



Market Overton Neighbourhood Plan

Character and Landscape Assessment

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Introduction and overview

Poorly designed development proposals are often the result of a lack of understanding of, or in some cases a disregard for the character, feel and appearance of the local area. Such proposals can fail to conserve or enhance the unique qualities of the local area for which they are proposed, and may harm and erode the existing character. Conversely, good design, that is both visually attractive and functional, stems from having an understanding of development's setting and the character of the local area. This understanding can help to ensure that new development proposals are of an appropriate design; one that respects and complements the existing local character ¹.

The Character and Landscape Assessment document describes the existing character of Market Overton. It draws upon those sections of the Neighbourhood Plan concerned with the history and development of the village. It should be taken into account by developers, architects and planners when assessing the merits of new developments and will help to deliver sensitively designed proposals in keeping with the feel and appearance of the area.

This appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan includes aspects already described in previous chapters concerned with the history and development of the village but they are brought together to show the relationship between character and its effect on future developments in the village.

Situated in the north of the county the parish of Market Overton borders Leicestershire and the parishes of Teigh, Thistleton, Barrow and Cottesmore. The village dates back to pre-Roman times.

The parish lies entirely within the Rutland Plateau landscape character type and the Cottesmore Plateau sub-area as defined in the Rutland Landscape Character Assessment. The village is situated in the north of Rutland at the edge of the plateau on a ridge overlooking the Vale of Catmose. Consequently, the landscape context is particularly important to Market Overton in comparison to the other settlements of the Cottesmore Plateau as outlined in the 2012 RCC Sensitivity and Capacity Study. The local topography therefore creates an occasionally prominent landscape setting to the western and southern fringes of the village and expansive views over the Vale of Catmose.

The village has developed around the 'T' junction of roads to Teigh and Thistleton (which Run in an East-West direction) and the road to Cottesmore (which runs in a North-South direction). Much of the village is within a Conservation Area which includes a number of listed buildings and Tree Preservation Orders.

Conclusion - The impact of Heritage and Character on sustainable development

The overall impression given by the disposition of housing in the village is that it is visually attractive. The Sunday Times (2019) described the village as one of the three prettiest in Rutland. This is partly a reflection of the age of the housing in the conservation area and the layout of subsequent estates and developments. The village does not have any high-density estates. Further the visual impression of the village from any direction is one of low-density

¹ How to prepare a character assessment to support design policy within a neighbourhood plan. Planning Aid.

attractiveness at the edge of farmland. The village appears to sit well in its immediate environment. Consultation with the community suggests that the openness of layout within the village and proximity of accessible countryside is an important characteristic for inhabitants. This distinctive nature of the village is one that the community wish to retain. It attracts visitors and history enthusiasts. Local services and accommodation for such visitors include caravan and camping facilities, a few 'holiday lets', food outlets and bed and breakfast accommodation in the village pub. This supports the local economy and employment. The area provides footpaths, bridle ways and fishing facilities.

Market Overton has evolved over many centuries as a result of economic and social change to produce the village we see today. The change has been significant in that of the 220 dwellings in the village 21 are grade 2 listed, the other listed items include the telephone box and the stocks! The current nature of the village contains at its heart an historic variety of dwellings situated around or close to the village green together with significant developments in the twentieth century. The key characteristics of the village are listed below:-

- Identifiable settlement areas with common characteristics and building lines.
- Important vistas surrounding the village both into and out of the settlement areas.
- Consistent character of buildings both in the historic core and in twentieth century developments.
- A variety of historic buildings from manor houses, farms and workers cottages
- The importance of access to the countryside
- A complex street pattern
- Green and open spaces which fit into the character and needs of the village.
- A variety of facilities and village assets such as clubs and societies occupying important spaces within the village
- The importance of the interface between the village and the countryside
- Public rights of way affording access to the countryside
- Spaciousness in both the historic core and new developments.

Potential threats to the environment

- Inappropriate design and use of materials in new developments
- Poor use of available space for new building
- Infill affecting the density and scale of housing
- Developments which ignore the ecological environment
- Inappropriate industrial development affecting the quality of life in the village.
- Increase of traffic on narrow roads and affecting road safety.

Potential opportunities

- The identification and registration of important green spaces in and around the village.
- The greater development of the ecology including green corridors and areas of interest.
- Enhanced access to the environment
- The development of more wooded areas including the incorporation of trees in new housing developments.

