

BLABY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



February 2018

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1. Blaby Neighbourhood Plan (Introduction)

1.1 This Plan addresses the need for sustainable development within the parish of Blaby until 2029. It builds on the principles of the Blaby District Core Strategy taking into account the views of the local population. This Plan has resulted directly from the views expressed to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group through public events, community groups, questionnaire responses and other communication. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which has been led and coordinated by Blaby Parish Council, consisted of a mix of parish councillors and interested local residents, supported by Blaby District Council.

1.2 The Plan also considers the important issues identified through the consultation process such as:

- Maintaining and enhancing existing areas of green space, in particular land adjoining Hospital Lane and the Green Wedge.
- Protecting and enhancing the Town Centre.
- Determining the most appropriate location for any further development if necessary.
- Protecting Blaby heritage.
- Designating an area of Local Green Space.

1.3 This is the beginning of a new era in which the community in this Plan Area can shape how present and future needs can be met through sustainable development.



2. Foreword

2.1.1 The Localism Act (2011) introduced Neighbourhood Planning to give communities in England the right to shape their future development at a local neighbourhood level.

2.1.2 The 'Your Blaby Steering Group' was established by the Parish Council following a successful application from the Parish Council (as the qualifying body) to Blaby District Council for Neighbourhood Area status in February 2014.

The intention of this Plan is to reflect community-wide views, comments, observations and concerns about Blaby's future, in a context of local and national planning requirements. It aims to reflect the community's overwhelming desire to make Blaby an even better place to live and work, now and for future generations.

2.1.3 This Plan seeks to ensure that Blaby will retain its unique and distinctive character, in particular managing the balance between retaining open space while potentially accommodating some development over the plan period, for example developing the town centre shopping areas and addressing housing allocations as necessary, for the benefit of current and future generations.

It has taken the hopes, aspirations and concerns about the village as highlighted through consultation to create a vision for the future and establish the aims and objectives for sustainable development, and the policies to deliver these, for the plan period up to 2029.

2.2 Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan for Blaby?

2.2.1 Blaby has the services and facilities to serve its own community as well as many of the smaller outlying villages. Managing the need for development, whilst retaining the essential character, requires an innovative approach to securing sustainable growth. This Plan seeks to ensure that Blaby will continue to thrive as a vibrant village evolving to meet the challenges posed by the 21st century, while also retaining its

unique and distinctive character for the benefit of current and future generations.

2.2.2 The Plan demonstrates the importance of green spaces to the character of the village, now and for the future. It aspires to enhance the infrastructure, and improve the town centre for visitors and residents alike. This was articulated by Greg Clark the then Minister of State for Communities and Local Government when the Localism Act (2011) was introduced:

“The primary objectives (of Neighbourhood plans) are to:

1. Put unprecedented power into the hands of local communities to shape the places in which they live;
2. To better support growth...;
3. And to ensure the places we cherish... are bequeathed to the next generation in a better condition than they are now.”

2.2.3 The Plan is Blaby’s opportunity to help fulfil those ambitions at a local neighbourhood level. Set within a broader context of the process of Neighbourhood Planning which incorporates many “neighbourhood management” issues and policies, the Plan reflects the need for social, economic and environmental actions.

2.3 Context for the Neighbourhood Plan

2.3.1 Blaby is a large vibrant village on the southern edge of Leicester, approximately 5 miles from the City centre, with a small, but functional “town centre” serving local needs and those of outlying villages. This Plan endeavours to respond to the many challenges facing Blaby, by encouraging external and internal investment to provide a basis for harmonious development which will protect the most valuable green areas around our village, sustain local jobs and businesses, provide housing to meet local needs in the most appropriate locations (as necessary) and enhance the infrastructure. Together with the Core Strategy, the Plan provides an opportunity to direct proposals for sustainable development.

2.4 The potential benefits of implementing the Neighbourhood Plan

2.4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will recognise the most valuable assets in the Parish and development will:

- Improve landscape and biodiversity,
- Protect the most valuable green field land.
- Conserve and enhance the green infrastructure
- Maintain and enhance the town centre.



Blaby Cemetery Chapel



Bouskell Park

3. Introduction: Looking forward to 2029

3.1 Details of consultation activities

The Plan has been prepared by members of Blaby Parish Council, residents and stakeholders working as part of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Support has been provided by the District Council.

3.2 Designation

In February 2014 the Parish of Blaby was approved as a Neighbourhood Area for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan at a meeting of Blaby District Council.

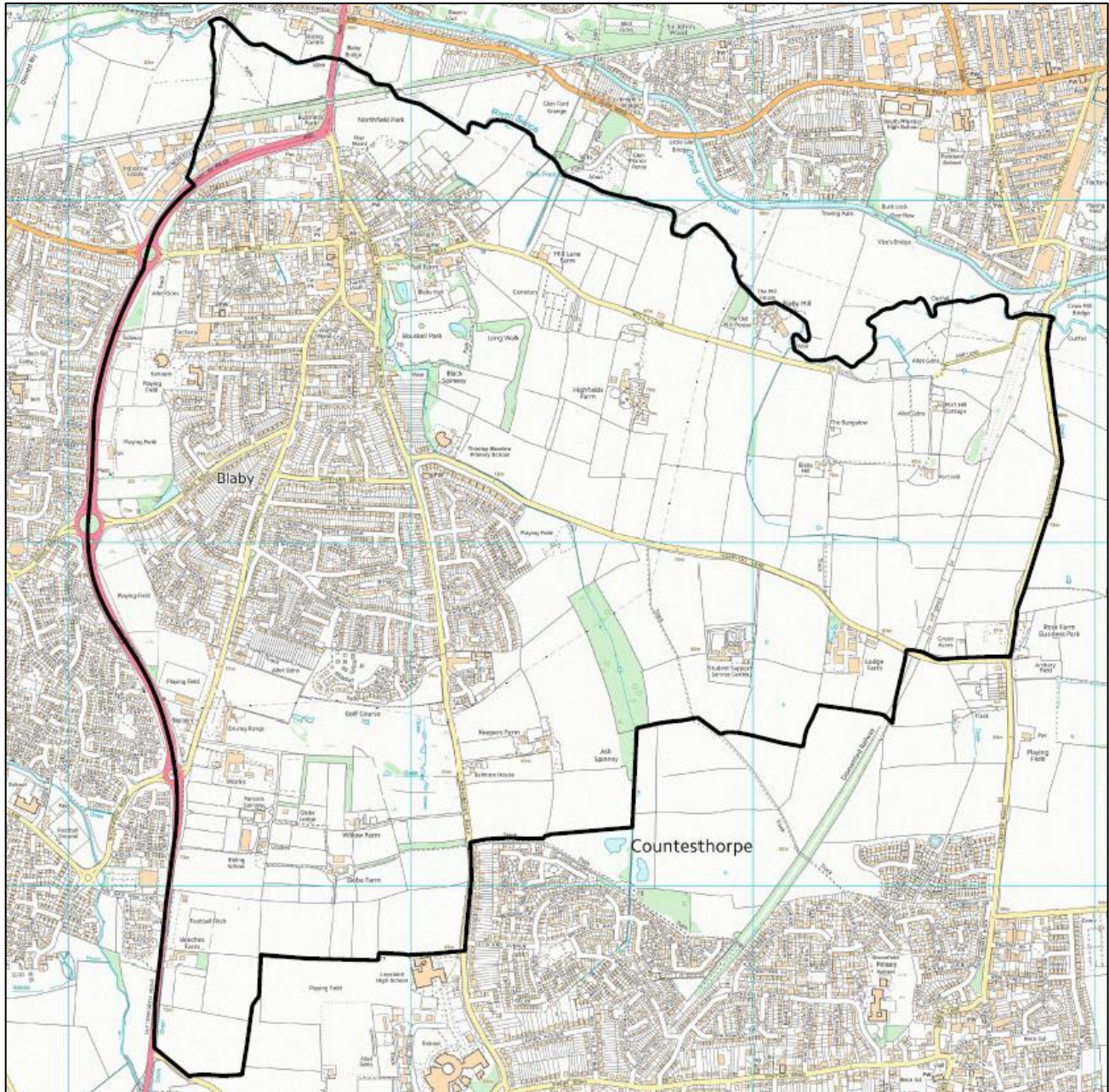
3.3 Early Consultation and Evidence Gathering

Extensive engagement and consultation has taken place with residents and stakeholders throughout the Plan making process. In the summer of 2014 questionnaires were distributed to all houses in Blaby as a supplement to the Blaby Topic Magazine. Questionnaires were also distributed at a public meeting held at the Methodist Church Hall in May 2014, the meeting having been called to discuss a proposed development on a green field site in the village. To ensure the consultation process was as inclusive as possible, questionnaires were distributed to local businesses and service providers. The views of pupils at Blaby schools had previously been sort in an interactive Planning exercise held during 2013.

Approximately 20% of the general questionnaires were returned and over 95% of the questionnaires supported the Parish priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan. At a further public meeting, again held at the Methodist Church Hall on 8th January 2015, and attended by 64 Blaby residents, maps of Blaby were displayed. On one of the maps residents were asked to indicate those green areas they would like to see preserved. On the other map residents were asked to indicate reserve

sites for housing development. Pictures of these maps are contained in the consultation report.

Blaby Parish Boundary Map 1



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3.4 Requirements and Procedures

3.4.1 This Plan follows the requirements and procedures laid down in the Localism Act and The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, (as amended). It spells out the precise policies and proposals for the use and development of land which is relevant to the Plan Area; these policies and proposals are explained and justified in the corresponding text.

3.4.2 This Plan uses evidence from national and local sources such as reports, and statistics, and from local surveys and consultations. It has been written in the context of national and local policy, including (but not limited to) the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the Blaby District Core Strategy and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (see Evidence Base).

3.5 Partner Organisations and their Involvement

3.5.1 The statutory consultees have all been consulted and invited to contribute to this Plan. A particular effort has been made to consult with local stakeholders to ascertain the impact of any development pressures in the Plan Area. Community groups, schools, businesses and the community have been involved in the preparation of this Plan. A full breakdown of the consultation process is provided in the Consultation Statement.

3.6 The Plan Area

3.6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan boundary is the Blaby Parish boundary (see Map 1).

3.7 Blaby District Council Policy

3.7.1 The current Blaby District Council Local Plan is formed of two parts, the adopted (Core Strategy) (2013) and the emerging Local Plan (Delivery)

Development Plan Document (DPD). The Core Strategy was subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) at every stage of preparation and the emerging Delivery (DPD) will go through a similar process with regards to SA / SEA appraisal.

3.8 The Core Strategy

3.8.1 Blaby District Council adopted the Core Strategy in February 2013. This document provides the overarching strategic context for development across the District Council area and the Neighbourhood Plan is required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies within it.

3.9 Delivery (DPD)

3.9.1 This document will identify land across the district to deliver the development requirements outlined in the Core Strategy. The principle role of the Delivery DPD will be to identify housing and employment sites. In addition, it will include development management policies to be used in the determination of planning applications. This is an emerging document which will be subject to public consultation and examination.

3.10 Local Plan (1999) – saved Policies

3.10.1 A number of policies from the earlier Blaby District Local Plan (1999) have been saved and therefore remain part of the Development Plan for the District. Due consideration has been given to the relevant policies in the Local plan (1999) in preparing this Neighbourhood Plan. Collaborative working with the District Council has produced a Neighbourhood Plan which will reflect the provisions of these documents whilst providing a more localised approach.

3.11 National Planning Policy Framework

3.11.1 The national approach to planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The focus of this Framework is to

achieve the right balance between **sustainability** and **growth** to ensure development is carried out in a way that makes a positive contribution to our lives but also leaves a lasting legacy for our children, i.e. the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

3.11.2 It identifies three arms of sustainability:

(a) Economic - Contributing to building a strong economy: ensuring that sufficient land is available in the right places and at the right time.

