

Kings Ripton Community Led Plan

Adopted November 2017

<http://www.kingsriptonpc.org.uk>

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1 Purpose

This plan sets out a strategy for the future of Kings Ripton, along with specific ideas and recommendations. It is the result of consultation with and by the community and has been produced by parish residents. The Plan is to inform future decision making by volunteer groups within the village including the Parish Council. All ideas within the Plan are subject to approval of specific proposals.

2 Kings Ripton and Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC)

HDC has historically consisted of small towns and villages, in a largely agricultural area. Considerable development is planned within HDC, including a major ‘new town’ at Alconbury and possibly one at Wyton Airfield, and further development in existing communities close to Kings Ripton as

Huntingdon, St Ives, Upwood and Warboys. These could amount to 20,000 houses in HDC over the next 20 years. This will increase economic activity within the District and contribute to the UK's housing needs, increasing traffic volumes in the district and putting pressure on facilities and amenities. It will also change the character of Huntingdonshire. Kings Ripton's Plan must be set within the context of Huntingdonshire district.

HDC's Local Plan Vision is as follows:

By 2036 Huntingdonshire's physical environment will support the health and wellbeing of all its residents, by:

- Supporting a diverse, thriving economy
- Providing sufficient infrastructure to support healthy communities
- Meeting the needs of a changing population
- Working with our climate and landscape

HDC's Plan has 25 objectives but the strategy for development is summarised as follows.

HDC Strategy for Development

The development strategy for Huntingdonshire is to:

- Concentrate development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the greatest access to services and facilities;
- Direct substantial new development to two strategic expansion locations of sufficient scale to form successful, functioning new communities;
- Provide opportunities for communities to achieve local development aspirations for housing, employment, commercial or community related schemes;
- Support a thriving rural economy;
- Protect the character of existing settlements and the surrounding countryside; and
- Provide complementary green infrastructure enhancement and provision to balance recreational and biodiversity needs

It is within the context of this development that this Plan sets out a strategy for the village.

2.1 Summary of Kings Ripton's future within HDC's Local Plan

The views of residents of Kings Ripton are broadly in line with HDC's strategy.

The community believes that the character of Kings Ripton, a traditional village surrounded by working farmland, should be maintained. Without villages maintaining their historic nature, the character of HDC will be lost to widespread development. The village should encourage small scale development but maintain its current nature and boundaries, not encroaching significantly on agricultural land for residential or industrial building.

3 Planning and Development

Development in the parish should be within the vision for the village described above, Section 2.1.

Maps setting out possible areas for development are provided as an appendix to this document. As well as the areas indicated on the map, in-fill housing alongside existing housing within the current developed area is likely to be appropriate. Identification of an area in this plan does not indicate that development there is to be encouraged or appropriate. Decisions on whether development

should be proposed are down to individual landowners. Decisions on whether any particular planning application is appropriate will depend on the detail of the planning application.

Residents need to be able to access accurate and up-to-date information so that they can make informed representations to the Parish Council when applications are made. There must be up-to-date and accurate information available from the District Council. HDC provides this on the planning section of its website. The Parish Council will encourage residents to read the HDC planning website and to express their views on any development affecting the parish to the PC and to HDC direct.

3.1 Residential

Residential development should be limited to a small number of houses to preserve its character and should be within the current village boundary, not on current green space and agricultural areas. It should be consistent with the existing character of the village, recognising that the village includes a range of types of residential property built over many years. Any development within the Conservation Area should be in accordance with maintaining its character. Outside the Conservation Area, we welcome development within the agreed envelope, particularly buildings of architectural and design merit.

There are very few houses to rent and little affordable housing at present in Kings Ripton. It was clear from the survey that the provision of such housing was not considered as a high priority by respondents. However, the lack of such housing could result in difficulties for younger people to find a foothold on the property ladder and affect the future make-up of the village. The Parish Council will welcome the provision of affordable housing and, if there are multi home developments, encourage affordable housing to be included in plans.

3.2 Businesses and employment

Without sustainable farming businesses, the character of Kings Ripton, a village surrounded by and supporting agriculture, will be lost. Agriculture, and associated processing of crops into added value products, is the largest use of employment in the area. The Plan supports local farming and the development and diversification necessary to maintain its profitability, provided it does not change the essential character of the village.

