

Heversham and Hincaster Neighbourhood Plan to 2025

Submission Version

Index

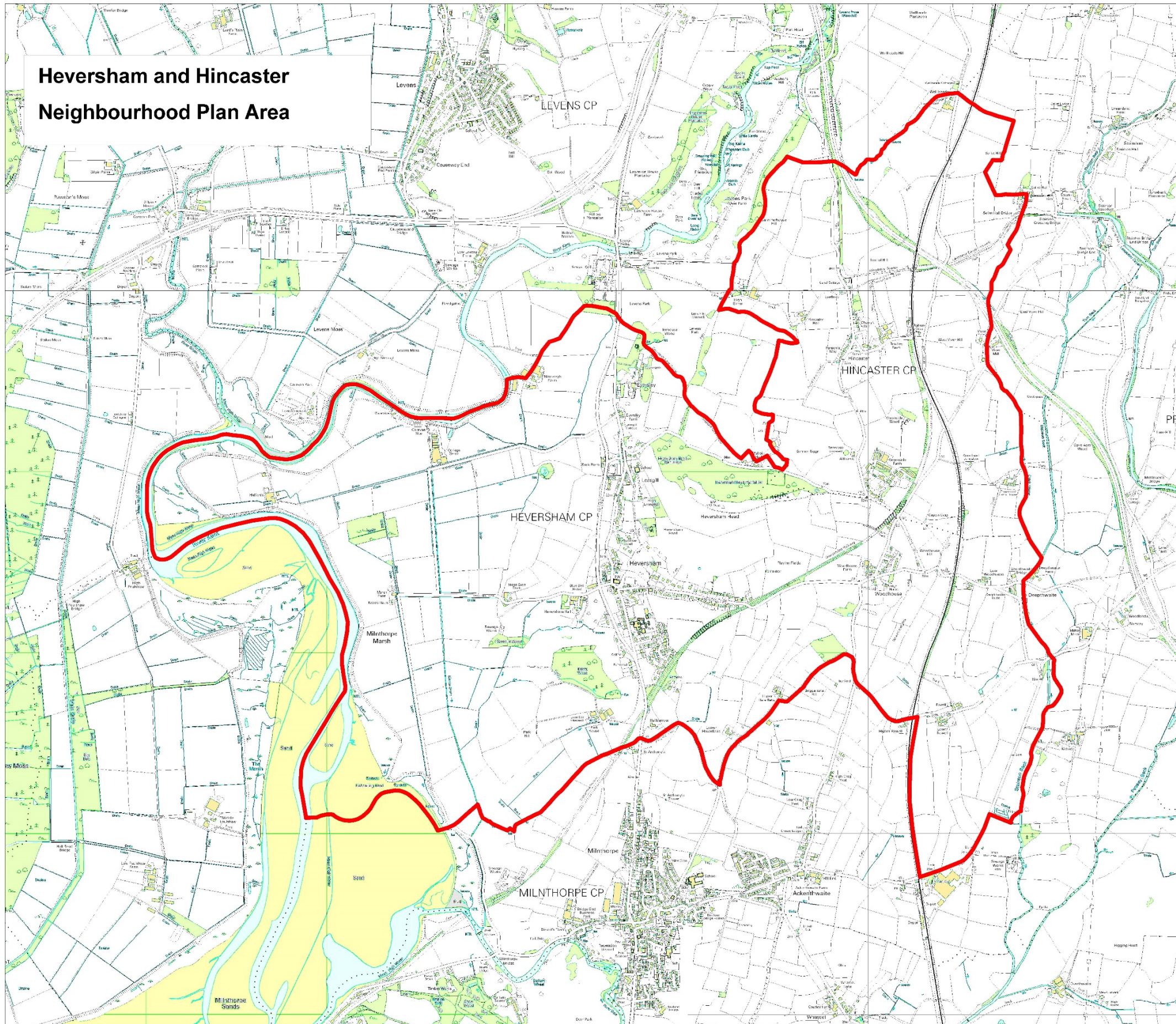
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Note : A number of Annexes are referred to within this document. They can be viewed at <http://www.hevershamandhincasternp.co.uk> or in “Neighbourhood Plans” under the “South Lakeland Local Plan section of South Lakeland District Council’s website <http://www.southlakeland.gov.uk>

