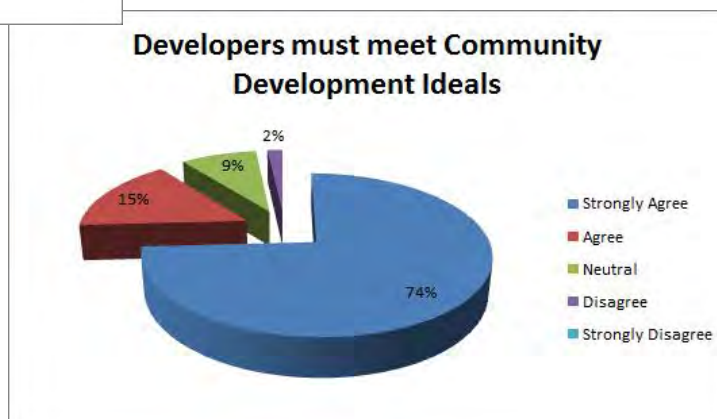
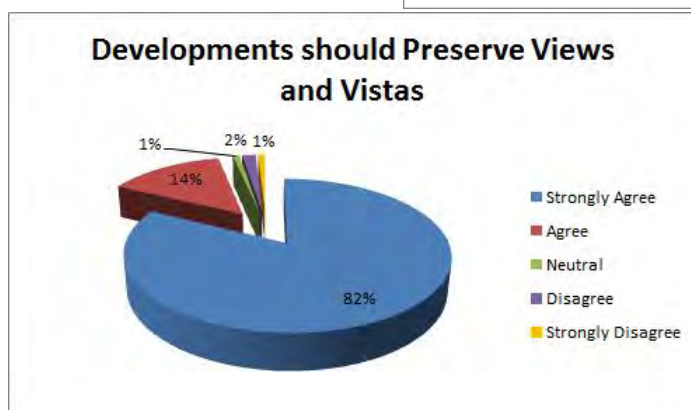
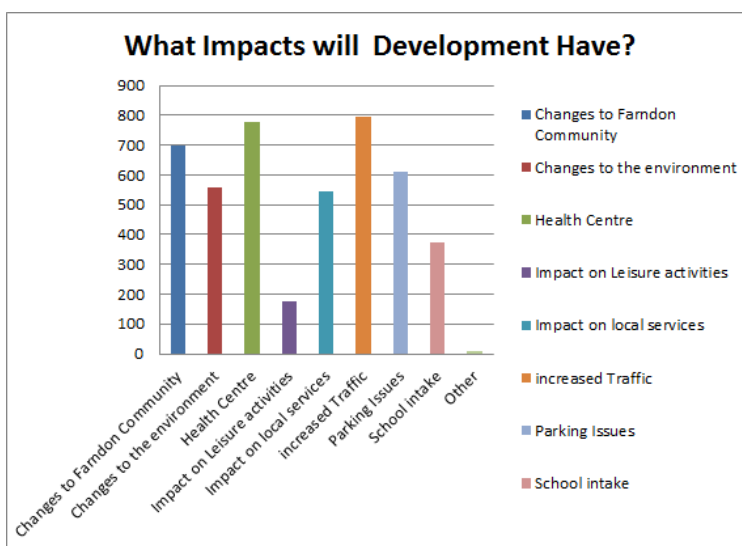
Article 4 Directions will be periodically reviewed by Cheshire West and Cheshire Council and applied to unlisted buildings within the Conservation Area to prevent erosion of character by otherwise permitted development alterations.

Community Consultation

There has been considerable concern registered by residents that new development on the approaches to the village does not contribute to the established heritage. Properties are '*modern estate type*' with no reference to the local character where Cheshire brick walls and Welsh slate roofs are common - these standards were included in the Cheshire County Council Supplementary Planning Document 2007 section 4.2. The village consultation showed almost 100% agreement with the need to protect Farndon.

- Development must not be prominent in scale, visually dominant or significantly change the character of the village – 92% agree
- Not adversely affect key distinctive views into and out of Farndon with particular attention to listed buildings, open space, the Conservation Area and key landscape features – 96% agree
- Development in or adjacent to any listed building or the Conservation Area should enhance the character of the structure – 92% agree
- Linking new development with existing residential areas by road and public footpaths to ensure integration of Farndon as a whole – 93% agree
- Consideration must be given to building on 'brownfield sites' now known as ' *previously developed land*', before submitting plans to build on open countryside – 96% agree
- Incremental development to allow for gradual expansion and evolution of facilities – 94% agree.

Farndon is a tightly contained village surrounded by modern housing estates mostly built since the 1960s – and more recently since 2014 - on agricultural land and residents have expressed an unambiguous wish to conserve Farndon including building, views and landscape, and to ensure that it remains a small rural village.





Cheshire West
and Chester

Farndon conservation area

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Details of Policy 3 – The Built Environment

New development to be low key and preserve views and vistas

It is the intention of this Plan that new development and refurbishment of existing buildings should respect and enhance the local character and the built environment of Farndon and the wider area of the Parish which includes the River Dee, the flood plain and the agricultural land inside and outside the '*settlement boundary*' to the north, east and south.

Policy 3.1 New development to be low key and preserve views and vistas.

- new development, particularly in the Conservation Area or adjacent to listed buildings or landmarked structures, should be low key and appropriate to the area in terms of scale, mass and height; and
- a sense of enclosure should be provided based on an appropriate height/width ratio, with a flexible and varied building line and street width; and
- development should preserve and enhance key vistas by using landmark buildings or significant landscape features as focal points; and
- edge of settlement sites should aim to fit the development into the wider landscape by appropriate and dominant landscaping and appropriate spacing between buildings.

Farndon is set on a low hill surrounded by fields and hedges with some small copse cover. The church tower is the highest point for some miles around and it is crucial that the vistas towards the village from: -

- the east – Landscape Character Area 9c - Tattenhall to Shocklach Plain
- the north – Landscape Character Area 11a - Grosvenor Estate
- the west – Landscape Character Area 15f – Dee Valley

are not hampered or obliterated by three story, or the modern trend of two and a half story, houses, which are very high and intrude into the skyline or by '*massed*' or '*anodyne estate-style housing*' but comply with the Landscape Character Area requirements.

Policy 3.2 Design and layout of new developments will be required to: -

- respect the local landscape and villagescape as recommended in Building for Life 12 Criteria numbers 5,6 and 7; and
- comply with the guidelines included in the CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016 with respect to landscape management and built environment; and
- ensure that the character of the village is not significantly changed.

The Farndon Conservation Area includes much of the High Street and there are numerous listed buildings scattered throughout the village. It is important that new development respects and does not block or detract from the views into and out of the village, especially from the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Farndon is currently being updated by the Conservation Team at Cheshire West and Chester Council. Adherence to the conditions therein, will, along with the heritage legislation regarding listed buildings and their settings, be of the highest importance when planning applications for housing and commercial premises are considered.

Policy 3.3 Conservation Area, listed buildings and their settings.

The design of all new houses, alterations, conversions and extensions to buildings within or adjacent to the Conservation Area or listed buildings and their settings, should respect the distinctive heritage and character in the design, use of quality building materials in the vernacular and preservation of natural features including trees and hedgerows. Where appropriate, a positive contribution should be made to the wider public realm in terms of hard and soft landscaping and associated street lighting and furniture.

Developers should take account of the updated Conservation Area Appraisal for Farndon prepared by the Conservation team at Chester Council.

Development proposals that do not contribute positively to the built environment of Farndon, to the distinctive character of the Conservation Area or buildings outside the settlement boundary, will not be permitted.

Actions for the Parish Council

The Parish Council will work with Chester West and Cheshire Council and developers to: -

1. Secure the protection of the environmental heritage features within the village especially the Conservation Area.
2. Carefully consider any applications for housing or commercial buildings to ensure that Landscape Character Area requirements are met.
3. Ensure the integration of new buildings with Farndon as a whole, by careful planning of roads and footpaths.

Supporting Legislation and Advice

- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained - Natural Built Environmental Designations
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest ENV 28
 - Scheduled Monuments ENV 31 and
 - Conservation Area ENV 35 to 44
- Cheshire County Council – Historic Landscape Characterisation 2007 - pages 26 and 27
- Cheshire County Council - Supplementary Planning Document 2007 - Design for Residential Development - section 4.2
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012 paragraphs 29 to 46
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 No 637
- Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 numbers 5, 6 and 7
- CWaC Local Plan Part One, 2015
 - Strategy 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7
 - Strategy 10 and 11
- Queen's Speech and Bills 2015 page 27-29 - Housing Bill 2015 superseded by: -
- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016 – Landscape Character Areas 9c, 11a and 15f
- CWaC Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Farndon – updated.

