

A photograph of a forest floor covered in a dense carpet of purple bluebells. Sunlight filters through the tall, thin trees, creating a warm, golden glow and long shadows on the ground.

High Littleton & Hallatrow Neighbourhood Plan

2024-2044

February 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to our Neighbourhood Plan. This plan has been produced to ensure your voice is heard when planning and development decisions are made in our parish and that the things we value in our community are protected and improved for future generations to enjoy.

The plan has been developed by a small group of High Littleton and Hallatrow residents on behalf of the Parish Council, taking in the views of as many people in the parish as possible through 'drop in' events and formal consultations. Through these events, we heard that you:

- Recognised that new houses are needed to support a growing population, but that the significant constraints on the infrastructure, environment and services provided to our parish, mean that only small developments can be sustained, **defined as between 1-9 dwellings for the purposes of this plan;**
- Valued the strong sense of community in our parish and want the plan to strengthen this further as an integral part of development;
- Enjoyed our distinct countryside and diverse natural environment which you want to protect and enhance to improve our well-being and to keep our villages as attractive and healthy places to live;
- Recognised the challenges of climate change and want development to be sustainable;
- Are concerned that increased traffic flow through the parish creates congestion and is a risk to pedestrian and cyclist safety that the plan needs to mitigate against

This Neighbourhood Plan captures the important characteristics of our parish and sets objectives and policies that ensure your priorities are considered in future planning decisions.

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1 WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The High Littleton and Hallatrow Neighbourhood Plan presents a vision for the parish and will help deliver our community's aspirations over a plan period of 20 years (2024-2044).

The concept of Neighbourhood Plans was introduced in 2011 with the enactment of the Localism Act. The act enables local communities to have a say and become involved with planning decisions which affect them.

Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) gave approval in October 2016 for High Littleton Parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Plan Area, allowing the Parish Council to work with our community to produce a Neighbourhood Plan that gives us influence over planning decisions that affect us.

Approval for the plan will be sought through a local referendum and, if adopted, policies described in the plan must be followed in making future planning decisions.

Based on consultations with the community, the key objectives for supporting the overarching vision are:

- Allow for small-scale development¹ that can be supported by the local infrastructure
- Preserve and protect the distinct rural and historical character of the parish
- Maintain the integrity of buildings to preserve the parish's heritage
- Safeguard and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity within the parish and encourage measures to increase resilience and adaptation to climate change
- Support and enhance existing amenities and services within the parish for the benefit of the community and other stakeholders and help to reduce the carbon footprint

¹ Development in the context of this plan refers to small scale residential development (of between 1 to 9 units).

2 PLANNING CONTEXT

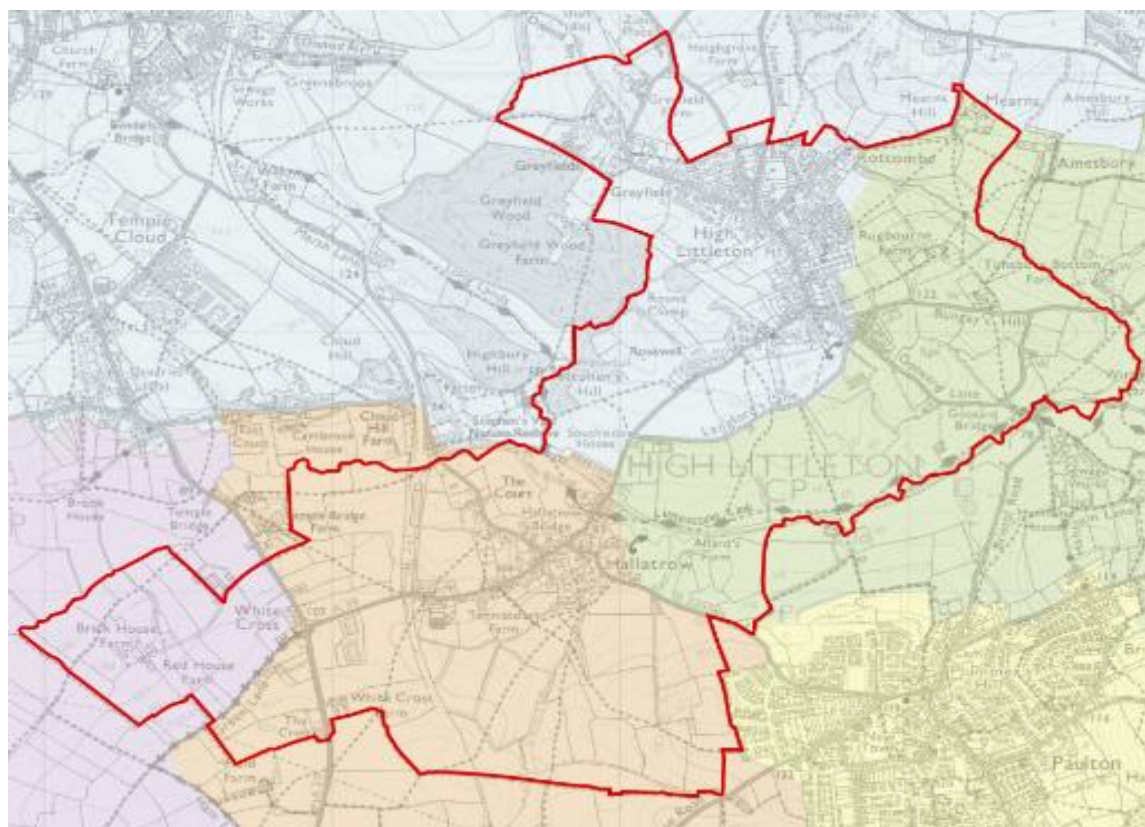
This Plan promotes sustainable development through three dimensions of the planning system: economic, social and environmental. In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, Neighbourhood Plans must meet some basic conditions, which are:

