

**REPRESENTATIONS TO DRAFT BARROWBY  
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN  
ON BEHALF OF BARROWBY ACTION GROUP (BAG)**



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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This representation is submitted on behalf of Barrowby Action Group in response to the Regulation 16 consultation on the Barrowby Neighbourhood Plan (BNP) Submission Version dated August 2025. It constitutes a detailed and reasoned planning critique intended to assist the Local Planning Authority, the Independent Examiner, and the Parish Council in assessing whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and whether it is sufficiently robust to achieve its stated objectives.
- 1.2 Below is a detailed, independent appraisal of the draft Barrowby Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 16 submission version, August 2025), focused explicitly on how the Plan could be strengthened and tightened to provide greater protection against further residential development, particularly at the village–countryside interface, including the visually sensitive land to the west and other edges of the settlement where development pressure is increasing. All comments are grounded in the Plan’s own evidence base and policy wording, and are framed to remain compliant with basic conditions while materially improving policy effectiveness.
- 1.3 Barrowby Action Group recognises the substantial voluntary effort that has gone into preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and supports the principle of neighbourhood planning. However, we consider that, in its current form, the Plan contains significant weaknesses in relation to housing restraint, landscape protection, and the safeguarding of sensitive green infrastructure, which undermine both community objectives and the evidential conclusions of the Steering Group’s own commissioned studies.
- 1.4 In particular, this response focuses on:
- The inconsistency between the Plan’s housing policies (Policies 1 and 3) and the findings of the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment;
  - The failure of Policies 1 and 3 to provide an effective policy framework to resist further speculative or non-essential residential development;
  - The inadequacy of Policies 6 and 7 in protecting longer-range and elevated views, including those towards and from Harlaxton Manor;
  - The insufficient protection afforded to sensitive green spaces, countryside setting, and the public footpath network within and around Barrowby;
  - The risk that, without strengthening, the Plan will not deliver the community’s clearly expressed objective of protecting Barrowby’s rural setting and landscape character and allow coalescence with the adjacent town of Grantham.
- 1.5 This response is intentionally robust, as befits the Regulation 16 stage, when unresolved policy weaknesses must be clearly identified before independent examination.

## **2.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT: DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE AND THE ROLE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

2.1 Barrowby is already subject to exceptional development pressure arising from:

- The South Kesteven Local Plan allocation of approximately 270 dwellings within Barrowby (which now includes 291 no. dwellings);
- The large-scale Grantham Southern Growth Area, part of which lies within the parish boundary;
- Ongoing and anticipated speculative interest in land on the western edge of the village, which lies within a highly sensitive landscape setting.
- Ongoing interest in further land which adjoins the existing built form of Barrowby which has not been cumulatively assessed alongside other development proposals.

2.2 Against this background, the Neighbourhood Plan must perform a genuinely defensive and qualifying role. Its purpose is not merely to restate support for “appropriate” development, but to articulate clearly where development will not be supported and why, based on evidence.

2.3 In this regard, Barrowby Action Group is concerned that the draft Plan adopts permissive and ambiguous policy wording that would, in practice, provide limited resistance to further residential development beyond that already allocated.

## **3.0 OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIC WEAKNESSES**

3.1 The draft Neighbourhood Plan is well-evidenced and clearly rooted in community engagement, particularly through the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) and landscape-led character analysis. Importantly, the HNA confirms that Barrowby’s objectively assessed housing need is already substantially met by existing allocations, with “little or no residual need for new housing beyond that already in the pipeline.”

3.2 However, despite this strong evidence base, the policy framework does not yet fully translate that evidence into sufficiently restrictive spatial controls, especially in relation to:

- Land west of the village, which is visually, functionally, and historically part of open countryside;
- Development on the edge of the settlement, where policy language remains permissive and vulnerable to interpretation;
- Landscape and visual protection, particularly where expansive rural views contribute to setting, identity, and heritage significance.

