

YARNFIELD AND COLD MEECE PARISH COUNCIL  
PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES  
Wednesday 14 December 2022  
Yarnfield Park Conference Centre

Present (for all or part of the meeting): -

**Councillors:**

David Beeston

Brian Eyre

Margaret Broader

Sally Parkin (Chairperson)

Officer in attendance: John Fraser, Clerk to the Parish Council

Also in attendance: 0

Public at the meeting: 1

Apologies for Absence

22-539 Apologies were received from:

- Cllr Stela Hughes
- Cllr Frank Cromey
- Cllr Jeremy Pert (Staffordshire County Council)
- Cllr Roy James (Stafford Borough Council)
- Cllr James Nixon (Stafford Borough Council)

Declaration of Interest

22-540 Nil

Public Question Time

Question

A second-hand car business is operating from Gorsty Hill Farm. Cars are being stored at the property, customers are visiting the site on any day of the week, including Sundays, and cars are being repaired by a mobile vehicle repair service.

What can be done to control the use of this domestic property for commercial car sales?

Response

22-541 As a result of advice, the complainants have now contacted Stafford Borough Council enforcement team by email. This prompted a swift response and as a result the owner of the business has been advised that:

- The use of the property in connection with vehicle repairs/sales requires planning permission.
- Should they choose to submit a planning application it is unlikely to be supported by the Council, however they do have a right to appeal any potential refusal with The Planning Inspectorate.
- A deadline has been set to cease the use and relocate the business to more suitable premises by no later than 31 December 2022, and that

in the interim they must cease any vehicle repairs work from the site, cease placing vehicles for sale on the local road network and have due consideration to neighbouring properties in terms of hours of operation and noise and disturbance.

- Based on this advice the owner of the business has confirmed that they do not consider the submission of an application a viable option.
- The owner has confirmed that they will be complying with the request.

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 – to approve the draft minutes (as previously circulated and posted on the parish council website.)

22-542 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 16 November 2022 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

Reports from Borough and County Councillors

22-543 Nil

HS2 – update report

22-544 The HS2 update report in November 2022 focussed on the alternative proposals for the HS2 project that SRCG has put to the Government and how cancelling Phase 2 would lead to a far better rail network to the North West and save at least £39.6 billion. At that time, we were hopeful that the new Chancellor may see the folly of proceeding with the HS2 project as currently envisaged, and at least place Phase 2 on hold to give more time to look at the alternatives. Sadly, he did not take the opportunity in the Autumn Statement and so we are now engaged in a race against time to try and get the Government to see sense.

22-545 Part of this argument also relates to inflation. Although CPI was 10.1% in September (10.7% for November) and RPI 12.6% (now 14.0%), infrastructure sector inflation is running at 18.1% in September. Mark Thurston, HS2 CEO has made it clear that he expects for indexation to be applied to the HS2 project. So, whilst the Government is prepared to limit all departments to below CPI inflation, HS2 will need inflation protection, or something extra will need to be cancelled. Based on the overwhelming evidence that we have produced, that should be Phase 2!

22-546 HS2 Ltd is determined to push ahead with its works as quickly as possible which is why we are now seeing so much activity on the ground locally.

22-547 Although the Early Environmental Works being carried out on the northern side of Yarnfield Lane are coming to an end, ground investigation works relating to the Yarnfield Lane realignment and the signalisation of the Yarnfield Lane junction with the A34 have started and will continue for several weeks. These works involve:

- Yarnfield Land GI Works - Kier
  - o West of Moss Lane to A34 junction
  - o Start 28th November, end 23rd December 2022
  - o Temporary lights 0800-1600
  - o Lane closures 1900-0500
  - o Pavement coring etc
  - o Access to affected properties on Yarnfield Lane during overnight period by intercom and contractor escort



- Some instances of failure noted, i.e. visitors to Darlaston Grange (last week) and resident of Moss Lane on way back from Wayfarer
  - Kier said today that works supervisor had been replaced
- A34 Fillybrooks GI Works - Kier
    - Around junction near Wayfarer including Trent Road
    - Due to start on 5th December but start delayed until 12th December
    - 12th - 16th December, A34 northbound closed between Walton island and Esso garage island from 2100-0500
    - Escort in place for Wayfarer guests after 9pm, but Wayfarer had been promised Yarnfield Lane works would not coincide
    - 19 December to 4th January 2023 A34 northbound closed between Walton island and Esso garage island from 2100-0500. Outside lane of southbound also closed. Notice says that works closed down from 23rd December to 2 January and all traffic management will be removed.
    - 5th January to 13th January 2023, A34 northbound closed between Walton island and Esso garage island from 2100-0500 and Trent Road closed.
    - Pavement coring etc.
    - Official diversion route is via A520 to A50 at Meir.
  - Land possession programme - Balfour Beatty
    - Access from Yarnfield Lane to land being acquired for the HS2 railway work to facilitate fencing
    - Temporary lights between Moss Lane and M6 and near Wayfarer (road widening?) from 16th January, although possessions start from 9th or 13th with landowners subject to CPO?
    - Ongoing management of habitats? and grass/hedgerow cutting
    - An update on the Advance Civils Works will be published after Christmas.

22-548 The Annual Extraordinary Meeting of the HS2 Transport Sub-Group was held on 28th November. Invitations to the parties that asked most questions at last year's meeting (Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council and Woore Parish Council) failed to materialise and we therefore did not know about the meeting until after it had occurred.

#### Action Tracker Update

- 22-549 Minute 22-188 – Community Project Officer recruitment
- Interviews for the post will take place on 16 January 2023
  - The interview panel will include Cllr Parkin and two representatives from Support Staffordshire.
- 22-550 Minute 22-153 - Yarnfield Greenway application to Staffordshire County Council
- No decision has been made about the applications from parish councils to secure support from the Staffordshire County Council infrastructure budget.
- 22-551 Minute 22-376 - Labour in Vain Asset of Community Value application

- It is hoped a decision on the application will be received before the end of January 2023.

22-552 A copy of the Update of Actions Report, set out in Appendix 1, and posted on the parish council website was noted.

Parish Clerk's report: Budgets

22-553 Schedule of invoices awaiting payment since the last meeting = £866.99

22-554 A grant of £7,885 from LOCALITY, to support the work on the Neighbourhood plan, has been received.

22-555 Current Account bank reconciliation on 14 December 2022 = £42,877.08

22-556 Reserve Account bank reconciliation on 14 December 2022 = £6,010.01

22-557 It was proposed that £25,000 is transferred to the reserve account, this will be made up of the Lottery Grant, the LOCALITY grant and money allocated to capital programme projects. Funds will then be drawn down as these projects are completed.

22-558 **Resolution:** It was resolved that:

- The schedule of payment for the period 16 November – 14 December 2022, set out in Appendix 2, is approved.
- The transfer of £25,000 to the Reserve Account is made.

Correspondence

22-559 Next year's parish council election is likely to result in a new group of councillors. The Staffordshire Parish Council Association (SPCA) has provided a reminder that the new intake of councillors would benefit from training.

22-560 SPCA course prices for next year will remain broadly unchanged at £30 for a 2 hour course. Courses where Councillors may appreciate support are areas such as Councillor Fundamentals, Finance for Councillors, Employment and Planning.

22-561 The 2022/23 training budget is set at £630. This may not be sufficient to cover the training requirements in 2023. The budget setting process in January 2023 will have to consider the need for an enhanced budget.

Stafford Borough Council Preferred Options- to note the consultation response

22-562 The parish council response to the Preferred Options paper, set out in Appendix 3, was sent by email to the planning department on Monday 12 December 2023. An email confirming receipt of the response was received.

22-563 The work done to encourage residents to submit their own thoughts on the Preferred Options paper has resulted in numerous responses being sent to the Borough Council.

22-564 Timetable for the Local Plan Review:

- Preferred Options (October – December 2022)
- Publication (July 2023)
- Submission (November 2023)
- Examination (February 2024)
- Adoption (October 2024)



- 22-565 Copies of the responses from Chebsey Parish Council, Eccleshall Parish Council and a resident's group at Slindon have been circulated to councillors, who were impressed by the quality of these papers and please to note common themes.
- 22-566 The Preferred Option Paper includes a commitment to include the four parish councils most affected by the Meecebrook proposals in the preparation of the Framework Masterplan, Supplementary Planning Document, concept plan and site-wide design and development principles for Meecebrook. The councils to be involved will be Yarnfield and Cold Meece, Chebsey, Eccleshall and Swynnerton.
- 22-567 **Resolution:** It was resolved that:
- i. A request is sent to Swynnerton Parish Council asking to receive a copy of their response to the Preferred Option paper.
  - ii. A letter is sent to the Interim Head of Planning at Stafford Borough Council asking for an update on how he will ensure the four parish councils affected by Meecebrook are involved in the design process.

#### Village Green - Section 106 application

- 22-568 The application to Stafford Borough Council to release the s106 money, set out in Appendix 4, has been prepared and is now ready for submission to the Borough Council. Based on the estimates received the indicative costs for the project will be £90,000 - £140,000.
- 22-569 Funding for the project will come from a combination of section 106 budget (£41,800) and an application to the HS2 Community and Environment Fund (£75,000) which is obviously short of the projected budget.
- 22-570 A full tender process will need to be undertaken in line with the council's Standing Orders and the work programme adjusted to ensure the budget commitment does not exceed the capital available.
- 22-571 The tender process will start following approval of the section 106 application.

#### Village Green - Lease

- 22-572 Stafford Borough Council has agreed to lease the whole of the village green to the parish council. They must advertise the lease of the land in a local newspaper. The cost of the advert will be in the region of £500. Discussions are taking place to establish whether Stafford Borough Council will pay this cost or whether the cost will need to be met by the Parish Council.
- 22-573 **Resolution:** It was resolved that:
- i. The section 106 application is sent to the borough council
  - ii. Cllrs James and Nixon are asked to invite the Borough Council Cabinet Lead for Leisure, Cllr Mrs Trowbridge, to come to a meeting in the parish to see for herself what the project will deliver.
  - iii. The Parish Council start discussions with Groundworks to prepare an application to the HS2 Community and Environment Fund.

#### Neighbourhood Plan - update and next actions

- 22-574 Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan text has been started. The first draft document which includes policy statements, set out in Appendix 5, prepared by Urban Vision, have now been completed.

- 22-575 The draft document has yet to be completed however it is important that that Stafford Borough Council are given an opportunity to see the policy statements, so they are able to provide their thoughts on the policies.
- 22-576 Change to section 2 of the draft document, in respect of school pupil numbers and population data, will be required before it is sent to Stafford Borough Council.
- 22-577 The AECOM consultant work on the production of a design code which will sit alongside the Neighbourhood Plan has identified an opportunity to produce a more detailed analysis of three areas in the parish: Yarnfield Park; the former BT Conference Centre Gym; and the derelict VOSA site at Cold Meece.
- 22-578 The policy statements include policies for the protection of Open Green Spaces. To support this work an Open Space Consultation will need to be carried out to provide the evidence to underpin these policies.
- 22-579 **Resolution:** It was resolved that:
- i. The draft policy statements in Appendix 5 are approved
  - ii. The amended draft Neighbourhood Plan is sent to Stafford Borough Council.
  - iii. All application is made to LOCALITY to provide technical support to prepare a Master Plan for up to three locations in the parish.
  - iv. To approve the Open Space Consultation that will start in January 2023.

#### Forward Plan

- 22-580 The forward plan, set out in Appendix 6, for meetings was noted.

#### Planning – to consider any planning applications in the parish

- 22-581 22/36503/COU - Moss Cottage, Yarnfield Lane, Yarnfield - Change of use from agricultural land to residential.

The application relates to a piece of land that lies between Moss Cottage and the Wellbeing Park football ground.

- 22-582 **Resolution:** It was resolved to send the following comment:

#### Decision

That no objection is raised about the application.

#### Reasons

In principle the Parish Council are reluctant to approve an application that would result in agricultural land being taken into domestic use. On this occasion the Parish Council noted that there would be no benefit in asking that this small piece of land is retained as agricultural land as there is now no physical connection between the application land and any surrounding agricultural land.

- 22-583 22/36809/FUL - The Barn, Whitemoor Farm, Yarnfield Lane, Yarnfield - Use of former farm building as two storey, four bedroom dwellinghouse including insertion of rooflights to serve first floor (retrospective)



Decision

- 22-584 The Parish Council is frustrated by having to consider another retrospective application which has arisen because the applicant failed to follow the planning permission granted in 2010. Setting aside the retrospective nature of this application, the Parish Council has no comment it wishes to make.

Reasons

- 22-585 The Parish Council is disappointed to see a retrospective application on this property.

Date and time of next meeting

- 22-586 18 January 2023 at 7.30pm



Signed




Chairperson of the Parish Council



Date: 18 January 2023

Meeting closed 5:15 pm

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council  
Council Resolutions and Actions




Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 06/12/22

	 Warning	 Action – in progress	 Achieved
July 2022	12	8	5
September 2022	2	11	4
October	2	13	2
November	2	14	0



<u>Minute</u>	<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>RAQ</u>
22-472	Parish Council Elections 2023 - Work to promote the May 2023 elections and opportunity it presents to become a parish councillor is prepared	Work to develop a poster and social media campaign to encourage people to get involve with the parish council.	Work to start in December with completion date for January 2023	
22-470	Stafford Borough Council Options Appraisal - Parish Council to work with neighbouring councils on a response to the Preferred Options Paper - That the Borough Council is approached to ask for a specific event to answer questions about the proposed Garden Community at Meecebrook for parish Councils directly affected by that proposal.	Discussions with Chebsey and Eccleshall Parish Councils held to agree on joint working. Email sent to Stafford Borough Council asking for briefing for the parish council on Meecebrook. Draft report to be prepared for November Parish Council Meeting.		



Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council  
Council Resolutions and Actions



Minute	Resolution	Action	Status	RAG
<u>October 2022</u>				
22-376	<p><u>Yarnfield Lane Lay-by</u></p> <p><i>The Borough Council is approached to discuss what enforcement options could be used to tackle the problem of littering.</i></p> <p><i>The Staffordshire County Council Highways are approached to raise the Parish Council's concern about the lay-by.</i></p>	<p>Email to Stafford Borough Council Environmental Health enforcement team.</p> <p>Camera monitoring notice to be placed at the lay-by.</p>	Waiting for response	
<u>June 2022</u>				
22-285	<p><u>Network+ contractor – helpline charges</u></p> <p>Network Plus and the Staffordshire County Council are contacted to express the parish council's concern about the use of a premium phone number to report defects with the traffic management lights.</p>	<p>Chasing response from Network Plus (06/09/22)</p> <p>Concern about you of 0845 number raised with Major Project Manager</p> <p>Email sent to Network Plus asking for their views on why an 0845 number is used and whether an 0800 or 0808 number could be used. (05/07/22)</p> <p>Email sent to Cllr Pert asking if the Staffordshire County Council permit arrangements for traffic management could require the use of a freephone number for reporting faults. (05/07/22)</p> <p>Network+ forwarded email to their contractor</p>	Awaiting response from Network+ and SCC	
22-265	<p><u>Labour in Vain</u></p> <p>i. The notes of the Annual Parish Assembly were notes;</p> <p>ii. Work is done to establish a group to approach the Stonegate in with a view</p>	<p>Stafford Borough Council confirm application has been received and no additional information is required and a decision will be made ASAP.</p>	Await response from Stafford Borough Council	

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council  
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<u>Minute</u>	<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>RAG</u>
	to agreeing how the pub can be reopened. iii. Work is undertaken to register the Labour in Vain and a community asset with Stafford Borough Council.	Registration as a community asset made to Stafford Borough Council (26/08/22) Autumn 22 Newsletter used to support the pub and promote their Facebook page.	on ACV application	
<u>April 2022</u>				
22-188 22-271	<u>Community Project officer appointment</u> The Clerk work with Support Staffordshire to develop a scheme that is beneficial to the parish council up to a limit of £2,000.	Application form agreed and interview date for candidates set Monday 16 January 2023. Lottery fund approved. Meeting with Support Staffordshire arranged to project detail and appointment of the project officer - 21/11/22 Lottery application prepared with support of Support Staffordshire, and now await result (25/08/22) Lottery fund application prepared and sent to Support Staffordshire Agreement from Yarnfield Park to use the centre secured. (14/06/22) Meeting with SS requested to complete work on the lottery bid. (04/07/22)	Interview date agreed	
22-153	<u>Yarnfield Lane Cycle path</u> - That the council endorses the proposal to provide a safe cycle and footpath connection between Yarnfield and Stone. - That the Staffordshire County Council and neighbouring parish councils are contacted to secure their support.	Update on progress requested [06/12/22] Project proposal submitted to Staffordshire County Council Work with SRCG to prepare supporting evidence to be submitted to Staffordshire County Council	Awaiting decision from Staffordshire County Council	



Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council  
Council Resolutions and Actions


<u>Minute</u>	<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>RAG</u>
		Staffordshire County Council confirm arrangement for HS2a Road Safety Fund.  Email sent to Cllr Pert to forward to appropriate officer/cabinet member at Staffordshire County Council (11/07/22)		
<u>March 2022</u>				
22-97	<u>New Office Systems</u>			
21-584	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A Microsoft Business 365 Standard licence is purchased.</li> <li>- Set up bespoke email systems for councillors.</li> <li>- That a laptop up to a value of £400 including VAT is purchased.</li> <li>- That the existing Zoom licence is terminated before the renewal date in May 2022.</li> <li>- That support is provided to the councillors in the use of Microsoft 365 and Teams.</li> </ul>	<p>Proposal to migrate to a new version of the Website template.</p> <p>Costs associated with this work £250 (estimated)</p> <p>Brief for this project has been extended to look at migrating the parish council website to a later version that would provide enhanced functionality and support bespoke parish council email addresses for councillors.</p> <p>Laptop setup complete.</p> <p>Laptop purchased</p> <p>Zoom Licence cancelled</p> <p>Enquiries made about IT support for councillors, cost prohibitive.</p> <p>Discussions with SCC IT support and use of MS 365</p> <p>Laptop purchased to run new system (31/03/22)</p> <p>Help from Staffordshire County Council IT secured (03/05/22)</p>	Action deferred to summer recess	
22-82	<u>Community Speed Watch</u>			
		Staffordshire Community Speed Watch asked to undertake risk assess on new locations on Yarnfield	Contact Staffordshire	

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council  
Council Resolutions and Actions




<u>Minute</u>	<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>RAG</u>
	<p>Contact is made with the Staffordshire CSW to arrange for them to visit the parish to undertake risk assessments on new sites.</p> <p>Contact is made with the Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, to press for a change in the approach to enforcement on 20mph roads.</p> <p>CSW activity is reported to the Parish Council on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>Lane Buffer Zone, Meece Road and Swynnerton Road, Cold Meece.</p> <p>Staffordshire Community Speed Watch propose using Yarnfield as a pilot project to test feasibility of CSW operating in 20mph areas.</p> <p>Email to Staffordshire CSW to establish pilot project</p> <p>Activity is linked to the adoption of the Yarnfield Park Roads by Staffordshire County Council. which was first scheduled to happen in December 2020.</p> <p>Contact with Staffordshire CSW to be actioned once local group established and new coordinator operating.</p> <p>Letter sent to deputy PFCC</p> <p>Response received from Deputy PFCC</p> <p>Not content with response, further research required to reply to DPFCC</p> <p>Review report to be prepared for September 2022 meeting.</p>	<p>County Council to confirm adoption date.</p>	
<u>February 2022</u>				
22-58	<p><u>Network +</u></p> <p>The parish council prepare a list of issues and follow up actions required to reinstate Yarnfield Lane which will then be sent to Network Plus.</p>	<p>Chasing email send to Network Plus Project Manager – Major Projects (12/11/22)</p> <p>Site meeting with Major Projects Manager who has agreed to action the parish council’s snagging list</p> <p>Assurances given that the snagging work would be undertaken now they were nearing the end of the contract wok</p>	<p>Waiting for conformation of the date for complete the work</p>	



Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council  
Council Resolutions and Actions


<u>Minute</u>	<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>RAG</u>
		<p>Concern about delay in dealing with the outstanding actions raised with Network + Project Manager – Major Projects. 05/09/22</p> <p>Site survey undertaken and list of outstanding action sent to Network + (25/03/22)</p> <p>Still waiting for confirmation that the work will be carried out.</p>		
<u>September 2021</u>				
<p>21-524</p> <p>21-746</p>	<p><u>Village Green Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The plan, which sets out the vision for the project is approved;</li> <li>- A meeting is arranged with the borough councillors for the parish and the lead officer at Stafford Borough Council;</li> <li>- That a costed delivery plan is prepared.</li> </ul>	<p>Section 106 funding application prepared</p> <p>HS2 Phase 2a CEF funding application being prepared.</p> <p>Stafford Borough Council approve lease of land to Parish Council</p> <p>Stafford Borough Council approve additional £10k from the Westbridge Park Project</p> <p>Meeting held with four contractors. Awaiting indicative costs that will enable completion of the SBC s106 application form and the submission of the revised concept plan to Stafford Borough Council</p> <p>To be arranged - site meeting with Stafford Borough Council officer, Cabinet Member and Ward members</p> <p>Revised plan prepared. Actions to be completed:</p> <p>Indicative costing to be obtained from at least two contractors by end of July 2022</p> <p>Concept plan prepared and present to Stafford Borough Council. Further work required to ensure plan meets requirements of the s106 agreement.</p>	<p>Parish Council approve s106 application to Stafford Borough Council.</p>	

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council  
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<u>Minute</u>	<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>RAG</u>
21-499	<u>Severn Trent work Highlows/Yarnfield Lane</u> Severn Trent give undertaking to complete work on the Highlows Lane/Yarnfield Lane Sewer	Work on the method statement for delivery of the second part of the project still to be completed and agreed with Staffordshire County Council Highways Team. Continue to liaise with STWCo.  Stage 1 works completed. Now waiting for details of the second stage works and start date.  Meeting on site with Severn Trent engineers. Work to be completed in two stages. Part 1 work scheduled to start on 3 October – 7 October 2022  Meeting with Severn Trent Manager to agree work (August 2021)  Chase up email sent – 28 June 2022	Contractors due to start 3 October.  Continue to monitor progress.	
21-488	<u>Gates at Cold Meece</u>  - The proposal to build wooden gates was approved.  - That the County Council Highways Department are contacted to secure approval for the siting of the gates.	Location of Gates identified and shared with Amey and ward Councillors. (21/09/22)  Follow up meeting with Amey to agree arrangements  Awaiting decision by Staffordshire County Council over the date for completion of the 40mph limit on Meece Road and Swynnerton Road.  Contacted Highways Team with a request to agree site, design and installation (11/07/22)	Actioning proposal AMEY to agree location and construction of the gate	
<u>June 2021</u>				
21-364 22-368	<u>Yarnfield Park – Section 106 Agreement</u>  - Yarnfield Park residents Group	Meeting with residents agree to request meeting with SBC Head of Planning in January.	Awaiting response from	



Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council  
Council Resolutions and Actions

<u>Minute</u>	<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>RAG</u>
	<p>- It was resolved that arrangements are made to hold a public meeting for the residents of Yarnfield Park</p>	<p>Second meeting scheduled for 30 November</p> <p>Request to Stafford Borough Council to ask that representatives of the Resident's Group meet with planning and lead team.</p> <p>Options report being prepared for Stafford Borough Council Leadership Team</p> <p>Inaugural meeting of the Yarnfield Park Residents Group held.</p> <p>Response from Interim Head of planning who has referred concerns to the legal team for guidance.</p> <p>Letter to Stafford Borough Council – Interim Head of Planning asking for his intervention to resolve (26/08/22)</p> <p>Stafford Borough Council have still to answer basic questions about their handling of the section 106 agreement with the developers and what enforcement action they will take to secure compliance with the agreement.</p> <p>- Contact original group members to reenergise formation of the residents group</p> <p>First meeting of a residents group held (13/07/21).</p> <p>Ambition to establish a resident's group still exists on the estate. The arrival of the annual Pinnacle bills for the maintenance contract (2022-23) will be issued in July.</p>	Interim Head of Planning	
<u>May 2021</u>				
22-47	<p><u>Firing Range</u></p> <p>It was resolved that the Chairperson write to the PFCC;</p>			

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council  
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<u>Minute</u>	<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>RAG</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To press the case to secure mitigation being put into the existing range;</li> <li>- To seek assurances about the timescale for completing the business case to move the range.</li> <li>- To secure an undertaking about the police authority's commitment to relocate the range.</li> </ul>	<p>Material proposed for the second sate of acoustic work failed fire safety checks. Further work being undertaken to find a suitable acoustic cladding material.</p> <p>Police asked to say when they hope this work to be complete.</p> <p>PFCC signs off business case for the range – 01/09/22</p> <p>The first stage of the acoustic works which is the mitigation wall along the left flank of the Range was installed at the end of August 2022.</p> <p>An assessment of a number of acoustic products for the right flank wall is being undertaken by the Police who should be making a decision quite quickly and then will get it installed.</p> <p>Mitigation work at the range to be installed in September.</p> <p>Letter sent. Assurance given this was a priority to the PFCC and would be a regular discussion with the chief constable.</p> <p>Consultant report on mitigation work received by the police. Meeting with Environmental Health Service to be held to agree work programme.</p> <p>Mitigation work agreed between police and Stafford Borough Council.</p> <p>PFCC confirms by email progress being made with the business case to find a new location for the range.</p>	<p>On track, continue to monitor.</p>	
<u>September 2021</u>				
	<p>Highways Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Buffer Zone</li> </ul>			

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<u>Minute</u>	<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>RAG</u>
	- Cold Meece 40 mph limit	<p>Traffic orders confirmed. Awaiting date for installation of signs.</p> <p>Speed limit along the Swynnerton Road in Cold Meece and the Yarnfield Lane buffer zones will become legal soon (hopefully before the September) although the physical implementation on the ground is extremely slow at the moment, due to material supply issues.</p> <p>Final stage of the public consultation on buffer zones and Cold Meece 40 mph limit completed [September 2021]</p>	Start date to be confirmed by SCC	

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council  
Schedule of Payments - 14 December 2022

Date	Ref/Chq no	Payee	Description	NET	VAT	RECEIPTS	Payment
02/12/2022	DD	Npower	Defib - utility bill	5.18			5.18
14/12/2022	BACS	Clerk	Salary	604.63			604.63
14/12/2022	BACS	Clerk	Expenses	93.93	12.25		106.18
14/12/2022	BACS	HMRC	PAYE payment	151.00			151.00
				854.74	12.25		866.99

Chairperson:

Date:

*Sally Parri*  
14-Dec-22





## Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council

### Stafford Borough Council Preferred Options Consultation Response

#### 1. Meecebrook Garden Community

##### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council acknowledges Stafford Borough Council's preferred option of Meecebrook Garden Community to address the local housing need over the next 20+ years. We welcome this opportunity to comment, but request in the strongest possible terms that our parish, with Chebsey and Eccleshall, is actively engaged in the refinement of future plans.
- 1.2 The councillors understand that Meecebrook has emerged as the preferred site largely due to the opportunities for scale and ambition it represents.
- 1.3 We accept the need for new housing in the Borough and we understand that the duty to cooperate requires the Borough Council to consider unmet need for housing within the region as well as locally.
- 1.4 We recognise the desire to create capacity within the workforce to support economic growth.
- 1.5 We would like to see high quality new housing built in Stafford Borough with careful consideration given to connectivity, community, employment, education, health and wellbeing for new residents and existing communities.
- 1.6 However, having studied the Preferred Options paper and associated evidence we believe that Meecebrook appears to be at best an unrealistic aspiration and at worst a costly social experiment which is highly likely to fail. The impacts of this will be felt most keenly by the residents of Meecebrook and the three parish councils but the financial burden will be borne by the residents of the whole of the Borough.

##### 2. Timing of the Consultation

- 2.1 Meaningful assessment and analysis is difficult as this consultation is happening ahead of the publication of the Meecebrook Masterplan. Appendix 9 of the Local Plan is frustratingly blank, and we only have a concept map to consider.
- 2.2 Since the devil will be in the detail, our comments are by necessity limited to points of principle and will often be presented as questions.
- 2.3 We would like to have raised many of these comments and questions over the past 3 years, which would have given Stafford Borough Council the benefit of accommodating local knowledge and expertise within the published plans.