- General conformity with strategic policy within Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) which at the time of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation comprises two Development Plan Documents i.e. the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan. B&NES is progressing a partial update of the Local Plan which proposes some urgent policy changes. The New Local Plan, once adopted, will establish the planning framework for Bath and North East Somerset up to 2042.
- Have regard to the current National Planning Policy.
- Contribute to achieving sustainable development.
- Be compatible with European Law and human rights obligations.

The B&NES Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan steers growth primarily to brownfield land in urban areas of Bath, Keynsham and the larger settlements in the Somer Valley. High Littleton and Hallatrow fall within the Rural Area and the Policy Framework for development is covered by Policy RA1 and RA2. The B&NES Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan made no site allocations in High Littleton or Hallatrow because there was no realistic prospect of ensuring the timely delivery of the supporting social infrastructure that would be required to support additional housing.

The B&NES Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) was still in development at the time this Neighbourhood Plan was agreed. This plan takes into account and aligns with the policies of the LPPU at the time it was agreed. Once the LPPU is agreed, the Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed for consistency and an update to the Neighbourhood Plan will be progressed if deemed necessary.

3 OUR PARISH



High Littleton's history can be traced back to Saxon times, while Hallatrow's origins are probably much older. The Domesday Survey of 1086 recorded each village occupying about 600 acres of mainly arable farming, with a population of less than 100. The population saw rapid growth around 1800 as coal mining flourished in the area of Somerset, bringing with it new wealth and the construction of several fine houses in the parish.

Today, the parish has a population exceeding 2000 with the villages of High Littleton and Hallatrow retaining separate characteristics, linked physically by the A39 that runs through the parish and by a community that shares common amenities (e.g. a primary school). The surrounding landscape typifies the unique character of the Cam Valley, shaped by farming and coal mining heritage.

A Landscape Character Assessment of the parish was completed in 2018 to determine the local landscape character, identify key features and sensitivities and consider the distinct characteristics of the villages within the parish. It remains robust and relevant today and is included at Appendix B and summarised below.

3.1 APPRECIATION OF OUR NATURAL ASSETS

The villages of High Littleton and Hallatrow and hamlets of White Cross and Mearns are set within open countryside which provides both these rural communities with a distinctive character and very special sense of place, and provides physical separation of the settlements. The rich variety of local landscape is clearly apparent whether looking out of or into the villages. There are wide ranging views on all sides, from the north looking south over the Cam Valley, from the east looking towards Timsbury, and from the west looking south and west towards Paulton and the Mendip Hills. Significantly, the views from open countryside towards the villages are also extensive and attractive, with the edge of the villages being clearly defined and established, and distinctive in the view. In turn, the landscape around the villages is, particularly to the south and east, both physically and visually a contiguous part of the wider open landscape which includes that of the Cam Valley.