The plan supports the use of existing buildings or appropriate building on brownfield land for light industrial use or office space.

Home working for all or part of a working week is not uncommon in Kings Ripton. The Plan recognises that this is an important part of working life and supports the connectivity which makes home working and rural businesses possible.

3.3 Renewable energy

Renewable energy is an essential part of building a sustainable future. The consultation identified a strong feeling against large scale wind turbine development but also that many people were in favour of renewable power with a lower visual impact. The Plan encourages renewable energy wherever it can be installed without a major adverse impact on the character of the village, especially schemes to generate and distribute power within the village.

4 Amenities

Kings Ripton is a small community. The village needs amenities to improve quality of life and community cohesion but these must be on a scale appropriate for the population size and the resources available. Current amenities consist of St Peter's Church and the Village Hall. The Village Hall is run by a charity (Kings Ripton Village Hall Trust) and supported by the Parish Council.

The Plan encourages further use of these community amenities and improvements to facilities, provided any changes include sound business plan for longer term management.

Many of the residents of Kings Ripton are retired, but there are a significant number of young families living in the village. The small courtyard behind the Village Hall is paved and is not equipped in any way as a play area, but the eastern end of School Lane often acts as an informal area in which many of the children in the village are able to ride bicycles and play in relative safety. As this area provides access to Glebe Farm and the sewage works, it is not ideal. However, it is a cul-de-sac, and is popular with those children who have easy access to the area.

The consultation showed strong support for a playground or provision of some form of children's amenities. Identification of a suitable site would need to take account of the concerns regarding safety, access and noise. It has been suggested by Sports England that a "recreation ground" rather than a playground might be more suitable and viable.

The Plan encourages the provision of further facilities. The Parish Council would welcome a costed proposal and suggestion for funding from any group of residents who wish to extend children's amenities.

5 Transport, lighting and signage

The District Council Plans for development of Alconbury, Wyton and Upwood airfields are a major concern to Kings Ripton. Their close proximity to the village has seen a major increase in the volume of traffic passing through the village, with the resulting potential risk for pedestrian safety. It is considered imperative to improve the provision of safety measures and traffic calming in order to manage this. The speed of the traffic is a major concern, particularly at the north end of the village near the bridge over Bury Brook on which there is no footpath.

Residents are very clear that there is an urgent need further to calm traffic throughout the village. Much of the traffic slows at the road narrowings at either end of the village and at the calming measures in the village. It speeds up considerably in between where school buses pick up and drop children off at the start and end of the school day.

The children in the village are collected and returned on school buses which pick up from the junction of School Lane and Ramsey Road, and drop off at the bus shelter near the exit of Walden Close onto Ramsey Road. There is no lay-by for the buses (one for senior children and one for primary school children) on either side of the road within the village. Nor is there a safe road crossing in either position, and in addition the narrow footpath on the east side of Ramsey Road near the bus shelter means parents and children have to walk in single file and parents cannot hold small children's hands.

There is a popular public footpath crossing the road at the north end of the village next to the bridge over Bury Brook. This lies some yards from the existing road narrowing. Approaching the road from the west (Abbots Ripton), pedestrians cannot see traffic approaching the bridge from the south (village) side and on many occasions traffic has driven over the road edge where the path crosses the road as it speeds up to leave the village prior to going through the road narrowing. There is no safe footpath over the bridge; it is not safe for pedestrians to cross. Traffic calming at the road bridge, reducing the bridge traffic to single file and marking a clear route for pedestrians, is a high priority.

There is a current restriction of 7.5 tons on the road which is regularly ignored by large lorries.

Living in Kings Ripton without a car, or access to a car, is very difficult. The current bus service is extremely limited, provided by the community bus, which goes to Huntingdon at 9.45 on Thursday morning, and returns at 12.15 from the bus station. It is likely that, as the village is populated by a significant number of retired people, the demand could increase over the next decade. Ideally, this could include a service to St Ives to connect with the Guided bus-way to Cambridge and should also include an aim to organise some form of more regular service.

School children are collected and dropped off in the village by designated School Buses. To provide a regular service at the beginning and end of the day would also assist by reducing the need for this service.