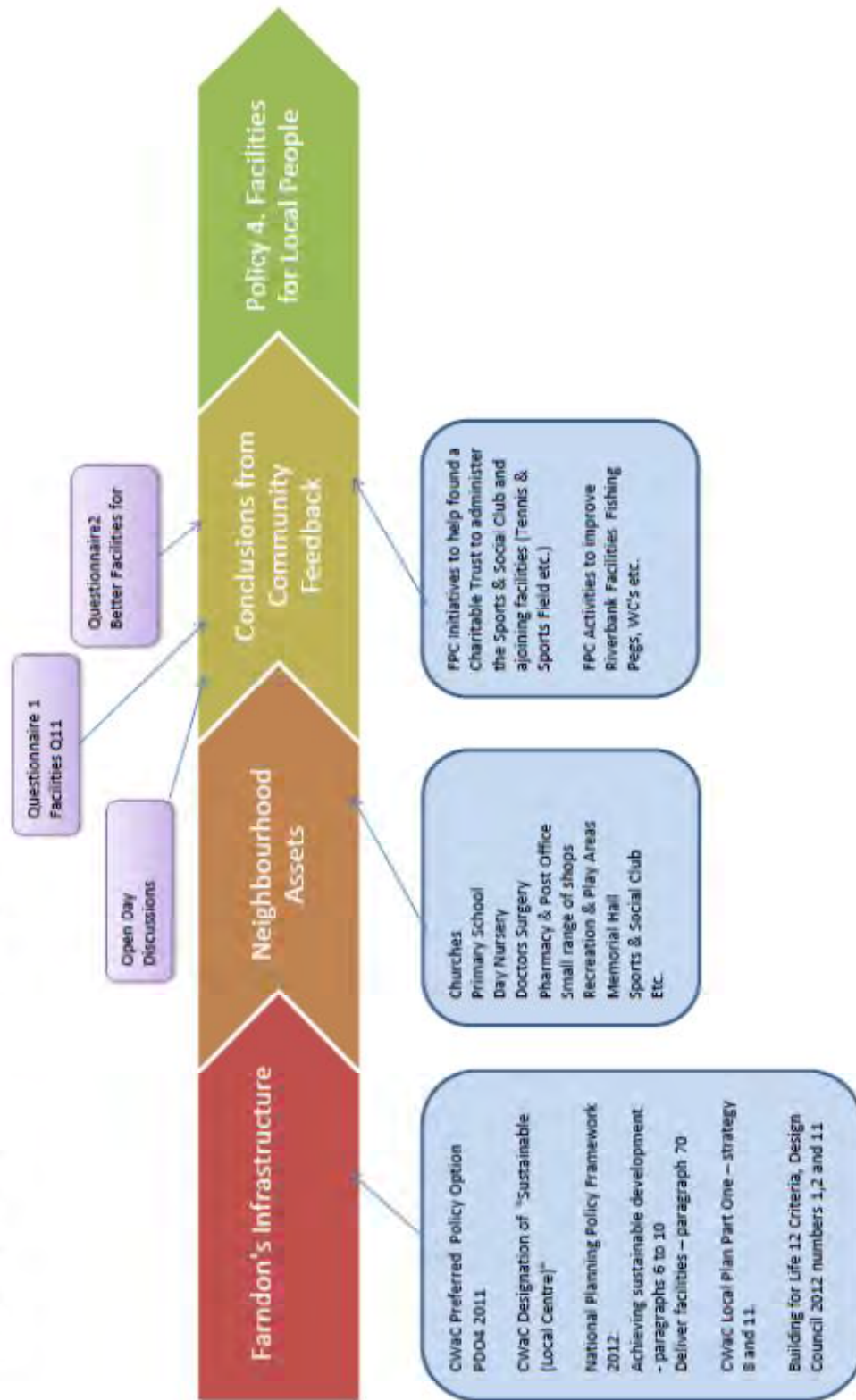
Annexes

- Household Questionnaire 1 (December 2012) – Environment Priorities
- Household Questionnaire 2 (January 2015) – Protecting the Built Environment
- Farndon Conservation Area – map
- Farndon Conservation Area – CWaC Planning Portal
- Farndon Listed Buildings.

Topic 4

Facilities for Local People

Policy #4 Facilities for Local People



Facilities for Local People – Leading to Policy 4

Background

As is the case with many rural villages, local services have declined during the past 20 years and although most day-to-day needs can be met in either Holt or Farndon, larger items and specialist services require a journey, usually by car, to Chester, Wrexham or Manchester.

Retail facilities in Farndon include a Post Office and pharmacy, butcher combining a delicatessen and general store, newsagent, florist with gift shop, a chandler's including kitchen design and a dry cleaning service, a beauty salon, a personal fitness gym, a wedding dress service, two hairdressers, a pottery, dog grooming and boarding kennels. Two public houses are to be found on the High Street, although the third has closed. There is a restaurant and coffee shop.

Conversely, public services have come under increasing pressure and was the highest level of concern expressed by residents throughout the consultations. In spring 2015, Farndon surgery combined with the Rookery Surgery Tattenhall (re-named '*Village Surgeries Group*'), to accommodate an increasing number of patients, the primary school expanded to meet increased demand with the addition of an in-house nursery and two mobile classrooms and the Dandelion Nursery at Monument Place has recently re-opened to accommodate pre-school children.

Farndon itself has two churches, St Chad's, Church of England and at Rock Chapel, the United Reform Church. Crewe-by-Farndon has a well attended Methodist Chapel. The Memorial Hall opposite St Chad's hosts a wide range of activities from yoga sessions and badminton, to meetings of the Women's Institute and Parish Council, the mobile library parks there and the Hall serves as the Polling Station. Farndon Sports and Social Club – with the support of the Parish Council has become the '*Farndon Community Club*' – offers a wide range of facilities including a bowling green, tennis courts, a sports field, a skateboard park, a bar and social events hall. Farndon Farmer's Market is held there periodically and a car boot sale on most Bank Holidays.

Some years ago a number of fishing pegs were built into the riverbank but the Environment Agency no longer has resources to maintain them. As the river bank to the south of the bridge as far as the boardwalk is '*common land*', fishing – with license – is available and after discussions with the Holt and Farndon Fishing Club, it was agreed that rather than lose the facility, Farndon Parish Council would take responsibility with the proviso that the pegs were fully repaired and cleaned before they were transferred. The public toilets on the riverbank, owned and managed by Cheshire West and Chester Council, have recently been re-furbished and re-opened.

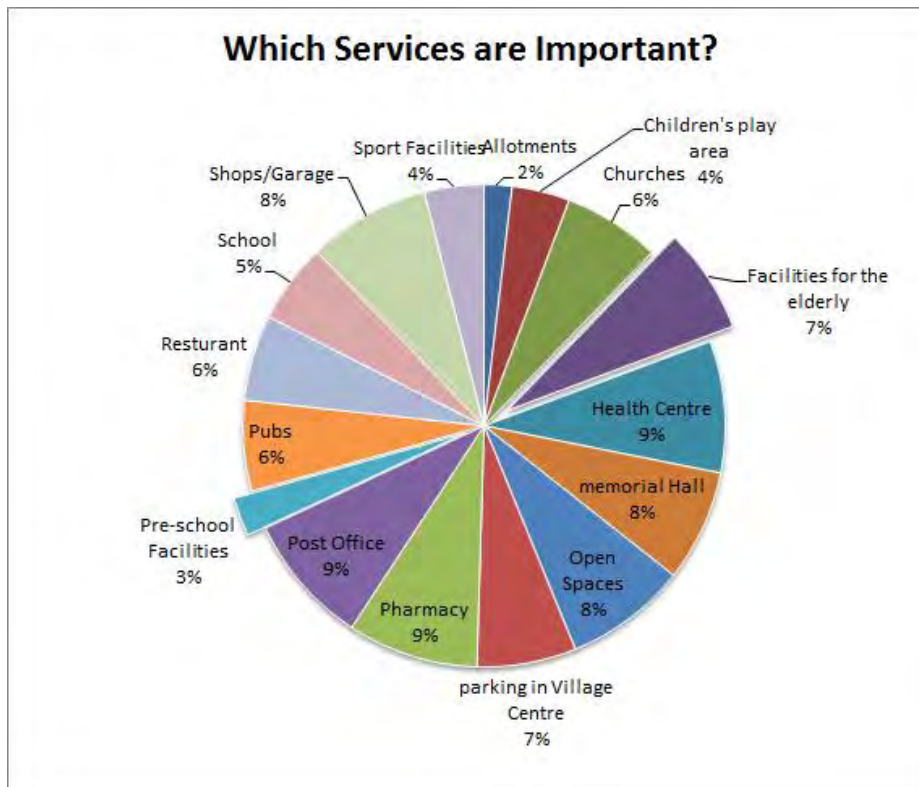
Farndon has received an allocation under Section 106 and two bus shelters on Barton Road have been replaced but to date no support has been received for the amelioration of the wider impact of four large housing developments on village facilities – most notably the surgery and the school – or the existing infrastructure or to support necessary new infrastructure.

