

FAIRFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

PLAN PERIOD 2020 TO 2031

VERSION 1.3 / 5-JUNE-2023



FAIRFORD

A GOOD PLACE TO BE

CONTENTS

Contents	i
Foreword.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Our Vision	iv
Executive Summary	v
Our Ambitions.....	v
Sustainable Development	v
Delivering New Homes without increasing Flood Risk	vi
References.....	vii
1 Introduction and Background	1
Development of the Plan	2
The Pre-Submission Plan.....	4
2 The Neighbourhood Area	7
Introduction	7
A Brief History of Fairford	9
The Parish Today.....	12
Geology, Topography and Hydrology	15
Future Challenges	17
3 The Planning Policy Context	23
Cotswold District Local Plan (CDLP).....	24
4 Community Views.....	27
Background	27
5 Vision and Objectives	31
Vision Statement	31
Issues Highlighted.....	32
Objectives	33
6 Land Use Policies.....	35
Introduction	35
FNP1 The Fairford and Horcott Development Boundaries	37
FNP2 Providing a New Burial Ground.....	39



FNP3	Maintaining Viable Community Facilities	41
FNP4	Managing Flood Risk	45
FNP5	Investing in Utilities’ Infrastructure Improvements	49
FNP6	Managing Traffic in the Town.....	53
FNP7	Improving Access to Visitor Attractions	55
FNP8	Protecting Local Green Spaces.....	57
FNP9	Protecting the Fairford-Horcott Local Gap.....	59
FNP10	River Coln Valued Landscape.....	61
FNP11	Valuing Hedgerows and Trees	63
FNP12	Achieving High Standards of Design	65
FNP13	Conserving Non-Designated Heritage Assets	69
FNP14	A new Low Carbon Community in Fairford.....	71
FNP15	Housing Type and Mix	75
FNP16	Zero Carbon Buildings	79
FNP17	Growing Our Local Economy.....	81
FNP18	Sustaining a Successful Town Centre.....	83
FNP19	New Visitor Accommodation	85
7	Implementation and Monitoring.....	87
	Community Infrastructure Projects.....	87
	Monitoring & Review Policy.....	88
A1.	Appendix 1: Maps.....	89
A2.	Appendix 2: List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets	97
A3.	Appendix 3: FNP12 Achieving High Standards of Design.....	101
	Key Views	101



FOREWORD

Fairford is a small market town in the south-east corner of Gloucestershire, on the A417 between Lechlade and Cirencester (8 miles away), just south of the Cotswolds AONB near the lower end of the River Coln catchment and close to lakes in the eastern section of the Cotswold Water Park. The nearest large town is Swindon, 10 miles away to the south, with Gloucester, Cheltenham, and Oxford also within 25 miles. The historic centre, close to the river and its surrounding green areas, contains a reasonable range of small shops and services and the 15th century St Mary's Church with its internationally renowned original set of stained-glass windows. Fairford Park on the north side of the town now contains Farmor's Secondary School (Academy) as well as a Primary School, and elsewhere around the town there are several small industrial estates providing local employment. The town has a close relationship with the RAF Fairford air base just to the south at Whelford, which is the home of the annual Royal International Air Tattoo. The shops and services of the town also help to serve the needs of surrounding villages.

Fairford has experienced rapid growth of housing in the last 10 years but with very little investment in new community infrastructure to support this, and at the same time it has also sadly lost facilities including some shops and the Sports Centre at Farmor's School. This is not sustainable as new housing continues to be demanded to meet District as well as local needs and existing facilities such as the Community Centre are increasingly in demand. Fairford deserves more and better.

There are also major new challenges from Climate Change, as more extreme weather leads to increased risks of flooding in lower-lying areas and we strive towards Zero Net Carbon targets, which may require significant changes to our lifestyles, including reducing the need for longer-distance travel.

This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to make a serious start at addressing these issues by setting planning policies to:

- Provide for some new housing as required by the Cotswold District Local Plan strategy,
- Ensure that new housing is in the most suitable places, of the right type, built to energy efficient standards fit for the 21st Century and has the necessary supporting infrastructure,
- Protect the rural and historic character of the town which is valued by both residents and visitors to the benefit of local businesses and all of us,
- Provide for the protection and enhancement of local facilities, including walking access around the river, lakes and the town, the Walnut Tree Field and the anticipated acquisition, by the Town, of the former Coln House School playing field.

This is a plan for the whole of Fairford – young and old – for the next 10 years. It will be a foundation for other plans, e.g., Transport and Business; and something that the town can extend and improve on in the future.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The plan is the result of over 6 years work by a dedicated group of people on the Steering Group, comprising members of Fairford Town Council, Fairford Community Voice, and others at different times, who have endured a number of setbacks but persevered to finally produce a document, with supporting evidence, that is really worthy of the Town. We are extremely grateful to all who contributed to the plan.

- Neighbourhood Planning Group Joint Chairs Jon Hill and Margaret Bishop, and members Sarah Basley, Cllr Andrew Doherty, Cllr Richard Harrison, and Cllr Jennie Sanford.
- Previous contributors to the plan have included Malcolm Cutler, Barry Fenby, Lizzie Garthwaite, Alison Hobson, and Rev Caroline Symcox.
- The businesses, societies, and residents of Fairford for their support and contribution to the consultation process.
- Our consultant, Neil Homer of oneill homer Ltd, who has supported us throughout.
- The Fairford Town Council team Vanessa Lawrence and Roz Morton. Thanks to Roz for her unstinting efforts supporting the very many meetings, discussions, and items of correspondence that went into the creation of the plan.

Our sincere thanks go to all those who have worked so hard to bring this plan to fruition and to the whole community for the positive responses they provided.

OUR VISION

Fairford will accommodate the level of growth required to meet our local housing needs, while respecting its history and protecting its market town setting within the Cotswolds and alongside the River Coln. Our Neighbourhood Plan will encourage a modern, thriving and self-confident town, together with the facilities and infrastructure necessary to meet the economic, social and environmental needs of the community. As part of this, the planning process will promote sensitive development that integrates well with the rest of the town and design standards that ensure Fairford retains its distinctive character.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The submitted plan represents the views of the local community about the future of Fairford up to 2031. It has been prepared by the Fairford Neighbourhood Plan Group (FNPG) at the direction of Fairford Town Council (FTC) and with extensive consultation with local people, statutory bodies and local organisations. Within this context it has been designed to work together with the Cotswold Local Plan (2011-2031) in the Fairford Neighbourhood Plan area.

OUR AMBITIONS

The Plan has been designed to be a planning, land use document. However, within this important context it delivers several overlapping community ambitions in Fairford as follows:

- A wish to plan positively for growth rather than to respond on an ad hoc basis to unplanned growth and development;
- A wish to ensure that further development does not increase flood risk;
- A wish to bring forward the implementation of additional road infrastructure to relieve traffic congestion to the East of the town;
- An ambition to reduce the impact of through traffic in the town centre;
- An ambition to enhance the vitality and viability of its town centre;
- A wish to safeguard the rural character of the town;
- Delivering low carbon residential development;
- A wish to enhance biodiversity within the parish.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The plan has paid attention to delivering sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. We recognise its importance in both national and local planning policies. We are confident that the plan and its suite of policies will deliver sustainable development within the context of its three dimensions as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as follows:

The plan will deliver the economic dimension of sustainable development through:

- Delivering approximately 80 new homes in the most sustainable location;
- Assist in delivering the 5-year housing land supply and meeting the housing needs in the district;
- Support for renewal of commercial and employment areas in the town.

The plan will deliver the social aspect of sustainable development through:



- Enhancing the ability of local people to enjoy the character, appearance and services in the historic town centre;
- Enhancing access to recreational facilities.

The plan will deliver the environmental aspect of sustainable development through:

- Delivering housing in locations where it will not result in increased flooding risks;
- Delivering high-quality design in new developments;
- Safeguarding the character and appearance of the Fairford Conservation Area;
- Safeguarding ecological and biodiversity assets in the Plan area;
- Designating Local Green Spaces;
- Maintaining the historic green space separations that define the layout of the town.

DELIVERING NEW HOMES WITHOUT INCREASING FLOOD RISK

The Leaffield/Hatherop Road site to deliver new homes without increasing flood risk is a key element of the Plan.

The area between Leaffield and Hatherop roads is considered the most suitable site to deliver new homes without increasing flood risk because it is in the most sustainable location, the revised site stays close to the existing development boundary, and the site is large enough to allow for drainage ponds and for parkland and trees to mitigate the impact on the landscape.

New hydrological evidence indicates that Site F44, Land to the rear of Faulkner's Close, is unsuitable for development and it is not allocated in this FNP. Housing development on the revised FNP14 site, the Southern part of F51B, which more than compensates for the change, is proposed as alternative. This has been accepted by Cotswold District Council (CDC).

There are specific issues related to road use and transport in Fairford due to its location on a key east-west route (A417) between Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, the restricted historic road-layout and the presence of significant school sites that contribute to high peak time traffic flows.



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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Fairford Town Council (FTC) has prepared a Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authority, Cotswold District Council (CDC), on 20 November 2013, under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The designated area is shown in Plan A below.
- 1.2. The plan-led system is intended to empower local people to shape their surroundings and identify locations to accommodate housing development. Making the Fairford Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) empowers us as a community to develop a shared vision for the neighbourhood, based on local knowledge and conditions, and use this to produce policies which will shape future development and deliver a truly sustainable future for Fairford.

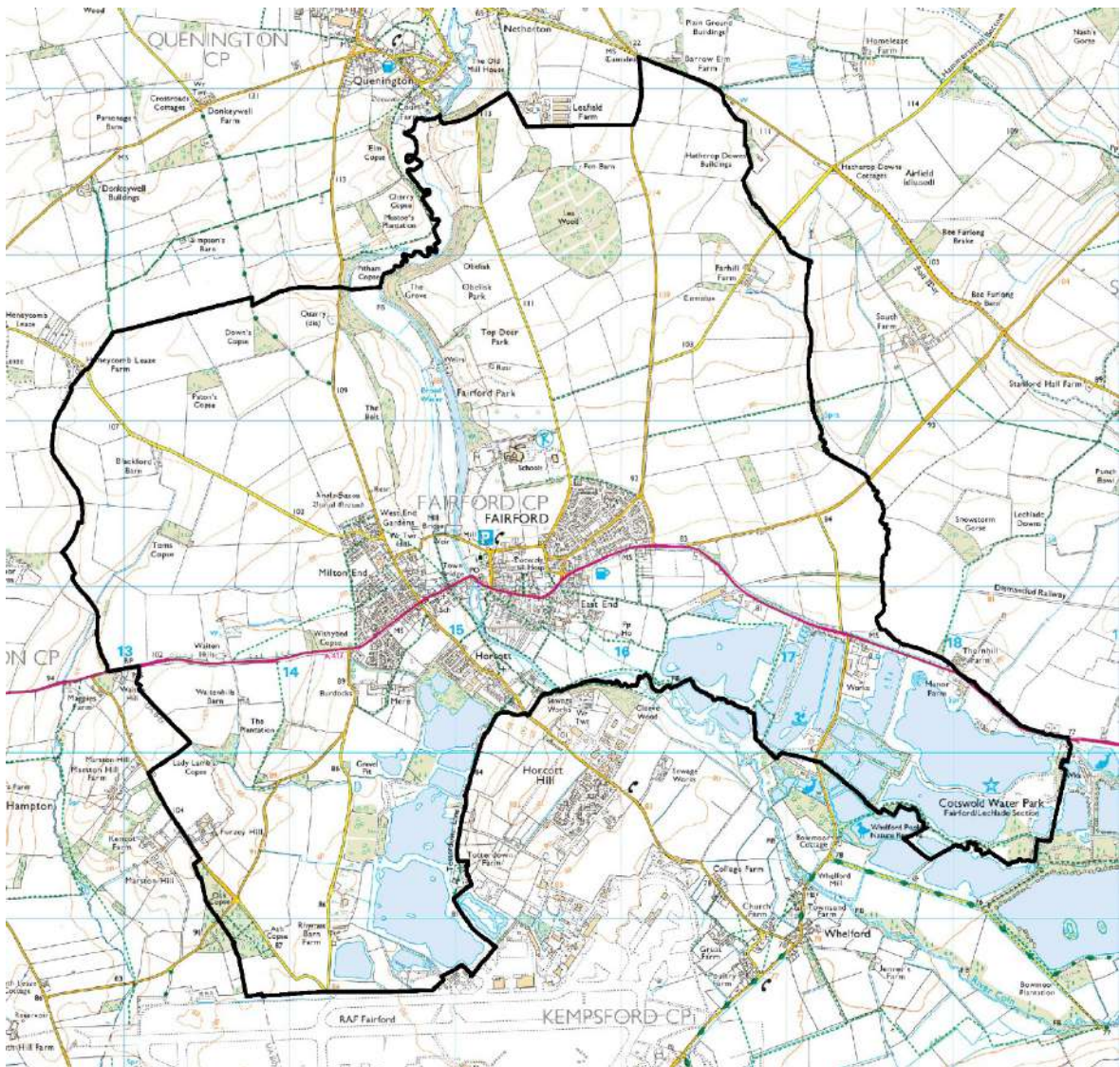


Figure 1 Plan A: Fairford Parish Designated Neighbourhood Area



- 1.3. The Neighbourhood Plan sets out a series of planning policies that will be used, alongside the Local Plan, to determine planning applications in the area. Its policies aim to plan for the growth of the town to 2031, by ensuring that development is built in the most suitable place, protecting the special historic character of the town and of its surrounding landscape and by ensuring there are crucial improvements to local infrastructure.
- 1.4. Neighbourhood plans can only contain land use planning policies. This often means that there are important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Neighbourhood Plan if they are not directly related to planning or land use.
- 1.5. In addition, the Town Council must be able to show that it has properly consulted local people and other relevant organisations during the process of making the Plan and it has followed the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations:
 - a. having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan).
 - b. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
 - c. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
 - d. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
 - e. prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).
- 1.6. These requirements were tested by an independent examiner before the Neighbourhood Plan was finalised. Once satisfied, the examiner recommended that the plan went to a referendum of the local electorate. At the referendum a simple majority of those voting voted for the Plan, and it became adopted as formal planning policy for the area.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

- 1.7. The Plan has built on consultations carried out for the Fairford Health Check (FTC, 2005), Fairford Horizon 2011-16 (FTC, 2011) and Fairford Community Plan (FTC, 2014). This was updated and augmented by a residents' questionnaire, a business questionnaire, discussions with local organisations and open consultation days. An independent Transport Appraisal report and a Town Centre report and workshop were undertaken. Planning professionals, landowners, developers, local organisations, local health professionals, neighbouring Town and Parish Councils, the Cotswold District Council (CDC), Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and other statutory consultees were all consulted.



- 1.8. An initial version of the Plan was prepared in challenging circumstances, at the same time as the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011 to 2031 was emerging and proposed a different allocation of housing. That initial plan was rejected at examination, partly on the grounds that it provided insufficient evidence to justify the differences.
- 1.9. In October 2017, a new Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was formed to produce a revised plan with more robust evidence. Flooding is a local concern so specialists in hydrology were commissioned to produce a detailed report on the groundwater levels and flood risks in Fairford. Technical support to undertake an independent and objective assessment of the sites available for housing was commissioned, along with a Sustainability Appraisal.
- 1.10. In August 2018, CDC adopted its Local Plan which is now the key planning policy document for the District, providing the framework for decisions on the use and development of land in the area. This Local Plan designates Fairford as a Principal Settlement and a District Centre for retail development. Policy S5 (Fairford) of the Local Plan allocates two sites to deliver a total of 61 new dwellings for Fairford: our plan therefore must deliver at least as much housing development as the CDC Local Plan.
- 1.11. Further community consultation has taken place with an open day on 14th March 2019. This included a display of the 7, independently assessed, sites selected as potentially suitable for development, to assess public opinion.
- 1.12. Having been approved by the community in a referendum and endorsed ('made') by Cotswold District Council, it has become part of the development plan for the Cotswold District. The plan will direct future development in Fairford to meet the changing needs of the community. It indicates where and when that development should take place and what additional infrastructural and community facilities should be put in place to meet the needs of these developments.

PLAN PROCESS

- 1.13. The neighbourhood development plan process has several steps that need to be followed before the plan can come into force:

<p>DESIGNATING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA</p>	<p>The town council sought that the area covered by the plan be designated by Cotswold District Council (CDC) (the local planning authority) to enable a planning process to begin. This stage was completed in 2013.</p>
<p>DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PREPARATION</p>	<p>The Fairford Neighbourhood Plan Group (established by Fairford Town Council) consults with residents and stakeholders, gathers evidence and develops a plan. This stage was completed in September 2022.</p>



PRE-SUBMISSION PUBLICATION AND CONSULTATION	The FNPG publishes the draft of the plan and consults with interested parties and stakeholders.
PLAN REVISIONS	The FNPG takes onboard input from the pre-submission consultation and makes any revisions needed before the plan goes to the next stage.
PLAN SUBMISSION TO THE PLANNING AUTHORITY	The plan is submitted to the planning authority (CDC) for them to determine whether it meets the basic conditions necessary to go forward to a formal consultation process (which they undertake).
PLANNING AUTHORITY CONSULTATION	The planning authority (CDC) publishes the plan and seeks consultation responses.
INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION	The plan is examined by an independent examiner (appointed by the planning authority) to determine whether it meets the necessary conditions to proceed to a referendum. This stage was completed in January 2023.
REFERENDUM	The plan was put to a local referendum on Thursday 4 th May 2023, 90% of local voters approved the plan.
PLAN MADE	Having been approved in the referendum, the plan was then “made” by the planning authority. This means it has become part of the local development plan for the Cotswolds and its content guides future local planning decisions.

Table 1: Stages of the Neighbourhood Development Plan process

THE PRE-SUBMISSION PLAN

- 1.14. The Fairford Neighbourhood Plan Group (FNPG) considered the future of the town and in particular the capacity of local infrastructure to cater for the recent and future housing growth in the town. After reviewing the relevant national and local planning policies, gathering evidence and wide consultation, the Pre-Submission version of the Fairford Neighbourhood Plan (Reg 14) was prepared. In September 2020, it was submitted for a six-week period of formal consultation by residents, stakeholders and statutory consultees.



- 1.15. The draft Plan was presented to obtain the views of the local community and other organisations on its proposed vision, objectives, and land use policies. The comments and representations received on it were taken into consideration in preparing the ‘submission’ version of the Fairford Neighbourhood Plan. This process of consultation and the responses themselves are described in detail in the accompanying “Consultation Statement”.
- 1.16. Alongside this document, the Town Council’s independent consultants, AECOM, provided a Sustainability Appraisal report. This is a requirement of the EU Directive 42/2001 and 2004 Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, as the District Council considered whether the Plan had the potential to cause significant environmental effects. The Appraisal looked at how the policies of the Plan propose to avoid or mitigate those effects and it compared the proposed policies with reasonable alternative policies. A Habitat Regulations Assessment was also carried out.
- 1.17. This regulation 16 ‘Submission Plan’ version was submitted to Cotswold District Council along with the other documents for them to determine whether they were satisfied it met the submission requirements. Having agreed this, they published the Plan for a formal consultation process and arranged for its independent examination to determine whether it meets the necessary conditions to proceed to the referendum.
- 1.18. The independent examiners report, received on 1 February 2023, confirmed that the Plan met the required ‘basic conditions’, subject to some recommended amendments. The amendments were then incorporated into the ‘Referendum’ version.
- 1.19. The plan was put to a local referendum on Thursday 4th May 2023, 89.8% of the ballots cast (1097 votes) were in favour of the plan.
- 1.20. Cotswold District Council formally “Made” the Plan on the 5th June 2023. It now has legal force in the determination of planning applications and guides planning decisions in the Neighbourhood area.