Both villages are historic settlements, and the local landscape contains features and remnants from the coal mining era names that evidence its industrial heritage. These include terraced housing, converted mine buildings, former spoil heaps ('batches') and infilled bellmouth pits, as well as the granite railway tracks that took the coal from Mearns to Paulton Basin.

Apart from Greyfield Woods, the landscape is dotted with smaller woods and hedgerow trees, as well as ponds, springs and streams. This makes the area very important for biodiversity and provides key wildlife corridors for many different types of wildlife. The area is rich in wildlife, providing habitats for mammals including dormice, bats, badgers, deer, foxes, water vole and otters. There are abundant wildflowers, particularly along hedgerow edges that are not sprayed; and a growing population of both permanent and seasonal migrating species, including numerous birds of prey such as buzzards and hobby. The large network of footpaths is a highly valued and important amenity.

3.2 LOCAL LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

The preparation of the B&NES Placemaking Plan involved consultation with local communities and the production, by the two villages' Community Assessment Team, of 'Snapshot Character Summaries' for High Littleton and Hallatrow (included at Appendix B). These summaries described the particular character of

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the villages and the surrounding landscape, and summarised issues and concerns that had been identified during extensive community consultation.

As part of its Placemaking Plan evidence base, the Council prepared its 'Landscape Setting of Settlements (Policy NE2A)', and 'Extension of residential curtilages in the countryside' (Policy NE2B) in December 2015 (B&NES Landscape setting of settlements (Policy NE2A): Summary of Evidence December 2015). This document appraised the landscape setting of settlements to ensure that areas which met Policy NE2A selection criteria were safeguarded by the policy and their boundaries identified on the Policies Map. High Littleton is addressed on pages 38-40 of the document, and the relevant Policies map shows the boundary drawn tightly around the village. This demonstrates a keen awareness of the sensitivity and value of the landscape setting of the two settlements.

3.3 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

It is vital that any new development within the Parish should be appropriate in scale, form and location, so that the capacity of the receiving environment is not exceeded. To this end, in 2018, independent consultants, Hankinson Duckett Associates (HDA) were appointed by the Parish Council to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the Parish to inform the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan. The work was funded by a Department for Communities and Local Government grant, and was carried out in combination with a similar study for the adjoining parish of Clutton. The assessment determines the parishes' local landscape character, identifying key features and sensitivities and considers the nature of the two villages within the Parish.

The report divides the landscape into areas of common landscape character, listing the key landscape characteristics and sensitivities of each Landscape Character Area. Maps of these areas are included at Appendix B. This analysis helps to highlight areas of the Parish which are sensitive and of low landscape capacity where future development would be inappropriate.

For each character area, a list of relevant designations and planning policies was prepared. The landscape character was analysed in terms of its landscape sensitivity and landscape value of the area, which together provided the landscape capacity of each LCA.

The assessment identified that the majority of High Littleton and Hallatrow Parish is a rural landscape with substantial sensitivity and/or value. Of the thirteen Parish Landscape Character Areas, substantial sensitivity or value resulted in eight areas (Areas 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 21, 22 and 23) being adjudged to have Negligible/Low, Low or Low/Medium capacity.

The assessment found that the majority of the LCAs which surround the two villages had substantial sensitivity, were of moderate value, and were determined as having a low capacity to accommodate change from built development. The consultants considered that significant development in these areas would likely have a detrimental effect on the character of the landscape as a whole and/or on separation between settlements, and the setting to existing settlements.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The landscape surrounding the two villages has very limited capacity to accommodate development, and so the latter should be of modest scale enabling it to be properly integrated into the established morphology of the settlements rather than encroaching into the open countryside. There is a clear need to maintain the green spaces and open countryside between the two villages, as well as that between the surrounding villages of Paulton, Clutton and Timsbury.

4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Our Neighbourhood Plan provides a flexible framework for the sustainable development of our Parish over the next 20 years. It sets out the views of the community on how best to preserve the rural and distinctive character of the Parish and at the same time encourage social, environmental and economic development for the benefit of all.