(b) Social - Providing homes that will meet the needs of present and future generations and supporting the health, social and cultural well-being of communities.

(c) Environmental - Protecting our environment: improving biodiversity using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating climate change.

4. Blaby

4.1 A Brief History of Blaby

4.1.1 Although the village of Blaby has expanded considerably, particularly during the latter half of the 20th century, mainly due to housing development, it is still recognisable from its 1766 enclosure map which shows the still distinctive triangular, easel-like shape of the built parish environment; the 2 major roadways, one leading to Lutterworth and the other to Countesthorpe can be seen on the 1766 map.

4.1.2 The 1846 Trade Directory also describes the parish of Blaby, helping further to set it in its historical context:

“Blaby is a considerable village, on the south side of the Union Canal and a tributary stream, [the Sence], of the Soar, and on the Lutterworth Road; 4½ miles S. by W. of Leicester and 1 ½ miles W. of Wigston station. Its township contains 1241 acres of land and had 1081 inhabitants in 1841, many of whom are framework knitters. The soil is light and sandy and the surface generally flat. John Clarke is lord of the manor and resides at the Hall, a handsome mansion and having beautiful pleasure grounds recently laid out.”

4.1.3 The name of Blaby is 9th century Danish in origin, and means Blar's farmstead or village. The Scandinavian personal name means 'dark one' or 'dark blue' but there is no further evidence of occupation from that time until the Domesday record of 1086 which describes the village and its various inhabitants who had been ruled by 2 Danish Thaners – Bricmar and Ulf - pre Conquest but were now under the lordship of the Norman Count of Mellent. Blaby had a water mill and 30 acres of meadow land and its value had increased from 30s to 50s under Norman occupation.

4.1.4 Possible evidence of later medieval occupation of the village, is to be found at the entrance to Bouskell Park. There are 'lumps' and 'bumps' on this site, with what appear to be 'trackways' and marks in the ground suggesting building work of some kind. Archaeological pottery

concentrations may indicate that a medieval 'manor' house might also have once been located on this site as well.

However, the site also shows the very distinctive ridge and furrow of the Mill Field shown on the 1766 map. This part of the park land is clearly overlain with the remains of the landscaped pleasure gardens mentioned in the opening paragraph. A 'track way' seems to lead to the 19th Century Ice House and pond and could be the one, down which, the 19th Century servants pushed the cart from Blaby Hall to collect the chilled produce contained therein.

4.1.5 This area is regarded as the best historical site in the District and there is potential for further archaeological investigations and research. However it is also possible that the medieval centre of the village could have been situated to the north of Bouskell Park in 'The Green' area where, although, the properties here are largely 19th century, the pattern of the streets and lanes indicate much earlier occupation.

4.1.6 **Blaby Hall** is a listed building and described as a Country House in the Jacobean style and built in 1838, but on the site of an earlier house of 1727, possibly incorporating some of its features, including what is described as a meagre staircase, suggesting that the earlier building was somewhat less imposing. The current Hall is an attractive building and although disappointingly, not currently open to the public, provides a fine backdrop to the public parkland of Bouskell Park, which acquired its name from the 1930s owner of the Hall and Park, James Tempest Bouskell. To the East of this park land is The Long Walk, an atmospheric woodland walk taking you from the Park to Hospital Lane, and containing oak, beech, ash and pine trees.

4.1.7 **The Bakers Arms**, dating from around 1485 and described as the oldest pub in the county, 2nd oldest in the country, is also significant in the historical development of Blaby. It is a large thatched property and is to be found on Wigston Road which puts it firmly in the medieval centre. It was known as the "Three Owles" and could have been the family home of the Saville family who were at one time the lords of the manor ; their coat of arms contained three owls. It is believed it was the village bake house and

houses a large oven in one of its outhouses.

4.1.8 It is worth mentioning that although Blaby had in its origins a feudal, medieval core with all its associated attributes, it also has a proud early industrial heritage, once again indicated in the initial paragraph with its mention of framework knitters. Blaby was an open parish and as such entertained non-conformity from an early stage. The Baptist church, in the Conservation Area, began in the late 18th century and the Congregational church, on Park Road, a little later. Their contribution to the village built topography is also be recognised in this document.

4.2 Blaby Demographics

4.2.1 The population of Blaby according to the 2011 census was 8,840, made up of 51% females and 49% males. The average age of people in Blaby is 43, while the median age is slightly higher at 44. 94% of people living in Blaby were born in England, other answers for country of birth were, 1% Scotland, 0.7% Wales, 0.5% India, 0.4% Ireland, 0.3% Northern Ireland, 0.3% Kenya, 0.2% Hong Kong, 0.1% South Africa, 0.1% USA.

4.2.2 98.7% of people living in Blaby speak English as their first language, the other languages spoken are Cantonese, Russian, Persian/Farsi, Welsh, Arabic, Gujarati, German, Italian and Polish.

4.2.3 The religious make up of Blaby is 61% Christian, 31% No religion, 1% Hindu, others at less than 1% are Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish and Atheist. 290 people did not state a religion while 9 people are identified as a Jedi Knight.

4.2.4 54% of people are married, 11% live with a member of the opposite sex, 0.5% live with a partner of the same sex. 20% are single and have never been married or been in a registered same sex partnership. 7.4% are separated or divorced.

4.2.5 The top occupations listed in Blaby are Skilled Trades 16%, Professional 13%, Administrative and secretarial 13%, Associate

professional and technical 11%, Elementary 10%, Caring, leisure and other service, 10%, Elementary administration and service 9%, Administrative 9%, Managers, directors and senior officials 9%.

4.2.6 The age and gender profile for Blaby was at the older end with “over- representations” in age 35 years and over. The self-reported health profile for Blaby had “over-representations” of those “Very good or good” health amongst older age groups (50-64 years and 65 years and over).

An overview of the current position

Character Area A: Bouskell Park, Blaby Hall, the cemetery and adjoining farmland

Character Area B: Town centre shops, restaurants and pubs

Character Area C: Suburban Residential

Character Area D: Conservation Area

Character Area E: Northfield and Oakfield Parks

Character Area F: The Green Wedge

Character Area G: Outlying agricultural land

Character Area H: Commercial employment area (Winchester Road Business Park)

4.3 Character Area A: Bouskell Park, Blaby Hall, the cemetery, Long Walk and adjoining countryside

4.3.1 This area is dedicated largely to recreation and agriculture. It adjoins the village conservation area and provides a green oasis for the bustling village. The current Blaby Hall dates from the early part of the 19th. The Hall has been used for a number of years as offices and it has an existing Planning Permission for a sympathetic office extension. The Hall is surrounded by old farm buildings and residences, some of which are listed buildings.

4.3.2 Bouskell Park is a public park owned by Blaby District Council and consists principally of parkland which formally was associated with the Hall. The land is used for informal recreation and is very popular with residents and visitors. The Park includes a restored, Grade 2 listed, 19th century Ice House.

4.3.3 Character Area A adjoins and overlaps the Blaby Conservation Area and provides a green recreation area which protects the Conservation area from further erosion. Residents of Blaby, have indicated through surveys that this area is an area which should be conserved as green space.



Character Area A



Character Area A Map 2



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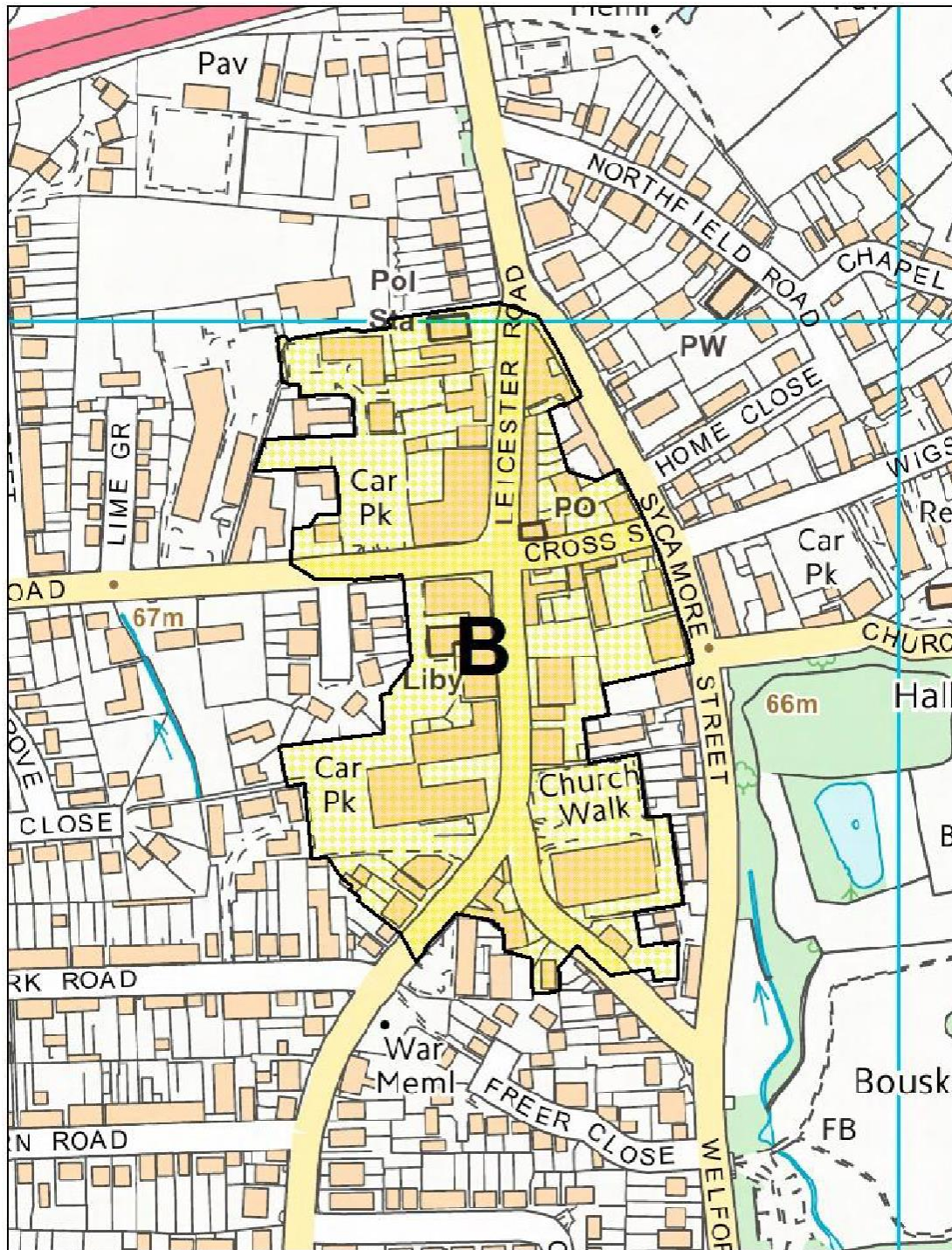
4.4 Character Area B: Town centre shops, restaurants and pubs

4.4.1 Blaby's Town Centre is an important shopping centre meeting the shopping needs of not only Blaby residents, but residents of surrounding villages. The main shopping centre which focuses around a Waitrose store dates back to the 1970s. The centre has two supermarkets, a butchers, chemist, bakers, jewellers and a DIY shop. The centre also has a number of charity shops, banks, opticians and hairdressers. The centre also has a number of cafes, restaurants, takeaways and pubs providing a variety of eating establishments.