3.3 This creates a disconnect between what the evidence clearly supports and what the policies would realistically resist at application / appeal stage.

#### **4.0 POLICY 1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

##### Overly Permissive Structure

4.1 Policy 1 is framed as a general statement of support for development that contributes to sustainability. While this is consistent in principle with national policy, the policy is drafted in such a broad and aspirational manner that it lacks operational teeth.

4.2 The policy:

- Does not define what constitutes an unacceptable impact on sustainability;
- Does not distinguish between development that is necessary to meet identified needs and development that merely exploits market demand;
- Provides no explicit link between sustainability and spatial restraint.

4.3 As a result, Policy 1 risks being interpreted as supportive of additional housing growth so long as developers can demonstrate technical compliance with matters such as biodiversity net gain or energy efficiency.

#### **5.0 POLICY 3: HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

##### Housing Need and Spatial Strategy

5.1 The Plan's Housing Needs Assessment concludes that Barrowby's identified housing requirement to 2041 is already exceeded by existing Local Plan commitments, leaving little or no residual need for further housing growth. However, this conclusion is not clearly embedded as a limiting principle within the housing and spatial policies. As a result, the Plan remains vulnerable to speculative proposals that may conflict with community objectives and landscape sensitivity.

5.2 As detailed further below, it is requested that policies be tightened to make clear that additional residential development will only be supported where it demonstrably meets a specific, evidenced local need and can be accommodated without harm to the village's character, infrastructure or countryside setting.

##### The AECOM Housing Needs Assessment: Implications for Policy

5.3 The Housing Needs Assessment commissioned by the Parish Council and undertaken by AECOM is a critical part of the Plan's evidence base. Its conclusions are unequivocal and must be taken seriously at policy level.

5.4 The AECOM study concludes that:

- The objectively assessed housing need for Barrowby is approximately 167 dwellings over the Plan period;
- This equates to fewer than 10 dwellings per annum;
- The existing Local Plan allocation alone significantly exceeds this identified need;
- Once committed and allocated development is taken into account, there is little or no residual requirement for additional housing growth to meet local needs.

These findings are explicitly acknowledged in the Neighbourhood Plan text. However, they are not translated into a clear and restrictive policy position.

5.5 The AECOM Housing Needs Assessment confirms that the identified housing requirement for Barrowby over the plan period to 2041 is already met, and exceeded, by existing Local Plan allocations and commitments. In this context, the purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is not to identify additional housing growth but to ensure that any further development is strictly limited to that which demonstrably meets a specific and evidenced local need and can be accommodated without harm to the village's landscape setting, character and infrastructure.

5.6 Accordingly, proposals that would result in additional residential development beyond that already committed in the Local Plan will be expected to demonstrate clear conformity with the Neighbourhood Plan policies protecting the village's landscape setting, green infrastructure and important views.

#### Failure to Reflect Evidence in Policy

5.7 Despite the AECOM conclusions, Policies 1 and 3 continue to:

- Promote housing development in broad, qualitative terms;
- Support development on land "adjacent to the Developed Footprint" subject to loosely defined criteria;
- Avoid setting any clear spatial or numerical limits on further growth.

5.8 This disconnect between evidence and policy is a fundamental flaw. While Neighbourhood Plans cannot reduce strategic housing allocations, they are fully entitled—and expected—to:

- Shape the location of non-allocated development;
- Distinguish between essential and non-essential growth;
- Provide strong local criteria to resist speculative applications.

In its current form, the Plan fails to do so.

### Housing Need Evidence Is Not Being Fully Used

5.9 The Plan correctly identifies a housing need figure of **167 dwellings to 2041**, already exceeded by Local Plan commitments. This is a critical finding but is under-deployed in policy terms.

5.10 Policy 3 should explicitly state that:

“The AECOM Housing Needs Assessment demonstrates that the identified housing requirement for Barrowby over the plan period to 2041 is already met, and exceeded, by existing commitments and allocations within the Local Plan. In this context, the Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to identify additional housing growth beyond that already planned.