The street lighting in the village is limited to a single lamp on Ramsey Road opposite the exit to Quaker Close, and within Quaker Close. The lack of lighting is part of the existing character of the rural village and a good view of the night sky is appreciated. Many residents do not want to see further lighting installed. Some concern was expressed in the survey that the lack of lighting is dangerous, given the very variable quality of footpaths in the village, although there is little pedestrian traffic within the village. Traffic calming again would improve the village for pedestrians. The current footpaths and lack of light pollution are elements of the character of the village.

There are quite a number of road signs at the boundary and within the village. However, it is clear that these are not as effective as they could be and it is considered that advice and financial help should be sought from the Local Highways Improvement Initiative (LHII). The Parish Council will comply with LHII regulations.

Street parking within the village is very limited, usually to the area at the entrance to School Lane and near the village hall in School Lane. This has encouraged off-road parking in certain other areas of the village. There is very little alternative to this situation, but the Parish Council will keep this situation under review, particularly if there is any housing development within the village

The existing rights of way provide recreational facilities for many residents. There are no obvious additional potential footpath routes or desire lines which need to be considered.

Many grass verges suffer from traffic erosion and their maintenance in certain areas, preventing vehicles encroaching onto grass e.g. near Thatcher's Rest, driveway entrances and by the bus stop at the entrance to Walden Court. This could be achieved by installing posts or using other preventive measures

6 Utilities and services

The Parish Council will liaise with all service providers, including the District and Country Councils as appropriate on behalf of the village

The electricity supply in the village is subject to fairly frequent outages lasting from a few seconds to a few minutes. The supply lines are over-ground. Liaison with suppliers to improve the service should be undertaken.

Access to the new Superhighway is now available. Further improvements will be monitored to ensure connection speeds are sufficient to support business, home working and leisure use of the internet.

The treatment works at the north-east corner of the village are serviced by Anglian Water, and are currently adequate. However, if future developments of any sizable housing developments are considered, the capacity of current system may be inadequate and the Parish Council will need to monitor this carefully.

Mobile phone reception in the village is generally poor. The Parish Council may undertake negotiations with suppliers to consider installation of an aerial at a suitable location in the village.

7 Crime and safety

The principal concern regarding crime within the village relates to excessive speeding through the village. A Speedwatch team has performed regular checks, which are fed through to the District Council, and their data provide useful statistics to inform proposals for traffic calming. There is otherwise very little crime.

Offences committed by attendees at the Abbots Ripton Estate Secret Garden Party have, in the past, been attributed to Kings Ripton, and the Parish Council should ensure that this does not recur. The effect on household insurance rates, and statistics for the village could be adversely affected if this was allowed to happen again.

There is some demand for a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the village but volunteers have not come forward to organise one in recent years.

8 Village appearance and litter

Since the start of the process of putting together the Community Led Plan, there has been a lot of activity regarding the issues raised in the survey. It is much to the credit of individuals in the village who have worked hard and invested time to improve several of the areas in the village that had attracted comment.

The principal problem within the village is that of littering from through traffic. There are litter bins by the Village Hall and the telephone box. These could be placed on or near the footpath along the brook and near the steps next to Manor Cottages leading up onto the footpath across the field to the east of Ramsey Road. The Parish Council will investigate cost and suitable sites.

The Parish Council have attempted to liaise with fast food providers locally who do what they can to encourage customers to take their litter home, but essentially this is not something they can do very much about. The Parish Council organise litter picks as and when required.

9 Major events

Major events, such as music festivals, open air cinema, garden shows, food festivals, etc are often important activities for business diversification on rural areas. The consultation showed that residents believe the number of events is appropriate for the area, provided they are well planned.

10 Communications

The Riptons Area News is published monthly and provides an effective mechanism for the Parish Council to Communicate with residents. There is also a Village web site <http://www.kingsriptonpc.org.uk>, but the survey results showed that very few people access it. Ways of improving the “hit rate” will be considered, bearing in mind that some residents in the village do not have computers. There is no regular collective use of digital social media by the village as a whole, although many do use social media.

The proposal to establish a form of “Village Directory” met with some endorsement in the survey. This proposal requires consideration, particularly as it could serve as a directory of people who might be willing to provide help or services to assist elderly or disabled residents, such as lifts to the Doctor or hospital. It could also include a “business” section for those running businesses. The directory would be made available only within the Village and could form part of a “Welcome” pack for new residents moving in. At present the Riptons Area News contains phone numbers of those who head clubs and organisations.

