

PIRTON
Neighbourhood Development
Plan

2011 – 2031

REFERENDUM 2018

THE PIRTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2011 – 2031

A SUMMARY

As you may already know, full details of the modifications to the Plan have been available online on the NHDC website, but we are conscious that not everyone will have access to the internet. So, for those parishioners, we set out the final Plan Policies, following modifications which the Examiner has made.

***The Vision:** Pirton Parish thrives socially, economically and environmentally as a safe, tranquil, rural community where sustainable development of good and intelligent design enhances its distinctive character; its heritage, biodiversity and position, and respects and enhances its position in the landscape.*

The Pirton Neighbourhood Plan (PNP) sets out a positive vision for the future of our village and the Parish of Pirton. After conducting an examination of our Neighbourhood Plan, an independent expert has agreed that it encourages sustainable development in accordance with the character of the village and Parish, and that it accords with the needs and wishes of the local community.

The PNP is a community-led document that guides the future growth, development and conservation of the Parish of Pirton, with a particular focus on the village of Pirton. It contains planning policies that deal with a range of social, environmental and economic issues such as housing, heritage, biodiversity and transport and work.

Both the PNP, and its supporting document the Pirton Character Assessment describe the main elements that make Pirton's distinctive, character and which, then, lead to the policies that are needed to preserve and enhance what the community says are the special qualities that make up Pirton. These special qualities include:

- The Setting of Pirton as a rural village, close to a large urban area (Hitchin) set next to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and within the contrasting Pirton Lowlands;
- It's amazing Heritage, with 55 Listed buildings, 5 Scheduled monuments, a number of non-listed buildings of local interest; a significant archaeological heritage ranging throughout the prehistoric periods, to Roman, Saxon, medieval and later periods;
- An extraordinary depth of biodiversity, related to the wide-ranging habitats that exist and the very "green" nature of both village and parish;
- A strong sense of place and of community, so that community facilities should not be lost, but gained, and wherever possible improved and expanded;
- A feeling of harmony between village setting and the surrounding landscape. In particular, the manner in which open spaces within the village and a network of village footpaths, fan out into the landscape, encourages this harmony;

- The considerable diversity of dwellings from medieval to modern and the successful integration of this diversity which respects the village scale and appearance.

The PNP Policies include aiming to:

- ❖ Encourage mixed housing growth to meet the needs of all ages with an emphasis on young families, elderly downsizers and affordable homes.
- ❖ Encourage sensitive and innovative development in accordance with the existing character of Pirton including its greenery, wildlife habitats, its built and archaeological heritage and its connectivity to the countryside.
- ❖ Prevent sprawl and urbanisation
- ❖ Keep Pirton as a safe place to live with good public transport whilst encouraging walking and cycling around the village and Parish
- ❖ Conserve and enhance Pirton's rich archaeology and heritage, its important green and open spaces, its biodiversity, and the local landscape including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the Pirton Heritage Verge.
- ❖ Sustain and enhance community facilities
- ❖ Support the rural economy

The policies, as they are now after passing the Examination, are as follows:

Policy PNP 1 – Meeting Local and Wider Needs (Pirton and North Hertfordshire):

A residential development proposal will be supported if:

- 1.1 It is within the development boundary of the village. as shown on the map on page 3 of the Plan.
- 1.2 It is for no more than 30 houses on any one development site.
- 1.3 It has regard to the needs of young families looking for 2/3 bedroom properties which may include semi-detached and terraced housing
- 1.4 It has regard to the need for homes suitable for down-sizing and lifetime occupation by the elderly, including bungalows and sheltered accommodation.
- 1.5 It provides a mix of homes (including the provision of self-build plots where appropriate) which include an element of social and affordable housing as specified in the NHDC Local Plan and in accordance with local needs, taking into account the high market value of property in Pirton in relation to the average salary.
- 1.6 The affordable housing is subject to a Section 106 legal agreement or planning conditions ensuring that it remains an affordable dwelling for local people in perpetuity.
- 1.7 All proposed developments have plans and methodology agreed with NHDC at the outset, on how the construction will be carried out, with the minimum of impact on the community.

Policy PNP 2 - Design and Character

Residential development proposals will be supported if they are in accordance with the guidance contained in the Pirton Character Assessment and the following principles:

- 2.1 Recognise, respect and reinforce the distinct local, rural character of both Pirton Village and Parish (as set out in the Character Assessment at Evidence Base 1) in relation to height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design, design detail, and building materials, with particular consideration given to these elements reflected in dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development. This should be particularly reflected in areas of high heritage value. Proposals for development that fail to respect this Policy will be refused unless there are special circumstances of an architectural nature that demonstrate innovation in design without impacting adversely on the character and appearance of the area.
- 2.2 Are in accordance with the Build for Life Principles (Evidence Base 15)
- 2.3 The density of any scheme should be consistent and compatible with the existing and prevailing density and reflect the locally distinctive character of the locality in which the new development is proposed so that the village feel is retained.
- 2.4 Where there is a multi- dwelling development:
 - a) The proportions of openness between the houses and roads in the immediate surroundings is continued, and
 - b) A network of spaces of all sizes to preserve the rural balance and amenity spaces within Pirton Village must be maintained.
 - c) Parked cars do not dominate the streetscape.
- 2.5 Should take into account the Chilterns Conservation Board Position Statement *“Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB June 2011”* or as updated.
- 2.6 Include gardens for all new dwellings.
- 2.7 Include secure cycle storage and storage for children’s buggies and mobility scooters, and, where appropriate, a suitable store for refuse bins.
- 2.8 Preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of a conservation area or area adjoining a conservation area and to respond to existing scale, height and character of the conservation area, including boundary treatments around and within new development which should reflect the distinct local character in relation to materials and design.
- 2.9 Maintain a mix of open spaces, trees and varied housing layout along the edges of the village in order to sustain the current characteristic blending of the village into the countryside with a soft edge.
- 2.10 Follow good practice in lighting design for reduction of obtrusive or light pollution such as The Institution of Lighting Engineers: Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light. Developers should reference the design practice used.
- 2.11 Ensure by design that a development is fully integrated into the village and is not isolated and thereby form *“satellite communities”* separate from the main village.

Policy PNP 3 - Residential Extensions (Excluding Those Covered by 'Permitted' Development):

Residential Extension proposals will be supported if:

- 3.1. They are subservient to the host building.
- 3.2. The scale, height and roof form are complementary to the host building and the character of the street scene.
- 3.3. They are made of materials that are sensitive and complementary to the host building.
- 3.4. The spacing between buildings respects the character of the street scene.
- 3.5. Amenities such as access, noise, privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining residents are safeguarded.
- 3.6. The dwelling continues to meet the parking standards of PNP 13.

Policy PNP 4 - Hedgerows, Trees and Verges

- 4.1. Proposals for new development should include an assessment of trees and hedges on the site.
- 4.2. The retention and maintenance of existing trees and hedgerows is encouraged in all development or if their removal is demonstrated to be necessary they should be replaced in an appropriate location with trees of no less arboriculture or amenity value.
- 4.3. Where the boundary of a new development is adjacent to the edge of the village, existing hedgerows and trees should be protected to give the village a green and soft edge, with additional landscaping and planting to minimise the visual impact of new development.
- 4.4. Landscaping must be incorporated in the design of all new development to mitigate the visual impact of development and ensure that the development merges into the existing village context. Landscaping schemes should seek to include predominately native species.
- 4.5. New development or the construction process of new development must not damage or destroy the Heritage Verge which runs along both sides of the Hitchin Road from Walnut Tree Road to the Barton Road, as shown on the Map, Wildlife Sites and Parish Boundary, on page 30.

Policy PNP 5 - Wildlife

- 5.1. Proposals for development must demonstrate how consideration has been given to the maintenance, protection and enhancement of the wildlife habitats of Pirton and Pirton Parish.
- 5.2. Development proposals must demonstrate that they have met the legal requirements for establishing the presence or otherwise of protected species.
- 5.3. Boundaries between dwellings should be marked, where possible, by hedge planting rather than hard fencing or wall boundaries to provide green routes for wildlife.
- 5.4. It is expected that development proposals would meet this policy through the submission of appropriate and proportionate information taking into account both the type of development proposed and its location.

Policy PNP 6 - Local Green Spaces:

6.1. The areas listed below in the table are designated Local Green Spaces which are protected from new development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

6.2. The creation of new green spaces within new development is encouraged.

Existing Local Green Spaces:

(Great Green; Chipping Green, Bury End; Little Green, junction of High St, Walnut Tree Road and Royal Oak Lane; Middle Green, Colemans Close recreation area, orchard and children's play area; The Knoll; The Bury and Toot Hill; Pirton Vicarage Nature Reserve; Recreation Ground and Outdoor Sports Facilities off Walnut Tree Road; The Blacksmiths Pond.

Policy PNP 7 - Key Views and Vistas:

7.1. The Plan seeks to protect and enhance the setting of Pirton village in relation to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the surrounding rural landscape. Any new development in an area within the views specified below, described on pages 35 – 39 and shown on the map on page 36 of the Plan must ensure that key features of the view can continue to be enjoyed including distant buildings and landscape features, sensitive village edges and rural approaches to the village.

1. The view from Highdown north to the Bury, the village and the Pirton Lowlands beyond.
2. The view from Shillington Road and the Driftway looking southwards to Priors Hill (water tower) and St Mary's Church Tower.
3. The view from Punch's Cross on Hitchin Road north to the SE corner of Pirton village.
4. View across to the Chilterns AONB on the approach to the NE corner of village from Holwell Road.
5. The view from Priors Hill northeast towards Langford Water Tower and beyond.
6. View from Little Lane across the Pirton Lowlands.
7. View from Hambridge Way E across the Pirton Lowlands and Hertfordshire to the Letchworth ridge.
8. View NNW from the Baulk public footpath across Priors Hill towards the westwards extension of the Chiltern ridge and the famous local landmark of Sharpenhoe Clappers.

7.2. Development proposals should take into account the visual impact of those proposals on key views and vistas, as detailed in the list and map below.