Accordingly, additional residential development will only be supported where it demonstrably addresses a specific and evidenced local need and can be accommodated within the existing developed footprint without harm to the village’s landscape setting, character, infrastructure or the integrity of its countryside edge.”

Without this explicit linkage, the housing need figure risks being treated as descriptive rather than policy-limiting, weakening the Plan’s ability to resist speculative applications.

### Need for Explicit Housing Restraint

5.11 Given the AECOM evidence, Policy 3 should explicitly state that:

- Residential development will only be supported where it demonstrably addresses an identified local housing need (i.e. identified through the Neighbourhood Plan or an up-to-date Housing Needs Assessment) that cannot be met within existing allocations;
- Proposals that exceed or add to the level of growth already provided for in the Local Plan will be resisted unless fully evidenced. In the absence of such evidence, proposals for additional greenfield housing development beyond existing allocations should be resisted.

Without such wording, Policy 1 undermines the Plan’s own Objective 4 (“Appropriate scale of residential development”) and Objective 8 (“Protection of our rural setting and distinctiveness”).

5.12 Policy 3 is the most critical policy in the Plan and, in its current form, the most problematic. In particular, the term - “Land Immediately Adjacent to the Developed Footprint” – is ambiguous and too vague, leaving it open to interpretation and manipulation. Policy 3 supports housing on:

- Infill sites;
- Land east of the A1;
- Land immediately adjacent to the Developed Footprint.

The third category is insufficiently constrained and is of particular concern.

5.13 The western edge of Barrowby is:

- Visually prominent;
- Elevated and exposed in landscape terms;
- Part of the Harlaxton–Denton Bowl landscape character area identified as having high sensitivity to residential development;
- Critical to the village’s rural setting and separation from the wider countryside.

5.14 Yet Policy 3 does not:

- Exclude development west of the village;
- Require landscape capacity or sensitivity assessment;
- Establish a presumption against development in areas of high landscape value.

5.15 Similarly, the Plan does not yet provide sufficiently clear spatial guidance in relation to:

- Development at the village edge and settlement–countryside interface;
- Proposals that could lead to incremental outward expansion beyond the existing built form;
- The need to maintain the physical and perceptual separation between Barrowby and the urban edge of Grantham;
- Landscape and visual protection, particularly where expansive rural views contribute to the village’s setting and identity.

#### Conflict with Landscape Evidence

5.16 The Plan’s own landscape evidence (supplemented by the Landscape Appraisal undertaken by Influence, on behalf of BAG, which forms part of this submission) acknowledges:

- The high scenic value of the western landscape;
- The difficulty of assimilating major development;
- The importance of open views and rural context.

Allowing housing development “adjacent to the Developed Footprint” without spatial qualification directly contradicts this evidence.

#### Required Strengthening of Policy 3

5.17 Based upon the foregoing, Barrowby Action Group strongly recommends that Policy 3 be amended to:

- State explicitly that residential development to the west of Barrowby will not be supported;
- Limit housing growth to infill and redevelopment within the existing built-up area;
- Require proposals to demonstrate compliance with the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment (or any subsequent HN Assessment) in quantitative terms;

- Include a clear presumption against greenfield development beyond allocated sites.

Without these changes, Policy 3 will be ineffective at examination and in decision-making.

5.18 Specifically, the Policy as drafted includes a lack of explicit directional restraint - while Policy 3 prioritises infill and modest edge expansion, it fails to distinguish between different edges of the village. This is a major weakness given that:

- The western edge of Barrowby directly abuts open countryside, rising landscape, and long-distance views;
- The same edge plays a key role in maintaining the physical and perceptual separation between Barrowby and the wider rural landscape, distinct from the Grantham-facing eastern side.

The Plan even implicitly acknowledges differential suitability by recognising land east of the A1 as potentially suitable for further development — yet offers no equivalent spatial exclusion to the west.