The New Homes Bonus which was designed to assist with increased pressures associated with new development has been withdrawn by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

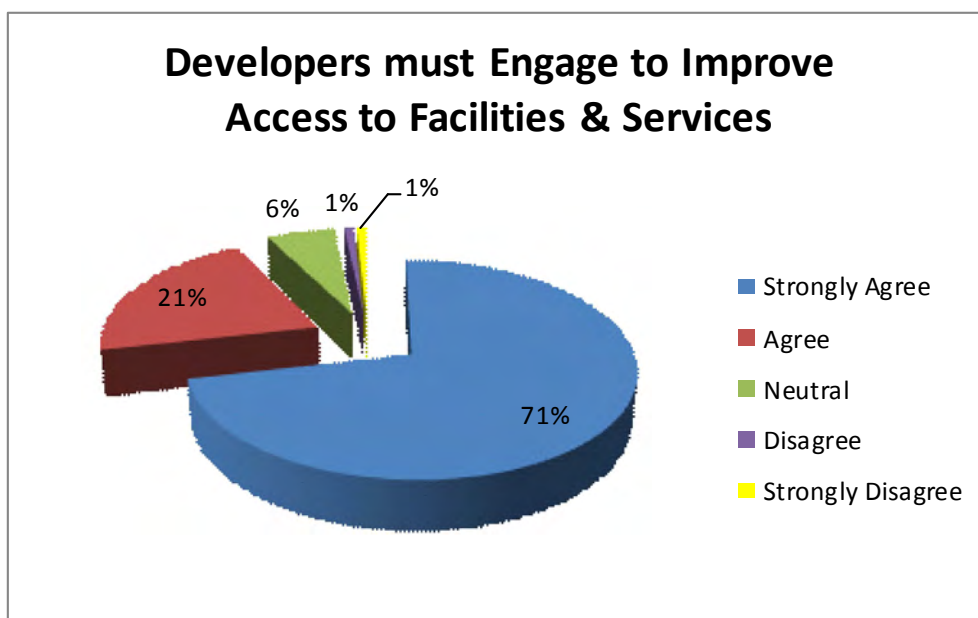
However, Cheshire West and Chester Council is currently working to establish a Community Infrastructure Levy as a charge on development in qualifying areas to be used in accordance with an agreed list of priorities. Parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan will be eligible to receive 25% of the funds so raised in their area.

Community Consultation

Concerns about retaining village services and the ever-increasing pressure on existing facilities were overwhelmingly expressed by residents - as follows:



- Support and retain existing facilities - the primary school, surgery, church and community buildings – 97% agreed
- Improve existing recreational facilities - 91% agreed
- Developers' impact assessment to identify issues – 98% agreed
- Safe easy access for new residents to village facilities – 93% agreed
- Developers to engage to improve access to facilities and services – 92%
- Understand the needs of young people – 86% agreed
- All sectors of the community catered for – 97% agreed.



Details of Policy 4 - Facilities

The Parish Council recognises that there is a need for local facilities and services to be protected wherever possible to ensure that the needs of the existing and future population of the village and surrounding areas are met. Future provision of facilities and services in Farndon must take the above data into consideration and be subject to consultation with the village when significant and where appropriate.

Policy 4.1 Provision of facilities and services

The provision of new community facilities and services within the defined settlement boundary will be supported subject to respecting residential amenity and local character.

During the pre-submission consultation period it became ever more apparent that residents were increasingly concerned about the pressures on public services, mainly the school and surgery, caused by the completion of two of the four major housing developments on the edge of Farndon. These pressures plus the increased volume of traffic and lack of parking are of great moment and the Parish Council is aware that there is little scope to address these issues where existing facilities are located in the centre of the village.

Policy 4.2 Change of use or redevelopment of community facilities and services.

Change of use or redevelopment will only be supported where it can be demonstrated, in the case of public and community services, that the proposal : -

- includes alternative provision, in a suitable location, of equivalent or enhanced facilities; and
- it is safely accessible to all by a range of transport modes including , walking, and has adequate car parking.

There is also a belief that developers should be required to identify the impact of any new development on local facilities.

The village of Farndon itself is served by two main roads, the east-west High Street and the north-south road to Chester. Shops and the surgery are located on the High Street, and the school, nursery and Monument Place are along the Chester Road. Consequently, all traffic into and through the village moves along one, or both of these two routes and it is important to alleviate the congestion where at all possible.

Local businesses have expressed the opinion that further extension of parking prohibitions on the High Street, would have a detrimental effect on local businesses and might affect their viability.

Actions for the Parish Council

As neighbourhood planning is a devolved responsibility of the Parish Council, the Parish Council should ensure that they are: -

1. Involved in discussions with developers from an early stage and before submission of planning proposals.
2. Actively engaged in the preparation of the '*Development Impact Assessment*' to ensure that the numbers of prospective new residents, school age children and vehicles are clearly described and the impact assessed.

Current Facilities

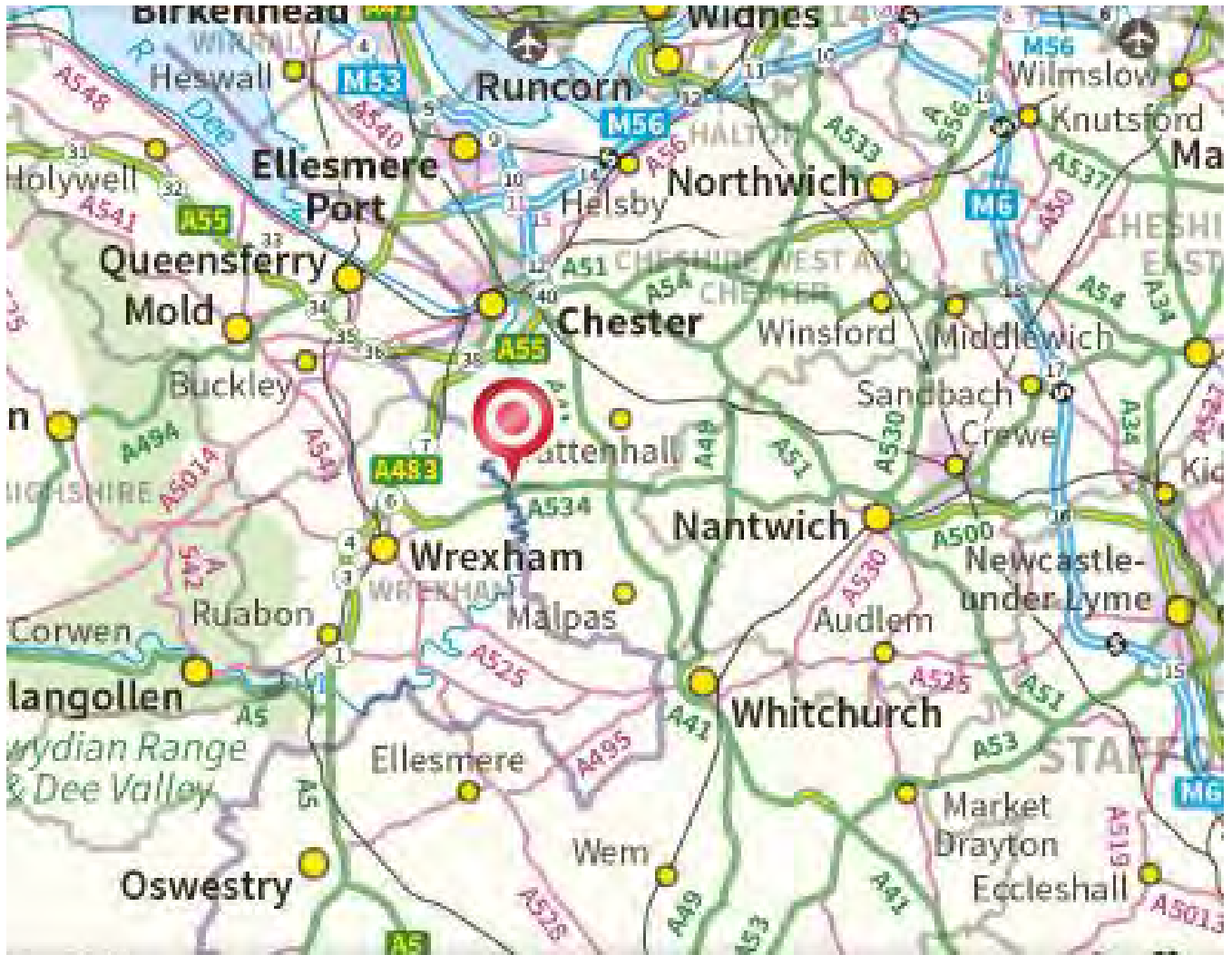
- Parish Church
- United Reform Church
- Methodist Chapel
- Memorial Hall
- Farndon Community Club
- Doctors Surgery
- Nursery School, Primary School
- Pharmacy & Post Office
- Public houses (x2) Coffee Outlet
- Retail (Newsagent, Hairdressing (x2), Beauty Saloon, Dog Grooming & Kennels, DIY, Florist, Butchers, Architects and Office Services)
- Brewery motors

Supporting Legislation and Advice

- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained - Village Shops RET 12 and 13
- CWaC Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan 2011
- CWaC Preferred Policy Option (Key Service Centre) 2011 PDO4
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012:
 - Achieving Sustainable Development - paragraphs 6 to 10
 - Deliver facilities – paragraph 70
- Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 numbers 1,2 and 11
- CWaC Local Plan Part One, 2015 – strategy 8 and 11
- The Town and Country Planning (DMP) (England) Order 2015 section 5.2.