3. Fundamental assumption that one large new development is best
  - 3.1 **The focus on the creation of a garden community, at the expense of housing development in existing settlements, threatens the growth and sustainability of rural communities.**
  - 3.2 **Careful consideration needs to be given to the cost of infrastructure associated with large scale development and the unintended consequences of delayed provision of major infrastructure projects.**
  - 3.3 **There is a fear that Meecebrook would become a “black hole” drawing in all future investment at the expense of existing settlements.**
  - 3.4 There is a perceived perception within the Preferred Options that development in existing settlements is bad; that it will be opposed by residents and will undermine the quality of those settlements. Yarnfield has seen a 55% increase in the number of houses during the life of the existing local plan. These developments have enhanced and added to the diversity of the parish, resulting in a shift in the age profile of the parish without which Yarnfield would have become an increasingly elderly population with little or no future for the community.
  - 3.5 Developments within rural settlements, supported by neighbourhood plans, will provide for renewal of housing stock and an opportunity for upgrading and improving local infrastructure and facilities across the whole of the borough. Without the s106 monies that currently support local communities, how does Stafford Borough Council propose to fund community infrastructure improvements?
  - 3.6 We can find no evidence in the Preferred Options that demonstrates how, and at what cost, development sites in the existing settlements might be supported nor evidence to show that such developments would support improvements to local infrastructure projects. There is a fear that Meecebrook would become a “black hole,” drawing in all future investment at the expense of existing settlements.
4. Fundamental re-evaluation of the Sustainability Proposal
  - 4.1 **We believe the Meecebrook proposals are fundamentally flawed, and the review of the Sustainability Appraisal fails to take account of the withdrawal of the MOD Swynnerton site.**
  - 4.2 The Meecebrook Garden Community Concept documents states that “The concept of locating a new settlement at Cold Meece is not a new one and has been mentioned since munition production at MOD Swynnerton ceased after WW2. The concept for this new settlement was revisited in 2015, gaining further momentum when it was included in the HS2 inspired Constellation Partnership Growth Strategy which was submitted to Government in early 2017”
  - 4.3 The scheme has been developed over a number of years, with a great deal of money spent on staff time, consultants and other spending, yet there still seems to be no evidence presented to demonstrate that the new town is viable, or deliverable as proposed.
5. Housing Numbers
  - 5.1 **We believe the proposed housing numbers are not justified and unnecessary to meet the future housing needs of the Borough.**
  - 5.2 **Stafford Borough Council needs to demonstrate the additional housing numbers are supported by requests from neighbouring local authorities.**
  - 5.3 **We believe the Preferred Options does not account for the true level of windfall homes that will come forward during the plan period.**

- 5.4 **We do not consider that Meecebrook can be justified by the need to deliver additional housing and employment land in the Borough.**
- 5.5 The minimum figure for local housing need set by national guidance (calculated in accordance with the standard methodology outlined in the Planning Practice Guidance) of 391 new homes per year would produce a requirement for 7,820 dwellings over the life of the plan.
- 5.6 The Stafford Borough Economic and Housing Development Needs Assessment (Lichfields 2020) proposes that, to supply the workforce to support the core employment growth forecast, the borough's housing need equates to 435 new dwellings each year which would produce a requirement for 8,700 dwellings over the life of the plan.
- 5.7 The addition of a further 2,000 dwellings to provide for migration has been done to justify the development of Meecebrook and is unsupported by evidence of need or requests from other local authorities.
- 5.8 The Black Country Consortium who supported the principle of Stafford Borough Council providing housing to support need for the Consortium was made in 2020. However, the Sustainability Appraisal of the Black Country Plan: Regulation 18 SA Report, July 2021 makes no reference to Stafford; "The neighbouring authorities which would be likely to take some of the housing and employment need for the BCP are: South Staffordshire; Shropshire, Solihull, Lichfield; and Cannock. Further exporting to Telford and Wyre Forest is also being considered." para - 1.4.3
- 5.9 The Preferred Options proposal is based on only 6% of housing being provided through windfall sites, accounting for only 750 windfall homes. The Borough Council routinely monitor housing completions and from this it is clear the average of 400+ dwellings per year were built on windfall sites.
- 5.10 Supporting the development of windfall sites will give greater weight to the benefits of using appropriate sites within existing settlements and is so doing support the viability of those settlements.

## 6. Affordable Housing

- 6.1 **Meecebrook lies in two parish council areas, Eccleshall and Chebsey. Planning Policy 23 sets different affordable housing quotas for these parishes which will lead to inconsistency across the proposed development.**
- 6.2 **Policy 23 should be amended to require a 40% affordable housing quota across the whole of the Meecebrook development.**
- 6.3 **The Master Plan should ensure that affordable housing provision within the site should be fully integrated within the overall housing plan and not marginalised to specific areas and should be phased to occur alongside the general housing development.**
- 6.4 Policy 23 defines the approach of Stafford Borough Council to affordable housing and this policy appears to be sensitively and sensibly written. Has a decision been made about the location and composition of affordable housing as the requirements are very different regarding greenfield sites in Chebsey and Eccleshall?

## 7. Garden Community – Infrastructure Fund

- 7.1 **Will the reduced scale of development prevent the Meecebrook Development Board securing national infrastructure funding?**
- 7.2 We note the change in name for Meecebrook from "Garden Village" to "Garden Community." This we assume is needed because of the reduction in scale of the

proposal following the withdrawal of the MOD site at Cold Meece. The Garden Community concept was to see 10,000+ houses developed. This however has now been downgraded to 3,000 houses in the plan period and a possible further 3,000 in the future.

- 7.3 This scale of development will inevitably bring reduced opportunities for capital investment required to deliver the infrastructure proposals to create a complete self-sufficient, off-grid, community.

## 8. Unintended consequences

- 8.1 **No account appears to have been taken for the impact on surrounding settlements arising from housing developments coming before essential infrastructure: schools, roads, transport links and health services.**

8.2 We are concerned that we have not seen an assessment of the impact of Meecebrook on surrounding communities. The AECOM SA provides insight into the impact on biodiversity, land and flooding but the scope of the brief is limited, and the focus is more on opportunity than mitigation.

8.3 Some of the unintended consequences will occur as a result of the phasing of the development, where dwellings are occupied long before the infrastructure designed to support the communities and others will undoubtedly centre around unplanned cost rises.

8.4 The infrastructure to support the community is unlikely to be financially viable until the population reaches a certain point, meaning that the people who move into homes in the early phases of development will establish lifestyles dependent on car travel. Those residents who embrace the environmentally friendly car-free ambition may find themselves isolated. A cohesive and self-sufficient, sustainable community would need to be enabled from the outset, rather than retrofitted once private businesses calculate they will get a reasonable return on their investment.

8.5 We know from experience that it is difficult to bring people together in a diverse community without facilities and activities that give them motivation and opportunity to mix.

8.6 Other unintended consequences will arise because of unanticipated cost increases leading to compromises having to be made and spending prioritised on whatever is deemed to be most essential and/or cost effective. This scenario would undoubtedly undermine the concept and viability of the garden community.

## 9. Mitigating or responding to unintended consequences.

- 9.1 **We are concerned that consultants' reports have a tendency to tell the client what they want to hear, particularly when further commissioned work is anticipated, and when they do highlight risks, these can be overlooked.**

9.2 Overly optimistic predictions and best case scenario calculations are likely to mean that insufficient funds are available to mitigate unintended consequences. Worse still, responsibility for aftercare (of residents' wellbeing, community cohesion, buildings, services, roads, pavements, cycle ways, water courses, natural spaces etc) can easily be dodged and those who might have been accountable are long-gone once problems are evident.

## 10. Over-promising

- 10.1 **We are concerned that the Meecebrook Vision is founded on a promise to provide services and community facilities that rely entirely on others to deliver.**



10.2 We are concerned that it is not within the gift of Stafford Borough Council to promise a railway connection, schools or healthcare provision. However, it is these very advantages that have caught the imagination of the media (through targeted briefing) and local people.

## 11. Healthcare

11.1 **We are concerned that in section L of Policy 7 healthcare provision is excluded from the list of amenities which must have guaranteed funding before development can commence.**

11.2 There is a national shortage of primary care professionals - GPs, practice nurses, dentists, community pharmacists etc. The national shortage of residential and domiciliary care is at a critical level. The shortfall is not due to a lack of premises but due to a lack of staff. The reasons for this are complex: political, social and economic.

11.3 A recent study by the Health Foundation think tank (June 2022) predicts a national shortfall of 10,700 GPs by 2030/31 and 6,400 nursing vacancies in GP practices by 2030. To make matters worse, Stafford currently has the 7th highest number of patients per GP; 2,537 against a national average of 2,038.

11.4 A National Audit Office survey of NHS dentistry in February 2020 indicates that England has an average of 4.4 dentists per 10,000 population, where Italy has 8.3 and Germany 8.5. However, the regional breakdown shows that in North Staffordshire the ratio is just 3.7:10,000 which makes the area the fourth worst in England. When the NAO analysed unsuccessful attempts to get an appointment with an NHS dentist, North Staffordshire was the third worst area.

11.5 Similar staff shortages are being reported across a range of NHS professions.

11.6 In England ambulance services are now taking an average of over 59 minutes to respond to Category 2 (emergency) calls against a target of 7 minutes. This is the longest average response time since records began.

11.7 Regarding Meecebrook, we understand there is a plan to liaise with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups. This should actually be easier now since the CCGs' commissioning functions have been taken over by the Staffordshire Integrated Care Board which includes Local Authorities and GPs in its membership.

11.8 However, unless there is a strategic drive with significant additional funding made available to train, incentivise and recruit more primary care professionals in Staffordshire, Meecebrook might struggle to staff a community health centre and it is far from certain that new primary healthcare services will be approved by NHS England, especially during the early phases of the development.

## 12. Schools

12.1 **We are concerned that the promise of a new school for the children of the Meecebrook proposal will not be developed until well into the project with the inevitable consequence that pressure will be placed on existing local schools.**

12.2 Have new schools been pledged by Entrust on behalf of Staffordshire County Council? We imagine that even if this is the case, the schools will not be viable in the early stages of the development and therefore road transport will be needed to take children to schools outside of the development. We are not aware of any demographic projections for Meecebrook, nor any feasibility study regarding surplus capacity in local schools that might assure head teachers and parents that the quality of education offered to our children will not be compromised in any way.

- 12.3 It is worrying to note that the Staffordshire County Council Strategic Infrastructure plan estimates that at least 1,000 new houses would be needed to support the provision of a one class intake at primary school level.
- 12.4 We are aware that in Stone there is a three tier school system, but Eccleshall forms part of the Stafford school system which is two tier. Has the Meecebrook Board considered the implications of this on the allocation of school places?

13. Land

Best and most versatile land (BMV)

- 13.1 **We are disappointed to see that significant areas of Grade 2 BMV agricultural land are proposed to be lost to housing and ask whether there has been any consideration of how this might impact on our regional and national food security policy, and on the future of farming in our Borough?**

13.2 Paragraph 9.11.3 of the AECOM Sustainability Appraisal (SA) date July 2022 states that "The national dataset serves to suggest a likelihood of Meecebrook being associated with significant areas of 'grade 2' land." It then continues by concluding that, "...it seems likely that Meecebrook comprises BMV land."

13.3 Paragraph 9.11.1 states that: "A foremost consideration here is the need to avoid the loss of agricultural land classed as 'best and most versatile' (BMV), which the NPPF defines as that which is grade 1 (highest quality), grade 2 or grade 3a.

13.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 includes policies to protect BMV land. For example, paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that:

"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland."

13.5 Paragraph 9.11.7 of the Sustainability Appraisal concludes that: "With regards to the selection of greenfield allocations, avoiding the loss of BMV / better quality BMV agricultural land appears not to have had a major bearing on the spatial strategy and site selection process, and there are reasonable alternatives that perform better than the proposed strategy..."

Previously developed (brownfield) land

- 13.6 **The proposed Garden Community could have made a significant impact on remediating previously developed land and an opportunity has been missed by selecting Meecebrook over the other possible sites that do include previously developed land as well as potentially being better located to existing road and possibly rail infrastructure.**

13.7 Paragraph 85 of the NPPF states that: "The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist."

13.8 Paragraph 119 of the NPPF states that: "Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously developed or 'brownfield' land."

- 13.9 Despite this requirement, paragraph 9.11.7 of the Sustainability Appraisal concedes that: *“A fairly limited proportion of growth [within the 2020–40 local plan] is set to be directed to previously developed land”, before concluding that: “...there is no identified ‘reasonable alternative’ strategy that would perform better in this respect.”*
- 13.10 Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council is aware that preliminary proposals for the Meecebrook development had assumed that it would incorporate large parts of the nearby Swynnerton Training Camp owned by the Ministry of Defence (MOD).
- 13.11 Appendix IV of the 2022 Sustainability Appraisal concedes that when it states *“...extensive areas of land thought to be available at the time of the Issues and Options consultation is now unavailable (specifically MOD land at Swynnerton Training Area...)”*.
- 13.12 It is then stated that *“This led the Council to undertake further work to explore land availability, following the Issues and Options consultation, which led to additional land being identified as available. The net effect is that the current site ‘red line boundary’ is shifted significantly to the west, in the direction of Eccleshall, relative to the assumed red line boundary at the time of the Issues and Options consultation.”*
- 13.13 Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council is concerned that this statement implies that rather than reassessing the suitability of the Meecebrook site for development in the absence of the availability of the previously developed and contaminated land within the MOD’s ownership at Swynnerton, Stafford Borough Council simply moved the redline boundary to incorporate more agricultural land on the assumption that it was feasible to be able to obtain a train station and possibly a new motorway junction to serve the site.

#### 14. Land acquisition

- 14.1 **We believe that some landowners whose land is inside the “red line” of the Meecebrook proposal are not prepared to sell their land to the Development Board.**
- 14.2 We understand that compulsory purchase orders are not planned. The refusal by landowners to allow their land to be included within the proposal further undermines the viability of the project and moved it even further away from the stated vision.

#### 15. Carbon neutral development

- 15.1 **We believe a detailed CO<sub>2</sub> balance for the whole life of the project is essential to demonstrate the claim that the Meecebrook Project will produce “carbon neutral communities.”**
- 15.2 The development of Meecebrook on best and most versatile land will result in the release of CO<sub>2</sub> during the development phase and the subsequent loss of a significant CO<sub>2</sub> bank.
- 15.3 No evidence has been provided to assess the CO<sub>2</sub> balance associated with the development of Meecebrook on a greenfield site.

#### 16. Minerals

- 16.1 **We are concerned that the proposed Meecebrook development will sterilise mineral deposits on this “Mineral Safeguarding Area.”**
- 16.2 **Given the requirements of local minerals policy, Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council wishes to understand whether there are any proposals for exploiting any**

**remaining and economic mineral resources within Meecebrook prior to its development to avoid or minimise their sterilisation?**

- 16.3 The section regarding Meecebrook within the 'New Local Plan Preferred Options' is silent with respect to the location of minerals within the proposed site. However, comparison with the extant 'Policies and Proposals Map for the Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire (2015-2030)' shows that a significant part of the site is located within a 'Mineral Safeguarding Area'.
- 16.4 The minerals underlying the part of the Meecebrook site within the Minerals safeguarding Area are sand and gravel.
- 16.5 Policy 1 of Strategic Objective 1 of the Minerals Local Plan recognises the importance of sand and gravel deposits as aggregate minerals to support sustainable economic development.
- 16.6 Policy 3 of Strategic Objective 1 of the Minerals Local Plan sets out the importance of such safeguarding nationally and locally important and sets out how it is proposed to prevent resources being sterilised by non-mineral development.
- 16.7 Policy 3 includes requirements for potentially permitting the sterilisation of minerals. Specifically, it requires prospective developers to produce evidence about the existence; quantity; quality and value of the underlying or adjacent mineral resource, and also to outline reasons why the material planning benefits of the non-mineral development would outweigh the material planning benefits of the underlying or adjacent mineral.