Character Area B



Character Area B Map 3



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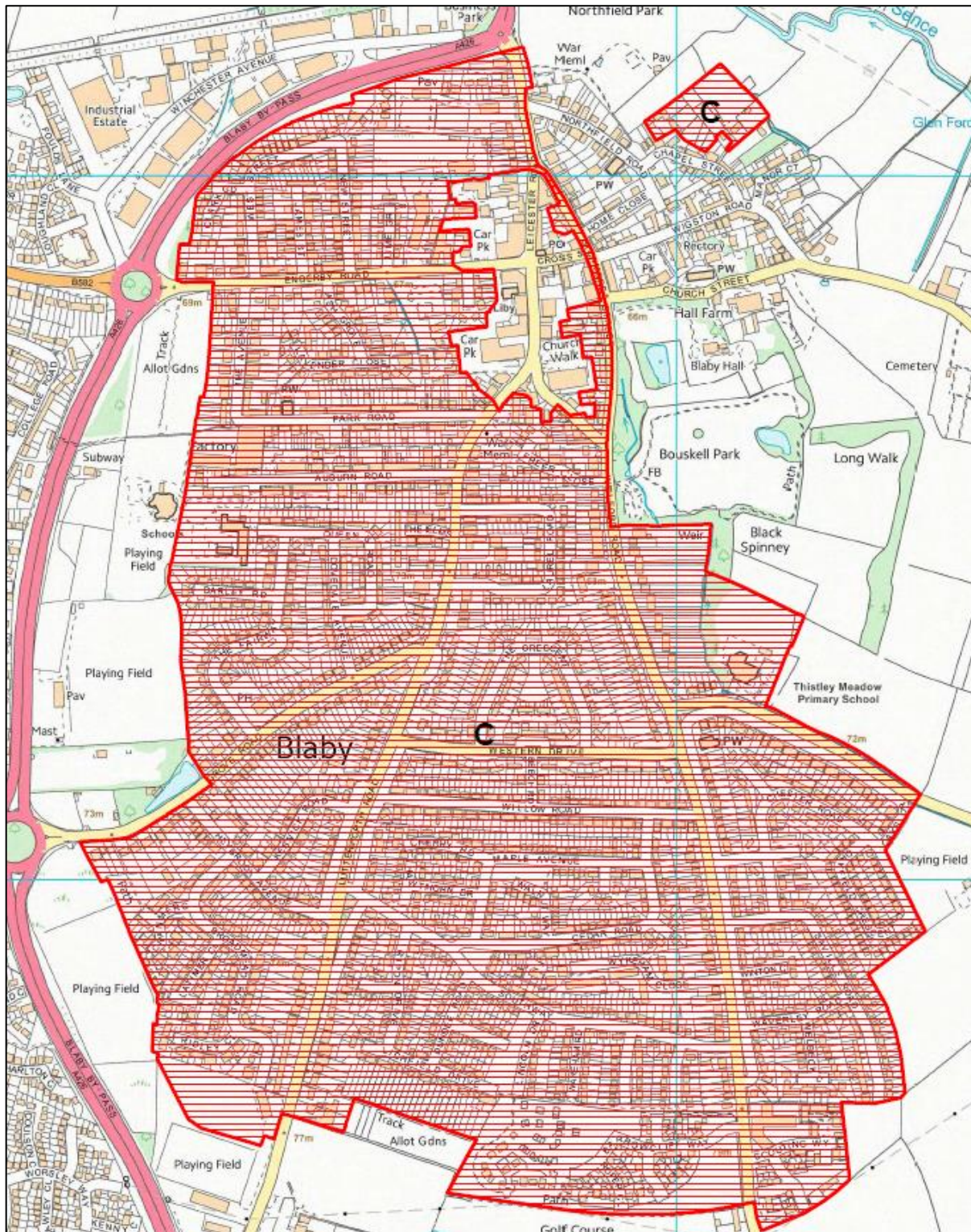
4.5 Character Area C: Suburban residential

4.5.1 Much of Blaby consists of a variety of residential properties which provide a wide range of housing options. Blaby has a range of residential properties including Victorian terraces, pre and post war semi-detached, both private and former Council properties. There are over 300 social rented properties, with the former Council rented properties being managed by East Midlands Homes. Since the 1960s there has been an expansion of the village with a number of “small estates” of semi-detached and detached dwellings. This growth has continued and Blaby has seen a considerable expansion of housing in the past few years, such that the village has already exceeded the minimum number of dwellings required to be built in the village, by the Blaby Core Strategy.

4.5.2 Large scale development over recent years has put a considerable strain on local roads and services. This is particularly true, since, the adjoining villages of Whetstone and Countesthorpe have also seen significant growth during the same time period and they rely to some degree on Blaby services. Owner occupation dominates the housing tenure in Blaby with 76% of properties falling into this category.



Character Area C Map 4



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4.5.3 In Blaby there is a substantial demand for social housing: during the period 01/05/14 to 01/05/15 the demand for 2 & 3 bedroom homes was extremely high with an average of 50 bids per property through the Blaby DC Choice Based Letting System.

4.5.4 The 2011 Census statistics show a mismatch between household size and the types of property available in Blaby. 68% Blaby Households are 1 or 2 person households whereas only 30% properties are one or two bedroom. 70% of Blaby properties are 3 bedroom or more. With the main parks and gardens being on the periphery of the village the Crescent Play Area, at the rear of Weston Drive provides an important additional recreational facility and has been designated as an Asset of Community Value. Two recent developments in Blaby have provided more than 100 Extra Care units which were built partially in recognition of the growing elderly population. Also as older persons often require one or two bedroom properties then the affordable housing allocations should recognise this.

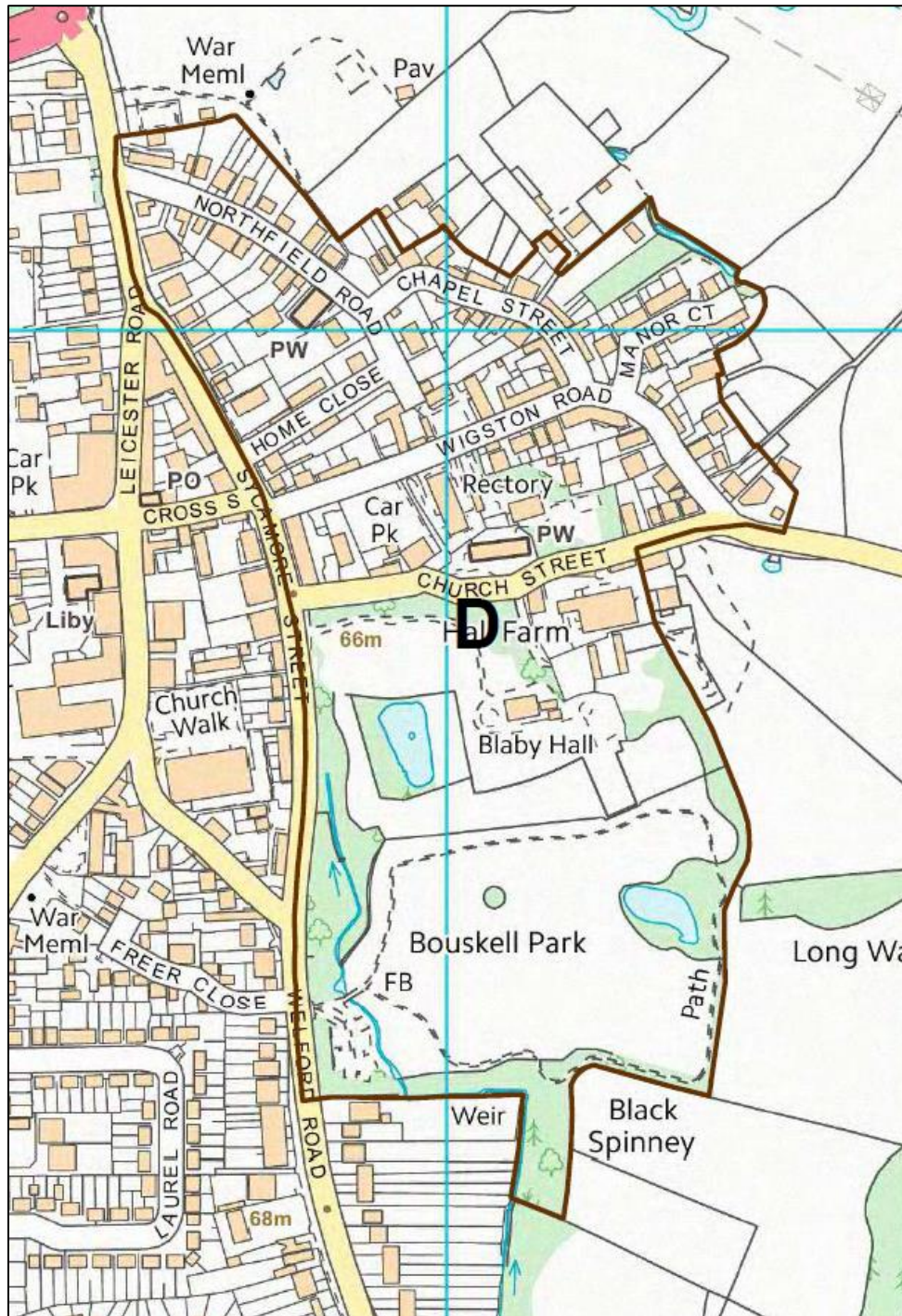
4.6 Character Area D: Conservation Area

4.6.1 The Blaby Conservation area has been drawn around the historic core of the village that lies on the eastern side of the village centred on the Grade I listed, All Saints Church. As a result of local topography, the Conservation Area is situated at the western end of a spur of land that marks the southern edge of the River Sence valley that runs to the north and west of Blaby.

4.6.2 The Conservation Area consists of two distinct character areas, the post- Medieval settlement core that occupies the closed network of streets to the north of the church (Wigston Road, Chapel Street and Home Close), and the later Victorian and Edwardian expansion to the north of this settlement, (Northfield Street and Church Street). This area of predominantly close-knit housing contrasts with the largely undeveloped areas to the south of the church, associated with Blaby Hall and its open landscaped parkland, now contained within Bouskell Park. The chronological, social and economic

development of the village, has left a range of buildings of various architectural styles and types, that includes many listed buildings. The designated and non-designated heritage assets define the essential character and appearance of the Conservation area and its overall significance.

Character Area D Map 5



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Assessment of Non-Designated Heritage Assets in Blaby

4.6.3 Blaby's historic environment is an important asset that contributes to the sense of local character and distinctiveness, often providing distinctive local features that are a tangible link to the past. There are a number of buildings outside the Blaby Conservation Area that have some local significance because of their archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest, and should therefore be considered as non-designated heritage assets. It is for Blaby District Council to determine whether to designate properties as non-designated heritage assets.

4.6.4 These non-designated heritage assets do not enjoy the levels of statutory protection afforded to nationally-listed buildings or buildings in the Conservation Area, but the effect of a planning application on a non-designated heritage asset is a material consideration when deciding planning applications, in accordance with the advice in paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Criteria for selection of non-designated heritage assets

4.6.5 The National Planning Policy Guidance suggests that non-designated heritage assets should be identified against consistent criteria, and the identification of non-designated heritage assets in Blaby parish will allow the Local Planning Authority to more thoroughly understand the heritage significance of these assets and the contribution they make to the character and distinctiveness of the area. It will also provide clarity to the general public and those wishing to make alterations to these assets as to the constraints and opportunities they may pose.

4.6.6 The selection of non-designated heritage assets will therefore identify buildings that are largely as they were originally built and can demonstrate a degree of significance in at least two of the following criteria:

- *archaeological interest*: it should provide evidence of past human

- activity and/or the social and economic development of Blaby;
- *architectural and artistic interest*: it should represent a significant example of a locally distinctive building or architectural style or technique; and,
- *historic interest*: it should have a particular association with a notable person or historic social or cultural event.