This Plan seeks to ensure that our Parish continues to thrive and remains an attractive place to live, work and visit. We wish to ensure that future generations benefit from improved and sustainable facilities and that the distinctive rural nature of the Parish is maintained and protected.

Three key themes were identified from the community consultation process:

- Planning and Development
- Environment and Sustainability
- Local Heritage and Historic Buildings

Our Neighbourhood Plan builds on these themes and identifies specific objectives and policies in relation to each. These form the core of the Plan. How we enhance our community is considered as an integral part of each theme.

The following sections of the Plan deal with each of these key themes. Each has a brief introduction to describe relevant background and context and to identify:

- **WHAT** we are trying to achieve (the aim)
- **WHY** we have the policies (the rationale and objectives).
- **HOW** we plan to achieve it (our policy)

In addition to specific areas that are relevant to planning and, therefore, within scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, our community engagement identified further themes where residents had aspirations and concerns that are recorded in the final section of the plan (Other Aspirations and Concerns). Among key concerns of the community were the challenges and safety issues relating to Transport and Infrastructure in the parish. These challenges will be taken forward by the Parish Council on behalf of residents.

4.2 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (PD)

Aim: To support proportionate, sustainable and small-scale residential development, in a way that enhances the character of the area and protects the natural and historic environment for future generations

Due to the significant pressures already facing the Parish, including traffic congestion, limited capacity of the parish primary school, limited public transport and increasing threats to biodiversity, the need to protect the heritage and health of our landscape through the aims, objectives and policies in this plan is paramount.

Following consultations, it has been agreed and defined by the community that this plan is not seeking to identify any housing allocations. Through this plan we are looking to support sustainable, small-scale development that benefits residents and fosters a sense of community in the parish.

Where small-scale development is required, there are common aspects, in terms of design and location, that this plan is seeking to define. These will have a positive impact in determining the future character of the Parish and it is important they are reflected within any further development.

Rationale / Objective	Policy
<p>PD1: Preserve the rural setting of the villages</p> <p>The Parish has a rural setting within the Somerset landscape. Villages are enveloped within the distinct rolling countryside and have retained a sense of community and local heritage. The busy A39 links Hallatrow and High Littleton and provides key access routes to Bristol, Bath, Wells and the surrounding villages and Somerset towns.</p>	<p>PD1 - Preserve the rural landscape</p> <p>Small-scale development proposals should not have a detrimental impact on the landscape character and setting of the Parish and its surrounding countryside and should not have a detrimental impact on the important views identified in the Landscape Character Assessment. The full report is available on the Parish Council website and summarised at Appendix B.</p>



Rationale / Objective	Policy
<p>PD2: Support small-scale, infill developments that take into consideration the limited capacity of the infrastructure and facilities of the Parish</p> <p>Parish amenities are limited and the school has historically been at full capacity. The main road through the village suffers from significant congestion, particularly at school drop off/ pick up times. The local Community Speedwatch group regularly reports issues with excessive traffic speeds to the Parish Council.</p> <p>The parish amenities and infrastructure cannot support any significant development.</p> <p>Previous community consultations have unanimously highlighted the growing concern with increasing traffic and traffic related safety concerns throughout the parish.</p> <p>This Plan and the community have both independently recognised that any new development permitted in the Parish continues to add to the growing pressure on the local transport routes. The decline in public transport options and lack of any safe commuting routes from the rural villages by bike/walking continue to add to this growing concern.</p>	<p>PD2a: Support small-scale (between 1 to 9 dwellings), infill developments</p> <p>Small-scale development proposals are supported where they are considered small-scale or infill. No major sites will be offered up for development through this plan.</p> <p>PD2b: Any new small-scale development must demonstrate consideration for highway and pedestrian safety and support easement of traffic congestion throughout the Parish, for example, by providing necessary parking</p> <p>Greater consideration and resource is required to ensure a balance is maintained for the people living in the Parish and the people commuting through the villages via the A39. Any new small-scale development must be sensitively developed and consider the need to support a sustainable and safe commuter corridor that protects the parish residents and also supports commuters utilising this route.</p>