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Localism Act of 2011 introduced new powers to enable people to help to shape the development of their own communities. One way that it did so was by introducing the concept of a Neighbourhood Plan. Such a Plan must be supportive of development and cannot contradict existing national or local planning policies. However once such a Neighbourhood Plan has been approved as meeting national requirements and is endorsed by a local referendum, the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan become part of the statutory development plan. South Lakeland District Council (SLDC), the Local Planning Authority will be required to give consideration to them when planning applications in the two parishes are determined.
- 1.2 In August 2013 SLDC approved the two civil Parishes of Heversham and Hincaster as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of Neighbourhood Planning [*see map on next page*]. Although they are separate civil Parishes, the two are closely related; they are in a single ecclesiastical Parish and share some facilities.
- 1.3 The **Heversham and Hincaster Neighbourhood Plan** will guide the development of the area from its approval until 31st March 2025 (which is the life of the current SLDC Development Framework), as well as laying a foundation for any future Neighbourhood Plan or equivalent document that may succeed this one after 2025.
- 1.4 In May 2012 Heversham Parish Council and Hincaster Parish Meeting established a joint Steering Group to develop a draft Plan. The Group has undertaken a variety of consultation and communication exercises as described in the Consultation Statement. This Plan takes account of the feedback received.

Heversham and Hincaster Neighbourhood Plan Area



Scale 1:20,000 @ A3



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2. An Overview of the Parishes of Heversham and Hincaster

- 2.1 Heversham and Hincaster Parishes are located in Cumbria to the south of the Lake District National Park, east of the Kent estuary, to the north of the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and west of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Their setting is essentially rural and the communities reflect this, particularly Hincaster. To the west, where Heversham borders the River Kent and the head of the estuary, there is an area of former marshland. The underlying limestone, including Heversham Head, and the drumlins which are characteristic of the area to the south of Kendal, form a more varied and undulating landscape with a pattern of smaller fields. The area also supports and benefits from a wealth of biodiversity.
- 2.2 The origins of Heversham and Hincaster can be traced back over two millennia, although little evidence from those times remains today. Hincaster is thought to have been settled as part of a Roman military route leading north to Watercrock. Some fragments of Samian pottery were discovered during the building of the A590 dual carriageway.
- 2.3 Hincaster was once a much more industrial community with gunpowder mill and its associated housing and its location on the Lancaster canal. Buildings of note include the Grade 2 listed Hincaster Hall, built in the 16th century and the porticos to the 378 yard Canal Tunnel opened in 1819, now a listed building. The canal horse path over the tunnel is a scheduled ancient monument.
- 2.4 Heversham developed from early Christian settlements in the area. Parts of St Peter's Church date from the 8th century and are the oldest in the former county of Westmorland. Little from medieval times remains but Heversham Hall grew from a Pele Tower and dates back to 14th century. The threshing barn at Park House is from the 16th century. Heversham Grammar School was founded in 1613. Many of the buildings located within the designated Conservation Area around the church were built in the 18th century, quite possibly on the site of earlier structures. The Parish has a number of fine 19th century dwellings, including Plumtree Hall (now retirement accommodation), Heversham House (a residential care home) and Eversley House (divided into four separate houses). There are 26 listed buildings in the two parishes.
- 2.5 The villages are typified by housing, of mixed ages and styles, in a largely linear format. Heversham developed from its original line along the old A6 with further developments along Woodhouse Lane after the first World War, and then with the Dugg Hill development in the 1960s. Over subsequent years both communities have seen some continuing development of houses – either individually or in small groups. Whilst most development in the last 50 years has been within the footprint of the main settlement or through conversion of former farmsteads, a group of houses was built at Haverwood in the 1970s. Development of new houses on the site of a former egg farm at Greenside commenced in 2015, planning consent having been achieved prior to this Plan.
- 2.6 The Cumbria Rural Housing Trust Housing Survey carried out in October 2014 (Annex 4) asked people if they felt that the area will need to provide additional homes in the future. 111 of the 210 respondents (approx. 52%) stated that they believed that homes for various households would be needed. The survey also asked whether respondents foresaw a future housing need for

themselves or a member of their family in the next 5 years. 38 respondents (approx. 18%) indicated that they did.

- 2.7 As shown in the table below, the population of the two Parishes (and particularly Heversham) is significantly weighted towards those over 65 – something that will bring its own challenges and demands in the next ten years.

Table 1. Population of the Parishes

	Heversham	Hincaster	England
Population	699	209	n/a
Number of households	307	83	n/a
Under 16 years of age	105 (15%)	47 (22.5%)	18.9%
Working age adults	356 (50.9%)	118 (56.5%)	64.7%
Over 65	238 (34%)	44 (21.1%)	16.3%
Density per hectare	0.9	0.7	4.1

Data taken from Office for National Statistics 2011 Census.

