

CANNINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2016-2032

APPENDIX 2: CANNINGTON LOCAL VISUAL LANDSCAPE STUDY



**GUIDING THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, REGENERATION AND CONSERVATION OF
CANNINGTON**

Produced on behalf of Cannington Parish Council by Rob Morgan

June 2019



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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. The village of Cannington has developed at the foot of an escarpment of land which separates the rural settlement from the flood plain of the River Parrett to the north. While there have been some linear intrusions up the slope, following the line of the roads at Rodway and Chads Hill, the vast majority of the village is located around the village core or the flat land which abuts the A39 road to Bridgwater. Therefore, the village setting is especially framed by the higher land and which is found to the north and north west.
- 1.2 The character and appearance of the village is very different at the opposite ends of the settlement. The southern end offers easy direct access to the town of Bridgwater and several high density residentials and businesses benefit from that connection. The western end is more remote, connecting only to the smaller rural Quantock villages beyond. The western end is characterised by the tree lined fields and mature deciduous specimens, including a fine avenue and a recently planted and landscaped water retention area.
- 1.3 The local residents are highly proud of the rural setting of Cannington. During the public consultation process (in October and November 2014), residents considered that the protection and enhancement of the rural landscape around the village to be a high priority. Residents identified which areas they considered to be of the greatest landscape value. The results of that survey were overwhelming in its clarity and are reproduced in Maps 1 and 2 below.
- 1.4 The areas where protection should be put in place were identified as:
 - i) The highest land on the ridgeline, at the northern edge of the village ("Ridgeline").
 - ii) The rolling hill slopes and elevated land, abutting the village to the north west ("North-western Slopes").
 - iii) The western approaches and gateway to Cannington ("Western Approaches").
- 1.5 In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan steering group then set out to assess the landscape quality of all these and other areas surrounding the village and to determine the landscape value of each general area surrounding the village. Using landscape and constraints mapping (much of which is reproduced in the Neighbourhood Plan itself), together with our local knowledge, each area was examined as to whether it was visible from public vantage points approaching and leaving the settlement and also, whether there were other areas outwards from within the village. There are a number of areas

on the edge of the village which already benefit from some form of policy protection in landscape, open space or recreation terms, in the Local Plan.

1.6 Most importantly, we considered whether the areas contained features which made a specific important contribution to the rural character of the landscape.

1.7 The study firstly examined three particular areas not identified in the public participation exercise (in October and November 2014):

A. The land south of the Mill Lane area towards Cannington Brook.

The gently folding fields, falling gracefully from the urban edge to the Cannington Brook are without substantial landscaping but display a distinctly different character to the monotone flatness of fields further to the south. However, as much of this area is already designated as protected landscape under policy D32 of SDC Local Plan, further analysis and examinations were not required.

B. The land further south towards the southern bypass.

Much of the land south of this protected area, extending as far as the bypass, has recently been intensively developed by a park and ride facility as ancillary works in connection with Hinkley Point C. The area is now dominated by the new buildings, extensive car parking and access roads and particularly the multitude of lamp posts and exterior lighting.

The land is clearly no longer of landscape quality and in fact was identified in the public participation exercise as the preferred site for new development. This was expressed in the Parish Council's formal response to the Sedgemoor District Local Plan. See appendix A.

C. The floodplain area to the east of the village.

These fields are largely devoid of features of note and are of a flat nature with little interest or variety.