Rationale / Objective	Policy
<p>PD3: Maintain village boundaries between High Littleton and Hallatrow</p> <p>The villages of High Littleton and Hallatrow have distinct rural characteristics that it is important to protect. Clear boundaries between the rural villages to preserve the spatial integrity of each village within the Somerset Landscape should be preserved.</p>	<p>PD3: Maintain the rural environment and preserve the natural green spaces between the villages in line with the recommendations of the Landscape Character Assessment</p> <p>New small-scale development proposals on land between the villages of High Littleton and Hallatrow must take due consideration of the Landscape Character Assessment. Any development that is proposed in the important green space identified and valued by the local communities will not be supported.</p>
<p>PD4: Deliver Carbon Net Zero and build resilience to Climate Change</p> <p>The plan supports the B&NES Net Zero aims. Any new building and alterations must meet high standards of sustainability in construction, materials and ongoing use. Any new small-scale development should promote and deliver the policies outlined in this section.</p>	<p>PD4: New small-scale developments must deliver the Clean Energy requirements that align with the ambitions of the B&NES Local Plan and Climate Emergency Action Plans</p> <p>New small-scale developments must consider the installation of solar panels and green technology where appropriate, for example future planning with the installation of electric car charging points. Only small-scale developments that demonstrate net zero by 2030 are supported.</p>
<p>PD5: Safe walking routes</p> <p>Public transport is limited in High Littleton and Hallatrow so footpaths are popular and valued as a means of connection to amenities in surrounding areas. They are also used for exercise, dog-walking and for enjoying the benefits of the rural landscape. Pavements along the busy main road through the villages are very narrow in some areas.</p>	<p>PD5: New small-scale developments must demonstrate support for safe walking routes throughout the Parish and, in particular, routes to key parish assets (including the school and recreation ground). Where any significant enhancements are proposed, a consultation with residents is required.</p>



4.3 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (ES)

Aim: To safeguard and enhance the natural habitat and biodiversity within the Parish and to adapt and build resilience to a changing climate, supporting the net-zero carbon objectives of the Council

This theme aims to recognise the distinct environmental features of the parish and contribute to policies that will help protect, enhance and develop our environmental resources (Green Infrastructure) for the benefit of the community and its visitors, now and in the future. By raising awareness and understanding of the issues that may impact on the local environment it aims to develop engagement, empathy and a sense of “ownership” for our surroundings that will preserve the landscape, its habitats and the biodiversity of species that enrich the lives of all members of our community.

Green Infrastructure (GI) is a strategically planned and managed network of natural and semi-natural areas - green and blue spaces- delivering multiple benefits. The **West of England Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy (JGIS)** sets out that planning, management and investment in GI is fundamental and is required at all levels of planning; from strategic, to local, to site specific, recognising that GI can be embedded in grey infrastructure (for example, roads, rail and flood schemes) and is not in competition with it. The GI approach allows the coordination and consolidation of broader environmental evidence and assessments into a single approach for delivery of ‘environmental mitigations’.

Duties and obligations regarding Green Infrastructure (GI) are set out in European conventions, national legislation and national, sub-regional and local policy. These give substantive weight to the need for plan making, policy development and economic development to be sustainable through the integration, development and maintenance of GI. The **Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan** sets out to improve the environment with ambitious goals for the natural environment and seeks to ensure that better account is taken of its value to our health and prosperity. The ambitions are now translated into the **Environment Bill** and include a requirement to develop **Local Nature Recovery Strategies** and a duty on public authorities to actively carry out strategic assessments of the actions they can take to enhance and conserve biodiversity.



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As identified in the JGIS, the Parish is located in the key nature corridor of the Cam Valley that is identified within the GI Areas. It is also part of the Somer Valley Rediscovered, both recognised by the Local Plan.

The JGIS aims to ‘deliver improved and better connected ecological networks’, this includes the creation of ‘bigger, better, more joined-up woodland, grassland and wetland habitats to achieve the ambitions of the West of England Nature Recovery Network’. The mosaic of natural habitat within this parish provides a key piece of the jigsaw in delivering this agreed ambition to re-connect our natural habitats and enable wildlife to adapt to climate change.

In the JGIS, 22 GI Areas have been profiled and digitised into map layers. The GI Area approach is intended to assist GI delivery by facilitating a focus on specific landscape areas and the development of local partnerships as well as operating across groups of areas or the whole West of England area and beyond. They are intended to guide policy making at a strategic level by providing evidence. Fundamentally the GI Areas should be viewed as enablers, a tier down from the National Character Areas (NCAs), that help to deliver GI and GI functions effectively: primarily at a strategic level, but also more locally whilst continually recognising the need to respond sensitively to landscape character and the functions (water management, access networks, habitat enhancements and open space) and services they each deliver are interconnected to some greater or lesser extent.