There are more statistics about the two Parishes in Annex 10

- 2.8 There are limited employment opportunities actually within the two Parishes. Milnthorpe is very close and many of those who are employed travel to work in Kendal, Ulverston and Lancaster. The close proximity of road and rail routes means that others choose to travel further afield, for example to Carlisle, Manchester and beyond.
- 2.9 Traditionally, agriculture has been a source of employment within the Parishes. However, seven out of the nine farmsteads in Hincaster Parish and nine of the fourteen in Heversham are now without their own land. The farm houses and buildings have, in the main, been converted to residential dwellings of between two and seven family units. The land is now used by other farmers in the neighbourhood, thus increasing the size of the remaining farms but with mechanised farming, involving few workers. Both Dallam and Levens Hall Estates continue to provide employment opportunities related to land use and tourism.
- 2.10 Heversham also has a long tradition of education related services. St Peter’s Primary School and the Heversham campus of Dallam School continue to provide facilities and therefore employment.
- 2.11 Small employment units have been created on the site of the former garage on the Princes Way and 3 businesses operate from these. There are also a limited number of small businesses that operate from other locations in the Parishes.
- 2.12 In 2016 fibre optic broadband became available in the Parishes as part of the Connecting Cumbria initiative. It is planned that hyper-fast connectivity will be available to the new

Viver Green development at Greenside through B4RN and there may be options for this to be extended into Hincaster and possibly to Heversham.

- 2.13 The two Parishes today are the product of development over many centuries. The shape of the settlements, their buildings and the facilities within them all reflect their history, as well as current circumstances. The Parishes are physical locations marked on a map but they are also social communities of people who share the place as they live, work and undertake leisure pursuits.

3. Focusing the Plan

- 3.1 Responses to communication and engagement exercises indicate that people who live in the parishes value their character and form and the links between the settlement areas and the surrounding countryside.
- 3.2 Some respondents explicitly express the view that they want little or nothing to change. More appear to recognize that living communities must evolve over time.
- 3.3 There is a recognition that both Parishes, but particularly Heversham, may become increasingly communities of older people. There is concern that the absence of children and younger families may impoverish community life.
- 3.4 The two Parishes lie close to main road and rail routes and between the two National Parks and the AONB and are part of an area that is therefore likely to be of potential interest to developers, whether for housing or other forms of development.
- 3.5 Whilst accepting that if the Parishes are to remain sustainable and viable for individuals and families, some development over the next decade is both inevitable and desirable, many people are wary of creeping urbanisation.
- 3.6 The weight of responses highlighted the desire that any development should be managed in order that it is sympathetic to the area, its history and its character and that it contributes positively to the sense of place and life of the community for the future.
- 3.7 The vision underlying this Plan is therefore:

To retain and enhance the distinctive character of Heversham and Hincaster Parishes as sustainable communities within a valued landscape, strengthening the sense of community and wellbeing and fostering an even stronger sense of place for present and future residents of all ages.

- 3.8 The scale, form and location of developments relating to housing, employment and tourism all have the potential to make an impact on the Parishes – either supporting and enhancing them or eroding and diminishing them. The Plan therefore seeks to address these key planning issues in constructive ways. Furthermore, this Plan recognises the residents' broader interest in the sense of place and social community by addressing issues that are not strictly planning matters.
- 3.9 Two alternative approaches to achieving this vision were considered. The first involved the identification of specific sites that could be considered as ones where planning applications for housing, employment or tourism developments would be supported as being consistent with the aspirations of the vision. The second approach involved identifying policies that would be applied to consideration of any sites that may emerge.

- 3.10 A number of initial site options were explored and feedback from the residents was obtained. Some respondents to the consultations welcomed this approach, because of the relative certainty that naming sites was seen to bring. However, it is not easy for the community to predict the economic and policy drivers that will influence developers' proposals over the next decade, nor to be precise about what parcels of land may or may not become potentially available to developers. It was recognised that the apparent certainty given by referring to specific sites risks actually weakening the ability of the Plan to influence the patterns and form of development over the period.
- 3.11 The alternative approach of utilising policies was seen by some as being vague and imprecise, however it was also recognised as potentially bringing the flexibility necessary for the Plan to be sustainable for its life and to be relevant to changing circumstances and development propositions that emerge over a period of years.
- 3.12 A Neighbourhood Plan is limited to matters within the scope of the Town and Country Planning Act. However, focussing the Plan only on matters that directly relate to planning legislation would ignore many of the issues, opportunities and concerns raised by residents during the consultation and engagement processes and relating to the sense of place and strength of community.
- 3.13 In order to support the delivery of the vision, this Plan therefore follows the second of the two options, setting out a series of **Planning Policies** that provide a framework within which any future planning proposals in the two Parishes must be considered by SLDC, the Planning Authority. Additionally, alongside these policies, there is a series of **Community Objectives** that the Parish Council in Heversham and Parish Meeting in Hincaster, should actively seek to pursue, along with SLDC, the County Council and other community partners. Whilst these are not technically part of the Neighbourhood Plan they form an integral part of the achievement of the vision for the Parishes.
- 3.14 The planning policies start with a **General Policy** which must be met by **any and all developments**, in order to ensure that all developments are of an appropriate scale and form and are sensitive to the setting and character of the community. There are then **specific additional** policies which will apply to differing types of development.
- 3.15 There is the potential for a development being proposed that would contribute to the achievement of the vision and benefit the community but which fails fully to meet some particular requirement of the relevant specific policy. For this reason, a final policy, **HH7**, makes provision for the Parish Council/Meeting to hold a pre-submission discussion with the developer. If the Council/Meeting then concludes that the proposed development fully meets the terms of the general policy and would contribute to achieving the vision they should report this to SLDC, who are then expected to give due weight to their comments