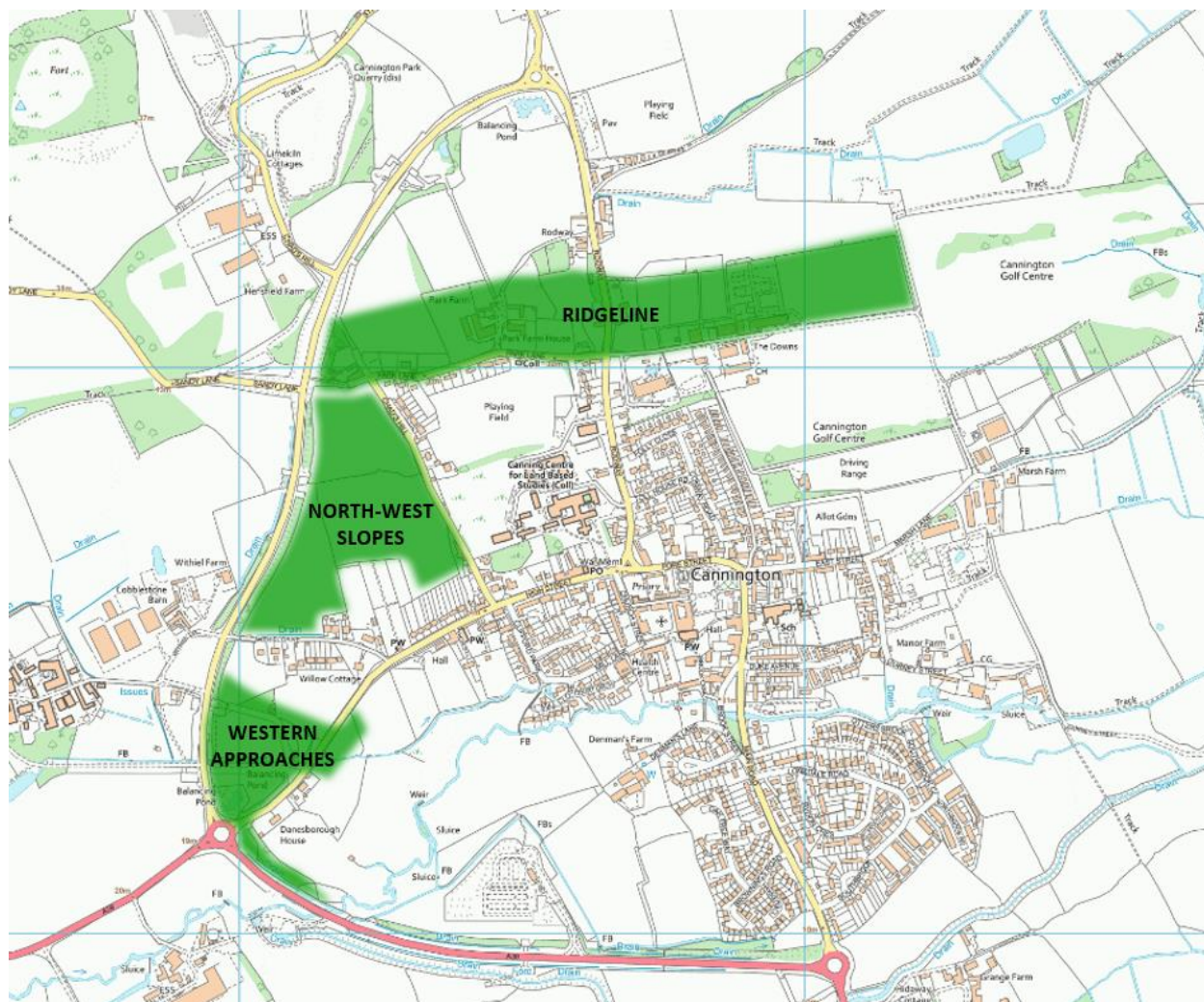
1.8 Having taken the positive approach to objectively assess the unmentioned areas to the south and east, the study went on to assess in a greater detail the landscape value of the three identified areas:

A. The Ridge Line

B. The North Western Slopes

C. The Western Approaches

Map 1: Landscape Areas Assessed

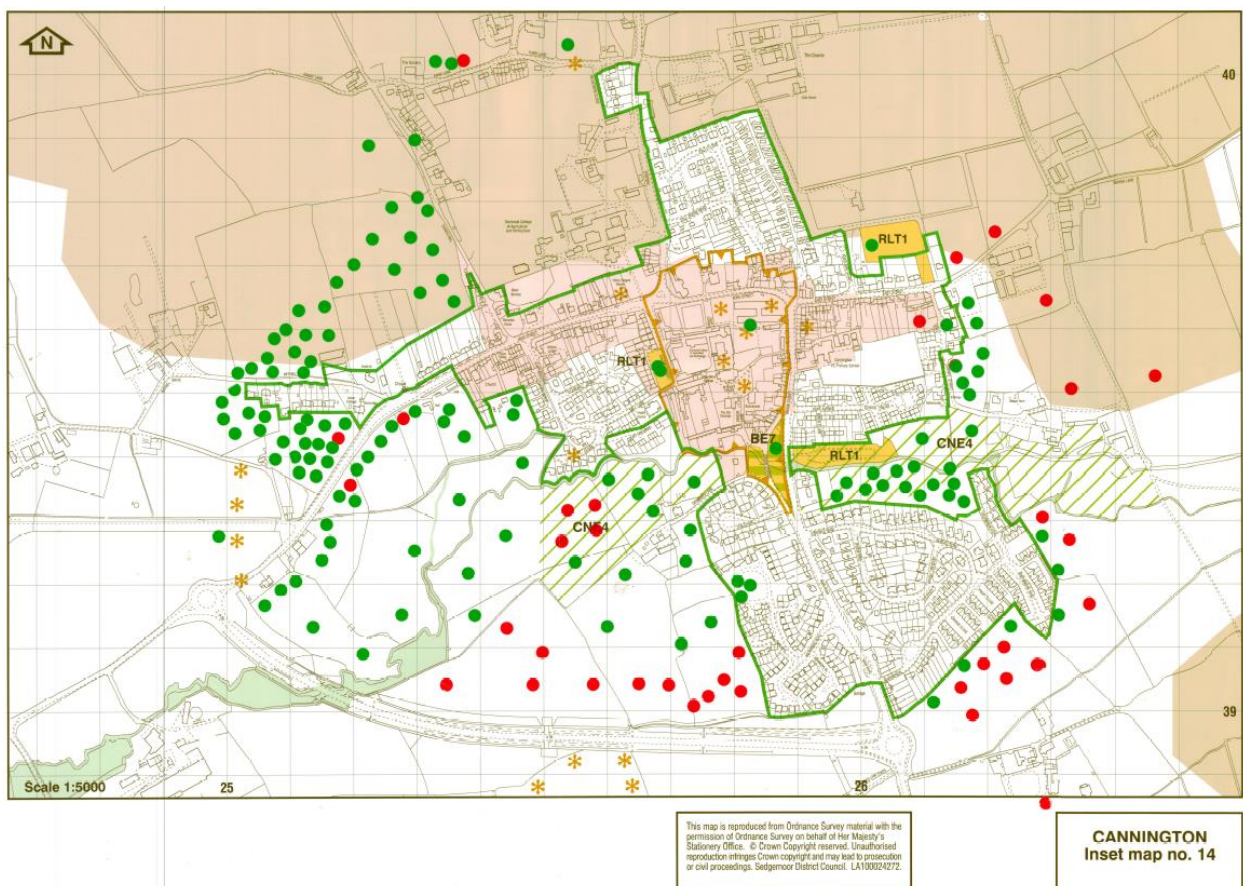


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2. **Consultation**

2.1. Map 2 shows areas people wanted to protect from inappropriate change (green dots) and areas where people thought housing development would be appropriate (red dots). Map 3 shows these areas and areas that people thought could also be developed for commercial uses (blue dots).

