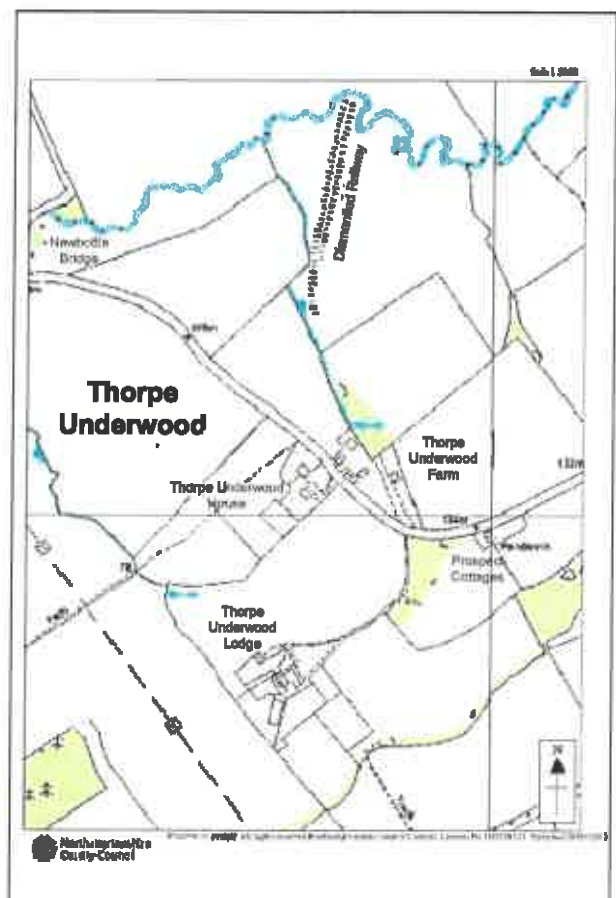
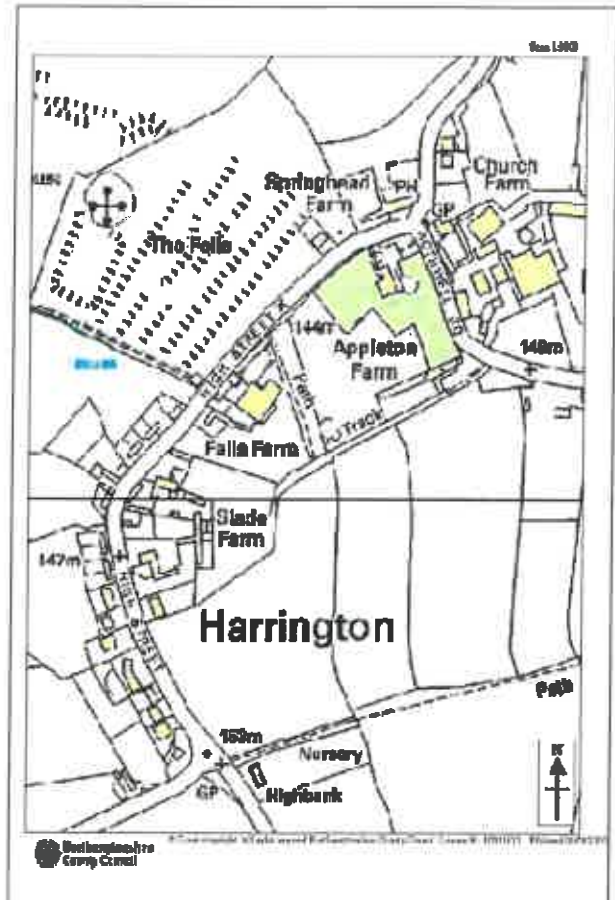


Harrington and Thorpe Underwood Village Design Statement



August, 2008





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All Villagers in Harrington and Thorpe Underwood in 2005
Kettering Borough Council
Harrington and Thorpe Underwood Parish Council
Harrington and Thorpe Underwood VDS Group