2 THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. The parish of Fairford now includes Horcott. For the purposes of this document, 'Fairford' should be taken to refer to the whole parish.
- 2.2. Fairford, as a Principal Settlement, is expected to play its part in developing a sustainable future in the wider district, and the Neighbourhood Plan has importance in this. There are several specific issues that affect the town/parish which must be given due consideration and may not be addressed effectively by district, county and national planning policies; our Plan must address these.
- 2.3. Fairford is located at the far south-east corner of the county. Lying closer to Swindon than to Gloucester, Cheltenham and the M5 corridor, it lies outside the main county economic strategy area, and is much affected by cross-boundary effects and issues e.g., commuting and A419 links, nearest hospital facilities in Swindon (Wiltshire) and the Cotswold Water Park which goes beyond county boundaries. In recent years Fairford has extended significantly to both east and west, but there are significant environmental and physical constraints to expansion. The town sits in the pastoral valley setting of the River Coln which flows right through the centre towards the Upper Thames Vale to the south-east, with extensive water meadows and flood plains. The A417 road bisects the town in an east-west



direction. A Special Landscape Area, including extensive landscaped parkland, lies to the north of Fairford, and beyond this the Cotswold AONB. To the south-west and south-east are large areas of lakes formed by gravel extraction, and Fairford Air Base, with its 2-mile-long runway, cuts off the town to the south. These all effectively limit expansion and reduce the capacity of the town to accommodate significant further growth without

having adverse impact on its character and setting. Most recent development has been along the A417 on the east and west outskirts. Further developments are increasingly likely to be outside practical walking distance from the town centre, although it is possible to locate them close to other facilities (e.g., schools or employment) or to consider providing new facilities within them. Further growth will require consideration of traffic congestion issues and appropriate infrastructure to mitigate impacts.

- 2.4. Fairford's position on key cross-country routes has had a great impact on its history. The M4 and A419 relieve pressure on the A417 (classed as a District Link) which passes right through the centre of the town but increasing development and on-going local quarrying have resulted in significant problems.



- 2.5. These problems are exacerbated by the facts that:
- at the centre of the town, the carriageway reduces to 3.4m;
 - at this and other points the A417 is essentially single track;
 - there is an approx. 70° turn after Town Bridge;
 - many listed and historic buildings line the A417 – the weight and emissions of vehicles, especially HGVs, are likely to have a serious detrimental effect on the soft limestone and their structural integrity.
- 2.6. Plans for a by-pass in the past have been abandoned as ground conditions and environmental impact of the proposed route made it infeasible. Other constraints are:
- The Special Landscape Area (SLA) to the north
 - RAF Fairford (The Air Base) to the south
- 2.7. Two potential solutions to these issues are:
- upgrade the Thornhill-Whelford-Kempsford-Latton route (Eastern Spine Road)
 - weight restriction on heavy traffic through the town
- However, such action falls strictly within transport policy rather than planning policy.
- 2.8. In addition, the centre of the town is increasingly congested, and a bottleneck during peak periods. This is a historic centre, including a church of national importance, which allows very little room for expansion. Traffic and parking constraints have had a negative effect, particularly in the Market Place, High Street and London Street.
- 2.9. A potential link road connecting the Leaffield /Hatherop Road area to the A417 at the eastern end of the town could decrease congestion in the Leaffield Road, Mount Pleasant, Lower Croft and town centre areas by providing access to the schools and Air Base from the East of the town.
- 2.10. Despite recent rapid housing expansion and the promise of local economic benefits this would bring, Fairford has continued to lose key facilities: Lloyds Bank local branch, local Building Society, Post Office sorting and mail collection facility, large antique shop. In addition, several former shops have been converted to residential, reducing the number of premises available for retail/commercial use in the town centre. Most of those that remain are small, limiting the range of products and services that they can provide.
- 2.11. Thus, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Fairford to perform its retail role as a ‘District Centre’ and focal point for the rural economy effectively. Radical measures, as outlined in this Neighbourhood Plan, are needed to attract new businesses, prevent further loss of premises and improve sustainability.
- 2.12. The parish boasts around 11km of public footpaths including numerous riverside and rural walks. Keeping Fairford ‘green’ is a high priority for local people. There is a potential conflict between this and the pressures for development arising from the fact that Fairford



is within the 20% of the Cotswold District outside the Cotswolds AONB. It also has a secondary school and other services (churches, sports facilities, clubs and societies) which make it a desirable place to live and work.

- 2.13. Fairford is one of the most beautiful towns in the Cotswolds, with the countryside and parkland interwoven into the built area and uniquely, coming right into the heart of the town at the top of the High Street and at The Greens. This is a place of significant historical and cultural interest and it is vital to balance the needs of the future with a sensitivity to the demands of the past.
- 2.14. Horcott lies on the opposite side of the River Coln, a smaller but distinct settlement, on the edge of the water park with RAF Fairford to the south-east. The air base is a major NATO facility which imposes constraints on the surrounding area, including height restrictions, vulnerable building distance, and control of water-bird habitat.
- 2.15. Horcott comprises a small number of homes, a farm, an industrial estate and recreational facilities. In addition to schools and town-centre businesses, the other main employment areas lie on the A417 to the east of Fairford, at the old station site and at Whelford Business Park.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FAIRFORD

- 2.16. Fairford has a long and rich history, with land around the crossing point of the River Coln, the ‘fair-ford’, inhabited for thousands of years. Archaeological investigations prompted by gravel extraction and property development in the parish in recent decades has greatly enhanced our understanding of early communities living in the area, with significant remains from Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British periods now documented. New housing developments on the west side of town have revealed extensive remains of Anglo-Saxon occupation, the settlement associated with the rich contemporary cemetery focused on Tanners Field, and the predecessor of today’s town.
- 2.17. The river, the proximity of the River Thames, and the fertility of the land where the high ground of the limestone Wolds descends to meet the gravel beds of the Upper Thames basin, have all played their part in the development of the settlement and some continue to affect the town today.
- 2.18. Two Scheduled Monuments in the Parish date from this early period: at Tanners Field (an Anglo-Saxon cemetery) and land south of Burdocks (a Bronze Age hengiform barrow mound and ring ditch).
- 2.19. The earliest written record of Fairford is in 850 CE and Fairford appears in the 1086 Domesday Book (VCH, 1086 p. 78) [Vol7, Ref.18]. Fairford Mill is mentioned.
- 2.20. The town grew up at the river crossing and its ancient roots can be seen in the layout of the roads and buildings around a web of important tracks which have developed over the centuries around/from Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval drove roads and salt routes.



- 2.21. By the 12th century, the town was recorded as having ancient borough status with a market. It was, however, in the early 14th century that the town, positioned in an area of sheep farming, began to prosper.
- 2.22. In the mid-15th century Fairford grew in stature as a stronghold of the Earl of Warwick (the Kingmaker) and a staging post on the route between London and Ludlow Castle (a Yorkist stronghold in the Wars of the Roses).
- 2.23. The late 15th century saw an expansion of its economic fortunes on the back of the wool trade, leading to a period of considerable growth. Much of the early town dates from the Tudor period.
- 2.24. Today's road layout through the centre of Fairford is the legacy of John Tame, a wealthy wool merchant who rebuilt the older church at this time (completed 1497) – the main road was diverted, and present-day London Street became the main road as we see today. The Market Place has the same layout as in the 16th century.
- 2.25. John Tame's splendid tomb still survives in the chancel of the church he had rebuilt, which was later endowed with a wonderful set of late-medieval stained-glass windows, the only near--complete set still existing in any parish church in England. St Mary's Church and its windows attract an average of ten thousand visitors every year, from all over the world (figures PCC annual report).
- 2.26. In 1660 the manor of Fairford was bought by a wealthy Bristol merchant, Andrew Barker, who built a new mansion, Fairford Park, ~400m north of the town centre. The Park was further landscaped in the 1780s and two features still remain of that landscaping: the Votive Column (the Obelisk near the northern edge of the Park) and the picturesque bridge to the north of the Mill Pond.



Figure 2 Gloucestershire Archives P141/M1/7/1 Map of the Parish of Fairford 1834 NB Horcott not shown as in Parish of Kempsford at this date



- 2.27. All the older town is a Conservation Area and there are more than 120 listed buildings, all dating from 19th century and earlier. The Market Place and High Street are mostly Georgian and earlier.
- 2.28. Fairford Park and other land was purchased by Ernest Cook in 1945 and in 1952 was passed to the Ernest Cook Trust (ECT), an educational charity with its head office at Fairford Park and extensive landholdings to the north of the town and elsewhere in the country.
- 2.29. RAF Fairford was established to the south of the town in 1943-44 and played a role in the airborne landings in Normandy. Post-war the airfield saw the testing flights of Concorde before becoming an important American air base, still used by the United States Air Force.
- 2.30. The construction of the airfield effectively cut Horcott off from the rest of its Parish of Kempsford and closer ties developed with Fairford. In 1987 it became part of the Parish of Fairford but retained its own distinct town councillors on Fairford Town Council until 2015.



Figure 3 Horcott: OS 25inch Gloucestershire L11.16 (includes Fairford, Kempsford 1877 ([109728025] Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland

- 2.31. The air base is the venue for the annual Royal International Air Tattoo. Despite the short duration of the event, its size makes it important to employment in the town and many local businesses are supported by the boost it provides. Visitors come for the whole duration of the event and stay in local hotels, homes and camping sites.
- 2.32. Development in the town since 1945 can be divided into 3 stages (there is a temporary peak during the 1940's because of wartime activity).
- Steady flow with significant expansion in each of the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1990s (see Figure 4 Fairford Population Growth).
 - A few small infill developments 2000-2012.
 - A major burst of housing, from 2013 through 2019, saw the town grow by over 33% in a few years, with building to both east, west and north-west of the town.

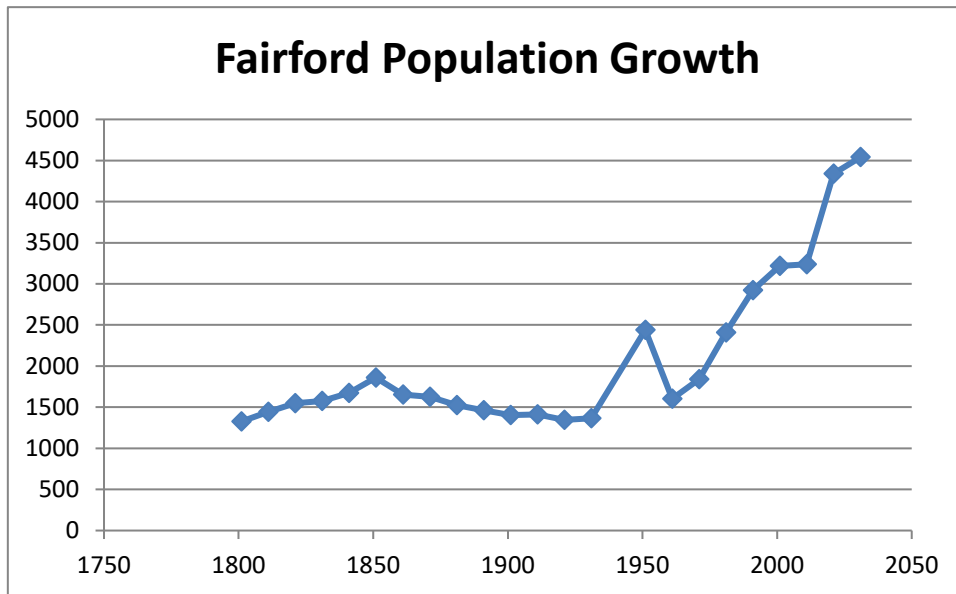


Figure 4 Fairford Population Growth

- 2.33. Further details of the history of Fairford and Horcott can be found in the evidence base documents, particularly the Character and Design Assessment.

THE PARISH TODAY

- 2.34. The population has now grown to approach 4500 as the major housing schemes of recent years have been completed and occupied.
- 2.35. The town serves as a District Centre serving a wider rural area including the villages of Kempford, Whelford, Meysey Hampton, Quenington, Coln St Aldwyns, Hatherop, Southrop and Eastleach. The slightly smaller town of Lechlade is about 5 miles to the east, with the towns of Cirencester, Burford, Carterton, Faringdon, Highworth, Cricklade and Swindon also within 17 miles.



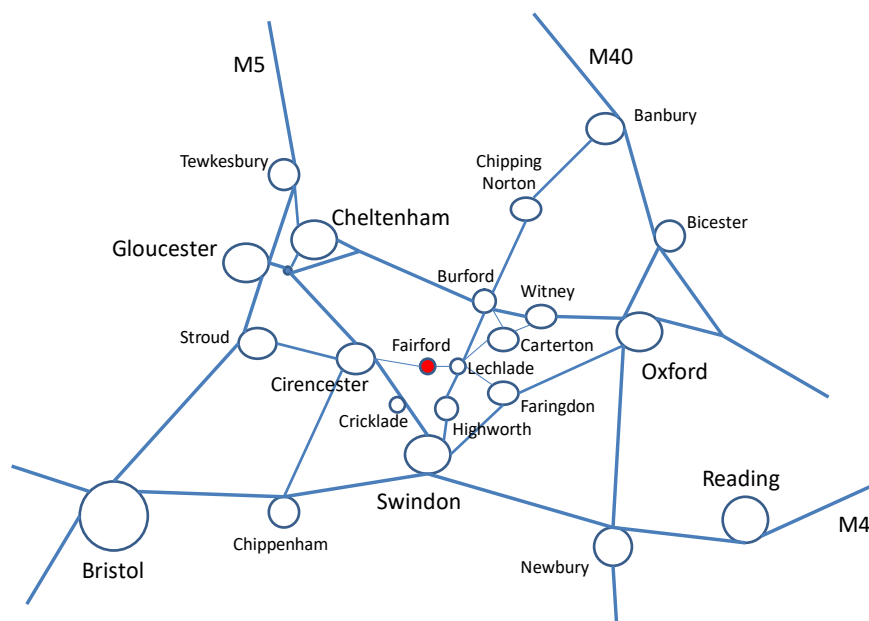


Figure 5 Fairford's Connections to the Wider Region

- 2.36. Although relatively small for a town, Fairford has maintained a range of local services, including a small but reasonably successful town centre (albeit there has been a loss of shops to residential conversions over the years and Lloyd's Bank closed the only local bank branch in November 2016). Current shops/facilities include two convenience stores, a Post Office, a chemist, a butcher, an hotel, cafes, a restaurant, hairdressers, beauticians and several take-aways. There is also a community centre, event spaces, a library, primary and secondary schools, health services, churches, sports facilities and many clubs and societies.

- 2.37. Unfortunately, growth of facilities has not kept pace with the increase in population and there is now an infrastructure deficit, particularly with regard to health services, water supplies, sewage and wastewater disposal. Internet connection speeds are relatively poor. Fairford is subject to flooding and in addition to river flooding, has experienced groundwater, surface water and sewage flooding.

- 2.38. Mineral extraction (mainly sand and gravel) has been an important activity in the area for a long time and has increased significantly since World War II. This has led to the creation of more than 140 lakes in the Cotswold Water Park, many of which are now managed for recreational and wildlife purposes, as part of restoration programmes. These now play a significant part in the area's recreation and tourism.

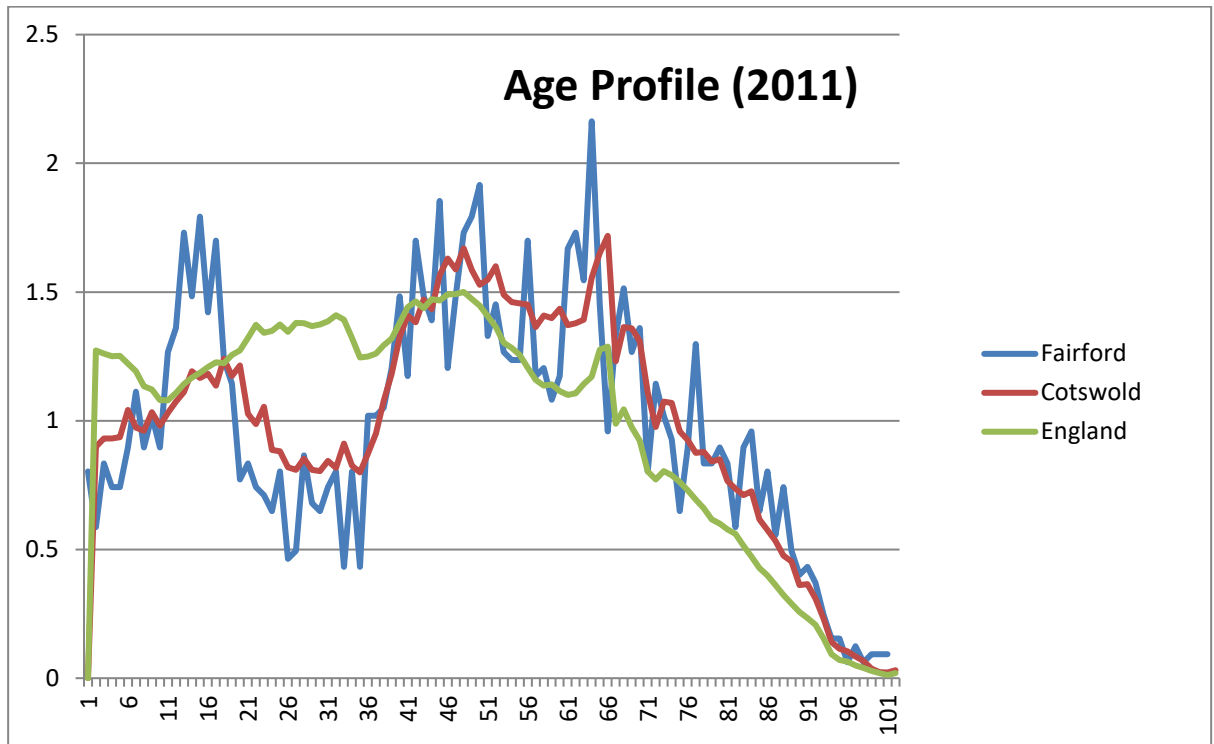


Figure 6 Population Age Profile

- 2.39. The age profile (2011 Census) is generally like that for Cotswold District as a whole, with a higher percentage of older people than the national average. However, there are relatively more young people of secondary school age (reflecting the presence of Farmor’s School), and fewer in their 20s and 30s, reflecting a tendency to move away for employment, as well as housing cost issues.
- 2.40. The population surge is not expected to continue to 2030 because of physical constraints on the land but will be influenced by the amount of growth and development of the Airbase, at present uncertain. Continuation of growth at the present (2020) rate would suggest population around 4500 to 4600 by 2031 with the peak age profile increased by about 10 years. Housing development in Fairford must meet the needs of an aging population
- 2.41. About one third of the population is in professional or skilled trade occupation. Comparison of employment occupations with figures for Cotswold District as a whole, shows slightly less in professional occupations, more in skilled trades, administrative/secretarial and elementary occupations, with fewer in higher level managerial and official roles, probably reflecting a small business focus and proximity to industrial employers in Swindon as well as the local area.