Historical development

Much of the village's early history was linked to agriculture which persists today. Homes which were once farmhouses and labourers' dwellings exist on the main road through the

village and date from the 17th Century. The Church of St. Peter and St. Paul has features dating from Anglo-Saxon times. There is an Anglo-Saxon burial ground (see later map). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries ironstone mining had a significant effect on the topography of the village as well as its population and housing. Thus there is evidence of its history in the current disposition and types of housing in the village.

Topography

Market Overton lies within the Rutland Plateau Landscape Character Type as defined in the Rutland Landscape Character Assessment (2003). Market Overton is situated on a ridge composed of Jurassic Limestone which is part of the series which extends from North Yorkshire to Dorset's Jurassic Coast. Limestone varies in quality as a potential building material. Much of the stonework in the village originates from other sites in the surrounding area as the limestone in the village is not suitable for building. The other geological feature is the deposits of ironstone within the village boundary which lies on top of the limestone and is sedimentary in origin. Ironstone can be seen in the walls of many of the listed dwellings and walls in the conservation area. The ironstone contains radon gas which needs to be eliminated in proposed new developments.

Market Overton lies within the sub-area of the Cottesmore Plateau. The village is located on the scarp of the plateau overlooking the Vale of Catmose. This forms a buttress on the plateau's western edge which wraps around to the west and south of the village. This characteristic has resulted in this area being designated in the RCC Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study Land around Local Service Centres (July 2012) as an area of local landscape value as it has expansive views and landscape features. It further forms a settlement boundary.

As will be demonstrated later the position of the village in the landscape provides for valuable views looking outward from the village as well as important boundaries to the village which enhance its character.

The Rutland County Council Landscape Sensitivity and capacity Study noted that land to the North, West and South of the village exhibited high landscape sensitivity (defined as areas which may be particularly sensitive to development based on a designation for an agricultural area which needs special protection because of its landscape, wild life or historical value) whereas land to the East was assessed as being of moderate or low sensitivity.

Land Use

Much of the parish's early history was linked to agriculture which continues today. The village is surrounded by largely arable farmland.

The village is largely residential with a Parish Church, a village hall, one shop, a pub and a few home-based businesses. The Lodge (a residential home for young people with disabilities) is located on Main Street to the east of the village; it offers a caravanning and camping site and two wooden lodges for rent. It also hosts the children's play area. (See below)

There is a small industrial estate along Ironstone Lane about half a mile to the north of the village.

Part of the parish is used by the Ministry of Defence as a base for the Army.

Areas close to the village have lowered fields as a result of early 20th century quarrying for ironstone. The current cricket field is the result of such activity.

Layout

The early development of the village was confined to dwellings down Main Street and along Berrybushes. Unlike many other ancient villages the parish church (grade 1 listed) is not in the centre of the village but rather lies to the northwest at its edge. Main Street, which is the road to Cottesmore, contains the majority of the listed buildings in the village with the remainder being contained in Berrybushes and Teigh Road. The village probably has its settlement origins at the T-junction formed by Main Street and the Thistleton/Teigh Roads.

The arrangement of buildings within the village is variable. Older homes and newer additions within the conservation area are linear with buildings close to the road. They either have short gardens to the front or no gardens with longer plots to the rear. The building line is largely consistent.

20th century buildings including two estates are irregular in layout with an inconsistent building line. The buildings are set back from the road, with wide plots and large front gardens.

Roads, streets, and routes

All the roads in the village are surfaced in tarmac as are the footpaths. Many of the roads and footpaths are bordered by grass verges.