NOTE:

The views represented in this document have been put together from the majority opinion expressed by residents of Harrington and Thorpe Underwood when questioned in Summer 2005. All residents of the villages have been consulted at various stages during the preparation of the document, and the final draft of the document was submitted to every household for consideration prior to formal adoption in March 2006. The final version of the document was formally adopted by the Village Design Statement Committee at a meeting held in Harrington Village Hall on Monday 27th March 2006. It was then submitted to Kettering Borough Council for formal adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance as part of the Core Policy of the Local Development Framework for Harrington and Thorpe Underwood. Following representations by Kettering Borough Council in March 2008, minor revisions to the wording of some 'recommendations' were put forward by the Committee prior to final consultations to enable the statement to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

INTRODUCTION

The Parish of Harrington and Thorpe Underwood is located about 3 miles from both Rothwell and Desborough, and totals approximately 1,040 hectares (2,570 acres). Originally a Roman settlement that was found at the edge of the River Ise, Harrington was mentioned in the Domesday Book as a mainly agricultural village.

Over the centuries the villages more famous inhabitants and owners have been The Knights Hospitallers, The Earl of Dysart, The Tollemache family, Richard Naylor and more recently Desborough Co-operative Society in order to find employment for their members and to extend their mining operations. They sold the Thorpe Underwood Estate at auction in 1927, having purchased it in 1911.



Harrington is well known for the vamping horn in the church, of which only five are in existence; the Falls, being the tiered gardens of the Manor House in the days of the Earl of Dysart; and the 17th century pub, The Tollemache Arms. This was famously acquired by the local vicar, and then closed on Sundays in an attempt to get more parishioners to attend church!

The village has changed little over the centuries, and the current population of 150 reached a peak of 250 in the mid 19th Century. The Parish continues to be dominated by agriculture, and even

though there has been consolidation in this area, several working farms remain. Today however, the village is populated mainly by commuters working locally and further afield.

The Village Design Statement seeks to reflect the wishes of the inhabitants as to how this small village should progress in relation to the design of any future development. The protection of the rural setting and environment of the Parish was seen by the inhabitants as being extremely important. Therefore where development does occur, it should be designed to fit the peaceful, agricultural setting that is unique to the area.

AIMS OF THE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

The aim of this Village Design Statement (VDS) is to identify the characteristics of Harrington and Thorpe Underwood and its local environment, as seen through the eyes of existing inhabitants. A detailed questionnaire was sent out to 121 individuals in 2005, and each adult or teenage inhabitant of the Parish was asked to complete a response. 105 responses were received and the results have been combined by the coordinating committee to produce this statement. As a consequence of these questionnaires local knowledge, perceptions and ideas will in the future contribute:-

- To maintain the characteristics which villagers value the most.
- To ensure that future change and development is based on a considered understanding of the evolution of the villages, and is of a sympathetic and suitable nature.

WHO IS THE VDS ADDRESSED TO?

In a small Parish, such as Harrington and Thorpe Underwood, change is brought about not only by developments of new housing, but also by smaller alterations and extensions to homes and gardens, open spaces, trees, footpaths and walls. These smaller alterations can change the look and feel of the whole village but should still be regarded in this context as development. Therefore it is hoped that the VDS will be read and used by:-

- All villagers, including those moving into the area to enable them to get a feel for the environment that they are joining.
- Kettering Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council and the East Midlands Regional Assembly, including Members and Officers.
- The Parish Council
- Planners, architects, builders and developers when considering any development in the villages, however small.
- Anyone else associated with the villages.



HOW DOES THE VDS FIT INTO THE PLANNING PROCESS?

The VDS is intended to be adopted by Kettering Borough Council as a Supplementary Planning Document. The recommendations should be taken into account as a material consideration when planning applications or other matters relating to the appearance of the Parish are being assessed in the future. It will also assist as part of the adoption of a core strategy for Harrington and Thorpe Underwood under the Local Development Framework, which is the emerging development planning system.