5.19 As such, it is proposed that a clear spatial principle is included within Policy 3, such as:

“Residential development proposals on the western edge of Barrowby, where the settlement transitions directly into open countryside, will not be supported where they would extend the developed footprint of the village, harm the landscape setting, or erode the visual and functional relationship between the village and the surrounding countryside.”

5.20 This would be entirely consistent with:

- Local Plan Policy SP3 (no extension beyond existing built form);
- NPPF emphasis on recognising intrinsic countryside character;
- The Plan’s own Objective 8: *Protection of our rural setting and distinctiveness*

## **6.0 PROPOSED NEW POLICY – WESTERN LANDSCAPE PROTECTION**

6.1 Based upon the findings at Paragraphs 5.14 – 5.17 above, there is also potential to include an additional Policy, which would seek to address ‘Western Landscape Protection’. The intention of this Policy, would be to protect the sensitive western edge of Barrowby village, where the settlement transitions directly into open countryside, and to prevent encroachment that would undermine the village’s rural setting, landscape character, and long-distance views.

### Policy Wording

6.2 The western edge of Barrowby forms a sensitive and distinctive transition between the built form of the village and the open countryside. This area is characterised by openness,

rising topography, long-distance rural views, and its contribution to the wider historic and landscape setting of the village.

6.3 Residential development proposals on land to the west of the village's developed footprint will not be supported, except in exceptional circumstances, where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

1. The proposal constitutes genuine small-scale infill or redevelopment within the existing built form, and does not extend the settlement boundary westward;
2. There would be no loss of landscape openness, rural character, or long-distance views, including views towards and from Harlaxton Manor;
3. The proposal would not result in cumulative or incremental encroachment into open countryside;
4. The development would conserve the visual separation between Barrowby and the wider rural landscape, maintaining the village's distinct identity.

Proposals that would result in outward expansion, ribbon development, or the urbanisation of the western approach to the village will not be supported.

## **7.0 POLICY 6 – IMPORTANT VIEWS**

### Strategic Role of Views in Defining Barrowby's Character

7.1 The protection of important views is not a cosmetic or secondary matter; it is fundamental to Barrowby's identity as an elevated rural settlement within the wider Trent and Belvoir Vales landscape. The village's character is defined as much by its outward and inward views as by its built form.

7.2 The visual relationship between:

- The historic core (including All Saints' Church),
- The open countryside to the west, south and north,
- The rising landform of the Harlaxton–Denton Bowl, and
- Long-distance landmark features including Harlaxton Manor,

is intrinsic to the village's rural distinctiveness and landscape setting.

7.3 Policy 6, as currently drafted, acknowledges identified views but does not provide sufficiently robust or technically precise policy protection to withstand development pressure or appeal scrutiny.

### Over-Reliance on Mapped Viewpoints

7.4 Policy 6 relies heavily on specific mapped viewpoints. While mapped views are helpful, this approach has inherent weaknesses:

1. It risks implying that only the exact mapped viewpoints are protected, rather than the wider view corridors or landscape setting.
2. It may allow development that technically avoids the precise line of sight from a mapped point but still intrudes into the broader panorama.
3. It does not adequately address cumulative or skyline effects visible from multiple informal locations.

7.5 In a rural parish such as Barrowby, valued views are often experienced dynamically—while walking along public rights of way or moving through the village—not from a single static point. A policy that limits protection to mapped viewpoints may be interpreted narrowly by applicants and Inspectors.

#### Failure to Address Skyline and Edge-of-Settlement Impacts

7.6 The western edge of Barrowby is elevated and visually prominent. Development in this location would:

- Extend built form onto rising land;
- Interrupt currently open skylines;
- Introduce rooflines, lighting and domestic activity into previously undeveloped horizons;
- Alter the perception of Barrowby as a compact settlement contained within countryside.

Policy 6 does not explicitly reference skyline protection or the importance of maintaining undeveloped horizons. Nor does it require applicants to demonstrate that proposals will not break the skyline when viewed from surrounding countryside or public rights of way.

