

Skillington Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2031

As submitted to South Kesteven District Council
(February 2017)



(Cover photograph by kind permission of Andrew Cluskey)

Prepared by Skillington Parish Council

Foreword

Skillington Neighbourhood Plan is an important planning document which will shape the future of our community over the next fifteen years. It is relevant to all parishioners and those who value our unique heritage and sense of community. By preparing a neighbourhood plan the Parish Council is taking the opportunity to influence the type, scale and design of any development which can take place within the Parish.

This plan has been produced to reflect the views of parishioners on the village's future. It provides policies which will support South Kesteven District Council's Local Plan, at a time when national policy on housing requires increased building. The plan describes the village, its background, context and character, and proposes a series of policies which are intended to ensure that any proposed development should respect our unique identity.

Of necessity, this document has to conform to the language of planning. Some of the plan therefore explains the planning context (at local and national level), before trying to define Skillington's particular situation. This sets up a series of objectives which aim to strike a balance between acknowledging the need for some development and preserving and enhancing the village's identity. The policies set out a framework for considering potential future development.

This plan has been produced by the Steering Group, which reports to the Parish Council. The summary of information on who lives in Skillington and their views on the character of the village and any future development is based on the survey carried out last year. The document has been drafted with the invaluable advice of Bob Keith, our planning consultant, who has extensive Neighbourhood Plan experience.

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1. Introduction

What is a neighbourhood development plan?

- 1.1 Communities now have new powers to shape development through neighbourhood planning, which is a new right introduced through the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.2 A neighbourhood development plan can set out a vision for an area and planning policies for the use and development of land. It will form part of the statutory planning framework for the area, subject to the outcome of the referendum, and the policies and proposals contained within the neighbourhood plan will be used in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.3 The neighbourhood plan will therefore form part of the development plan for the area and will be used by the local authority and other stakeholders in decision making.

Skillington Parish

- 1.4 The parish is located 8½ miles south of Grantham in the county of Lincolnshire. It comprises the small village of Skillington surrounded by open countryside. It is on the border of the county adjacent to Leicestershire and Rutland.
- 1.5 According to the 2011 Census it has a population of 345 living in 151 households.
- 1.6 The parish of Skillington covers 2,240 acres. Surrounded by agricultural and wooded land, the village sits at the intersection of minor roads to the nearby town of Grantham, and neighbouring villages of Buckminster, Colsterworth, and Sproxton. The Cringle Brook runs across the south of the village.
- 1.7 The older pattern of settlement was focused to the north of the present village, around the Church of St James (dating to the 11th century), and Abbey (dated 1637). To the south the Square contains a number of limestone and pantile houses, some dating from the 17th century. There has been further development in the 19th and 20th centuries focused around The Square, including Blue Town and Stonepit Lane to the southern edge of the village. Almost the entire village has been designated a Conservation Area and much of the recent development has been in keeping with the nature of existing properties.
- 1.8 Since the 19th century the Square has been the centre of the village, with two pubs (The Cross Swords Inn and The Blue Horse Inn), the Methodist Chapel (1847), and opposite these, the Old Post Office now a residence. More recently a new Village Hall was built in 2008 on the edge of the village, by the Grantham Road; this is adjacent to a playing field used for cricket, football and other sporting activities.
- 1.9 Although the housing and facilities are concentrated in a small area within the boundary defined by the river and neighbouring fields there is a strong sense of openness created by the paddock, The Square, The Green. These green spaces are often used for community events and echo the way the village gives on to open countryside. A number

of public rights of way and bridleways, notably the Viking Way, connect with the village and these are used by both residents and visitors.

- 1.10 Skillington enjoys good transport links, the CallConnect demand responsive bus service is available to pre-book for journeys between Skillington and Grantham between 7am – 7pm Monday-Friday and 8am-6pm Saturday. Skillington It is located about 1½ miles west of the A1 Great North Road. It is about 70 minutes to London by train from Grantham using the East Coast Main line. There are also cross country services to Nottingham, Birmingham, and Ely/Cambridge. However the local bus service is limited, providing a daytime service to/from Grantham via neighbouring villages. Even this service is at risk from County Council spending cuts.

Governance

- 1.11 Skillington Parish is in the administrative area of South Kesteven District Council which serves as the local planning authority. Services such as education and transport are provided by Lincolnshire County Council, which also deals with minerals and waste planning matters.

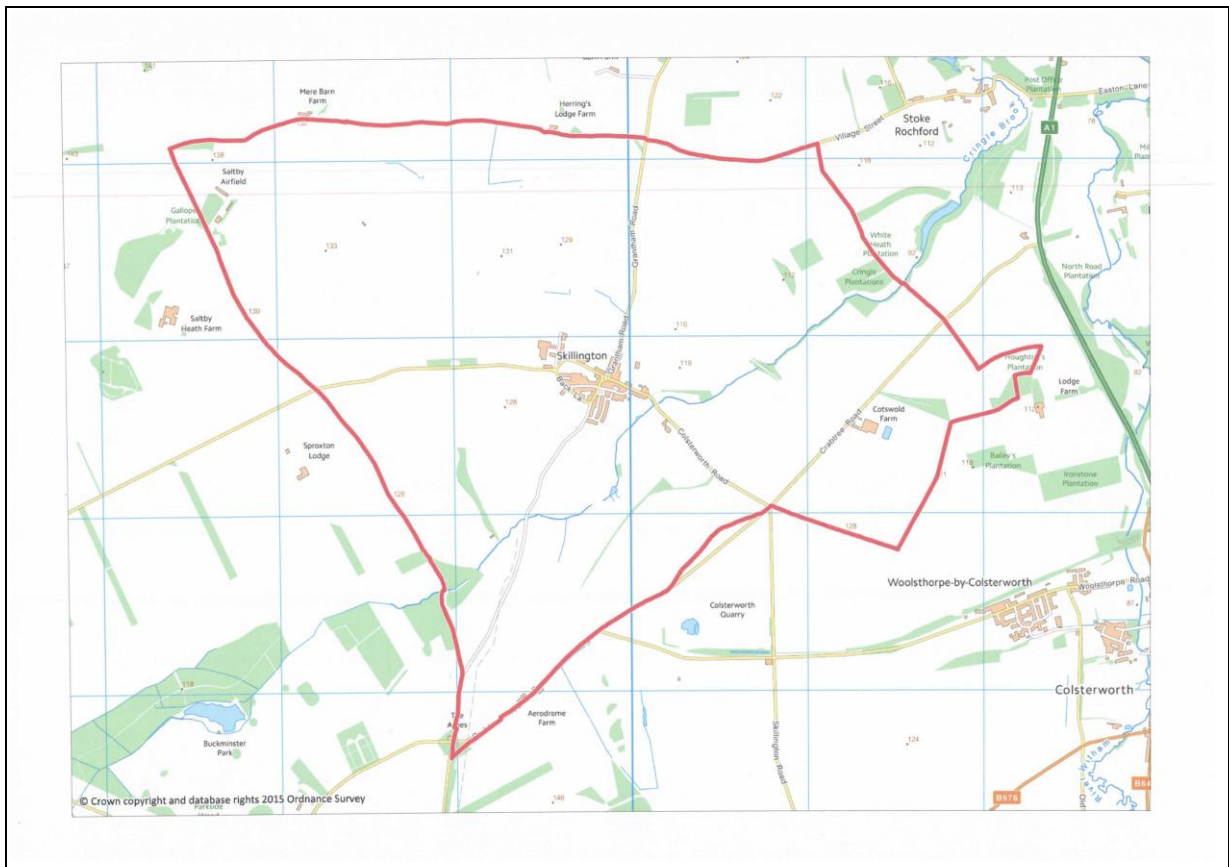
Background to the Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.12 The process to formulate a neighbourhood plan started in November 2014 with a questionnaire distributed in the village asking if a plan was something that residents wanted to take forward. A strong majority (over 80%) of respondents were in favour of preparing a plan.
- 1.13 As the appropriate ‘Qualifying Body’, Skillington Parish Council applied to South Kesteven District Council to designate a neighbourhood area on 7 April 2015. The District Council subsequently publicised the application for a six week period and invited any representations. The District Council formally approved the Skillington Neighbourhood Area on 17 June 2015.
- 1.14 The boundary of the Skillington Neighbourhood Area corresponds to the Parish boundary. This is indicated on Diagram 1 overleaf.

The Plan Period

- 1.15 The Skillington Neighbourhood Plan will cover the period up to 2017-2031. The plan period for the adopted Development Plan prepared by South Kesteven District Council is up to 2026. However the District Council is preparing a new Local Plan, which will cover the period up to 2036.
- 1.16 A plan period of 2017-2031 allows the neighbourhood plan to be consistent with the adopted Development Plan but mindful of the latest evidence base and the proposed housing requirement in the emerging Local Plan.

Diagram 1 – Boundary of the Skillington Neighbourhood Area



Consultation on the Pre-submission Draft Plan

- 1.17 As part of the statutory process the Parish Council was required to invite representations on the Draft Plan prior to it being formally submitted to the District Council. This stage must include a formal consultation period of at least six weeks to publicise the plan and bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area. The Parish Council was also required to invite representations on the Draft Plan from key stakeholders and statutory consultees, including the District Council. This consultation was carried out in September to November 2016.

Next Steps

- 1.18 Following this consultation, the draft plan has been reviewed in the light of comments received and revised where appropriate. It is now being formally submitted to South Kesteven District Council for the next stage of the statutory process.
- 1.19 The District Council will again publicise the submitted plan for a six week period and invite comments. An independent examiner will then be appointed to consider any representations and check that the plan meets certain basic conditions, including conformity with national and local planning policies. The examiner may suggest modifications to ensure this is achieved. The submitted plan can only proceed to a community referendum once the District Council is satisfied that the plan is fit for this final stage. A majority of people voting must then support the plan if it is to be eventually 'made' by the District Council. Once 'made' a Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the development plan for the area and will become a major consideration when determining planning applications.

2. National and Local Planning Context

The Basic Conditions

- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011 stipulates that a neighbourhood development plan must meet certain basic conditions before it can come into force. The independent examiner will assess whether the plan has met these basic conditions and make recommendations to the local planning authority accordingly. If the local planning authority concludes the basic conditions have not been met, the plan will not go forward to referendum.
- 2.2 There are five basic conditions that are relevant to a neighbourhood plan. These are:
- The neighborhood plan has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area;
 - the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations; and
 - the prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with. For example, the ‘making’ of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012).

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.3 The Skillington Neighbourhood Plan must therefore be developed with regard to national policy, especially the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Framework set out the Government’s planning policies for England and came into effect in March 2012. It contains core planning principles which must underpin all plan-making. It provides the basis for local planning authorities to prepare their local plans and for communities producing neighbourhood plans.
- 2.4 The Framework states that neighbourhood plans should support the strategic development needs of the wider area set out in the adopted local plan. They should not promote less development or undermine its strategic policies. It adds that neighbourhood plans should plan positively to shape and direct development that is outside the strategic elements of the local plan.
- 2.5 The Framework lists core planning principles that should underpin plan-making and decision-taking.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.6 The Skillington Neighbourhood Plan must also be mindful of Planning Practice Guidance, which was published on-line by the Government in 2014. The Guidance explains how national policy should be applied.