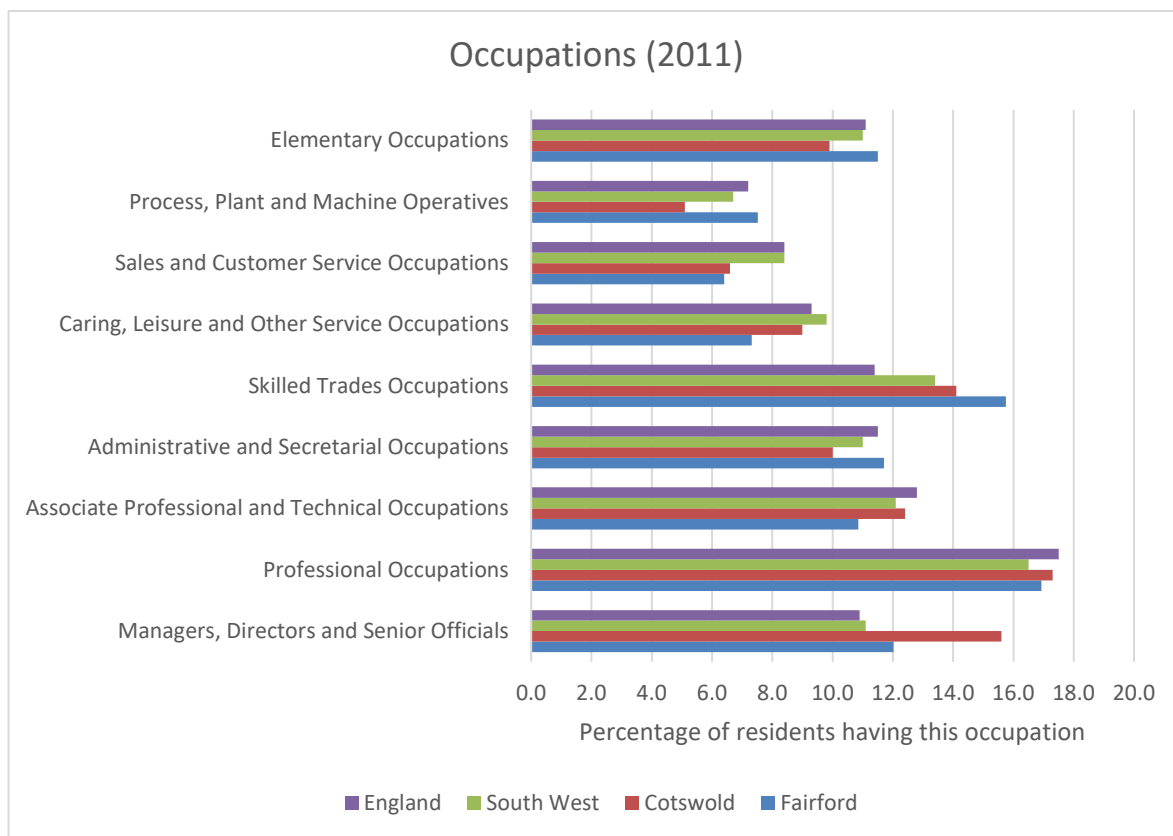


Figure 7 Local Occupations

GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND HYDROLOGY

- 2.42. Since Fairford has suffered from surface water, groundwater, and sewage flooding in the recent past, it is important to understand the special geology, topography and hydrology of the area. The Environment Agency Report on the 2007 floods (section 1.3.2) (Environment Agency, 2008) describes how the special shape and geology of the River Coln catchment affect the groundwater and spring flows at Fairford.
- 2.43. Another special feature of Fairford is that most of the gravel beds to the south and east of the town have been extracted, resulting in several deep lakes which feed and are fed by groundwater and surface water. Although these lakes do act as a flood reservoir, they do not protect the town since they are downstream, to the south and east.
- 2.44. The Court Brook collects overflow from the River Coln in the wet season and channels flow into these lakes. Fairford Drainage Strategy section 2.1 (Thames Water, 2015).
- 2.45. The report (Environment Agency, 2008) on the 2007 floods states in Section 1.3.3 that the “significantly urbanised” nature of Fairford Town means that a high proportion of rainfall flows directly into the River Coln.
- 2.46. The rise and fall of groundwater and river levels is of course seasonal but the rate of rise after rainfall is dependent on how dry the soil is prior to that rain. Soil Moisture Deficit

(SMD) measures how much rainfall is needed before direct runoff into watercourses starts. This is especially relevant to Fairford with its flood plain proximity and permeable geology.

- 2.47. The complex and multi-faceted nature of flood risk at Fairford is shown by the number of projects and studies conducted over the past few years. These include:
- The report on the 2007 Floods (Environment Agency, 2008) and the resultant Environment Agency Fairford Flood Alleviation Scheme (2008–2013) (Environment Agency, 2013?) which reduced the risk of “riparian” (main river) flooding.
 - The “GCC Groundwater Intermediate Assessment” (Atkins, April 2015) for South Cotswold District concluded that Fairford has now been identified as subject to groundwater flooding and that further housing development on sites with high groundwater level is likely to exacerbate the problem.
- 2.48. The drainage strategy (Thames Water, 2018) reports on “intervention” works already done on:
- clearing the Court Brook stream,
 - diverting surface water on Quenington Road,
 - fixing sewer defect at East End.

The drainage strategy concludes that sustainable drainage solutions (SuDS) using infiltration are unlikely to be effective in the low-lying areas to the south of the town because of frequent high groundwater levels.

- 2.49. CDC’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report (JBA, 2014) also suggests that SuDS drainage using infiltration is unlikely to be feasible for those areas to the south and southeast of Fairford with high groundwater levels.
- 2.50. To supplement this existing body of work and to provide that “hard evidence” requested by the Examiner of the first Plan, FTC commissioned a study by Water Research Associates’ (WRA) to monitor groundwater levels around Fairford and to review the overall flood risk. Their report “Groundwater Monitoring and Review of Flood Risk at Fairford” (WRA, 2018) described Fairford’s geology as characterised by superficial deposits of alluvium, “Northmoor” sand and gravel and “Cornbrash” overlying the solid Oxford and Kellaway clays and Forest Marble clay and limestone. The groundwater levels were found to rise quickly in winter and fall similarly quickly in summer. Water levels in Fairford wells and boreholes varied by 1.0 to 2.5 metres during the 2018 monitoring period. The report concluded:
- a) Development should avoid the several spring lines along the Cornbrash / Northmoor boundary (for example just south of Beaumoore Place in East End)
 - b) Development should avoid the area south of Cornbrash / Kellaway boundary (for example south of Cinder Lane).



- c) There is no scope for SuDS drainage using infiltration in the low-lying areas associated with alluvial deposits of the Coln valley due to frequent high groundwater levels” (Section 6-2-3).
 - d) “Ideally development should be directed away from the Coln and Court Brook corridor” (Section 6-2-5).
- 2.51. Flood risk issues need to be addressed at the pre-application stage. Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs) should address groundwater as well as surface water flooding and should consider loss of natural flood storage capacity.
- 2.52. Many areas in Fairford are not suitable for development and should be preserved as green spaces which can store floodwater. Development should be diverted to more sustainable sites with less flood risk, in accordance with NPPF.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

IMPLICATIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

- 2.53. The world’s climate is changing and will continue to change as a result of greenhouse gas emissions, even if global warming is limited to 1.5°C above pre-industrial level. In England, hotter drier summers, milder wetter winters, rising sea levels and more extreme weather events are expected in future. Projected changes in climate are expected to have a large impact on the water environment as a result of changes in sea level, river flow, groundwater recharge and water temperatures. Flooding, caused by intense or prolonged rainfall, as well as by sea level rise and coastal storm surges, has become more likely in recent years and this trend is expected to continue. Many people will experience climate change through its effects on water, and especially through floods and droughts.
- 2.54. The single most important impact for Fairford, an inland town with historic flooding issues, is the likelihood of serious flooding. Bigger, more frequent floods are expected over the 21st century, particularly during the winter season when flows and groundwater levels are increased, and the community must prepare for this. Therefore, the FNP directs development to areas with lower flood risk.
- 2.55. Green Infrastructure planning is increasingly being recognised as an effective and efficient response to projected climate change. We need to protect natural green spaces, which as well as contributing to the attractiveness of the river and lakeside areas, serve a vital function as water storage areas. Future land management practices should aim to create more flood water storage capacity for storm events, treating stormwater at its source while delivering environmental, social, and economic benefits. It is important to recognise the benefits that green infrastructure provides, in mitigating the impacts of climate change, alleviating flooding, and improving air quality as well as contributing to the health and well-being of communities and creating better places for wildlife.

Therefore, the FNP gives protection to local green spaces. Fairford has a responsibility to reduce the factors contributing to climate change by:

- Diverting development to areas of lower flood risk



- Reducing emissions from travel by encouraging use of public transport and providing employment near to homes.
- Making available allotments for residents to grow their own food.
- Encouraging local markets selling local produce.
- Protecting existing trees and hedges and encouraging the planting of more trees.
- Ensuring the new buildings meet or exceed best environmental practices.
- Protecting the banks and water quality of watercourses, especially the River Coln.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHANGING ROLE OF RAF FAIRFORD

- 2.56. RAF Fairford was opened in January 1944 in preparation for D Day. It served both British and American forces and in 1950 was transferred to the United States Air Force for strategic bomber operations. A 10,000-foot runway was constructed for long-range bomber operations, completed in 1953, and up-graded since. Because of this runway, which can accommodate the largest and heaviest planes, Fairford was chosen in 1969 as the British test centre for the Concorde aircraft until 1977, and also as an abort landing site for the Space Shuttle in 1983 until the end of the programme.
- 2.57. The role and use of the Airfield has varied over the years, but it is designated as a forward operating location for the US Air Force, and has been used extensively for aerial re-fuelling, heavy- bomber operations and NATO operations and exercises, and provides the venue every July for the Royal International Air Tattoo.
- 2.58. Up to 2010, the Air Base was well integrated into the Fairford community, and a major source of local employment, but in 2010, USAF withdrew all their uniformed staff from the station leaving a civilian operating unit to maintain the base on a "care and maintenance" basis, though capable of immediate reactivation within 48 hours. In November 2018, it was announced that, as part of the US European Infrastructure Consolidation programme, the Boeing RC-135 surveillance aircraft mission would transfer to Fairford as Forward Operating Location, and the two Squadrons which support it would relocate to Fairford by 2024.
- 2.59. This change would have seen around 887 US military personnel and 1240 family members moving into the area, from 2023. These would be housed on the base and dispersed into the community over a wide area, within 50km or 30 minutes' drive from the base.
- 2.60. These plans have now changed, and the RC-105 mission and supporting squadrons will not now be relocated to Fairford. However, expansion is still taking place although precise plans have not yet been released. In addition to improving the surface of the runway and building a facility for squadron operations, they intend to renovate the 106 houses already on the base and improve domestic facilities. The USAF is committed to building good relationships with their British hosts and will seek to reduce any harmful impact of the increased numbers but provide additional employment and boost the local economy.



THREATS TO HERITAGE

- 2.61. Cotswold District Local Plan Policy (EN1) defines a policy requirement to ensure that new development protects and enhances existing historical assets.
- 2.62. Cotswold District Council’s Historic Environment Strategy¹ (Cotswold District Council, April 2016) further identifies heritage risks and guidance for development to ensure that the historic environment is fully considered in the determination of planning applications.
- 2.63. The impact of vibration and pollution from heavy vehicles damages the soft limestone of listed buildings in the town centre, particularly along the A417.

ISSUES/VULNERABILITIES

- 2.64. The story of Fairford is thus one of change and replacement, reflecting political, economic and social change over the ages, with signs of the major past phases of development still visible (e.g. Plantagenet, Tudor, and commerce-funded development). Unfortunately, much of the evidence of that greater history has been lost over the ages or is no longer visible. However, those elements that are left, principally from the Tudor, Georgian and Victorian periods, are worthy of preservation as key elements of the town’s character and identity as well as being a record of the consequences of social and economic change.
- 2.65. The Site Assessment Report prepared by AECOM for the Fairford Neighbourhood Plan states that “All development in and adjacent to a Conservation Area should be carried out in conjunction with the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan prepared for the Conservation Area. However, an appraisal has not been carried out for Fairford Conservation Area. It is recommended that this is further investigated by FTC, and is supported by CDC and Historic England. This will provide an appropriate basis for the protection and enhancement of the Conservation Area, and provide guidance for proposed development.”
- 2.66. In response to consultations on the Scoping Reports (2016 and 2018) for the Sustainability Appraisals (incorporating SEA) of the Fairford Neighbourhood Plan, Historic England has previously highlighted the value of up to date and suitably detailed Conservation Area Appraisals to inform/support the formulation of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan, both in the selection sites and spatial options and the identification of heritage issues which the Plan might wish to address.
- 2.67. As stated above, a formal Conservation Area Appraisal has not yet been carried out for the Fairford CA. However, there is a County Planning Policy Statement (under the Civil Amenities Act 1967) relating to the original designation in 1970, and the boundary of the CA was apparently reviewed (and re-confirmed) in 1990. A local Character and Design Assessment has been prepared and can be seen in the supporting evidence set.
- 2.68. Without an Appraisal, the fall-back arrangement is for the LPA to provide partial assessments on a case-by-case basis in relation to individual planning applications. There

¹ <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/jhzhfuxh/5201-historic-environment-strategy-apr-2016.pdf>

is a danger that this could be inconsistent, because it does not put these in an overall context and may focus unduly on particular aspects associated with individual applications.

- 2.69. 'Lack of Conservation Area appraisals' is specifically recognised as one of a number of 'Threats or Weaknesses' in a SWOT analysis included in CDC's historic environment strategy (Cotswold District Council, April 2016), along with the following:
- Impact of new housing developments on the settings of historic towns and villages and on the transition between the existing built environment and the wider countryside
 - Incremental small-scale losses of quality of assets, through inappropriate management and / or change
 - Permitted development rights, particularly for undesignated heritage assets and within Conservation Areas (This could be addressed by an Article 4 Direction or Directions)
 - Owners' expectations and their relative affluence, leading to potential aggrandisement and suburbanisation
 - The desire to adapt the historic environment for modern styles of living (which could include meeting the specific needs of an aging population)
 - The sheer numbers and volume of heritage assets can lead to complacency about the importance of these assets
 - Article 4 compensation issues.
- 2.70. Public transport (i.e. buses) provision is poor, and there is no railway connection. This encourages car use and disadvantages those on lower incomes as access to jobs and entertainment in larger towns such as Swindon is restricted to those with private vehicles.
- 2.71. The percentage of over 70's is likely to increase, and provision will be needed for their accommodation, health and wellbeing.
- 2.72. Additional specific threats particularly relevant to Fairford include the impact of the loss of local shops on historic frontages and the loss of other features of specific local character.
- 2.73. There are strong pressures for infill developments. Key features of Cotswold villages/towns are the indented, open edges and fields which penetrate into the settlement (see White Report 2000, p.4, para. 2.19). These features are particularly strong in Fairford, witness the open landscape at the Town Bridge and the various small paddocks, playing fields, parkland and large gardens present within the town. In recent years infill pressure has seen the disappearance of a market garden area (The Nurseries) and large gardens (Fayre Court, Lygon Court), as well as proposals which would have the effect of 'straightening up' the boundary line. The town is thus vulnerable to developments which could severely detract from its Cotswold character and result in damaging suburbanisation.



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3 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1. The Neighbourhood Area lies within Cotswold District in the County of Gloucestershire.
- 3.2. The National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) published by the Government (revised in 2018, 2019 and 2021) is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. The Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate that it is consistent with the provisions of the NPPF. The following paragraphs of the revised NPPF are considered especially relevant:
- supporting a prosperous rural economy (paragraph 83, etc);
 - good design (paragraph 127, etc);
 - promoting healthy communities (paragraph 92, etc);
 - protecting local green spaces (paragraph 99, etc);
 - conserving and enhancing the natural environment (paragraph 170, etc);
 - conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraph 185, etc);
 - neighbourhood planning (paragraph 21, 28-30);
 - ensuring the vitality of town centres (paragraph 85);
 - meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding ... (paragraph 150, 155, 157-163).

National Planning Practice Guidance and the new National Design Code provide further clarification and guidance.

- 3.3. The Neighbourhood Plan must also be able to show that its policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, which currently comprises policies or saved policies of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031, of the Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 and of the Gloucestershire Waste Core Strategy 2012 - 2027. The second document is in the process of being replaced, it passed the pre-submission consultation stage and is expected to be adopted within the next year.
- 3.4. The FNP policies will have regard to the relevant policies and saved policies of the adopted plans and will be informed by the relevant strategies, policies and evidence base of the new plans.
- 3.5. The adopted Local Plan contains several policies (see below) that are relevant to the FNP, notably those on protecting the natural environment, protecting heritage, development inside and outside of defined development boundaries, and promoting rural economic development and good design. The Policies Map (Plan B in Appendix 1: Maps) shows the development boundary and areas of protected open space, the Fairford-Horcott local gap, a special landscape area, the conservation area and the town centre boundary. Most of the southern part of the Parish, including Horcott, lies within the Cotswold Water Park area and is subject to related supplementary planning guidance (for the Water Park) as well as

policy SP5, which focuses on recreational development and sustainable transport while protecting access and the character and settings of settlements. Policy EN14 (Managing Flood Risk) is also particularly relevant in this area.

- 3.6. Fairford is defined as a Principal Settlement and District Centre and has a development boundary (Policy 18 in the old plan and DS2 in the new one). Housing development has been much greater than envisaged in 2001, with very significant levels of housing growth in the last decade.

COTSWOLD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN (CDLP)²

- 3.7. The FNP needs to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted CDLP (Cotswold District Council, 2018). Those that have a specific relevance to Fairford are listed below:

- Policy DS2: Development Boundaries – to update the current defined development boundaries to take account of the new site allocation (FNP14) and the withdrawal of site F_35B;
- Policy DS4: Open Market Housing Outside Principal and Non-Principal Settlements;
- Policy SA1: Infrastructure Delivery South Cotswolds principal settlements;
- Policy S5: Fairford;
- Policy H1 & H2: Housing Mix & Tenure and Affordable Housing – requiring schemes to provide a mix of types and tenures;
- Policy EC1: Employment Development – supporting local employment and the local economy;
- Policy EC2: Safeguarding employment sites - allowing for the managed expansion of existing facilities and protecting against their unnecessary loss;
- Policy EC3: Employment Generating Uses – offering qualified support for new employment uses in Principal Settlements like Fairford;
- Policies EC7 & EC8: Town Centres and Uses – defining Fairford as a ‘District Centre’ to encourage the provision of new local shops and to manage the mix of retail and other uses;
- Policy EC11: Tourist Accommodation;
- Policy EN1: Built, Natural and Historic Environment – including managing habitats and green infrastructure;
- Policy EN2: Design of the Built and Natural Environment – including application of the Cotswold Design Code and consistency with local character;

² <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/adopted-local-plan/local-plan-2011-to-2031/>



- Policy EN4: The Wider Natural and Historic Landscape;
- Policy EN6: Special Landscape Areas;
- Policy EN7: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands;
- Policy EN8: Features Habitats and Species;
- Policy EN9: Designated Sites;
- Policy EN10: Historic Environment: Designated Heritage Assets;
- Policy EN11: Historic Environment: Designated Heritage Assets - Conservation Areas;
- Policy EN12: Non-Designated Heritage Assets;
- Policy EN14: Managing Flood Risk;
- Policy INF2: Social and Community Infrastructure;
- Policy INF7: Green Infrastructure;
- Policy INF8: Water Management Infrastructure;
- Policy SP5: Cotswold Water Park Post Mineral Extraction After Use.

3.8. The most important CDLP policy specifically on Fairford is S5 (see below). S5 has allocated two sites – at Milton Farm and Faulkners Close – for a total of 61 homes (net), as well as protecting the town’s key employment sites and setting out a series of local infrastructure projects. It also requires that development schemes contribute to the delivery of infrastructure projects across the South Cotswolds Sub-Area set out in its Policy SA1. Those projects contain only one specifically in Fairford - improvements to the junction of the A417 and Whelford Road. However, this does not preclude other projects being funded by either Section 106 contributions (S106) or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in the future.



Policy S5

FAIRFORD

Allocated housing development sites:

- F_35B Land behind Milton Farm and Bettertons Close (49 dwellings net)
- F_44 Land to rear of Faulkner Close, Horcott (12 dwellings net)

Established employment sites:

- Horcott Industrial Estate (EES26)
- London Road (EES27)
- Whelford Lane Industrial Estate (EES28)
- New Chapel Electronics (EES29)

The following non-strategic (local) infrastructure projects are proposed:

- a. The route for the multi-use path from Fairford to Lechlade along the line of the former railway will be safeguarded;
- b. Improvements to the provision of footpath and cycle links between Fairford and the riverside, the Cotswold Water Park and canal route;
- c. The provision of suitable land for allotments; and
- d. The provision of suitable land for a burial ground.

Figure 8 Local Plan Policy S5

- 3.9. FTC has been working with the CDC so that the proposals of the FNP are acceptable. This demonstrates a collaborative approach to plan making for the town. New hydrological evidence, and changes to the Water Park SSSI boundary, indicate that site F44, Land to the rear of Faulkner’s Close, is unlikely to be developable. It should be noted that the previously allocated site F35B (Milton Farm) has now been withdrawn. An alternative site is proposed; the revised Leaffield/Hatherop Road site, (Southern part of F51B).
- 3.10. Other material considerations for the FNP include:
- Designated Ministry of Defence (MoD) aircraft safeguarding areas for both RAF Fairford and RAF Brize Norton, and USAF future plans.
 - Thames Water have worked with FTC to resolve several drainage issues and set out plans for further intervention in their “Fairford Drainage Strategy v3” (Thames Water, 2018).