17. Radon

- 17.1 **We can find no evidence that the effect of Radon gas on future developments within the Meecebrook proposal has been taken into account.**
- 17.2 Land within the footprint of the Meecebrook proposal is known to be affected by Radon. We can find no assessment of this risk. The presence of radon gas will have consequences for housing developments which will need to build in appropriate measures to protect properties and therefore have an adverse effect on the viability of sites.

18. Areas of Contaminated Land

- 18.1 **We are concerned that there are known areas of contaminated land on or adjacent to the Meecebrook proposal.**
- 18.2 Adjacent to Hilcote Hall is believed to be an area of contaminated land and while it is outside the "red line" for the Meecebrook development the effect will extend 250m into the development area. The area is shown as suitable for housing. If this land remains in the plan investigation into the cost of remediation will be required.

19. Railway Station

- 19.1 **We are concerned that passenger forecasts, both in terms of physical numbers, and when they might occur, are unrealistically optimistic and need to be reassessed.**
- 19.2 **We believe the capacity and rail layout constraints resulting from the HS2 proposals will mean Meecebrook could only be served by one four-car train per hour in each direction and that trains could only utilise the slow lines.**
- 19.3 Although a total of eight station locations were considered, all of these are located on the West Coast Mainline (WCML).



- 19.4 The preferred North option is located to the north of the junction with the Norton Bridge to Stone railway. Since there is no connection between the railways to serve the site, only stations located on the WCML will be directly accessible to future Meecebrook travellers. Consequently, it will not be possible to travel by rail to either Stone or Stoke-on-Trent without changing trains at Stafford. This is likely to put off most potential travellers wanting to access these destinations.
- 19.5 It is proposed to construct platforms alongside all four tracks of the WCML. However, this is not considered realistic for numerous reasons that are set out below.
- 19.6 The demand forecasts for Meecebrook station are based on passengers living within the development itself; those living locally within a 5km radius of the station; and those passengers abstracted from other stations that would choose Meecebrook station as a preferred alternative.
- 19.7 The only notable settlements located within 5km of Meecebrook are Eccleshall and Yarnfield and the nearest alternative station from which passengers could be abstracted is at Stone, which is located on a different railway line, with direct access to destinations, such as Stoke-on-Trent, which cannot be directly accessed from Meecebrook.
- 19.8 It is assumed that Meecebrook station could be opened by 2026 to receive two stopping trains per hour based on trains paths that SLC and Rail Aspects consider will be created by the opening of HS2 Phase 2a. However, main civil engineering construction of Phase 2a is not expected to commence until Quarter 1 2025. With a seven-year construction and track commissioning programme, Phase 2a will not open until 2032 at the earliest. Indeed, it is likely to be later than this as HS2 Ltd has stated that Phase One will be completed between 2029 and 2033. With HS2 Ltd's Chief Executive informing the Transport Select Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 that Phase 2a is running four years behind Phase One, it is very unlikely that Phase 2a would open before the end of 2033.
- 19.9 When HS2 Phase One opens, all HS2 services north of Birmingham would use the fast lines on the section of the WCML north of Stafford, which would reduce capacity until Phase 2a opens.
- 19.10 In addition, the design of the Phase 2a connections back onto the WCML at Blakenhall, south of Crewe, involves crossing over the slow lines to access the fast lines. This will significantly reduce the number of paths on the WCML slow lines.
- 19.11 Rail Aspects has assumed that Meecebrook station would be served by two trains per hour in each direction. These are the current North West Trains services:
- Crewe to London via the Trent Valley
  - Liverpool to Birmingham
- 19.12 The Crewe to London train starts/ends in a bay platform at Crewe station and currently utilises the WCML slow lines to access the station. The design of the Blakenhall Spurs connection onto the WCML south of Crewe means that it is extremely unlikely that this service could continue once Phase 2a becomes operational.
- 19.13 When Phase 2b opens (2040 at the earliest) some HS2 trains will bypass the Blakenhall Spurs to pass under Crewe via the Crewe Tunnel. However, the cancellation of the Golborne link (a 25km section of high-speed railway that would have connected Phase 2b from Hoo Green in Cheshire to the WCML south of Wigan) means that only Manchester bound HS2 trains will be able to utilise the Crewe Tunnel. All other HS2 services (3 trains per hour in each direction) will continue to use the Blakenhall Spurs and therefore take up valuable paths on the

WCML from south of Crewe and throughout Cheshire, thereby leaving insufficient train paths to enable the Crewe-London service to continue.

- 19.14 The Liverpool to Birmingham train is a four-carriage commuter train that utilises the WCML fast lines through Crewe station. Although it would not be impacted by the Blakenhall Spurs issue, because it needs to access the Birmingham line from Stafford, it would need to have crossed onto the WCML slow lines at Basford Hall south of Crewe.
- 19.15 Since there are no current locations on the WCML between Basford Hall and Meecebrook to switch back onto the fast lines, the Birmingham to Crewe train would remain on the slow lines.
- 19.16 Given the capacity and rail layout constraints outlined above, it would appear that Meecebrook could only be served by one four-car train per hour in each direction and that that could only utilise the slow lines.
- 19.17 Table 1 in the SLC report states that Meecebrook station is expected to generate nearly 45,000 trips by 2026, with more than half these journeys generated from the development itself. By 2030 it is expected that over 133,000 trips would be generated by the Meecebrook development. With the first 300 houses planned for construction in 2030/31 and Phase 2a not opening until at least 2032, the predicted trip numbers would be unachievable.

## 20. Road Networks

### 20.1 **We are concerned that:**

- (a) **Unless significant new road infrastructure is constructed by 2030, access to the proposed site is only achievable from either the B5026 Eccleshall Road or via the unclassified Swynnerton Road.**
- (b) **The claim that Meecebrook is located in close proximity to the Strategic Road Network is unfounded.**
- (c) **The local road network around Yarnfield, Cold Meece, Chebsey and Eccleshall is at capacity and is not viable to support the number of vehicle movements that the Meecebrook development will create.**
- (d) **No evidence is presented in the Preferred Options document to support the notion of a new motorway junction.**

- 20.2 It is not possible to undertake a thorough review of the proposals because the Atkins Transport Strategy dates from 2020 and the proposed Transport Logistics Plan is not currently available.
- 20.3 Notwithstanding this constraint, we note that, unless significant new road infrastructure is constructed by 2030, access to the proposed site is only achievable from either the B5026 Eccleshall Road or via the unclassified Swynnerton Road.
- 20.4 The Atkins Transport Strategy claims in Section 1.3 that “The site is located in close proximity to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) with J14 of the M6 located approximately 11km to the south and J15 of the M6 located approximately 8km to the north.” Such distances cannot reasonably be considered close to the SRN, especially since the roads that would need to be utilised from the two motorway junctions are significantly constrained.
- 20.5 Although J14 is potentially closer to Meecebrook, the most direct route is reliant on the use of the A5013 through the villages of Creswell and Great Bridgeford, as well as the heart of Eccleshall. Alternatively, construction traffic would need to use the A34 to Stone and then the A5026 from the Walton Roundabout. Such a diversion would add an additional 3.5 to 4km each way to this supply route.

- 20.6 The route from M6 J15 to the north is also constrained, especially at the busy Hanchurch interchange between the A519 and the A500.
- 20.7 Both motorway junctions will be significantly impacted by HS2 construction traffic, with J15 adjacent to Hanchurch particularly vulnerable as it will be used to supply 17 HS2 construction sites, including via the A519, which would represent the key route to supply construction materials to Meecebrook from the north.
- 20.8 HS2 Phase 2a is scheduled for a minimum five-year construction programme and although this is currently proposed to commence at the beginning of 2025, there is a risk of cumulative effects occurring with the Meecebrook development, especially in the reasonably likely event that the HS2 project construction is delayed or prolonged.
- 20.9 As a consequence of the above, it is important that a full analysis of the HGV movements associated with the Meecebrook proposals is carried out and accompanied with an assessment of the cumulative effects of traffic and especially interaction with HS2 Phase 2a construction traffic, which is likely to overlap with Meecebrook in the early years. It is important that this analysis is undertaken both for entire construction period and in relation to the employment centres on the site.
- 20.10 Paragraph 9.2.4 of the AECOM Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report dated October 2022 states that “Meecebrook may be delivered alongside a new junction on the M6, thereby ensuring that traffic could be directed to the strategic road network...”
- 20.11 No evidence is presented in the Preferred Options document to support the notion of a new motorway junction. Furthermore, this idea (referred to as J14A) has been raised and rejected previously, notably in evidence given by representatives of Stafford Borough in front of the HS2 Phase 2a House of Commons Select Committee in May 2018. There is therefore no provision for J14A in the hybrid Bill for HS2 Phase 2a, which became an Act of Parliament when the Bill received Royal Assent on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- 20.12 Paragraph 9.13.4 of the AECOM report states that “The new proposed [Meecebrook] site is notably located between strategic road corridors, such that there will be a need to ensure good links, and the possibility of having to bridge over one or both of the M6 and HS2 corridors might be envisaged. The possibility of new link / relief roads to improve the functioning of the current network has been suggested, albeit in the context of a 11,500 home scheme.”
- 20.13 Such a statement seems to be misguided in a number of respects, not least because the Meecebrook proposals will deliver just 3000 houses within the period covered by the local plan, i.e. 300 per year from 2030/31 until 2040, with the idea of the same level again between 2040 and 2050. Such a level of housing falls well-short of what would be required to justify major infrastructure investment such as a new M6 junction.
- 20.14 Furthermore, the reference to a bridge being required to cross the M6 and HS2 suggests that the authors believe that a new motorway junction with the A51 at Sandyford is realistic. However, this was the location for J14A that was presented in evidence by Stafford Borough Council to the HS2 Phase 2a Select Committee that was rejected on engineering and cost grounds.

## 21. Assessment of cumulative impacts

- 21.1 **We are concerned that no work has been done to assess the cumulative impact the proposed Meecebrook development and HS2 Phase 2a will have on residents of Yarnfield and Cold Meece.**

- 21.2 Residents of Yarnfield and Cold Meece parish will face disproportionate disruption over many years if HS2 Phase 2a goes ahead.
- 21.3 The parish council is already very concerned about the levels of HS2 HGV construction traffic that will completely isolate our community, disrupt our daily lives and blight our homes for many years.
- 21.4 Advance works relating to the realigned Yarnfield Lane, which would be undertaken to facilitate the proposed Stone Railhead and are scheduled to commence during 2023, will be followed by the construction of the HS2 mainline over a period of at least five years from early 2025. The construction of Meecebrook will overlap with these HS2 works in 2030 and then prolong the impacts on the inadequate local road network for a further 10 years, the effects of which will cumulatively affect traffic used by both residents, emergency services, public transport and employment sites.
- 21.5 A detailed and robust assessment of the cumulative effects of these projects is therefore required to determine whether the proposals are actually sustainable or not.

## 22. Employment

- 22.1 **We believe the Preferred Options proposal fails to take account of the impact that approved development opportunities at Raleigh Hall Industrial estate and the 85 acre Meaford Business Park will have on the viability of any employment land within the Meecebrook proposals.**
- 22.2 Paragraph 9.7.4 of the AECOM Sustainability appraisal states that “With regards to Meecebrook, there is general support for mixed use new communities, and there are reasons to suggest this is a strong location for employment growth, assuming significant transport infrastructure upgrades, including a train station and good links to the M6.”
- 22.3 Road and rail connectivity for the development of employment land on Meecebrook will be seriously compromised by the poor quality road network in the vicinity of the identified employment land areas.
- 22.4 From the consultation commentary outlined above, it is clear that the assumptions regarding significant transport infrastructure upgrades are highly optimistic and therefore potentially unlikely to happen. Accordingly, the anticipated employment growth at the business parks within Meecebrook is unlikely to be achieved and this will undermine the concept of a self-sustaining garden community.
- 22.5 The Meaford Business Park, with its established access to the A34 and M6 will proved to be a more commercially viable alternative.

## 23. Social Engineering

- 23.1 **We believe Meecebrook represents a massive degree of social engineering based on a desire to see a fundamental shift away from dependency on cars in a way that is unrealistic.**
- 23.2 “Meecebrook’s vision will be for a garden community that is sustainable in all forms by reducing carbon use and being a self-sufficient community” - but not how it will be achieved.
- 23.3 The phased approach to the development of the site, with the key infrastructure projects not appearing until later in the project, if at all, will inevitably force residents to look to neighbouring communities for support. No connections with either Yarnfield or Eccleshall that support safe walking or cycling, and a poor public transport network, have been provided beyond the footprint of the

proposed development. This in turn will lead to residents having to use motor vehicles as their preferred means of transport.

#### 24. Parish Council Boundary Review

24.1 **We believe that a parish boundary review will be needed to provide a connection between any housing development on the eastern side of the Meecebrook proposal to Yarnfield and Cold Meece.**

24.2 The area of land to the east of the proposed site is close to the existing community of Cold Meece and lies on the border between Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish and Chebsey Parish. It is separated from the rest of the development land.

24.3 When this area is built on we strongly recommend that there are walking and cycling routes to link it with Yarnfield and Cold Meece and that logically it should form part of Cold Meece ward. In this way the developers could ensure that the new residents were physically and socially connected to the wider community.

## 2. Stafford Borough Council Preferred Options Paper - Other General Comments

#### 25. Policy 2 – Settlement Hierarchy

25.1 **We believe the Preferred Options proposals should be used to correct an anomaly created by the planning approval that allowed for the construction of 250 houses in Yarnfield outside the settlement boundary.**

25.2 The settlement hierarchy for the borough proposed in Policy 2 places Yarnfield in Tier 4 – large settlement. However, the settlement boundary for Yarnfield has not been updated and approximately 1/3 of the housing in Yarnfield is outside the settlement boundary. While we acknowledged the brownfield site on which these houses and employment land lies is within the North Staffordshire Greenbelt we believe the review of the Local Plan provides an opportunity to correct this anomaly.

25.3 There is a real possibility that development will come forward during the period covered by the new local plan that would not be possible if the land is left outside the settlement boundary. We have already seen one building demolished on grounds of safety, leaving a 1.2 hectare site with no movement to find an acceptable use of the site. The Parish Council is concerned that the location of the conference centre and office buildings is too central to the village to suffer a similar fate.