4. Policies.

Planning policy HH1: General Conditions

- 4.1 A core objective of the vision underlying this Plan is that any new developments integrate within the existing communities in ways that enhance the communities rather than diminishing their character and setting. This applies whatever the specific form or purpose of any development.
- 4.2 Policy HHI will apply to any and all development proposals as a reinforcement of this core objective.

POLICY HH1

Each development proposal will be required to demonstrate that:

- A. It is of a scale and form that both respects and integrates with the topography and the surrounding landscape and safeguards the pattern and characteristics of the existing settlements and heritage assets, and**
- B. It enhances and improves the places in which people live their lives, work or visit, or it supports the sustainability of the settlements and the amenities within them, and**
- C. It does not adversely affect sites designated internationally, nationally or locally for their biodiversity importance.**

Planning Policy HH2: Housing Provision

- 4.3 There is national, regional and more local recognition that additional housing is likely to be required over the coming decade. However, identifying housing needs at a very local level is not easy. The Cumbria Rural Housing Trust Housing Survey (see section 2.6) did indicate that approximately 18% of those responding to the survey foresaw a future housing need in the Parishes for themselves, or a member of their household, within the next 5 years.
- 4.4 The South Lakeland District Council Local Plan sets a target of 578 dwellings in the smaller villages and hamlets in the “Kendal Rural” area outside the Arnside and Silverdale AONB in the period from 2003 to 2025. The pro rata share of this target for Heversham and Hincaster would be 61 (10.6%).
- 4.5 In the period between that target being set and March 2015, 11 houses were completed. In addition, a further 24 houses (including 18 at Greenside) were approved, or seeking approval, at the same date. During this same period, a new Boarding House was completed on the Dallam School site but, by its nature, this did not meet any housing need and is excluded from the calculations. Details of these completions and the applications approved, or seeking approval are listed in Annex 11. The planning application for the Viver Green development at Greenside was amended from 18 to 22 after March 2015.

- 4.6 Policy HH2 seeks to ensure that the number of additional dwellings is consistent with the vision for this Plan, whilst also being consistent with the aims of the SLDC Local Plan. If all 24 approved dwellings were to be completed and the full new provision within this policy taken up it would result in 65 new houses in the period 2003 to 2025.
- 4.7 This policy also seeks to ensure that there is some phasing over the lifetime of the Plan, in order to support the integration of developments into the existing communities.

POLICY HH2

- A. 15 completed new dwellings will be supported in the 5 years from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2020. A further 15 completed new dwellings will be supported in the subsequent five years to 31st March 2025. Any unused balance at 31st March 2020 may be carried forward.**
- B. Any increase in the number of dwellings as a result of revision to planning applications which had been approved, in any form, before 1st April 2015, will count towards the totals. Completed dwellings from new planning applications after 1st April 2015 will count in full.**
- C. Any additional dwelling created as part of an alteration, or extension, of an existing building (including former agricultural buildings) will count as a new dwelling for the purposes of this Policy.**

Planning Policy HH3: Housing Delivery

- 4.8 In the past, some new housing developments have involved a significant number of dwellings. The pattern of the communities is such that, if new dwellings are now to enhance the area, it will be necessary for them physically to integrate into the existing settlement pattern, usually in small groupings, rather than to be in clusters on greenfield sites.
- 4.9 The sustainability of the community will be aided by developments which enable more young families to live in the parishes. This requires housing which is of a suitable size and affordability. Developments which include affordable housing will therefore be of particular value.
- 4.10 To promote sustainability of the community, a mix of housing types is required. For example, affordable starter homes for first-time buyers, smaller properties for older people wishing to downsize, dwellings that can grow according to the needs of the owners and those that can accommodate working from home. Similarly, it is desirable for there to be a range of types of tenure in addition to ownership (such as shared ownership or rental) and a variety of approaches to development (including self-build or housing associations) Such a mix of housing could enable the mobility of people within the parishes, thus strengthening the sense of community.
- 4.11 The provisions of Policy HH3 are therefore designed to enable housing to be delivered in small developments which integrate well with the existing settlement form, respond positively to the public realm, and enhance the mix of housing available within the Parishes.