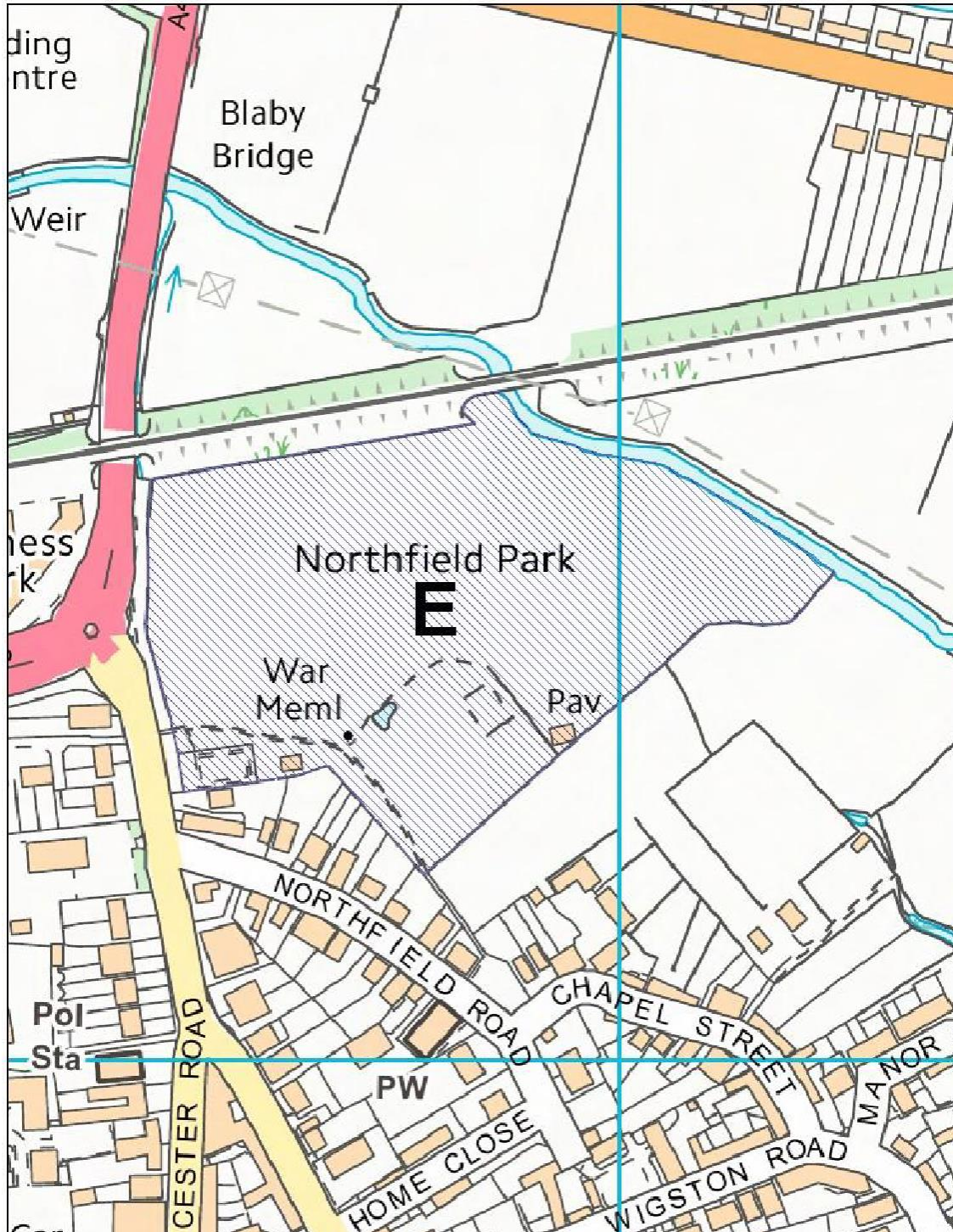
4.7 Character Area E: Northfield and Oakfield Parks

4.7.1 These two parks are owned by Blaby Parish Council and provide a variety of recreational opportunities. Oakfield Park has recently been improved with a range of play equipment for children and young people, an outside gym and a table tennis table for adults. In addition the park has a number of football pitches used by both children's and adult teams. Overall in 2014 /17 c. £300,000 has been spent on improving park facilities an indication of the vision of the Parish Council to improve and enhance its facilities

4.7.2 Northfield Park is used more for informal recreation although there are a number of items of play equipment. The park adjoins Blaby Cricket Club's cricket ground. There is also a Second World War memorial, which also includes a number of memorial trees. The park also incorporates a more formal peace garden for quiet enjoyment.

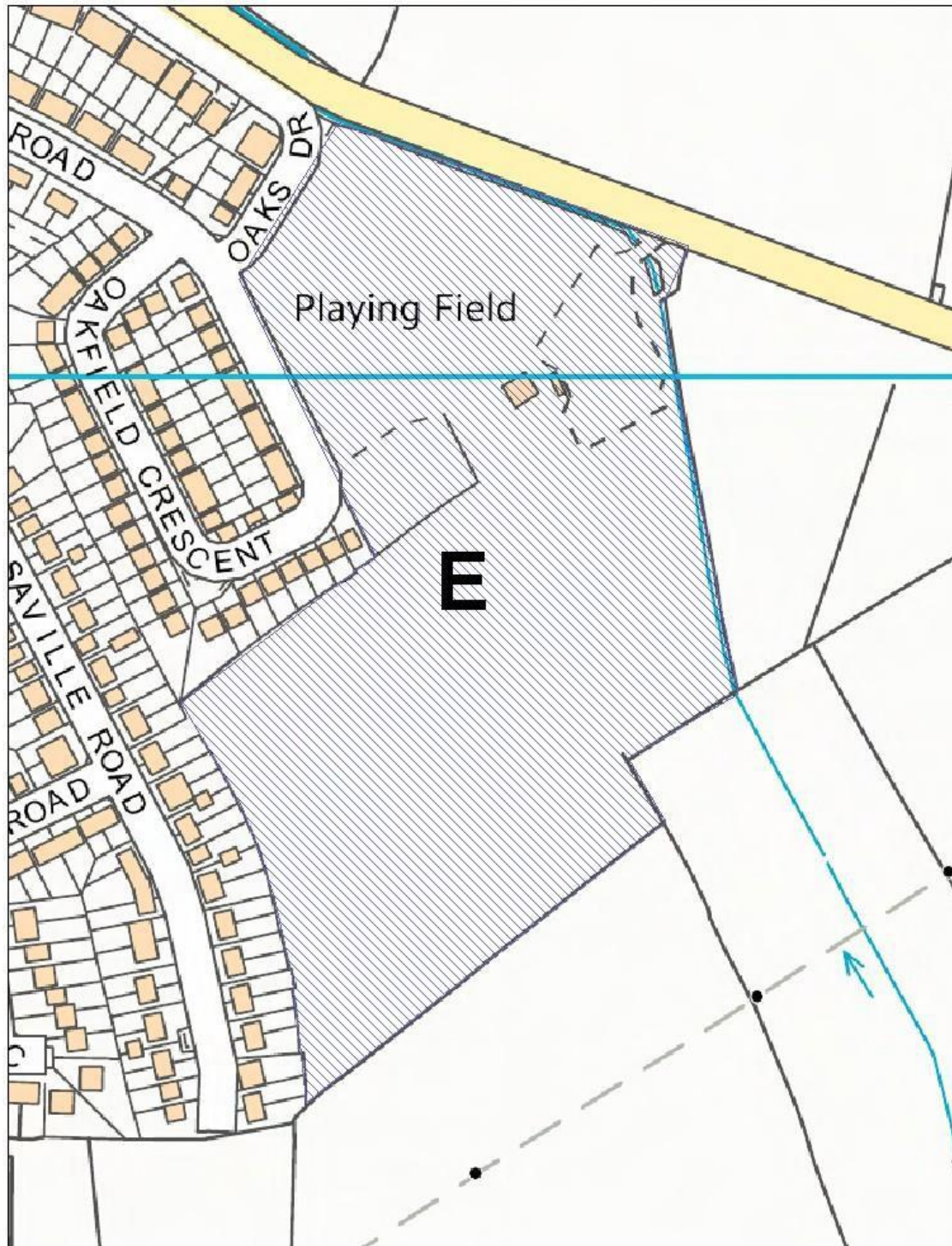


Character Area E (Northfield Park) Map 6



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Character Area E (Oakfield Park) Map 7



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4.8 Character Area F: The Green Wedge

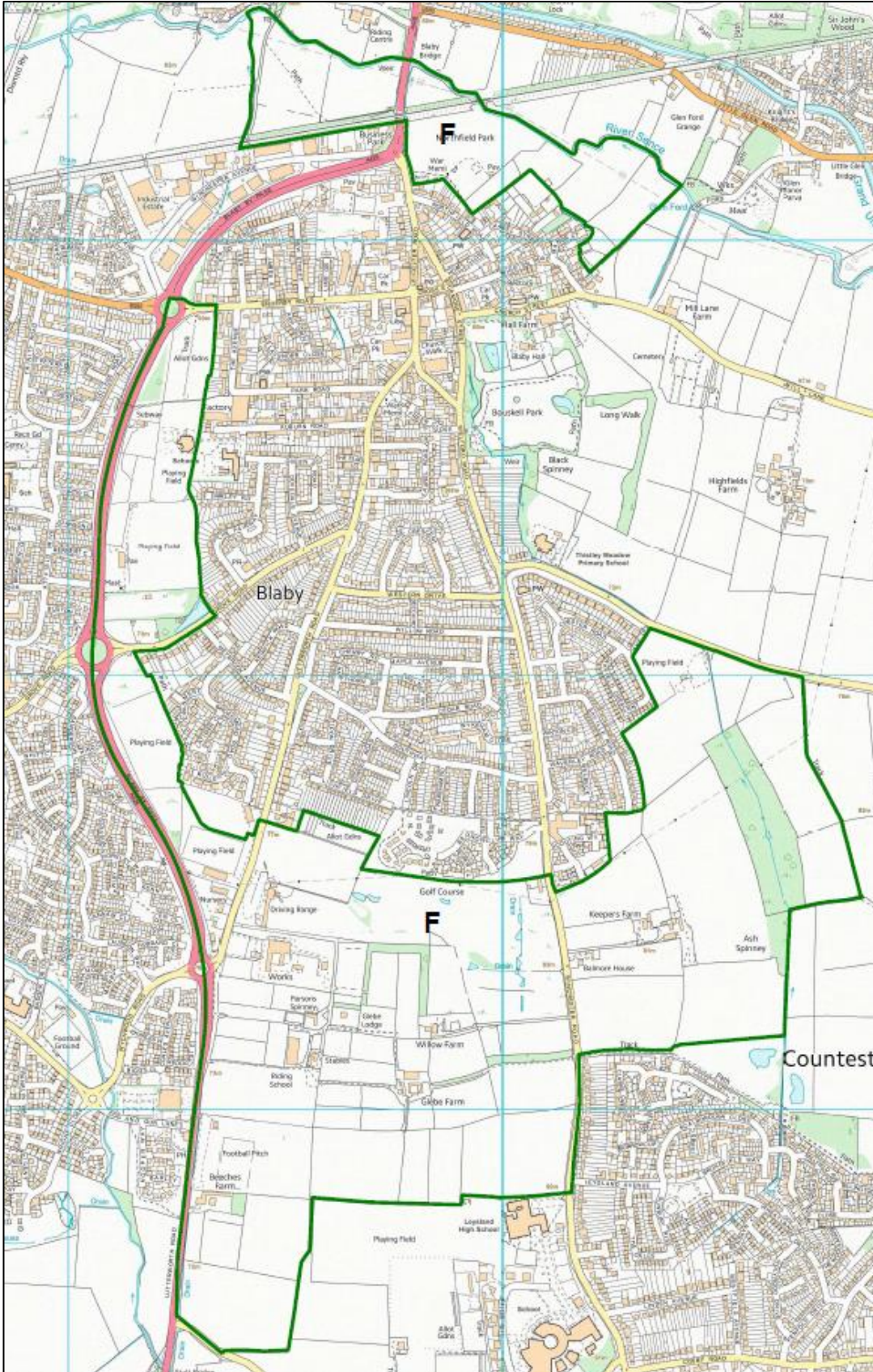
4.8.1 Blaby is separated from Whetstone by the Blaby bypass and the Green Wedge which runs alongside the bypass from Enderby Road to its end. The Green Wedge also extends to the north of Blaby where it provides an area of separation between Blaby and Glen Parva.