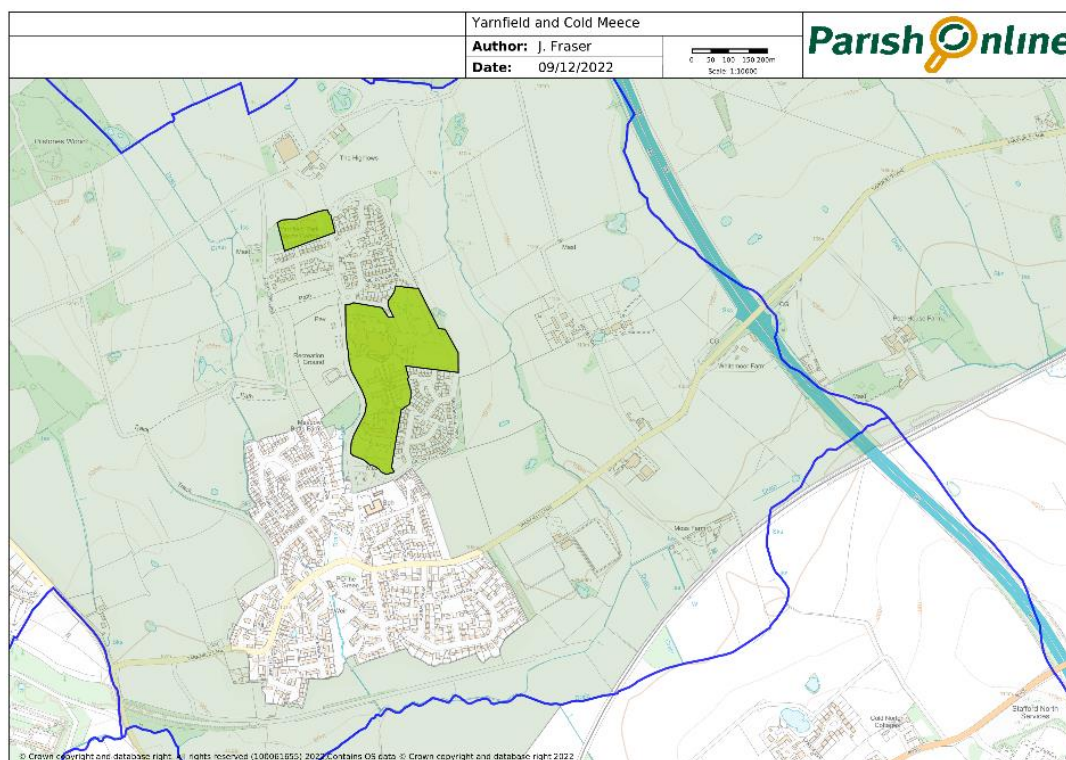
#### 26. Policy 5 – North Staffordshire Green Belt

26.1 **The Parish Council values the protection that the North Staffordshire Green belt provides to Yarnfield and in so doing recognises the vital role it plays by preventing inappropriate development. However, to be effective the green belt designation must be meaningful. We believe that the Borough Council's review of the Green Belt and the statement in Policy 5, para 5.3, is incorrect. It is our view that exceptional circumstances exist to justify the removal of Yarnfield Park from the Green Belt.**

26.2 The Parish Council acknowledges the vital role of the North Staffordshire Green Belt and recognises that it prevents urban sprawl and keeps inappropriate developments in check. However, the Parish Council believe that exceptional circumstances exist that would justify the removal of Yarnfield Park from the Green Belt.



- 26.3 The area of land occupied by Yarnfield Park was granted planning permission to build 250 houses in the North Staffordshire Green Belt in 2012 (reference 09/12911/OUT) on brownfield land that had previously been occupied by the British Telecom Training College.
- 26.4 The construction of the houses has resulted in those parts of the site still used by the conference centre and offices, being located towards the centre of Yarnfield.
- 26.5 We believe the remaining parts of Yarnfield Park now fails to meet the NPPF criteria for Green Belt: the northern and southern boundaries of the site are surrounded by housing and the western boundary by an area of public open space and football pitch. As such its purpose can no longer be “to check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas”
- 26.6 The National Planning Policy Framework requires that exceptional circumstances should be “fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans”. The parish council believes that the review of the Local Plan should be used to remove Yarnfield Park from the Green Belt.



27. Policy 13 Local Green Spaces

27.1 **We believe Policy 13, Local Green Space, does not take adequate account of areas of Green Space in Yarnfield which should be afforded the same level of protection.**

27.2 The areas of open green space are:

Name	
Ashdale Park	Owner: Stafford Borough Council Provided as part of the housing development
Ford Drive	Owner: Stafford Borough Council Provided as part of the housing development
Yarnfield Park Multiuse Play Area, football pitch	Owner: Hackberry Property UK Ltd

Name	
Worthington Grove Play area	Owner: Barratt West Midlands

27.3 These site are an essential asset to residents and have for many years provided an important health and wellbeing function.

27.4 The Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan that is currently being prepared will include these areas as Local Green Spaces.

28. Policy 23 - Affordable Housing

28.1 **We are concerned that no provision is made within the Preferred Options proposal for the delivery of affordable housing in the parish. Policy 23 should be redrafted to provide 30% affordable housing on major development sites.**

28.2 The settlement hierarchy for the borough proposed in Policy 2 places Yarnfield in Tier 4 – large settlement. No provision is made for an appropriate quota of affordable housing in Policy 23. Even if development in Yarnfield came only from windfall sites these should still include a proportion of affordable housing.

## Section 106 – Introductory Project Template

<b>1. ORGANISATION DETAILS</b>	
Name of Organisation	Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council
Name of Project Lead	John Fraser
Telephone Number	07546 456771
Email address	ycmclerk@gmail.com
Role descriptions of people involved in delivering the project.	Parish Council Community volunteers Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
How will the team manage the project – how often will they meet?	Project plan to be agreed by Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council who will receive regular update on progress and milestones being met.  Work programme to be developed.  Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council to form working group to be assigned task of coordination.
Will your organisation be working with any other agencies to deliver or fund this proposal?	Yes
If yes please provide details:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust</li> <li>- HS2 Community and Environment fund – application not yet submitted</li> </ul>
<b>2. PROJECT DETAILS</b>	
Name of Project	Yarnfield Rewilding Project
Location of Project	Yarnfield village green
Borough Ward	Swynnerton
Project description	Village Green and community involvement project

## Project Background

*Based on local need please provide a business case for the project and / or please identify how this project has been identified as a priority and include linkages to National, Regional and Local Strategies if possible*

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council has embarked on an ambitious project to open up access to our natural environment, enhancing and improving outdoor play and learning opportunities for children and creating a managed wildlife corridor running through our parish.

*The village green project* emerged as a result of our engagement with residents about their best hopes for village green and it reflects their concerns that better use could be made of the area with links to enhancing the biodiversity and climate change credentials; making the village green a place where people can play, relax and congregate.

The project supports the borough council's play and open spaces strategy objectives and will deliver improvements to the existing play facilities on the village green as well as providing new play opportunities.

The project will deliver the Borough Council's Corporate Business Plan Objective 2, improving the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work and encouraging people to be engaged in developing strong communities that promote health and wellbeing.

The project will achieve local and national biodiversity aims and objectives by improving land management, halting the loss of biodiversity on our land, developing an effective framework that ensures biodiversity is considered in decision making, and raising awareness through increased understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity and engagement with people in the parish.

The project will be the vehicle that drives some of the aspirations of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan through the development of the village green as a vibrant facility at the heart of the Parish.

<p>Planning Application number to which S106 money is requested</p>	<p>13/19226</p>
<p>Is Planning Approval required for the project and are any other Approvals to be secured? – If yes please provide draft plans and details</p>	<p>It is not thought the work will require planning permission and any changes will be allowed under permitted development rights.</p> <p>Some work will be carried out on Yarnfield common. This work will be designed in a what that will not require prior consent from the Secretary of State.</p>

Parish (if applicable)	Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council
Land Ownership (Is the land owned by the applicant – if not who?)	Stafford Borough Council – transfer of land under a long lease to the parish council is being prepared in line with the Stafford Borough Council Cabinet Report.
<p>Does the applicant need approval from the landowner? – if yes, please provide evidence that the landowner has consented for the application to proceed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes</li> <li>- We presume these discussion will form the basis of the borough council's consent.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What outcomes will be achieved from the scheme?</b></p> <p>By 2025 to improve the quality of life residents of the parish, and those who visit or work in the parish by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing a multi-functional space for all ages and needs that builds on existing facilities and enables a wide range of community activities to take place.</li> <li>- Providing an environment for children to learn and to link with Yarnfield First School</li> <li>- Improving and adding to the facilities on the playground and by providing a single safe play area.</li> <li>- Providing a relaxing spaces, access to nature, play/fitness, dog walking, accessible by the whole community and catering for all abilities.</li> <li>- Provide space at the centre of the village that enhances the environment, addresses the biodiversity loss links the centre of the village to a green corridor.</li> <li>- Enhancing the role of community involvement and volunteering to work alongside the parish council grounds maintenance contract to ensure the site is effectively managed.</li> </ul> <p><b>How does link into the Council's adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and other Council strategies?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The adopted Plan for Stafford Borough (and the Preferred Options Paper for the new Local Plan) identifies the space as "Green Infrastructure".</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Project Costs</b></p> <p>Indicative costs have been sourced from local contractors; These place the cost of the entire project between - £90,000 - £140,000</p>	



Stafford Borough Council agreement to the project, and the lease of the village green to the parish council, will trigger tender documents being prepared.

### Project Funding

*Please include amount requested and provide a breakdown of how the project will be funded. If applicable please also provide any information about partnership funding being allocated alongside S106 monies to deliver the project.*

*The costs associated with the project exceed the value of the contribution from Stafford Borough Council.*

Amount requested from the Borough Council:

13/19226 – (Walnut Tree Farm) – £16,800

Stafford Borough Council Cabinet Report – 6 October 2022

09/12911/OUT – (Yarnfield Park, Yarnfield) – £15,000

09/12911/OUT – (Yarnfield Park, Yarnfield) – £10,000

Total request £41,800

The Parish Council recognise that some elements of the work may not be eligible for funding by the Borough Council's section 106 money. Phasing plan for the project will ensure the section 106 money is spent appropriately and within the timetable agreed with the Borough Council.

### Stafford Borough Councillors

*Are local borough councillors aware of the proposed project? Do they support the project? If no, please provide information as to why and the reason you think the project should continue to be considered*

Cllrs James and Nixon support the project aims and outcome and have been briefed on the proposals.

### Site Access

*Please provide details to confirm the site is accessible to all. Furthermore, in terms of assessing project delivery please state if the site has open access or if access is restricted at any time*

Project will be delivered on Yarnfield village green – part common land part public open space

One outcome of the project will be to improve access disabled access to the site.

### Public Engagement

*Please provide details of all public consultation undertaken and responses received as part of any engagement activities*

Public Consultation event

**May 2019** - Annual Parish Assembly provide basis for the concept plan, improvements that were important to them and ideas about what the outcome of the project might look like.

**Spring 2020** – work with young persons groups in the parish (Scouts and Guides) and Springfield First School, School Council.

**October 2020** – public consultation exercise run with whole parish being invited to rank proposals and offer additional suggestions.

**May 2022** Annual Parish Assembly – update on scheme proposals.

Key Milestone and Timescale

*Set out timescale of planned works. Are there any contingencies for delays in materials, inclement weather, or outside factors? How would it affect the project?*

The aim is to tender the work over early in 2023 and a detailed phasing plan to be agreed with the selected contractor

Maintenance and Management

*Please provide details of how the facility will be maintained. Who will manage the project once it is completed? Who will pay for the maintenance? How sustainable is the project? Will there be a sinking fund set up?*

Ongoing maintenance of the village green will be incorporated into the parish council's ground maintenance contract. In addition, one outcome of the project will be to develop a community group to support the ongoing maintenance.

The parish council currently holds to parish clean-up projects and the aim will be to increase the number of volunteers.

The parish council would also look to secure the offsite maintenance sum to provided for in the Walnut Tree Farm section 106 Agreement, Schedule 2

Other Relevant Information

### 3. PROJECT DELIVERY

Procurement

How will you prove that you have obtained value for money in delivering the project?

- How many quotes will there be?
  - The procurement for the project will be carried out in line with the Parish Council's Financial Regulation that will require three competitive quotations,
- Will they be evaluated on cost, quality, delivery of similar projects, value for money, or a mix of these?
  - Parish Council will establish evaluation panel, to which an office of the borough council will be invited, to evaluate quotations.
  - Cost will be a significant factor in the evaluation to ensure the project remains within budget, However Parish Council Standing orders and Financial Regulations do not require contracts to be awarded solely based on price.

#### Previous Experience

Please provide details of previous project your organisation has managed leading to a successful outcome

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council was formed in 2019 following a governance review by Stafford Borough Council.

Since that time the parish council has been responsible for the ground's maintenance of the leased part of the village green. In 2020 they then assumed responsibility for the ground's maintenance (principally grass cutting) for the whole site.

The parish council has a run regular volunteer events to maintain the site and other parts of the parish. This work also includes developing strong links with Drake Hall Prison that also support these events.

#### Risk Management

What are the risks in delivering this project? Please list the risks. How will they be managed? What could the cost or timescale implications be on the project?

The project plan, phasing and delivery programme for work funded by the Borough Council will be prepared with the selected contractor to ensure the project meets the funding criteria and deadlines set by the Borough Council and other funding agencies.

Please note that to progress a project the Council will require 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties to enter into a Legal Agreement.

OFFICE USE	
S106 Reference	
S106 Amount	
S106 Clause	

Further details may need to be progressed in terms of the topics listed below:

1. Purpose
2. Outline Business Benefits / Business Case
3. Financial / Budget Requirements
4. Key Milestones and Timescales
5. Risk Log
6. Contingency Arrangements
7. Review and Reporting

# Yarnfield and Cold Meece Neighbourhood Plan

January 2023 (DRAFT V1.2)



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# **A. Introduction**

## **A 1 Why a Neighbourhood Plan?**

The Yarnfield and Cold Meece Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council to guide future development of the Neighbourhood Area. The neighbourhood area is the administrative boundary of Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan is based on analysis of data and of evidence; previous plans; and the views of the community. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group formed in November 2020 and the early community engagement began in Summer 2020. Building upon the early community engagement, the themes for the Neighbourhood Plan emerged, providing insight into local issues of importance to the community.

The Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan guides future development, focused on the themes of residential development, employment, design, natural landscape, green space, heritage, transport and other matters.