POLICY HH3

- A. New housing developments will be supported if they are proportionate and reflect the scale of existing properties; this will normally mean developments of 6 or fewer dwellings.**
- B. Housing proposals that are next to new developments established within the lifetime of this plan will not be supported, thus preventing creeping development.**
- C. New housing developments will be the subject of proportionate assessment for impact on factors such as the landscape, heritage buildings and sites, visual amenity of residents and viability of road access.**
- D. Housing proposals will be expected to contribute to the provision of affordable housing locally, when appropriate, in accordance with National and Local Planning policies.**
- E. Housing proposals that provide a mix of dwellings and types of ownership will be encouraged.**
- F. Housing development proposals that fulfil the requirements of Policies HH1, HH2 and A to E of this policy, and are within or closely adjacent to settlements developed before the lifetime of this plan will be supported.**

Planning Policy HH4: Employment Development

- 4.12 Whilst the Parishes today are essentially residential in character, a valuable part of a sustainable and vibrant community is the availability of relevant employment opportunities.
- 4.13 Historically, farming, and its associated activities, has played a key role in this. However, as highlighted in Section 3, changes have occurred that have affected both the number of agricultural jobs and the use of land and farm buildings. This has led to a sizeable number of redundant farm buildings throughout the Parishes, some of which have been converted to residential and business use. However, there remain others that offer opportunities for re-generation for contemporary uses. National permitted development rights allow changes of use in many instances from agricultural use to a variety of commercial uses, as well as to residential use.
- 4.14 Another historically significant focus for employment in Heversham has been education. Whilst recent years have seen significant changes, the Heversham site continues as a distinctive part of Dallam School with its boarding houses and other facilities. There is also Heversham St Peter's Primary School. In the next ten years there may well be changes in the requirements of the schools. It is important that the sites are able to evolve in response to changing educational requirements. The significance of the sites in their village settings makes it important however that developments not only respond to the requirements of the schools but also that they take account of their wider visual and physical impact.
- 4.15 Small enterprises are generally increasing in number, and more use is made of home based work. This requires premises that are fit for such purpose and are served with modern technology and design. Dwellings with space for home offices are also relevant (see HH3).
- 4.16 Policy HH4 is designed to encourage some sustainable growth in employment opportunities. It will support the bringing of vacant farm buildings into use, appropriate changes in educational facilities and more home-working, all of which will add to the vibrancy and attraction of the community. The development of new buildings which may

benefit the economy of the district will also be supported when the location, scale and form are consistent with the vision (as reflected in the requirement to comply with HH1).

POLICY HH4

1. Development of new Buildings for Employment

- A. New buildings providing any form of employment will be supported provided that they are complementary to the topography, environment and services, and reflect economic, social and environmental sustainability issues.**
- B. Proposals for buildings of more than 100m² of floor space, will be supported only if the site is close to and accessible from the A6, and is adjacent to existing commercial development.**

2. Conversion of Farm Buildings

- A. Where planning permission or prior approval is required, the conversion of existing traditional farm buildings to employment generating uses will be supported together with necessary works to facilitate such uses, provided the local road network can accommodate any increase in traffic as a result of the development. In the case of listed buildings, their protected status need not be a barrier to a successful change of use provided that a suitable and sympathetic conversion scheme is proposed that is consistent with the conservation of their particular significance.**
- B. In the case of former or redundant farm buildings which are not of a traditional character (steel, concrete or pole frame or of a block construction) the change of use to employment will be supported provided the local road network can accommodate any increase in traffic as a result of the development.**

3. Redevelopment of Farm Buildings and Change of use for other Existing Buildings

- Redevelopment (including demolition and re-construction) of farm buildings, and change of use of other existing buildings for employment use will be supported where it:**
- is sympathetic to and enhances the character of the area or visual amenity of residents and**
 - Supports the safe and appropriate use of the road and access network and**
 - Is substantially within the footprint of the existing building, and**
 - the proposed building is sympathetic to and enhances the general character of the area.**

Planning Policy HH5: Tourism

- 4.17 Tourism is the largest industry in Cumbria and the primary generator of business in the Lake District National Park. Areas close to the Park can also benefit from significant business levels from visitor spending. The industry is in growth and spreading away from traditional “honey-pots” as consumers seek new experiences, destinations and facilities.

