

# Woodford Halse Village

## Woodford cum Membris Parish

### Rural Areas Settlement Hierarchy – Response Form

#### Technical Engagement with Parish Councils

#### February 2024

This response form should be read in conjunction with the Settlement Hierarchy Consultation document and Settlement Confines Background Paper. You can type your answers directly into this response form. Please email your completed form to [localplan@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@westnorthants.gov.uk) by **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024**.

#### Existing settlement hierarchy

**Question SH1.** Do you think Primary Service Village is still the appropriate tier of the hierarchy for Woodford Halse? If not, which tier do you think is more appropriate?

#### No

It is important to note why Woodford is historically a residential & industrial area. It was developed due to the Great Central Railway expansion in the late 18<sup>th</sup> & early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Consequentially, its industry & residential was associated with the railway and NOT the needs of the area or locality. Indeed, one of the newer industrial areas was only formed to provide some local employment for railway workers after the 1960's demise of the railway. Due to this reason, the locality was never served by a robust infrastructure, including roads, public transport, schools and doctors' surgeries. Indeed, the 2 "main" roads servicing the village are very rural ones and in part, the tarmac layer is laid directly on top of clay which is not sufficient for the trucks servicing the industrial area. The Byfield & Preston Capes Roads are too narrow for the current traffic size and level causing either severe damage to the roadside and /or threatening pedestrians as lorries mount the pavements.

In addition, the one bus service (Stagecoach 200) is constantly under threat to cease due to lack of funding and has only been recently saved with the help of Oxfordshire County Council!

The doctors surgery is in Byfield with only visiting to the Memorial Hall in Woodford which has now ceased. Indeed, planning for a new doctors surgery in Byfield was rejected by the Planning Authority as it would cause too much traffic on the road leading to Woodford Halse!!

In recent years, a corner shop, post office (merged with chemist), off licence, hardware store & estate agent have all closed their doors. County Library provision has also been withdrawn (Library now operated by the Parish Council).

Other Primary villages are well served by road infrastructure: Brixworth A506/43; Crick A5/428/M1 & DIRFT; Long Buckby A5 + Railway; Moulton A43/508 + Northampton Town infrastructure; Weedon A5/M1.

Therefore, Secondary Service Village would be more appropriate due to this lack of infrastructure which is inadequate to support the developments which have already taken place in the Village possibly due to its status as a Primary Service Village. The roads are unable to cope with the current traffic load and there is insufficient employment for the population. Indeed, one could promote that a Primary Village must be set around an "A" class road to cope with any development.

**Question SH2.** What is your experience of being in this tier? Have any issues arisen, for example through Planning Applications, because of being in this tier?

The Primary Village status has led to the expansion of the Industrial Area and two larger housing developments outside of the original village confines which have not been supported by additional infrastructure in particular the local road network.

Both the Byfield Road and Preston Capes Road are village roads in terms of structure. There are no foundations. There is just a layer of tarmac laid on mud in places. This is causing the road to fracture and the report which was requested by Planning in 2019 on the impact of changes to the Industrial Estate on the infra-structure of roads was not completed.

Since then, the Industrial Estate has been extended three times and two housing estates built creating over 350 new houses. No-one has listened to the concerns expressed by the Parish Council resulting in the current situation where the Village has deteriorating roads, chronic parking situations and insufficient services to meet the needs of the expanded population.

The Byfield road is being used by lorries which are unable to pass each other side-by-side on the road but have to drive over the pavement. This dangerous situation puts local people including children using the pathway on their way to school at risk.

The Village Neighbourhood Development Plan which was written with full consultation of the local population has been ignored in all planning decisions. This has created a lack of trust in the planning process and a belief that it is the intention of WNC to continue to expand the Village.

Cumulative effect of planning permissions are ignored, with planning decisions by WNC considered in isolation. Hence, for example, the expansion of the industrial area (Grants Hill Way) has never been cumulatively considered with the effect the expansion had on the road network. Grants Hill Way itself was built to industrial standard, but the Byfield Road upgrade was not considered!

Conversely, expansion/new siting of the Doctors Surgery in Byfield which is desperately needed by residents in Woodford, was denied planning permission as it was deemed to have an adverse impact on the road infrastructure as it needed 70 houses to be built in financial support to the surgery.

**Question SH3.** Have you identified any advantages or disadvantages from being in this tier?

The disadvantage of being in the Primary Tier is that these developments have been approved without the necessary infrastructure. Moreover, there is insufficient services in terms of facilities to support the current expanded population. If Woodford Halse remains as a Primary Village there will be more applications which do not meet the requirements to be an 'exception' site but are approved for development. For example WNC0841/23.

Section 106 and CIL monies extracted from Developers have been largely expended on areas outside of the village.

There are no advantages to being in the current tier. AS stated in SH1, several services since the previous plan was formulated have been withdrawn or are seriously under threat.

### Existing services and facilities

Below is the list of services and facilities which were identified in 2016 when the last assessment was carried out. Could you please review this list and indicate any services or facilities which are no longer available and add any new provisions which are now available.