The VDS will supplement saved policies from the Local Plan and emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) relating to the form and scale of new development, including changes of use and extensions, landscaping proposals and the protection of environmentally important open spaces. It will also provide guidance on matters of special control, such as:-

the protection and enhancement of the Harrington Conservation Area; and

the preservation of the character and appearance of Listed Buildings.





THE VILLAGE TODAY

Harrington, Thorpe Underwood and the outlying farms currently have some 65 households, with 142 inhabitants. The village retains its rural setting and peaceful atmosphere despite the growth of nearby urban areas such as Rothwell and Desborough.

The main economic activity includes agriculture, although there has been significant growth of small and large businesses and ventures run from households within the village. A major recent addition to Harrington has been the conversion of an extensive range of redundant farm buildings to provide tourist and business accommodation.

However, employment for most of the villagers is centred in the towns and cities in the East Midlands with some commuting to London by train. Most villagers transportation is by car, as no public transport is available to the village. The increase in private car ownership over the past 20 years has resulted in a generally younger population than previously.

With regard to the community there are 3 public buildings where villagers meet. The Church of St. Peter and St Paul is linked with 6 other parishes in the locality (The Faxton Group) and holds regular services. Events, gatherings

and village meetings for different sections of the community are held in Harrington Village Hall. The Tollemache Arms continues to be a social meeting place for some of the villagers.

Harrington is classified as a Restricted Infill Village in a saved policy (RA3) of the Kettering Borough Council Local Plan. Part of the village lies within a Conservation Area. As a Restricted Infill Village, planning consent for new development will only be considered where the subject site is within the village boundary and meets certain defined criteria.

THE CHARACTER OF THE LANDSCAPE

Harrington village has developed on the top edge of a river bluff, which forms the edge of a wide ridge overlooking the east/west valley of the River Ise to its north. The village is sited 50 metres above and approximately half a mile away from the river channel, at approximately 150 metres above sea level. A dry, tributary valley extending from the southern end of the village, at the junction of High Street with Kelmarsh Road, forms a natural boundary to the settlement. The valley follows a northeastern route to join the wide, regularly flooded, water meadows of the Ise. The springs lower down this valley, some of which once fed the medieval fishponds, indicate the junction between the permeable limestone, together with occasional areas of sandy-ironstone on which the village is built, and the impermeable alluvial clays below. The settlement of Thorpe Underwood is one mile to the northeast of the larger Harrington village and nestles at the head of one of the many small, tributary valleys that drain the main ridge into the much

wider Ise valley, near Newbottle Bridge. This small settlement consists of twelve residences including outlying farms and follows a similar land use pattern to the larger village.

Essentially a farming area, the land use reflects the geology through the predominantly permanent pasture on the lighter soils of the limestone adjacent to the village and increasing arable use on the heavier soils nearer to the water meadows of the River Ise.

The whole Civil Parish presents a rural, undulating, landscape pattern of neat fields bordered by well-kept hedges and trees. The nature and prospect of the village and its surrounding landscape is considered a major contribution to the quality of life by over 90% of questionnaire respondents.

Recommendations

- 1. It was unanimous that all Service Utility providers should be encouraged to put all services (new and existing) underground, wherever possible with surface materials sympathetic to the local and rural character.**
- 2. Thorpe Underwood should be safeguarded in accordance with the special environmental character of the area which restricts new development**
- 3. Changes affecting the appearance of the villages and their landscape setting should be managed to reserve their distinctive character and setting.**

SETTLEMENT PATTERN CHARACTER

The village of Harrington existed well before the Domesday book of 1086. It is laid out in a generally linear formation along High Street, Church Lane and Rothwell Road with houses predominantly set back off the road frontage. The older portion of the village is centred on The Falls with more recent housing growth from the mid-20th Century concentrated at the top end of the High Street, to the south. The layout is open in character with reasonable-sized gardens for most houses backing onto open farmland, reflecting the agricultural heritage. Countryside and rural views are a predominant feature throughout the village particularly to the east. Thorpe Underwood is a collection of isolated dwellings and farms set in the rural landscape about 1.5 miles to the northeast of Harrington. The area takes much of its character from the stone buildings and walls and the distribution and setting of the buildings in relation to important private and public open spaces, trees and other rural landscape features.