- 4.18 Existing tourist accommodation within the area includes 3 small touring caravan sites on the marsh, the Blue Bell/Heversham Hotel and a small number of bed & breakfast establishments as well as a number of self-catering properties offered as holiday lets. There are other facilities in the immediate surrounding area. It is possible that applications will be received in the future for additional accommodation establishments within the parishes. Proposals might also be brought forward for leisure/tourism related use of redundant or underused farmland.
- 4.19 There are two potential tourist related developments which could have significance for the Parishes. The proposed development of the Lancaster Canal would bring visitors to the area and it is likely that some level of commercial amenity will follow, including possibly mooring and accommodation facilities. The upgrading of the tow-path is likely to bring an increasing number of walkers and cyclists. The Morecambe Bay Cycleway from Glasson to Walney would pass through the marshland area of Heversham, following a route from Arnside towards Grange via Sampool. There may be a new bridging point across the Kent Estuary within the Parish. It would add to the current cycleways crossing the area such as part of the Cumbria Cycleway network and again may increase the number of walkers and cyclists. Both of these proposals are long term plans but could begin to develop during the life of this Plan and certainly successor Plans.
- 4.20. Tourist related developments may lead to additional traffic and other impacts but they may also bring benefits and increased facilities or resources to local residents and contribute to the prosperity and sustainability of the communities. Policy HH5 is designed to support such positive outcomes.

POLICY HH5

Tourism developments will be supported provided they demonstrate that:

- A. They are of an appropriate scale so as not to have an adverse effect on the character of the surrounding area or on the views from it.**
- B. The immediate environment and infrastructure can accommodate the visitor impact.**
- C. Developments that improve or extend the current range of visitor accommodation, respecting the conditions in A and B above will be supported.**

Planning policy HH 6: Renewable Energy

- 4.17 Initiatives for producing power using wind, solar, tidal, hydro-electric and biomass energy may arise within the life of this Plan. Solar “farming” is becoming increasingly popular in the UK, particularly in areas where agricultural diversification is an economic necessity.

- 4.21 Planning treatment of any such initiatives will be largely governed by local National or District/County guidelines. However, a renewable energy scheme within the Parishes, could have a very significant impact on the vision on which this Plan is based.
- 4.22 Policy HH6 re-emphasises, for the avoidance of doubt, that any such development proposals will be required to meet general conditions.

POLICY HH6

Renewable energy developments will be supported subject to meeting all of the conditions set out in Policy HH1

Planning Policy HH7: Parish Consultations

- 4.23 The policies in this Plan are set out as means of ensuring that developments in the Parishes are consistent with the vision. In the lifetime of the Plan, it is possible that proposals will be brought forward which in some specific respect go outside the terms of the relevant policy but can be seen still to be consistent with the objectives of the Plan.
- 4.24 Policy HH7 is intended to make it possible, in such circumstances, for the Parish Council/Parish Meeting to undertake pre-application discussions with the developer. If the Council/Meeting agree, at a duly convened meeting held in public, that a particular planning application does contribute to the objectives of the Plan **and** fully complies with the general conditions set out in HH1, they should inform SLDC in order that the SLDC decision makers can give due consideration to their comments.

POLICY HH7

Where the Parish Council/Meeting concludes that a development that would otherwise be ruled out by a policy in this Plan, meets the general conditions (HH1) and is consistent with the delivery of the vision upon which this Plan is based, the comments of the Council/Meeting should be given due consideration by the SLDC decision makers in their consideration of the proposal.

5. Community Objectives

- 5.1 For the vision of the Neighbourhood Plan to be realised, planning decisions need to reflect its objectives. The policies set out in the Plan are designed to facilitate this. Consultation and engagement with local residents demonstrated that there were also other matters of importance to them, which may fall outside the planning regulations but which need to be addressed as part of realising the vision. These are set out in the following community objectives that the Parish Council in Heversham and Parish Meeting in Hincaster should actively seek to pursue, along with SLDC, the County Council and other community partners.

Community Objective 1: Community Infrastructure Levy

- 5.2 New housing developments now attract a levy to support the development of community infrastructure (The Community Infrastructure Levy or CIL). This is a national provision and the local rate is set by SLDC. Following the approval of this Plan, Heversham Parish Council will automatically receive 25% of the Levy on any developments within the Parish. This should be used to support developments within the scope of this Plan and in line with its vision.
- 5.3 Because Hincaster does not have a Parish Council, the equivalent 25% of CIL for Hincaster developments will, under the current rules, revert to SLDC. In the spirit and context of this Plan, Heversham Parish Council and Hincaster Parish Meeting should encourage SLDC to ensure that it is be used by SLDC to support the development of the Hincaster community in line with the Policies set out in this Plan.