Annexes

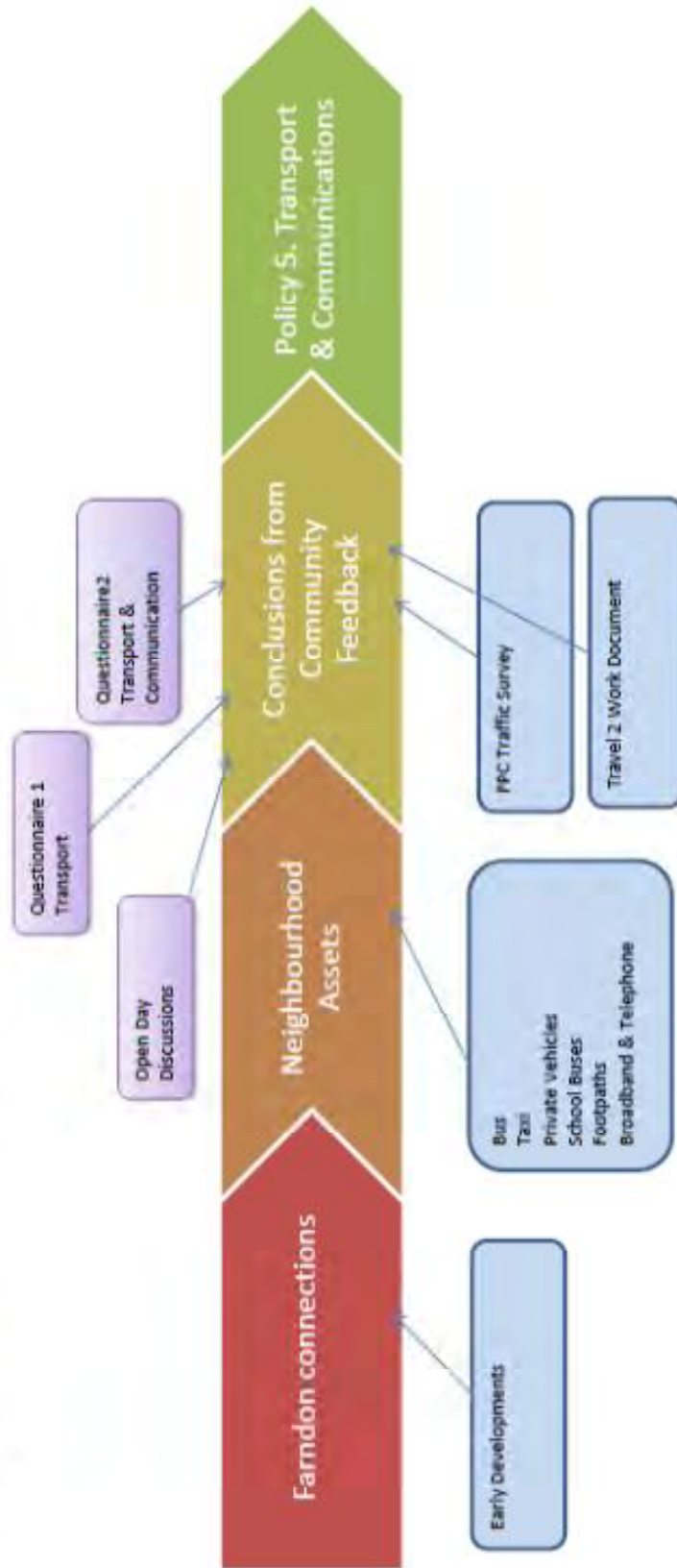
- Household Questionnaire 1 (December 2012)
 - What impacts will development have?
 - Which services are important?
- Household Questionnaire 2 (January 2015) – Better facilities for local people.



Topic 5

Transport and Communication

Policy #5 Transport & Communication



Transport and Communication – Leading to Policy 5

Background

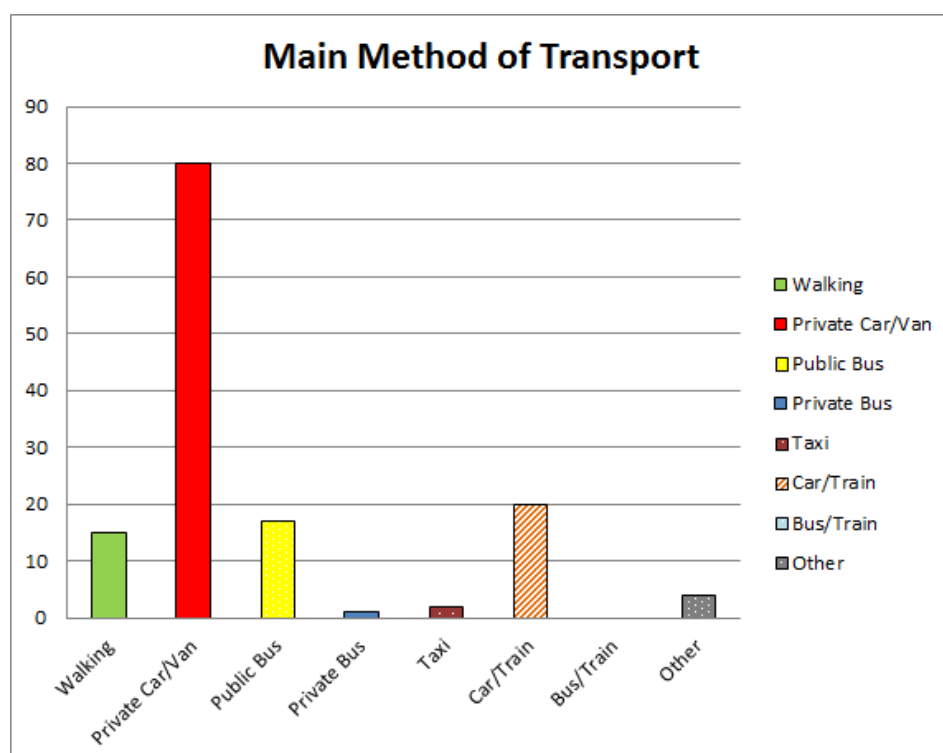
Farndon developed about 2,000 years ago at the point where a ford across the River Dee enabled the passage of east-west traffic from North Wales to Cheshire and the Midlands. About a mile east of Farndon at Kings Marsh this road, now the A 534, intersected with Watling Street the north-south Roman road from Chester to Wroxeter. This stretch of Watling Street is now the Bishop Bennet Way, a public footpath and bridleway.

Originally the A534 went through Farndon over the 14th century bridge, a scheduled monument and up the High Street, but due to damage by increasingly heavy traffic the village was by-passed in 1986. The High Street rejoins the main road about a mile east of the village. In the centre of the village a T-junction leads north to Chester along the B5130.

It was anticipated that Farndon would become a typical '*sleepy village*' but that did not prove to be the case. Despite the A534 bypass, traffic continues to be a problem in the village and whilst most heavy east-west traffic by-passes, local traffic does not and much of the west-north traffic uses the bridge. Farndon is the only public crossing of the Dee in Cheshire, south of Chester.

The tight juxtaposition of the village junction results in a heavy traffic flow during peak hours, carrying vehicles north towards Chester from Holt and further west plus local traffic, cars doing the '*school-run*' from the wider area in all directions – Wrexham, Holt and Rossett to the west, Clutton to the east, Churton to the north and Shocklach to the south - to the primary school 100 yards north of the High Street junction, the pre-school nursery a further 400 yards on and school buses to and from the secondary school in Malpas. Cycling, particularly at '*school time*', is a dangerous activity.

Congestion is of particular concern at peak times and during normal shopping hours due to the absence of dedicated parking areas near the school, local residential on-street parking and the narrowness of the village roads. There are two car parks, one at Top Farm for use by people working in the adjacent commercial premises and the second at the Memorial Hall, 200 yards south of the High Street, opposite the Church, which is out-of-the-way and far from the school.



A more adequate network of footpaths linking existing and any new housing developments with the village centre and the school would be helpful but only if well maintained, as they would pass through or close to agricultural land.