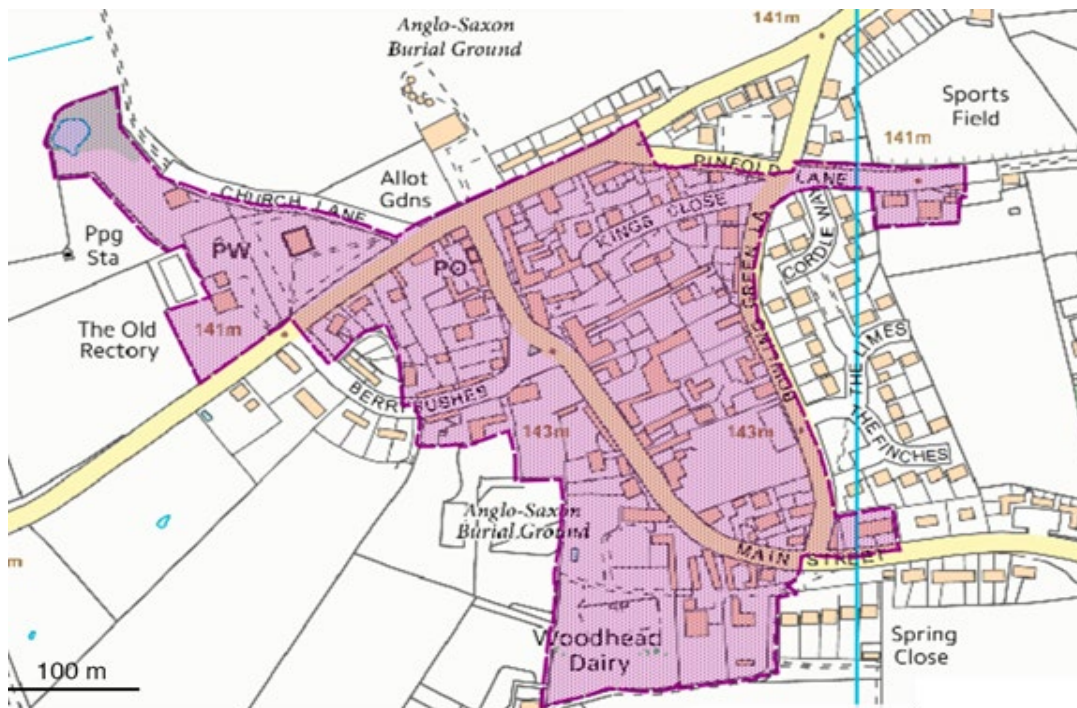
The village has no one-way streets. The majority of roads other than those to Cottesmore, Teigh and Thistleton being narrow. Older dwellings frequently have no off-street parking. The 2011 census indicates that of the 247 dwellings within the village and there were 425 vehicles. This along with the lack of off-road parking and the narrow roads causes parking problems and results in damage to grass verges and open spaces. A traffic survey in 2017 identified over a 1,000 vehicles daily travelling through the village on the road to Cottesmore.

There are footpaths and bridleways in lanes outside the village. The Rutland Round long distance path passes to the north of the parish close to the Leicestershire border. There are remnants of the disused Rutland canal within the parish, elements of which have become significant green corridors with footpaths along its length.

Buildings

This section of the character assessment describes the appearance and character of buildings within the village. The key focus is on the older more traditional buildings within the Market Overton Conservation Area

The conservation area in the village covers the earlier pre-19 century buildings.



The map above shows the shape of the village with the conservation area shown in pink.

The dynamic of the village settlement is an outward growth to the south and east of the village firstly along Main Street, (the road to Cottesmore) and subsequently along the roads to Thistleton and Teigh followed by the establishment of the Finches/Limes/Cordle Way estate on the eastern edge of the village in the late 1970s.

The oldest building in the village is the parish church which has some 13th century elements but which is mainly 14th and 15th century

The oldest inhabited house in the village is a Jacobean ex-farmhouse built in about 1625 on Main Street, the remainder of the listed dwellings being late seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century.

The oldest part of the village is Main Street characterised by a spacious area around the village green and a preponderance of older dwellings, mostly listed. The appearance and character of the more traditional buildings can be described as follows:

The arrangement and position of buildings.

- While the majority of buildings face towards the roads there are examples where the building is gable-end on to the street.
- A majority of buildings are two storey in height. However, there is variation with some dwellings being of single storey and others incorporating rooms within the roof space.
- Together with differences in the pitch of roofs, this results in variation in the relative height of buildings in the street scene.



External walls

- Older buildings at the core of the conservation area are mostly constructed of coursed rubble limestone with one example of a house constructed in ashlar stone. Quoins (masonry blocks) are frequently found at the corners of the buildings.

Windows

- A few buildings have mullion windows. However, white casement and sash windows, frequently with glazing bars, predominate.
- Ground floor windows are frequently aligned with those at first floor level, although they are not necessarily of a similar size.
- Lintels and sills are usually either of wood or stone although there are a few examples in brick. Occasionally, stone or brick lintels are arched.



