

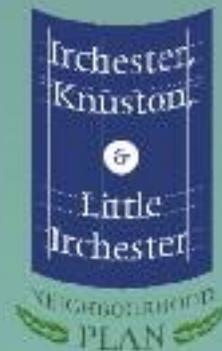
Irchester Knuston and Little Irchester Neighbourhood Plan

Please Return this questionnaire by 10am Thursday 1st October 2015

This is an official consultation on your Neighbourhood Plan

It is independent and for the community

**It is in no way linked to other consultations
on development proposals in the village**



Your Community – Your Voice

www.irchesterparishnhp.com

What is the Neighbourhood Plan?

Under the Localism Act 2011 the Irchester Parish Council acquired powers that will give local people opportunities to express their views on how they would like their area to be shaped by development in the period 2011-2031.

In 2012 the Parish Council held a public meeting in Irchester Village Hall resulting in volunteers forming a Steering Group to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. During December 2012 the Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated. It encompasses the Parish taking in Irchester, Knuston and Little Irchester.

The Steering Group have to develop the Plan in consultation with the community, but the Plan must conform to both local and national policies and frameworks. Much research work has been completed. The information gathered from any surveys, consultation and events will be used by the Steering Group to form the final Neighbourhood Plan document.

The Plan will be assessed by the Borough Council of Wellingborough who will send it to an Independent Inspector for approval. The Plan will then go to a parish referendum. If more than 51% of the people vote for the Plan it will be adopted to become part of the statutory development plan for the period up to 2031.

Saying no to all development is not an option. The Neighbourhood Plan offers the chance to have your say and to help shape the future of the Parish. This leaflet sets out the options for housing growth in Irchester and asks for your views on the best places for new homes.

Vision Statement

Irchester Parish must maintain its character as a rural and vibrant community.

It must continue to have a close relationship with its surrounding countryside.

It must remain attractive to visitors and residents.

Irchester, Little Irchester and Knuston must each have their own identity and provide community cohesion for all their inhabitants for current and future generations.

New Homes

A key issue for the Plan will be the need to accommodate additional housing. Irchester has to contribute to the amount of housing required by the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy and the Borough of Wellingborough Local Plan. Because these higher level strategies are still under review, we do not yet know what the exact housing requirement for Irchester will be.

However, it is likely to be in the region of 150 homes in the period 2011-2031. This requirement has been confirmed by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit. It is also worth noting that since 2011, 21 dwellings have either been completed or have had planning permission granted in Irchester.

In recent years, Irchester has been subject to speculative planning applications for major residential developments. Given this pressure and the importance of this issue for the whole community, we have decided at this stage to concentrate our Neighbourhood Plan on the issue of housing growth.

Whilst there are some brownfield sites within Irchester, none of these have been put forward by their respective owners. Moreover, these brownfield sites are not large enough to accommodate the quantity of houses needed. This means some greenfield land on the edge of the village will need to be developed.

All new housing development will include affordable housing (in line with the Local Plan Policy), which will be made up of various types of dwellings as well as including assisted care provision. Housing will also be limited to within or adjoining the settlement boundary of Irchester.