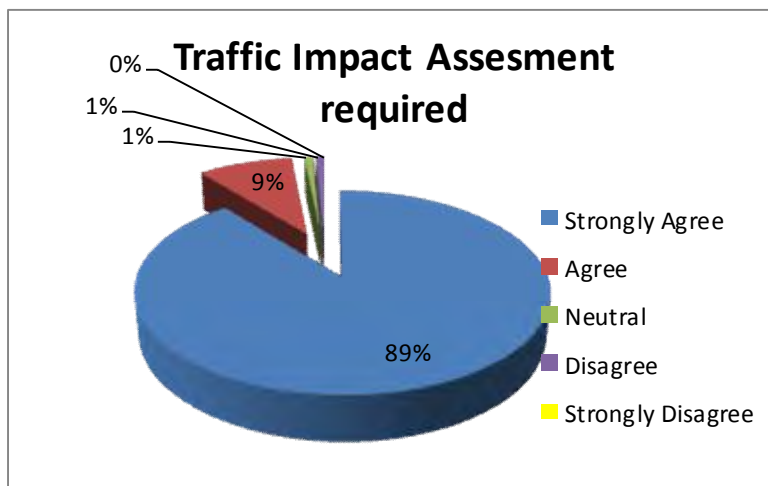
Public transport is scant and limited to weekdays and Saturdays with a bi-hourly bus in the morning and two buses in the afternoon on the C53 Wrexham to Chester route and vice versa. Most people – 80%- rely on private cars for almost all journeys, adding to the congestion.

Historically, broadband connections in Farndon were slow but during spring 2015, Superfast Broadband (fibre) was brought to the village by Connecting Cheshire. However, speeds are well below anticipated levels. Mobile signals remain erratic with poor coverage in many places.

Community Consultation

Consultation and feedback distinctly demonstrate that residents are very concerned that :-

- New developments must realistically identify and demonstrate the additional level of traffic they will generate and how it will be managed – 98% agreed
- Pedestrians and cyclists must be catered for in all applications – 96% agreed
- Applications must include new or enhanced footpath links – 91% agreed
- Need for better broadband and telecommunication systems – 86% agreed.



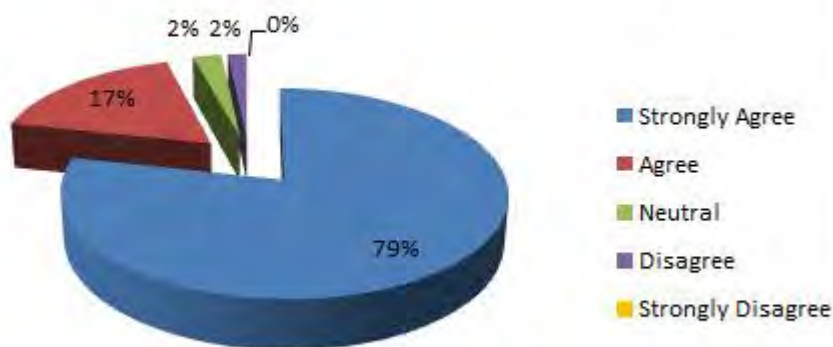
Other issues raised as concerns include lack of public transport, the need for improved parking facilities in the centre of the village and improvement to mobile phone connections.

Details of Policy 5 - Transport and Communication

Whilst it is not within the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan to require the local council to provide public transport, it is a public service without which many residents would not be able to do city shopping or travel more widely across the county and country. (See Map 6 page 48)

The decision by Cheshire West and Chester Council to reduce the frequency of the C56 bus route will only add to the difficulties. It will further isolate various sectors of the population most notably the elderly and infirm and introduce an opposite and equal pressure by increasing the number of journeys made by car as friends and family act to compensate for the absence of public transport.

Pedestrian & Cyclist Safety



Policy 5.1 Road safety and congestion.

In all significant applications and for large scale commercial development, applicants should include an assessment of the impact that any increase in traffic would have on the roads within and around the village, especially at peak times for journeys to and from school and work.

The assessment should incorporate steps to mitigate any harmful effects and the timetable to deliver that mitigation.

Development where levels of traffic would cause severe danger which could not be ameliorated will not be approved.

Safe walking routes to school and the centre of the village are a requirement, as is conformity with the relevant Building for Life 12 Criteria.

Policy 5.2 Pedestrians and cyclists.

Where appropriate new developments must include provision for safe, wide, smooth surfaced and direct footpaths and cycle routes from the development into the village centre and to the school.

If appropriate and whenever possible, the new footpaths should link with the existing network of public footpaths which should be enhanced by the developer to provide safe passage.

Actions for the Parish Council

1. Developments on roads where no pavements or footpaths exist will be the subject of discussions between the Parish Council, developers and planners.
2. The Parish Council will continue to press Cheshire West and Chester Council for an improvement in the frequency of the C56 bus service into Chester and Wrexham.

Supporting Legislation and Advice

- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained - Planning for Community Safety (January 2005) paragraph 7.2
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012 paragraphs 29 to 46
- CWaC Local Plan Part One, 2015 – strategy 10 and 11
- Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 numbers 1, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

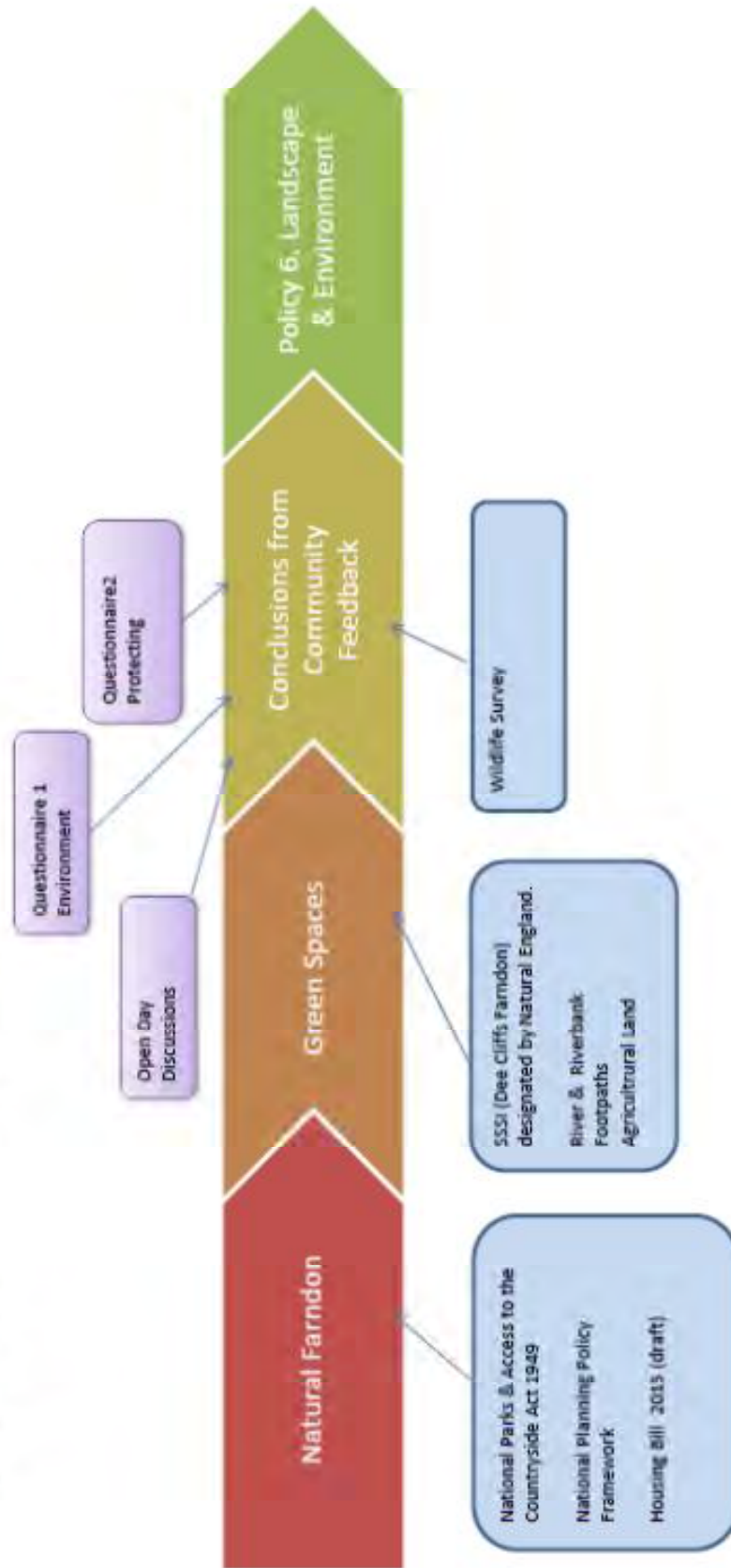
Annexes

- Household Questionnaire 1 (December 2012) – Main method of Transport
- Household Questionnaire 2 (January 2015) – Transport and Communication
- Ordnance Survey Landranger Map sheet 117 – Public Footpaths
- Bus timetable C56 route
- Farndon Traffic Survey – CWaC A 14178 and A 14179.

