

Mrs Angie Daly  
Irthlingborough Town Council  
Council Offices  
Station Road  
Irthlingborough  
NN9 5SN

Dear Angie,

**Re: Evidence base review: Irthlingborough Neighbourhood Plan**

In line with the agreed project plan for the formulation of the Irthlingborough Neighbourhood Plan, this letter seeks to offer advice on the scope and robustness of the evidence base that the Neighbourhood Plan may seek to rely upon. In addition, where necessary we will also consider where there may be gaps in evidence that would assist the Neighbourhood Plan.

The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2016) identifies Irthlingborough as a Market Town. The role of Irthlingborough is to provide a strong service to their local community and wider rural areas with growth in homes and jobs to support regeneration and local services; at a scale appropriate to the character and infrastructure of the town.

**Documents Reviewed**

The following planning documents have been reviewed with specific reference to their evidence-base or policy implications on Irthlingborough:

- North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit Local Plan Part 1 (NNJCS 2016);
- North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit Settlement Hierarchy (NNJPU 2015);
- North Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (NNJPU 2013);
- North Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (NNSHMAU 2012);
- East Northamptonshire Housing Mix Requirements Assessment (2016);
- 2018 Authorities Monitoring Report – calculating a Five Year Housing Land Supply for the district;
- Northamptonshire Transport Plan (2012);
- Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2013);
- East Northamptonshire Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2006);
- Current Landscape Character Assessment (2003);
- Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy (2017); and
- East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 (1st Consultation Draft).

In addition, we have reviewed a range more general statistical and thematic publications that haven't been published with a specific planning purpose.

**Evidence Base: Housing**

There are several potential policies which the Neighbourhood Plan may wish to include in respect of

housing development and this review has revealed a substantial evidence base that is appropriate to inform any such policies. The housing requirement for Irthlingborough within the Plan period is 1,350 dwellings, most of this growth will be delivered through the 700 dwellings sustainable urban extension (SUE) to the west of the town (NNJCS 2016). Approval was granted in 2014, although discussions continue around development contributions. This and other smaller commitments to the east (Attley Way) and west (Wellingborough Road), combined with recent developments at the former Sunseeker Caravan site (Finedon Road) and Crow Hill (to the north of the main urban area), have expanded and will continue to grow the town throughout the Plan period (LPP2).

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 Irthlingborough has a residual requirement 643, however emerging commitments for a further 275 reduces this to 368 (AMR 2018). However, the latest position of Irthlingborough SUE shows that trajectory for the site has been set back until later during the Plan period, such that just 315 (out of 700) dwellings are now anticipated to come forward within the Plan period.

The NNSHMAU (2012) provides clear evidence on housing tenure mix requirements and forecasts across East Northamptonshire District. Its conclusions in respect of housing tenure mix (a need for 40% affordable housing and 60% market housing) are clear and reliable; should the Neighbourhood Plan wish to deviate from this identified tenure mix, additional local evidence-gathering would be necessary to substantiate this.

The Housing Mix Requirements Assessment (2016) identifies that across the district, including Irthlingborough, there is a miss-match between the housing stock, which is predominately dwellings, and its demographic make-up, which is predominantly smaller households. Additionally, there are affordability issues which need to be addressed through the provision of affordable rented and intermediate forms of tenure. It should be considered that Irthlingborough has one largest proportions of affordable homes at a ward level. There is also a general lack of older persons' accommodation and the increasing numbers of older people in the district will need housing which meets their needs and aspirations. Any housing-related Neighbourhood Plan Policies would need to have regard to and reflect the assessment's findings, additionally local evidence-gathering being necessary should the Neighbourhood Plan wish to depart from this evidence document.

### **Evidence Base: Town Centre and Employment**

Initially highlighted at the Regulation 18 Consultation of the emerging Local Plan the town centre was identified as an issue affecting Irthlingborough. Subsequent stakeholder workshops indicated that the town centre needs to be reimagined, this means securing the benefits of the new Market Square/ Church Street Coop etc development and addressing other redevelopment opportunities (e.g. former Select & Save premises, 13-21 High Street and St Peter's Way Car Park. Town centre improvement will form part of the future strategy for Irthlingborough, local evidence-gathering may be necessary to successfully identify how this could be done.

The most recent East Northamptonshire Employment Land Review was published in 2006, it then identified a need to balance increased residential provision with an increase in the number of jobs. It is currently anticipated that Irthlingborough West will create over 950 jobs and Former Rushden and Diamonds FC stadium site, Nene Park, will create around 300 jobs. It is considered that the 7,300 jobs required in the district will be met. The Nene Park development will form a key part of the future strategy for Irthlingborough in order to secure investment.

