

Responses to Initial Consultation (July 2013)

Summary Findings

The people who responded to this initial consultation indicate strong appreciation of the historic fabric of the three settlements in this Parish, especially the beauty and tranquility of the landscape. Generally people recognise that the value placed on the quiet, rural nature of life here is inevitably accompanied by a low level of key services (such as public transport and shops). In consequence, people are concerned about issues of access and connectivity. Unsafe roads and slow broadband speeds are consistently raised as negative experiences. There were also indications that people value local sports and play provision, and would like to see more, along with general community meeting space and community-run provision.

The implications for the Neighbourhood Plan include:

- little support for expanding the size of the existing settlements, or accommodating any major new developments
- strong support for protecting the existing landscape character and enhancing its enjoyment
- support for more rigorous protection of the historic nature of the built environment and its visual amenity

Wider implications and issues for the Parish Council to consider:

- continued focus on improving the physical state of the roads
- indications of support for improved road safety, such as improvements at dangerous junctions and reduced speed limits
- assessment of options for improving/expanding the range of community facilities such as play and sports provision
- improving communications with residents about local issues of concern

1 Background

A leaflet to publicise and explain the process of neighbourhood planning was distributed to every property in the Parish in June 2013. The primary purpose was to ensure everyone was informed about the initiative, whilst also using the opportunity to gather some initial views about:

- Good features people wanted to keep/enhance
- Negative features people wanted to change/or get rid of
- Anything else we should have/should do
- Anything we should not have

The leaflet and questionnaire was also available on the website (www.loveden.org.uk/np) and there was a stall at the Hough Church Fete on 6th July attended by two of the Parish Councillors.

2 Return Response

Questionnaires were not personally collected from each property. Those responding had to deliver them to addresses in each of the three villages, or bring them to the Hough Church Fete or to a public event which took place in Gelston. Therefore a large response was not expected.

In the event, a total of 28 questionnaires was returned which, whilst a small percentage of the population, has provided a helpful steer on some of the main issues.

It is important to note that people were encouraged to include issues that were not necessarily within the scope of a neighbourhood plan but which might assist the Parish Council in their wider responsibilities. Also, the questionnaire didn't provide any prompts on specific issues or subjects, so all the comments were spontaneously identified by respondents.

A full list of the issues raised is appended.

3 Issues Summary

(a) Landscape and Local Character

It is clear that people's main focus is on the importance of the landscape, its tranquility and unspoilt character. This is valued very highly and should be a core objective of the neighbourhood plan. A Landscape Character Assessment has been commissioned from consultants who aim to work closely with local people to capture the lived experience of the local environment, especially key views, walks, buildings, hedgerows and wildlife.

(b) Housing and New Development

It is also clear that those who responded do not want any change to the size of the villages, or to their look or feel. There is support for heritage and conservation measures, and for tighter controls of new build designs. Concern about wind farm development featured quite highly, and also dislike of motorsport noise, and generally people indicated that they did not want any large, industrial or noisy developments.

(c) Road Safety

There are quite a few comments relating to roads and transport. The physical condition of the roads and road safety issues in particular figure quite highly, along with concerns about through traffic and speeds. The neighbourhood planning team should explore whether any of these issues could be covered within the Plan's policies. The Parish Council should also be made aware of these views.

(d) Facilities

There were several responses relating to community facilities, especially play and sports provision.

(e) Other Issues

The most consistently raised issue was the need for improved Broadband provision.

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

<p>Character Like tranquility x14 Like unspoilt look/feel x11 Like low population density, open spaces (inc The Wilderness) x9 Like unspoilt views to/from villages & skyline x8 Like walks / cycle routes x6 Like that it's a working (farming) village x4 Like community spirit x3 Like church & historic buildings, conservation area x3 Like environment/birds/trees/hedgerows x2 Like safe play area for children (Gelston) Like Bosom Hill (sledding)</p>	<p>Transport Want more public transport x8 Dislike HGV on narrow roads (make access only) x6 Dislike potholes / maintenance x6 Want safer roads for walking/cycling/horses / more paths x6 Want lower speed/weight limit on C001 x4 Don't want road widening x2 Don't like Frieston road closure Don't like (any) street lighting Don't like speeding/dangerous junctions Don't like car parking around pub corner and Gelston Want better gritting</p>
<p>Facilities – shops/pub Want small/community shop (eg sell home grown stuff) x4 Like pub x2 Want ways to bring village together (quiz nights etc)</p>	<p>Development - Housing Do not extend village boundaries x9 No new builds (just upgrading) x8 More protection for heritage assets (inc Brandon phone box / Gelston green) x4 No infill housing x4 No large scale (>5 houses) or industrial building x3 More control of design x3 No social housing without suitable amenities/infrastructure x2 Don't like unused / dilapidated farm buildings x2 Don't like poor drainage in Brandon x2 Don't like poorly placed solar panels x2 Specific protection for open spaces in villages (EN6) Lack of affordable housing</p>
<p>Facilities - sports Improve / make more of Hough playing field x3 Want village hall/sports hall x3 Want playing field in Brandon x3 Like Hough playing field x2 Want more sports facilities Lack of community meeting place Use parish land in Brandon</p>	<p>Development - Other No wind turbines / farms x14 Prevent/reduce kart racing & other noisy sports x7 No large/inappropriate development x3 Anything that affects views from the village / spoils character x3 Don't want bus route, shops, tea rooms, school etc x2 Don't like (Frinkley Farm) wind turbine x2 No solar farms x2 No large structures</p>
<p>Others Want better broadband x10 Don't like rubbish in front gardens / dumped by road x2 Want more tree planting on empty spaces/verges x2 Want community allotments x2 Encourage home working x2 Encourage repair of stone field walls Local employment opportunities Encourage low impact renewable energy (heat pumps etc), wells Enhance tourism Want better mobile phone coverage Want telescope on the scarp to enhance long views Want shared facilities / deliveries Prevent Raves Maintain mobile library service or use Hough Church as library Improve Hough Community centre, daycare centre for elderly?</p>	