Topic 6

Landscape and Environment

Policy #6 Landscape & Environment



Landscape and Environment – Leading to Policy 6

Background

Farndon is a small rural Parish, surrounded on three sides by agricultural land and on the fourth by the River Dee where it forms the national boundary with Wales and flows between the flood plain to the west and a Triassic sandstone cliff to the east designated by Natural England as the Dee Cliffs Farndon Site of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I). It is one of the seven geological S.S.S.I sites in Cheshire.

Agriculture is, and has been for centuries, the primary use of land in the Farndon Parish and wider district with characteristically large dairy farms interspersed with fields of arable grain and fodder crops. Most of the land in the Parish is classified as Grade 2 and 3 and some to the north of the village is '*best and most versatile agricultural land*'.

The landscape is typical of the Cheshire plain with gently rolling open fields, high tree filled hedgerow and small copses. All of these provide habitat and protective areas for a variety of wildlife from brown hares, rabbits, foxes and badgers to a large bird population, migratory and otherwise, including Canada geese, swallows, swifts, finches, woodpeckers, great and blue tits and owls. Along the river are swans, mallard ducks, herons, sand-martins, kingfishers and snipe and in the ditches, great-crested newts.

Farndon is located at the point where the ford across the Dee formed the first crossing point of the river south of Chester and so it remains, although a bridge, now a Grade I listed monument, was built in the 14th century. And, because Farndon was '*on the way to somewhere else*' the settlement remained small until the 1960s when housing was built on a few fields close to the village. The farmhouses and outbuildings of the three working farms within the village boundary were converted to housing or small commercial use. Three '*brownfield sites*' are undeveloped.

As a consequence, there are few local green spaces within the village itself and residents rely for informal recreation on the riverbank which is in part, common land and on the network of footpaths which run through the fields to the north, south and east.

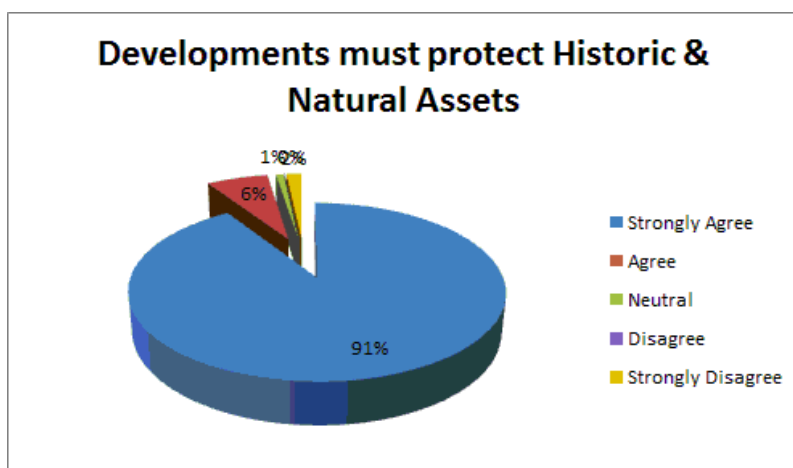
Not to a recognised scale

Extracted from the Landscape Strategy CWaC 2016

Community Consultation

Feedback from the consultations showed how important the protection of the Farndon landscape and environment is to residents.

- Riverside and natural heritage - not harm or impact – 97% agreed
- Landscape and visual - minimise negative impact – 96% agreed
- Conservation – adhere to government policy on landscape and nature – 94%
- Wildlife corridors – enhance, maintain and create – 93% agreed
- Riverside - support enhancement for recreational use – 84% agreed.

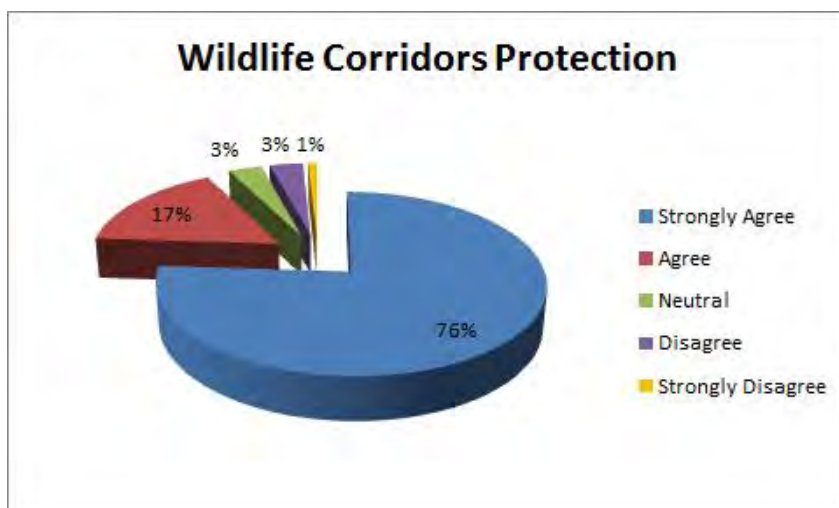


Details of Policy 6 – Landscape and Environment

Farndon is set in a rural landscape. It is distinctive with the High Street rising steeply from the river to the highest point of the village at Top Farm from where the land flattens out towards the east but drops to the north.

This landscape means that the village has a rising silhouette when viewed from the north and the west with St Chad's church tower dominating as the highest building. Every field around the village is high or medium quality agricultural land, some is '*best and most versatile*' and all is constantly in use.

Agricultural land, green spaces, fields and the riverbank surround the village. All are important recreational areas for walking, fishing, bird watching and cycling. This was clearly expressed during the discussions at community meetings and in responses to the household questionnaires and through the great concern showed by residents when four of the fields adjacent to the village were approved for large housing development during 2012 and 2013 with disturbance to small animal habitat and the destruction of ancient hedgerows and agricultural land.



Farndon residents set a high value on the rural setting of the village, the open spaces and the River Dee, all of which define the village and residents wish to be protected and enhanced.

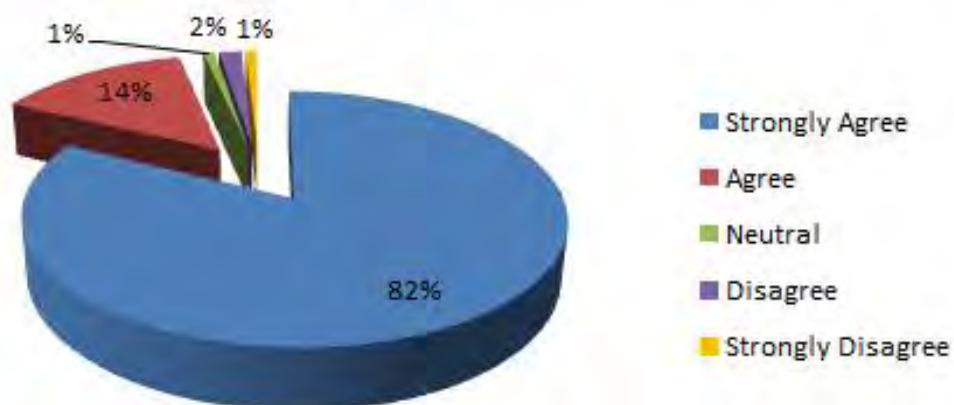
(See Map 7 page 58)

Policy 6.1 Conserve the landscape.

Development will be required to take the following into account: -

- the location and setting of tree planting should be designed to conserve and enhance local character, and native tree species should be planted; and
- existing mature trees and groups of trees should be retained and protected on development sites. In the case of a tree which is deemed diseased or unsafe by a tree specialist, a suitable replacement native tree must be planted; and
- other than to enable access to be gained to sites for development, existing hedgerows should be retained, and
- new hedgerows are encouraged as boundary treatments around and within new developments; and
- existing sandstone walls, including those which are part of hedgerows must be retained, repaired if necessary and kept in good order; and
- within the Conservation Area, general boundary features should be in keeping with the existing character of the immediate area and should include conservation of existing or inclusion of new red sandstone walling and black and white railings (Cheshire railings). Suburban style garden boundaries will be resisted; and
- respect, preserve and enhance the character of the local landscape – complying with “Building for Life 12 Criteria”, 5, 6 and 7 and
- conform with the guidelines for built and development management – complying with Landscape Character Area 15f of CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016, Dee Valley.

Developments should Preserve Views and Vistas



There are nine designated Local Wildlife Sites within the parish which include two marl pits, Meadow Chase Pit and Crewe Lane Pond where the usual water species are found. The River Dee and nearby cliffs are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the River Dee is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Policy 6.2 Protect and conserve natural assets – including wildlife and trees.