Community Objective 1

Opportunities should be sought in order that:

- A. Community facilities and organisations that contribute to the objectives of the plan are encouraged**
- B. CIL received by Heversham Parish Council is utilised to support community facilities and infrastructure in line with the objectives of the plan**
- C. CIL attributable to developments within Hincaster is utilised by SLDC, in conjunction with the Parish Meeting, to support community facilities and infrastructure in line with the objectives of the Plan.**

Community Objective 2 Housing Mix

- 5.4 The vision on which the Neighbourhood Plan is based seeks to ensure that the parishes are “sustainable communities... for residents of all ages”. In Heversham in particular, the current age profile is weighted towards the older age groups. It seems likely that the price of housing will exacerbate this in coming years, because the properties tend to be such that they require either a substantial mortgage or a sizeable equity stake. Many younger house-buyers will be more inclined to look to other parts of South Lakeland in order to buy more for less. Similarly, there is only a modest number of properties for rent and many of these are costlier properties.
- 5.5 The Housing Policies set out in the plan are intended to encourage affordable housing, but the reality is that with market forces, very few of the houses that may be built between now and 2025 will be in a different price bracket to the majority of the existing housing stock. One of the best ways to stimulate the kind of housing development that will support

a wider mix of accommodation in the two parishes may not be through planning policies but through establishing a Housing Trust that will itself undertake development.

- 5.6 Housing Trusts have been successfully established elsewhere in South Lakeland. They are social businesses, based in the local community providing housing at more affordable levels, either for rent, shared ownership or for sale. Whilst a key consideration is their potential to bring in some younger residents to the communities, the housing they develop can also offer solutions to the need that has been identified for “downsizing” by older people.

Community Objective 2

Opportunities to establish the feasibility of a Housing Trust in the parishes should be considered and, if it appears feasible, to seek to create the partnerships necessary to enable such a Trust to make an appropriate local contribution in line with the Plan.

Community Objective 3: Pathways and Connections

- 5.7 Heversham and Hincaster are linked through a network of footpaths and bridleways, which connect also with neighbouring communities. Local residents value these routes and there is scope for them to be of benefit to people from elsewhere. An objective of the Plan is to enhance the facilities for people to enjoy the countryside and to move around within the settlements, minimising the need for pedestrians, cyclists and riders to use the roads, whilst being sensitive to the natural environment and the character of the area. Wherever possible footpaths, cycle ways and bridleways should be accessible for those with restricted mobility.
- 5.8 Many existing footpaths, bridleways and green spaces could be improved and enhanced, with particular reference to stile improvements, renewed drainage and path surfacing (where appropriate). The appropriate placing/restoration of seats along the network of paths and better way-marking would also be of benefit.
- 5.9 There is potential to create greater connectivity through new routes, recognising that these will need to maintain the essential nature of the area. The Hincaster Trailway is an asset to both villages and there is particular scope for its further development/extension past Tristram’s playing field and on towards the Kent Estuary. As noted in 4.19, Natural England has proposals for a coastal path and should this materialise there will be scope for connections between it and existing paths in the Parish. Similarly, the Lancaster Canal tow path is an important longer distance route with which additional connections might be developed. More locally there is scope for improved connections with existing routes, such as between Park House Drive and Woodhouse Lane; the village centre and Tristrams playing field; Mabbin Hall Lane and Heversham Head, through the woodland and through the church yard to the north of the church where currently there is no path.
- 5.10 A programme of works to improve signage, the accessibility of some stiles and to develop interpretative display panels would benefit both local residents and visitors. Panels could provide information points explaining the history and natural life of the area whilst using illustrations and photographs to depict the highlights and show route maps.

Community Objective 3

Opportunities should be sought to enhance and extend the local network of paths and

tracks and to improve accessibility, whilst being sensitive to their setting and to the impact of increased recreational use of environmentally important areas.