The Development Plan

- 2.7 The Skillington Neighbourhood Plan must also be in general conformity with the strategic planning policies of the planning authority for the area.
- 2.8 The South Kesteven Development Plan currently comprises:
- Core Strategy 2006 – 2026 (adopted July 2010)
 - Site Allocation and Policies Development Plan Document (adopted April 2014)
 - Saved policies in the South Kesteven Local Plan 1995 (which only affect Grantham)

These adopted plans are therefore the District Council's policy for planning, development and growth in the district.

See more at: <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8159>

Emerging Local Plan

- 2.9 The District Council has begun preparing a new Local Plan, which will cover the whole district for the period up to 2036. The new plan will:
- bring together the relevant policies of the adopted Core Strategy and Site Allocation and Policies DPD;
 - update and include new policies arising from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and national Planning Practice Guidance; and
 - provide new development requirements for the plan period, in particular providing for the objectively assessed housing needs of the District.
- 2.10 The Local Plan will therefore establish the key principles which should guide the location, use and form of development. It will also identify land for potential housing and employment use throughout the District.
- 2.11 Consultation on the scope of the new Local Plan began in January 2015. The consultation paper included a series of questions to start a discussion with the community about the content of the new plan.
- 2.12 In July 2016 the District Council commenced the second stage of consultation on the new Local Plan. The focus of this consultation was on 'sites and settlements'. The consultation sought views on the suitability of various sites identified for possible development through the Call for Sites in 2015/2016. It also estimated the total level of housing and employment land required across the District to 2036. A settlement hierarchy was outlined together with a suggested level of new housing and employment that should be permitted at each settlement.
- 2.13 The emerging Local Plan will eventually replace the documents in the current Development Plan listed above. However it is not envisaged that it will be adopted until early 2019.

See more at: <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8498>

- 2.14 The Skillington Neighbourhood Plan must conform to the strategic policies in the documents that comprise the adopted Development Plan. Whilst not a basic condition, the neighbourhood plan also has to be mindful of the emerging Local Plan, especially the up-to-date evidence base that supports its preparation.

Sustainable Development

- 2.15 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's approach to sustainable development which essentially is about enabling development to cater for the needs of current generations, but ensuring that development doesn't mean worse lives for future generations. All neighbourhood plans must thereby be aware of the economic, social and environmental consequences of its policies and proposals and achieve a positive outcome for each.

EU Obligations

- 2.16 A number of EU obligations may be relevant to the Skillington Neighbourhood Plan. In particular the District Council will check this draft plan and ascertain whether the policies and proposals give rise to significant environmental effects and trigger the need to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The District Council will also assess whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required.

3. Profile of the Area

Population and Employment

- 3.1 Skillington is a relatively small village set within open countryside. The 2011 Census revealed that the parish had a population of 345.
- 3.2 The mean age was 45.4 years. This compares to 41.8 years for the whole of South Kesteven District and 39.3 years nationally. In terms of ethnicity 96.5% were described as white British.
- 3.3 Of the 151 households in the parish:
- 30.5% owned their accommodation outright
 - 35.1% owned their accommodation with a mortgage or loan
- These figures are similar to the national average.
- 3.4 As regards those who were economically active the 2011 Census indicated that:
- 36.6% were employed full-time
 - 13.4% were employed part-time
 - 15.3% were self-employed (5.5% higher than the national average)
 - 1.9% were unemployed (2.5% below the national average)
 - 21.8% were retired
- 3.5 For centuries the majority of local residents were employed in various farming activities. However the latest Census stated that only 4 persons were employed in agriculture, forestry or fishing. Most residents now commute by car to the nearby towns of Grantham, Bourne and Stamford. Many take the train from Grantham to Kings Cross Station in London, which has a journey time of around 70 minutes using the East Coast Main line.
- 3.6 The Census indicated that 180 persons aged 16 to 74 were in employment. Of these:
- 20% were Managers, Directors and Senior Officials
 - 17.2% were Professional Occupations
 - 13.3% were Associate Professional and Technical Occupations
- 3.7 In terms of health, 48.7% enjoyed very good health and 33.3% good health. These are broadly comparable to the national average.

Services and Facilities

- 3.8 There are limited services and facilities available within the village.
- 3.9 There is no primary school within the village. Local children attend the primary schools in Buckminster, Colsterworth or Great Ponton. They are each located about 3-4 miles away from Skillington. The available secondary schools are all located in Grantham, and in Corby Glen, nine miles away.

- 3.10 There are two places of worship in Skillington. In The Square there is a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel run in association with Saltby Methodist Church. There is also the Anglican Church of St James at the top of Church Street.
- 3.11 There are two public houses in Skillington. The Cross Swords Inn and The Blue Horse Inn both front onto the village green. However in March 2016 a full application was submitted to the District Council for a change of use for the Blue Horse from a Public House (A4) to (C3) Dwelling. This application was refused on the 29 June 2016 and the pub is now closed.
- 3.12 Skillington has a village hall with an adjoining rented playing field. This is located on the Grantham Road on the outskirts of the village. It provides a venue for a variety of social, recreational and sporting activities.
- 3.13 There is no shop in the village. The nearest food store is located three miles away in Colsterworth, where there is also a post office. Larger supermarkets are located in Grantham, which is 20 minutes away by car.
- 3.14 There is a two-hourly bus service during the day to Grantham. There is no early morning or evening bus service, which limits employment and social activities both for villagers and others. However the CallConnect demand responsive bus service is available to pre-book for journeys between Skillington and Grantham between 7am – 7pm Monday-Friday and 8am-6pm Saturday.
- 3.15 There is no gas supply. The heating/energy sources are oil, electricity or liquified gas.
- 3.16 Fibre optic broadband is available in the village due to a recent upgrade, which now provides an improved internet infrastructure. The village phone box has been disconnected and, following a village fund-raising appeal, is now used to house a defibrillator.

History

- 3.17 The origins of the village may go back to Anglo-Saxon or even Romano-British times. However the earliest clue is in its name. This is a corruption of the Viking name Sciella together with tun meaning a farmstead or small village. Thus Sciella's village. By 1018 this had developed to Scillintun.
- 3.18 The parish church of St James has Anglo-Saxon origins, a 13th-century tower, and additions from the 17th and 19th centuries. The mainly 19th-century interior fittings include two memorial windows to Charles Hudson, Vicar of Skillington, who perished following the first successful ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865.
- 3.19 The picture of land ownership was well-recorded in 1797 when the Enclosure Awards for Skillington changed the long-established pattern of farming. The three huge fields of around 2000 acres, which had been cultivated in the strip system (the remaining signs of this process are evident as ridge and furrow), gave way to smaller, hedged fields that were ideal for sheep-rearing.
- 3.20 The 2011 Census population of 345 inhabitants falls well short of the maximum of 490 reached in 1851. The main landowners at that time were:

- Buckminster Estates (representing the Earl of Dysart, later the Tollemache family)
 - Easton Estates (representing the Cholmeley family)
 - Turnors of Stoke Rochford.
- 3.21 The outcome of the Buckminster Estate’s acquisitions was the unusually-named Blue Town housing for their workers and the Blue Horse Inn. The Dysart and Cholmeley families provided twin Lords of the Manor and all three donated many beneficial gifts to the village as well as providing employment.
- 3.22 In the mid-nineteenth century, a number of significant public buildings were created: The Old School (1842 and enlarged 1894), on Colsterworth Road, the Methodist Chapel (1847) and the Old Post Office (c.1850) on The Square. The Old Vicarage (1850) was added to the important cluster of buildings to the north end of the village (St James, the Abbey).
- 3.23 The continued dominance of farming is demonstrated in the 1901 Census where, out of 354 inhabitants, 55 were listed as farm labourers or ploughboys, 19 were waggoners or grooms, and 4 were shepherds. Every single person had employment in the farming industry or in village support occupations. The farming was mainly sheep rearing with wheat and barley the two staple arable crops.
- 3.24 The first real break from this farming tradition came shortly after the Second World War when the extensive stone quarrying on the south side of the parish reached into the village itself. Virtually all signs of this industry are now lost.
- 3.25 During the Second World War the nearby airfield at Saltby, now used by a local gliding club, was firstly used as a bomber station then as one of the airfields used to fly gliders to the D-day invasion and, later, the airborne assault on the bridges at Arnhem. The runway then extended onto parish land.
- 3.26 More detailed information can be found in a 2003 book entitled ‘The History of Skillington’ by Trevor Palmer using the following link:

<http://www.skillingtonlife.co.uk/skillingtonhistory.html>

The Conservation Area

- 3.27 The history of the village has informed its present day character and attractive appearance. Today almost the entire village falls within the Skillington Conservation Area. The only exceptions are the southern end of Buckminster Lane, Stonepit Lane, and the newer houses in Sproxtton Road which are excluded from this designation. See Appendix 1.
- 3.28 The Skillington Conservation Area was designated in 1990. Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. The designation grants control over the demolition of unlisted buildings, strengthens controls over minor development and also gives special protection to trees. It is the quality and interest of the area as a whole, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a conservation area.

- 3.29 The Act specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The main effects of conservation area designation are:
- Conservation area consent is required to demolish a building in a conservation area. It is a criminal offence to demolish a building without first obtaining consent
 - Six weeks written notice is required prior to any work being carried out to uproot, fell, lop or top (the removal of the crown and natural structure) trees in a conservation area, not already protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Small trees which are less than 75mm in diameter, fruit trees and bushes are exempt
 - Applicants will need to demonstrate that any development proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of a conservation area. Extra publicity is given on planning applications affecting the character or appearance of conservation areas
 - The general permitted development order 2015 (GPDO 2015) requires planning applications for certain types of development that do not require planning applications elsewhere and are ‘permitted development’
 - Local planning authorities can further restrict permitted development rights on dwellings where the development fronts a public area through Article 4 (2) Direction
 - Permitted Development Rights of non-residential properties can be restricted using Article 4 (1) Directions.
- 3.30 In 2016 South Kesteven District Council prepared the ‘Skillington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan’. The purpose of this document is to define the special interest of the conservation area and assess the action needed to protect and enhance its special qualities. The conservation area appraisal and management plan is split into three sections:
- Section 1: Conservation area appraisal, which details any proposed changes or extensions as part of the 2016 review.
 - Section 2: Management plan, which puts forward proposals for preservation and enhancement.
 - Section 3: Action plan to address those issues drawn out in the appraisal and management plan.
- 3.31 The full document, which was issued for consultation in July 2016, can be found here:
- <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10881>**
- 3.32 The special interest of the Skillington Conservation Area is summarised as follows:
- The village has long standing associations with a number of large landowners
 - Strong rural and agricultural character with a number of working farms
 - Village Greens, areas of open space and the Paddock to the south of Church Street contribute towards a rural and open character
 - Grouping of St James’s Church (Grade I), The Abbey with its moat to the rear, outbuildings and pigeoncote (Grade II) make a strong contribution
 - Development radiates from ‘The Square’, which forms the focal point of the conservation area. However the early settlement of the village is located to the west of the conservation area, surrounding the Parish Church and the Abbey

- Visual harmony across the conservation area contributes by a material palette of coursed or rubble limestone walling and pantile roofs, although the buildings do not necessarily display a uniform ‘estate style’ that is typical of many other villages within the district
 - Traditional craftsmanship embodied in original building materials and architectural features
- 3.33 The District Council’s appraisal states that the character of the conservation area is defined by “curvilinear development that radiates from a central square opposite the Methodist Chapel. Within the village core, there is a high density of development with terraces and cottages lining the narrow winding streets and built close to the footway. Buildings are mainly built of limestone, probably quarried locally in pits such as at Great Ponton. However, as you exit the village core along the lanes of Sproxton Road, Grantham Road and Church Street the character becomes more rural, with a lower density of development with detached houses, cottages and farms located in medium sized plots being the defining character”.
- 3.34 The appraisal describes the historical features and attributes of Grantham Road, Church Street, The Green, Back Lane, Buckminster Lane, The Square, Lords Lane and Colsterworth Road. It adds that the traditional buildings mainly date from the 17th-19th centuries and are generally domestic in scale, consisting of two storeys, and are usually built of coursed limestone rubble in a vernacular style with pantile roofs, although blue slate is also fairly common.
- 3.35 The study also describes the important contribution of key views, trees, hedgerows, open space, street furniture and other features to the character of the conservation area.