Recommendations

- 1. There was overwhelming support for the existing pattern of the Villages to be retained, avoiding new development on back-land or small cul-de-sac style developments that would take away the character of the elongated layout in Harrington, and the dispersed layout in Thorpe Underwood.**
- 2. No new-build development should be permitted outside the Harrington village boundary other than for the conversion or re-use of existing buildings. Although no such boundary exists in Thorpe Underwood, a similar policy should be adopted. Thorpe Underwood is characterised as a scattered village and should remain as such.**
- 3. The visual qualities of the villages, and their setting, should not be compromised as part of any new development, to ensure that the rural heritage and character is preserved.**
- 4. In the light of the remote location of the villages and reliance on private transport any new buildings should include adequate off-road parking areas.**
- 5. There was strong support for both the current Harrington Conservation Area boundary and also the Harrington Village boundary to be retained (as illustrated on the inside back cover). Conservation Areas may be reviewed in future in consultation with residents of the Parish.**
- 6. Developments should not be permitted which enable the development of an area with a separate identity than the existing village community such as a gated development.**
- 7. It was felt that Harrington should not undertake significant planned growth, although where growth was necessary, reuse of existing traditional buildings should be considered as a priority.**

BUILDINGS AND SPACES IN THE VILLAGE

There are a considerable number of important and distinctive buildings and spaces in Harrington. Of these buildings, a number are listed as being of historic or architectural interest, being spread throughout the Village, from the Church of St Peter and St Paul at the northeastern end to the southern end of the High Street. Many of the existing houses particularly at the northern end of the village are

more than 200 years old with few recently built homes.

The principal area of open space in the centre of the village, The Falls, is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is also recognised nationally as being of special historic interest as a Registered Park and Garden. This is the site and former garden, grounds and fishponds of the now-demolished Manor House. The area lies on the northwest side of the High Street opposite Falls Farm, The Cottages and The Old Rectory.

The defined Conservation Area, has existed since the mid-1980s and protects the oldest part of the village, It extends on both sides of the High Street from Slade Farm and Harrington House in a generally northeasterly direction to include part of Church Farm, as far as Appleton Farm to the east, and the Church to the north.

There are several distinctive buildings and areas within the villages including the area between the Church and Harrington Village, the working farms with adjoining traditional and modern farmbuildings, The Tollemache Arms public house, The Old Rectory and the row of Cottages facing over The Falls.

Recommendations

- 1. Future development including alterations to existing buildings should preserve the existing pattern of the villages, and be in sympathetic form, materials and design to the surroundings.**
- 2. Subdivision of the existing gardens should be discouraged, particularly where it results in a material alteration in the character and setting of the area and the overall aspect of the village.**
- 3. The village is noted for its spacious layout with open areas, large gardens and houses predominantly set back from the main village streets. This character should be respected.**
- 4. The existing open areas of the Falls, the land to the southwest of The Old Rectory and the land between Church Farm and the Church in Harrington should be preserved for its environmental and ecological benefits.**
- 5. New buildings and extensions should be constructed in a style and with materials that are consistent and in keeping with the local vernacular, with building lines being maintained and in sympathy with existing rooflines.**
- 6. New walls should be constructed and existing walls maintained using materials that are appropriate to the village and surrounding properties.**



DISTINCTIVE BUILDING FEATURES

Harrington is set on a high limestone ridge and is essentially a “ribbon” village. The majority of the houses are situated along the High Street and within 300 yards of the junction leading into Rothwell Road and Church Lane. Little back building has taken place in this conservation village. There are outlying farms and lodges, mainly in Thorpe Underwood, and also in the more remote areas.