4.8.2 The Green Wedge includes Blaby parish allotments which are registered as an Asset of Community Value. It also includes the Vipers Rugby Club, a small holding / horse field, a garden centre, Westfield Play area, an area of well used informal open space and the Leicester Lions Rugby Club. The latter has recently been the site of a successful planning application for housing which eats into the Green Wedge. Also included in the Green Wedge is the Blaby Golf Centre. The Wedge to the north is partly flood plain and also fields. The Blaby Strategic Green Wedge Review 2009 identified the strip parallel to the Blaby Bypass between Blaby and Whetstone as “a particularly sensitive Green Wedge”.



Character Area F

Character Area F Map 8



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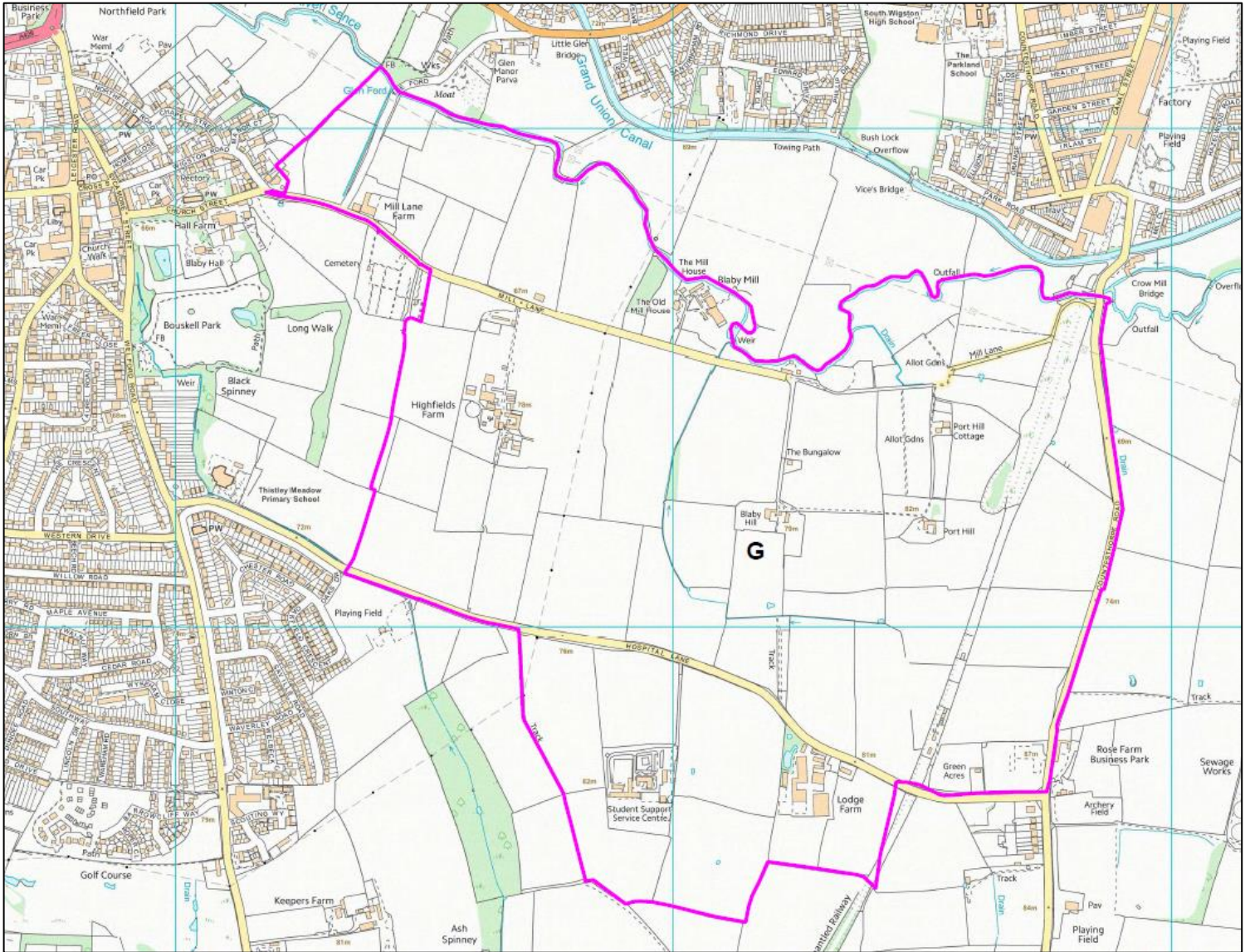
4.9 Character Area G: Countryside

4.9.1 Blaby is a reasonably compact settlement and within the parish there is a significant area of good quality agricultural land (1). The outlying agricultural land covers the area between the edge of the settlement to the East up to the Parish boundary. The agricultural land provides a rural setting for Blaby and helps maintain its individuality in the context of the surrounding settlements, including Countesthorpe and South Wigston.



Character Area G

Character Area G Map 9



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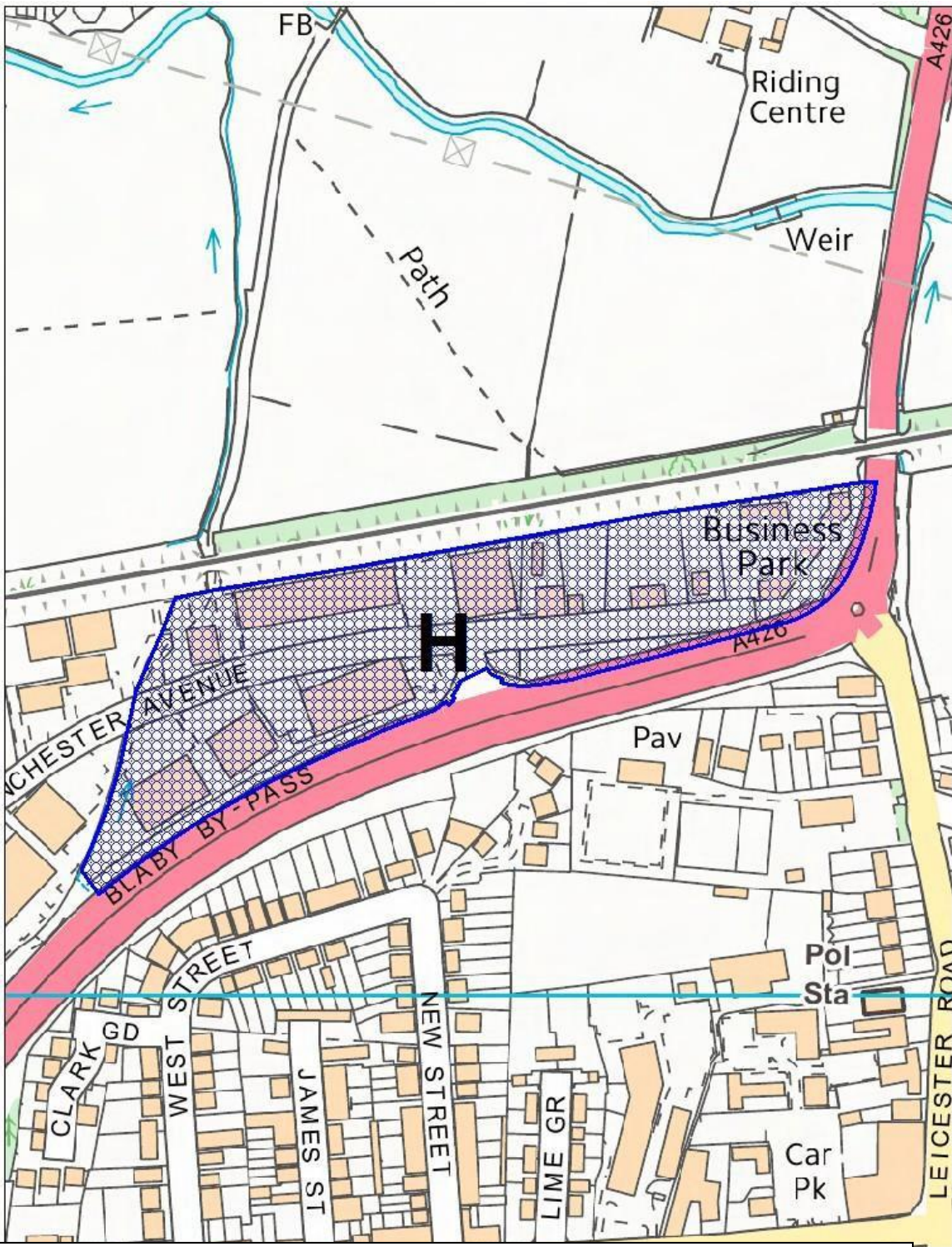
4.10 Character Area H: Commercial employment area

4.10.1 Blaby has a small area of commercial properties, as part of the Winchester Road Business Park which is shared with Whetstone. The area lies to the North of Blaby Bypass and to the south of the railway line shown as character area H on map. The units are used for warehousing, distribution, wholesale and car repairs. The Business Park appears quite successful with all units being occupied and providing employment opportunities.



Character Area H

Character Area H Map 10



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5. Development Needs

5.1 Housing

5.1.1 Blaby has seen substantial development over the past five years meaning that when all the housing development which has Planning Permission is complete Blaby Parish will have met and exceeded the number of dwellings set out in the Blaby Core Strategy. (The Core Strategy Policy CS5 requires a minimum of 420, homes to be provided between 2006 and 2029 and as at April 2017, 477 homes had been built or approved). To ensure this Neighbourhood Plan remains relevant over the plan period, if circumstances change, (potentially meaning that further housing land may need to be made available) it will identify “reserve “sites up to a combined minimum total capacity of 106 extra houses. It is not anticipated that the reserve sites would be needed until later in the plan period. The importance of providing affordable housing is apparent as well as provision of housing, suitable for first time buyers, including starter homes. Also, smaller occupancy units would be favoured as properties for downsizing and to meet the needs of the aging population which are currently in short supply. The mismatch between household size and housing type confirms the need for smaller properties. (See Evidence Base housing statistics)

5.1.2 The significant demand for social rented properties, particularly 2 and 3 bedroom properties confirms the importance of the Blaby Core Strategy policy which indicates all significant housing developments should have at least 25% affordable housing provision. (See Evidence Base housing statistics)

The Neighbourhood Plan will identify areas which could be used for housing, should circumstances require it.



The Bakers Arms

5.2 Town Centre Shopping Area

5.2.1 The Blaby commercial centre is an important local shopping area. It is recognised that this local centre is important not only to Blaby residents but also to residents of surrounding villages, in particular, Whetstone and Countesthorpe. The shopping area is centred around a 1970s precinct with a well-used Waitrose store at its focus.

5.2.2 However the shopping area expands well beyond precinct, with an equally well used Aldi store and small shops including butchers, bakers, pharmacy, hardware store, jewellers, banks and a post office.

The centre also has a number of cafes, pubs, restaurants and takeaway food shops. In addition there are a number of hairdressers, tanning salons, opticians, a betting shop, estate agents and a number of charity shops.