Listed Buildings

- 3.36 A listed building is one that is included on the government’s Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. These buildings are protected by law and consent is required from South Kesteven District Council before any works of alteration (to the interior or exterior), extension or demolition can be carried out.
- 3.37 There are 13 listed buildings within the Skillington Conservation Area. All are Grade II listed apart from the Grade I listed Church of St James. The conservation area appraisal states ‘the buildings of most interest include The Abbey (formerly Skillington Manor House), located to the west of the parish church, which dates to 1637, constructed of limestone with mullion windows. To the south of the house are stables and a 17th-century pigeoncote; surrounding the site to the west is a moat. Together with the Church they form an attractive grouping, visible as one enters the village from Sproxton Road. St James’s Church has Anglo-Saxon origins (evident in the long and short quoining) and the arcade, chancel and south porch are 13th-century. To the south east of the church is a 13th-century village cross which was originally sited opposite the Methodist Church. All the remaining listed buildings are farms, terraces or cottages’.
- 3.38 The listed buildings are itemised in Appendix 3 of this document.
- 3.39 A survey is carried out from time to time to assess the condition of significant heritage assets. This survey includes the identification of buildings that have fallen into disuse, dereliction or disrepair, commonly known as ‘Buildings at Risk’. The Church of St James

is on the national heritage 'At Risk' register, and its condition is particularly bad as there are problems with rising damp and the below-ground drainage system needs to be investigated. It is possible that part of the nave requires re-roofing, and the north aisle and south transept/chapel and porch roof coverings require repair.

- 3.40 In addition to listed buildings the appraisal states that the Conservation Area contains a number of unlisted buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. These are identified as 'positive unlisted buildings'. These are listed in Appendix 4 of this document.
- 3.41 However the appraisal points out that there are currently no locally listed buildings in the Skillington Conservation Area. The buildings identified on the conservation area map as 'positive unlisted buildings' are therefore recommended in the District Council's appraisal for consideration when compiling any future Local List of buildings of architectural or historic interest.

Archaeology

- 3.42 Lincolnshire County Council holds the historic environment record (HER) for the parish. There are 15 records on the HER for features within the Skillington Conservation Area and a small number of additional records just outside the boundary that are of interest. The majority of the records relate to listed buildings although some relate to earthwork features such as ridge and furrow in the fields to the north of The Abbey and to the west of Back Lane. Although these sites are not within the boundary of the conservation area, the District Council's appraisal says that they are important historic landscape features which form part of the wider setting of the Conservation Area.

Boundary Review of Conservation Area

- 3.43 Since designation in 1990 there have been some small-scale changes to the conservation area. However the conservation area appraisal conducted by the District Council concluded that no changes to the current boundary were necessary.

Management Plan for Conservation

- 3.44 In addition to a definition of special interest, local authorities have a duty to formulate and publish proposals on the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas. The aim of the management plan is to put in place measures to ensure that the character and appearance of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced.
- 3.45 To provide the context for the management plan the appraisal undertook a SWOT analysis listing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the Skillington conservation area. This is indicated below in Diagram 2.
- 3.46 The management plan concludes with a detailed action plan that outlines 15 proposed measures, the issue that each addresses, and the specific action that is required.

Diagram 2 - SWOT Analysis of Skillington Conservation Area

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good proportion of open space including formal and informal village greens • General condition of the conservation area is good. • Strong agricultural and rural character contributed by a number of working farms within the village • Previous landowners throughout the history of the village including The Buckminster Estate (The Earl of Dysart and later the Tollemache family), The Easton estate (The Cholmeley family) and the Turnors of Stoke Rochford • Surrounding rural landscape of the Kesteven Uplands contributing towards the setting of the conservation area and key views • Cohesive character contributed by use of common material palette and traditional building techniques • The conservation area has a strong focal point of the village square 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorised satellite dishes on front elevations detract from the overall character of the conservation area • Overhead cables and other features detract from the setting and character of the village • The standard design lighting columns detract from the rural context of the conservation area • Loss of character arising from inappropriate alterations (windows, doors, rendering and boundary treatments). This is particularly noticeable within 'The Square'
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many buildings in the conservation area; some of which are recognized as being 'positive unlisted buildings' that have level of significance that also contributes towards local distinctiveness and identity. In the absence of a local list many of these buildings are unrecognized for the special contribution they make not only to the conservation area but to the community and locality as a whole • Maintenance schemes in the public realm including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The removal of modern lighting columns and replacement with traditional street lighting. – Removal of overhead cables and replacement of underground cables • Improved access to design guidance, and advice on maintenance and repair for home owners, developers, property owners and agents • To consider using article 4 directions to restrict permitted development rights and address the loss of character arising from inappropriate alterations • Work in partnership with South Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire District Council such as highways to ensure that maintenance works are undertaken in a way that does not have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further erosion of character through loss of fabric and original architectural details • Further erosion of character and setting through inappropriate new developments, particularly on the fringes of the conservation area boundary • Incremental erosion of boundary features including walls, hedgerows and railings • Erosion of special character of the area through loss of important trees or open space • Loss of character through the use of insensitive highways schemes including street clutter, poor quality paving and obtrusive road markings • Declining condition of St James's Church. Currently the Church is on the Historic England 'at risk' register and is the most significant building in the conservation area

Source: Skillington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan by South Kesteven District Council (2016)

Surrounding Landscape Character

- 3.47 A Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken by South Kesteven District Council in 2007. This states that Skillington Parish falls within the Kesteven Uplands landscape character area, which is described as extending southwards towards Stamford and eastwards towards Bourne.
- 3.48 The Kesteven Uplands character area is described as:
- A relatively unified, simple, medium-scale agricultural landscape, with a high proportion of historic woodland
 - Undulating landform based around the valleys of the Rivers Witham and East and West Glen and the Welland to the south
 - Picturesque villages built of local limestone, with Collyweston slate roofs to the south, and pantiles to the north
 - High concentration of houses and parks, with areas of farmland under estate management
 - A dispersed, nucleated settlement pattern, mostly following the river valleys
 - Enclosed mostly by hedgerows, with hedgerow trees
 - Modern human influences include airfields and the A1, Great North Road
- 3.49 In terms of its sensitivity, the landscape of the Kesteven Uplands is described in the Landscape Character Assessment as medium in scale with a strong landscape pattern of woodland and hedgerows. It contains areas of sensitive landscape including the historic parks and areas around the edge of the often picturesque villages. Away from the main transport corridors it is a relatively tranquil landscape. Landscape sensitivity to new employment or residential proposals is described as being medium to high because of the high proportion of valuable landscape elements and relatively undisturbed character.
- 3.50 The landscape management objectives for the Kesteven Uplands are to:
- Protect and improve field boundary condition
 - Protect existing hedgerow trees
 - Plant new hedgerow trees
 - Maintain important grassland areas
 - Protect important and distinctive woodland cover
 - Protect historic parkland
 - Protect field trees, particularly in parkland and in large arable fields
 - Maintain traditional village forms
 - Use of limestone for new construction in the villages and countryside
 - Use of new planting to minimise the visual impact of major roads and industrial buildings
 - Pay special attention to sensitive spaces around the edge of historic towns such as Stamford and the villages
 - Maintain open areas that extend into the towns and villages
- 3.51 The District Council's Landscape Character Assessment can be found here: <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2417&p=0>
- 3.52 The District Council's SWOT Analysis of the Skillington Conservation Area identified one of the strengths as being the surrounding rural landscape of the Kesteven Uplands, which contributes towards the setting of the conservation area and enables key views into and out of the village.

3.53 The Parish contains a number of areas important for their wildlife and landscape character. The report from Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (5 February 2016), identifies the following: four local wildlife sites (Skillington Road Verges; Skillington to Gunby Road Verges; Stoke Rochford Road Verges; Crabtree Road Verges); one site of Nature Conversation Interest (Lower Farm, Skillington); one roadside Nature Reserve (Sproxton Road). Areas of Lowland calcareous grassland (3.04 hectares) were identified within and bordering the parish. (Full details of these locations are available from the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership, at www.glnp.org.uk)

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The process to prepare a neighbourhood plan began in November 2014 with a questionnaire distributed in the village asking if a plan was something that residents wanted to take forward. The Parish Council received 39 responses, which showed a strong majority in favour of a plan.
- 4.2 Skillington Parish Council then applied to South Kesteven District Council to designate a Neighbourhood Area. The District Council subsequently publicised the application for a six week period and invited any representations. The District Council formally approved the Skillington Neighbourhood Area on 17 June 2015.
- 4.3 In June 2015 a questionnaire was sent to every household in the village. Entitled 'Have Your Say!' this invited the local community to tell the neighbourhood plan committee what matters were important in planning for the future of the village.
- 4.4 A further consultation was undertaken in May 2016 seeking clarification of residents' views on the longer-term need for housing development and the sustainability of the village.

Statutory Pre-submission Consultation

- 4.5 As part of the statutory process the Parish Council was required to invite representations on the Draft Plan prior to it being formally submitted to the District Council. This stage must include a formal consultation period of at least six weeks to publicise the plan and bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area. The Parish Council was also required to invite representations on the Draft Plan from key stakeholders and statutory consultees, including the District Council. This formal consultation took place between September and November 2016.
- 4.6 A brief summary of the draft plan and a copy of the response form was delivered to all households before the consultation period commenced.
- 4.7 A copy of the notice announcing the publication of the draft neighbourhood plan and the opportunity to comment was distributed by email to various consultees.
- 4.8 A copy of the plan and response form was made available on the Skillington Life website. Hard copies of the plan and response form were also made available for inspection at various locations around the village.
- 4.9 A series of open days were organised where members of the local community were invited to drop in and discuss the contents of the plan with the Steering Group
- 4.10 Each of the issues and concerns raised during the pre-submission consultation were considered and addressed. Where appropriate, modifications were made to the plan in light of the representations received.