The 12th Century Church of St Peter & St Paul also constructed of local stone, lies to the northwest, and is somewhat remote from the village centre.



The village is a mixture of fine period stone houses, stone farm buildings, cottages and terraces, plus a few modern, but architecturally sympathetic, infill properties and extensions.



The predominant building materials are limestone and ironstone. There are numerous examples of these being used together or by themselves.



Many roofs are steep - pitched with overhangs, reflecting the bygone age of thatch. Tiles or slates have replaced most, but a few thatched properties remain.



A wide variety of windows are evident and include wood and metal casements, sliding sashes, a few dormers and their contemporary equivalents. There is wide use of oak lintels but there are some stone lintels and brick quoins. Some stone properties have decorative brickwork under the roof eaves.

Boundary walls of limestone and ironstone with stone coping generally link houses and farm properties, providing a pleasing rural environment.

Recommendation

1. Any building work or development in the Parish should be undertaken in a sympathetic style to the existing, and should be in sympathy with the local vernacular wherever possible.



THE TREES

The trees in the Parish, notwithstanding their utilitarian function of shade, soil stabilisation and food-source have always made a major contribution to the ambience of the landscape. Whether in wood, copse, hedgerows or churchyard, they are considered by the residents as an essential part of the living landscape surrounding the villages. There are many mature trees in both Harrington and Thorpe Underwood, in gardens, hedgerows, fields and alongside the roads.

The trees in the Harrington Conservation Area are protected by national regulations. Within this area there are two general locations that have Tree Preservation Orders, although all trees within the Conservation Area are protected.



Recommendations

- 1. Encourage the planting of new native species in any new development and promote the replacement of farmland and hedgerow trees, which have died or have been felled, in order to maintain the distinctiveness of the landscape.**
- 2. Maintain existing mature trees and copses, which are close to both villages, even though they are in the open countryside.**
- 3. Traditional hedgerows should be retained, and incorporated within any new development wherever possible.**