4 COMMUNITY VIEWS

- 4.1. The Fairford Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) is based upon the results of wide consultation with the local community. This process has included leaflets, meetings, workshops, questionnaires, discussions and public consultation drop-in days, and there have been invitations throughout to participate and to make comments.

BACKGROUND

- 4.2. There have been three previous consultations resulting in the comprehensive Fairford Health Check (2005), Fairford Horizon 2011-16 (2011) and Fairford Community Plan (2014).
- 4.3. The first stage of the FNP project was to identify the issues - all known community organisations were consulted, and a letter was delivered to every household in Fairford raising awareness of the FNP and its purpose and inviting their participation. A website³ was set up, aiming to attract, inform and invoke response, and an email address and mobile phone number were provided for contact. Four Working groups were then set up – Housing; Infrastructure and Environment (including Heritage); Business and Employment, and Community Services and Facilities. There was a general invitation for anyone interested to join any of the groups. An independent Transport Appraisal report (Helix Transport Consultants, February 2016) and a Town Centre report and workshop were commissioned (Place Studio, December 2015). Evidence gathering and research into existing conditions continued and there was a display about the aims and activities of the steering group at the Fairford Festival. The website was continued after the initial FNP was rejected, with explanation and information about the review and steps being taken to produce a successful revised FNP.
- 4.4. In the second stage - a six-page questionnaire (31 questions) was prepared, with help from Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC), and this was delivered to every household within the parish boundary. It was also put onto the website and people encouraged to reply online. The response was very good - 645 in total, including around 60 online (just over 40% of households). After discussions with business and tradespeople a separate business questionnaire was produced and businesses, tradespeople and retailers invited to participate. Thames Water held a drop-in day to get feedback on sewage flooding problems and at the event there was a display about the Neighbourhood Plan's proposals with hand-out leaflets. GRCC also carried out community facility audits and an assessment of future infrastructure needs. GRCC collated the responses of the questionnaire using specialist software. This identified key themes regarding needs and concerns. With these in mind, and after discussions with planning professionals, landowners, developers, local organisations, health professionals, schools, neighbouring Town and Parish Councils, Cotswold District Council (CDC) and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), and having

³ www.fairfordneighbourhoodplan.org.uk



considered previous publications, the various sites were considered and plans and options drawn up.

- 4.5. In the third stage - wide publicity was given to two public consultation days held on Sunday 18th and Thursday 22nd September 2016. People were invited to come and see the proposals and give their opinion. Maps and plans were displayed, and options presented. Members of the team were present to explain and answer questions. The attendance was good - 330 visitors over the two days and nearly 90 comment sheets completed.
- 4.6. After CDC decided in October 2017 on the advice of the Examiner, that the submitted plan should not proceed to referendum, there was a delay for further evidence gathering and revision of the Plan. Fairford Town Council (FTC) was awarded technical support from an independent company, AECOM, through the Neighbourhood Planning program, to undertake an independent and objective assessment of the sites available for housing for possible inclusion in the FNP. For the current FNP, a further public consultation day was held on 14th March 2019.
- 4.7. The key findings from the 2016 public consultation were as follows:
- **Strengths of the Town** - Community spirit, attractive historic market town, rural feel and access to countryside, green spaces, river and lakeside areas.
 - **Problems** - River, surface water and sewer flooding. Traffic congestion and HGV's on A417 and in town centre. Dangerous road junctions. Parking, especially in Market Place, London Road and at Hilary Cottage Doctor's Surgery. Town has grown too quickly, and infrastructure has not kept up causing pressure on public services e.g. schools and surgery. Poor public transport with bus services decreasing. Lack of facilities for young people. Loss of shops.
 - **Concerns** - Keeping Fairford green, protecting the heritage, improving infrastructure especially sewage system. Reserving areas with high groundwater for water storage. Protection from inappropriate development proposals.
 - **Support** - for FNP policy recommending future new housing developments to be built off Leafield Road. Facilities to encourage new employment/businesses. Improvements to the town centre, to walks and Public Rights of Way. Provision of safe routes to school.
- 4.8. Some of these issues have been addressed in the intervening period. The Primary school has been extended, and some safer pathways to school have been provided. Thames Water has carried out investigations and some improvements to the sewage network and is preparing a comprehensive Drainage Strategy for Fairford.
- 4.9. During 2018, CDC adopted a new Local Plan (2011 to 2031), and this allocates two sites, F35B (47 houses) and F44 (12 houses) for development in Fairford. It indicates (par.7.8.8) that because of pressure on infrastructure in Fairford, any large development should be towards the latter part of the plan period.



- 4.10. FTC commissioned a comprehensive study (WRA, 2018) on the hydrology and geology of the area, including groundwater levels. This reported in November 2018 and the results have informed subsequent work.
- 4.11. More than 100 people attended the drop-in public consultation day on 14th March 2019. There were displays on local green spaces, the Hydrology report, and the five main themes which had been identified, these were:
- Natural and Historic Environment;
 - Climate Change, Spatial Strategy and Water Management Infrastructure;
 - Housing Provision and Mix;
 - Community and Business Infrastructure; and
 - Local Economy and Town Centre

There was also a display of the seven sites which AECOM had selected as potentially suitable for development, with pros and cons. People were asked ‘would you support housing at this site?’ and invited to indicate, with stickers, whether the answer was Yes, No, or Maybe.

Members of the steering group were available to answer questions, and forms were provided for comments.

The comments from the public consultations were very supportive of the proposals presented, particularly the protection of local green spaces. The site survey showed a strong preference for the Leaffield/Hatherop Road site. This site had 25 more Yes than No answers, the only site with a net positive response. Full results are available from FTC.



5 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

VISION STATEMENT

By 2031 the vision is that ...

Fairford has built upon its status as an attractive and historic Cotswold market town, retaining the old and incorporating the new to be a vibrant, thriving community that successfully serves the wider rural area.

Well considered planning has ensured that Fairford has only grown and developed at a level that renewed and improved infrastructure is able to support. The features of Fairford that define much of its character and attraction – with parkland and green spaces interwoven into the town and the mix of buildings from six centuries– have been preserved and enhanced.

A range of regular local events, and the promotion of Fairford’s location as a base from which to explore the South Cotswolds, has encouraged visitors. Despite increasing visits, improved transport provision allows easy access to an attractive town centre with space for events, community groups and recreation. Increased attendance at events and activities has helped to support local businesses and the rural economy.

Fairford has proactively engaged with the climate change agenda to provide low carbon housing and increase the use of low (and no) carbon forms of transport. While provision has been improved for all forms of transport, targeted improvements to facilities, signage and navigation aids has reduced barriers for pedestrians, cyclists and those with limited mobility. Planning policy has been used to good effect to reduce vehicle usage and mitigate its effects in high-traffic areas of the town, and the link road to the east has reduced traffic in the town centre.

The local environment is key to the attractiveness of Fairford. Policies to improve provision for wildlife and to improve the ecosystem have been beneficial for people and the environment. Investing in green infrastructure has led to greater abundance and diversity of wildlife while supporting the mental and physical health of the local population.

Fairford has worked hard to ensure that the local economy remains vibrant. Local planning policy has ensured that residential development has not crowded out business and that space remains for a mixed local economy including light industrial, retail and service businesses.

The demographic challenges faced by our rural area have been met by development appropriate to the needs of residents-alongside housing, schooling and transport improvements, which encourage new families to live, work and study in Fairford.

Fairford truly is “A Good Place to Be”



ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED

- 5.1. The vision reflects how we expect the key issues in the future life of Fairford to be resolved for our shared benefit. The population of Fairford has increased by around a third since 2012, which has put a strain on all aspects of local infrastructure including the mains water and sewage systems, schools and health services. The location of Fairford at the lower end of the River Coln valley with high ground water levels for significant periods of time, calls for careful consideration when placing development within the town to avoid drainage problems.
- 5.2. Traffic has increased because of the rise in population in the town and other nearby settlements, as has congestion, particularly on the very constrained A417 through the town centre. This inhibits walking/cycling to schools etc. as well as impacting the local environment including damage to the soft limestone of listed buildings. However, the Special Landscape Area, river, lakes and Air Base impose constraints which have prevented a bypass route being found.
- 5.3. The historical setting of Fairford, with lakes, parkland, green corridors and green spaces interwoven into the town, and the mix of buildings from six centuries including the High Street frontage, are distinctive features of Fairford which are greatly valued by both residents and visitors, therefore having significant economic value, which would be lost if they are harmed by inappropriate development.
- 5.4. It is currently not clear what impact the plans for an expanded role for the Air Base will have on Fairford and its services. Many more servicemen and their families may need to be accommodated on the Base and in the wider locality. This would add to traffic and congestion but provide additional employment and boost the local economy.
- 5.5. Fairford has a population age profile that is relatively elderly but differs from the Cotswold average in that there are more teenagers but fewer people in their 20s and 30s (GCC, 2019; GRCC, September 2018). There is also a long-standing shortage of affordable housing for local young people; unfortunately, the recent tranche of development has not ensured an on-going supply for this purpose.
- 5.6. Fairford has increased in size but the low ratio of local employment to housing means that this growth has had relatively little benefit for the sustainability of the small-town centre, which is struggling to maintain 'critical mass', because out-commuters tend to shop elsewhere. Maintenance/enhancement of the attractiveness of the town centre, including shops and services, are important to encourage greater use by current residents and visitors and help it remain sustainable.
- 5.7. A particular concern in the Neighbourhood Area and the wider Cotswold Water Park area is the risk to aircraft at the Air Base from bird strike. This risk arises mainly from the large number of water bodies in the area, a legacy of gravel extraction, but also needs to be considered in relation to other development and its subsequent management.



OBJECTIVES

- 5.8. To achieve this shared vision, the FNP needs to focus on a small number of key objectives.

[1] NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- a. Ensure that any further housing development respects the character of the town and its rural setting.
- b. Bring local infrastructure up to an appropriate level to meet the needs of the expanded town.
- c. Ensure development and drainage designs protect environmental sites and groundwater sources (in accordance with Local Plan policies), including that they do not add to the amount of foul material entering the River Coln under 'storm' conditions.
- d. Ensure new development helps to maintain/enhance amenity and access.
- e. Protect wildlife and enhance local biodiversity.
- f. Maintain Horcott's historic identity as a separate settlement.

[2] CLIMATE CHANGE

- a. Consider flooding issues at the site selection stage.
- b. Avoid locating new housing in areas prone to flooding (all types⁴) or where it may increase risk of flooding to others.
- c. Ensure that drainage designs for new housing developments are based on sound data and analysis, including wet season groundwater levels.
- d. Ensure that new residential developments meet low carbon requirements, and that charging points for electric vehicles are provided.

[3] HOUSING PROVISION AND MIX

- a. Ensure that new residential developments provide the right housing mix for the existing and projected future demographic profile in Fairford.
- b. Ensure that development is phased to meet local infrastructure constraints.

[4] COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE

- a. Protect and support updating of existing facilities and development of appropriate new ones to cater locally for employment, sport, recreation, and social needs.
- b. To provide a sports/community building and associated ancillary facilities on the Coln House Playing Field (LGS) to support the use of the field for outdoor sporting and recreational purposes.

⁴ flooding can arise from several sources, namely fluvial (river), groundwater, surface water (highways) and from foul sewers



[5] LOCAL ECONOMY AND TOWN CENTRE

- a. Address imbalance between housing and local employment
- b. Facilitate good quality employment developments
- c. Promote appropriate mix of retail, service, community and tourism facilities to encourage business and increase footfall
- d. Make Fairford Town Centre an attractive and convenient place to visit and shop
- e. Identify suitable locations for new visitor accommodation (or conversions)



6 LAND USE POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1. This section sets out the land use policies that are intended to collectively achieve the vision and objectives set out in §5. Land use policies are used to determine planning applications made for development proposals. They can establish the principles for retaining or changing the use of land in settlements and in the countryside. They can also set out the conditions against which development proposals will be judged, in terms of, for example, their design or access.
- 6.2. The purpose of these policies is to encourage planning applications to be made for potential development that reflect the vision. The policies have been clearly written so that they can be easily interpreted and applied in the consideration and determination of planning applications.
- 6.3. The Fairford Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) deliberately avoids repeating existing national or local planning policies. The proposed policies therefore focus on a relatively small number of key land-use development issues in the town. For all other planning matters, the national and local policies of other planning documents, the NPPF and CDLP policies will continue to be used.



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FNP1 THE FAIRFORD AND HORCOTT DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES

- FNP1.1. The Neighbourhood Plan redefines the Development Boundaries at Fairford and Horcott, as shown on the Policies Map (Plan B, Appendix 1: Maps). Within the Development Boundaries applications for development will be permissible in principle. New-build open market housing will not be permitted outside the Development Boundaries unless it is in accordance with other policies that expressly deal with residential development in such a location.
- 6.4. This policy redefines the Development Boundaries at Fairford and Horcott that have been defined by Policy DS2 of the adopted Local Plan. It does so to firstly accommodate the developable area of the proposed site allocation in Policy FNP14 and secondly to remove the housing site allocated by Policy S5 of the adopted Local Plan (Milton Farm) that CDC accepts is no longer deliverable.
- 6.5. The policy restates the provisions of policies DS2 and DS4 of the adopted Local Plan in relation to the principles of development inside and outside the Boundaries. This will enable the policy to continue to operate with the full weight of the development plan in decision making in the event that the weight of the Local Plan policies is compromised by housing supply and/or delivery factors at the District level, with the provisions of NPPF §14 applying.
- 6.6. The policy will have the effect of focusing future housing and economic development on the existing urban area, where there will continue to be opportunities for redevelopment over the plan period. The policy does not rule out development outside the two settlements, but they do seek to confine proposals that are either necessary or especially suited to a countryside location. Other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan make provision for growing the town in the right place and at the right time, so the mistakes of the past in terms of lagging infrastructure investment should not be repeated. This policy defines the development boundaries at Fairford and Horcott, to enable the application of the relevant settlement and countryside policies of the Local Plan in this area (notably policies DS1 and DS2 of the Cotswold District Local Plan (CDLP)).



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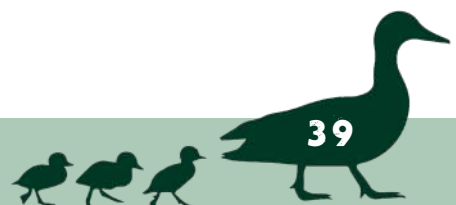


FNP2 PROVIDING A NEW BURIAL GROUND

FNP2.1. Proposals for a new burial ground will be supported, provided:

- a) ancillary buildings and structures are kept to a minimum for the operations of the use and are designed to minimise their effects on the landscape;
- b) they provide sufficient off-street car parking spaces where this is necessary to manage the impact on the local highway network; and
- c) The location is appropriate in terms of ground condition and flood risk

6.7. This policy encourages proposals to come forward to increase the capacity of local burial facilities. The existing burial ground has limited remaining capacity; the need for a new burial ground has been recognised for some time and is supported by both the Fairford Community Plan and the CDC Local Plan. No suitable sites have been made available during the plan preparation process. However, the FNP provides a positive and supportive policy over the plan period.



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FNP3 MAINTAINING VIABLE COMMUNITY FACILITIES

FNP3.1. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following land and buildings as community facilities for the purpose of applying Local Plan policies in relation to their protection and improvement:

- a) Fairford Community Centre
- b) Palmer Hall
- c) Fairford Library
- d) The Fairford Town Football Club ground and adjacent practice playing field
- e) Fairford Bowling Club
- f) Fairford Cricket Club Ground
- g) The Fairford Junior Rugby Club pitches
- h) The Fairford Rugby Club pitches (at Coln House School)
- i) Fairford Youth Football Club pitches
- j) Fairford Tennis Club
- k) Farmor's Sports Centre
- l) Riverside Garden

6.8. This policy acknowledges the invaluable role that the existing community facilities in the town play in community life. Policy INF2 of the Local Plan contains the necessary policy provisions to protect them from unnecessary loss or from proposals that will undermine their function and to encourage proposals that will enable them to remain viable, modern facilities to meet changing community needs. Policy FNP3 simply makes clear to which facilities in the town that Policy INF2 will apply and the value of each is summarised below. A map of the facilities can be seen in Appendix 1: Maps (MAP D: Community Facilities).



FAIRFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE

- 6.9. As part owners of Fairford Community Centre, with St. Mary's Church, the Town Council has a responsibility for maintaining the fabric of the building and wishes to ensure its long-term success for community activities. Part of the building serves as Council and Parish offices, and part provides Village Hall facilities. Fairford Community Centre Ltd., a registered charity, manages the lettable space in the building for community activities with special regard to the needs of the young, the elderly, the disadvantaged and the disabled. A Management Committee has been appointed to supervise maintenance of the fabric of the building and allocate costs between users and includes Town Council and Church representatives. However, the building is Grade 2 listed and it is important that the Council remains prepared for exceptional maintenance costs.

PALMER HALL

- 6.10. Fairford has a second community hall, the Palmer Hall, which includes a small stage for theatrical productions, and is run by a committee. It is an old building and requires regular upkeep and improvement. Fairford Town Council, as Custodian Trustees, has contributed to the recent refurbishment of the Palmer Hall, and will continue to provide grants for appropriate projects

FAIRFORD LIBRARY

- 6.11. This has a well-stocked library containing physical and audio, books and study space. Free public computers are available with internet access and computer buddies to help people who may need assistance. The library provides free public Wi Fi and houses a Library Growth Hub giving digital access to information to support businesses and entrepreneurs. The library provides a good range of activities, e.g., Story Time, Baby Bounce and Rhyme, Bookstart, Home Library Service and Library Club.

COMMUNITY SPORTS FACILITIES

- 6.12. Fairford is well served by community sports facilities, all of which play an integral part in retaining the viability of the town as an attractive place to live and work.
- 6.13. Fairford Town Football Club: The club consists of a clubhouse and 2 pitches off Cinder Lane to the East of Fairford town. The Clubhouse comprises: two bars (main bar and tea-bar), function hall including stage and skittle alley, home and away changing rooms, match and female officials' room, boardroom. The club provides social activities as well as football.
- 6.14. Bowling Club at East End. Formed in 1914 Fairford Bowling Club has a six-rink outdoor green, two rink indoor surface, licensed bar with dance floor and large indoor viewing area that can be adapted into a large dining/function hall.
- 6.15. Fairford Cricket Club: The site consists of a pavilion and one cricket pitch. The club was formed in 1889 and is known to be one of the oldest in the county. There are two Saturday league sides: one playing in Division Four of the Gloucestershire County Cricket League (GCCL); the other competing in Division Three of the Cotswold District Cricket Association



(CDCA) Cricket League. They also have a Friendly XI playing on Sunday afternoons. The Cricket Club ground is also used for community activities e.g. Fairford Festival.

- 6.16. Fairford Rugby Club: The Fairford Rugby Club shares the clubhouse of Fairford Cricket Club. The Senior Rugby team play on the Coln House School pitches and the junior teams now have their own pitches off Leafield Road on Ernest Cook Trust land. This pitch was new in 2015.
- 6.17. Fairford Town Youth Football Club. The club was founded in 1976 and its purpose is to provide and promote the playing of football for young people aged between 6-18, and girls under 13 of Fairford and the surrounding towns and villages. Efforts to improve the facilities, equipment and quality of coaching are ongoing. All coaches are qualified to a minimum of FA coaching level 1, are first aid trained, qualified in the safeguarding of children and all managers and coaches have an enhanced DBS check. The club is a FA Charter Standard Development Club.
- 6.18. Fairford Tennis Club: The site consists of two outdoor floodlit hard tennis courts and a small wooden clubhouse. There is no onsite parking provided. The club is open to players of all ages and abilities and has around 100 members. There is a varied offer of activities including social tennis, coaching, competitive league team tennis and a summer tournament.
- 6.19. Farmor's Sports Centre: The school site includes a facility, formerly owned on behalf of the community, incorporating indoor sports and gym facilities. This was run as a shared use facility until the end August 2019, by a subsidiary company of the Farmor's School Academy Trust. Community use of the facility is now very limited, and the gym is no longer available for community use.