Our planning will be influenced by related legislation and Plans that need to be taken into account, including the:

- B&NES Ecological Emergency (supported by the Parish Council in 2021)
- Joint Green Space Infrastructure Strategy for the West of England
- BANES Green Space Strategy for the Somer Valley



Rationale / Objective	Policy
<p>ES1: Protect and enhance the natural environment and connectivity of habitats (Green Infrastructure) of the parish and surrounding areas</p> <p>The community has identified the importance of the natural environment and is aware of the difficulty of maintaining a healthy ecosystem, especially in the face of climate change. Key wildlife habitats and green spaces (as identified and mapped on the B&NES website) should be protected and enhanced for future generations and the impact on the environment through development should be mitigated.</p>	<p>ES1a Respond positively to opportunities to protect and enhance the natural environment, including key wildlife habitats and corridors</p> <p>In particular, focus on preserving the existing green infrastructure whilst not adversely impacting the current agricultural pastures, woodlands, grasslands and watercourses of the Parish landscape and environment.</p> <p>As identified in the Area Profiles of the Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy for the West of England, the Parish lies within Area 11 (Cam, Wellow and Somer Valley). Based on the characteristics of this Area and the Nature Recovery Network, it is of particular importance that any impact on the hedgerows, woodlands, grasslands and watercourse habitats are protected and mitigated as part of any new small-scale development.</p> <p>ES1b: Demonstrate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) improvements and provide mitigation to benefit the local environment, if required through legislation</p> <p>Any off-site mitigation should focus on improving local habitats and supporting species adaptation to climate change.</p>



Rationale / Objective	Policy
<p>ES2: Mitigate and protect local wildlife and biodiversity</p> <p>Recent bat surveys have detected 11 species of bat in the Parish, this provides evidence that many different species of bat that are found within this region are present within the Parish.</p> <p>The Parish also lies within a key commuting and foraging habitat for bats to migrate between the protected roosts and sites designated in Bath and the Mendips. It is vital that we retain and improve the natural environment for bats, and all wildlife, that rely on healthy and well- connected habitats for their survival.</p>	<p>ES2: Any new small-scale development should be specifically designed to minimise the risk of light spillage/light pollution within the Parish</p> <p>It is widely recognised at a local level that noise and light pollution is a growing problem and there is strong support to reduce harm to the environment and wildlife. Lighting should be designed to protect light sensitive species and dark skies.</p> <p>In particular, light spillage should be minimised beyond the site boundary into neighbouring properties, the wider countryside and night sky to protect bats and other nocturnal wildlife that will be affected.</p>



Rationale / Objective	Policy
<p>ES3: Reducing the impact of pollution on our watercourses</p> <p>Various sources of pollution are impacting our watercourses, in particular the Cam Brook is failing its Water Framework Directive (WFD) status. The sources of pollution have been identified as sewage, agricultural diffuse pollution, industrial/business point sources, road-run off and individual houses (use of dishwasher tablets, chemicals in the households).</p> <p>This Plan aims to raise awareness of the impact of any new small-scale development on the water environment and look to reduce and mitigate these impacts.</p>	<p>ES3: Ensure that sustainable drainage solutions are incorporated which reduce water pollution and enable the Parish to adapt and build resilience for the increasing pressures of climate change</p> <p>Incorporating and delivering Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and where feasible, Nature-Based Solutions (NbS), will be a requirement of any new small-scale development.</p> <p>SuDS and NbS will help to slow the flow of water through the landscape and improve natural drainage. Delivering Nature-Based Solutions will also help to improve water quality, through natural infiltration, and reducing urban diffuse pollution by capturing surface water run-off before any polluted water drains back through the landscape into the local rivers.</p> <p>Any new small-scale development will specifically need to demonstrate robust Surface Water Management Plans that will future-proof and build resilience to Climate Change for the local communities over the next 100 years and beyond and protect against future flood events.</p>