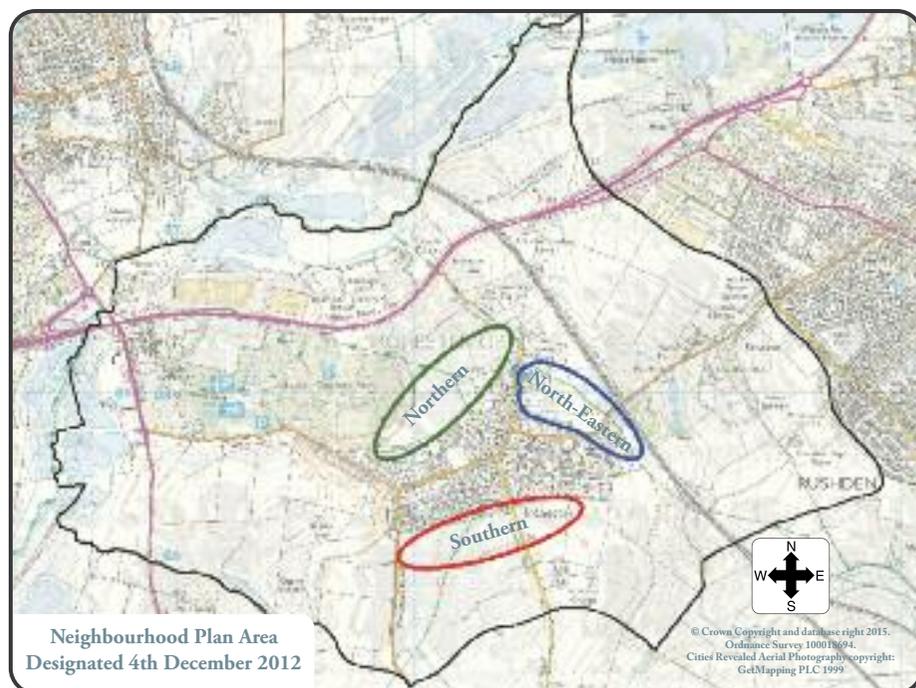
Windfall

There is always a possibility for previously developed land to be redeveloped for houses in the future. These are said to be windfall sites. Examples for Irchester are Mansfield Way and Biscay Close, built on former factory sites. Windfall sites are defined as sites not specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. By their definition, these sites cannot be planned for and we cannot count them towards our overall housing requirement.

The Neighbourhood Plan can however shape any windfall development in the future, and ensure it is sympathetic to the community and is of a limited scale.

Stage 1 Consultation Results

We engaged with key stakeholders including local landowners and have undertaken site analysis work to consider the opportunities and constraints of various sites. From this work we identified three 'broad directions of growth' for Irchester in our Stage 1 Consultation. They were Northern, North-Eastern and Southern, as indicated on the map below.



Each zone had planning development history. Our approach was to look at each zone afresh, bearing in mind that our Neighbourhood Plan must conform with local and regional plans, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Stage 1 Consultation asked for your preference between these three potential zones for development – Northern, North-Eastern and Southern. The outcome of the vote was very close, with no clear preference to see development in one of the zones over the others.

These Consultation results are on our website: www.irchesterparishnhp.com

Stage 2 Overview

The Steering Group have undertaken further work to assess the suitability of the various potential sites for housing development. It is important to bear in mind that the Neighbourhood Plan will cover the period up to 2031, so the new homes may not come forward all at once.

It has emerged that an issue of particular importance in Irchester is the need to conserve the significance of our heritage assets, and in particular the landscape setting of St. Katharine's Church. This important issue has been confirmed by Historic England (formerly English Heritage).

