

East Farndon Village

East Farndon Parish

Rural Areas Settlement Hierarchy – Response Form

Technical Engagement with Parish Councils

February 2024

This response form should be read in conjunction with the Settlement Hierarchy Consultation document and Settlement Confines Background Paper. You can type your answers directly into this response form. Please email your completed form to localplan@westnorthants.gov.uk by **Tuesday 2nd April 2024**.

Existing settlement hierarchy

Question SH1. Do you think Other Village is still the appropriate tier of the hierarchy for East Farndon? If not, which tier do you think is more appropriate?

Yes

Question SH2. What is your experience of being in this tier? Have any issues arisen, for example through Planning Applications, because of being in this tier?

We believe that this is the most appropriate tier for East Farndon. No issues have arisen with planning applications which related to our parish being in this tier.

Question SH3. Have you identified any advantages or disadvantages from being in this tier?

No comments relating to being in this tier. Our issues relate to communication between the Planning Department and the Parish Council. Whilst the Parish Council receives the initial consultation documents, it does not receive updates to applications or important responses from other consultees such as Heritage England or Archaeological Advisors etc.

Existing services and facilities

Below is the list of services and facilities which were identified in 2016 when the last assessment was carried out. Could you please review this list and indicate any services or facilities which are no longer available and add any new provisions which are now available.

	2016	2024	Comments
East Farndon Services and facilities			
Secondary school	No	No	
Primary school	No	No	
GP surgery	No	No	
General food shop	No	No	
Post office	No	No	
Community and Public halls	Yes	Yes	Village Hall
Public House / Restaurant	No	No	
Employment area	No	No	
Other shop(s)/Takeaways	No	No	
Local Employment provision	No	No	
Library	No	No	
Pre School Facilities	No	No	
Play area	No	No	
Sports ground	No	No	
Allotments	No	No	
Bus Service	County Connect	No	Service was stopped several years ago

Question SH4. Do you think there are any other services, facilities or factors that should be considered?

East Farndon is a small rural village where the only services and facilities are the village hall and a parish church. Whilst other services would be desirable, being realistic this is not going to happen and villagers accept that they need to travel

In addition:

- WNC should fund all public bins rather than adopting the complicated partial old/ new funding model used currently
- Grants to make public footpaths more accessible: currently the majority of these have numerous stiles whereas gates would make the paths accessible to less physically able people
- Potholes: WNC should have a lower threshold for repairs: currently most of the reports on Fix my Street are rejected as not necessary which is frankly just a cost cutting

Parish Aspirations

Question SH5. Do you have a vision for your parish for the next 15 years? What changes or enhancements would you like see?

East Farndon is a small rural community with a very important rural heritage. A scheduled monument consisting of a medieval settlement covers large areas both north and south of the village, with considerable areas of undesignated heritage assets such as well-preserved ridge and furrow and further remains of the medieval settlement which are worthy of protection on their own merits as well as forming part of the setting of the scheduled monument. Old photos of the main street show that the main views of the village are largely unchanged over the last century. The Parish Council intends to continue to promote its heritage and develop local understanding, as well as maintaining its rural identity. The Parish Council also wants to improve the understanding of the historical context of the spring in East Farndon to secure its place in the community as a heritage asset, and to improve the physical amenity of the spring itself, its trough and the area around it.

Our village has a great community spirit with many social activities, significant interest among residents in the quality of our village life and has recently introduced an initiative to provide assistance to less mobile members of our parish. We hope and expect these initiatives to expand over coming years. The number of children in the village is rising, and we would like to find suitable land (and finance) for a children's play area.

The future of the parish church is a key concern as attendance falls and costs increase. Villagers (not necessarily as members of the Parish Council) would like to work with the church to improve facilities and to open the church to a wider group of residents. The church is a key heritage asset (Grade 1 listed), with huge scope to be used for many more community based activities.

Question SH6. What needs does your Parish have over the next 15 years?

WNC to:

- Continue to provide technical and other support to the Parish Council, including via ward councillors, which works well at present
- Provide better communication and consultation on planning applications, including the provision of amendments to applications and other documents after the initial consultation, as our Parish Council only sees the initial documents
- Spend more money on our roads where there are many instances of WNC saying repairs aren't necessary, contrary to the Parish Council's view
- Set up an initiative to facilitate discussions with the Church of England on how rural parish churches could across its area of influence could evolve to meet the needs of a wider group of residents and survive into the future. There are many parishes in WNC's area which are struggling to keep their parish churches open as costs are very high and attendance has decreased. As well as being a place of worship for a particular religion, parish churches are also usually a key heritage asset (East Farndon's is c. 1000 years old and Grade 1 listed) and a really important community space.
- Increase spending on speeding restrictions, road safety and calming measures. Community speedwatch is a great initiative but a week later, repeat offenders are still exceeding the speed limit in our village by a significant margin.
- Provide clearer guidance on the consideration of non-designated heritage assets on planning decisions and better communication between the planning officers and the parish councils. For example, we have a scheduled monument in our village. We would expect to see all the responses from other consultees such as Heritage England posted on the planning application section of WNC's website on a timely basis so that we can take them into account in our response. We were advised to contact the planning officer to obtain these, but don't know what to ask for if there is nothing on the website. In addition, we have recently been told that planning officers are too busy to respond to questions by the Parish Council which is frankly unacceptable!

Question SH7. Do you think your Parish has the right mix and amount of housing and employment? Are there any sites or opportunities you would like to highlight for future development or redevelopment?

Yes, the mix of housing and employment is appropriate

There are no suitable sites for future development or redevelopment given the rural nature of the village and the infill which has already taken place

Settlement Confines

QUESTION SC1. Do you agree all exception sites should be excluded from settlement confines? If not, please explain why

Yes, we agree

QUESTION SC2. Do you agree with suggested criterion 4: Developments that are isolated or peripheral to the main built up part of a settlement, where they meet criteria: at least 30dph, have at least 20 dwellings, are within 100m of the main settlement and do not have a separate identity? If not, please explain why.

No, we do not agree. This would encourage development up to this isolated development which may well not be appropriate. This type of development should be subject to rigorous control.

QUESTION SC3. Do you agree with suggested criterion 8, to exclude land from settlement confines which would otherwise be outside the confines, even if it is between the edge of the settlement and a bypass? If not, please explain why.

Yes, we agree

Question SC4. Do you agree that all settlements in the hierarchy should have their confines defined in the Local Plan? Please explain why.

Yes, we agree. It will be much clearer where development may and may not be permitted. Development outside confines should be subject to extremely rigorous control with the presumption that such development should not be permitted. For example, a planning application for conversion of a garage to a dwelling was initially refused by WNC as being outside the village confines. On re-submission, WNC then granted planning permission despite the footprint of the development being exactly the same. This suggests that planning officers are interpreting Other Village confines guidance differently, which is extremely confusing and unhelpful

Question SC5. Should there be any changes made to the settlement confines boundary? Please explain your suggestions and/or annotate the enclosed map.

Please see attached the Parish Council's view on where the settlement confines boundary lies

QUESTION SC6. Do you think there is anything missing from the suggested criteria?

No

QUESTION SC7. Do you have any other comments on the suggested settlement confines criteria?

No

Your details

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Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

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