	2016	2024	Comments
<b>Woodford Halse Services and facilities</b>			
Secondary school	No	No	
Primary school	Yes	Yes	
GP surgery	Yes	No	
General food shop	Yes	Yes	But too small for the population
Post office	Yes	Yes	But combined with the Pharmacy against the Village wishes which has created a major traffic and parking hazard in the Village.
Community and Public halls	Yes	Yes	
Public House / Restaurant	Yes	Yes	
Employment area	Yes	Yes	
Other shop(s)/Takeaways	Yes	Yes	
Local Employment provision	Yes	Yes	But insufficient for the population.
Library	Yes	Yes	Community Library
Pre School Facilities	Yes	Yes	
Play area	Yes	Yes	
Sports ground	Yes	Yes	
Allotments	Yes	Yes	
Bus Service	Hourly No. 200	200	At risk and no early nor late bus for employment travel to Daventry. No buses on Sundays.

**Question SH4.** Do you think there are any other services, facilities or factors that should be considered?

There are no health facilities and insufficient food shops which means that people have to travel to Daventry or Banbury. If people work in the Industrial Areas of Daventry or Banbury they need to travel before 7.00 am and return to the Village after 10 pm so the current bus service is inadequate.

The road network is inadequate as stated in other answers.

Parking in the village is inadequate.

Flooding in the Village: In consequence of a number of factors, the village has occasional flooding in and around the river Cherwell which runs through the village and at a number of other points. We have been working with Northampton County Council (now WNC) & WSP Associates to improve this situation. In 2017 an Outline Business case was prepared which proposed a number of schemes in and around Woodford Halse which would either speed up the flow of water or retain water further upstream so improving the current situation - this was to be submitted for Government & DEFRA for funding. To date, none of these schemes in Woodford Halse have been prioritised and therefore no improvements have yet come to fruition.

#### Parish Aspirations

**Question SH5.** Do you have a vision for your parish for the next 15 years? What changes or enhancements would you like see?

The Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2029 states “Our vision for Woodford cum Membris in 2029 is of a safe, friendly and welcoming village with a mixed community of young and old, families and singles, local workers and commuters with as many resources for local people as possible within the village. It has a heritage of agriculture, village life and its railway history which we value and seek to maintain.”

The Parish confines should remain as currently defined, including in the Neighbourhood Plan - any development must be within the confines.

The access road(s) to the Village need to be upgraded or supplemented with a new road (see SH6 Below).

Health services need to be installed/enhanced (see SH6 Below). A hub for public services to support safety, health and well-being for the extended population would be a wish.

A bus service expansion to cater for people who need to work in surrounding towns (early morning/late evening).

Maintaining the current education and extending leisure facilities utilising existing establishments.

Cycle lanes/paths – there is no current provision.

Further parking areas are required in the village centre.

Enhanced general store provision is required.

**Question SH6.** What needs does your Parish have over the next 15 years?

The Village desperately requires a new access road, possibly from the A361 trunk road at Charwelton to the rear of the Grants Hill Way industrial estate – the route could be along the former Great Central Railway line. The road would be 2-way but built to an “industrial” standard the same as the Grants Hill Road was built.

Also required are health facilities – current medical facilities are in Byfield and the surgery is too small for the expansion that Woodford has experienced in the last 10 years. Plans to expand the surgery to a new site in Byfield were turned down by the planning authority as the road to Woodford from the 5-ways A361 roundabout could not take the increase in traffic – this despite planning permission given to over 350 new houses and extensions to the Industrial Estate in Woodford that has to use this same road!

**Question SH7.** Do you think your Parish has the right mix and amount of housing and employment? Are there any sites or opportunities you would like to highlight for future development or redevelopment?

No other sites - The Village is FULL and there cannot be any further development, even within the confines unless a new access road is created.

## Settlement Confines

**QUESTION SC1.** Do you agree all exception sites should be excluded from settlement confines? If not, please explain why

Yes – exception sites should be excluded.

**QUESTION SC2.** Do you agree with suggested criterion 4: Developments that are isolated or peripheral to the main built-up part of a settlement, where there they meet criteria: at least 30dph, have at least 20 dwellings, are within 100m of the main settlement and do not have a separate identity? If not, please explain why.

No – we do not support extending the confines in this way.

Confines should remain as defined in our plan.

**QUESTION SC3.** Do you agree with suggested criterion 8, to exclude land from settlement confines which would otherwise be outside the confines, even if it is between the edge of the settlement and a bypass? If not, please explain why.

No, where an access has been built to contain a Village then in-fill to the boundary road is a preferable option to building in open countryside.

**Question SC4.** Do you agree that all settlements in the hierarchy should have their confines defined in the Local Plan? Please explain why.

Yes if Local Planning is going to respect settlement confines then defining all settlements is essential.

**Question SC5.** Should there be any changes made to the settlement confines boundary? Please explain your suggestions and/or annotate the enclosed map.

No

**QUESTION SC6.** Do you think there is anything missing from the suggested criteria?

Road network/infrastructure

**QUESTION SC7.** Do you have any other comments on the suggested settlement confines criteria?

Settlement confines should not be extended through any method, e.g. extending gardens into fields over time or storage of items converting agricultural land.

#### Your details

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Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

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