7.7 This omission is significant. Skyline intrusion is a well-established and material landscape planning concern. Without explicit wording, decision-makers may lack policy support to resist such impacts.

#### Insufficient Recognition of Long-Range and Reciprocal Views

7.8 The Parish enjoys important long-distance visual relationships, including:

- Views from the village towards the surrounding open countryside and estate landscapes;
- Views into the village from elevated land and rural approaches;
- Views towards and from Harlaxton Manor, a heritage asset of national architectural and landscape significance.

Harlaxton Manor is not merely a distant feature; it forms part of the wider designed landscape context within which Barrowby sits. Development which intrudes into the village – countryside interface risks introducing built form into this shared visual envelope.

7.9 Policy 6 does not expressly reference:

- The setting of Harlaxton Manor;
- Reciprocal views into the village;
- The cumulative erosion of rural separation through incremental development.

In the absence of such reference, the policy underestimates the spatial scale at which visual harm may occur.

#### Cumulative and Incremental Harm

7.10 A critical weakness of the current drafting is the absence of reference to cumulative impact. Landscape and visual harm often arises incrementally:

- A single housing scheme may appear modest;
- Subsequent infill may follow;
- The combined effect materially alters the character of the village edge and wider landscape.

Policy 6 should require consideration of cumulative effects on important views, particularly where development proposals relate to land at the settlement–countryside interface. Without this requirement, the policy is vulnerable to piecemeal erosion of valued views.

#### Relationship with Policy 7 and Housing Policies

7.11 There is currently insufficient integration between Policy 6 (Important Views), Policy 7 (Green Infrastructure), and Policy 3 (Housing Development). If Policy 3 continues to support development "adjacent to the Developed Footprint" without spatial limitation, and Policy 6 provides only limited viewpoint protection, then the combined policy framework may inadvertently enable visual encroachment.

7.12 To function effectively, Policy 6 must:

- Reinforce spatial restraint in visually sensitive areas;
- Provide clear refusal grounds where development would erode open / important views or rural skyline character;
- Operate as a substantive constraint, not merely a design consideration.

#### Required Strengthening of Policy 6

7.13 To ensure meaningful and defensible protection, Policy 6 should be strengthened to:

1. Protect view corridors and panoramas, not just fixed viewpoints.
2. Explicitly safeguard undeveloped skylines and rising land to the west of the village.

3. Protect reciprocal views into the settlement and its historic core.
  4. Recognise the visual relationship with Harlaxton Manor and its wider landscape setting.
  5. Require proportionate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for development affecting the village edge.
  6. Require assessment of cumulative visual effects.
  7. Resist development that would materially reduce openness, introduce prominent built form into valued views, or suburbanise the countryside–village interface.
- 7.14 Without these enhancements, Policy 6 risks being interpreted as a limited visual amenity policy rather than a substantive landscape protection mechanism capable of safeguarding Barrowby’s defining visual characteristics.

Revised Policy 6: Important Views, Skylines and Landscape Setting

- 7.15 Based upon the foregoing, it is proposed that revised wording is provided in respect of Policy 6 as follows:
1. Development proposals must conserve and enhance the important views, panoramas and landscape setting of Barrowby Parish as identified on the Policies Map and as experienced from public rights of way, village streets, open spaces and surrounding countryside.
  2. The protection of Important Views applies not only to the precise mapped viewpoints but to the wider view corridors, foregrounds, middle-distance and background components that contribute to their character and significance.
  3. Development will not be supported where it would:
    - a. Interrupt, intrude upon or materially diminish identified Important Views;
    - b. Break or urbanise currently undeveloped skylines or rising land, particularly to the west, south and north of the village;
    - c. Introduce prominent built form, roofscapes, lighting or domestic paraphernalia into open panoramas that presently form part of the rural setting of the settlement;