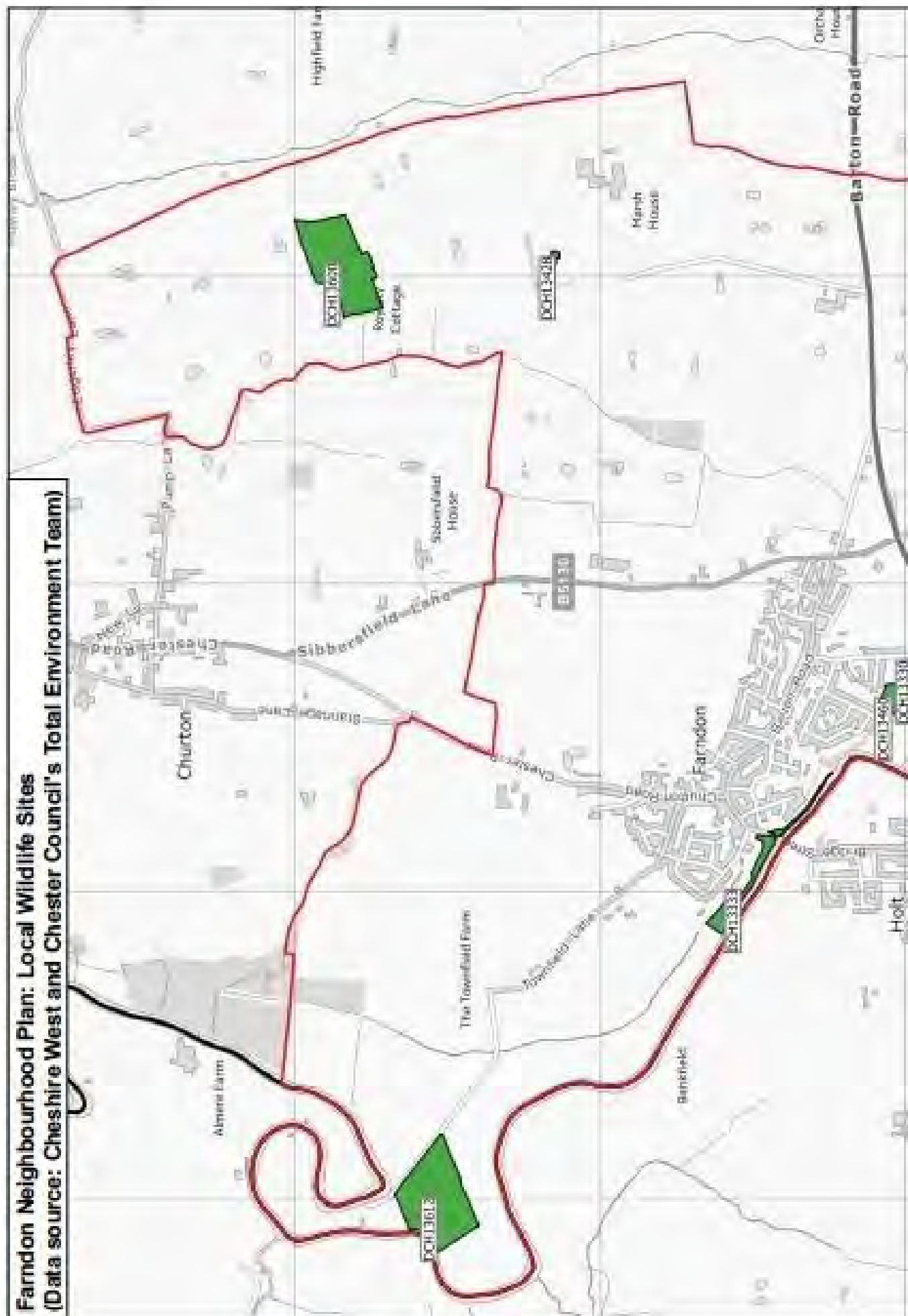
Development proposals should protect and wherever possible enhance biodiversity and natural assets through: -

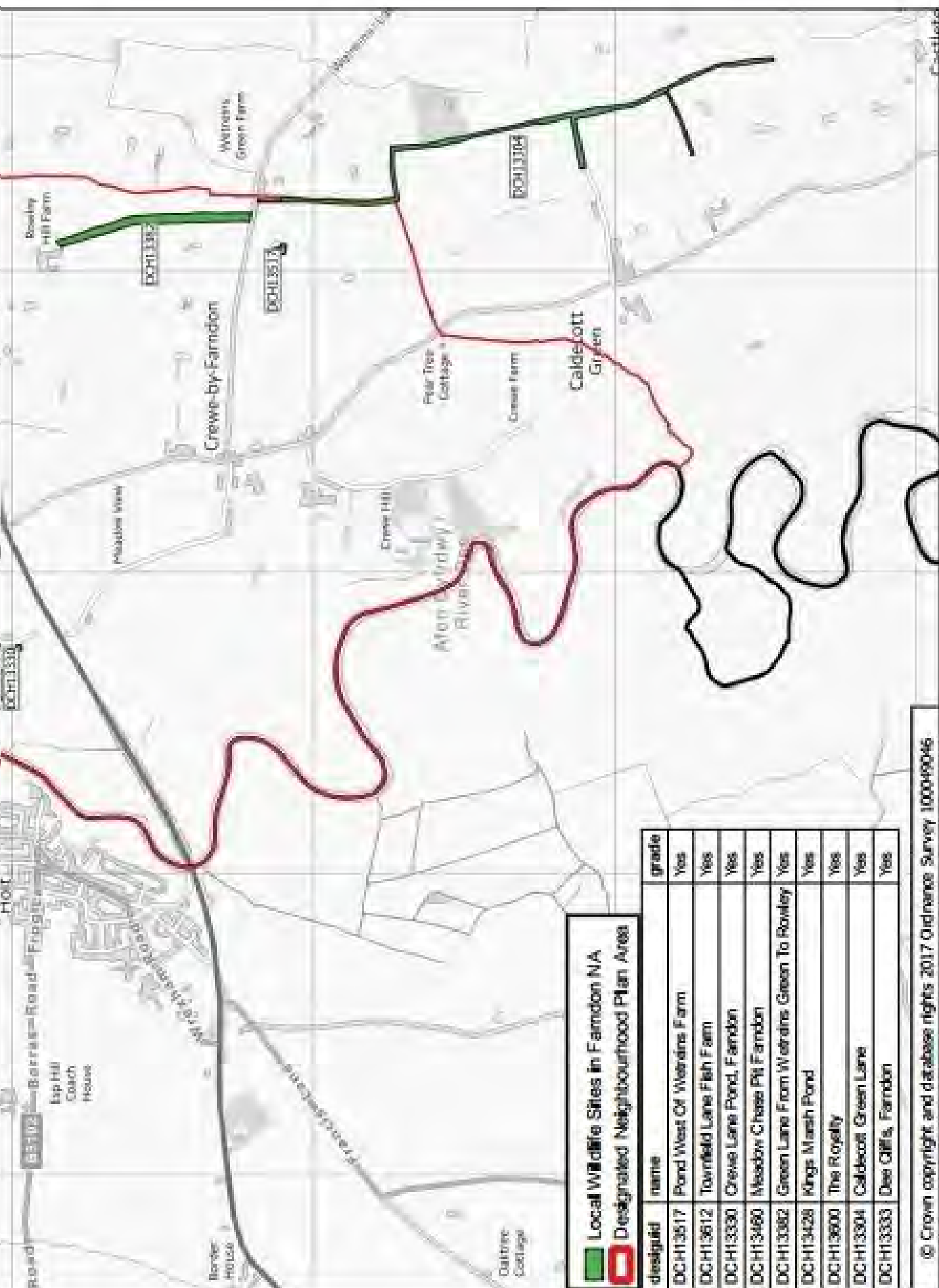
- preparation of wildlife assessments including appropriate action to conserve and enhance flora and fauna; and
- the protection of local wildlife sites; and
- retention of existing water courses and wetland features including ponds and marl pits; and
- protection of the trees within the parish covered by Tree Protection Orders and other mature or important trees or groups of trees; and
- provision of green spaces and green corridors within developments and the retention of mature trees and hedges along boundaries to provide safe passage for wildlife.

There are few areas within Farndon itself where residents may enjoy open green space. Some of the roads in 1960s and 1970s housing developments have wide grassed verges and mature trees, there are two play areas on two separate estates and a playing field, three tennis courts and a crown bowling green adjacent to the Farndon Community Club at the eastern edge of the village.

However, there are a few publically owned green spaces in Farndon but no Green Belt in the area covered by the Parish.

Map 8 Farndon Local Wildlife sites







Policy 6.3 Protect local green spaces. (Map 8 page 62 & 63)

Local green spaces are designated at the three sites shown and will be protected from development. They are (numbered): -

1. Farndon Community Club – the football field owned by Barnston Estates, and the adjoining land stretching from the tree line to the clubhouse, owned by the Parish Council.
2. Wimpey Estate – Limetree Drive and Nightingale Close where small plots of green verge are in the ownership of the Parish Council.
3. Townfield Lane – the lower half of the field of which the Maddock's Close housing estate forms the upper half. Owned by Redrow Estates.