11 Plan production and adoption

On behalf of all the residents of Kings Ripton, The Parish Council thanks everyone who has responded to consultations and particularly those volunteers who have given their time to consult the community, analyse and summarise views and write this Plan.

The Plan was adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting on 20 November 2017.

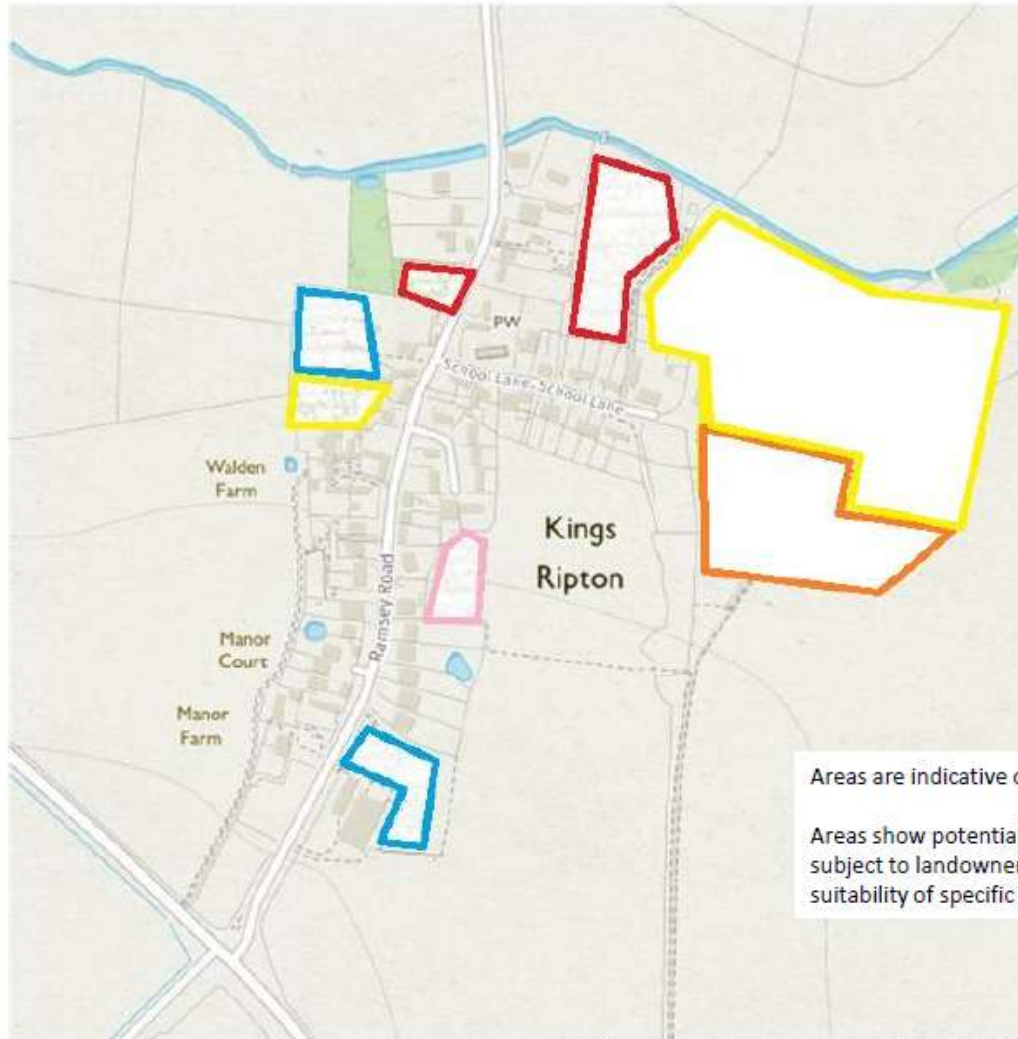
<http://www.kingsriptonpc.org.uk/>

Appendix 1 Parish map



Appendix 2 Village map

Yellow =
employment
Pink = amenity
Blue = housing or
employment
Red = Amenity or
housing
Orange =
Amenity or
employment



Areas are indicative only .

Areas show potential options but are
subject to landowner wishes and the
suitability of specific proposals.