Rationale / Objective	Policy
<p>ES4: Valuing safe spaces within the parish for the local community and improving access and the condition of local green spaces that provide health and wellbeing benefits for local residents.</p> <p>The Parish is captured within the West of England Nature Partnership’s Nature Recovery Network and also plays a key part of the West of England’s Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy. Any new small-scale development should reference the key nature and wildlife corridors that are identified within these agreed documents and consider reducing the impact on any key nature and wildlife corridors in the Parish. Reference and consideration should also be given to any ongoing environmental focussed initiatives or projects, such as the Somer Valley Rediscovered partnership project.</p> <p>The following sites are also designated as Local Green Spaces in the Parish: Allotments at Highbury Road, High Littleton (LGR22) The Triangle in Hallatrow (LGR23) The play area at Gores Park, High Littleton (LGR24) The Recreation Ground in High Littleton (LGR25) Development of such sites is subject to policies in the Placemaking Plan (Policy LCR6A).</p>	<p>ES4: Protect and enhance spaces and access routes within the parish that are valued by the community, in particular protecting local green spaces that also provide health and wellbeing benefits for residents.</p>



4.4 LOCAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS (HB)

Aim: To recognise heritage of assets (including buildings, walls and monuments), specific areas of historic importance and historic natural features (including trees and hedges) in the parish such that they can be preserved to maintain the distinct character of the parish.

There are many Grade II listed buildings in our parish pre-dating 1900 (listed at Appendix G). These buildings reflect the heritage of the area and should be protected by the policies in this plan to ensure the parish retains its distinct character.

More broadly, houses in the parish have general features that give our village a visual style that is sympathetic to the appearance of our historic buildings and our landscape.

As well as seeking to preserve the general characteristics of buildings in the parish, this plan identifies particular areas of historic importance and includes policies that seek to inform future development and protect and enhance, where possible, the environment such that our history is preserved for future generations.

Rationale / Objective	Policy
<p>HB1: Protect character of historic buildings</p> <p>Buildings listed at Appendix G are designated heritage assets reflecting the distinctive design of historic buildings in the parish and should be preserved or even enhanced.</p>	<p>HB1: New small-scale development proposals should seek to preserve or enhance their character and setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.</p> <p>Restoration of original features and/or improvements to previous unsympathetic alterations will be supported.</p>
<p>HB2: Preserve features and character</p> <p>Dwellings extending northwards along the A39 from the school reflect growth brought about through coal mining in the area and have features and character that reflect the period and should be preserved.</p>	<p>HB2: New small-scale development proposals fronting onto the A39 should reflect the distinct design characteristics of existing buildings and be sympathetic in form</p> <p>Design characteristics for this area are set out in more detail in the Local Character Assessment, including heights of buildings, roof shapes, windows, materials and other architectural details.</p>



Rationale / Objective	Policy
<p>HB3: Design build style</p> <p>The Design Statement² identified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Houses tend to be built as terraces or are shallow in plan. ● Roofs tend to be simple and are often gabled. ● Dormer windows on the main street frontages are rare. ● Older buildings often have brick or rendered chimney stacks and windows are generally timber and generally symmetrical in appearance. 	<p>HB3: New buildings, as part of a small-scale development proposal, should be sympathetic to design characteristics, building shapes and proportions and be of simple form</p> <p>More prominent developments (i.e. those fronting on to or visible from the A39) should make use of natural local materials with the use of slate, neutral clay or dark tiles for roofs and lias stone (High Littleton) templestone (Hallatrow) being encouraged.</p>
<p>HB4: Preserve historic core</p> <p>The area in the vicinity of the school and Holy Trinity church (including the church hall, old schoolmaster’s house and cemetery) in High Littleton is the historic core of the village, featured by listed buildings, walls and mature trees</p>	<p>HB4: New small-scale development proposals in the vicinity of the school and Holy Trinity Church should preserve and, where possible, enhance the distinct character of the area</p> <p>Design characteristics for this area are set out in more detail in the Landscape Character Assessment.</p>

² Hallatrow & High Littleton Design Statement, approved 28/08/2003



5 OTHER ASPIRATIONS AND CONCERNS

The following paragraphs set out topics that are important to residents but are not directly related to the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. They are captured here to ensure they are given priority outside of planning decisions, for example, to attract local government investment (e.g. through Community Infrastructure Levy spend) or to influence the priorities of the Parish Council.