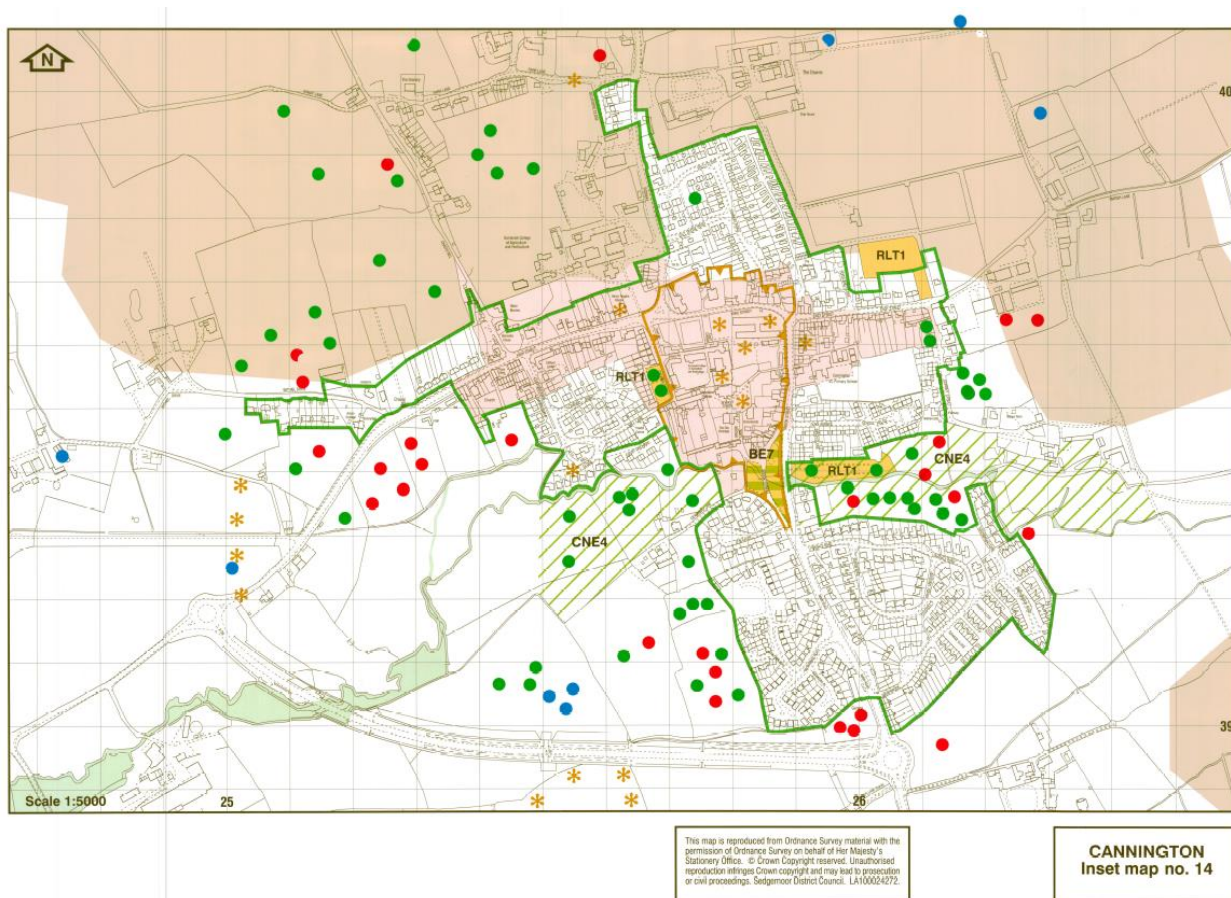
Map 2: Landscape Areas Identified in Consultation (October 2018) worthy of Protection (green dots) and those with Potential for Housing Development (red dots)



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Notes: Map is out of date as new bypass to west of village is now in place and new Local Plan inset map has replaced this version

Map 3: Areas Identified in Consultation (November 2018) worthy of Protection (green dots), those with Potential for Housing Development (red dots) and with Potential for Commercial Development (blue dots)



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Notes: Map is out of date as new bypass to west of village is now in place

3. **Ridgeline**

3.1 A dramatic ridgeline is evident to the north of the village. The impact of this extensive striking feature is substantial and imposing. It dominates the landscape.

3.2 The magnitude of this feature is difficult to show and it cannot be clearly viewed from within the village. However, from the north, this is the dominant feature not only within the local landscape but also the wider area. The photographs are therefore taken looking up from the flat, low land at the foot of Rodway Hill and adjacent to the Rodway Roundabout.

3.3 The difference in height and the dominance of the ridge over the flood plain cannot be overstated. It is difficult to demonstrate this with long range camera shots but examination on site from the locations indicated on Map 4. Looking up from the south shows its prominence and importance in the wider landscape.

3.4 The ridgeline does contain some buildings and the unfortunate impact can be clearly seen. However, development is far from continuous and there are many large gaps between these ad hoc, irregular intrusions. Clearly, speculative building on the highest points in the village, where it would be visible for long distances, is not desirable.

R1. Park Lane



View of Park Lane including Park Farm House from the bypass looking South.