Community Objective 4: Community Activities and Organisations

- 5.11 The Parishes have a range of community activities and organisations for people to enjoy. These are promoted and supported by people who live in the local area and they contribute to a sense of community and belonging. There is a wish to see their continuing use and further development.
- 5.12 The Athenaeum in Heversham is an important community hub, providing a high quality location for a wide range of local groups and activities, including community events. It is also available to hire for private functions and special events, such as art and craft fairs attracting visitors from a wide area. Hincaster no longer has the Mission Hall but village events such as the “Party in the Pasture” have been sustained and developed.
- 5.13 St Peter’s Church in Heversham is a prominent building of significant historical and architectural interest. It is a spiritual focal point for the Anglicans within the Parishes but also provides a location for some events not of a religious nature such as musical concerts and the Dallam School prize giving. It has scope for some further use as a venue.
- 5.14 Some organisations and community groups, such as the Bowling club have their own facilities but many use the excellent and well maintained facilities of the Athenaeum or, like the Tennis Club, access the resources of Dallam School. Many of activities are not confined to people from the Parishes but draw in people from neighbouring communities in particular Milnthorpe and Levens. The Parish News and the Hincaster Hub newsletter provide a valued channel of communication to all households.
- 5.15 Dallam School manages Tristram’s Sports field and there is an intention to increase the use of this asset following the rebuilding of the Pavilion. The main site for Dallam School is in Milnthorpe but the sizeable Boarding House in Heversham has scope to further develop links between the boarders and the local community. The Primary School in Leasgill forms a point of connection for parents of some of the younger children from the Parishes and beyond. There is also a children’s playground maintained by the Parish Council.
- 5.16 Two charitable trusts, The Rhoda Thompson Trust and The Leasgill Quarry Trust play an active role in supporting community development. Otherwise the growth of activities, facilities and organisations relies on fundraising and contributions from participants or on grants from external bodies.

Community Objective 4

Opportunities should be sought to use the full range of community assets and resources for the greater benefit of local people and to promote the development of new amenities.

Community Objective 5: Private Transport

- 5.17 The primary transport mode in the villages is the car. Most homes have at least one vehicle but a significant number have 2 or more (Appendix 5). This means that there must already be more than 650 vehicles “resident” in the villages. Increased residential development will

increase traffic on the road network and parking space within the villages. In addition, any visitor development, particularly an increase in caravan movements on the marsh, will affect movement on the largely single track roads leading to sites and some widening or additional passing places may be required. Also access/egress junctions on the A6 may require re-modelling. There are concerns about the speed of traffic on Princes Way and speed restrictions may be desirable.

Community Objective 5

Opportunities should be sought to ensure that:

- A. Sufficient un-obstructive parking spaces are available and new provision is designed to be permeable and safe**
- B. Road remodelling, traffic management and signage safely accommodates current and future traffic movements in the parishes.**

Community Objective 6: Public Transport

5.18 The villages are currently served by 3 main service bus routes:

555 Lancaster – Kendal/Keswick passing through Heversham hourly in each direction

755 Morecambe – Bowness passing along the A6, 4 per day in each direction

552 Arnside – Kendal passing through Hincaster, 3 per day in each direction

5.19 These services can be “lifelines”, most particularly for those who do not drive. They enable access to service centres for commuting, education, healthcare, shopping and leisure outings. Their retention is important but so too is encouragement of their use, to ensure that services are retained and also contribute to reducing use of private cars. Better waiting facilities might support greater use, with shelters provided where possible, along with improved provision for bus stops on the A6. The routes appear to be reasonably adequate for the villages at the present time, but any further curtailment, particularly of the 552, would be detrimental to the resident’s needs, and the sustainability of the villages.

5.20 Community Transport is emerging as a potential substitute for bus services when curtailments occur following commercial decisions by bus operators or withdrawal of subsidy. The age of the population and the fact that facilities and services are largely outside the Parishes suggests that there may be a need to develop ways of helping people to sustain maximum mobility and independence. Whilst much may be achieved through informal arrangements between neighbours and friends, the potential added value of more organized community support and transport schemes should be kept under review.

5.21 Transport for school pupils needs to be available at an affordable price for parents.

5.22 Access to rail stations at Arnside and Oxenholme usually requires a change of bus with poor connectivity and improvements to this would be desirable.

Community Objective 6

Opportunities should be taken to:

- A. Retain and improve present bus service provision**

- B. Improve waiting facilities for passengers at key pick-up points**
- C. Improve connection with railway stations**
- D. Foster appropriate community transport schemes and initiatives**

Community Objective 7: Broadband

- 5.23 BT's superfast broadband became available to much of the area in 2016. Increasingly people are looking to faster speeds, particularly to support business use and streaming of films and TV. It would seem likely that demand for the greater functionality of the hyper-fast broadband will increase. Its availability is likely to be a factor in increasing the attractiveness of the parishes to future house buyers and small businesses.
- 5.24 The Viver Green development at Greenside is to be connected to hyper fast broadband. This creates opportunities for its possible extension into Hincaster but also may provide a route for Heversham. There may also be other opportunities in the future, depending on the level of demand and costs.

Community Objective 7

Opportunities should be taken to assess the level of potential take up and to explore options for delivery of hyper fast broadband connectivity