Policy PNP 8 - Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage:

Development proposals will be supported where:

- 8.1. Proposals conserve or enhance the heritage assets of the Parish and their settings in a way that is appropriate to their significance. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets;
- 8.2. Development proposals on sites that include or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest and planning applications for development affecting the archaeology alert areas should be submitted with a desk top archaeological survey and where necessary a field evaluation undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist so that the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets can be assessed. This may indicate that further pre-determination field evaluation excavation and or mitigation secured by condition are required. Mitigation may take the form of further excavation, an archaeological watching brief, or the preservation in situ of significant archaeological remains.
- 8.3. Proposals demonstrate that they have consulted and respected appropriate sources of information such as Hertfordshire County Council's Historic Environment Record. In addition to consultation with the archaeological planning advisory service and the Herts Historic Environment Record, specialists undertaking such surveys should consult with the Pirton Parish Council which holds local knowledge on these sites.

Policy PNP 9 - Community Facilities:

- 9.1. New or improved community facilities for the benefit of residents (including those with a disability) will be supported subject to their compatibility with other policies in the development plan.
- 9.2. Non-householder residential development and major development proposals will be required to identify their likely impact on facilities, services and infrastructure and to demonstrate how any such impacts will be addressed, including the provision of new facilities. This provision should be based on evidenced local needs and discussion with PPC and NHDC Planning.
- 9.3. Development which makes a contribution to the rural economy by creating, facilitating or improving opportunities to work in the Parish or by providing or enhancing recreational facilities and opportunities to improve health and well-being will usually be supported.
- 9.4. Development proposals will not be supported which result in the loss of any community facility unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the existing use is no longer viable.

Policy PNP 10 - Support for Local Business:

Development proposals will be supported that:

- 10.1. Provide support and encouragement and the creation of new opportunities in keeping with the character of the village and its rural surroundings for new and existing businesses in Pirton to ensure viability is maintained and strengthened, and/or
- 10.2. Encourage home based and self-employed working, including the provision of improved broadband and communication technology, and/or
- 10.3. Encourage new uses of traditional farm buildings (including a farm shop) provided that it has been demonstrated that the buildings are no longer viable or required for farming, and/or
- 10.4. Improve public transport that would serve the needs of the community, and/or
- 10.5. Provide limited, non-intrusive and appropriate car parking to serve access to the footpaths and ancient monuments

Policy PNP 11 - Safety of Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Motorists:

Development proposals will be required to:

- 11.1. Provide safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the development
- 11.2. Demonstrate that there are adequate safe pedestrian links (including for those with visual and mobility impairments) to the principal village facilities including the village centre, and recreation ground.
- 11.3. Identify appropriate measures such as highway improvements to address any transport infrastructure inadequacies, and include measures to mitigate increased pollution arising from increased traffic and the impact on the environment. Where other development proposals are under consideration, any particular development proposal must take account of the cumulative impact of increased traffic arising from the new development, combined with other schemes that have received or are seeking planning permission.
- 11.4. Ensure that any traffic-calming measures or vehicular access from the highway that may be proposed are both sympathetic to the character of the village, and safe for all users, and existing Pirton residents.

Policy PNP 12 – Connectivity:

Development proposals will be required to:

- 12.1. Add to, link with and improve the existing safe network of cycle routes and footpaths, within Pirton and giving access to the countryside wherever it is appropriate given the scale of the development and there is an opportunity to do so.
- 12.2. Ensure that streetscape features along pedestrian and cycle routes, provided or improved by the proposal are of a design which reinforces or enhances the character of Pirton.
- 12.3. Improve access for walkers to the many public footpaths in the Parish and especially to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the regionally important Icknield Way Path/Trail, together with cyclist access to the Chiltern Cycleway wherever there is an opportunity to do so in relation to the network of public footpaths in the Parish.
- 12.4. Any development which has an adverse effect upon, or proposes the loss of existing footpaths and cycle routes will not be permitted unless a satisfactory alternative providing equivalent or better provision can be achieved.

Policy PNP 13 - Car Parking:

- 13.1. New developments should be self-sufficient in providing parking on plot to meet its needs in accordance with NHDC Residential Parking Standards, save for larger houses (3 bedrooms or more) when a minimum of 3 car parking spaces will be required. All proposals for parking must demonstrate that the needs of those with mobility impairment have been taken into account.
- 13.2. Where it is difficult to meet the above requirements on plot, for example for terraced housing, additional parking bays or service roads in front of the property will be considered acceptable to help achieve compliance with the parking standards.

There are some additional matters:

The Pirton Neighbourhood Plan (PNP) makes it perfectly clear that the Community want to be very much involved in development matters, and encourages developers to have on-going dialogue with the Parish Council and the community.

The PNP also makes it clear that the Parish Council will monitor all planning applications and planning decisions for adherence to the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan.

Whichever way you vote, the essential element of the Referendum on 8th March 2018 is that as many as can need to cast their vote, so please make sure you get to the village hall between 7am and 10pm on voting day. We need you to engage just one more time to ensure we get what the Pirton community chooses.

Thank you.

Pirton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group