Development issues requiring attention:

1. Maintaining the retail balance,
2. Need to invest to improve the 1970s infrastructure.

5.3 Business and employment:

5.3.1 Blaby has a number of small service industries and businesses, focused around the central shopping area. In addition there are a number of commercial employment premises as part of the Winchester Road Business Park.

5.4 Countryside and green space:

“Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities”. (NPPF para 73)

5.4.1 The green environment, especially the open areas, the three parks, the long walk and the area between Hospital Lane and Mill Lane, and the Green Wedge between Blaby and Whetstone are key to ensuring the protection and enhancement of Blaby’s rural heritage.

5.4.2 Blaby is a compact settlement, which is contained within the green wedge and countryside. The green areas give Blaby its rural setting and any further incursion resulting in development on the more valuable green sites, would damage the settings of the village.

6. The Plan; Vision, Objectives, and Policies

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Vision for Blaby

The vision of our Blaby Neighbourhood Plan is that:

“Blaby will be a vibrant, well balanced community that continues to be a great place to live, to be educated, to work and to visit whilst maintaining its historic character as a large village with an attractive conservation area and variety of open spaces.”

Our Neighbourhood Plan provides guidance for planners and developers on how to deliver our vision.

6.2 Objectives

The following objectives naturally evolved from the evidence base to guide proposed actions needed for local sustainable development. It was recognised that some of these are achievable components of policy whilst others are important aspirations for the community:

- 1. Sensitive development respecting the character of Blaby**
- 2. Protect and enhance existing open spaces and amenities**
- 3. Protect and enhance the Town Centre**
- 4. To ensure sufficient supply of housing in the Parish**
- 5. Protect Blaby’s heritage**
- 6. New development incorporates appropriate design features which enhance and complement Blaby’s housing, commercial and historic character (Urban Design)**
- 7. All new development within Blaby is focused within the settlement boundary (Built Settlement Boundary)**



Blaby Hall

7. Policies

7.1 Objective: Sensitive development respecting the character of Blaby

7.1.1 Policy BNP1: Character and Environment

All new development shall create a sense of place appropriate to its location (using the identified Character Areas Maps) by reflecting the principal characteristics of adjacent area(s) in regards to scale, layout and materials.

Explanatory text

7.1.2 Housing development is not essential due to Blaby having achieved its Core Strategy Housing allocation. Notwithstanding this, should any further development come forward, it is essential that it should reflect its surroundings and be compatible with adjacent uses.

The valuable open green space around Blaby should not be adversely affected by inappropriate development.

7.2 Objective: Protect and enhance existing open spaces and amenities

7.2.1 Policy BNP2: Green Wedges

Two Green Wedges are designated as identified on Character Area F Map 8:

- 1. Between Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone**
- 2. Blaby and Glen Parva**

Development in the Green Wedges is restricted to that identified in Core Strategy Policy CS16, with the exception of the development of reserve sites in accordance with Policy BNP6.

Explanatory text

7.2.2 The Green Wedges are valuable not only as a barrier to avoid joining up of settlements, but also as they represent valuable wildlife and recreational resources. The need to retain Green Wedges is balanced against the need to provide new development (including housing) in the most sustainable locations (Blaby Core Strategy Policy CS16).

7.3 Objective: Protect and enhance existing open spaces and amenities

7.3.1 Policy BNP3: Countryside

Land designated as Countryside is the land outside the limits of built development and outside the Green Wedges as identified on the Proposals Map.

The area designated as Countryside, would not be suitable for built development, or other development which would have a significantly adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape (Blaby Core Strategy Policy CS18).

Explanatory text

7.3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of countryside and makes an assumption against building on green spaces. Open areas are important to the form and character of the built environment and the context of the heritage areas.

7.3.3 The Countryside and Green Wedges, surrounding the settlement provides a rural context for the village. Agriculture is an important industry for Blaby and the land designated on the map as countryside provides a green area between Blaby and South Wigston. The area has a number of footpaths which give opportunities for recreation and promote wellbeing. NPPF (75) makes particular reference to the protecting of public rights of way.

7.4 Objective: Protect and enhance existing open spaces and amenities

7.4.1 Policy BNP4: Local Green Space

The area shown on Local Green Space Map 11 is designated as an area of Local Green Space.

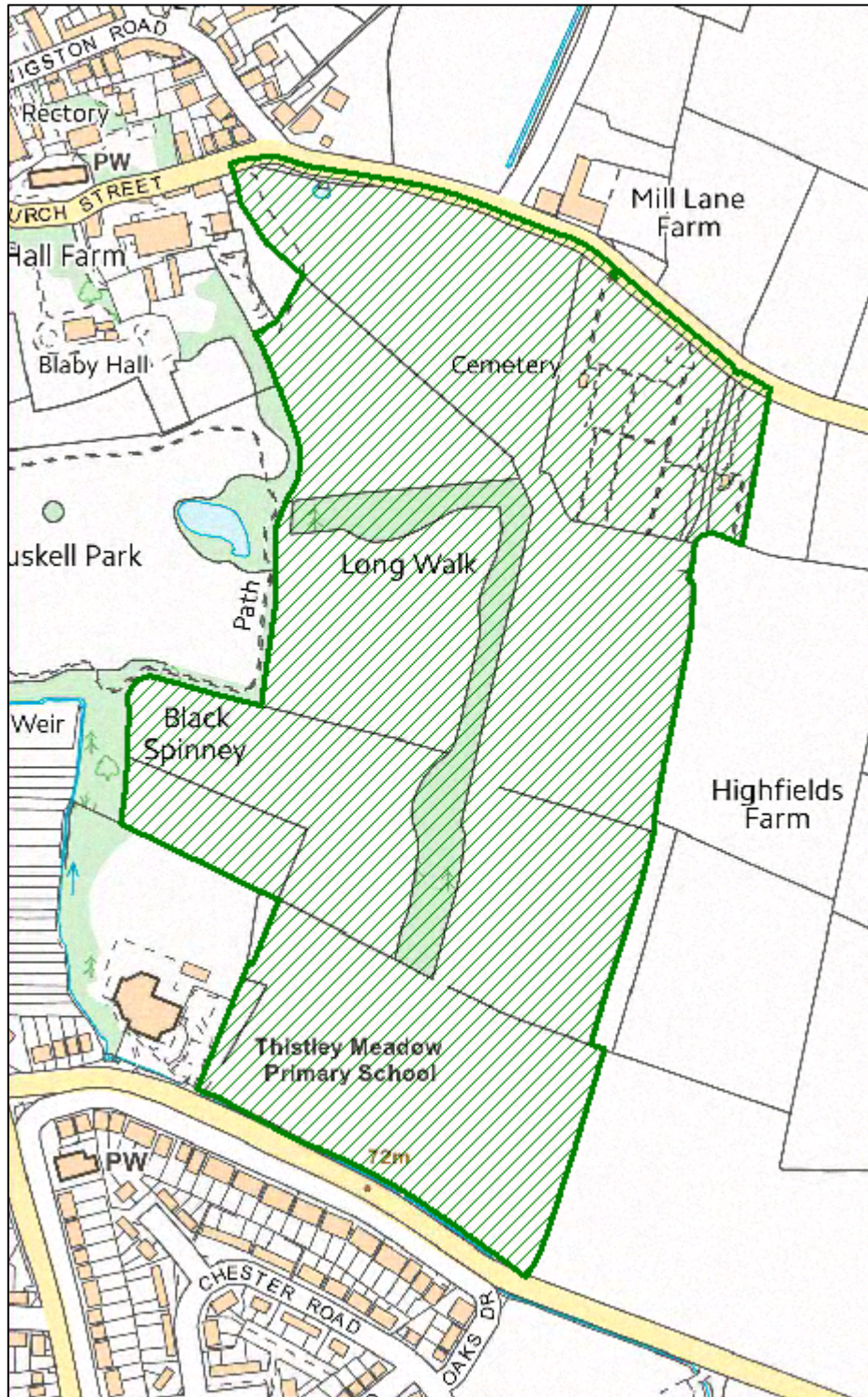
Explanatory text

7.4.2 The NPPF (paragraph 76) indicates that local communities can identify for special protection green areas of particular importance by designating land as Local Green Space. This plan will designate one area as an area of Local Green Space. The area to be designated is the land to the north of Hospital Lane, Blaby shown on Map 11.

7.4.3 Residents have consistently emphasised that this land is not only highly regarded for its amenity value, but also provides a green corridor to the East and also protects and enhances the heritage areas of Blaby Hall, Bouskell Park and The Ice House. Any development in this area would be detrimental to the recreational value of the Park and the Long Walk and rights of way, contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS14. It would also have a detrimental effect on a range of wildlife and habitat, contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS19.

7.4.4 This area has been repeatedly shown by residents in public meetings to be an area of green space which is most highly valued and used for recreation and enjoyment. The Local Green Space designation would be a means of protecting this area for future generations to enjoy.

Local Green Space Map 11



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7.5 Objective: Protect and enhance the town centre

7.5.1 Policy BNP5: Development in Blaby Town Centre

Any development proposals for Blaby Town Centre must accord with the general principles set out in the Blaby Town Centre Masterplan, except in exceptional circumstances

The general principles as set out in section 1 being:

- Provide a clear and robust urban design framework to guide future (re)development;**
- Identify sites in the Town Centre to accommodate a mixture of uses;**
- Improve linkages within the Town Centre;**
- Address sustainable transport issues.**

Explanatory text

7.5.2 The Blaby Town Centre is important not just to the village of Blaby but to the whole District as it represents the “County Town” of the District.

National Planning Guidance supports the enhancement and development of Town Centre locations using the planning system to help deliver a variety of services within a quality environment.

NPPF (23) Says;

“Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres...”

7.5.3 The need for the regeneration of the Town Centre, which is a key issue of national planning policy (NPPF23), was recognised in the Blaby Town Centre Masterplan. This identified a number of potential improvements to the town, which remain relevant although they were never implemented due to lack of resources.

7.5.4 The Masterplan (2008) identified Blaby as one of the Key Service Centres serving Leicester's southern conurbation, with ease of access from the M1 being seen as a key benefit to establishing a vibrant Town Centre.

The compact Town Centre and the "good proportion of independent traders" were also seen as strengths.

7.5.5 The four main transformational projects as outlined in the plan, remain valid and aspirational, in particular the "British Legion Site regeneration" and "John's Court".

The proposed transformation of Bouskell Park with the addition of a large community building is not such a high priority, with the new Civic Centre in Blaby now able to provide additional meeting space and possibly, space for historical and art exhibits. However certain aspects of the plan for Bouskell remain valid in particular the plan to link the Park to the town centre via various trails.

7.5.6 Also links between Bouskell Park and Blaby Hall should be explored to restore the relationship between the Hall and its original grounds. The Hall which is currently unoccupied would make an excellent community building. The Parish will pursue with the owners of the site, possibilities to bring the building into Community use, maybe as a museum along with a park information centre and café.

The fourth project of Environmental Enhancements and Public Realm Works remain an important aspirational project. The project is principally designed to link the other projects, and hence would probably naturally follow on from the other transformational projects.

7.5.7 The Plan recognises that the aspiration should be for the Masterplan to be implemented and that resources should be sought to deliver these projects. Developer contributions and or contributions from businesses in the town, could represent sources of funding.

7.5.8 Further it is important that when any changes to the Town Centre are proposed they remain within the general context of the Masterplan's

proposals. These can be summarised in the form of the objectives from Section 4 of the Masterplan:

1. To create an attractive Town Centre environment;
2. To achieve greater pedestrian priority whilst also meeting the needs of motorists and enhancing public transport provision;
3. To strengthen access to the Town Centre from surrounding residential areas, especially for pedestrians;
4. To improve car parking within the Town Centre;
5. To retain and attract a sustainable range of shops and services;
6. To capitalise on local heritage features to enhance the visitor experience;
7. To improve existing open spaces, particularly Bouskell Park, and improving integration of these facilities with the Town Centre;
8. To develop a higher quality leisure offer and enhance the evening economy;
9. To develop a distinctive and marketable image and identity for the Town Centre.