### **Evidence Base: Transport**

For Irthlingborough the Local Transport Plan (2012) has a 'saved' bus strategy policy. They aim to

improve the existing services to the main town of Wellingborough, Northampton, Kettering and Bedford. They also aimed to investigate developer funding to kick-start and new fast service linking one or more of these towns to Northampton via the A45. The Neighbourhood Plan would not be able to propose any policy which would fetter, curtail or reverse strategic decision set out in the Transport Plan. There appears to be an evidence gap regarding transport for Irthlingborough, it is considered that Car Parking stress points and congestion may be valid local issues that can be addressed through policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan. To do so would require additional evidence-gathering through an appropriately framed and robust traffic and parking survey.

### **Evidence Base: Flood Risk**

According to the Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Irthlingborough Waterloo Ward has been classified as being highly sensitive to climate change under the flood map for surface water scenarios. The built-up area of Irthlingborough lies outside of any flood zones, however, southeast lies River Nene which forms part of Irthlingboroughs lakes and meadows. As set out in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment likelihood of flooding is minuscule. It is considered that this Strategic Flood Risk Assessment can be relied upon for Neighbourhood Planning purposes, if more specific local concerns should arise around flooding a more detailed flood risk assessment of the area(s) of known concern should be carried as an additional evidence base document.

### **Evidence Base: Landscape**

Irthlingborough is defined as having an urban landscape within the Current Landscape Character Assessment. Adjacent to Irthlingborough is the Irthlingborough Slopes Character Area, defining the area is a series of valleys and slopes generally orientated in a northeast, southwest direction. Additionally, Clay Plateau lies to the north of Irthlingborough. Land cover is typically large and medium to large scale arable farmland, although improved pastures, generally smaller in scale are present on the south eastern boundary around Irthlingborough.

The current landscape assessment identifies character areas in Irthlingborough and for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan should be sufficient enough to be relied upon. Should the Neighbourhood Plan seek to allocate land that resides in these areas the existing evidence would then not be sufficient to assess the impact of development. Additional landscape assessments would likely be required on a site-by-site basis in the event that the Neighbourhood Plan wishes to consider any such allocation incorporating permanent built form.

### **Evidence Base: Open Space**

The Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy identifies Irthlingborough Lakes and Meadows, Ringtail Close, Scharpwell Greenspace, Irthlingborough Greenspace and Wharf Road as publically accessible open spaces. This document has only recently been published and is therefore considered up to date.

Additionally the document outlines open space provision required to support new development in hectares per 1000 population.

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Irthlingborough (ha per 1000 population)</b>
Parks and gardens	0.01
Natural and semi-natural	14.98
Amenity greenspace	1.16
Children and younger people	0.03
Allotments	0.38

### **Evidence Base: Education**

The Northamptonshire County Council- Strategic Plan for Schools 2010-2021 could not be located therefore we cannot advise on this particular evidence base at this moment in time.

### **Evidence Base: Heritage**

A Heritage Assessment would be a useful addition to the locally-generated evidence base. It should identify all designated heritage assets in the Town (e.g. listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, Conservation Areas etc...) as well as noting any key views to be protected (such as the Church). Additionally, any popular unlisted buildings could be noted as being locally important undesignated heritage assets, provided that the assessment clearly identifies and explains why they are locally important in architectural and/or historical terms.

### **Evidence Base: Community Assets**

A Neighbourhood Plan may seek to protect an existing local community facility or amenity from closure or redevelopment. Whilst it would separately be open to the Town Council to propose the designation of an existing facility as an Asset of Community Value, the identification of such facilities in a separate evidence base document would be necessary should the Neighbourhood Plan seek to include protection policies.

### **Summary**

There is already a wide-ranging existing evidence base upon which the Neighbourhood Plan can rely. However, there remain some gaps which could usefully be filled with additional local evidence-gathering, we recommend;

- a) Traffic and parking surveys;
- b) Any areas of localised flooding concern;
- c) Heritage;
- d) Community Assets

We will provide electronic copies of all the documents which we have reviewed, enabling you to read and review for yourselves. We can make these available via a download link should that assist. We trust that this evidence base review is of assistance provides you with the information to best move forward.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the author or another member of the team.

Yours faithfully

Connor Shingler  
DLP Planning Ltd