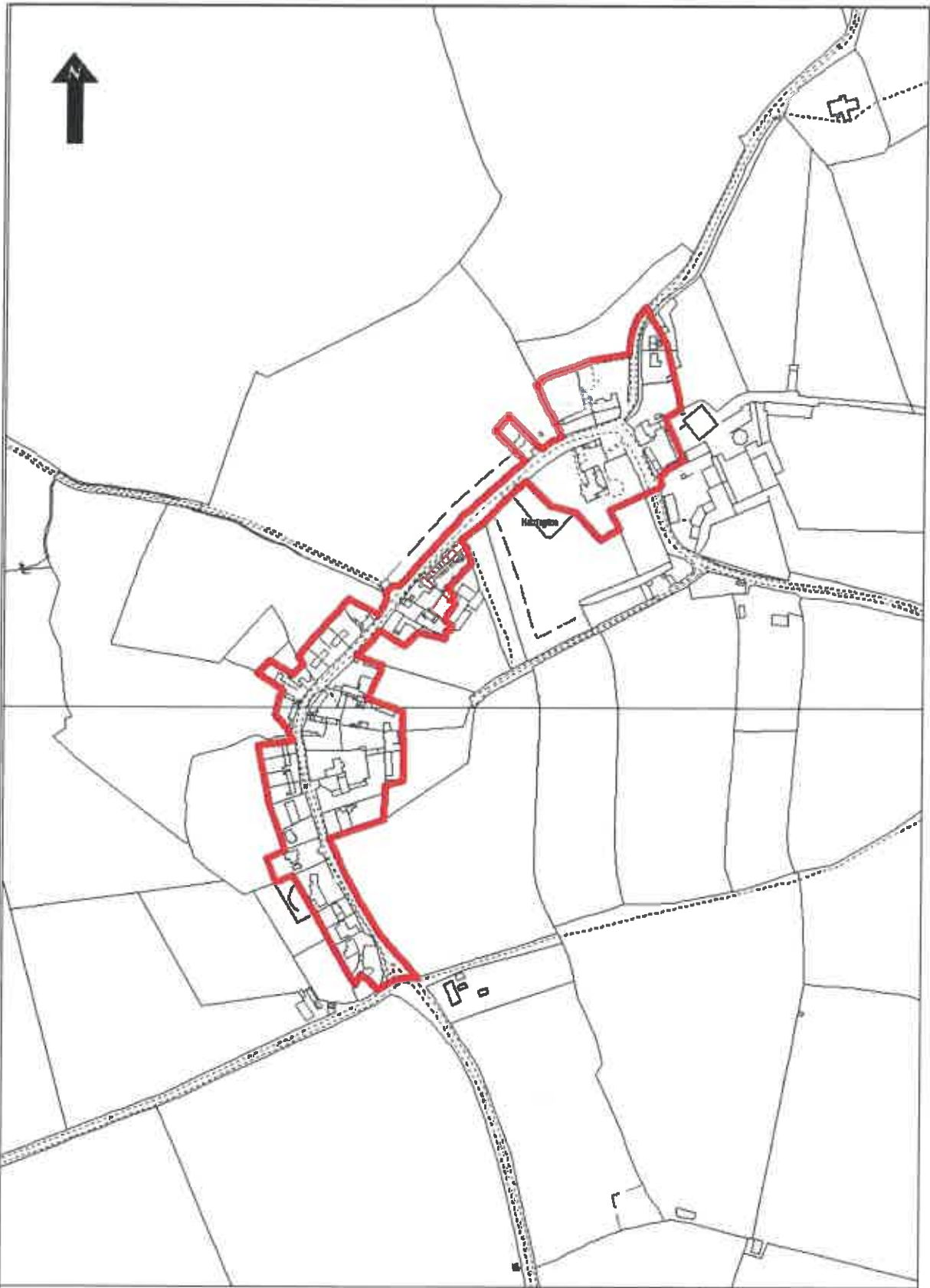
HIGHWAYS, TRAFFIC, LIGHTING, STREET SIGNS & FURNITURE

Generally the roads in the Parish are narrow and winding and unsuitable for any material increase in traffic use. A

7.5-ton weight restriction is now in force on all roads within the Parish except for local access. This restriction is of benefit, particularly to prevent A14 traffic shortcutting through the village and these factors should be taken into consideration in the determination of any planning applications.

Recommendations (particularly for the Highway Authority)

- 1. If any development takes place it is important that all parking is available without detriment to the street scene.**
- 2. The grass verges and stone-walls adjacent to the highway in Harrington and Thorpe Underwood should be preserved and maintained to a high standard given their importance in the village street scene.**
- 3. All road alterations, repairs, kerbs, surface finishes, crossings, signage, fences, seats, litter-bins and dog fouling bins etc. should be traditional and in-keeping with the traditions and materials of the area.**
- 4. The village has isolated incidents of speeding but does not warrant the introduction of speed humps, sleeping policemen, chicanes or other traffic calming measures. These**
would be alien and detrimental to the character of the village and hamper the movement of large agricultural vehicles. A reduction in the speed limit to 20mph and/or the provision of "Village Gateway" features at the main entrances to the village could be considered as alternatives.
- 5. There is no street lighting in either Harrington or Thorpe Underwood at present and the general consensus within the community is that street lighting is not required at present.**
- 6. It is important that the traditional red telephone box in Harrington is kept and not replaced with a modern version that is out of keeping with the traditional architecture.**
- 7. All Public Rights of Way should be properly maintained and preserved.**



