

# RUSHWICK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## ***OUR RUSHWICK:- OUR COMMUNITY, OUR FUTURE, OUR PLAN***

**Rushwick – including Crown East, Broadmore Green and Upper Wick – has the opportunity to influence what the village will be like in the next 10-15 years, by contributing towards the development of a ‘Neighbourhood Plan’. Once it is formally accepted by the village residents and the local authority the Neighbourhood Plan will be used by the planning authority to determine future development for the parish**

Rushwick Parish Council is leading on this, but the views of the whole of the village are a key part of the Neighbourhood Plan so, this consultation is an important component of the process. It is designed to find out how you would like your community to develop over the next 15 years. By taking part in this consultation, you will directly contribute to the Neighbourhood Plan and, consequently the future development of the village.

The Neighbourhood Plan cannot contravene the policies of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) and this includes the review of the SWDP which proposes that Rushwick becomes an expanded settlement to deliver a new railway station, 1000 new houses, 5 hectares of employment land and a traveller site. The Parish Council is doing all it can to resist the SWDP review proposals, but this has to be taken into account in any plan we develop.

Notwithstanding the above, we have drafted 4 key policies for the Rushwick Neighbourhood Plan. We would appreciate your opinion on these policies and any others you consider should be included within the plan.

We would appreciate receiving your comments either through the Rushwick Parish Facebook Page, by email to [rushwickndp@gmail.com](mailto:rushwickndp@gmail.com) or by telephone to Robert Jenkins, Chairman of the Parish Council on 07803 464280

Thank you for help.

## **Policy 1 – Housing**

### **Policy 1a – Housing Numbers**

The quantity of new housing to be delivered over the plan period is derived from the “Indicative Housing Requirements for Rushwick Neighbourhood Area 2021-2030 and 2031-2040” dated July 2019, namely: -

1 dwelling between 2021 and 2030, and

20 dwellings between 2031 and 2040

### **Policy 1b- Housing Development**

Development outside of the settlement boundary as defined by Policy SWDP 2 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan will be strictly controlled and limited to the following exceptions: -

- dwellings for rural workers (see policy SWDP 19)
- employment development in rural areas (see SWDP 12)
- rural exception sites (see SWDP 16)
- buildings for agriculture and forestry, replacement dwellings (see SWDP 18)
- house extensions
- replacement buildings and renewable energy projects (see policy SWDP 27)
- development specifically permitted by other SWDP policies.

**Reasoned Justification:** The quantity of new housing required to be delivered in the Neighbourhood Plan Area can be accommodated within the existing settlement boundary and on sites allocated for residential development by the SWDP. There is no requirement for windfall development on land outside of the settlement boundary or outside of allocated sites.

### **Policy 1c – Housing Mix**

Proposals for new homes in the Parish should deliver a range of house types, sizes and tenures.

In addition to the requirements set out within the SWDP (Policy SWDP 15) in relation to the proportion and tenure mix of affordable housing required, on schemes of 3 or more new homes, the following mix will be sought:

35% - homes for first time buyers (1 or 2 bedrooms)

30% - homes for small families (2 or 3 bed)

35% homes for older people or those with mobility limitations (1 or 2 bed bungalows)

Applicants should demonstrate how the proposal will meet these local needs.

**Reasoned Justification:** Following extensive research into local demand by the Parish Council in 2019, it was clear that smaller dwellings were in greatest demand ranging from first time buyers, small families and older people or those with mobility limitations. To that end, the Neighbourhood Plan proposes a policy to direct the delivery of appropriate house types to best meet local need. This will enable small households from the area to remain within the Parish as well as those who may have lived here for a long time. In doing this, it would also ‘free up’ larger homes for larger families within the existing housing stock.

### **Policy 1d – Infill Housing**

Within the settlement boundary as defined by Policy SWDP 2 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan, infill development of sites for up to five dwellings will be supported provided the proposal accords with the other relevant policies of the SWDP and the NDP.

**Reasoned Justification:** Following extensive research into local demand by the Parish Council in 2019, it was evident that infill developments were considered the most appropriate for Rushwick. In response to local views, the neighbourhood plan seeks to support Infill housing to encourage the delivery of small scale sites and individual plots within the settlement boundary rather than larger scale housing schemes on land outside the settlement boundary. The delivery of smaller sites is considered the best approach to deliver houses within the parish in order to meet local need and reduce harmful encroachment into the countryside.

### **Policy 2 – Areas of Landscape Value**

Proposals for any form of development within a designated area of landscape value will not be permitted unless in the following exceptional circumstances:

- For the development of sporting facilities (such as playing pitches) that would protect the open views;
- For the creation of areas of biodiversity gain;
- To improve surface water drainage (through the use of sustainable drainage systems).