- d. Erode the visual separation between the built form of Barrowby and the surrounding countryside;
    - e. Adversely affect reciprocal views into the village, including views of its historic core and landmark buildings, particularly the church.
  - 4. Particular regard shall be had to the visual relationship between Barrowby and the wider Harlaxton–Denton Bowl landscape, including the setting of Harlaxton Manor and its designed landscape. Development that would detract from this wider visual relationship will not be supported.
  - 5. Where development is proposed on land forming part of the settlement edge or within the foreground or background of an Important View, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal shall be submitted. This assessment must:
    - a. Assess impacts on view corridors, skyline character and landscape context;
    - b. Consider cumulative visual effects in combination with existing or approved development;
    - c. Demonstrate how the proposal avoids or minimises visual intrusion and protects openness.
  - 6. Proposals that rely solely on screening or landscaping to mitigate fundamental visual harm to Important Views or skylines will not be supported.
- 7.16 This revised policy provides clear, enforceable criteria capable of guiding decision-making and resisting development that would erode Barrowby’s defining visual characteristics, particularly along the sensitive western settlement edge.
- 7.17 In addition to the above amendments to the Policy wording, it is proposed that amended ‘Important Views’ are identified within the Neighbourhood Plan, which have been assessed and identified by ‘Influence’ on behalf of BAG. These revised views have sought to reflect the longer-range and mid-range viewpoints, which are experienced from within the village and towards the settlement, and are considered to better reveal the important elements of landscape and character which are of intrinsic importance to Barrowby and its setting. These amended ‘Important Views’ for inclusion within Policy 6 are appended to this document.

## **8.0 POLICY 7: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, LOCAL GREEN SPACES AND BIODIVERSITY**

### Strategic Importance of Green Infrastructure to Barrowby’s Setting

- 8.1 Policy 7 is central to delivering Objectives 7, 8 and 9 of the Plan. The green infrastructure network in Barrowby is not incidental or ornamental; it is structurally integral to:
- The village's physical separation from surrounding countryside;
  - The maintenance of its rural identity and sense of arrival;
  - The experiential quality of its public rights of way network;
  - The protection of longer-range views and skyline character;
  - The mental and physical well-being of residents who rely on immediate access to open countryside.
- 8.2 In particular, land to the west of the village forms a continuous and visually coherent green wedge. This land is elevated, open, and highly perceptible in views from within the village and from surrounding public footpaths. It provides an immediate transition from built form to open countryside and is demonstrably special to the local community in terms of recreational value, tranquillity and landscape quality.
- 8.3 Despite this, Policy 7 does not clearly articulate the spatial or qualitative significance of this western green infrastructure corridor.

#### Inadequate Protection of Public Footpaths and Rights of Way

- 8.4 Barrowby benefits from a well-used network of public rights of way radiating from the village core into the surrounding countryside. These routes are not merely linear access corridors; their value derives from:
- Their openness and rural setting;
  - Long-range and panoramic views;
  - Perceived tranquillity and separation from built form;
  - Their function as daily walking routes for residents of all ages.

Policy 7 currently focuses on safeguarding the existence of green infrastructure assets but fails to protect their setting and experiential character.

- 8.5 This distinction is critical. A public footpath can remain legally intact while its amenity value is substantially degraded through:
- Housing development immediately adjoining the route;
  - Back garden boundaries, fencing and domestic paraphernalia abutting the path;
  - Increased lighting, traffic and noise intrusion;
  - Urbanising edge treatments that erode rural character;
  - Loss of openness and skyline views.

The current wording of Policy 7 would not provide decision-makers with sufficiently robust grounds to resist development that retains the alignment of a right of way but fundamentally alters its character.

#### The Western Edge: Risk of Incremental Encroachment

8.6 The land adjoining the village to the west is particularly sensitive for the following reasons:

- It forms the immediate foreground in outward views from the village;
- It contributes to reciprocal views into the settlement;
- It is part of the wider Harlaxton–Denton Bowl landscape character area identified as highly sensitive to development;
- It accommodates multiple well-used footpaths which rely upon openness for their amenity value.