Guttering

- Rainwater goods are normally black and of cast iron with stirrup brackets used along the eaves to fix the guttering to the face of the building.

Roofs

- Most traditional dwellings have simple, gabled roofs, although there are several examples of other roof types including hipped and cross-gabled roofs.
- The predominant, traditional roofing materials are Welsh and Colyweston slate. However, there are four buildings with thatched roofs and examples of tiled roofs, including pantiles.
- There is an attractive roof-scape of pitched roofs of varying heights and materials.
- In several instances the gable end of the building is finished with stone-coped parapets and kneelers.



Chimneys

- Chimneys are located along the ridgeline of most traditional buildings. They are often positioned at the end of the building but are also found more centrally.
- Internal stacks are used and do not therefore project from the external face of the building.
- Chimneys vary in design but are usually constructed in either stone or red brick and add interest to the ridgeline and roofscape.

Dormers

- There are examples of gabled, flat, mono-pitched and hipped dormer windows.
- Whilst most are set entirely within the roof of the building there are examples where the window is, in part, located within the external wall (a wall dormer).



Doors

- There is considerable variation in the style of front doors. However, they are normally of wooden construction in older buildings with some incorporating the use of glass.
- Porches are not common. There are, however, examples of canopies of varying design.



Boundary walls

- Stone walls, with variation in height and capping materials, are an important feature of the oldest part of the village (Main Street).
- Hedgerows are also used to define boundaries, particularly in the wider conservation area. There are few examples of wooden fencing.



Within the conservation area there are 13th to 19th century buildings e.g. the parish church, farmhouses, agricultural workers cottages, converted barns or forges. Some have narrow frontages directly onto the pavement. There are few houses with gable frontages. There are some two-storey stone buildings, four with thatched roofs others with pitched Collyweston stone. Some second storeys are built into the roof space with dormer shed and pitched style windows. There are some three-storey 18th and 19th century houses. Houses are mostly constructed of coursed rubble limestone with dressed stone coins in the conservation area (there is only one example of ashlar stone), or brick at the southern end of Main Street. Features include internal chimneys with a variety of styles and double sash and slider windows. Older houses have mullion windows with both stone and wooden lintels without sills newer ones have casement windows with stone or wooden sills. Most windows are framed in stone and are secondary glazed. The result is an attractive roof-scape of pitched roofs of many heights and materials including thatch, Collyweston slate, blue slate and pantiles. In older houses doors tend to be wooden with some use of glass but the majority are solid. Porches are not common whereas some front doors have canopies.. Glass is more common in the doors of newer houses. The rooflines differ with older houses having no soffits and cast iron guttering and fall pipes and later infill houses having wooden soffits with plastic guttering.

Most have no off-street parking. Boundary walls are largely in local stone, or hedgerows. There are a few wooden fences.

Within the Conservation Area there has also been significant infill of less sensitive vernacular architecture both as a result of demolition of older properties and the need to construct social housing. These more modern buildings are often of brick construction. The 20th century buildings are brick with slate roofs, and are mainly detached or semi-detached. This has resulted in a complex layout of streets for a village of the size of Market Overton. Arrangement of these newer buildings is variable.

The newer houses (some of which are ex council houses) have front gardens and off-street parking.

There are some developments particularly to the southern end of the conservation area which differ architecturally from the older properties. While the area generally retains its historic character (see photograph below) this is somewhat diluted by modern buildings at the southern end of Main Street.



Thistleton Road is characterised by ironworkers cottages built in the 20th century. , The cottages form a terrace of brick built dwellings with slate roofs, stone arched lintels to the

windows and doors, and narrow frontages onto small gardens with no off street parking. (see photograph below).

There is also some twentieth century social housing and bungalows along Thistleton Road

The Finches/Limes/Cordle Way estate built in the late 1970's is a more modern, low density, spacious development to the east of the village. It essentially remains as it was constructed with no new infill development. (See photograph below) The layout is irregular with no consistent building line. The houses are well set back from the road with wide plots, large front gardens, garages and have space for at least two cars on the drives. The houses are constructed of brick with concrete tiled roofs. The rooflines include white wooden or plastic soffits with barge boards to the eaves. Chimneys are both internal and external. Originally the windows were of wood and single glazed now replaced by plastic double-glazed windows of the original dimensions. A key feature of the estate is its spaciousness with grassed areas with ornamental and mature trees.