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FNP4 MANAGING FLOOD RISK

- FNP4.1. When proposals for development are being considered, all sources of flood risk⁵ must be considered at the appropriate stages and the sequential and exception tests used to divert development to areas with lower probability of flooding, in accordance with NPPF guidance.
- FNP4.2. Proposals for development on land identified by the Environment Agency as lying within either Flood Zone 2 or 3, or in Flood Zone 1 in the circumstances outlined in footnote 55 of paragraph 167 of the July 2021 NPPF, will require a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), using appropriate calculations based on the highest expected groundwater levels for the area (200 year maximum). Proposals will only be supported where it can be demonstrated in the FRA that:
- a) they include appropriate site-specific measures to address effectively all the identified surface and ground water issues; and
 - b) any residual flood risk can be safely managed.
- 6.20. The natural floodplains of river valleys and minor watercourses are important features in terms of flood risk management. Future development sites should be guided away from these areas, using the Sequential Test, and should be preserved for flood water storage. Development in these areas would have detrimental effect on flood risk in the immediate vicinity and downstream, by displacing groundwater, and/or causing surface water to run-off onto neighbouring properties instead of soaking into the ground. Identifying areas suitable for water storage and safeguarding them from development, and harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water, are vital to surface water management.
- 6.21. Fairford, within the Cotswold Water Park (CWP), is subject to a number of particular issues with regard to flood risk:
- a) Fairford lies at the lower end of the River Coln catchment and has experienced significant fluvial, surface water and sewage flooding in the past. Lower lying areas could be at risk from more extreme events in the future due to climate change.
 - b) There are some ‘ordinary’ (minor) watercourses which have sufficient catchment to give rise to flooding which is essentially ‘fluvial’ in character at some locations –

⁵ “Flood risk” means risk from all sources of flooding - including from rivers and the sea, directly from rainfall on the ground surface and rising groundwater, overwhelmed sewers and drainage systems, and from reservoirs, canals and lakes and other artificial sources, as stated in NPPF guidance.



specifically the ditch (historic ‘drain’) on the western side of the town, feeding into the Horcott Lakes and thence via Totterdown Lane and the Air base to the Dudgrove Brook; the ditch starting at the top end of Lovers Walk and running down Hatherop Lane and thence along London Road ultimately to join the Court Brook at the eastern end of Lakes by Yoo; and the Court Brook itself downstream of Fairford where it is subject to flooding from the River Coln.

- c) The hydro-geology, which is locally variable, results in a high water table at some locations, particularly in wet seasons, and exceptionally variable confined groundwater levels, which has implications for deeper groundworks.
- d) There are groundwater flows in a generally south-easterly direction under and in the vicinity of the town. Development which affects these has the potential to increase surface and/or groundwater risks in areas ‘upstream’ or adjacent to the site.
- e) There are some areas of the town where infiltration type SuDS drainage may not be feasible to the extent that it may be impossible to avoid runoff and increased flood risk elsewhere in some wet seasons. The feasibility or otherwise of other types of SuDS in such situations needs to be considered on a site-specific basis, depending on the levels and space available.
- f) The sewerage system in the town suffers from significant amounts of surface water ingress, due to unavoidable historical connections, so that the capacity of the sewerage system is exceeded on occasions and this has resulted in sewage flooding in some locations as well as pollution of the river from ‘storm’ discharges.
- g) Fairford has experienced problems caused by increased surface water run-off during the construction phase of developments – something that has also been reported elsewhere in the district.

This is corroborated by evidence from the GCC studies, (especially the GIA (Atkins, April 2015) the CDC SFRAs (Halcrow, 2008) (JBA, 2014), as well as the WRA report (WRA, 2018).

6.22. This policy is designed to address these issues, to the extent that they are not adequately covered by CDLP policy EN14 and National policy and guidance (NPPF/PPG). The key points are:

- For all proposed developments (other than ‘minor development’) in the affected area as shown in the WRA report, developers must provide a site specific FRA at the first (full or outline) application stage, backed by appropriate on-site investigation of ground conditions and infiltration tests.
- For these affected areas, the design of drainage systems should take account of the ground water level found by infiltration tests, adjusted to a 200 year maximum level based on correlation with data from suitable boreholes in the vicinity for which both a concurrent measurement and long-term data is available.



- All types of flooding (including fluvial, surface water, ground water or sewage) should be taken into account. Evidence of incidence of these and the locations affected is included in the following specific sources:
 - CDC – Review and Response to the Summer 2007 Floods in Cotswold District, Second Phase Report (Hyder, July 2008)
 - Gov.uk – Long term flood risk information (for flood risk from sea or rivers or surface water)
- EA and WRA/Fairford Town Council borehole records should be consulted for information on ground water level variations in the area.
- Fairford Town Council and the relevant authorities (GCC, CDC and Thames Water) should be contacted when preparing the FRA to obtain any more specific or up-to-date information that may exist.
- In respect of all development within the Fairford Parish area, the guidance in section 6 of the CDC SFRA (JBA, 2014) should be followed, where it does not conflict with this policy and supporting guidance.
- Where a proposed development site is identified as being subject to a risk of any type of flooding and/or a drainage issue, the applicant must demonstrate by means of appropriate calculations at the initial application stage the feasibility of an effective mitigation solution that provides an acceptable risk of flooding for the development itself and avoids increasing flood risk anywhere else.
- The guidance in the Gloucestershire SUDS Design and Maintenance Guide (SDMG) (Dec 2015) should be followed for the design of SuDS and their associated management arrangements.
- Site specific FRAs and planning conditions should address potential issues that may arise temporarily during the construction phase of developments due to increased surface water run-off, to avoid increasing flood risk from this source to areas outside the site.

6.23. Additional supporting documentation and evidence base for this policy is included in the “FNP4 Supporting Evidence” document in the evidence base.



FNP5 INVESTING IN UTILITIES’ INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

- FNP5.1. Planning permission will only be granted to a development intending to connect to the sewer network if the sewer network can accommodate the additional demand for sewage disposal either in its existing form or through planned improvements to the system in advance of the construction of the development, to ensure that the environment and the amenity of local residents are not adversely affected.
- FNP5.2. Where a need for new or improved off-site utility infrastructure has been identified in order to support new development, any resulting proposals will only be supported where the proposed utility infrastructure will be delivered in line with an agreed phased timescale.
- FNP5.3. Development proposals will be required to make either satisfactory arrangements for the direct implementation of the off-site infrastructure, and/or an agreed financial contribution towards its provision by another party within the agreed timescale.
- FNP5.4. Planning permission for a development intending to connect to the sewer network must include conditions that require that new homes must not be occupied until it is demonstrated that the sewerage system has adequate capacity to accommodate the additional flow generated by the development. The condition may allow that the physical connection of new homes to the sewage treatment works may be delayed until enough homes are occupied to achieve sufficient flow through the sewerage system to avoid issues of septicity, during which time approved environmentally acceptable alternative arrangements (e.g., tankering) may be used, subject to Local Planning Authority agreement.
- 6.24. By “Utilities Infrastructure” this policy means not only sewerage and water supply (as set out in INF1 and INF8 of the CDC Local Plan) but also broadband. Flood protection is covered in FNP4.
- 6.25. Such “planned improvements to the system” may take the form of reduced surface and ground water inflow into the sewers, increased pumping station capacity or increased



sewage treatment works capacity. This plan does not stipulate which, but the effect must be to accommodate fully the additional demand.

- 6.26. This policy is intended to complement and strengthen Local Plan policies INF 1 and INF 8, particularly 11.8.8, 11.8.9 and 11.8.10, and ensure that developers work with Thames Water to plan for the necessary wastewater management infrastructure to accommodate growth in Fairford, taking account of the specific local circumstances. Fairford Town Council has been concerned for several years that further development would lead to overloading of existing sewerage infrastructure, since the population has increased dramatically in recent years. Ground and surface water ingress into the foul sewers adds to the problem, leading to sewage overspill in storm conditions and flooding of properties following prolonged and heavy rainfall.

RESIDENTS' FEEDBACK

- 6.27. In the Neighbourhood Survey, 88% of local people were concerned about the risk of flooding and 91% of respondents were concerned about overloaded sewers. There is therefore a strong expectation that the Neighbourhood Plan will require future development proposals to ensure that adequate sewerage infrastructure is delivered ahead of development.

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY (LPA)

- 6.28. As LPA for Fairford, Cotswold District Council (CDC), in its Local Plan policy INF8 indicates that development should be phased to allow infrastructure improvements to be implemented in time. INF8 requires any mitigation measures to be implemented in full before occupation of the development.
- 6.29. This policy refines Policy INF8 of the Cotswold District Local Plan (CDLP), which requires the impact of development on the capacity of existing off-site water and wastewater infrastructure to be considered and satisfactory provision for improvement to be made where a need is identified. It is expected that infrastructure upgrades will be required to serve the planned growth in Fairford. Because of this, the CDLP indicates that it would be prudent to phase sites allocated for housing development in Fairford to the latter part of the Plan period.
- 6.30. INF8 (1a) states "In addition, proposals should not result in a deterioration in water quality. Where a need for improvement or a risk of deterioration in water quality is identified, the Council will require satisfactory improvement or mitigation measures to be implemented in full prior to occupation of the development." CDC should ensure that there is adequate water supply, surface water, foul drainage and sewerage treatment capacity to serve new developments. Developers must demonstrate that there is adequate capacity both on and off the site to serve the development and that it would not lead to problems for existing users. The Water Cycle Study carried out for the Cotswold District (JBA, 2015) predicts that the Sewage Treatment Works (STW) at Fairford will require some infrastructure upgrade to accommodate higher flows and/or to prevent water quality deterioration. The study further concluded that Fairford STW has limited spare capacity



without the need for an upgrade. Development of sites greater than 15 units is identified as likely to require local network improvements, and sites larger than 40 may require catchment improvements downstream. Further proposed development (in the region of 50-100 units) may trigger the need for larger upgrades at the STW.

- 6.31. The CDC SFRA (JBA, 2014) states that developers “must liaise with sewerage undertaker at an early stage to prevent an increase in sewer flooding”.
- 6.32. The CDC SFRA (JBA, 2014) also states (6.5) that “Major developments and those upstream of areas where sewer flooding is known to be a problem must carry out wastewater capacity checks and should liaise with the sewerage undertaker at an early stage to prevent an increase in sewer flooding and/or spills from combined sewer overflows (CSOs) further down the wastewater system as a result of the development. The impact of an increased volume of foul water discharge on watercourses should also be considered for large sites, or where several sites are likely to be developed in the same STW catchment, particularly where the receiving STW discharges into the same watercourse as the surface water runoff from the site.”
- 6.33. The detailed implementation of this policy will be secured through the development management system either by way of planning conditions or through planning obligations. Fairford Town Council look to Cotswold District Council, as custodians of the development management system, to ensure that planning conditions are enforced, and planning obligations are met.

THAMES WATER (TW)

- 6.34. The provider, Thames Water, has acknowledged the problems of sewer and surface water flooding and is working on a drainage strategy for Fairford. Their publication “Fairford Drainage Strategy” (Thames Water, 2019) states (p8) that “Our sewers have become overloaded at times for a number of reasons, unfortunately leaving some of our customers with drainage issues such as sewer flooding, sewer blockages and restricted use of their toilets and bathrooms”
- 6.35. TW Fairford Drainage Strategy 2019 (p9) identifies these causes of drainage problems:
- More periods of prolonged and heavy rainfall
 - Growing numbers of people, houses and businesses entering the area
 - Loss of green spaces that previously provided natural drainage for rainwater as new paths, extensions and houses are built
 - Blockages in the sewer network,
 - Misconnected pipework that allows untreated wastewater to enter local rivers and streams
 - River water and groundwater entering our sewers.
- 6.36. In Thames Water’s current Business Plan period 2020-2025 it is delivering a sewer rehabilitation scheme to tackle the groundwater infiltration issues affecting its foul water



sewer capacity. The proposed works include relining approximately 244 metres of foul sewers in Courtbrook, the Croft and West End Gardens area.

- 6.37. To avoid sewage flooding, the Fairford sewage treatment works operates a fully compliant permanent storm overflow system which permits discharge of highly diluted sewage into local watercourses during storm events. To meet changing performance requirements and regulatory measures the works has undergone upgrades over the years. Thames Water has stated that “the capacity of the sewage treatment works is being reviewed due to the amount of new development now proposed within the catchment. Assessments will be undertaken to understand the phasing of the proposed future development and growth, and the operational implications for the existing sewage works.”
- 6.38. Thames water state that the scale of development in this plan is likely to require upgrades of the water supply network infrastructure. It is recommended that developers liaise with Thames Water at the earliest opportunity to agree a housing phasing plan. Failure to liaise with Thames Water will increase the risk of planning conditions being sought at the application stage to control the phasing of development in order to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of development.

WATER INTEGRATED WITH LOCAL DELIVERY

- 6.39. The Water Integrated with Local Delivery (WILD) group, a partnership project in the Cotswold Water Park working to improve the water environment, has reported (WILD, May 2016) that the water quality of the River Coln has deteriorated through ‘moderate’ to ‘poor’ in recent years. The water quality of the two SSSI lakes to the SE of Fairford is also reported as deteriorating.
- 6.40. This policy has been designed to address these matters and to ensure a close and effective relationship between future development in the town, CDC and the investment programmes of T.W. Developers must work with T.W. to plan for the necessary wastewater management infrastructure to accommodate growth in Fairford, to avoid unacceptable deterioration of water quality in the River Coln and quality of life for residents.



FNP6 MANAGING TRAFFIC IN THE TOWN

- FNP6.1. Proposals for a residential scheme of 10 or more homes or for a commercial scheme of more than 1,000 sq. m. gross internal area must identify and quantify in their transport assessments the effects of traffic generated by the scheme on its own, and in combination with other consented and allocated schemes, on the Fairford Conservation Area and on other heritage assets in the Town Centre. Where the potential for adverse effects has been identified then the proposals must make provision for the necessary mitigation measures to avoid contributing to the adverse effects caused to those assets.
- 6.41. This policy is intended to draw specific attention to the increasing levels of traffic passing through the town centre, both from the growth of the town itself and from development either side of the town. The A417 is especially narrow as it passes through the town centre and, aside from the Conservation Area, there are many historic buildings, the fabric of which may be undermined by any further, significant traffic using the road.
- 6.42. Due to their relatively soft limestone constructions historic buildings in the town experience damage due to vibrations and pollution effects from passing heavy vehicles.
- 6.43. Historic buildings in the town have also experienced damage from collisions with large vehicles using the main road through the town, notably at the narrow section at the bottom of the Market Place. Ensuring that collision risks are not increased is important for the preservation of those historic buildings that are adjacent to key traffic intersections.
- 6.44. Government strategy intends for the abolition of fossil fuel powered vehicles (The Road to Zero) (HMG, 2018) by 2040 at the latest and is currently consulting on the bringing forward of that target to 2035 or even earlier. The major migration away from fossil fuelled vehicles will therefore be well underway during the period of this plan.



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FNP7 IMPROVING ACCESS TO VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

- FNP7.1. Proposals within the Plan area to improve pedestrian and cycle access between Fairford and attractions within the Cotswold Water Park, Lechlade, the Thames and Severn Canal route and the Thames Path will be supported.
- 6.45. This policy encourages proposals to improve pedestrian and cycle access from the town to nearby visitor attractions. There are opportunities to develop the old railway line between Fairford and Lechlade (north of the A417) as a walking and cycle path and to upgrade existing walks and the introduction of new walks between Fairford, Cotswold Water Park lakes, Lechlade (southern route – south of the A417 through the Water Park) and surrounding villages. Fairford is a Walkers-are-Welcome town and maps and routes are available online and in leaflets. It is also possible to extend and create new walks to link Fairford with the Thames and Severn Canal route and the Thames Path near Lechlade.
- 6.46. Fairford has an existing number of walks by the river and lakes and into the surrounding countryside. There is an ongoing programme of rehabilitation and improvement with better signage, and the 'Access to the Countryside' scheme has provided a wheelchair-accessible riverside walk especially for disabled users and for visitors. The development of the old railway line as a foot/cycle path will also create an Eastern link with Lechlade, the Thames and the marina for use by locals, schoolchildren and visitors. This is included in the Cotswold District Local Plan.



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FNP8 PROTECTING LOCAL GREEN SPACES

FNP8.1. The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following land as Local Green Spaces, as shown on the Policies Map:

- c) The Walnut Tree Field;
- d) Upper Green;
- e) Coln House Playing Field.

FNP8.2. Development proposals that lie within a Local Green Space will only be permitted in very special circumstances

- 6.47. This policy proposes three important green spaces in and on the edge of the town are designated as Local Green Spaces in accordance with §101 and §102 of the NPPF. In each case, the green spaces play an integral part in the enjoyment of the town and are therefore special to the local community. A full description of each site, and the justification for its designation, is provided in the Landscape & Local Green Space Study in the Evidence Base. The NPPF requires that the Green Belt equivalent national policy provisions will apply to any proposals, whereby 'very special circumstances' must be demonstrated by development proposals unless there are exempted by NPPF §149 or §150.



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FNP9 PROTECTING THE FAIRFORD-HORCOTT LOCAL GAP

- FNP9.1. The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Fairford to Horcott Local Gap on the Policies Map.
- FNP9.2. Development proposals within the Local Gap will only be supported if they do not harm, individually or cumulatively, its open character.
- 6.48. This policy identifies the open land between the main settlement of Fairford and its smaller neighbour, Horcott, as a local gap preventing the visual coalescence of the two distinct components (Fairford and Horcott). The defined land is considered to be essential to the integrity of the gap and, although much of it also lies within Flood Zone 2, proposals that may otherwise be acceptable outside a Development Boundary defined in Policy FNP1 will not be supported if they do not maintain its open character. A full justification is provided in the Landscape & Local Green Space Study (Section 3) and in the Character and Design Assessment (p.1.2.18 and Section 6) both in the evidence base.
- 6.49. The Fairford-Horcott Local Gap includes Old Piggery Paddock; two fields south of Old Piggery Paddock; the Mere fields of Carters Ground and The Short Piece; Coln House School Playing Field (also proposed as a distinctive Local Green Space); Fairford Youth Football Club ground; and other land on either side of the River Coln to the south and east of the town centre.



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FNP10 RIVER COLN VALUED LANDSCAPE

FNP10.1. The FNP identifies land between the River Coln and Fieldway, as shown on the Policies Map, as a valued landscape.

FNP10.2. Development proposals in the River Coln Valued Landscape, that may otherwise be suited to a countryside location, will only be supported if they will maintain the essential open character of the land.

- 6.50. This policy defines an area of land around the River Coln and eastern edges of Fairford as a 'valued landscape' that is out of the ordinary in local landscape terms by way of its open, riparian character and the purpose this serves in helping define the significance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the ancient 'Fieldway' when viewed from the south east.
- 6.51. The policy aims to manage development proposals that are appropriate to the countryside but risk undermining the special character of the landscape. The network of rights of way in this area demonstrates its recreational value to residents and visitors and the on-going work carried out by volunteers aims to improve the wildlife value of the land and thus its value as a wildlife corridor.
- 6.52. This is a local designation and complements the growth strategy provided for by other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan and other policy designations. A full description of the land, and the justification for its designation, is provided in the Landscape & Local Green Space Study in the Evidence Base.
- 6.53. The designation complements the proposed Local Gap to its west and together they are intended to maintain the special landscape character and visual integrity of the land to the south of the town.
- 6.54. These 2 policy designations (FNP9 and FNP10) are intended to link up to create an effective insect and wildlife corridor/haven along the River Coln at Fairford. This constraint will not prevent the longer-term growth of the town, as explained in Policy FNP1.