Consultation Statement

- 4.11 Further details about all the consultation undertaken is provided in the Consultation Statement, which is a separate document that accompanies this plan. As required by the Regulations the Consultation Statement specifies:
- details of who was consulted on the proposed neighbourhood plan
 - an explanation of how they were consulted
 - a summary of the main issues and concerns raised throughout the consultation

5. Achieving Sustainable Development

5.1 The key issues to emerge from the evidence gathering on Sustainable Development are summarised below.

	Positive	Negative
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The village is very attractive with a rural and open character About 90% of the village has been designated as a conservation area There are 13 listed buildings within the conservation area The surrounding rural landscape of the Kesteven Uplands contributes towards the setting of the conservation area and enables key views into and out of the village Residents are keen to see the preservation of the local heritage There is little enthusiasm for significant change or development amongst the local community There is concern that any inappropriate development would result in the loss of surrounding countryside or important green spaces within the village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Church of St James is on the national heritage 'At Risk' register Some buildings not listed but ought to be included on a Local List of buildings of architectural or historic interest Ridge and furrow in the fields to the north of The Abbey and to the west of Back Lane are important to the wider setting of the conservation area and warrant protection The conservation area is suffering from satellite dishes on front elevations, overhead cables, inappropriate lighting columns, and inappropriate alterations (such as windows, doors, rendering and boundary treatments) There has also been the erosion of boundary features (walls, hedgerows and railings), loss of important trees and open space, and insensitive highway schemes (street clutter, poor quality paving, obtrusive road markings) Further erosion of the conservation area has occurred through inappropriate development, particularly on the boundary
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local people value the tranquillity and rural nature of the village One in three respondents to the household questionnaire have lived in the village for over 15 years The village has a good living environment with low levels of crime There are strong feelings about preserving the community spirit, appearance and character of the village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an ageing population with a current average age of 45 years, which is higher than the figure for South Kesteven District and the nation The village has limited services and facilities with no local shop, primary school or health facilities There is limited public transport so most residents are dependent on their own car. 6% depend on buses though 18% use them One pub threatened with closure Only a few people are now locally employed in farming, so there is little connection with the land Absence of a shop and some facilities for young people
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The village is adjacent to a number of good transport links About two thirds of residents own their property outright or have a mortgage The village has a high level of people who are self-employed and a low level of unemployment Broadband provision has been improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few employment opportunities within the village, hence the need to travel elsewhere or work from home Most residents commute by car to Grantham (and sometimes on to London by train) as well as Bourne and Stamford There is concern about the capacity of local infrastructure There is concern about poor road maintenance and parking

5.2 These issues thereby provide the context for the formulation of the vision and objectives and the subsequent policies and proposals.

6. Vision and Objectives

Context

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework refers to core planning principles. The principles most relevant to this neighbourhood plan state that planning should:

- be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct ... neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area
- always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity...
- take account of the different roles and character of different areas ...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it
- support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk ... and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources ...
- conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance...
- deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

6.2 The Core Strategy includes a vision for South Kesteven. It states that the District will become by 2026:

A successful rural district supported by excellent social and transport infrastructure. Grantham will have developed as a key economic centre not only in Lincolnshire but also sub regionally. Stamford, Bourne and The Deepings will have equally developed their distinctive market town roles. Rural communities will have remained viable by achieving development that supports their needs.

All of this will have been achieved in ways which ensures a good quality of life, health and well-being for everyone as well as celebrating the distinctiveness of the district's countryside and heritage.

This will be achieved by:

- **Creating the right balance of jobs, housing and infrastructure**
- **Ensuring that development is sustainable in terms of location, use and form**
- **Balancing the development needs of the District with the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment**
- **Addressing and mitigating any negative effects of development on the built and natural environment.**
- **Working with partners and residents to develop a place where people really matter.**

Vision

6.3 It is against this wider national and local context, and the views expressed by the local community, that the following vision for Skillington has been formulated.

6.4 The Vision is:

In 2031 Skillington will be an attractive and tranquil village, which has a strong and balanced community that looks after its historical buildings and surroundings

Objectives

6.5 To deliver this vision the plan has the following objectives:

1. To support appropriate and affordable residential development in the village
2. To support a prosperous local economy
3. To retain and improve local services and community facilities
4. To protect and enhance the Skillington Conservation Area
5. To conserve and manage the surrounding Kesteven Uplands landscape

6.6 These objectives are delivered through the policies and proposals in the following section.

7. Planning Policies

- 7.1 The following policies are designed to deliver the vision and objectives outlined in the previous section. Once the neighbourhood plan has been ‘made’ these policies will form part of the Development Plan for the area and will thereby be used by South Kesteven District Council to determine planning applications.
- 7.2 Each policy contains supporting justification to substantiate the stance being adopted. In accordance with the statutory requirements, each policy must meet certain basic conditions. Where appropriate, the accompanying justification to each policy will therefore refer to:
- relevant sections in national planning policy, most notably the National Planning Policy Framework (hereafter referred to as the Framework) and Planning Practice Guidance (hereafter referred to as Guidance)
 - strategic policies in the current Development Plan for the area, most notably the Core Strategy and the Site Allocation and Policies Development Plan Document (hereafter referred to as the SAPDPD)
 - the emerging Local Plan and any up to date information that is informing its preparation
 - the findings from research and the evidence base
 - the views expressed by the local community during the various consultation initiatives.

Objective 1 - To support appropriate residential development, including affordable housing

Housing context

- 7.3 When assessing future housing provision in Skillington regard needs to be paid to the wider strategic context, especially how the village relates to other settlements in the immediate area.
- 7.4 Paragraph 55 in the Framework states that housing provision in rural areas should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities in order to promote sustainable development.
- 7.5 Guidance adds that there are particular issues facing rural areas in terms of housing supply and affordability, and the role of housing in supporting the broader sustainability of villages and smaller settlements. It states that a thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship. Rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities.
- 7.6 The Guidance points out that assessing housing need is considered at a strategic level and through the Local Plan and/or neighbourhood plan process. However it states that all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas – and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing

other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless this approach can be supported by robust evidence. The Guidance says that a neighbourhood plan can allocate additional sites to those in a Local Plan where this is supported by evidence to demonstrate need above that identified in the Local Plan and the plan proposal meets the basic conditions.

- 7.7 The Core Strategy has defined a settlement hierarchy. Its Objective 2 seeks to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development in the District that maintains and enhances the role and function of settlements by:
- directing the majority of all new development to the market towns
 - supporting development that maintains and enhances the role of the more sustainable rural communities identified as Local Service Centers
 - restricting development elsewhere.
- 7.8 The identification of the 16 Local Service Centers in the Core Strategy is based upon an assessment of the relative sustainability of all the settlements across the District. In particular regard was given to the availability of nine essential facilities available within each village. Those villages which have seven or more of the essential facilities were identified as a Local Service Centre.
- 7.9 Local Service Centers must therefore offer a range of localised services and facilities, which act as a focal point for the rural communities and their surrounding hinterlands. Several Centres are comprised of two 'paired' villages. This includes Colsterworth and Woolsthorpe by Colsterworth. This paired designation is in recognition of the relationship existing between the two settlements whereby their proximity enables residents of each to benefit from the services and facilities without the use of private cars. These two settlements are located about 3 miles away from Skillington.
- 7.10 The Core Strategy says that some limited development in the Local Service Centres will prevent local services from becoming unviable and help to create more mixed and balanced communities. In addition they fulfil the role of a service center for a wider rural area. This includes smaller, less well-served villages. Whilst these may have the capacity to accommodate new development, the Core Strategy states that these other villages are not considered to be sustainable locations and new development will be restricted.
- 7.11 Skillington is therefore regarded as a smaller settlement that forms part of the hinterland for the Colsterworth and Woolsthorpe Local Service Centre.

- 7.12 Policy SP1 in the Core Strategy includes the following reference to such smaller settlements, however the Core Strategy only covers the period up to 2026 whilst the Neighbourhood Plan goes beyond to 2031.

In all other villages and the countryside development will be restricted. Proposals will only be considered acceptable if they are sites for:

- A. affordable housing (rural exception or allocated sites);**
- B. agriculture, forestry or equine development;**
- C. rural diversification projects;**
- D. local services and facilities;**
- E. replacement buildings (on a like for like basis); or**
- F. conversions of buildings provided that the existing building(s):**
 - contribute to the character and appearance of the local area by virtue of their historic, traditional or vernacular form;**
 - are in sound structural condition;**
 - and are suitable for conversion without substantial alteration, extension or rebuilding, and that the works to be undertaken do not detract from the character of the building(s) or their setting.**

Availability

- 7.13 South Kesteven District Council publishes an annual report on housing land supply. The latest report states that South Kesteven currently has an identifiable and deliverable housing land supply of 3793 homes expected to come forward over the next five years, which equates to 5.3 years supply.
- 7.14 Within Skillington there have been around 15 planning applications granted since April 2011. However these primarily relate to minor works such as housing extensions, erection of conservatories and garages, and tree works. Permission has only been granted for one new dwelling as a consequence of the conversion of an industrial building in Buckminster Lane.
- 7.15 The only application for new dwellings was on land to the rear of properties on Colsterworth Road. In March 2016 a planning application for the demolition of two garages and erection of two houses was refused by the District Council. The reasons for refusal were that Skillington was not a Local Service Village as defined in Policy SP2 in the Core Strategy. This states that outside of the main towns development will be directed to rural settlements where service use localised is already strong. The reason for refusal added that the District Council has an adequate supply of housing and that future occupiers would be reliant on a motor vehicle for essential services resulting in a less sustainable form of development.
- 7.16 A planning application for the change of use of a public house in the village to a dwelling was refused by the District Council in June 2016.

Emerging Local Plan

- 7.17 The District Council has begun preparing a new Local Plan, which will cover the whole district for the period up to 2036. The emerging Local Plan will establish the key principles which should guide the location, use and form of development. It will also identify land for potential housing and employment use throughout the District.
- 7.18 In July 2016 the District Council commenced the second stage of consultation on the new Local Plan. The focus of this consultation was on 'sites and settlements'. Amongst other things the consultation sought views on the estimated level of housing land that is required across the District up to 2036. A settlement hierarchy was outlined together with a suggested level of new housing that should be permitted in each category.
- 7.19 Skillington is again identified as a Smaller Settlement where development is described as less sustainable.
- 7.20 However the consultation document points out that in such smaller settlements in 2004-05 there were 136 new homes built, but by 2014-15 this figure had dropped to just 9 new homes. In recognition of this the consultation document states that it is possible that the Core Strategy's approach towards development in these smaller settlements was perhaps too restrictive.
- 7.21 The proposal for the Local Plan is therefore to have a spatial strategy that allows for infill and brownfield development (where suitable) in these smaller settlements so they can support their existing community through the provision of new homes. It is suggested that this in turn could lead to investment in services, facilities and infrastructure. Initial evidence outlined in the consultation document suggests that around 5% of future housing development might come from these smaller settlements.
- 7.22 Table 4 in the consultation document states that the possible outstanding requirement in the smaller settlements would be between 590 and 668 dwellings in the period up until 2036.
- 7.23 The Core Strategy identified 62 less sustainable parishes. The proposed growth figure of 5% would therefore amount to about 9-11 dwellings in each smaller settlement over the period to 2036. However this is an average figure and individual circumstances are likely to differ in each settlement.
- 7.24 The consultation document adds that all settlements and their local communities will be encouraged to consider the scope for additional development within their settlement through the preparation of neighbourhood plans.