8.7 Incremental residential encroachment into this area would result in:

- Erosion of the green wedge separating built form from open countryside;
- Gradual suburbanisation of rural footpaths;
- Loss of tranquillity and perceived countryside access;
- Cumulative landscape harm not easily reversible.

Policy 7, as drafted, does not establish a clear spatial buffer or presumption against such encroachment. It therefore risks permitting piecemeal change which, cumulatively, would undermine the Plan's Vision and Objectives.

#### Deficiency in Protecting the Setting of Green Spaces

8.8 The policy protects designated Local Green Spaces from loss. However, it does not:

- Protect their wider landscape setting;
- Prevent development immediately adjoining them where that development would diminish their openness or rural character;
- Recognise that green spaces function as part of a broader network rather than isolated parcels.

8.9 Green infrastructure should be understood as a continuous system. Development that constricts, fragments or visually encloses green space—even without directly building on it—can materially reduce its community value. In planning terms, the absence of explicit protection for the setting of green spaces creates vulnerability at appeal, where developers may argue that no direct land-take occurs.

#### Required Strengthening of Policy 7

8.10 To provide meaningful and defensible protection, Policy 7 should be amended to include:

1. Explicit protection of the setting and rural character of public rights of way, not merely their physical alignment.

2. A requirement that development adjoining public footpaths demonstrate that it will:
  - Maintain openness and key views;
  - Avoid urbanising boundary treatments;
  - Prevent light spill into open countryside;
  - Retain a clearly rural edge condition.
3. A defined green buffer or landscape protection zone to the west of the village where residential development will not be supported.
4. A clear statement that development resulting in the suburbanisation of the countryside–village interface will be resisted.
5. A requirement for cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment where proposals affect land adjoining the village edge.
6. Recognition that the amenity value of green infrastructure includes tranquillity, dark skies, and perceived remoteness from built form.

Without such strengthening, Policy 7 risks being interpreted narrowly and technically, providing insufficient policy weight to defend the western green corridor and the public footpath network from incremental residential expansion.

Revised Policy 7: Green Infrastructure, Public Rights of Way and Village Edge Protection

8.11 Based upon the foregoing, it is proposed that revised wording is provided in respect of Policy 7 as follows:

1. Development proposals must protect, conserve and enhance the Parish’s green infrastructure network, including its open countryside setting, green wedges, public rights of way, woodlands, watercourses, and designated Local Green Spaces.
2. The land adjoining the western edge of Barrowby village, as identified on the Policies Map, is of particular landscape and recreational importance and functions as a strategic green buffer between the built form and open countryside. Residential development within this area will not be supported.
3. Public Rights of Way, including footpaths and bridleways, shall be protected together with their setting and amenity value. Development proposals affecting or adjoining such routes must demonstrate that they will:
  - a. Maintain the openness and rural character of the route;
  - b. Preserve key views and skyline characteristics experienced from the route;

- c. Avoid urbanising boundary treatments, including close-board fencing, suburban garden encroachment, or prominent built form immediately adjacent to the path;
- d. Prevent unacceptable light spill, noise intrusion or loss of tranquillity;
- e. Retain a clear and defensible countryside edge.

Proposals that would suburbanise or materially diminish the experiential quality of a public right of way will not be supported.

- 4. Development proposals adjoining designated Local Green Spaces or other valued open land must protect not only the land itself but also its openness, visual setting and function within the wider green infrastructure network. Development that would visually enclose, fragment or erode the character of such spaces will not be supported.
  - 5. Where development is proposed on land forming part of the village–countryside interface, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment proportionate to the scale of development shall be required. This assessment must consider cumulative impacts on landscape character, public views, tranquillity and the integrity of green infrastructure corridors.
  - 6. All development shall seek to deliver measurable biodiversity net gain and, where appropriate, strengthen ecological connectivity between habitats within and beyond the Parish.
- 8.12 This revised wording would provide clarity, precision and defensible grounds for decision-makers, ensuring that the western green corridor and the Parish’s valued footpath network are protected from incremental residential encroachment while remaining consistent with national and strategic planning policy.