7.6 Objective: To ensure a sufficient supply of housing in the Parish

Introductory text

7.6.1 Blaby Local Plan (Core Strategy) identifies Blaby as being required to accommodate a minimum of 420 homes between 2006 and 2029. In this context Blaby has built or committed to build a total of 477 dwellings as at 1st April 2017 thereby exceeding the minimum requirement. Notwithstanding this there may be a risk that some of those schemes may not be completed during the period of the Plan or circumstances will change meaning Blaby's allocation increases, and hence the Plan will consider additional housing.

7.6.2 In view of this, the Plan identifies reserve housing sites which could be brought forward for development should the need arise. These sites have been identified following consideration of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and following public consultation at a

meeting held on 8th January 2015. In addition a detailed site assessment was completed for all of the sites within the SHLAA and the two reserve sites scored highest. In the event of these sites coming forward for development they should meet the conditions in terms of the proportion of affordable units as set out in the policy.

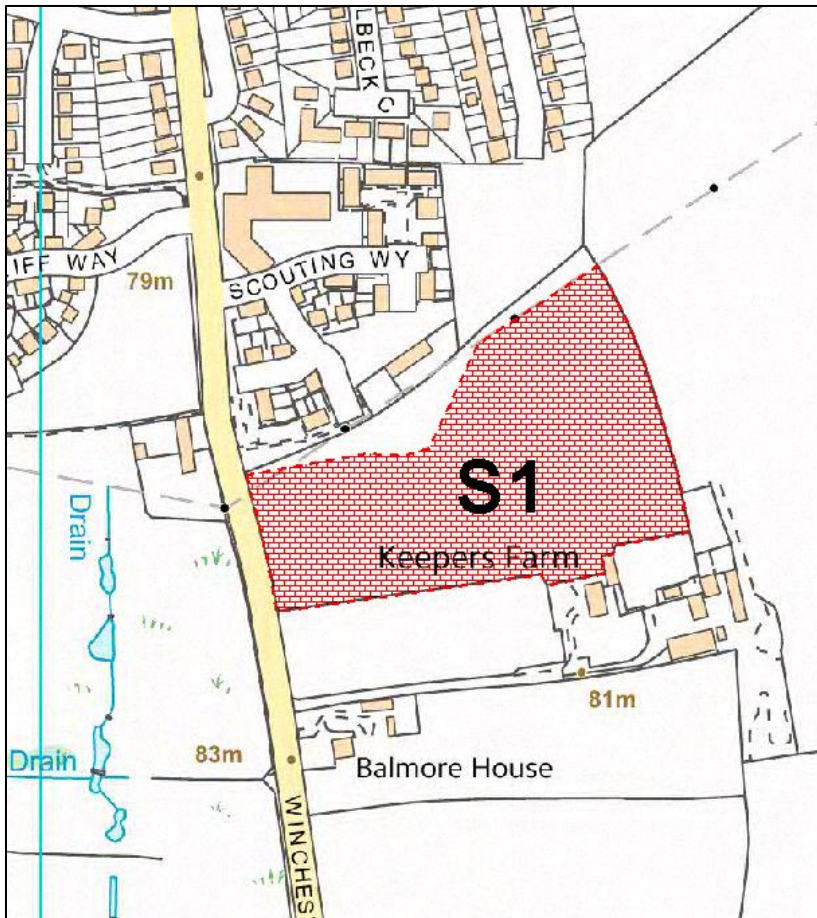
7.6.3 Policy BNP6(a): Reserve site allocation (S1)

Land to the east of Winchester Road and to the south of Saville Road Blaby identified as (S1) on map 12 to be allocated as a reserve site for approximately 55 dwellings which would be brought forward if needed to address the most up to date housing evidence. This site is to include a minimum of 25% affordable housing.

Explanatory text

7.6.4 Site (S1) would provide approximately 55 houses and according to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment could find “no fundamental reasons to exclude this site”, in highways terms. It was one of the sites identified by the public consultation as being a possible reserve site. This site is actually smaller than the one identified in the SHLAA as the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identified a surface flood risk in the Saville Road end of the site. We have excluded this part of the site. The site which covers 2.94 Hectares and would provide an excellent gateway development, due to its location on the edge of the edge of the village and being located on one of the main routes into the village from a southerly direction.

Reserve Site S1 Map 12



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7.6.5 Policy BNP6(b): Reserve site allocation (S2)

Land adjacent to Lutterworth Road identified as (S2) on map 13 to be allocated as a 'reserve' site for approximately 51 dwellings which would be brought forward if needed to address the most up to date housing evidence. The site is to include a minimum of 25% affordable housing.

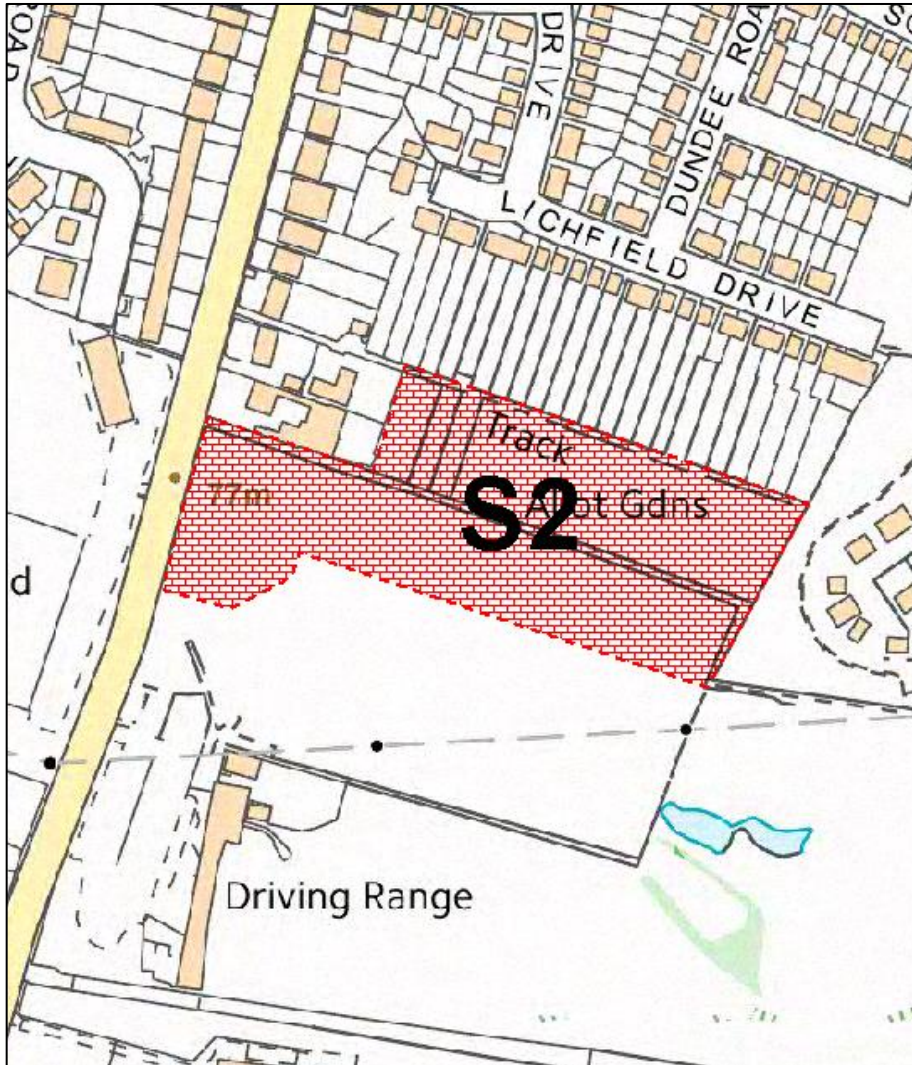
Explanatory text

7.6.6 Site (S2) would provide approximately 51 houses and the SHLAA describes this as developable but with policy constraints. Leicestershire County Council Highways Department identified via a SHLAA appraisal that "There are no apparent, fundamental reasons for this site to be excluded from consideration at this stage." The land is principally derelict allotments and a small part of the golf course practice ground.

7.6.7 A range of other sites were considered and assessed accordingly and subsequently rejected. More information is available on this process in the evidence base, housing site selection paper. Although the chosen sites are within the Green Wedge which the plan recognises should be protected, they abut recent development or have some existing housing there at present, and most importantly, they are not considered to undermine the overall function of the Green Wedge to a significant extent.

7.6.8 The Public Consultation meeting held on 8th January identified three sites as those which residents would see as most appropriate reserve sites. The map showing the resident's choices are included within the consultation report.

Reserve Site S2 Map 13



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7.7 Objective: Protect Blaby's Heritage

7.7.1 Policy BNP7: Properties of local significance

The properties listed in paragraph 7.7.3 are regarded as historic properties of local significance, which are worthy of being preserved and enhanced. Development adversely affecting these structures or their settings will be resisted.

Explanatory text

7.7.2 The Blaby Conservation area was established in the 1970s and some changes and development has taken place in the area since that time. This is why an updated character assessment has been undertaken and provided in the evidence base. (Blaby Neighbourhood plan Conservation Area) This policy seeks to ensure that all heritage assets including those that are not designated are protected from inappropriate change or development.

Local Non Designated Heritage Assets

The following properties merit consideration as non-designated heritage assets. It is for Blaby District Council to determine whether to designate properties as non-designated heritage assets. Reasons for the designation of each of the properties can be found in the evidence base (Assessment of Non-Designated Heritage Assets in Blaby).

7.7.3(a) Industrial Buildings:

These buildings have significant archaeological and architectural interest illustrating the economic development of Blaby and a functional architectural design.

(a) The Old Mill House (Historic Environment Record ref. MLE23) Mill Lane, Blaby

7.7.3(b) Residential Properties

These buildings have significant archaeological and architectural interest illustrating the social and economic development of Blaby, resulting in the expansion of Blaby to the west of its historic centre and the architectural design and features are typical of late Victorian and Edwardian housing.

Ashfield House: 8 Enderby Road, Blaby

South View House: 47 Enderby Road, Blaby

Holly House: 41 Enderby Road, Blaby

44 Enderby Road, Blaby

46 Enderby Road, Blaby

Sycamore Lodge: 69 Enderby Road, Blaby

Havelock House: 51 Lutterworth Road, Blaby

6 & 8 The Avenue, Blaby

10 & 12 The Avenue, Blaby



Blaby Baptist Church

7.8 Objective: New development incorporates appropriate design features which enhance and complement Blaby's housing, commercial and historic character. (Urban Design)

7.8.1 Policy BNP8: Design of new development

New development within Blaby should incorporate design features which enhance and complement Blaby's important housing, commercial and historic character and reflect the following principles in the relevant areas.

Design principles within the conservation area (Character Area D).

Materials: There is a design pallet of materials, principally comprising red brick and slate roofs and these should be used for future development.

Scale and Massing: Future development should be predominantly 2 storey in height, maintaining the roofline.

Landscape: Ensuring consistent landscape features throughout the conservation area is imperative to maintaining its special character.

Detailing: The detailing of new development should be reflective of the care and attention in traditional buildings in the conservation area.