Constraints to development

- 7.25 Almost the entire village is designated as a conservation area. The only exception is the southern end of Buckminster Lane and Stonepit Lane, which is excluded from this designation. It is the quality and interest of the area as a whole, rather than that of individual buildings, that is the prime consideration in identifying the conservation area.

- 7.26 Development is not prohibited within a conservation area. However applicants have to demonstrate that any development proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 7.27 On the periphery of the village there are some ridge and furrow earthworks in the fields to the north of The Abbey and to the west of Back Lane. Although these are not within the boundary of the conservation area, the District Council's appraisal says that they are important historic landscape features which form part of the wider setting of the conservation area.
- 7.28 The District Council's appraisal also identified one of the strengths of the conservation area as being the surrounding rural landscape of the Kesteven Uplands, which contributes towards its setting and enables key views into and out of the village.

Views of the local community

- 7.29 Consultation about future residential development generated a mixed response. Most respondents supported individual property development, and there was some limited support for small-scale infill development for new homes. However two thirds of respondents are opposed to larger-scale development in the village and about a third would prefer no development at all.
- 7.30 Should residential development occur, there was no clear consensus about what type of new properties were required.
- 7.31 It was concluded that there was also little enthusiasm for significant residential development in the village. However there were strong feelings about preserving the community spirit, appearance and rural character of the village.

The approach adopted

- 7.32 The Neighbourhood Plan has not included a numerical housing requirement for the village over the plan period nor made a specific allocation of land for residential development for the following reasons:
- there are very limited services and facilities, with one of the two public houses under threat of closure
 - the Core Strategy states that the village is not considered to be a sustainable location and new development will be restricted
 - the emerging Local Plan may adopt a less restrictive approach to smaller settlements but this would only amount to an average of around 9-11 infill dwellings per village over the plan period to 2036 and no quota is suggested for specific settlements
 - Colsterworth and Woolsthorpe by Colsterworth are identified in the Core Strategy as a paired Local Service Centre. This offers a range of services and facilities, and is located about three miles away from Skillington.
 - the District Council has identified a 5.3 year supply of housing land so the policies in the Development Plan are regarded as up to date
 - there has only been one proposal for new dwellings in the village since April 2011, which was refused by the District Council
 - almost the entire village is designated as a conservation area, and special attention has to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character and appearance

- any housing development on the periphery of the village would involve incursions into the surrounding open countryside and would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the conservation area, the historic ridge and furrow, and the landscape quality of the Kesteven Uplands
- the local community expressed some limited support for small scale infill development but were opposed to significant development on the periphery that could harm the agricultural nature of the village.

7.33 However neither does the Neighbourhood Plan seek to stop residential development altogether. The Plan recognises that very limited small-scale housing can occur subject to certain criteria being met. In accordance with the emerging Local Plan any development is restricted to infill and no development will be permitted outside the existing built up area. The aim is to avoid incursions into the surrounding open countryside and to protect the setting of the conservation area. Any residential development needs to be sensitive to its surroundings in view of the relatively intensive nature of the existing built up area. The Skillington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan prepared by the District Council pointed out that the village has a strong rural and agricultural character with a number of working farms. The provision of a new isolate dwelling to meet the essential need for an agricultural worker close to their place of work is normally acceptable in the open countryside, but might be preferable within the actual village itself close to the existing working farms subject to it meeting all the relevant design criteria. This protects the surrounding landscape and retains the agricultural character of the village by supporting the viability of the working farms.

7.34 Planning Practice Guidance states that proposals for development should consider scale. This relates both to the overall size and mass of individual buildings and spaces in relation to their surroundings, and to the scale of their parts. It adds that decisions on building size and mass, and the scale of open spaces around and between them, will influence the character, functioning and efficiency of an area. Guidance states that too much building mass compared with open space may feel overly cramped and oppressive, with access and amenity spaces being asked to do more than they feasibly can. Also that the size of individual buildings and their elements should be carefully considered as their design will affect the: overshadowing and overlooking of others; local character; skylines; and vistas and views. And that the scale of building elements should be both attractive and functional when viewed and used from neighbouring streets, gardens and parks.

- 7.35 These design considerations are particularly pertinent in Skillington where almost the entire village lies within the conservation area.

Policy 1 – Residential Development in Skillington

A proposal for residential development within the village will be supported providing that it comprises one or more of the following:

- a) the conversion of a redundant or disused building;
- b) a new dwelling required to meet the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work; or
- c) a small scale site for 3 or fewer houses in an otherwise built-up frontage.

All the above proposals for residential development should:

- 1) be acceptable infill that is located within the built-up part of the village;
- 2) be appropriate to its surroundings and not overshadow or overlook adjoining properties;
- 3) preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting with regards to form, scale, layout and materials; and
- 4) not affect open land which is of particular significance to the form and character of the settlement.

- 7.36 The following will be classified as inside the built up part of the village:
- A. Buildings and curtilages which are contained and visually separate from the open countryside that are clearly part of a network of buildings that form the settlement.
 - B. Areas of land with planning permission for built development.
- 7.37 The following will be regarded as being outside the built-up part of the village:
- C. Gardens which are visually open and relate to the open countryside
 - D. Individual, groups of dwellings and agricultural buildings that are detached or peripheral to the settlement
 - E. Areas of employment or leisure use, including public open space, that is detached or peripheral to the settlement
 - F. Land which would otherwise be outside the built up part of the village, even if it is between the edge of the settlement and a major road.

Affordable Housing

- 7.38 Affordable housing is defined in the Framework as “Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices”.
- 7.39 Paragraph 54 states that in rural areas there is a need to be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing. This includes rural exception sites where appropriate. The Framework defines rural exception sites as “Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small

numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding”.

7.40 The Government also has also recently introduced guidance on Starter Homes in Planning Practice Guidance, but at present this is not defined as affordable housing.

7.41 Policy H3 in the Core Strategy deals with affordable housing. It includes the following reference to rural exception sites:

The Council will seek to identify suitable opportunities to deliver about 10 rural affordable housing units each year through the allocation of rural exception sites within or adjacent to the smaller villages which are not identified as Local Service Centre's or towns.

In addition to allocated sites, rural exception schemes which are located in or adjacent to a smaller village will be considered acceptable where the scheme clearly meets a proven need for local affordable housing. Such houses should be available in perpetuity for local need. Sites should be suitable for development in all other respects and meet all other policy requirements for development.

Together with Registered Housing Providers (RHPs) and landowners the Council aims to deliver additional affordable housing in the rural area to meet identified local need. To achieve this, the Council will investigate and identify specific sites or areas of search to allocate specifically for local affordable housing development (exception sites).

7.42 The SAPDPD states that the District Council regularly monitors the need for and supply of affordable housing across the District and within individual settlements. Working closely with parish councils, housing providers and landowners the District Council's role is to enable small housing schemes to take place in villages where housing development would not normally be permitted. It notes that rural exception schemes may need some public sector funding to make them viable.

7.43 The District Council has identified a number of priority settlements where a local need has been clearly identified and the search for an appropriate site has begun. If a suitable site can be identified the District Council will work with housing providers and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to identify appropriate funding to deliver a scheme to meet the identified need.

7.44 Policy SAP2 states that:

Outside the towns and Local Service Centers the need for local affordable housing will be met through the development of rural exception schemes. In order that funding can be prioritised to those villages where a need has already been identified, the Council has identified a number of small villages as 'areas of search' for sites which may be suitable to meet the identified need for local affordable housing.

7.45 Skillington is not identified as one of the 'areas of search' and therefore a priority for rural exception affordable housing. However Policy SAP2 also adds that:

Rural exception schemes may be acceptable in other villages not listed above. Such schemes must be supported by clear up-to-date evidence that:

- **there is a need within that village for the affordable housing being proposed**
- **that no other more suitable site is available within the village**

Consideration of the suitability of a site to meet a local housing need will be based upon it satisfying all of the following criteria:

- **that the site is located within the built up part of the village. If no such sites are available consideration may be given to a site adjoining the village, provided that it is demonstrated that all other options have been considered**
- **that the site is small-scale, capable of accommodating only the amount of housing needed**
- **avoids areas which are protected because they are important for wildlife, biodiversity, natural, cultural or historic assets**
- **avoids sites which are at risk of flooding or which could increase the impact of flooding elsewhere**
- **have no or limited visual impact on the character of the village and surrounding landscape**
- **that the site can be safely accessed**

Schemes will also be required to ensure that the development meets the requirements of national and local planning policies which control the form, scale, design and impact of new development.

All affordable housing development provided as an exception must remain affordable in perpetuity.

7.46 A rural exception site may therefore be appropriate in Skillington if a need is identified in the future. However no specific need emerged from the research undertaken by the District Council as part of the evidence base for the SAPDPD or during the initial community consultation on the neighbourhood plan. However a quarter of respondents to the household questionnaire supported the provision of 2 bedroom starter homes if any such development occurred.

7.47 In conjunction with the District Council, the Parish Council will monitor and review the need for affordable homes and/or starter homes within the village over the plan period. Should a need emerge in the future the following policy will supplement Policy SAP2 in the SAPDPD.

Policy 2 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

A proposal for affordable housing on a rural exception site will be supported if it:

- a) is justified by evidence of need through a local housing needs survey for the village;
- b) is prioritised for those with a local connection;
- c) meets the criteria listed in Policy SAP2 in the Site Allocation and Policies Development Plan Document or listed in a replacement policy on rural exception sites adopted by South Kesteven District Council
- d) is appropriate to its surroundings;
- e) preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting with regards to scale, layout and materials; and
- f) does not affect open land which is of particular significance to the form and character of the settlement.

Objective 2 - To support a prosperous local economy

- 7.48 The parish has little obvious economic activity beyond three working farms and the two public houses, though a significant number of people work from home.
- 7.49 Paragraph 28 in the Framework states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, it adds that local and neighbourhood plans should:
- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
 - promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
 - support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and
 - promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- 7.50 The District Council's approach to rural development and diversification is set out in the adopted Core Strategy. Policy SP1 establishes which uses are considered appropriate in the rural parts of the District. This includes: agriculture, forestry and equine development and rural diversification schemes. The policy also establishes criteria against which the conversion of existing buildings should be assessed.
- 7.51 Policy E1 in the Core Strategy on employment development also supports rural diversification proposals in the rural areas. In all cases the District Council must be

satisfied that a rural location is essential, and that the scheme will help to support or regenerate a sustainable rural economy. Policy E1 in the Core Strategy includes the following:

7.52

Outside Local Service Centres, rural diversification proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it is necessary to meet the needs of farming, forestry, recreation, tourism or other enterprises and has an essential requirement for a rural location. Such proposals would need to demonstrate that they will help to support or regenerate a sustainable rural economy.

APDPD on rural diversification states that traditional rural employment in agriculture and related enterprises account for a small proportion of the District's workforce. Changes in farming practices over the years have resulted in fewer people being employed in agriculture and related support industries. The SAPDPD adds that diversification into non-agricultural activities can ensure the continued viability of many farm enterprises and rural businesses, while the re-use of redundant buildings for other employment purposes can help to sustain the wider rural economy.