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FNP11 VALUING HEDGEROWS AND TREES

- FNP11.1. Development proposals that require the removal of trees should make provision for their replacement with trees of (wherever possible) native species within the site boundary. Where appropriate each tree removed should be replaced with at least two new trees.
- FNP11.2. Development proposals that require the removal of all or part of a hedgerow should make provision in the landscape scheme:
- a) either for its replacement within the site of hedgerow of a similar length, height and form, and of similar or greater density of native species to match existing or nearby hedging;
 - b) or to deliver biodiversity value of the equivalent to that lost with additional hedgerow or other shrub or tree planting elsewhere within the site;
 - c) or to deliver a replacement boundary treatment of a different type which is more appropriate to the site and its surroundings and which respects and complements the wider development proposal.
- FNP11.3. Proposals for new planting should link, where appropriate, existing landscape features such as patches of woodland to watercourses or ponds. Hedgerows should be integrated into the development boundary features or be part of the open space provision to ensure their long-term management and retention.
- 6.55. This policy provides some detailed design guidance for managing the effects of development proposals on the trees and hedgerows of the Parish in support of the CDLP Policy EN7. Where practical, there will be an expectation that any tree lost will be replaced by two new trees. The size of the replacement trees should be based on the nature of the site and the ability of the new stock to become established and grow in a way which will ensure the effectiveness of the policy and which accords with CDLP Policy EN2 10.2.08: to provide a ‘sense of transition between the open countryside and an existing settlement’s historic core and character’. It is proposed that replanted trees and hedgerows should include significant numbers of blossom trees and plants in order to address the national crisis in pollinator numbers.



- 6.56. Over the past few decades, the landscape, watercourses, and biodiversity of this countryside has suffered serious damage through disease, development, neglect, and simple carelessness. This policy aims not only to maintain the status quo but to enhance the value of the landscape. The value of trees as a carbon sink is recognised in the minimum replacement ratio of 2:1. It should be noted that this complements the aims of the Cotswolds Conservation Board (Cotswold and Vale Ash Dieback Forum) and is in accord with moves to increase tree planting elsewhere (North Lincolnshire is proposing a 20:1 replacement ratio). In recent months ash dieback has arrived in Fairford and felling has begun. Re-planting the tree cover has suddenly become significantly more urgent.
- 6.57. Fairford is unusual in that most of the green planting throughout the town is within the curtilage of private properties, with Cotswold stone walls being the boundary of choice. The effort to plant trees in public places is longstanding and on-going but is limited by highways issues. Thus, new planting and renovation of hedgerows wherever possible is particularly valuable but not only as a means of enhancing existing landscapes. Hedgerows can also prevent soil erosion, capture pollutants such as fertilisers and pesticides running off fields, store carbon to help combat climate change, and provide homes for predators of many pest species. They also provide vital links across the countryside for wildlife, helping it to move about freely and keeping populations healthy.
- 6.58. The character of a place is found in the distinctive qualities of its landscape, cultures and built environment. A key environment issue in the Fairford Healthcheck (FTC, 2005) (EN3 p.61) was to 'keep Fairford green'. The recent rapid expansion along the A417 has meant that the remaining green spaces which are so characteristic of the town, have come under particularly severe pressure.
- 6.59. Any tree planting/replanting should be of trees labelled UKSG (UK Sourced and Grown Assurance Scheme)
- 6.60. Fairford has been identified by Buglife⁶ as being on a "B-Line" route for pollinators running through the Cotswolds West to East and along the Coln river valley. This emphasises the importance of the area for insect populations and raises the importance of appropriate planting and management of species to support wildlife. The Buglife work builds upon The National Pollinator Strategy (DEFRA, November 2014).

⁶ <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>



FNP12 ACHIEVING HIGH STANDARDS OF DESIGN

FNP12.1. Proposals for new development, including extensions to existing buildings, should be of the highest design standards, in accordance with the Cotswold Design Code and should have regard to the guidance of the Fairford Character & Design Assessment and to the following key design principles:

- a) There are key views listed in Appendix 3 which should not be obstructed, nor should their contribution to defining the character of the town and its relationship with the surrounding landscape be harmed
- b) More generally, development layouts and building orientation should not obstruct the occasional glimpse views of the surrounding landscape from within the town
- c) Short runs of low-level buildings in groups (1, 1.5 or 2 storey) should be placed at the edges of any development with higher (max. 2.5 storey) buildings kept to the centre for developments outside the town centre boundary
- d) The Cotswold stone of Fairford is the light, white/cream-coloured stone (not the yellow stone of the northern Cotswolds) with a light-coloured pointing. These are dominant and defining characteristics of the town and should therefore be the default material unless the nature and location of the proposal allow for the use of non-vernacular materials
- e) All solid fencing/walling should contain a 13cm square hole to enable the passage of hedgehogs and small mammals. If the barrier is particularly long e.g. in a boundary wall, then several holes should be included at regular intervals (ideally every 5m, with attention paid to



the needs of small animals as recommended in www.hedgehogstreet.org/development



Figure 10: Hedgehog friendly commercial fencing panel



Figure 9: Hedgehog access in Cotswold Stone wall

- f) Frontages and boundaries, where they are to be defined, should be demarcated with Cotswold stone walls, iron railings or hedging with practical maintenance arrangements in place if a hedge is to be planted
- g) Close-board timber fences should not be used to define boundaries to the frontage/roadside of new buildings
- h) Bin storage should be incorporated into new housing and commercial proposals in a manner which is sympathetic and does not detract from their character and appearance.
- i) Where 1960s imitation or reconstituted stone is to be replaced/covered, use natural and/or heritage materials, including rough cast render, rather than reproduction.
- j) Provision should be made for thoroughfares for pedestrians and cyclists providing quick and safe access to main arterial routes (alleyways and through routes are a typical feature of the town). Where linking alleyways are incorporated into new design they should be at least 2m wide.



- k) Development layouts formed of cul-de-sacs and crescents are not typical of old Fairford and are not encouraged in developments. Due consideration should be given to pedestrian/cycle connectivity and vehicle access resilience in the case of larger developments.
- l) Overhead services generally detract from the special character and appearance of the street scene and landscape and the opportunity should be taken as part of suitable development proposals to re-site them underground as part of that scheme.

FNP12.2. Development should also take account of any Fairford Design Code and/or any Fairford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

- 6.61. This policy complements the design policies of the CDLP (Policy EN2) and the application of the Cotswold Design Code (Appendix D of the CDLP) by requiring proposals to have regard to the Fairford Character and Design Assessment, prepared to evidence the FNP, and by identifying a number of specific characteristics and features of Fairford and Horcott. It has been formulated to have regard to the NPPF's approach to design whilst providing distinctiveness to the Plan area.



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FNP13 CONSERVING NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

- FNP13.1. The FNP identifies the buildings and structures, as listed in Appendix 2: List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets and shown on the Policies Map, as Non-Designated Heritage Assets by way of their local architectural or historic interest. Proposals that will result in harm to, or unnecessary loss of, a Non-Designated Heritage Asset will be considered having regard to the balance between the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.
- FNP13.2. Non-householder development on previously undeveloped land must allow for the evaluation of archaeological remains and the protection or investigation of other non-designated heritage assets of archaeological importance that may not be listed in Appendix 2: List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets.
- 6.62. This policy identifies several buildings, structures and other features that have local, social, historical and/or architectural interest in order that their significance is understood and taken into account in development proposals. They are therefore specifically regarded as ‘non-designated heritage assets’ in respect of para. 197 of the NPPF.
- 6.63. CDLP Policy EN12 provides the basis on which proposals will be judged in seeking to avoid unnecessary loss of, or damage to, its local heritage value. Each asset has been assessed against the criteria provided in that policy for buildings, structures and historic parks and gardens as set out in the Evidence Base (FNP13 Conserving Non-Designated Heritage Assets). This document includes photographs and maps showing the location of each of the assets.
- 6.64. In addition, as mentioned in the ‘Brief History of Fairford,’ Section 2.16-2.23, there is abundant evidence of prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval settlement within and around the town. The policy therefore draws specific attention to the likelihood of below ground archaeological remains so that development proposals make the necessary provision for investigations.



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FNP14 A NEW LOW CARBON COMMUNITY IN FAIRFORD

- FNP14.1. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land between Leafield Road and Hatherop Road (north of John Tame Close and St. Mary's Drive, as shown on the Policies Map) for a low, or zero, carbon residential development.
- FNP14.2. Proposals for housing development of around 80 homes will be supported, subject to delivery of a comprehensive proposal satisfying the following criteria:
- Development is not commenced until the necessary upgrade and improvements to the local utilities infrastructure are as provided for by Policy FNP5 Investing in Utilities' Infrastructure Improvements;
 - Development conforms with the requirements of FNP15 to deliver appropriate housing type and mix;
 - Development conforms with the requirements of FNP16 to deliver sustainable housing;
 - The layout and landscape scheme incorporate appropriate measures, including tree planting, to mitigate the visual effects of the development on the countryside to the west, north and east of the site, with provision for this to be maintained in perpetuity;
 - Development satisfies, as a minimum, the standards required for the "Building with Nature⁷ – Design" level. Developments that meet the higher levels ("Good", "Excellent") of the standard would be strongly supported.
 - The design and landscaping have regard for the setting of the Fairford Conservation Area;

⁷ <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/how-it-works>



- g) Provision is made in the layout for the future provision of a link road giving access between the schools and the A417 to the east of the town;
- h) A dropping-off point away from the school is provided, with a safe walking route to the schools;
- i) The scheme provides one or more areas of publicly accessible open space, including a children’s play area (Local Equipment Area for Play “LEAP”) and a community garden or allotments;
- j) Provision is made for the delivery of self or custom build plots in line with CDLP policy H1;
- k) The scheme keeps housing away from areas prone to surface or ground water flooding and incorporates measures to contain and attenuate surface water either in low lying areas within the site boundary or on other land in accordance with FNP4; and
- l) Provision is to be made for affordable housing in accordance with CDLP policy H2.

FNP14.3. The development of this site will be required to mitigate its impact on the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) at North Meadow near Cricklade.

- 6.65. This policy proposes developable land between Leafield Road and Hatherop Road for a housing scheme to meet a share of the district’s housing needs once essential utilities works have been completed in the local area.
- 6.66. This policy proposes that the new development should only be delivered using low and zero carbon housing in order that local policy may begin the practical steps needed to implement the climate emergencies declared by the planning authorities (CDC, GCC) in the locality.
- 6.67. This policy proposes that the new development should meet with the FNP15 requirement to deliver homes to the “Lifetime Homes” standard in order that people will be able to stay in their own homes for longer, reducing the need for future adaptation and providing greater choice to those who cannot achieve independent living due to lack of suitable housing. While these standards apply to residents of all ages, the demographic trend in the Cotswolds towards a much older population make the implementation of such housing in our area a higher priority.



- 6.68. With the expansion of the schools there has been increasing pressure on Leafield Road for parking/access and a number of junctions around the centre of the town, including those of Park Street/Leafield Road and Lower Croft/A417. The FNP’s Helix Transport report (Helix Transport Consultants, February 2016) identified a number of issues associated with these junctions and associated roads (e.g. the bend at the eastern end of The Croft).
- 6.69. This policy makes provision for a link road to give access to the schools and Air base from the east of the town, which would relieve congestion in the historic town centre, in accordance with Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan⁸ (in preparation).
- 6.70. At the junction of Hatherop Road with Hatherop Lane, visibility and footpath improvements may be needed to ensure safe crossing between Lovers Walk and Hatherop Lane, which is part of the route to school from other housing developments at the east end of Fairford. The precise configuration and details for all these aspects, and funding arrangements, would need to be agreed with GCC Highways as part of the master planning process.
- 6.71. In the interest of community cohesion and convenience for families, plus environmental considerations such as reducing car journeys, as well as taking account of the options considered for the schools’ expansion, it is considered most suitable to provide for both the additional facilities and additional housing on this site.
- 6.72. This site is proposed as an alternative to land at Milton Farm and Betterton’s Close (F_35B), as in policy S5 of the CDLP, for the following reasons:
- a. The F_35B is not being put forward by the landowner for development and is not considered to be deliverable in the lifetime of the CDLP;
 - b. Proximity to the schools and relatively easy and safe access to these, the town centre and community facilities, relative to sites to the south of the A417;
 - c. Ability to include provision of significant public open space, links to other footpaths;
 - d. Ability to provide a drop-off/pick-up facility away from the schools but within easy walking distance, helping to relieve traffic on Lower Croft and Leafield Road in particular;
 - e. Ability to include provision for a link road to the east of the town, which would improve connectivity to the East and help relieve congestion;
 - f. The concentration of the allocation on a single site, rather than spread over several smaller sites, makes the provision of affordable housing, self-build houses and community facilities (playgrounds, landscaping, e-charging points etc) more viable. Also if the allocation is spread over several sites, there will be a number of different constraints to overcome for the different sites.

⁸ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/gloucestershires-local-transport-plan-2015-2031/draft-ltp/>



- g. The NPPF requires Local Planning to steer development away from areas with higher flood risk towards areas with a lower probability of flooding. This site has enough land of low flood risk to accommodate the housing requirement;
 - h. The site is not in any water supply Source Protection Zone (SPZ).
- 6.73. The utilities works are not currently committed but awaiting decisions by Thames Water. This means that the scheme is unlikely to contribute to meeting the District’s five-year supply of housing until later in the plan period. The town is at the end of a significant new building programme of around 450 homes, so the scheme is not necessary to meet local needs within the next few years, but it is expected to be delivered before the end of the plan period.
- 6.74. Although the land comprises green fields on the edge of the town, the land is only considered to be of medium sensitivity to development (Site Assessments Report) and it is considered a more sustainable way for the town to grow; locating new homes closer to the schools, away from sensitive landscapes and in areas of lower flood risk.
- 6.75. To provide a ‘soft’ edge to the town, the form of development would need to be relatively low density, and incorporate significant tree planting, particularly towards the north and west of the site, in order to replicate the parkland character of the Special Landscape Area to the east, with fields separated by belts of trees and over-grown hedgerows. This would help to screen the development from the wider landscape to the north (including the AONB) and the east – a landscape of which the White report (White Associates, June 2000) says “The deterioration of tree cover, hedges and walls would make this area bleak”.
- 6.76. The WRA Hydrology Report (WRA, 2018) indicates that the southern parts of both F_51B and F_51C, as well as an area around the ditch between these, are subject to high ground water levels and surface water flooding at times. This means that housing should be kept away from these. The zone along the southern part of these sites may be particularly suitable for attenuation ponds, which would help to manage the flow into the watercourse running down adjacent to Lovers Walk and then down Hatherop Lane to the A417 and thence eastwards, also helping to mitigate existing flood risk there. Because of the risk of construction works temporarily adding to surface water run-off, it is suggested that these attenuation ponds should be completed at the start of development.
- 6.77. Any development of this site should take account of the Cotswold Water Park SSSI IRZ and should consult Natural England at an early stage.
- 6.78. Any development of this site should incentivise a shift away from petrol/diesel vehicles by ensuring that integrated electric vehicle charging points are installed.



FNP15 HOUSING TYPE AND MIX

- FNP15.1. Proposals for housing development should provide a mix of housing types that have an emphasis on two and three-bedroom houses.
- FNP15.2. Proposals for new housing that go beyond the requirements of Building Regulations and implement the design criteria set out in “The Lifetime Homes Design Guide” will be supported.
- 6.79. This policy is intended to guide the mix of development standards, housing types and tenures of the schemes provided for by the Neighbourhood Plan and by windfall schemes that are consistent with Policy FNP1 over the course of the plan period.
- 6.80. The mix of requirements will inevitably change as the economy and demographics of the town evolve. In which case, such changes will be reflected in future reviews of the Neighbourhood Plan. Although the onus is on developers to assess local needs for different types of home at the time they propose a development, this policy provides a useful guide to ensure local housing supply maintains a wide variety of stock in the town.
- 6.81. The analysis of ‘intentions to move’ in the community questionnaire suggested a net over-supply of 2, 3 and 4 bed terraced/semi-detached houses, but this might simply reflect aspirations to move to a larger house. It showed an under-supply of bungalows (particularly 3 bed) and retirement home places; also an under-supply of 3 bed detached homes (possibly up and down-movers) but an over-supply of 4 bed+ properties (potential downsizers). However, it is recognised that this records only people wishing to move within Fairford and does not represent total supply and demand.
- 6.82. The 2011 Census showed 1462 houses in Fairford. Of these, 182 were affordable dwellings, representing 12% of the total housing stock. By September 2015 there were 254 affordable homes representing approximately 16% of the total housing stock of 1,586 (according to CDC Housing as at 30th September 2015). In 2016, 116 households registered on Gloucestershire Homeseeker put Fairford, or one of the adjoining parishes of Lechlade, Kempsford, Quenington, Meysey Hampton and Hatherop, as their preferred location to live. However, expressing a preference does not necessarily imply that applicants have a ‘local connection’ to Fairford (GRCC, September 2018).
- 6.83. Between 2011/12 and 2017/18 a total of 400 new dwellings were built in Fairford:

Banding	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Additional dwellings	0	34	104	71	111	55	0	0

Table 2: Additional dwellings build in Fairford (March 2011 – August 2018) by Council Tax Band



6.84. By August 2018, the total housing stock in Fairford had risen to 1838 and the Council Tax Banding was:

Banding	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Number of dwellings	102	352	580	214	268	234	82	6

Table 3: Total Housing stock in Fairford (August 2018)

- 6.85. The percentages of dwellings overall in Fairford in the lower Council Tax bands A and B reduced considerably between Census 2011 and August 2018, as developers preferred to build larger and more expensive houses.
- 6.86. A conclusion of the housing stock report (GRCC, September 2018) was that affordability is an issue for people looking to buy or rent privately in Fairford, where house purchase prices and rents are higher than average in England and incomes are lower.
- 6.87. The total affordability ratio (the ratio between the total house price and annual earnings) for the lowest quartile (affordable) house prices in the Fairford/Lechlade area is almost double the national average (OSCI, 2017).
- 6.88. The Cotswold District has the highest proportion (25.2%) of people aged 65+ in Gloucestershire (GCC, 2019)⁹. That figure compares to a figure of 18% for England as a whole.
- 6.89. While aging populations are a national challenge, within Fairford and Cotswold District, the population is aging more rapidly than the average for England. The 65+ population in Cotswold rose by 29.5% in the 10 years between 2007 and 2017.
- 6.90. The Cotswold District, of which Fairford is a part, is expected to experience an increase in the over 65 population of 55.8% from 2016-2041.
- 6.91. Lifetime housing standards seek to address the needs of all users but have a particular role to play in ensuring that the housing we build today remains suitable for the needs of an aging population.
- 6.92. A detailed comparison of Building Regulations requirements versus Lifetime Homes Design Criteria are provided by Habinteg (Habinteg Housing Association, 2015)¹⁰.
- 6.93. The major migration away from fossil fuelled vehicles will therefore be well underway during the period of this plan. The plan therefore ensures that provision is made for suitable electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

⁹ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/12777/equality-profile-2019-final.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.habinteg.org.uk/reports-and-briefings/accessible-housing-standards-2015-824>



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FNP16 ZERO CARBON BUILDINGS

- FNP16.1. Subject to the development being found to be acceptable when judged against other policies in the FNP, innovative approaches to the construction of low carbon homes which demonstrate sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency levels will be supported. Examples would include, but would not be limited to earth sheltered, rammed earth, or straw bale construction, construction to Passivhaus standards, conversion to EnerPHit standards.
- FNP16.2. The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of micro-renewables in historic buildings will be encouraged, including the retrofitting of listed buildings, buildings of solid wall or traditional construction and buildings within conservation areas, whilst safeguarding the special characteristics of these heritage assets for the future.
- FNP16.3. All new non-residential buildings should achieve the BREEAM Excellent standard.
- 6.94. Planning authorities in the Fairford planning area have declared Climate Emergencies. Cotswold District has a stated intention to revise its local plan to address this emergency, however that process may take several years to complete, and this policy ensures that a policy response to climate change is enacted in a timeframe consistent with an emergency.
- 6.95. Despite the relative affluence of the Cotswold District it still has a fuel poverty rate of approximately 10.2%¹¹ (2019 report from 2017 data) (UK Government, 2019). This rate is higher than in the rural districts that surround the Cotswolds. Improved energy efficiency standards significantly reduce running costs for households and reduce the likelihood of that household falling into fuel poverty.
- 6.96. The major migration away from fossil fuelled vehicles will therefore be well underway during the period of this plan. The plan therefore ensures that provision is made for suitable electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- 6.97. Planning authorities covering the Fairford planning area have declared Climate Emergencies. Non-residential development must also respond to the need for energy efficient, low carbon development and the BREEAM standard provides a benchmark for such development.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-2019>



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FNP17 GROWING OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

- FNP17.1. Insofar as planning permission is required proposals to intensify an existing business use on the Whelford Lane Industrial Estate, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported, provided that use lies within either Class E(g), Class B2 or Class B8 and that the proposal is accessed from the highway using the existing access to the A417 via Whelford Road. Proposals for new buildings on vacant land in the Estate for any other use falling within Class E will not be supported.
- 6.98. This policy complements policies EC2 and EC3 of the CDLP by supporting proposals to intensify the use of land at the Whelford Lane Industrial Estate.
- 6.99. With the town seeing around 450 new homes built in recent years, the local community is keen to see the number of quality local jobs increase to provide local employment opportunities as an alternative to commuting to nearby towns. The two existing industrial estates are already successful locations and can deliver new jobs by extending their site areas or intensifying their use without any significant environmental or amenity harm.