Design principles within Blaby Town Centre (Character Area B)

Renewal or improvement of Blaby Town Centre should include the following where possible:

- a. High quality natural stone paving
- b. New natural stone paving to the cross roads crossing area
- c. Planting of street trees with accompanying seating and street furniture
- d. Remove or reduce on-street parking and extend street scape out
- e. Closure of Cross street to vehicular traffic
- f. Change of surface at gateway to village centre

Design principles within the Gateway development

Reserve site S1 is located at the Gateway to Blaby approaching the village from Countesthorpe, some or all of following should be incorporated into the design of that development:

- a. New public open space at the front of the site with pond and tree planting,
- b. Traffic calming at the gateway to Blaby,
- c. Link with existing cycle route into Blaby Town Centre,
- d. Provide landmark buildings at the site entrance and at the end of the access road vista,
- e. The creation of perimeter blocks to ensure active fronts and private backs.

Explanatory text

7.8.2 Neighbourhood Plan Blaby Design Principles (July 2015) provides detailed design guidance for the three relevant areas.

7.9 Objective: All new development within Blaby to be focused within the settlement boundary (Built Settlement Boundary)

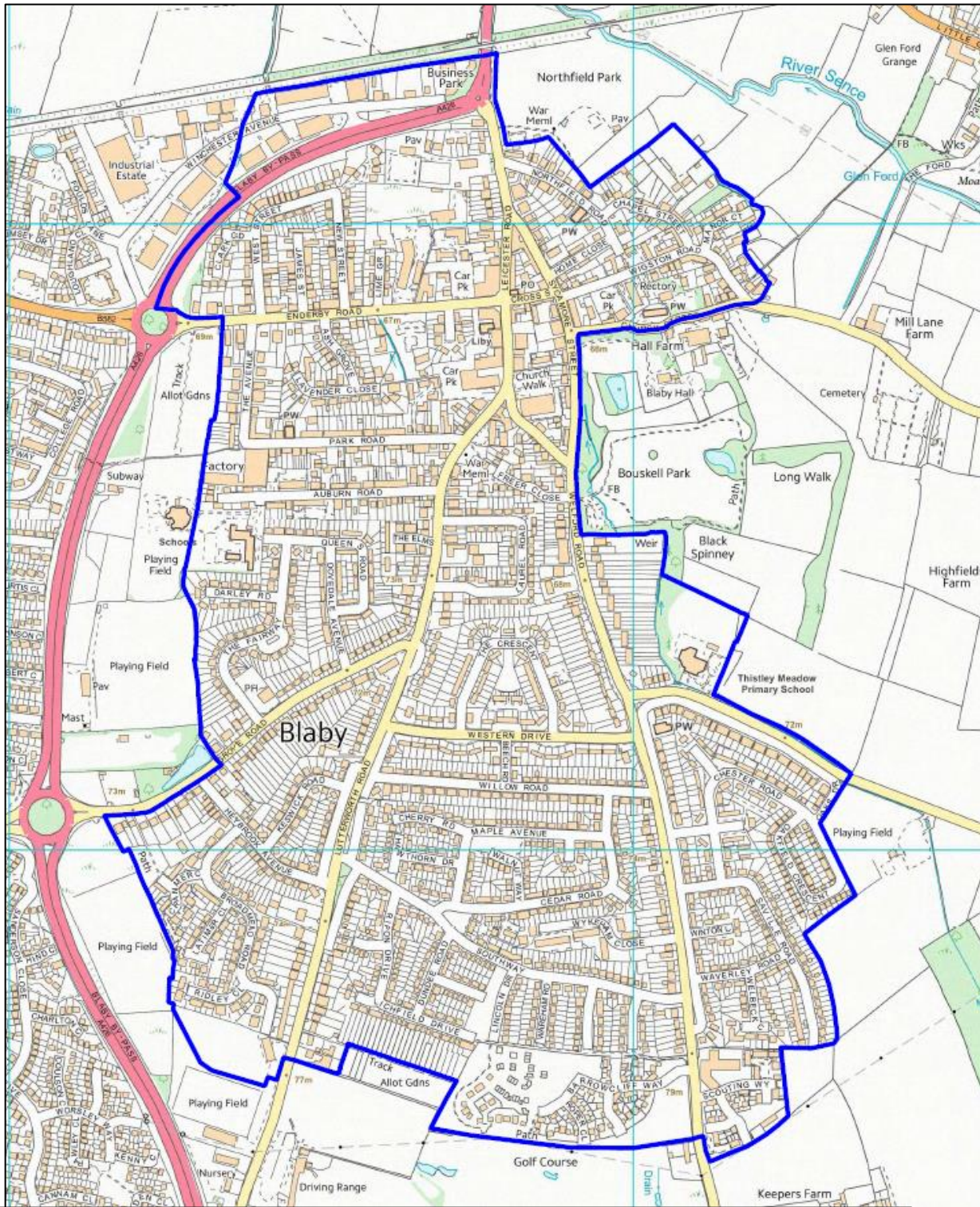
7.9.1 Policy BNP9: Settlement boundary

The location of future development will be focused within the identified settlement boundary (as shown on Map 14), whilst allowing for sustainable development within the Green Wedges and countryside. Such sustainable development to include the development of the reserve sites in accordance with Policy BNP6. New development will be supported within the settlement boundary, subject to the proposed development having a satisfactory relationship with other nearby uses.

Explanatory text

- 7.9.2 This policy will have a number of positive impacts on Blaby;
- a. It will protect the Green Wedge and the Countryside areas of the village which contribute significantly to the character of the village;
 - b. It will ensure Blaby remains an independent settlement with clear separation from adjoining villages;
 - c. It will encourage development on Brownfield or previously developed sites, subject to the development being of appropriate quality and design.
 - d. It provides flexibility for the future of Blaby to develop in the most sustainable way

Blaby Settlement Boundary Map 14












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Blaby Neighbourhood Plan

Proposals Map

Map 15

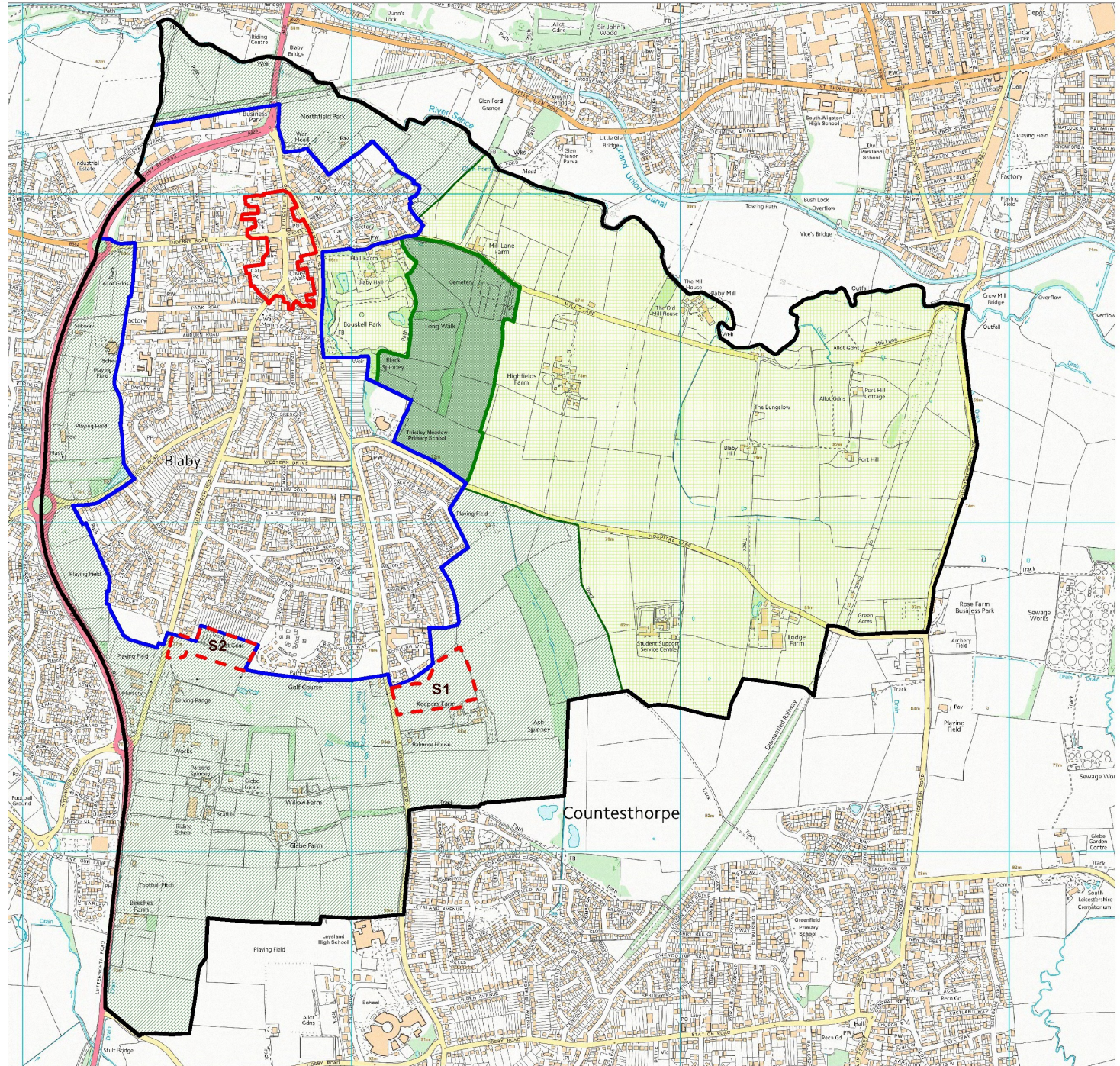
Key

-  BNP2 Green Wedge
-  BNP3 Countryside
-  BNP4 Local Green Space
-  BNP5 Blaby Town Centre
-  BNP6 Reserve Housing Sites
-  S1 BNP6a Reserve Housing Site S1
-  S2 BNP6b Reserve Housing Site S2
-  BNP9 Blaby Settlement Boundary
-  Blaby Parish Boundary



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7.10 Proposals Map

Following a number of requests from consultees it was decided to include a Proposals map which shows graphically the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

8. Implementation

8.1 Details of how this plan will be implemented

The Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered and implemented over the plan period of 2006 – 2029. The Plan will inevitably require flexibility over its implementation as further challenges and opportunities arise over time. The Plan will therefore be reviewed on a bi-annual basis and it will be the responsibility of both the community and Parish Council to monitor progress.

8.1.1 Key to the success of the Plan will be ensuring that all planning and development decisions take into account the views of the community as expressed through the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, which has subsequently been prepared in the context of the Blaby District Council Core Strategy.

8.1.2 Any proposed development in the Parish of Blaby will need to be considered in the context of the policies set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Some of the Plan is aspirational, in particular in relation to Town Centre improvements, but that doesn't in any way detract from the importance of the Town Centre to the health and prosperity of Blaby. Further, the Parish Council will look for sources of funding, in particular developer contributions, to deliver, some or all, of the aspects of the Masterplan.

9. Bibliography / Evidence Base

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Soar

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Evidence Base Age and Health Statistics

Evidence Base Blaby Housing Statistics

Assessment of Non-Designated Heritage Assets in Blaby

Blaby District Council Draft Delivery Development Plan Document (2016)

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Blaby District Council Choice Based Letting System

10. Glossary

- **Blaby Town Centre Masterplan:** A plan developed by consultants and adopted by Blaby District Council in 2007, setting out sustainable improvements to the town centre.
- **Character Areas:** Specific areas of land defined by their main purpose and use.
- **Conservation Area:** An area designated by the District Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
- **Core Strategy:** A Development Plan Document setting out long-term spatial vision and objectives, and containing both strategic and generic policies.
- **Evidence Base:** The researched, documented, analysed, and verified basis for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.
- **Referendum:** A general vote by the electorate on a single question. In the case of Neighbourhood Plans, the referendum at the end of the process decides whether the plan shall be made.
- **Sustainable Development:** Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA):** An assessment of identified sites within the District for their development potential.