7.53

It is also important that the environmental qualities of the countryside are maintained. The need for rural diversification must be balanced against the likely impact, and schemes which detrimentally affect the environment or alter the appearance of the landscape or its biodiversity will be resisted.

Policy SAP4 deals with business development in the countryside. It includes the following:

Outside the towns and Local Service Centre's proposals for the following types of small business schemes will be supported, provided that it is demonstrated that the business will help to support, or regenerate the rural economy:

- Farming
- Forestry
- Equine
- Rural enterprise
- Sport and recreation
- Tourism

Proposals must demonstrate that they meet all of the following criteria:

- be of a scale appropriate to the rural location
- be for a use(s) which is (are) appropriate or necessary in a rural location
- provide local employment opportunities which make a positive contribution to supporting the rural economy
- the use/development respects the character and appearance of the local landscape, having particular regard to the Landscape Character Assessment
- will not negatively impact on existing neighbouring uses through noise, traffic, light and pollution impacts
- avoids harm to areas, features or species which are protected because they are important for wildlife, biodiversity, natural, cultural or historic assets, including their wider settings.

- 7.54 The following policy therefore builds on the national and local planning context by encouraging local economic development and diversification providing it is compatible with a rural area and its environmental constraints.

Policy 3 – The Local Economy

A proposal for economic development will be supported if it:

- a) supports the viability and expansion of existing businesses and enterprises;
- b) promotes the development and diversification of agricultural activity;
- c) enables and encourages home working; or
- d) improves electronic communications such as superfast broadband and the mobile phone network.

Objective 3 - To retain and improve local services and community facilities

- 7.55 Skillington has little in the way of local services and facilities. This is principally the two public houses (though, following a refused application for change of use, one is currently closed), two churches and a village hall with associated playing fields.
- 7.56 The SAPDPD states that proposals for a change of use or for development that will result in the loss of community facilities and/or services must be fully justified. They must demonstrate that all options for continued use have been fully explored and that retention would not be economically viable. They must show that there is no reasonable prospect of the established use being retained, or resurrected, and that there is little evidence of public support for the retention of the facility.
- 7.57 The SPD goes onto to say that in the case of public houses it must be demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to sell or let the property as a public house and that it is not economically viable. Where permission is given for a change of use of a community facility and/or land, preference will be given to the premises remaining in either some form of community or employment use.
- 7.58 Policy SAP1 in the SAPDPD states that:

Applications for the change of use of community facilities which would result in the loss of community use will be resisted unless it is clearly demonstrated that either:

- **there are alternative facilities available and active in the same village which would fulfil the role of the existing use/building,**
- or**
- **the existing use is no longer viable (supported by documentary evidence),**
- and**
- **there is no realistic prospect of the premises being re-used for alternative business or community facility use.**

The proposal must also demonstrate that consideration has been given to:

- **the re-use of the premises for an alternative community business or facility and that effort has been made to try to secure such are-use,**
- and**
- **the potential impact closure may have on the village and its community, with regard to public use and support for both the existing and proposed use.**

- 7.59 The SAPDPD adds that the existence of alternative facilities in the same village could include another public house that is within easy walking distance. Other factors include the viability of the business, public support for the business or facility, and other factors such as the impact a change of use would have on the attractiveness of the village (particularly if the premises are within a Conservation Area).
- 7.60 While not essential to determination, the SAPDPD refers to a CAMRA leaflet entitled "Public House Viability Test", which it says may be of assistance in determining planning applications. This provides additional information to assist local planning authorities and others when considering the viability of public houses. It identifies issues such as population density, visitor potential, local competition, flexibility of the site and car parking as factors which can affect the trade potential and viability of public houses.
- 7.61 Against this context the following policy deals with development proposals for services and facilities in the parish.

Policy 4 – Local Services and Community Facilities

The expansion of existing services or community facilities will be supported providing that it does not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of residents or on other neighbouring uses.

The loss of a local service or community facility will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown it to be surplus to requirements or no longer viable; and
- b) the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, and in a suitable location to meet the need; or
- c) the development will bring about a community benefit, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

Green Space

- 7.62 Paragraph 73 of the Framework states that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.
- 7.63 Policy SAP10 in the SAPDPD deals with the protection of existing open space, and includes the following statement:

All existing open space including allotments, parks, equipped play space, sport pitches and informal natural open space, route ways and corridors will be protected. Development proposals for existing open spaces will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that the proposal will provide increased or improved open space and/or recreational facilities, or the site is not required to meet the local standard set out above, or equivalent (or better) replacement provision is to be made within the locality, or the site does not support important or protected habitats or species.

- 7.64 Paragraph 76 in Framework says that local communities should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space in a neighbourhood plan, communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.
- 7.65 Paragraph 77 of the Framework points out that Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:
- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 7.66 Guidance states that different types of designations are intended to achieve different purposes. If land is already protected by designation, such as a conservation area, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as a Local Green Space.
- 7.67 Guidance also says that land could be considered for designation even if there is no public access (e.g. green areas which are valued because of their wildlife, historic significance and/or beauty). Designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over what exists at present.
- 7.68 In Skillington there is no allotment provision. There is also no park or play area meaning that younger children are restricted in their outdoor play activities to private gardens or the village greens in The Square.
- 7.69 However there are some small public open spaces within the heart of the village known as The Square and The Green. These are both important for their cultural and historic associations, and provide opportunities for social interaction. The conservation area appraisal undertaken by the District Council also noted that The Square and The Green both contribute towards the rural and open character of Skillington and the setting of Listed Buildings.
- 7.70 The only open space outside the conservation area is the playing field adjoining the village hall in Grantham Road. It includes a full sized cricket and football pitch. Whilst a little removed from the core of the village, it is the only significant area of public open space in the entire settlement.

7.71 In accordance with the criteria listed in paragraph 77 of the Framework, the following sites are considered worthy of Local Green Space designation and protected accordingly.

Number	Name	Justification for inclusion as Local Green Space in accordance with Framework criteria
1)	The Green	<p>This is located between Park Lane and Church Street.</p> <p>As the green is approached from Church Street the conservation area appraisal states that there is an open character with a low density of development. It adds that the small cluster of buildings surrounding the green, the Church of St James and village cross form the focus of views in a north westerly direction. The village cross dates to the 13th century and is Grade II listed. It is situated on a modern concrete foundation, but there are the remains of two stone steps that date to the 13th century. From the Green, which is one of the highest points in the village, the appraisal states that there are attractive views towards the surrounding countryside and distant tree belts of Buckminster Park to the south. To the north of Park Lane the open character prevails with medium to large sized houses such as The Elms and Skillington House making a strong contribution. As you continue along Park Lane the road becomes unmetalled, with open fields on both sides and attractive views in many directions.</p> <p>This small public open space is in close proximity to the community it serves. It is also demonstrably special to the village character and holds a particular local significance because of its historical associations. It is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.</p>
2)	The Square	<p>This site is bounded by Buckminster Lane, Middle Street and Stonepit Lane.</p> <p>The conservation area appraisal states that the square has an open character, with a central green, studded with trees which are enclosed by houses, mostly of which are unlisted but as a group make a strong contribution to the village core. These include the former post office, built in approximately 1850, The Blue Horse Inn, The Methodist Chapel and Nos. 1-4 The Square. The appraisal adds that the square acts as a focal point within the conservation area and there is a visual cohesiveness contributed by a limited material palette and the arrangement of buildings side by side directly addressing the green.</p> <p>The square is in close proximity to the local community it serves being located at the very heart of the village. It is also demonstrably special to the local community as a village green. It holds a particular local significance because it provides the location for various outdoor village activities. It is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.</p> <p>This piece of land was registered as a Village Green under the Commons Registration Act of 1965 on 3rd February 2010.</p>

7.72 These Local Green Spaces are thereby designated in Policy 5.

Policy 5 – Local Green Space

The following areas are designated as Local Green Space:

- a) The Green;
- b) The Square.

The boundaries of the Local Green Spaces are shown on Appendix 1.

The development of Local Green Spaces will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh any harm.

Public Rights of Way

7.73 Paragraph 75 of the Framework states that planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Opportunities should also be sought to provide better facilities for users by, for example, adding links to the existing rights of way network including regional long distance paths.

7.74 The Viking Way forms part of the village boundary. This is a long distance public right of way which starts on the banks of the Humber in the north and winds its way through Lincolnshire to finish on the shores of Rutland Water. The route was established in 1976 and is a total of 147 miles in length. The name reflects the influence of the Danelaw in the eastern counties of Britain. The route passes through the Kesteven Uplands about 0.5 miles to the west of the village. There is therefore access to this regional long distance path.

7.75 The public rights of way network immediately around the village allows access to the surrounding open countryside for walking and exercising dogs. In view of the limited public open space within the village, these public rights of way provide invaluable access for recreation and health purposes.

Policy 6 – Public Rights of Way

Support will be given to proposals that improve and extend the existing network of public rights of way where they allow greater access to the village centre, village hall and the surrounding open countryside.

The loss of existing public rights of way will be resisted.

Objective 4 - To protect and enhance the Skillington Conservation Area

- 7.76 The vast majority of the village falls within the Skillington Conservation Area. The only exception is the southern end of Buckminster Lane and Stonepit Lane, which is excluded from this designation.
- 7.77 The conservation area was designated in 1990. A conservation area is defined as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. Designation grants control over demolition of unlisted buildings, strengthens controls over minor development, and also gives special protection to trees. It is the quality and interest of an area as a whole, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a conservation area.
- 7.78 Paragraph 126 in the Framework says that there should be a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, recognising that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource. Paragraph 129 adds that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset). They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 7.79 In the Guidance it states that neighbourhood plans need to include enough information about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the Local Plan into action at a neighbourhood scale. It adds that designated heritage assets within the plan area should be clearly identified at the start of the plan-making process so that they can be appropriately taken into account. In addition neighbourhood plans need to include enough information about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions.
- 7.80 The Core Strategy sets out the key principles for managing development and the conservation of the historic environment. Policy EN1 states that:

Development must be appropriate to the character and significant natural, historic and cultural attributes and features of the landscape. The development must also contribute to its conservation, enhancement and restoration.

- 7.81 Fortunately the District Council’s appraisal of the Skillington Conservation Area prepared in 2016 addressed these issues and provided an invaluable backcloth for the preparation of the neighbourhood plan.

Views and vistas

- 7.82 The appraisal noted that from outside the boundary there are a number of key views, particularly from the approach into the conservation area from Grantham Road where the Parish Church spire features prominently. Please see Appendix 2. It added that views

on the approach from Sproxton Road are also important with the grouping of historic buildings around the church including the Grade II listed pigeoncote making an attractive contribution.