R2. Park Lane



Second view of Park Lane from the bypass looking South

R3. View of Bridgwater & Taunton College



View of the College Downs buildings from the bypass looking South

4. **North-western slopes**

- 4.1 Where the land falls from the ridgeline down to the Cannington Bypass, it does so in a pleasing collection of gently sloping fields and low hills. This area is entirely undeveloped and forms an unbroken chain of green fields rising up north of Withiel Drive/High Street and to the west of Chad's Hill.
- 4.2 The attractiveness of the area and the further enhancement of its rural character, has been achieved by the extensive tree belts and hedgerow plantings throughout the new road corridor. The land is unspoilt and has never been part of the urbanised area of the village. The photographs of these areas are taken from a northerly, southerly and westerly direction.
- 4.3 The landscape character and quality of this area is provided by the rising nature of the land from the village below and its open and unspoilt nature. These open fields are now set in the green frame of new landscape belts which border the recently constructed western bypass.
- 4.4 The importance of this area is demonstrated by the views of its slopes both from Withiel Drive and from the houses along Chads Hill. An iconic view over slopes can be seen from the Public Right of Way which crosses the site and displays the village nestling at the foot of the hill, dominated by the parish church tower.

NW 1. High Street Cannington



View of the rear of High Street taken from the bypass looking south

NW2. Chads Hill



View of Chads Hill taken from the bypass looking East

NW3. View from Withiel Drive



View from Withiel Drive looking south towards western roundabout

NW4. View from Withiel Drive



View from Withiel Drive looking North

5. **Western Approaches**

- 5.1 Here the southern entrance is urban in character, dominated by a car dealership and estates of high-density housing. The western access however accommodates very light traffic and is entirely rural in character. It is dominated by hedgerows, low stone walls and long lines of tall, mature trees. It even possesses an impressive avenue of fine, mixed deciduous trees. This tranquil area has been further enhanced by screen planting and the formation of wildlife reserve at the gateway to the western approaches.
- 5.2 The western approaches are often viewed as a continuation of the swathe of high-quality landscape which exists to the north west of Cannington. The charm and character are the same but the trees are more numerous, mature and majestic.
- 5.3 The trees of the western approaches can be viewed from all directions and at considerable distances. The photographs attempt to illustrate this important issue.
- 5.4 The lines and avenues of large deciduous trees are important announcements of the gateway entrance to the village. However, the quality and landscape value of the area is equally, if not more striking, when viewed from within the village outwards to the west. This is shown on photographs WA3, WA4 and WA5.
- 5.5 This outstanding landscape value of the western approaches is further demonstrated by the ecological value of the attenuation pond at the beginning of the western approaches. In addition to this vital aquatic habitat, the matured associated landscaping with continuous mixed deciduous hedging and high-density tree planting has created a unique feature which not many other villages enjoy.

WA1. Brymore Drive



View of Brymore Drive from Bypass looking East

WA2. Western approach to High Street



View from Brymore Drive towards the High Street looking North East

WA3. Western exit from the village



View looking away from the village South West towards the western roundabout

WA4. Western exit from the village



View looking away from the village South West towards the western roundabout, including comprehensive landscaping and nature reserve.

