

# Wicken Village

## Wicken Parish

### Rural Areas Settlement Hierarchy – Response Form

#### Technical Engagement with Parish Councils

#### February 2024

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

#### Existing settlement hierarchy

**Question SH1.** Do you think Small Village is still the appropriate tier of the hierarchy Wicken? If not, which tier do you think is more appropriate?

Small village remains appropriate

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

Planning objections made by the Parish Council are often ignored even though there is a robust rationale. The principles of Design Statements and Conservation Area rules are not followed correctly by Planning Officers in reaching delegated decisions. It is assumed that the reason for this is as outlined in the answer to SH3

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

Lower status in the hierarchy seems to mean that we are given less attention when we have issues

### Existing services and facilities

Below is the list of services and facilities which were identified in 2013 when the last assessment was carried out. Could you please review this list and indicate any services or facilities which are no longer available and add any new provisions which are now available.

	2013	2024	Comments
<b>WICKEN</b> <b>Services and facilities</b>			
Secondary school	NO	No	Show current roll as % of maximum of nearest
GP surgery	NO	No	Identify nearest with capacity
Primary school	NO	No	Show current roll as % of maximum of nearest
Bus to urban area	NO	No	
General store	NO	No	
Post office	NO	No	
Broadband	NO	Yes	FTB and Gigaclear
Recreational facilities	YES	Yes	Children's playground
Pre-school / Nursery	NO	No	
Community Facilities	YES	Yes	Wicken Sports Club
Public House	YES	Yes	
Local Employment	NO	No	
Restaurants / takeaways	NO	No	
Allotments	NO	No	
Social Club	YES	No	
Wildlife site	NO	No	
Adult learning facility	NO	No	
Permanent library	NO	No	

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

The categorisation is too simplistic. The only medical category is GP Surgery but many of these do not offer every service so people have to travel many miles to access these. It also presumes that the nearest GP surgery is taking patients.

If answer is NO for any entry then distance to the nearest facility should be given

Distance to the nearest train station

Distance to the nearest major supermarket

Distance the nearest major town (even if outside Northamptonshire)

Distance to nearest regular bus service eg hourly

### Parish Aspirations

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

Reduction in car dependency by the provision of affordable and regular public transport to and from the village

Maintenance of the rural setting of the village by preventing coalescence with neighbouring settlements

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

Wicken is predominantly a dormitory village with residents of working age commuting by their own transport to locations at some distance from the village itself. It is already a victim of losing services to other locations which make them more sustainable but Wicken less so.

The village aspires to maintain its rural "feel" by strict adherence to the principles applied to conservation areas and village confines. This has not always been supported by decisions taken by Planning Officers.

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

The village has no current employment opportunities and has no capacity to increase this. It also has no land which is not designated open countryside surrounding it where the presumption is for zero development.

## Settlement Confines

**QUESTION SC1.** Do you agree all exception sites should be excluded from settlement confines? If

We agree that all excepted sites should be outside the confines structure. There should be no process by which the confines boundary can be adjusted as part of a planning application without the express written consent of the relevant Parish Council. The viability of projects must be linked to sustainability such that houses must have zero impact on electricity supply (by generating their own) and no impact on water or sewerage provision. Excepted sites should only be for affordable housing with no market value property included and no ability for planning applications to be withdrawn and re-submitted with market value housing or for the original planning application to be modified.

not, please explain why

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

Any isolated or peripheral development cannot be considered as inside the confines unless express written consent has been obtained from the relevant Parish Council from a publicly attended meeting.

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

This does not apply to Wicken but the answer to question SC2 would equally apply.

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

All settlements should have a map produced to be included in the plan along with confirmation of the minute passed by the Parish Council which agreed the map as being accurate.

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

The Wicken boundary has been changed through planning applications with Parish Council objections being discounted. It has been disclosed that the Council was not contacted to obtain views at the appropriate time. The boundaries adjacent to the Leckhampstead Road at the edge of the village should revert to the 2019 position even if that means, in effect, a dwelling was approved to be built outside of the confines.

Gardens of houses within the Confines boundary should not be included where the building of an additional structure between the original house and the boundary would mean the loss of a view of open countryside by the original house.

An additional criterion would be a definitive statement that small parcels of land ring-fenced adjacent to the current confines boundary as a speculative measure by the landowner will always be regarded as outside the confines. If this presumption is not made then the long term linear growth of more parcels of land would continue to push the village confines further and further away from the heart of the village.

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

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

To re-iterate that the confines line must be signed off by the Parish Council which it affects with no overriding veto to be held by the local authority

**Your details**

Name: \_\_Neil Gordon-Lee\_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_Chair\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_neilgordonlee@wickennorthants.co.uk\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_07904781414\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

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