All landowners have been informed by letter from the Parish Council

The justification for protecting the local green spaces at number 1 and 2 are that both locations are in constant use by local people and act as wildlife corridors. Both have been agreed by the landowners, Barnston Estates and the Parish Council.

The justification for protecting the local green space at number 3 is that it is designated as a nature conservation habitat on Planning Application 07/00229/FUL made on the 5th April 2007 that states "*habitat area will be secured in perpetuity to ensure the transition between the development and the countryside will be guaranteed*". Condition applied Chester City Council (2007)

These natural assets must be protected and conserved in conjunction with policy ENV3 of CWaC Local Plan Part One, 2015

Actions for the Parish Council

The Parish Council will work to secure the protection of the range of environmental and heritage features within Farndon itself and outside the '*settlement boundary*' to maintain its rural and historical character by: -

1. Working closely with Chester Council and developers to ensure that the SSSI's are respected, and notice is taken of the Cheshire Council policies on Landscape Strategies.
2. Responding to planning applications in line with the Neighbourhood Plan policies.
3. Publicising planning applications and arranging public discussion sessions of planning issues affecting the Parish.

Supporting Legislation and Advice

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended Section 28
- Cheshire County Council – Dee Cliffs Farndon SSSI – geological sites
- DEFRA Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales (1998)
- Natural England Technical Information Note TIN049
- Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 numbers 5, 6 and 7
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012 paragraph 112
- Environment Agency, Lower Dee Policy – map
- Environment Agency, Lower Dee Policy – narrative
- CWaC Tree Preservation Orders – Farndon
- CWaC Local Plan Part One, 2015 - ENV 4 and STRAT 1
- CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016 – Dee Valley – Landscape Character Area 15f
- Housing and Planning Act 2016.

Annexes

- Household Questionnaire 1 (December 2012) – Environmental Priorities
- Household Questionnaire 2 (January 2015) – Protecting Landscape and Nature Conservation Interests
- Wildlife Survey
- List of Tree Preservation Orders – Farndon
- Map showing '*Designated local green spaces*'.
- Ordinance Survey Landranger Map sheet 117 – Public Footpaths.

4. Conclusion and Next Steps

Neighbourhood planning as a national policy was introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and in Farndon, is the devolved responsibility of the Parish Council.

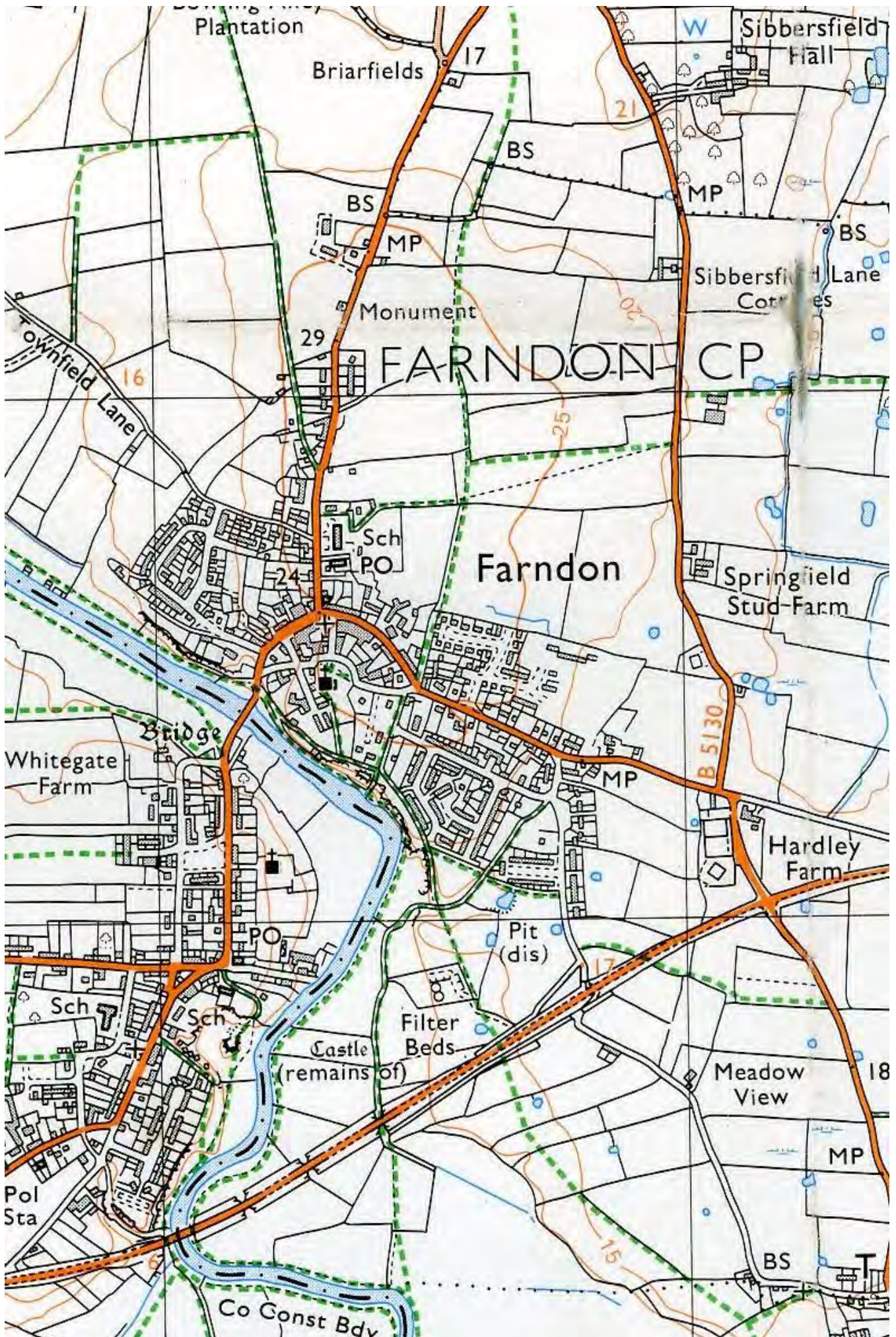
Since late 2012, residents of Farndon have been involved in consultations and discussions about the future development of the village and numerous meetings and conversations have been held with the Planning Department of Cheshire West and Chester Council.

The Farndon Neighbourhood Plan was prepared initially in 2014 but has necessarily been amended since then to accommodate the sudden and rapid expansion of housing in Farndon, to take account of the change of the Parish boundaries which was enlarged in April 2015, to address the issues raised by the Environment Agency and Natural England about the need to protect the Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the Parish, to consider the provisions of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the policies contained in the emerging Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan.

The Plan has been prepared and finalised and the supporting documents required by the legislation have been completed by the Steering Committee. The Plan was submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council in May 2017 and subject to independent examination during the summer. The examiner concluded that the Plan met the necessary requirements and a referendum was held in February 2018. 94.5% of those who voted supported the Plan.

The Plan now forms part of the development plan for the area and forms a basis for making decisions on planning applications in Farndon Parish.

March 2018



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- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended) – section 28
- DEFRA Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales 1998
- Localism Act 2011
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012
 - i. Achieving sustainable development – paragraph 6 to 10
 - ii. Safety – paragraphs 29 to 46
 - iii. Deliver facilities – paragraph 70
 - iv. Environment – paragraph 112
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 No 637
- The Town and Country Planning (DMP) (England) Order 2015 section 5.2
- Housing Bill 2015

Legislation – Local

- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained – EC6, EC11, EC12
- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained – Natural Built Environmental Designations
 - i. Sites of Special Scientific Interest ENV 28
 - ii. Scheduled monuments ENV 31
 - iii. Conservation area ENV 35 to 44
 - iv. Listed buildings ENV 45-48
- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained – Village Shops RET 12 and 13
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- Farndon A Gateway Village – Chester City Council
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A word cloud shaped like a stylized cross, featuring various urban planning and community development terms. The words are arranged in four main arms of the cross, with some overlapping. The colors of the words include red, yellow, green, and purple. The words are: DESIGN, RURAL, LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT, PARKING, COMMUNITY, EMPLOYMENT, SURGERY, SAFE, PLANNING, FRIENDLY, RIVERSIDE, HOUSING, PROTECTION, TRAFFIC, SCHOOL, BUSINESSES, TRANSPORT, AMENITIES, FOOTPATHS, CHURCH, and SHOPS.

DESIGN

RURAL

LEISURE

ENVIRONMENT

PARKING

COMMUNITY

EMPLOYMENT

SURGERY

SAFE

PLANNING

FRIENDLY

RIVERSIDE

HOUSING

PROTECTION

TRAFFIC

SCHOOL

BUSINESSES

TRANSPORT

AMENITIES

FOOTPATHS

CHURCH

SHOPS