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FNP18 SUSTAINING A SUCCESSFUL TOWN CENTRE

- FNP18.1. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the Town Centre, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of applying other development plan policies relating to retail development.
- FNP18.2. Insofar as planning permission is required proposals for the conversion of Class E business premises in the town centre to residential use will not be supported. The loss of main town centre uses floorspace on the ground floor within the Town Centre boundary identified on the Policies Map will only be supported if the development does not harm the vitality and viability of the Town Centre and evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the property has been continually, actively and effectively marketed for at least 12 months and that the use is no longer of commercial interest.
- FNP18.3. Proposals for conversion to residential use will be supported on the upper floors of business premises in the Town Centre, provided that the conversion would not adversely affect the viability of the premises for commercial use.
- FNP18.4. Proposals to improve the Market Place to create a more attractive environment for shoppers and visitors, including expanding the pedestrian area in front of the Bull Hotel, will be supported, provided any loss of existing car parking spaces is compensated for by new spaces within or on the edge of the Town Centre.
- 6.100. This policy defines the town centre and frontages for the operation of development plan policies managing retail and non-retail space and development.
- 6.101. As a country market town Fairford needs to adapt to meet the needs of an increased population (largely on the fringes of the town), an ageing existing population with decreasing mobility, requiring the town to be more self-sufficient in provision of services, and competition from other centres including out of town retail developments. Discussions with the town's retailers and through the Plan consultation days, has identified the need for the town centre to be more attractive and pedestrian friendly, with improved parking and walking/cycling links from the new developments. This policy and policy FNP7 together are designed to achieve this goal.



- 6.102. In order to protect the vitality and viability of the centre it is important that marketing is effective both in terms of visibility to potential local business users and commercial terms being realistic in relation to the size of the centre.
- 6.103. Because several premises now only have reduced ground floor business space, they may be dependent on storage, office or other facilities to maintain their viability as a business unit. This needs to be taken into account when considering applications for change of use on upper floors.



FNP19 NEW VISITOR ACCOMMODATION

- FNP19.1. Proposals for the development of new visitor accommodation or for a change of use to such accommodation will be supported, provided they are located either within the defined Fairford Development Boundary or comprise the appropriate and sustainable reuse of a redundant agricultural building in the countryside.
- FNP19.2. Proposals for camping facilities outside the defined Fairford Development Boundary will be supported provided there are not harmful effects on landscape and wildlife and the facility would be well related to the main tourist routes.
- 6.104. This policy encourages proposals to create new visitor accommodation in and around the town to stimulate greater economic activity from tourism. There is currently limited provision of publicly advertised visitor accommodation.
- 6.105. There is a range of cottages and rooms to rent privately through online websites, but the current provision is not affordable to low income individuals and families.
- 6.106. Due to the lack of affordable accommodation, priority will be given to the development of new visitor accommodation that demonstrates a commitment to providing affordable short-term accommodation.
- 6.107. Providing more flexibility for the provision of additional visitor accommodation, particularly within the expanded Town Centre boundary, will help to increase the market for daytime and evening services in the town centre and retain visitors in the town for longer, and hence improve its vitality and viability.
- 6.108. Offering a range of accommodation from budget to premium, will ensure a broad mix of visitors, including walkers, cyclists and larger families. Providing child and dog-friendly accommodation will also attract a wider tourist base.



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7 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Neighbourhood plans provide local communities, like Fairford, with the chance to shape the future development of their areas. Having been approved at referendum, and ‘Made’ by Cotswold District Council, it has become a statutory part of the development plan for the Cotswold District and its policies will carry significant weight in how planning applications are decided, alongside other policies that apply across the District. The plan will direct future development at Fairford to meet the changing needs of the community over the next fifteen or so years. It indicates where and when that development should take place and what additional infrastructural and community facilities should be put in place to meet the needs of the town. The Neighbourhood plan should support the delivery of strategic policies set out in the local plan or spatial development strategy and should shape and direct development that is outside of those strategic policies (NPPF par.13) It should contain policies for the development and use of land. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF also states (§12) that where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date neighbourhood plan (as part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted.

Most of the policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered by landowners and developers. In preparing the Plan, care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the policies are achievable. Whilst the District Council will be responsible for determining applications, the Town Council will use the Plan to frame its representations on submitted planning applications. It will also work with the District Council to monitor the progress of sites coming forward for development

Once a neighbourhood plan is “made” the local community benefits from 25% of the revenues from the Community Infrastructure Levy arising from the development that takes place in their area. Allocating sites and producing housing policies demonstrates that the neighbourhood plan is planning positively for new homes, and provides greater certainty for developers, infrastructure providers and the community. In turn this also contributes to the local authorities’ housing land supply, ensuring that the right homes are delivered in the right places.

The Town Council will guide investment of any future Community Infrastructure Levy passed on to it by the District Council into projects identified as needed/wanted by the local community.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The Town Council, in consultation with residents, has committed to prioritising the following community infrastructure projects in the town:

- Fairford to Lechlade multi-use circular path
- Victory Villas verge improvements and reinstatement of pavement



- Skate Park upgrade and improvements
- Coln House Community Sports Building
- Transport Plan incorporating reduction in speed limits, electric car charging points, improvements to the marketplace, improvements to footpaths and increased accessibility and road safety measures.
- New Burial Ground

The Town Council will endeavour to negotiate S106 agreements on future developments that are directly related to one or more of these project proposals to secure financial contributions. It will also use the list to guide its investment of any future Community Infrastructure Levy that is charged by the District Council within the Parish and is passed on to it (a minimum of 25% of the Levy once the Neighbourhood Plan is made).

MONITORING & REVIEW POLICY

The Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored by the District Council and the Town Council using data collected in planning monitoring reports. The objectives will form the core of the monitoring activity, but other data collected and reported at the town scale that is relevant to the Plan may also be included. It is expected that the Fairford Neighbourhood Plan will be formally reviewed every five years, or more frequently if circumstances change, in order to meet the changing needs of the community over time.



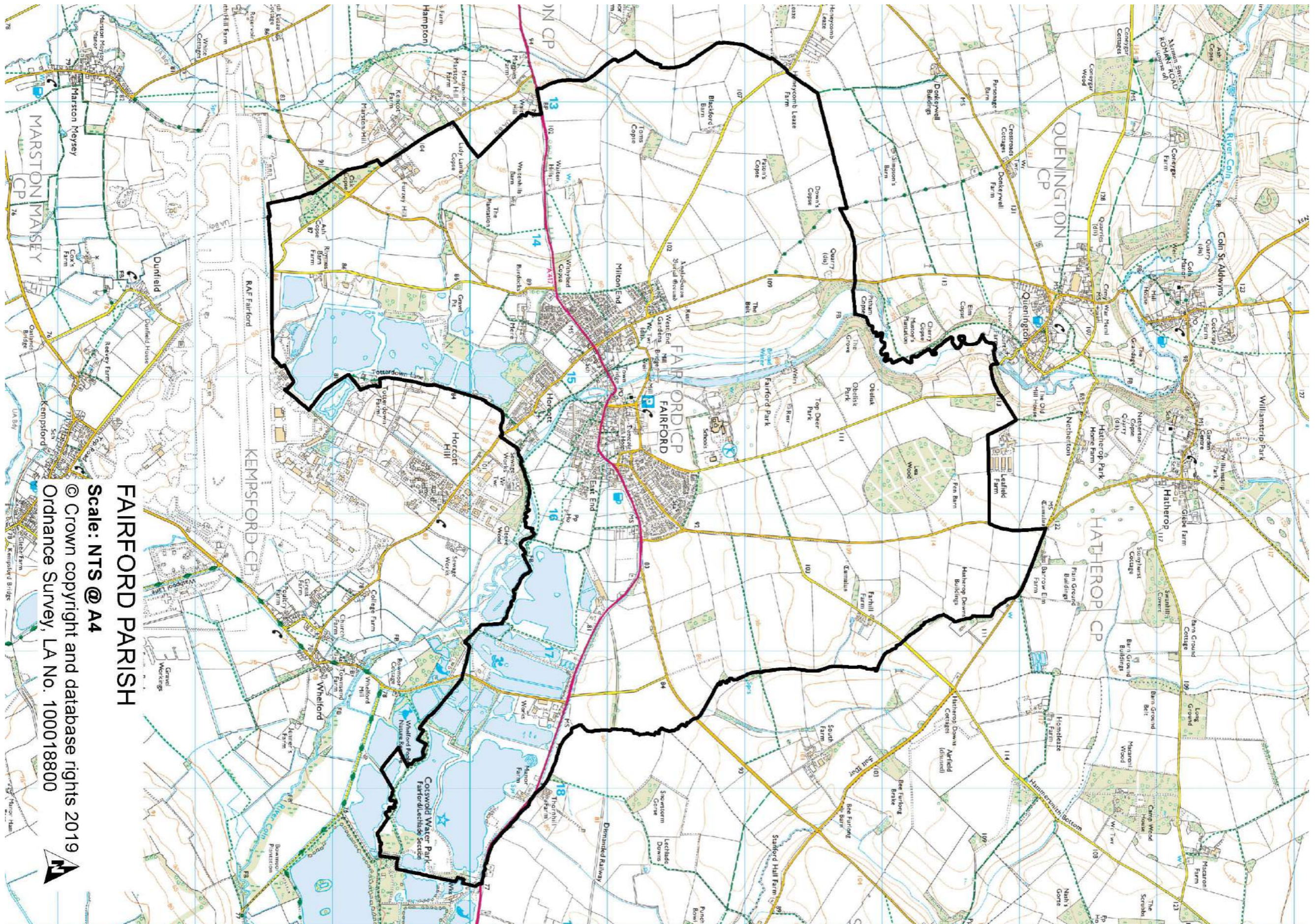
A1. APPENDIX 1: MAPS

Maps included are:

- Map A: Fairford Parish Map
- Map B: Fairford Policies Map
- Map B1: Fairford Policies Map (Central Area)
- Map B2: Fairford Policies Map (Development Boundary Area)
- Map C: Heritage Assets
- Map D: Community Facilities
- Map E: Historical Environment and Landscape Designations



MAP A: FAIRFORD PARISH

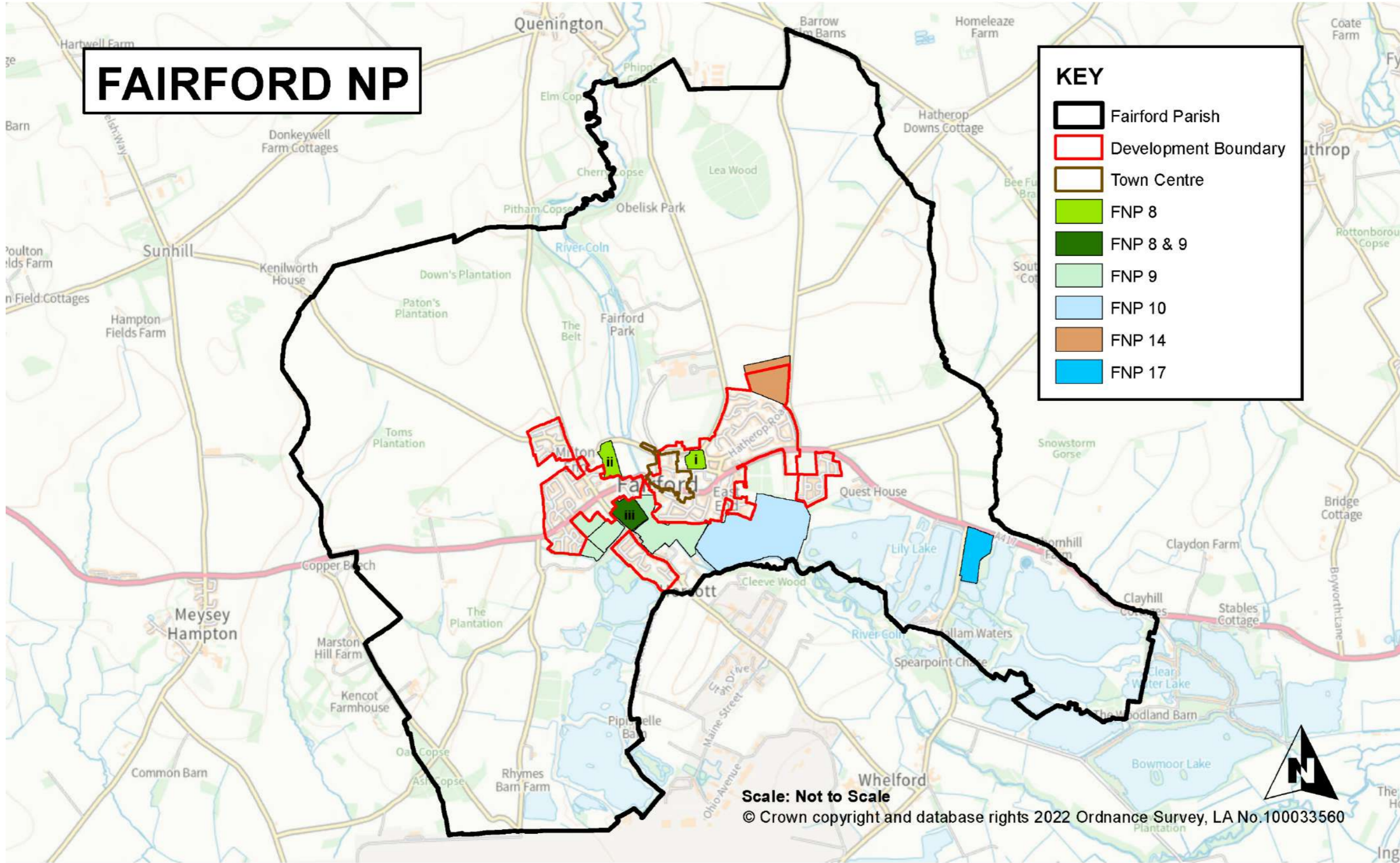


FAIRFORD PARISH

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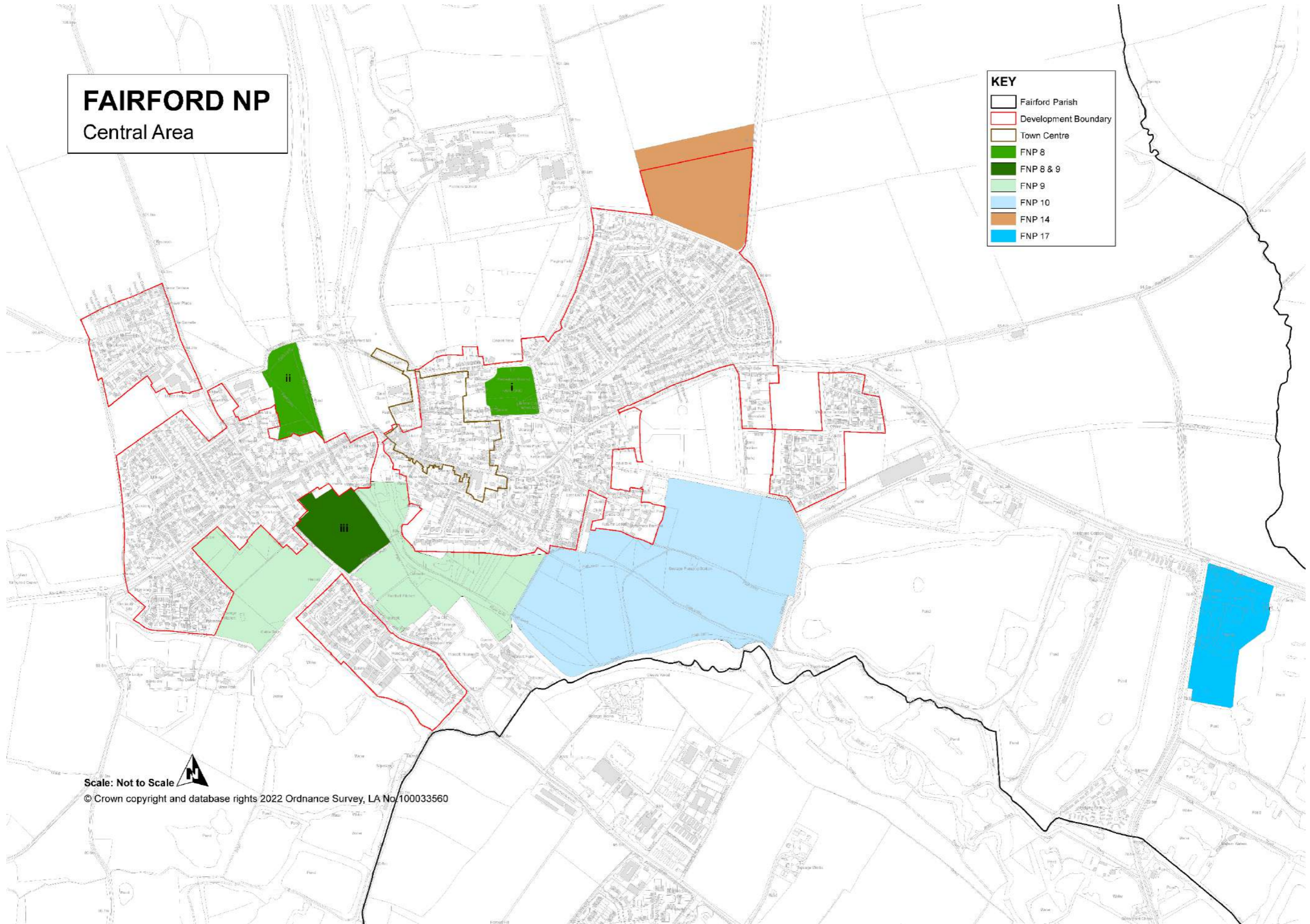