5.1 TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Traffic congestion, speeding vehicles and a lack of public transport are perennial problems in our parish. To address these issues, we will support initiatives to promote safe walking, reduce congestion and improve transport links to the Parish. Actions might include:

- Oversee a Parish wide study to review integrated transport needs including road/pedestrian safety
- Support and implement initiatives to unite the villages through improving safe access around and in-between the villages and extend the footpath from Hallatrow to White Cross.
- Support services providing public and community transport
- Review parking and pedestrian safety at High Littleton Primary School (on A39)
- Improve pedestrian and cycle access to neighbouring communities/villages and towns
- Ensure that any new small-scale developments provide appropriate off-street parking in accordance with the B&NES Local Plan

5.2 COMMUNITY

The sense of community within the Parish is strong, helped by a variety of formal and informal groups and associations and some shared amenities. The size and proximity of the villages generate a sense that most people feel able to know or get to know others in the parish. Practically all households and amenities in the parish are within walking distance of each other.

The pandemic reinforced the importance of community to many parishioners and proved the willingness of residents to help their neighbours. In June 2021 the Parish Council adopted a Strong Rural Communities framework to steer an action plan for better community involvement and positive change. It is difficult to define

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a 'sense of community'. Some aspects such as the Recreation Ground, have a clear physical reality, while others - the willingness of individuals to help others and participate in community activity for instance - are less tangible.

To preserve the sense of community within the parish, policies need to support an increase in social activities and amenities for all age groups and to protect and enhance the spaces, facilities and built environment which support a sense of community.

High Littleton & Hallatrow is the only parish in the area not to have its own dedicated community centre. High Littleton Church Hall and Scout Hall are available to hire but times are limited. An old Royal British Legion building, historically used as a community space, has been boarded up for over 10 years now. A lack of a dedicated community venue or meeting space and a need for better methods of consultation/communication were identified as the main barriers affecting community groups ability to operate.

Recreation Ground: The recreation ground provides the only central location for village activities and is well used by local groups. It provides essential support for youth activities such as the junior football teams and the local primary school. The Club building, consisting of a bar, football changing rooms, small room and storage garage, is very run down and needs updating. The car park is too small.

Support and make improvements to the recreation ground and club building.

Projects to be supported could include:

- Purpose built facilities for young people up to 19 years
- Multi-wheel skate park
- Multi Use Games Area

Proposals that ensure the retention, improve the quality and/or extend the existing range of community facilities, such as the recreation ground would be supported provided that the facility and the scale are appropriate to the needs of the community and landscape.

Allotments: Allotments are an important amenity that provide sustainable food production and enhance personal well-being, There is an unsatisfied local demand for allotment facilities. We should look to expand the current allotments and improve the services (including a water supply).

5.3 ENVIRONMENT

In addition to considering the environment in all planning decisions. we will support the development of a Community led Environmental Action Plan which might include:

- **Support Environmental Community Groups:** Close links with and support for existing and future community groups who have an interest in and commitment to our local environment will be fostered (e.g. High Littleton and Hallatrow Environmental Group, Surfers Against Sewage, Litterpickers, Wildlife Trust groups, Woodland Trust, Somer Valley Rediscovered, Bristol Avon River trust).
- **Work with landowners and farmers:** Relationships with local landowners and farmers will be developed with a view to sharing plans, ambitions and understanding that encourage and ensure accessibility and responsible enjoyment.
- **Monitor Well-being:** The well-being of the local environment, habitats and biodiversity should be regularly monitored through surveys and consultation with local wildlife groups to understand what actions can be taken to sustain our local habitats for the use of all residents.
- **Foster relationships:** Relationships with local businesses and service providers will be fostered in order to increase understanding of practices and respond quickly and productively to issues and threats that might impact on the local environment and the enjoyment of its supporters.
- **Carbon reduction:** Support local initiatives that aim to reduce carbon and support the route to net-zero. These might include initiatives that promote alternative and green energies and the installation of public Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure.

6 CONCLUSION

We are privileged to live in an area that has such a rich and diverse natural environment - but this needs to be recognised and protected so that it can be enjoyed by future generations.

The policies within this Neighbourhood Plan give local residents a voice in all planning and development decisions and, in doing so, seek to protect and enhance the things we believe are important in our parish.