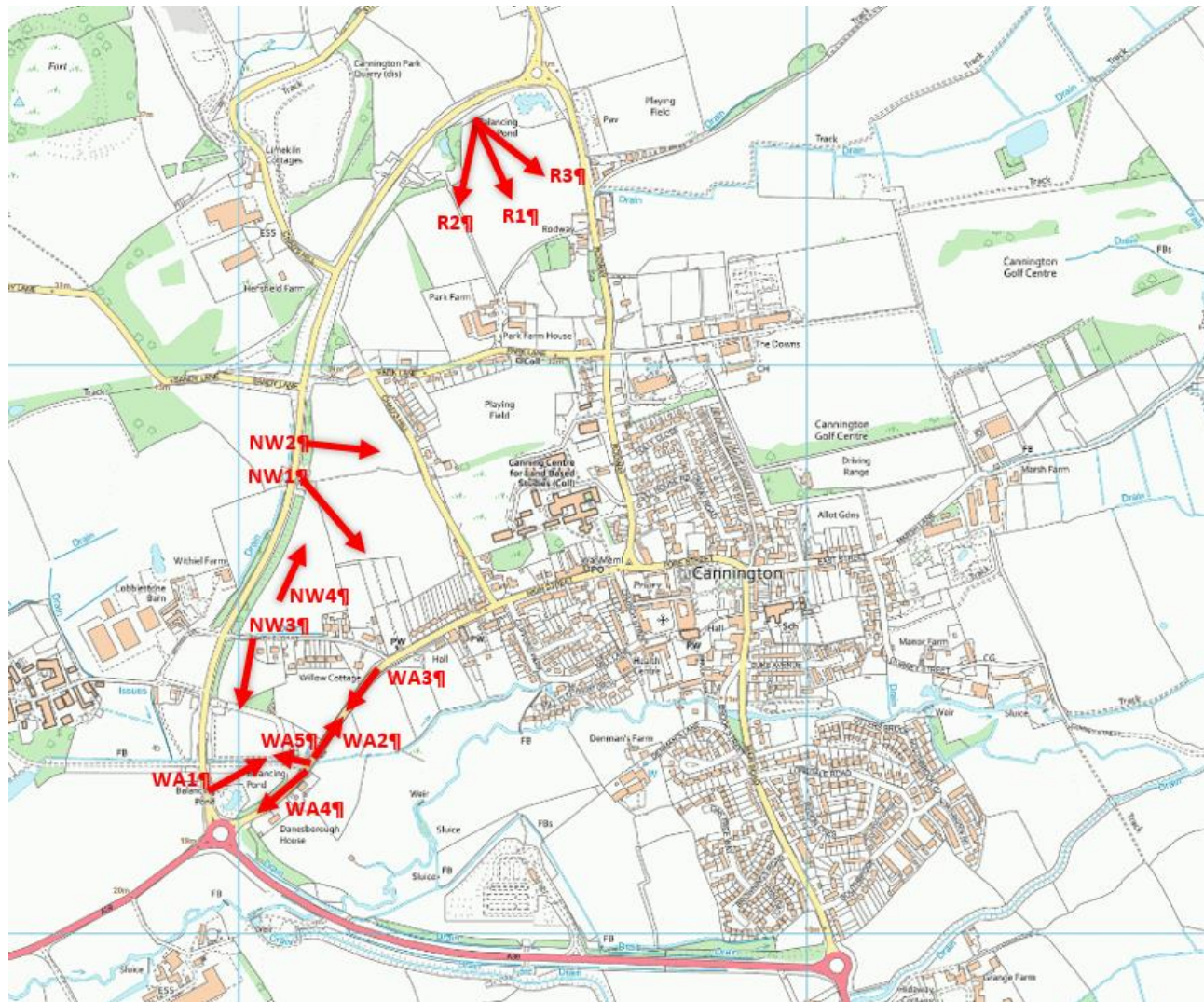
WA5. Brymore Drive



Spectacular avenue of trees at Brymore Drive looking west.

6. Summary of Views of Particular Importance

Map 4: Views of Particular Importance



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7. **Conclusions**

7.1 The importance and local feeling for these three different but equally important landscape areas is perhaps demonstrated by the well-trodden routes taken by local residents and families throughout the week. The proliferation of safe, paved footways and cycleways through and adjacent to these areas, the new cycleway to Comwich below the ridgeline, the availability of the public right of way between Chads Hill and the bypass, all ensure that these areas of landscape value and quality are known and appreciated daily by the people of the village. It was this regular viewing and sense of belonging that perhaps helps contribute to the strong commitment regarding the need to conserve and enhance the best landscape within which their village stands, their neighbourhood.



Cannington Parish Council

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17th March 2017

Planning Policy Team
Strategy and Development
Sedgemoor District Council
Bridgwater House
King Square
Bridgwater
TA6 3AR

Dear Sir

Local Plan Consultation

Cannington has no objections to the overall housing growth figures as specified in the Local Plan Consultation. However, it is completely unacceptable that thousands of new homes have been allocated throughout the District all without any proposed new strategic roads to service this growth. Policy B17 suggests limited junction improvements and alterations only. **(Policy B17 unsound)**

Opportunities for the long called for northern bypass, and a western bypass have not been considered. This is a major flaw in the plan.