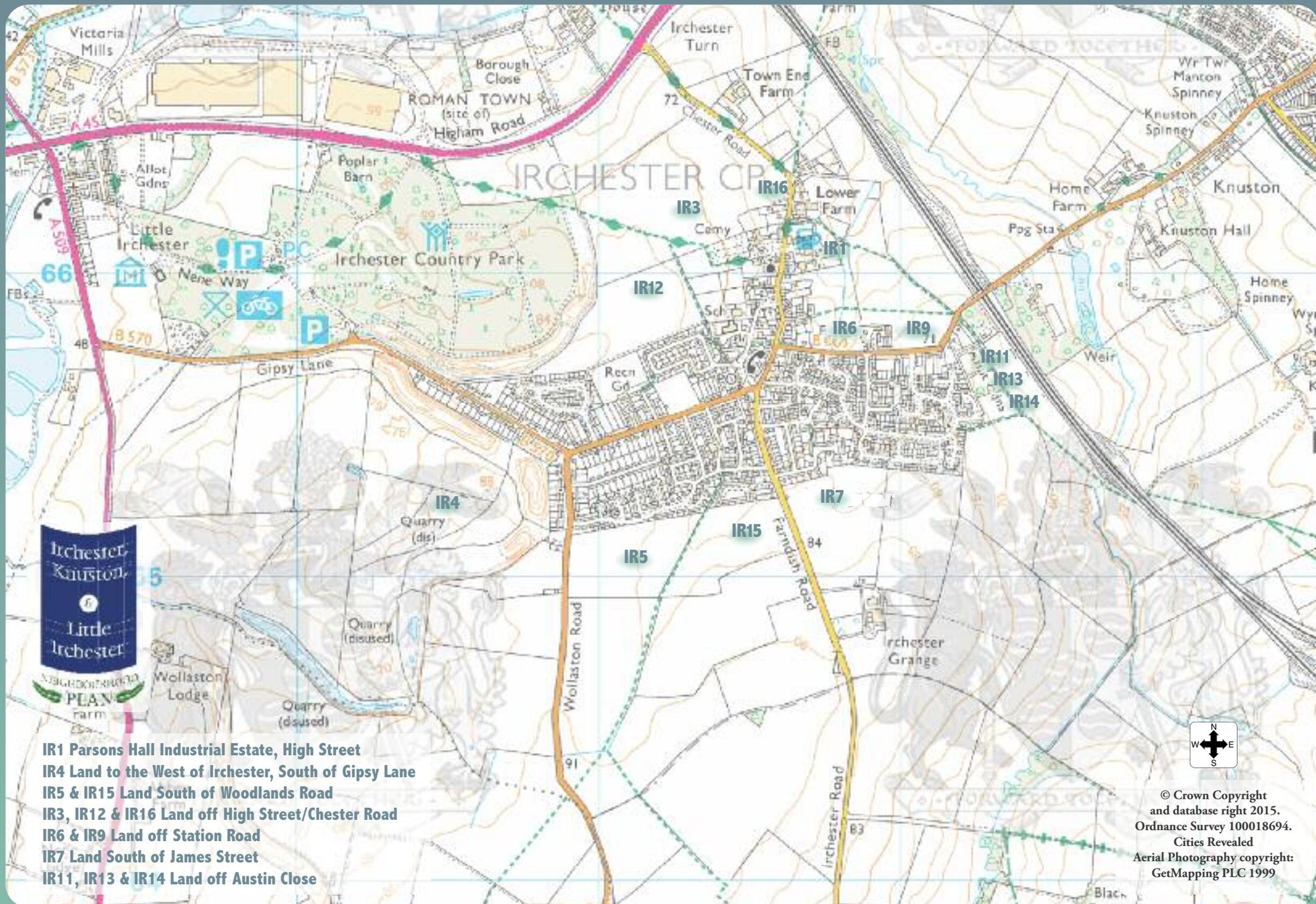
St. Katharine's Church is a Grade I Listed building. Just 2.5% of listed buildings in England are Grade I Listed, meaning the Church is of exceptional historic interest. Its tall spire is an important feature in our landscape, providing a sense of Irchester's character and identity. Our work has revealed how important both the immediate and wider rural setting of the Church is to appreciating its significance.

Because of this, we believe the new housing that Irchester needs, should be directed away from sites which contribute to the setting of St. Katharine's Church.

Through our work assessing the suitability of the various sites, the following are not considered suitable for allocation for housing in the Neighbourhood Plan. The site references code locations can be found on the map on pages 6-7.

IR6 & IR9 Land off Station Road – These sites are considered to be in a highly sensitive location for new housing due to archaeology and landscape issues. The impact of development here would be high, interrupting key views of St. Katharine's Church from Station Road. A recent planning application has been refused on these sites.





Stage 2 Overview continued

IR1 Parsons Hall Industrial Estate, High Street – There is no certainty that this site is currently available for housing development and because of this, it has to be discounted.



IR4 Land to the West of Irchester, South of Gipsy Lane – This site faces several physical constraints on development. The area was part of a large ironstone extraction concern and has been subject to quarrying and subsequent reinstatement. There are ecological constraints in the form of Irchester's Old Lodge Pit Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located within the eastern boundary of the site. Access to this site has also been assessed and is constrained. The site is not well related to the existing settlement boundary and is on raised ground with no visual enclosure. Because of this, development here would result in an unnatural extension of the village.