## **9.0 NEW STRATEGIC ISSUE – SETTLEMENT COALESCENCE**

- 9.1 A further strategic issue which the Neighbourhood Plan should explicitly address is the potential for incremental coalescence between Barrowby and the expanding urban edge of Grantham.
- 9.2 Barrowby has historically functioned as a distinct rural settlement, physically and visually separated from the town of Grantham by areas of open countryside and agricultural land. This separation is important not only in landscape terms but also in maintaining the village’s identity, character, and sense of arrival.

- 9.3 The continued growth of Grantham, including development associated with the Southern Growth Area, alongside approved development to the north and west of Grantham, increases the importance of maintaining a clear physical and visual break between the two settlements. Without explicit policy guidance, there is a risk that incremental development at the settlement edges could gradually erode this separation.
- 9.4 Neighbourhood plans are entitled to identify and protect areas of land which perform an important settlement separation function, provided this is supported by proportionate evidence. The Plan would therefore benefit from recognising the role of open land surrounding Barrowby in maintaining its distinct identity and preventing coalescence with Grantham.

Proposed New Policy: Settlement Separation

- 9.5 Add a new policy after Policy 7, entitled ‘Maintaining the Separation of Barrowby and Grantham’ as follows:

“Barrowby shall remain a separate and distinct rural settlement, physically and visually separated from the urban area of Grantham.

Development proposals will be supported only where they maintain the open countryside that contributes to the physical and visual separation between Barrowby and Grantham (in addition to meeting other Policy requirements).

Development proposals will not be supported where they would:

- a) Result in the coalescence or perceived merging of Barrowby with Grantham;
- b) Significantly reduce the open gap between the two settlements;
- c) Introduce urbanising development that would undermine the rural setting and identity of Barrowby; or
- d) Create a continuous or visually dominant built form along approaches to the village which would erode the sense of transition from town to countryside.

Proposals affecting land that contributes to the separation between Barrowby and Grantham must demonstrate that the development will retain the openness, landscape character and visual distinction between the settlements.”

- 9.6 The following supporting text / justification for this Policy could include the following:

“The open countryside surrounding Barrowby performs an important role in maintaining the village’s distinct identity and separation from Grantham. This separation contributes to the character of both settlements and reinforces Barrowby’s role as a rural village rather than a suburb of the town.

The policy therefore seeks to ensure that development proposals do not erode the strategic gap between the two settlements or undermine the rural setting of the village.”

## **10.0 CONCLUSION**

10.1 Barrowby Action Group considers that, without significant amendment, the draft Neighbourhood Plan will:

- Fail to reflect its own housing evidence;
- Be ineffective in resisting further residential development pressure;
- Expose the western landscape of Barrowby to incremental and harmful change;
- Undermine community confidence in the neighbourhood planning process.

10.2 To address these concerns, we strongly urge that Policies 1, 3, 6 and 7 be strengthened to:

- Align explicitly with the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment;
- Introduce a presumption against further greenfield housing beyond existing allocations;
- Protect the village’s countryside setting, important landscapes, and the separation between Barrowby and surrounding settlements, the western landscape, long-range views, and green infrastructure with clarity and precision;
- Provide decision-makers with unambiguous grounds to refuse inappropriate development.

10.3 In addition, new Policies are proposed as required, to address deficiencies identified, particularly with regard to the protection of the village-countryside interface along the western side of the settlement, and to ensure that visual or physical coalescence does not occur between Barrowby and Grantham.

10.4 Only through such changes will the Neighbourhood Plan genuinely deliver sustainable development, protect Barrowby’s distinctive setting, and meet the Basic Conditions at examination.