The existing road networks in and around Bridgwater are already highly congested, even at off peak times, and are incapable of accommodating large scale growth as they stand, or with minor junction works.

This particularly affects Cannington. For a major proportion of this suggested new growth will come at west Bridgwater, resulting in considerably increased pressures on the already congested A39.

Insert map 9 Cannington

We are pleased that the allocations set out in this map are entirely consistent with the previously expressed views of this council in that it includes: -

1. The agreed village development boundary
2. It identifies and protects all existing areas of public open space and recreational land.

(Policy D36 sound)

3. It allocates two sections of land following the line of the Cannington Brook as Open Areas Protected from Development **(Policy D35 sound)**

All this is to be commended.

(However, these limited allocations only serve to emphasise the need for Urban Features of Note and Important Landscape features to be identified and included as an integral part of the Cannington Neighbourhood Plan)

Housing allocations (Policy T2 and T3)

We note that map 9 does not include any of the required housing sites. No overriding reasons have been given for this most serious omission.

It has been stated by SDC that these will be compiled in a separate allocations document, which will deal with all Tier 2 settlements. This will take in excess of 2 years. In the meantime developers can apply on any sites. This is a situation which should be avoided.

Members have rightly pointed out that construction traffic in connection with Hinkley C will grow rapidly over the next two years. These significant pressures will continue unabated for a many, many years.

It makes perfect sense that Cannington Parish Council should only accept these 150 houses if they are allocated to be built at the **end of the plan period**, after the main construction traffic pressures have subsided. Without this phasing being an integral part of the new plan, Cannington Parish Council would **formally object** to the allocation of 150 new houses within its boundaries.

We cannot over-emphasise the importance of avoiding new housing growth at a time when Hinkley Point construction traffic will have risen to its peak and will be retained at that level for an extensive period.

Fortunately, there appears to be a most simple solution to this difficulty.

Construction is starting on the EDF park and ride scheme off the southern bypass. This is a temporary facility which is required to be removed at the end of an agreed period.

Cannington Parish Council proposes that at that time, the already constructed access could be upgraded to allow vehicular access into the land to the east of the Park and Ride for residential purposes.

The site would be successfully constrained by the D35 protected land and the landscaped bypass.

A development of this scale could offer significant planning gain which could be used to facilitate the construction of a new recreational building or village hall on the P+R site, where access roads and car parking would already be available and the land already screened and landscaped.

EDF would probably be agreeable to this alteration as it would negate their need to restore the land as per the legal agreement.

By adopting this approach of seeking to allocate the land to the east of the park and ride, accessed off the bypass, this should accommodate the vast majority of the required housing growth. There would be no need to propose housing development on more sensitive sites on the higher land on the edges of the village.

If the capacity appraisal would only support a number of houses which was insufficient to substantially pay for a village hall facility, the Parish Council would have no objections to parts of the Park and Ride site itself also being given over to limited forms of housing.

Given the edge of settlement location and its rural location any allocations should specify that any buildings should not exceed two stories in height.

This concludes the Parish Council's formal views. However, if there are any matters contained in this letter that you wish to discuss with us, we are happy to meet with you.

Yours Sincerely

Tina Gardener
Clerk to Cannington Parish Council

The plan can be downloaded at; <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan>

Policy D32

Open Areas Protected from Development

The following areas of open land (as identified on the Policies Map) are considered to make an important contribution to environmental quality and sense of place in their respective settlements. Development proposals will be supported provided it does not adversely affect their environmental quality and sense of place, or be harmful to their open character.

Biddisham *Land south west of The Old Rectory*

Brent Knoll *The Glebe Field, Church Lane*

Cannington *Brook area*

Catcott *Land north of St Peter's Church*

Chilton Trinity *Land south west of the Holy Trinity Church*

East Brent *Village Green at Brent Road*

Edington *Land rear of Holywell Road and Broadmead Lane*

Shapwick *Land between Manor House and St Mary's Church*

Shipham *Village Green areas at The Square and land at Hillside Cottage*

Stone Allerton *Land at Overbrook land at Manor Farm and land at Sleepy Hollow*

Wedmore *Land at The Close and land at West End.*