FAIRFORD NP
Central Area

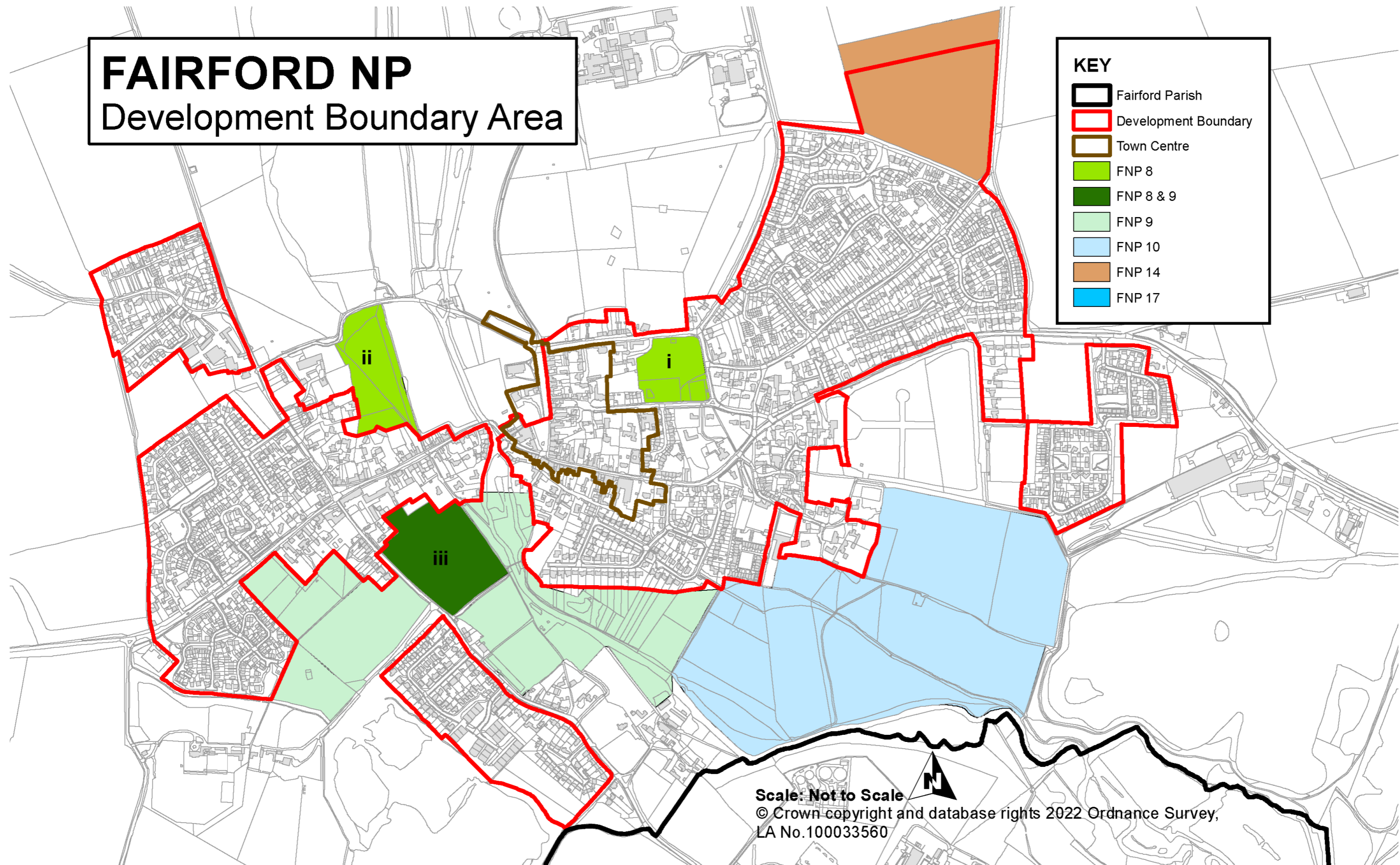
KEY

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	Development Boundary
	Town Centre
	FNP 8
	FNP 8 & 9
	FNP 9
	FNP 10
	FNP 14
	FNP 17

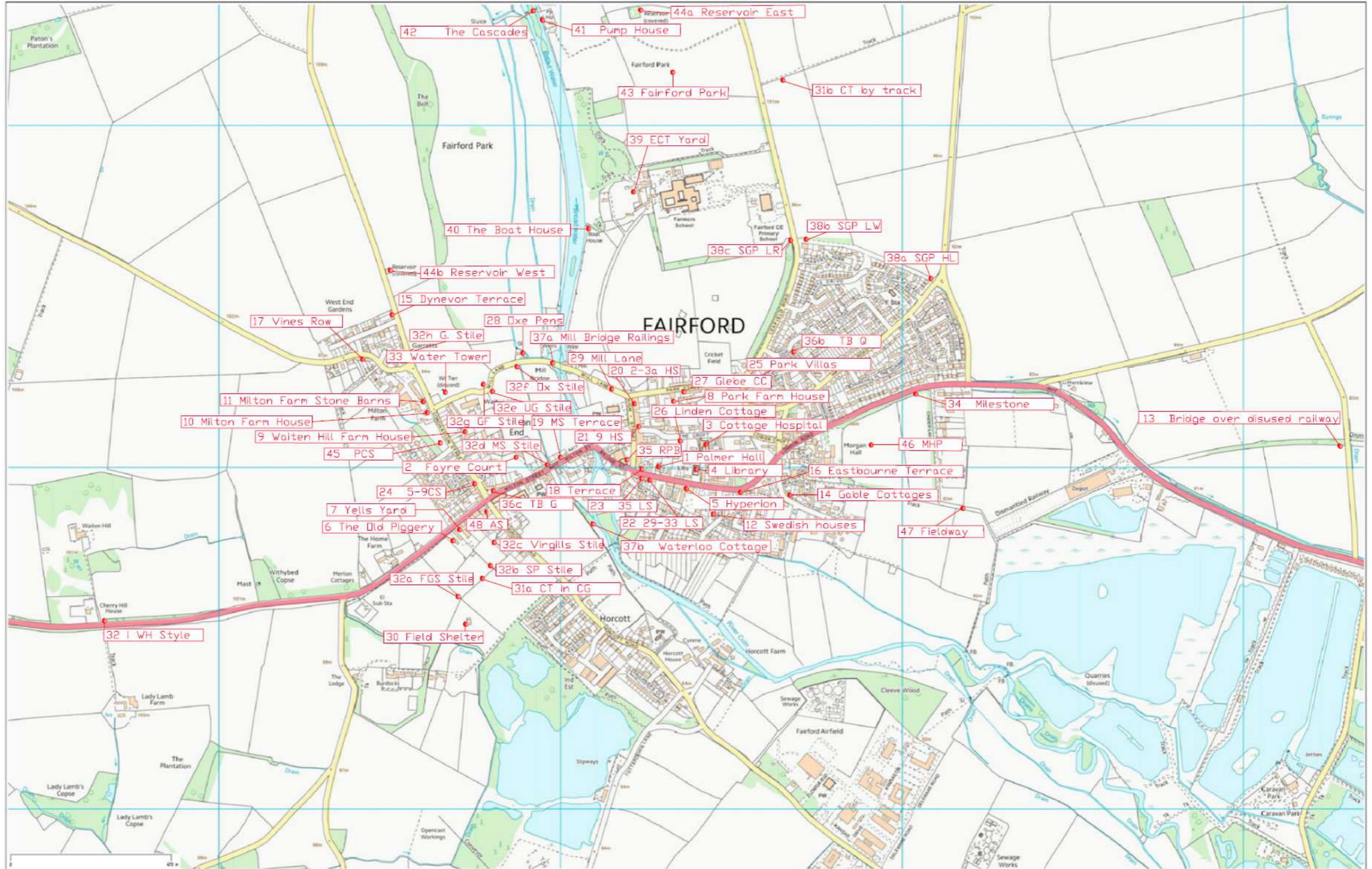


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MAP C: HERITAGE ASSETS

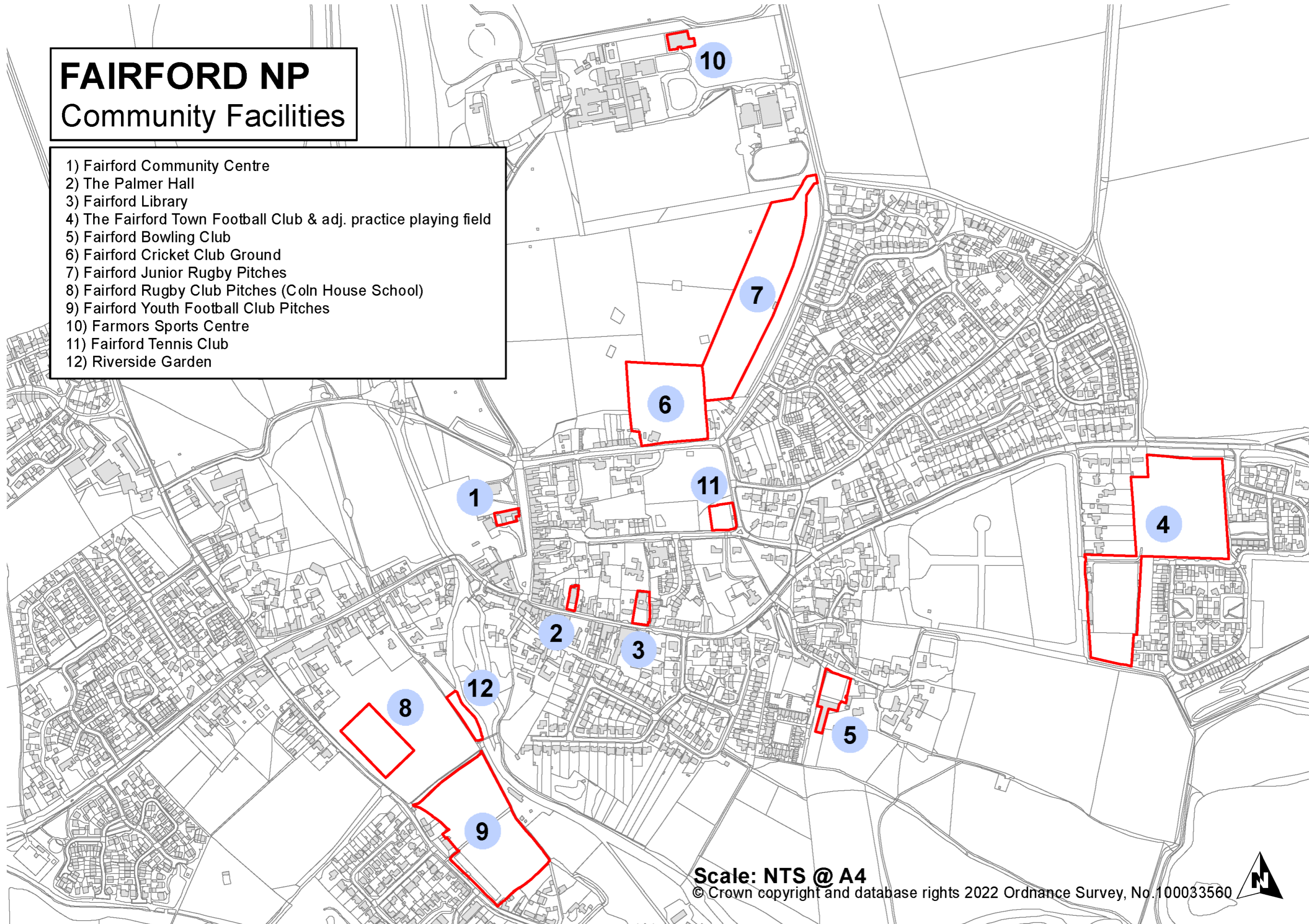


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FAIRFORD NP Community Facilities

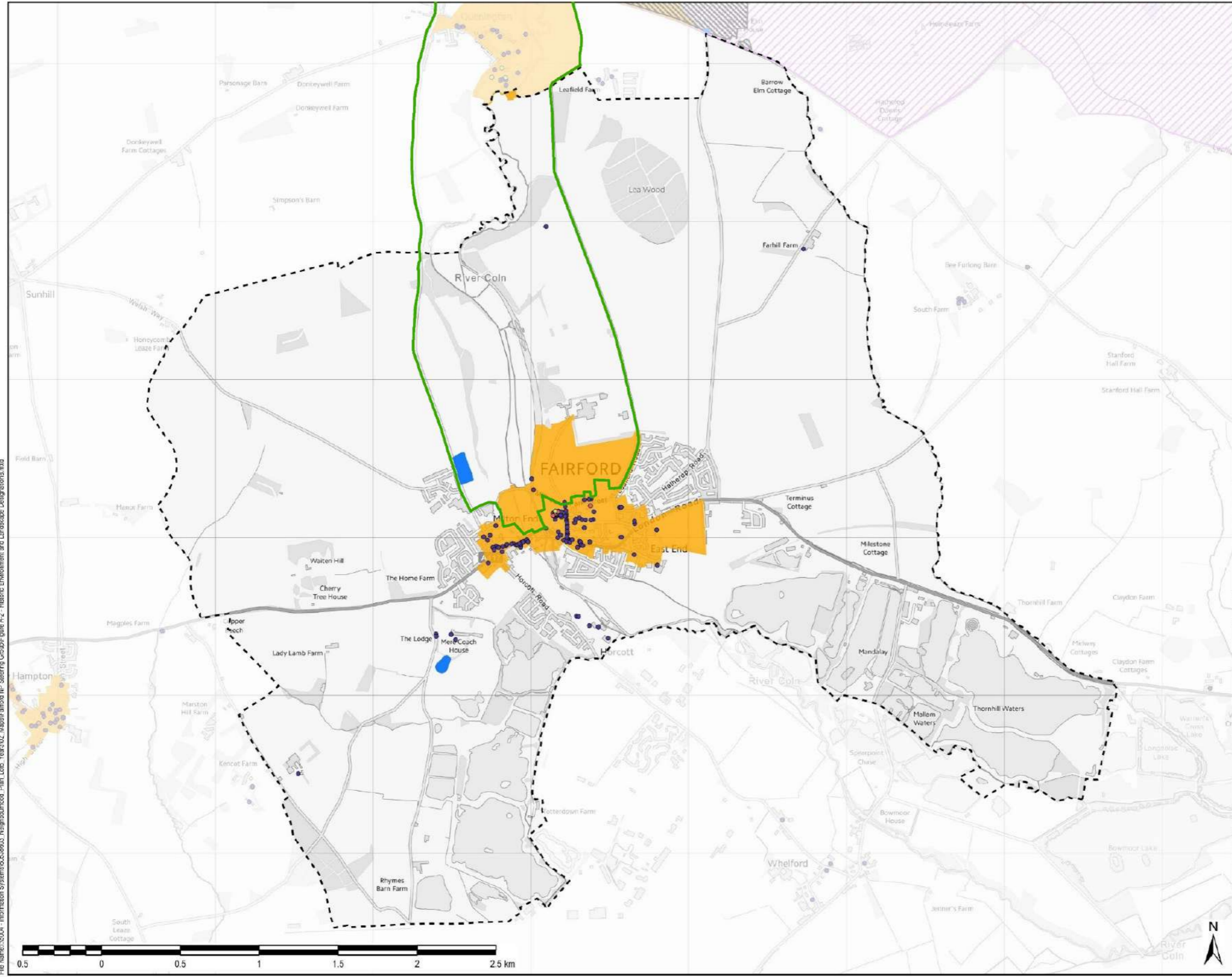
- 1) Fairford Community Centre
- 2) The Palmer Hall
- 3) Fairford Library
- 4) The Fairford Town Football Club & adj. practice playing field
- 5) Fairford Bowling Club
- 6) Fairford Cricket Club Ground
- 7) Fairford Junior Rugby Pitches
- 8) Fairford Rugby Club Pitches (Coln House School)
- 9) Fairford Youth Football Club Pitches
- 10) Farmors Sports Centre
- 11) Fairford Tennis Club
- 12) Riverside Garden



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MAP E: HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS



THIS DRAWING IS TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ISSUE THAT IT WAS ISSUED FOR AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT

LEGEND

- Fairford Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Record of Scheduled Monument
- Registered Parks and Garden
- Conservation Area
- Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Listed building

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II
- Special Landscape Area

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Purpose of Issue: **FINAL**

Client: **FAIRFORD TOWN COUNCIL**

Project Title: **SEA FOR THE FAIRFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title: **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS**

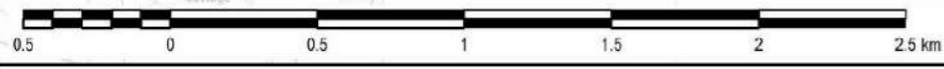
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1001-4000
Wentworth Lane, Westborough
Northampton, NN2 7PP
Telephone: 01254 293000
Fax: 01254 293204
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A2. APPENDIX 2: LIST OF NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The Fairford Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following as Non-Designated Heritage Assets,

1. Palmer Hall
2. Fayre Court
3. Fairford Cottage Hospital
4. Library / Old School
5. Hyperion House
6. The Old Piggery
7. Yells Yard
8. Park Farm House
9. Waiten Hill Farm House
10. Milton Farm House
11. Milton Farm Stone Barns
12. The Swedish Houses in The Plies
13. Bridge over disused railway
14. Gable Cottages
15. Dynevor Terrace
16. Eastbourne Terrace
17. Vines Row
18. Terrace of Houses between Mr Ernest in the Market Place and The Plough, London Street: 7A, Tynedale, The Plough Inn
19. Terrace of Cottages on Milton Street backing onto Lower and Upper Green
20. 2, 3, 3a High Street
21. 9 High Street
22. 29, 30, 33 London Street
23. 35 London Street
24. 5-9 Coronation Street
25. Park Villas



26. Linden Cottage
27. Glebe Court canopy
28. The Oxpens
29. Mill Lane
30. Cotswold Stone Field Shelter
- 31a. Cattle Trough in Carters Ground
- 31b. Cattle Trough by Track in Field East of Polish Camp Site
- 32a. Fairford Gate South Stile
- 32b. The Short Piece Stile
- 32c. Virgills Stile
- 32d. Milton Street Stile
- 32e. Upper Green Stile
- 32f. Oxpens Stile
- 32g. Gassons Field Stile
- 32h. Garretts Stile
- 32i. Waiten Hill Stile
33. Gassons Field Water Tower
34. Milestone
35. Red Pillar Box, Market Place
- 36b. Telephone Box: Queensfield
- 36c. Telephone Box: The Green, Coronation Street
- 37a. Iron Railings on Mill Bridge
- 37b. Iron Gates to Waterloo Cottage
- 38a. Stone Gate Pillar – Hatherop Lane
- 38b. Stone Gate Pillar – Lovers Walk
- 38c. Stone Gate Pillar – Leafield Road
39. Entrance arch and Ernest Cook Estate Yard
40. The Boathouse
41. Pump House by The Cascades
42. The Cascades
43. Fairford Park



MAP D: FAIRFORD COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 44a. Reservoir – East
- 44b. Reservoir - West
- 45. Paddock on Coronation Street
- 46. Morgan Hall Park including Jones' Field
- 47. Fieldway
- 48. Applestone Court

This is not an exhaustive list and further NDHAs may be identified in the future that meet the criteria provided in the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031.

A3. APPENDIX 3: FNP12 ACHIEVING HIGH STANDARDS OF DESIGN

KEY VIEWS

Key views are identified in ‘Character and Design Assessment’, the main supporting document for this policy.

1. From Betterton’s Close footpath across Milking Path Park to Waiten Hill
2. From Common Lane across to Waiten Hill
3. Across Gassons Field to the Mill and St Mary’s Church tower, over to Horcott Hill and Cleeve Wood (south) and into the Special Landscape Area (north)
4. The Mill, Upper and Lower Green, and the view over towards St Mary’s Church and vice versa (the views from St Mary’s Churchyard back across the River Coln)
5. Views from Pitham Brook Path
6. Westward from Leafield Road
7. Into Fairford Park from High Street + Walnut Tree Field
8. Up and downstream of the River Coln from Town Bridge and Mill Bridge.
9. Any views within/into Fairford Park, especially those across the River Coln, towards the Obelisk and from the gateway at the top end of Lovers Lane
10. Along the line of Lovers’ Walk (from both directions)
11. Along Park Street and over to Walnut Tree Field including views to St Mary’s Church
12. St Mary’s Church from the High Street
13. Market Place and High Street including White Hart Court
14. From The Croft back towards the High Street as well as along the length of the Croft
15. Over Coln House playing fields from Horcott Road towards St Mary’s Church
16. Southwest from Horcott Road across The Short Piece towards the Conservation Area
17. Along London Street from Back Lane junction; also along London Road towards the junction with the Market Place
18. Across the fields and along the River Coln
19. South from the end of the track off Moor Lane to the meadows and Snake Lane, across to Horcott Hill and Cleeve Wood
20. South from the track to the south from Moor Farm
21. Along Fieldway and across the meadows



22. Around and across Lake 104
23. From Horcott Road looking towards Horcott House paddocks, Horcott Farm and Horcott Hill
24. Across the Horcott Lakes at all points including views from the permissive paths
25. Back from Horcott Lakes (causeway seating area) to Horcott Hill
26. From Horcott Farm and the river PROW north and east across the river
27. Along London Road (both directions) particularly towards Keble House from Railway Inn
28. From green by Eight Bells towards East End House
29. North & south along river from River Walk passing gardens at the rear of Courtbrook and Moor Lane
30. Southeast from Cirencester Road west of The Old Piggery and along Cirencester Road in both directions
31. South from footpath south of The Burdocks
32. Westward from gateway halfway down Totterdown Lane across Horcott Lakes
33. Along Milton Street, both directions
34. From Gassons Field to Milton Farm agricultural buildings and on towards Waiten Hill