Built form in these areas will not normally be permitted, although small scale built form necessary to deliver the above forms of development (such as changing rooms, pumping stations and other necessary infrastructure) will be considered on their own merits.

Such areas are identified on the proposals map and fall outside of the SWDP2 development boundary for Rushwick.

**Reasoned Justification:** Rushwick is a village at risk of settlement coalescence with Worcester, only being separated by Grove Way to the east and a small area of undeveloped land. It has much in common with its neighbouring rural settlements insofar as it sits within an open undeveloped landscape. The backdrop of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the west and the low-lying undulating fields clearly create a setting for the village which benefits from significant, valued views to the north, west and south. In landscape terms, the land to the north and west is of greatest landscape value, being of the ‘Principal Timbered Farmlands’ landscape typology<sup>1</sup>. Protecting the most important views for the village would form part of a strategy to direct development to the least sensitive locations, whilst still allowing the use of land for agriculture, recreation and biodiversity.

### **Policy 3 - Green Spaces and Public Rights of Way**

- (a) New development that would harm any public right of way as shown on the Worcestershire Definitive Map would not normally be permitted. Necessary diversions to such public rights of way as a result of proposed development must re-provide the public right of way following an acceptable alternative route with an enhanced surface and improved access arrangement in order to ensure the route is accessible for those with mobility limitations.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gis.worcestershire.gov.uk/website/LandscapeCharacter/>

- (b) The PROW's that have been identified as the most important and well used routes by villagers in the NDP residents survey will be protected. Any development that would limit access to these routes will not be supported.
- (c) New green space designations are proposed in the areas shown on the proposals map. New development will not normally be permitted within these locations unless the equivalent level of equally accessible (by foot or bicycle) green space is provided within the parish, or where the equivalent level of green space is provided for visual amenity purposes (depending on the role of the green space area in question).
- (d) New development that would negatively impact upon the 'key views' identified on the proposals map as having a 'very high' level of Visual Landscape Value will not be supported.

**Reasoned Justification:** Whilst Rushwick is surrounded by large areas of open undeveloped agricultural land, much of this land is inaccessible. Those routes within the definitive map that allow access to the open countryside must be protected and, wherever possible enhanced. Development that leads to the improvement of access to the countryside or improves the level of open land that is accessible or performs a positive function in terms of visual amenity may be considered favourably subject to compliance with other policies within this plan. The NDP residents survey identified key views that are important for visual amenity. These views have been assessed against the criteria set out within the evidence base and fall within the 'very high' level of Visual Landscape Value. Any development that would negatively impact upon these views will not be supported.

#### **Policy 4 – Design and Climate Change**

All development will be required to enhance the appearance of the village and reinforce it's identify as a rural settlement. The scale, massing and height of new buildings must reflect the established and predominant settlement pattern and built form within the Parish. All externally facing construction materials (including boundary treatments) should reflect or improve upon the established character of their surroundings.

All proposals for residential development will be required to clearly describe how the proposed development in terms of design, appearance, form, density and choice of materials, has taken reference from existing development that has been identified as representing high quality by this plan.

Residential development should not exceed 30 dwellings per ha, with the exception of site-specific circumstances which may indicate otherwise, on sites of less than 5 units.

All new houses will be expected to include Photovoltaic Cells or Air Source Heat Pumps, as well as external cabling for at least one electric car charging point, without exception. Further, such developments will be expected to include a minimum of 1 electric car charging point (fitted and operational) for every 10 dwellings

All new development generating permanent on site employment will be expected to include Photovoltaic Cells or Air Source Heat Pumps, as well as electric car charging points on a ratio of one per 10 parking spaces (at 7KW or more).

All new development will be expected to take a 'fabric first' approach, securing an optimum level of insulation as well as the use of Modern Methods of Construction to preserve air tightness.

**Reasoned Justification:** Rushwick has been developed iteratively and has a range of different architectural eras throughout the parish, with the predominant typologies in housing terms being

domestic single and two storey dwellings set on generous plots. Much of the large-scale post-war development in the village to the north and south of the Bransford Road is characterised by suburban, low density housing arranged in quiet cul de sacs. The feeling of space in each case is something that makes Rushwick such a popular place to live. The NDP residents survey identified that a key priority for residents is to maintain a village identity and character for Rushwick. This includes lower density, spacious developments in contrast to those found in the more urban areas of Worcester City and other main towns in the Malvern Hills District. Securing high quality design is an important part of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that any new development would reinforce local distinctiveness and the 'village' character of Rushwick. Examples of high-quality design and features considered to be important are provided in the evidence base. Development proposals should refer to this design guidance and demonstrate how it has been used to inform proposals for new development.

The neighbourhood plan is an important mechanism to secure significant improvements in energy efficiency and make positive contributions towards the climate change agenda. As an integrated part of the Design Policy, we consider that energy efficiency measures are intrinsic.