## **A 2 Status of the Neighbourhood Plan**

The Yarnfield and Cold Meece Neighbourhood Plan contains planning policies, against which planning applications will be considered. The Neighbourhood Plan, once made, forms part of the statutory development plan, together with the adopted Stafford Borough Part 1 and Part 2 Local Plan.

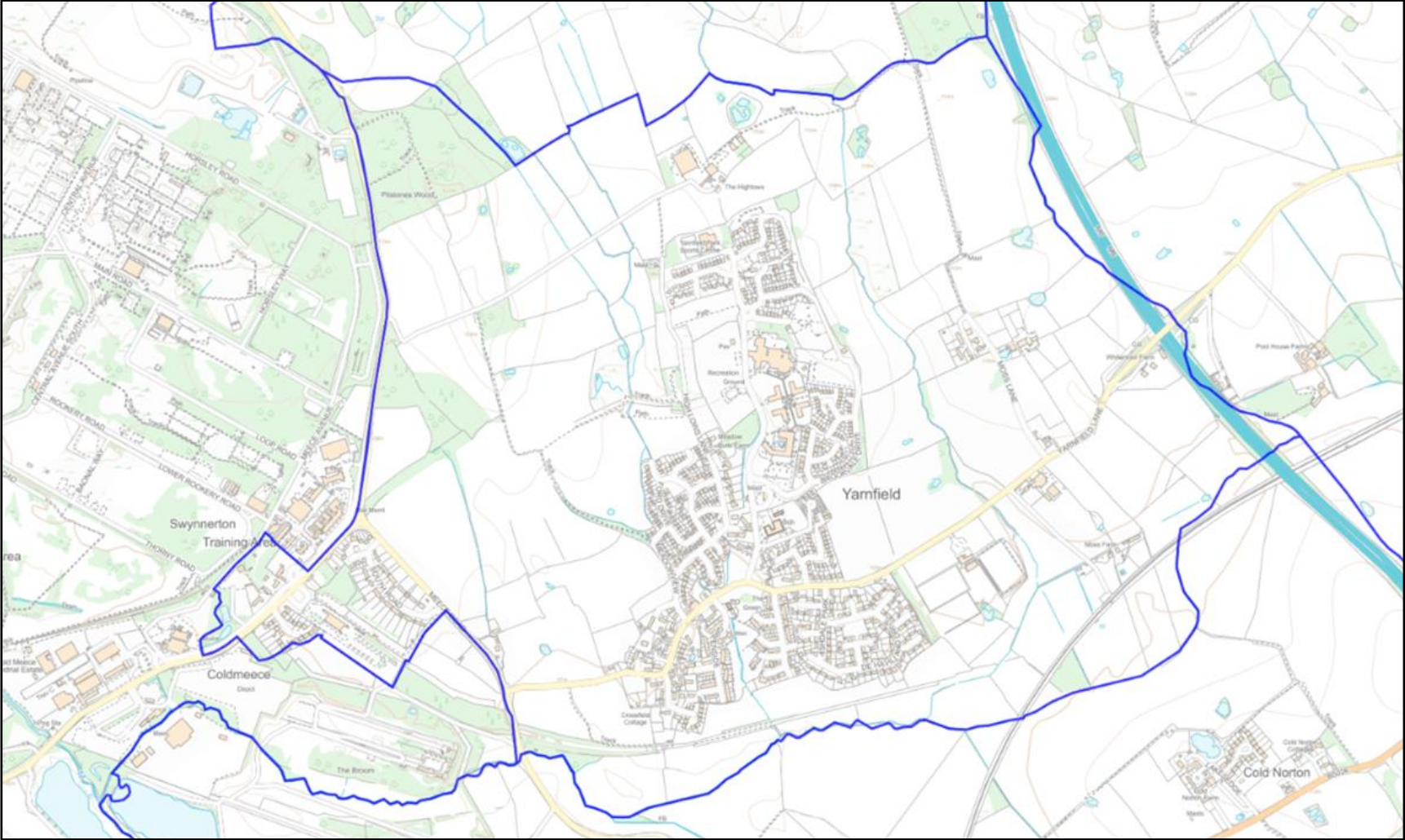
Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications must be determined in accordance with the policies of the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be in force until the end of 2040 or until an updated plan is made before that date. The Plan will be reviewed regularly to assess whether an update is necessary.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with excluded matters including waste, mineral extraction or nationally significant infrastructure.

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council submitted proposals to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan (Figure 1 – Plan of Neighbourhood area) which was approved by Stafford Borough Council on 5 August 2021.

Figure 1 - Yarnfield and Cold Meece Neighbourhood Area



### **A 3 Monitoring and Review**

The Plan will be monitored throughout the Plan period to 2023 - 2040. Monitoring will include:

- planning decisions to see how the plan is being used in practice;
- any changes in national policy, guidance or legislation;
- any changes in or local plan policy or guidance; and
- any other changes in the Neighbourhood Area (social, economic and environmental).

The Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed and updated when necessary, a regular report will be prepared on the monitoring.

## **B. Background and Context**

### **B 1 Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish**

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council came into existence on 1st April 2019 following a campaign by residents. Previously this parish had formed the ward of Yarnfield within the boundary of Swynnerton Parish Council. The new council was elected on 2nd May 2019.

### **B 2 Location**

Yarnfield and Cold Meece is a rural parish in the north of Stafford Borough. Yarnfield Lane is the B road which runs through the village of Yarnfield connecting it to Cold Meece to the west and to the A34 and the market town of Stone 3 miles to the east. The A34 is a major trunk road connecting Stone to Stafford 9 miles to the south and to the City of Stoke-on-Trent 9 miles to the north. The M6 running south to north, forms the eastern boundary of the parish.

The villages of Yarnfield and Cold Meece are approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile apart, with Cold Meece to the west. Yarnfield is the larger of the villages. The east boundary of the parish runs alongside the M6, with the parish located roughly halfway between Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford. The former is around 11 miles north of Yarnfield village, with the latter around 9 miles south-east of the village. The market town of Stone is 2.5 miles east of Yarnfield village. There is a limited bus service from Yarnfield to Stone, with onward travel to larger settlements possible from Stone.

Walking and cycling routes between Cold Meece, Yarnfield and Stone are very poor.

### **B 3 Characteristics of the area**

Yarnfield is identified in the current local plan as Key Service Village<sup>1</sup> in an attractive rural location.

It is home to Yarnfield Park Conference Centre which is the main source of employment in the parish. The conference centre has 34 meeting rooms and residential capacity for 450 guests.

A larger area of employment land is situated adjacent to Cold Meece at Raleigh Hall. The Ministry of Defence occupies a 900-acre site on Meece Road between Cold Meece, Raleigh Hall and Swynnerton Parish.

Springfields First School in Yarnfield is a community school providing education for 163 children

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to review based on the Stafford Borough Council preferred option proposals.

aged 3 – 9 and 35 pre-school children<sup>2</sup>. There is a nursery class and a before and after-school care club on the school site. Most of the older children living in the parish travel by bus to Middle and High Schools in Stone.

Yarnfield has a post office, general store and a pub, The Labour in Vain<sup>3</sup>, which is currently trading, but has struggled to thrive in recent years.

Yarnfield also has a busy Village Hall and a hair, nail and beauty salon situated in the former Chapel in the centre of the village.

Situated to the east of Yarnfield on Yarnfield Lane, Wellbeing Park is commercial sports club with many outdoor full-sized and junior sized football pitches. There is a privately owned fitness centre on the site.

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish is surrounded on three sides by farmland and the village of Yarnfield is “washed over” by the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

#### **B 4 Census 2021**

The 2021 national census returns have provided a valuable insight into the population of the parish. This is aided by the fact that there is a strong collocation between the parish/neighbourhood plan boundary and the Lower Super output area Stafford 005E<sup>4</sup> with only a small part of the parish, which is entirely agricultural land, falling outside the LOSA boundary.

- Insert pen portrait of the parish

#### **B 5 Key Issues**

Community Engagement events in May 2019, October 2020, November 2021 and an online consultation in 2022 have identified that the following key issues are most important to residents:

The parish council has an ambition to create a wildlife corridor running through the parish from north to south following the course of the Meece Brook, enhancing biodiversity, improving access to nature and expanding outdoor play and learning opportunities. (Policy Y6)

HS2 phase 2a is expected to run from south to north roughly parallel with the M6 along the eastern side of the parish. HS2 Ltd plans to build the Stone Railhead and IMB-R across the path of Yarnfield Lane between the M6 and Stone. The

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<sup>2</sup> Based on school role on 6 December 2022

<sup>3</sup> The parish council is waiting for confirmation that the pub will be listed as an Asset of Community Value.

<sup>4</sup> LOSA reference - E01029747

construction and operation of this large compound (bigger in size than the village of Yarnfield) and the subsequent construction of the high speed rail line will have a huge detrimental effect on the lives of the residents of this parish. The major impacts on the road network and on the environment are issues the parish council is actively addressing in collaboration with neighbouring councils.

The Neighbourhood Plan is based on analysis of data and of evidence; previous plans; and the views of the community. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group formed in November 2020 and the early community engagement began in November 2020 Building upon the early community engagement, the themes for the Neighbourhood Plan emerged, providing insight into local issues of importance to the community. Further engagement included a range of activities including householder survey in [\[insert date here\]](#), etc..

- **Insert dates of the community consultations**

A summary of the key issues identified including from the householder survey are shown below:

- **Key Issues (bullet point list).**

## **C. Overall Planning Strategy**

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out strategic priorities for the development of the parish reflecting the needs and aspirations of the community: supported by a set of planning policies that ensure new development addresses the economic, environmental and social needs of the parish.

The Neighbourhood plan, and the policies it contains, is underpinned by an evidence-based assessment of the social, economic and environmental needs of an area

The Neighbourhood Plan does not make site allocations leaving this to be dealt with by Stafford Borough Council through the adopted Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan policies draw on National Planning Practice Guidance to provide a local context for the needs of the neighbourhood plan area.

- **How growth is achieved.**
- **How to ensure it is sustainable and inclusive, taking account the needs of current and future generations.**

### **C 1 Vision**

To protect and enhance Yarnfield and Cold Meece parish as a place that continues to be a thriving, safe and friendly place where people want to live, work, and play and



to ensure any development opportunities are sustainable and appropriate to the scale and nature of the parish, respecting its historic, agricultural and rural character.

## **C 2 Aims**

The following set of aims for the neighbourhood plan evolved through discussion with the community and the evidence base:

### **Housing Sites**

To identify appropriate sites for future housing, that will meet the needs of the community and emerging households.

### **Housing Types and Tenures**

To encouraging a mix of sustainable housing types and tenures that will help residents remain within the area through different life stages.

### **Open Spaces**

To protect and enhance important areas of local green which are highly valued and much used by the community: providing a strong biodiversity link through the protection of the local environment.

### **Economic Development**

To employment opportunities are available in the parish which support the needs of the community and are sympathetically sited and do not have a detrimental impact on residential areas.

### **Community Buildings and Facilities**

To enhance buildings and services what are essential to the community focus which are a significant asset underpinning the vitality of the local community.

## **C 3 Format of Policies**

The following policies are supported by analysis of key issues, national and local policies and relevant evidence documents. This includes the following key evidence documents:

- Housing Needs Assessment,
- Design Codes and Master Plan,
- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Mapping Data,
- Review of Community Engagement

The policies are grouped under themed chapters. These are:

- Housing and Community

- Economy
- Design and Heritage
- Environment and Green Infrastructure
- Transport

The structure of each policy is as follows:

- **Purpose** (what the set of policies seek to achieve)
- **Planning Rationale** (concise summary of the thinking behind the policies).

Then for individual policies in the chapter:

**The policy** (requirements for development proposals to meet)

**Interpretation** (notes on how the policy should be applied in decision making)

# 1. Housing & Community

- Purpose

What the set of policies seek to achieve

- Planning Rational

Paragraph or two to explain the thinking behind the group of policies. Try to keep these sections to a page.

- National policy ...
- Local Plan ...
- Key evidence or data ...(HNA)
- Planning rationale ...

This may need updating as the NPPF is updated later in 2022.

## **Policy Y1: Housing**

- 1. Residential development will be supported in the following locations:**
  - a. within the Yarnfield settlement boundary (see Plan \*\*);**
  - b. brown field sites, but excluding unsuitable development in the Green Belt;**
  - c. sensitive conversion of agricultural or historic buildings.**
- 2. The mix of housing in new development should be based on:**
  - a. The need for 2/3-bedroom properties, which should be the predominant part of the mix;**
  - b. The need for housing suitable for the elderly and for down-sizing;**
  - c. The current over-supply of 4-bedroom properties;**
  - d. The current adequate supply of 1-bedroom properties.**
- 3. Housing design should be flexible for different needs, including homeworking, and rooms should meet or exceed national space standards.**
- 4. Residential development should include positive design and landscape features to reduce carbon use and promote biodiversity, having regard to the Sustainable Design and Character policy in this Plan.**
- 5. All new dwellings should include:**
  - a. screened storage for bins and recycling;**
  - b. secure and screened storage for cycles and personal vehicles.**
- 6. High speed broadband infrastructure should be provided within the site of all new housing, to be ready as local services are improved.**