- 7.83 The appraisal said that views on the approach into the conservation area across the open fields to the south of Cringle Brook are also important. It felt that from Back Lane there are attractive views in a south westerly direction across the open countryside with some areas of visible ridge and furrow.
- 7.84 The appraisal pointed out that the distant tree belts of the Stoke Rochford Estate (such as Cringle and Houghton's plantation) contribute towards the setting of the conservation area and provide attractive views towards the wider landscape visible from vantage points along Back and Middle Lane.
- 7.85 From within the conservation area the appraisal emphasises views across the paddock to the south of Church Street, views towards the Church of St James from The Green with the Moot Cross and views in both directions along the streets of Colsterworth Road and Church Street. As The Square is approached from Colsterworth Road the appraisal added that there are important views across the various central village greens towards the Methodist Chapel. It added that Hopwells planting (see below) forms the focus of views in an easterly direction along Back Lane.

Contribution of Trees and Hedgerows

- 7.86 The appraisal stated that there are a group of trees at the junction of Back Lane and Middle Street (known locally as Hopwells planting), which comprise beech, sycamore, horse chestnut and lime. These are noted as making a significant contribution to the conservation area. The appraisal added that this group of trees is marked on the 1905 OS map of the village and it is likely that they may be at least 100 years of age. The trees are covered by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 7.87 The distant tree belts of the Buckminster Estate are also noted in the appraisal. These make a contribution to the setting of the conservation area as do those at the rear of the Abbey.

Important Open Spaces

- 7.88 The appraisal acknowledges that The Square and The Green are important areas of open space and contribute towards the setting of those buildings that look out onto them. In view of their wider significance to the local community, it is proposed that these are designated as Local Green Space and protected accordingly.
- 7.89 The paddock to the south of Church Street, the field to the south of Colsterworth Road, beside Cringle Brook, and the field between Summer Croft and Stone Lodge, Church Street are also noted in the appraisal as important areas of open space that contribute towards the rural and agricultural character of the conservation area.
- 7.90 The open fields to the south of Back Lane are not within the boundary of the conservation area but contribute towards its wider setting and are of archaeological importance as within these fields are visible ridge and furrow earthworks. Within the

conservation area are a number of informal greens located at the junction of roads, which confer an open character.

Listed and Important Unlisted Buildings

- 7.91 A listed building is one that is included on the government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. There are 13 listed buildings within Skillington conservation area (see Appendix 3). All of these are Grade II listed apart from the Grade I listed Church of St James. The Church has Anglo Saxon origins (evident in the long and short quoining) and the arcade, chancel and south porch are 13th century.
- 7.92 The appraisal states that other buildings of interest include The Abbey located to the west of the parish church, which dates to 1637. It is constructed of limestone with mullion windows. To the south of the house are stables and a pigeon cote, whilst surrounding the site to the west is a moat. Together with the church they form an attractive grouping, views of which can be obtained upon entrance to the conservation area at Sproxton Road.
- 7.93 All the remaining listed buildings are farms, terraces or cottages. Manor Farmhouse, for example, was built in the 18th century and was originally part of the Easton Estate. The Old Rectory displays more polite architectural detailing. It was built in circa 1850 with an ashlar front and has an attractive doorway flanked by Doric pilasters with frieze above.
- 7.94 In addition to listed buildings, the conservation area contains a number of unlisted buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Both the Framework and advice from Historic England stress the importance of identifying and protecting such buildings. An example listed in the appraisal includes The Old Post Office, which is located in The Square. This is constructed of buff brick with red brick banding. Church Farm, Church Street is also included. This has on its front a Buckminster estate shield. Also mentioned is the Methodist Chapel and Jackson's House and Barn, which has an excellent retention of historic features despite not being listed.
- 7.95 Far House is also a very attractive example of an important unlisted building that makes a significant contribution to the traditional agricultural character of the conservation area. Other examples include Rock House, located at the junction of Buckminster Lane and Back Lane, The Old School in Colsterworth Road that was built in the mid-19th century and closed in the 1970s, and the two public houses in the village (The Blue Horse Inn and The Cross Swords Inn).
- 7.96 Despite the above recognition of these important buildings, the appraisal noted that there are no locally listed buildings in the Skillington Conservation Area. These 'positive unlisted buildings' are therefore recommended for consideration for inclusion on any future Local List of buildings of architectural or historic interest (see Appendix 4).

Ridge and Furrow

- 7.97 In 2016 there were 15 records on the historic building record that are located within the boundary of the conservation area. The majority of these records relate to listed buildings. However there are also a small number of additional records just outside the boundary that are of interest. In particular are references to earthwork features, most

notably the ridge and furrow in the fields to the north of The Abbey and to the west of Back Lane. Although these sites are not within the boundary of the conservation area, the appraisal states that they are an important historic landscape features which form part of the wider setting of the conservation area.

Policy 7 – Conservation Area

A proposal for development within or adjoining the Conservation Area should preserve or enhance its character and appearance. It must have regard to the historic context in terms of scale, alignment, height, form, style, design and materials. The development should seek to promote or reinforce the local distinctiveness of the village and create a sense of place.

A proposal will be supported if it has no adverse impacts on:

- a) the existing street pattern;
- b) important views and vistas;
- c) important areas of open space;
- d) important tree groups;
- e) a listed building;
- f) a Local List of buildings of architectural or historic interest; or
- g) ridge and furrow earthworks.

The location of the important areas of open space is indicated with in Appendix 1, the important views and vistas and the Positive Unlisted buildings of architectural or historic interest is included in Appendix 2

A proposal to alter or extend a building will be supported if it:

- 1) is carried out in building materials appropriate to the location;
- 2) is subordinate to the main building;
- 3) reflects its character in terms of scale, appearance and detailing; and
- 4) it does not have an adverse impact on the street scene or residential amenity.

- 7.98 The conservation area appraisal undertaken by the District Council highlighted a number of concerns. These ranged from unauthorised satellite dishes to the loss of character arising from inappropriate alterations (windows, doors, rendering and boundary treatments). The appraisal also noted that overhead cables and standard design lighting columns detract from the rural context of the conservation area.
- 7.99 The appraisal also expressed concern about further erosion of character through the incremental erosion of boundary features such as walls, hedgerows, and railings. The loss of important trees and open spaces was also mentioned along with insensitive highways schemes that created street clutter and inappropriate paving and road markings.
- 7.100 It therefore is apparent that the biggest threat to the character and appearance of the conservation area is not the pressure for new residential development but insensitive piecemeal changes by statutory bodies and some home owners. To rectify this situation design guidance will be prepared to guide and inform all future development in and around the conservation area.

Policy 8 – Conservation Area Design Guidance and Management

A proposal for development in or adjoining the Conservation Area should have regard to:

- 1) The Skillington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2016 prepared by South Kesteven District Council; and
- 2) Design Guidance for the Conservation Area prepared by the Parish Council.

Design guidance will be prepared to minimise the adverse impact of development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The design guidance will address:

- a) the inappropriate installation of satellite dishes;
- b) the removal of overhead cables and replacement by underground cables;
- c) inappropriate alterations (such as windows, doors, chimneys, rendering and boundary treatments);
- d) maintenance schemes in the public realm including the removal of modern lighting columns and replacement with traditional street lighting;
- e) the erosion of boundary features including walls, hedgerows and railings;
- f) the loss of important trees or open space; and
- g) insensitive highway schemes including street clutter, poor quality paving and obtrusive road markings.

The guidance will develop a 'local heritage list' of buildings and monuments that are valued as distinctive elements of the historic environment of Skillington.

A working group will be established to review and recommend how the management of the conservation area can be pro-actively enhanced.

In partnership with South Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council, the design guidance will address the loss of character arising from inappropriate alterations and encourage best practice if permitted development.

Objective 5 - To conserve and manage the surrounding open countryside

- 7.101 Open countryside in this instance is regarded as the rest of the parish outside the main built up area of the village.
- 7.102 Paragraph 55 in the Framework says that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances such as:
- the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside
 - where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets

- where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting
- the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling.

- 7.103 In such circumstances the Framework states that the design should:
- be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;
 - reflect the highest standards in architecture;
 - significantly enhance its immediate setting; and
 - be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

- 7.104 Policy EN1 in the Core Strategy addresses the need to protect and enhance the character of the District. An accompanying map of South Kesteven's Landscape Character Areas indicates that Skillington is located within the Kesteven Uplands. Policy EN1 adds that:

Development must be appropriate to the character and significant natural, historic and cultural attributes and features of the landscape within which it is situated, and contribute to its conservation, enhancement or restoration.

All development proposals and site allocations will be assessed in relation to:

- 1. statutory, national and local designations of landscape features, including natural and historic assets**
- 2. local distinctiveness and sense of place**
- 3. historic character, patterns and attributes of the landscape**
- 4. the layout and scale of buildings and designed spaces**
- 5. the quality and character of the built fabric and their settings**
- 6. the condition of the landscape**
- 7. biodiversity and ecological networks within the landscape**
- 8. public access to and community value of the landscape**
- 9. remoteness and tranquility**
- 10. visual intrusion**
- 11. noise and light pollution**
- 12. Conservation Area Appraisals and Village Design Statements, where these have been adopted by the Council**
- 13. impact on controlled waters**
- 14. protection of existing open space (including allotments and public open space, and open spaces important to the character, setting and separation of built-up areas).**

- 7.105 The following policy builds on national and local planning guidance and outlines what type of development might be appropriate in the open countryside of the parish. This includes supporting the rural economy where appropriate, especially the creation of local employment opportunities. Similarly the specific needs of a rural worker will be accommodated. Opportunities to increase local sport and recreation facilities will also be encouraged.

- 7.106 However any proposal for development is expected to safeguard the landscape character, protect areas of wildlife interest, and the historic environment.

7.107 In addition the community consultation revealed how the local community values the rural location and its inherent characteristics. This includes retaining the prevalent dark skies, which is particularly apt given the proximity of Sir Isaac Newton's birthplace in nearby Woolsthorpe.

Policy 9 – Open Countryside

Proposals for development in the open Country side will only be supported:

- a) where it contributes to rural diversification and there is an essential requirement for a rural location;
- b) where it would involve the suitable reuse or extension of an existing building, and that any increase in size would be subordinate to the original building(s) in terms of floor space or massing;
- c) for outdoor sport or recreation where the rural character and openness of the landscape would be maintained;
- d) for a new isolated dwelling where there are special circumstances as specified in paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework, such as the need for a rural worker to be close to their place of work;
- e) for affordable housing as 'exception sites' that are located adjacent to an existing built-up area; or
- f) for agriculture, forestry or equine purposes.

Development will be supported where it preserves and enhances:

- 1) landscape character and quality including individual features of value;
- 2) sites of ecological value;
- 3) listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments and other sites of archaeological interest including ridge and furrow;
- 4) the intrinsic character, beauty and tranquility of the countryside; and
- 5) the character and appearance of the area in terms of its historic and vernacular built form.

8. Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 The Parish Council will monitor and, if appropriate, undertake a review of the neighbourhood plan.
- 8.2 An annual monitoring report will therefore be prepared and considered by the Parish Council. This will cover:
- the effectiveness of the policies in the neighbourhood plan when assessing and determining planning applications
 - any changes in national planning policy that could supersede the policies in the neighbourhood plan
 - the latest statistical information such as meeting the rural housing requirement across the District or the need for more affordable homes within the village
 - the implications of the emerging local plan being prepared by South Kesteven District Council
 - any changing circumstances within the village
- 8.3 In particular the Parish Council will monitor the condition of heritage assets in the conservation area.
- 8.4 As the local planning authority, the views of South Kesteven District Council will be sought on these matters.
- 8.5 The annual monitoring report could thereby conclude that a partial or comprehensive review of the neighbourhood plan is necessary and trigger the statutory process for a replacement plan accordingly.