The village is further characterised by ex-council houses and social housing in Berrybushes, Teigh Road, Thistleton Road and the southern end of Main street. These are of brick construction with both concrete and slate tiled roofs

Landmarks

The 13/14th century parish church built within a roman camp enclosure has a lychgate which acts as the village war memorial and the tower incorporates a Saxon cross.

The sundial on the church tower said to have been placed by Sir Isaac Newton.

A Roman stone stile in the church wall leads to Church Lane.



The village green has stocks and a whipping post which are listed



A Pinfold surrounded by a hedge exists at the junction of Pinfold Lane and Bowling Green Lane.

'The Warf' going out of the village towards Teigh is on the site of a canal basin. Remnants of the canal can be seen along a field on the edge of the village.

A stone bust of Sir Isaac Newton is on the wall of a small rectangular building at the junction of Main Street and Berrybushes. This is on the site where his grandmother lived and he spent much of his youth.

There is a listed 19th century phone box

The village sign on the green represents historical and current local industry such as quarrying, agriculture and bee keeping.



Evidence of ironstone quarrying

Many of the surrounding fields have been lowered as a consequence of quarrying including the cricket pitch which is sited in a disused quarry. Quarry workers cottages are a feature of Thistleton Road as well as a reading room constructed for ironstone workers in Berrybushes.

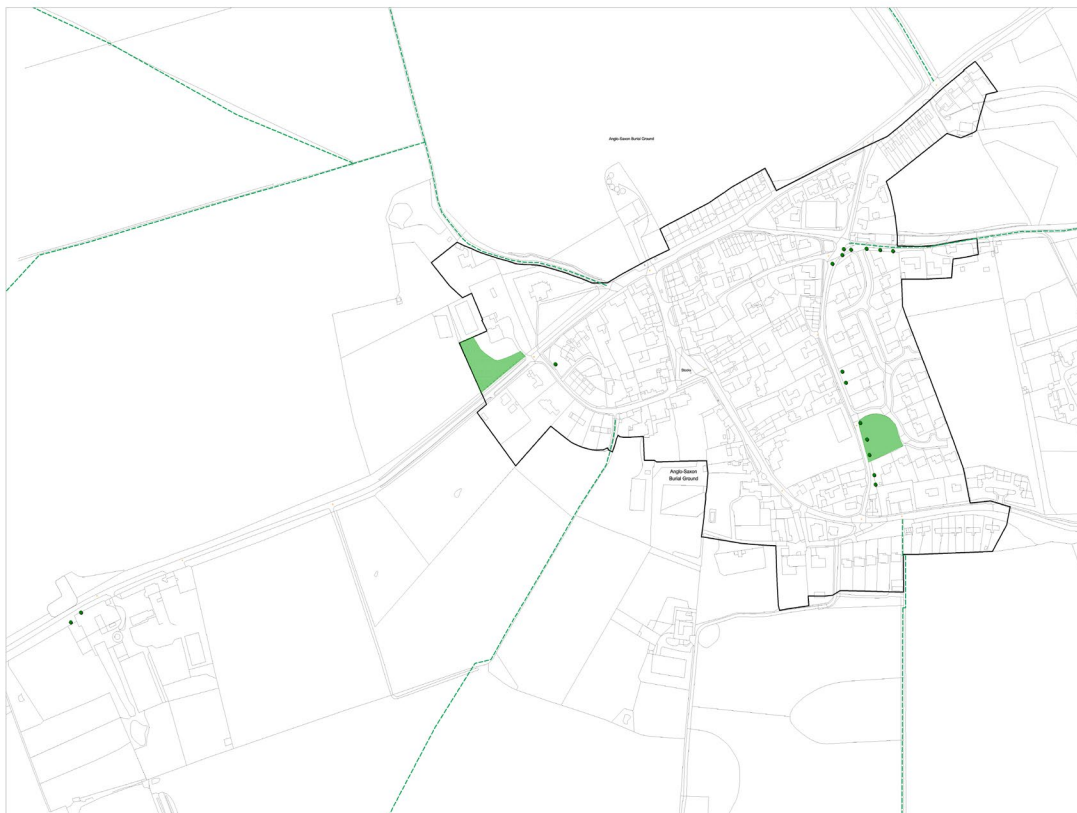


Green and natural features

The evidence from questionnaires and informal sources of opinion point to the importance of access to the countryside as a major reason for valuing living in the village,

There are fishing lakes within the village environs near the cricket pitch accessed from Pinfold Lane bridle path, as well as on land adjacent to that utilised by the Ministry of Defence.