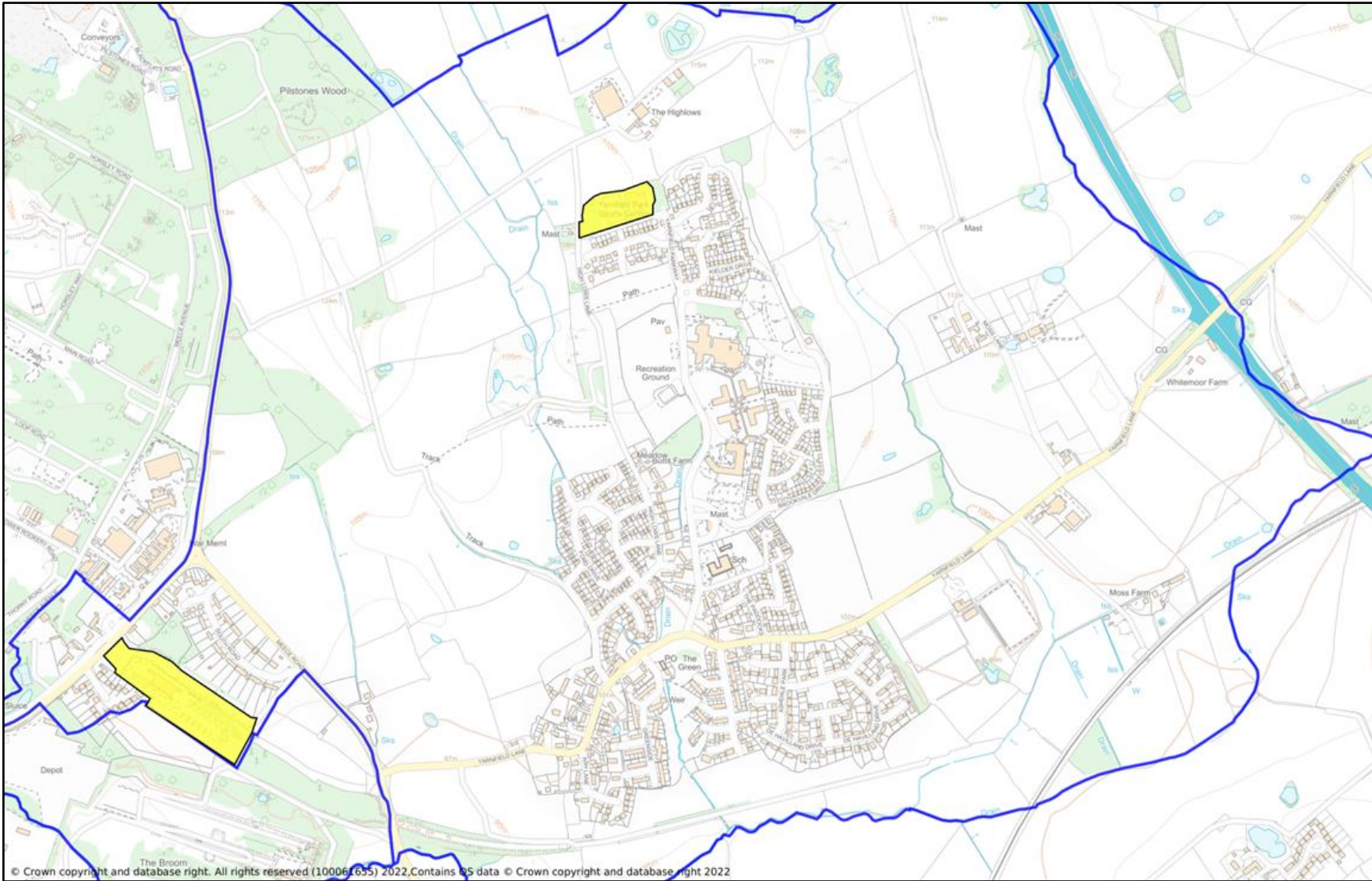
### **Interpretation**

- The housing mix clause requires 2/3-bedroom properties to be predominant part of the mix and encourages housing suitable for the elderly. The mix could include some 1-bedroom properties, but not as a significant part of the mix. There is currently an over-supply of 4-bedroom properties, so they should be a very small part of the mix, if included at all.
- National space standards refers to 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard 2015' or to any standard updating and replacing that standard.
- Secure and screened storage for cycles could include garages of sufficient size.
- Design, transport and other requirements for residential development are contained in other policies.

Figure 2 - Yarnfield Settlement Boundary (proposed)



Figure 3 - Brownfield sites not within development boundary





## 2. Community Facilities

- Purpose
- Planning Rational

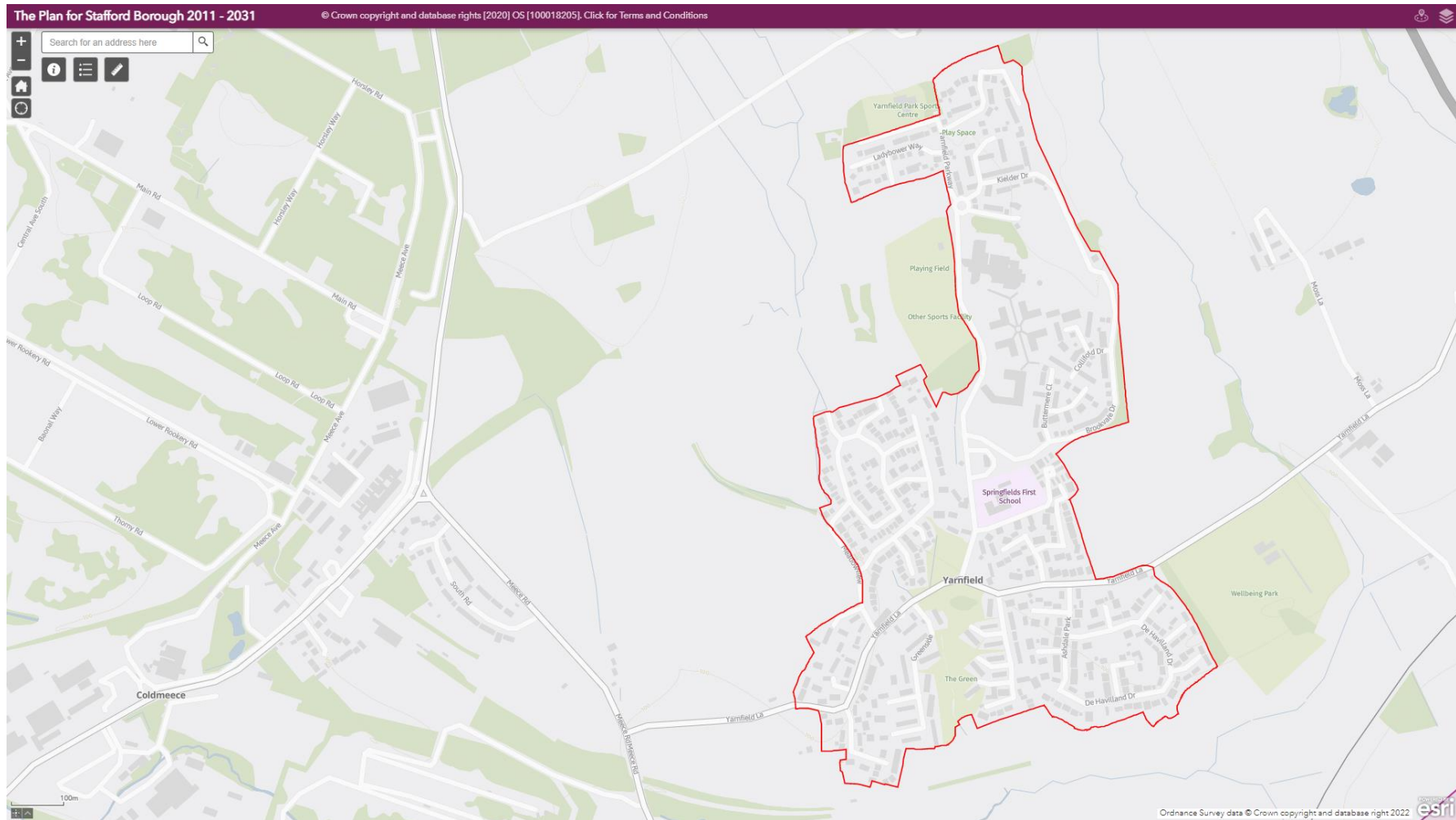
### **Policy Y2 Community Facilities**

1. New community facilities will be supported in the following locations:
  - a. within the Yarnfield settlement boundary (see Figure 4)
  - b. brownfield sites, but excluding unsuitable development in the Green Belt;
  - c. sensitive conversion of agricultural or historic buildings.
2. Support will be given to the improvement or diversification of the following key community facilities:
  - a. The post-office, public house, shop and personal services;
  - b. Yarnfield Village Hall;
  - c. Springfields First School;
  - d. Wellbeing Park Football Ground and Playgrounds (Greenside, Yarnfield Parkway, Worthington Grove).
3. Support for new or improved community facilities is subject to:
  - a. There being no significant harm to the amenities of residential properties;
  - b. There being no significant harm to the natural or historic environments, having regard to policies Y5 and Y6.

### **Interpretation**

- Community facilities would include uses in Use Class E and F1.
- Loss of existing community facilities is dealt with in the Local Plan.
- Design, transport and other requirements for community-related development are contained in other policies.

Figure 4 - Yarnfield Settlement Boundary



### 3. Economy

- Purpose
- Planning Rational

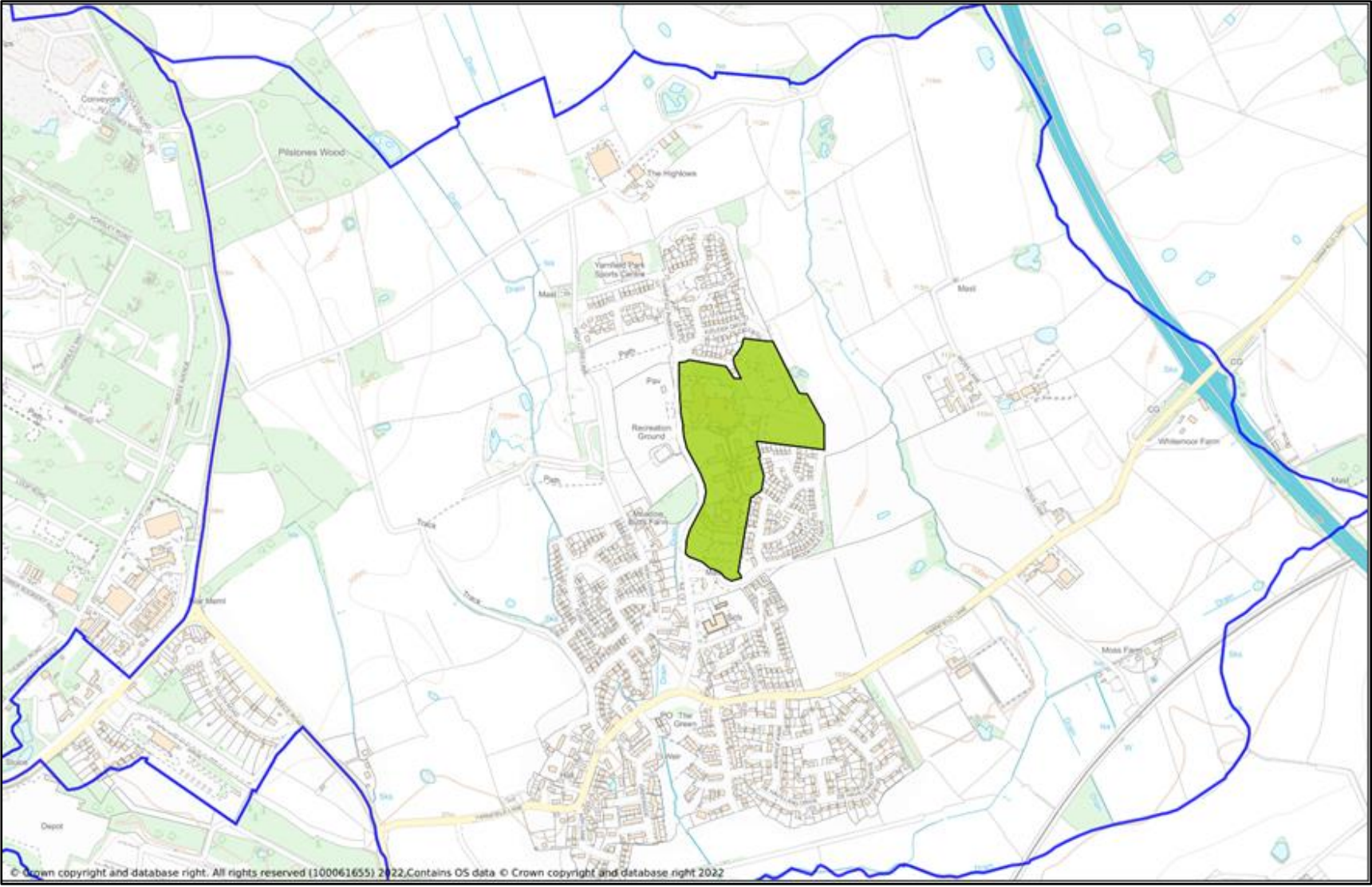
#### **Policy Y3: Yarnfield Park**

1. Development will be supported within Yarnfield Park (Figure 5) providing:
  - a. It would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
  - b. It maintains and complements the conference and/or employment use of the site, including activities in Use Class E, F1 and related C2 activities;
  - c. It would retain the open character of the site as a green campus.

#### **Interpretation**

- The policy seeks to ensure that Yarnfield Park remains in use as a conference centre and/or employment site, to maintain local employment and avoid the village from becoming an unsustainable mono-use (residential) dormitory town.
- The need to retain the open and green campus character of the site would include retention of landscaped areas and treatment of parking and servicing areas through high-quality landscape design and planting.
- For new employment development, the local planning authority may wish to consider use conditions, where retail uses could cause harm to surrounding facilities.
- General industry or distribution are not explicitly mentioned in the policy, but could cause problems with residential amenity (noise and traffic) and could impact on existing light industrial and business uses in Yarnfield Park.
-

Figure 5 - Yarnfield Park Employment Land Opportunity



## 4. Design and Heritage

- Purpose
- Planning Rational

### **Policy Y4: Sustainable Design and Character**

1. Development should be well-designed to be sustainable and to create a locally distinctive sense of place, meeting the following requirements of this policy, proportionate to the scale and nature of the scheme.
2. Development should include high quality green infrastructure, including:
  - a. retention of existing trees and hedgerows, which should be incorporated into the design and layout of scheme;
  - b. taking opportunities to plant new trees and hedgerows, including as part of boundary treatments;
  - c. incorporating high quality landscape design, based on local native species or other species of high environmental value;
  - d. taking opportunities to create or enhance existing green spaces.
3. Development should include positive design and landscape features to reduce carbon use and promote biodiversity.
4. Development should complement the site and surrounding context in terms of scale, height, setback from the road, pattern of gardens, and other townscape characteristics.
5. Development should complement the following characteristics of the village:
  - a. The predominant two storey height of buildings;
  - b. Architectural diversity but also use of simple building forms.
6. Development should use high quality and durable materials and support will be given to the use of:
  - a. local traditional materials;
  - b. recycled materials;
  - c. materials from sustainable sources and with good environmental credentials.
7. Development should prioritise pedestrian and cyclist safety and convenience by:
  - a. Allowing for ease of movement within the site and providing links to surrounding paths;
  - b. Providing a high-quality of public realm;
  - c. Ensuring that streets and spaces are not dominated by carparking.
8. Support will be given to innovative or creative green design solutions.

## Interpretation

- Materials good and bad ... (Design Code should clarify this)
- Ways of building green can include:
  - use of efficient heating and cooling systems, or design to reduce dependency on heating and cooling systems.
  - superior insulation properties and airtightness;
  - natural ventilation and air flow (for warmer months) to help avoid over-heating;
  - use of local, low-embodied energy, recycled and recyclable materials;
  - living (green) walls or roofs;
  - orientation to maximise passive solar gain;
  - rainwater capture, storage and reuse (grey water);
  - use of LED or other low wattage lighting;
  - space for natural drying clothes;
  - bins for recycling;
  - flexible spaces and layouts to accommodate changing demands.
- The public realm and green infrastructure should be designed to support movement, recreation, social interaction, play and exercise.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems can be incorporated into landscape design. This includes ensuring that hard surfaces are water permeable.
- Use of traditional hedges for boundary treatments creates a greener environment and enhances the historic and rural character of the area.
- Use of skilled and experienced design teams can make compliance with this and other policies much easier.