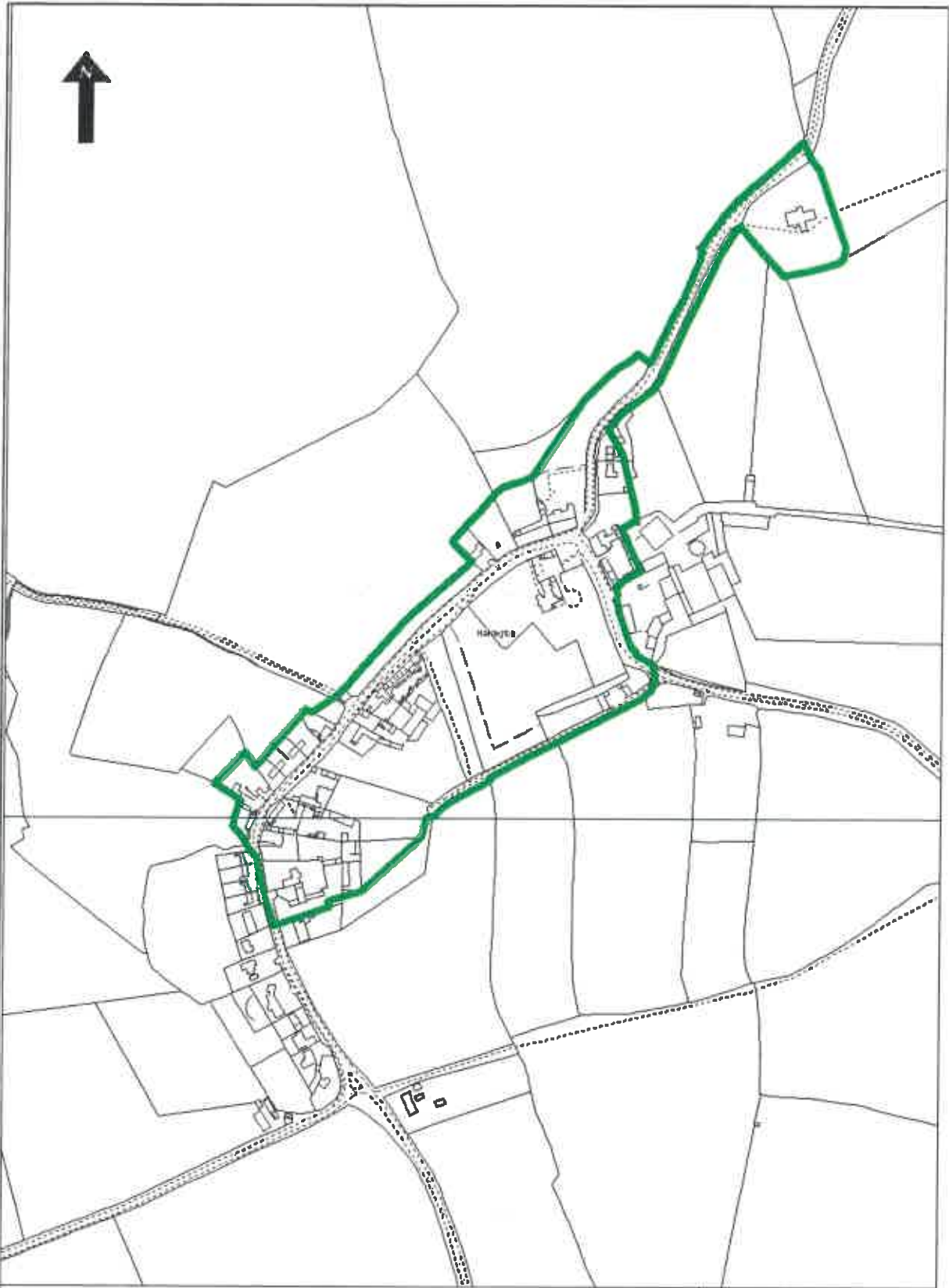
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Date: 17.02.06

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Kettering
Borough Council



Title: Harrington Conservation Area

Date: 17.02.06

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