A number of mature and relatively rare trees (e.g. elm trees) exist, some with TPOs. (Mainly on Pinfold Lane and Bowling Green Lane - see map below) Some dwellings have boundary hedges.



The village is surrounded by intensely farmed arable land broken by hedgerows. Roads leading to and from village are lined with trees and/or hedges.

Spaces

Within the village and its environs there are a variety of significant green spaces. The only registered important green space is the village green, the designated green spaces within the village are part of the garden of the Old Rectory and an expanse of grassed land at the entrance to the Limes/Finches estate. Other significant grassed areas include – the cricket pitch, the bowling green, the Pinfold, the Lodge country park (which hosts a children's large play area), allotments, church graveyard and further verges which are part of the Finches, Limes and Cordle Way estate;

Streetscape

This includes modern lampposts; black and green litterbins throughout the village; wooden public seating near bus stops, on the village green, outside the village hall and at the junction of Pinfold Lane and Thistleton Road. Boundary walls are largely in local stone, or hedgerows. There are a few wooden fences. Free-standing road signs exist at main junctions. There is a stone mounting block on Main Street; and planted flower troughs under the signs for Market Overton on the roads leading into the village. The main roads have kerbstones, but the verge of older side roads is directly onto the road. Roads and most pathways are tarmac, laid on top of old cobbles.

Views

A key reason for living in Market Overton (as identified in the village survey) is the proximity of attractive countryside. The location of the village affords attractive and valued views for example from the ridge looking West across the Vale of Catmose. (See map arrow A). There are a number of footpaths from the village into the countryside. The immediate environment of the village is intensively farmed arable land with trimmed hedges. There are areas of woodland within walking distance.



The north edge of the village (marked by Teigh and Thistleton Roads) presents a clear break with the surrounding landscape setting over the wide, open arable fields to the north. (See map arrow B)



From the East access to the village is along Thistleton Road. From there looking south can be seen trees, hedgerows and fields and the buildings in the distance on the army base. (See map arrow C). Looking west the roofs and buildings of the village give the overall impression of a mixed development until reaching the terrace of the quarry's cottages. The east of the village contains the majority of modern bungalows.



Approaching village from the west along Teigh Road the outline of buildings marking the west side of the village are visible along the ridge. (See map arrow D)



Approaching the village from Cottesmore, trees and the buildings along the south side of the village are visible. (See map arrow E).



From the north side along Church Lane looking south towards the village there are the buildings along Thistleton Road marking the northern boundary of the village (See map arrow F).



From the end of Pinfold Lane looking west the bridle path offers views of the fishing lakes, hedges, fields, and the Lodge Country Park. (See map arrow G)



There are views to the south from the green lane off Berrybushes over fields, down to the Vale of Catmose, and up to Barrow. (See map arrow H)



The village topography has been much influenced by ironstone quarrying to the north and east of the village in the early twentieth century resulting in lowered fields. The site of the cricket field is an example.

Public footpaths (green dotted lines on the map) and main green corridors are indicated on the map below showing the views the community feel are important. The green corridors

are found on the perimeter of village – the site of the old railway along Ironstone Lane, Pinfold Lane and Church Lane bridle ways; adjacent to The Warf on the site of a canal basin with remnants of the canal along a field on the edge of the village; and the path from the Warf on Teigh Road along the line of the now filled in canal leading up to Woodwell Head wood.



Evidence base for Character Assessment

Rutland County Council Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study Land around Local Service Centres July 2012

The Sunday Times report 20th October 2019

Rutland Landscape Character Assessment 2003

Rutland County Council Local Plan Review Consultation Draft Plan July 2017

Rutland County Council, Review of Open Space, Sport, Recreation Facilities and Green Infrastructure in Rutland. 2009

RCC Traffic survey of Main Street 2017

Village opinion through -

SWOT analysis - village meetings 2015

Meta planning exercise - village meeting 2016

Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire 2017

Village visioning exercise 2017

Focus groups 2018

Feedback from Neighbourhood planning exhibition 2018