### **Policy Y5: Local Heritage and Character**

1. Development should complement the rural and green village character, based on the following key characteristics:
  - a. Properties set back from the roads, behind front gardens or verges;
  - b. Boundary treatments comprising trees and hedges or low brick walls;
  - c. The domestic character and scale of residential properties;
  - d. Architectural diversity, based on different periods of construction.
2. Development should preserve or enhance the Cold Meece War Memorial and its green open space setting.

### **Interpretation**

- Green infrastructure is an important part of character, including trees, hedges, verges and gardens.
- In terms of architectural diversity, the village includes different periods of construction, including older domestic properties and post-war housing with a clear Scandinavian influence (larger windows and shallow pitches). Some later housing is less distinctive, using an 'anywhere' and generic 'heritage' style.
- The policy places emphasis on the importance of the war memorial and its landscape setting.



## 5. Environment and Green Infrastructure

- Purpose
- Planning Rational

### **Policy Y6: Landscape and Biodiversity**

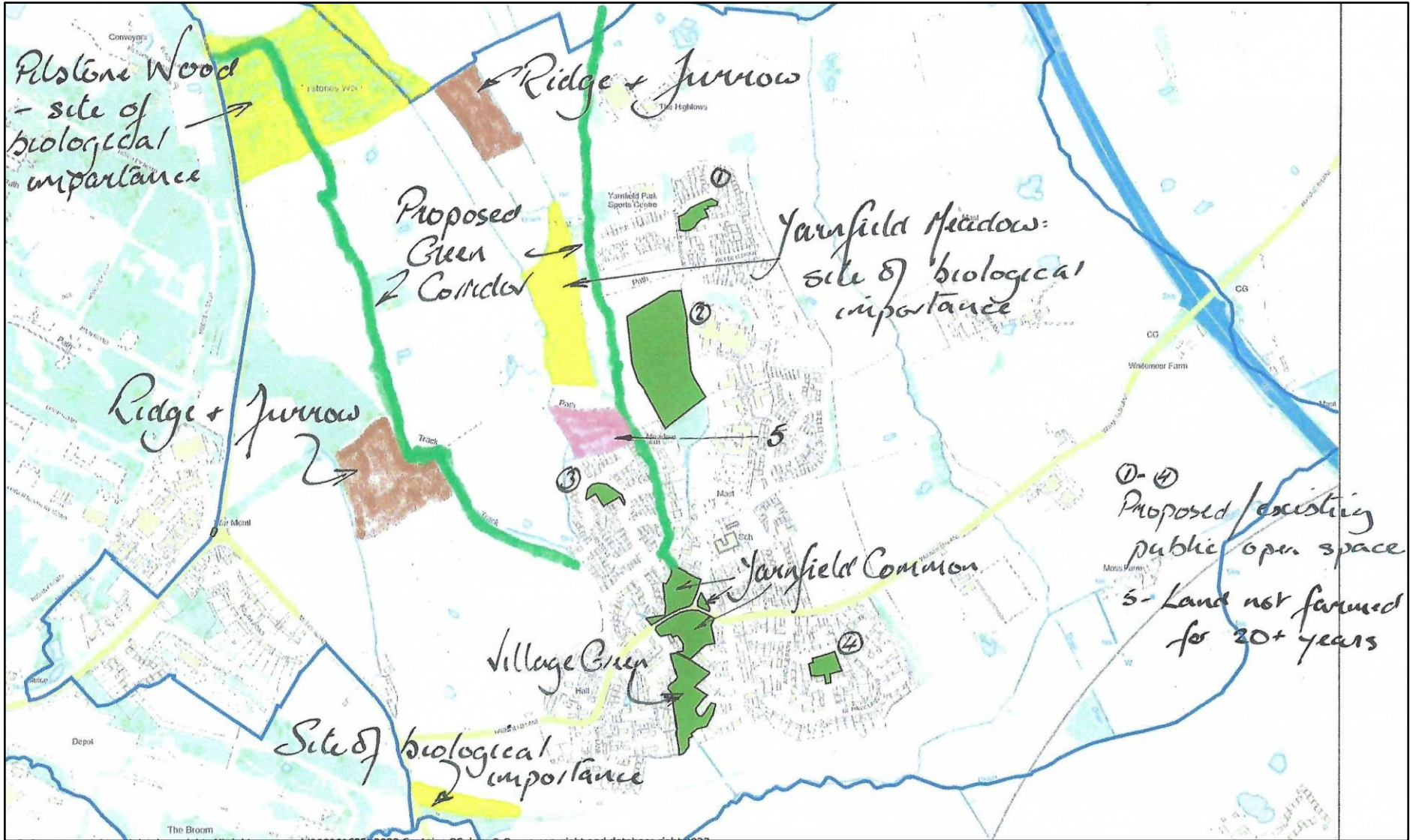
1. Development should conserve and not harm habitats, including those for tawny owls, great spotted woodpeckers, reed buntings, and hares, and should:
  - a. avoid habitat damage; or
  - b. minimise habitat damage where it can't be avoided altogether; and
  - c. take opportunities to restore damaged or lost habitat; and
  - d. where habitat loss or damage is unavoidable, compensate for such damage through positive design or landscape features or other measures to support wildlife.
2. Development should conserve and cause no harm to the green character, flora and fauna and wildlife connectivity of the following linear green corridors (see Figure 5):
  - a. Footpath YCM-11;
  - b. Footpath YCM-2.
3. Development should retain and cause no harm to mature trees, hedgerows, woods and ancient woodlands.
4. Development should conserve and cause no harm to the biological importance of the following designated sites (see Figure 6, 7 & 8):
  - a. Pilstone Wood;
  - b. Yarnfield Meadow;
  - c. Area South of Yarnfield.
5. Development should retain and avoid harm to the following landscape features:
  - a. Yarnfield Brook, steams, ponds, soakaways, balancing ponds, and water features;
  - b. Wetland and reed beds;
  - c. Different orchid varieties, including Marsh Orchids and Ragged Robin;
  - d. Ridge and furrow landscape.

### **Interpretation**

- Existing landscape features, landform and green infrastructure should be retained and be incorporated into redevelopment and enhanced as far as possible.
- Design features to support wildlife include:

- Bat boxes and bird boxes;
- Hedgehog gaps in fences;
- Badger routes;
- Wildlife connectivity via grass verges and footpath edges;
- Meadow edge grasses and wildflowers, bee friendly desirable.

Figure 6 – (DRAFT) Green Infrastructure and Landscape Map



## **Policy Y7: Local Green Space**

1. The following spaces are designated as Local Green Space:

LGS1: Ashdale Park;

LGS2: Yarnfield Village Green – northwest;

LGS3: Yarnfield Village Green – northeast;

LGS4: Yarnfield Village Green – central;

LGS5: Yarnfield Village Green – south;

LGS6: Ford Drive;

LGS7: Yarnfield Park Multiuse Area;

LGS8: Worthington Grove Play area;

LGS9: Cold Meece War Memorial;

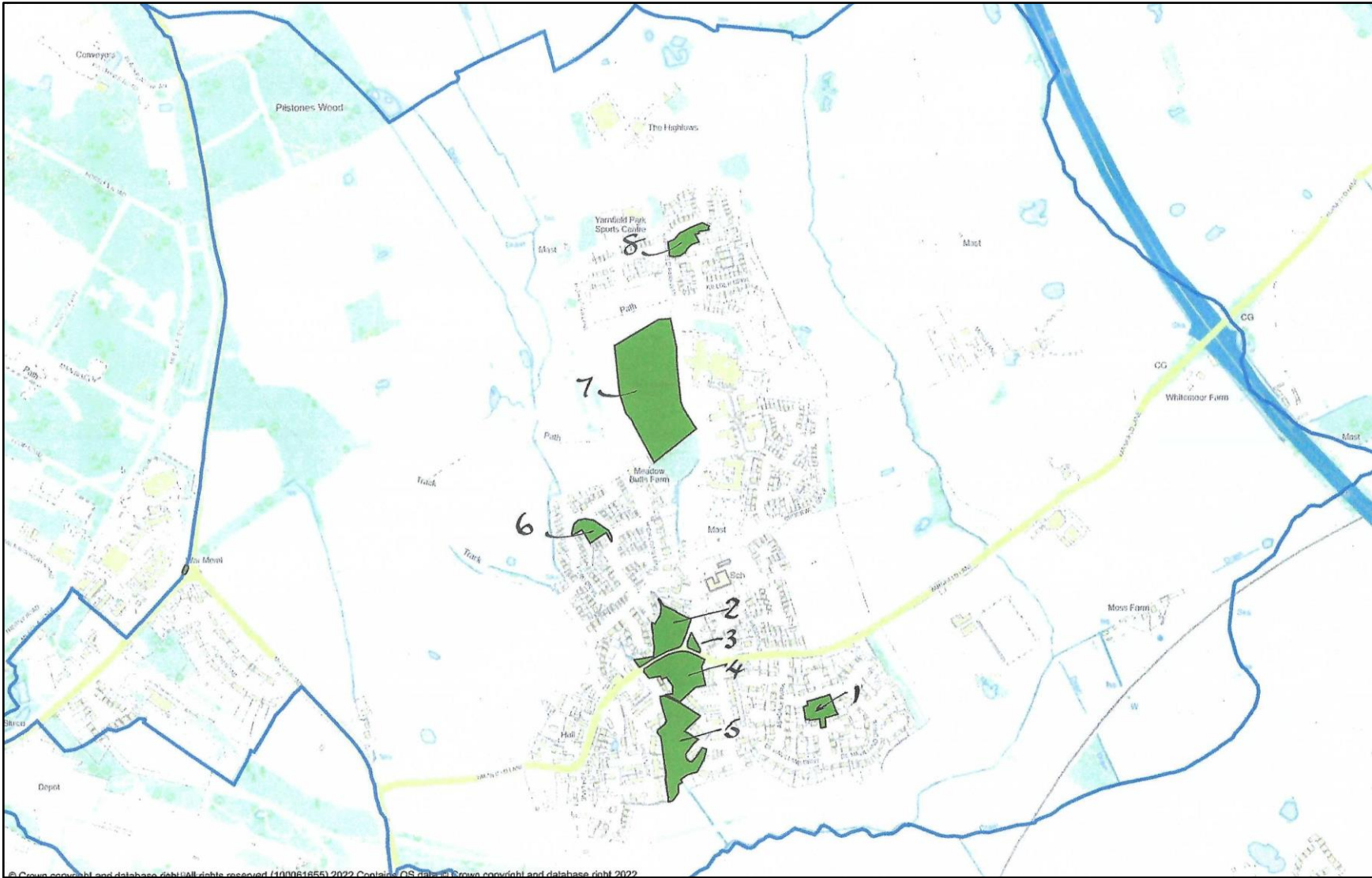
2. Development should have no adverse impact on the amenity, safety, accessibility or open and green character of Local Green Space.

- LGS is very restrictive for sports pitches and play areas – suggest alternative approach to LGS.

### **Interpretation**

- National policy states that Local Green Space has similar protection to Green Belts. It should be noted that the purpose of Local Green Space designation is related to community value, so is different to the five purposes for Green Belts. The second clause to the policy draws on the National Design Guide.
-

Figure 7 - Local Green Spaces - Yarnfield







## 6. Travel

- Purpose
- Planning Rational

### **Policy Y8: Sustainable and Active Travel**

1. Development likely to generate additional need for travel should be supported by balanced transport provision, including opportunities for sustainable and active travel.
2. Opportunities should be taken to improve links for pedestrians and cyclists to surrounding paths and facilities, including public transport facilities.
3. New footpaths should be of sufficient width to accommodate people with a range of mobilities and for the passing of wheelchairs and prams.
4. Development should cause no significant harm to the amenity, safety, accessibility or functioning of existing footpaths and cycleways.
5. Parking provision should include:
  - a. electrical charging points;
  - b. secure, covered storage for cycles and personal vehicles.

### **Interpretation**

- Active travel includes cycling and walking.



## 7. Infrastructure Priorities

- YCM-PC to name priorities –footways and cycle route to link settlements?

## Contacts

- Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council ...

**YARNFIELD AND COLD MEECE PARISH COUNCIL  
PARISH COUNCIL - WORK PROGRAMME 2022 - 2023**

Date	Start	Meeting	Venue	Key issues and decisions
<b>2022</b>				
<b>2023</b>				
<del>4 January</del> 11 January	10.30am	Informal briefing	Village Hall	
<del>11 January</del> 18 January	7.30pm	Parish Council	Yarnfield Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Speed Watch Report</li> <li>- Playground annual inspection report</li> <li>- Civic collection scheme 2022 report and proposals for next year</li> <li>- 2023/24 programme and budget proposals Budget and Precept approval</li> <li>- Approval of regular payments list</li> <li>- Quarter 3 Bank resolution statement</li> </ul>
8 February	10.30am	Informal briefing	Village Hall	
15 February	7.30pm	Parish Council	Yarnfield Park	- Minutes of Community Action Group
21 February	7.30	Community Action Group	Village Hall	
8 March	10.30am	Informal briefing	Village Hall	
15 March	7.30pm	Parish Council	Yarnfield Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Speed Watch Report</li> <li>- Annual renewal of council insurance policies</li> <li>- Minutes of the Community Action Group 18 October 2022</li> </ul>

**YARNFIELD AND COLD MEECE PARISH COUNCIL  
PARISH COUNCIL - WORK PROGRAMME 2022 - 2023**

Date	Start	Meeting	Venue	Key issues and decisions
<del>5 April</del> 29 March	10.30am	Informal briefing	Village Hall	
5 April <del>12 April</del>	7.30pm	Parish Council	Yarnfield Park	- Yearend financial report and bank resolution statement
18 April	7.30pm	Community Action Group	Village Hall	
4 May (Provisional date)	- Local government elections			
10 May (Provisional date)	10.30am	Informal briefing	Village Hall	- New Councillor briefing
<del>17 May</del> 31 May (Provisional date)	7.30pm	Annual meeting of the Parish Council	Yarnfield Park	- Inaugural meeting of the new council - Appointment of chairperson/vicechair
<del>17 May</del> 31 May (Provisional date)	7.45pm	Parish Council Meeting		- Minutes of Community Action Group
31 May		Annual Parish Assembly		-