IR5 & IR15 Land South of Woodlands Road – This site has archaeological issues and ecological constraints due to its proximity with Irchester's Old Lodge Pit Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).



IR3, IR12 & IR16 Land off High Street/Chester Road – This land has also been shown to be a highly sensitive area. Development on these sites would have an impact on the historic landscape and character views of Irchester village and St. Katharine's Church. It is considered development here would result in harm to the important countryside setting of the Church and the historical village. Three recent planning applications and two planning appeals have been refused for these sites.

Stage 2 Consultation

As a result of our consultation, research and Heritage Assessment, it is proposed the Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following as possible housing sites:

IR7 Land South of James Street – This site relates to the more modern suburban development of Irchester, separated from the historic village core. It has closer proximity to facilities than many of the other sites assessed. It is considered that design requirements relating to height and density of any development here could be imposed, such that new housing could be provided in a manner which does not cause significant harm to the local landscape.



IR11, IR13 & IR14 Land off Austin Close – Discussion with landowners has confirmed these sites could come forward together. These sites are well-related to the existing shape of the village. The topography of the sites are such that the land dips down to the railway cutting, meaning any development here is unlikely to interrupt the historic views of the village and new homes can be accommodated with minimal impact on the existing character of Irchester.



Proposed Plan Objectives:

Based on the consultation already undertaken with the community, it is proposed the Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives. These will form the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

1. To allow some housing development to meet local needs in a manner which respects the character of Irchester.
2. Protect the beauty and integrity of the natural environment.
3. Preserve the heritage features of Irchester and promote high quality design in all new development.
4. Protect local services and infrastructure and support opportunities to enhance them to ensure the local community continues to thrive.

What to do with this form

Complete and return by 10am Thursday 1st October 2015

Please drop it into the collection boxes available at:
Irchester Co-op
Irchester Library (*letterbox available at all times*)

Or return in the pre-paid envelope provided,
by 10am Thursday 1st October 2015
Irchester Library, High Street, Irchester, NN29 7AA.

We will be holding a drop-in event, so please come along if you would like to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan:
Tuesday 29th September, Irchester Library, 4pm – 7pm

For further information and help you may phone:
Nikki Daft, Neighbourhood Plan Co-ordinator:
07525 909528. Email: parishclerk123@gmail.com
Geoff Armstrong, Consultant. Email:
geoff.armstrong@arplanning.co.uk

A large print version of this questionnaire is available for viewing at Irchester Library.

If you would like more information on the Plan please visit our website: www.irchesterparishnhp.com. Alternatively a file copy of our research is available for viewing at Irchester Library.

Now we need your views for Stage 2...

In January 2013 the Borough Council of Wellingborough completed a Rural Housing Survey within our Parish and 35.6% of householders replied. This revealed a need for 39 houses to be built in Irchester during a 5 year period. The Survey also identified there was no need for additional housing in Knuston or Little Irchester.

As this Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2011-2031 we have multiplied the 5 year figure of 39 dwellings by 4 to give us a total housing need of 156 dwellings over this 20 year period.

Our Neighbourhood Plan is aiming to deliver in the region of 150 homes in the period 2011-2031. This requirement has been confirmed by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit and the Borough Council of Wellingborough. It is also worth noting that since 2011, 21 dwellings have either been completed or have had planning permission granted in Irchester.

Proposed Housing Allocations

Please tick which of the Proposed Housing Allocations you would prefer. (TICK ONE BOX ONLY. More than one box ticked will be discounted).

| Alternative Options for Housing Allocations: (Site locations can be found on the map on pages 6-7) | Preferred Option TICK ONE ONLY |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 150 dwellings on Land off Austin Close (IR11, IR13, IR14) and no dwellings on Land South of James Street (IR7). | |
| 150 dwellings on Land South of James Street (IR7) and no dwellings on Land off Austin Close (IR11, IR13, IR14). | |
| Approx. 75 dwellings on Land off Austin Close (IR11, IR13, IR14) and 75 dwellings on Land South of James Street (IR7). | |