Local Green Spaces

From left: The Green; The Square

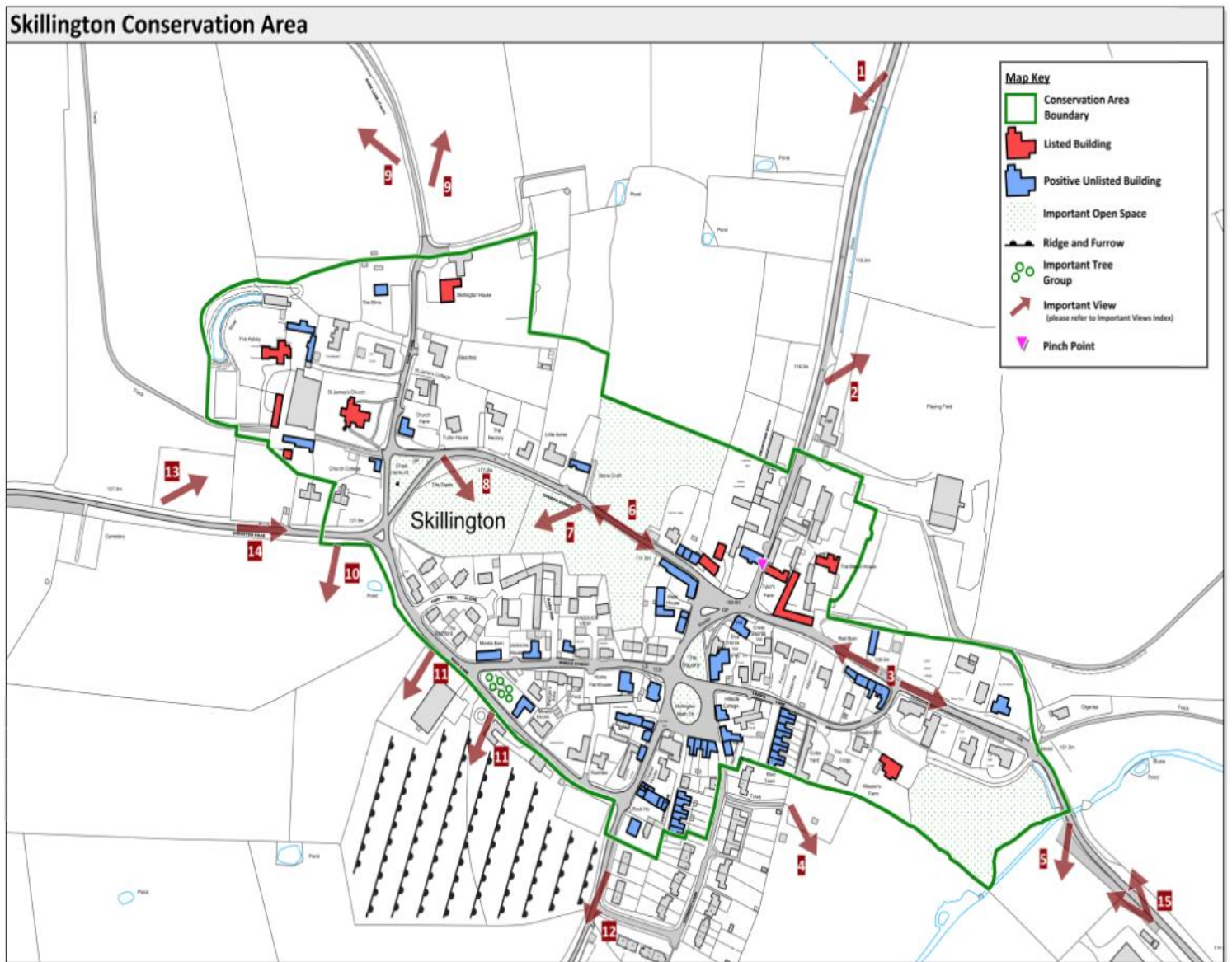


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Conservation Area, Key Views and Key Features

Key Views

(As listed in *Skillington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, Designated 1990, Review 2016, Draft for Consultation*, p. 11 / <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk>, 28 August 2016)



¹ In the blue Positive Unlisted Buildings shown on the map above Jackson's Barn is wrongly marked; it should be the second, not the first building on the north side of Back Lane. Location of ridge and furrow fields south of Back Lane cannot be confirmed at present.

Image reference	Description
Image 1	View towards the Conservation Area from Grantham Rd with the spire of St James featuring strongly.
Image 2	View from Grantham Rd towards the open countryside with the tree-lined ridges of Stoke Rochford featuring strongly to the north east.
Images 3	Enclosed views to the east and west along Colsterworth Rd.
Image 4	View towards surrounding open countryside from the track at the rear of Stonepit Lane
Image 5	View from the valley bottom at Cringle Brook towards open fields to the south.
Images 6	Enclosed views to the east and west of Church St.
Image 7	View across the paddock, an important area of open space, from Church St.
Image 8	View across the paddock from the Green.
Image 9	View from the east of the village green across the paddock.
Image 10	View from the track at Park Lane towards the open countryside with the distant tree belts of the Stoke Rochford estate in view.
Image 11	View from Sproxton Rd towards open countryside to the south.
Image 12	Views from Buckminster Lane and Back Lane towards open countryside across ridge and furrow.
Image 13	View looking out of the Conservation Area boundary at Buckminster Lane towards open countryside and Buckminster estate.
Image 14	View from outside the Conservation Area boundary at Sproxton Rd, towards St James and surrounding historic buildings, with the church spire featuring strongly.
Image 15	View from the Conservation area boundary at Sproxton Rd towards the village green
Image 16	View from Colsterworth Rd looking north across fields from the edge of the Conservation Area.
Image 17	View from Colsterworth Rd looking west towards the village at the entrance to the Conservation Area.



1. View towards the Conservation Area from Grantham Rd with the spire of St James featuring strongly.



2. View from Grantham Rd towards the open countryside with the tree-lined ridges of Stoke Rochford featuring strongly to the north east.



3. Enclosed views to the east and west along Colsterworth Rd.



4. View towards surrounding open countryside from the track at the rear of Stonepit Lane.



5. View from the valley bottom at Cringle Brook towards open fields to the south.



6. Enclosed views to the east and west of Church St.



7. View across the paddock, an important area of open space, from Church St.



8. View across the paddock from the Green.



9. View from the east of the village green across the paddock.



10. View from the track at Park Lane towards the open countryside with the distant tree belts of the Stoke Rochford estate in view.



11. View from Sproxton Rd towards open countryside to the south.



12. Views from Buckminster Lane and Back Lane towards open countryside across ridge and furrow.



13. View looking out of the Conservation Area boundary at Buckminster Lane towards open countryside and Buckminster estate.



14. View from outside the Conservation Area boundary at Sproxton Rd, towards St James and surrounding historic buildings, with the church spire featuring strongly.



15. View from the Conservation area boundary at Sproxtan Rd towards the village green.



16. View from Colsterworth Rd looking north across fields from the edge of the Conservation Area.



17. View from Colsterworth Rd looking west towards the village at the entrance to the Conservation Area.

Listed buildings within the village

Listed Buildings in Skillington (with List Entry Numbers)

Grade I	Grade II
Church of St James (1168300)	Gravestone, south of porch of St James: Robert Sewton, d. 1769, aged 76 (1062321)
	The Abbey, Church Street [Park Lane] (1062324)
	Stables at the Abbey (1360330)
	Pigeoncote at the Abbey, Church Street (1062320)
	The Old Vicarage, Vicarage Lane [Park Lane] (1360332)
	Village Cross (1168236)
	Two houses (Stone House and Green View) opposite Shepherd's Barn, Church Street (1062322)
	Stables behind two houses that are opposite Shepherd's Barn, Church Street (1168334)
	Barn, stables and loose boxes at Manor Farmhouse, Church Street (1062323)
	Manor Farmhouse, Church Street (1307044)
	Lower Farmhouse, Church Street (1307048)
	Tyler's Farmhouse, Church Street (1360331)

Source: Historic England; historicengland.org.uk

Positive unlisted buildings in the village

Positive Unlisted Buildings in Skillington

Buildings which ‘make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area’ (Source: Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2016).

<p>Stables/outbuildings at the Abbey</p>	<p>Church Street:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church Farm • Stone Croft • 1-3 Church Street
<p>Park Lane:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Elms • Church Cottage 	<p>Grantham Road:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Far Farm
<p>Colsterworth Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Barn • Four houses on south side, adjoining Lord’s Lane • The Old School 1842 (enlarged 1894) • Pump outside Old School 	<p>Blue Town</p>
<p>The Square:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillside Cottage • Nos 1-4 • Methodist Chapel • The Old Post Office • The Blue Horse • Cross Swords • Shepherds Barn • Stone House • Stone Cottage and Barn 	<p>Buckminster Lane:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Post Box • Rock House • Christian’s Barn • Molland’s Cottage
<p>Middle Street:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Farmhouse • Jackson’s House • Stone Cottage • Monk’s Barn 	<p>Back Lane:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson’s Barn

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'This Plan is Your Plan!'

Glossary of Terms

Census	A census is a complete population count for a given area or place taken on a specific date.
Conservation Area	An area of notable environmental or historical interest or importance which is protected by law against undesirable changes.
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/1927/pdfs/ukxi_20121927_en.pdf
EU	European Union
Framework	National Planning Policy Framework
Guidance	Planning Practice Guidance (in National Planning Policy).
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	<p>The Habitats Directive¹ requires competent authorities to decide whether or not a plan or project can proceed having undertaken the following “appropriate assessment requirements” to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine whether a plan or project may have a significant effect on a European site² - If required, undertake an appropriate assessment of the plan or project - Decide whether there may be an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site in light of the appropriate assessment. <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69580/pb13809-habitats-guidance.pdf</p>
Historic environment record (HER)	http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/herdetail.aspx?crit=&ctid=94&id=4754
Lincolnshire County Council	www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/
Localism Act 2011	<p>The aim of the act was to devolve more decision making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. The act covers a wide range of issues related to local public services, with a particularly focus on the general power of competence, community rights, neighbourhood planning and housing</p> <p>http://www.local.gov.uk/localism/localism-act</p>
Local Plan	<p>The Local Plan is the overall Development Plan for South Kesteven, setting out local planning policies</p> <p>http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8498</p>
National Planning Policy Framework	Sets out the Government’s approach to sustainable development which essentially is about enabling development to cater for the needs of current generations, but ensuring that development doesn’t mean worse lives for

	<p>future generations</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf</p>
Parish Council	<p>A parish council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the parish</p>
SAPDPD	<p>Site Allocation and Policies Development Plan Document</p> <p>http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8658</p>
SKDC	<p>South Kesteven District Council</p> <p>http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/</p>
Skillington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan	<p>The purpose of this document is to define the special interest of the conservation area and assess the action needed to protect and enhance its special qualities</p> <p>http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10881</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<p>This is covered under the European Directive 2001/42/EC, on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf</p>