

MASHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

VISION

With a Saxon name, Masham has been an established community for at least 1400 years. In the Domesday Book it had a church and a priest as well as significant areas of land under cultivation, already marking it out as an important community. It was granted a market in the 14th Century, a right that continues to this day. By the 19th Century it had become one of the most important centres in the North for sheep sales, with the Market Square and the adjoining streets filled with sheep every September. The annual Masham Sheep Fair continues that tradition.

Today, Masham remains a vibrant place. Industry is represented by two long established animal feed mills and two breweries, and there are many shops and smaller businesses in the town. It has a very active pre-school group and C of E Primary School as well as a medical practice and a chemist. St Mary's Church and the Methodist Chapel are both at the heart of the community.

Being situated in lower Wensleydale, Masham is increasingly a tourist destination, with the economic benefit that brings to the shops, pubs, hotels and B and B's.

It is also a desirable community to retire to, with beautiful surroundings, good facilities within the town and varied social activities and societies.

The vision for Masham for fifteen years hence has to take account many aspects. Above all, the balance and character of the community must be retained, taking account of the needs of local families, local employment, suitable housing for each stage of life and retirement.

There is opportunity to grow the size of the community, with land available for housing and further industrial development, but this must be done in balance; the vision is to grow the community whilst providing appropriate housing for local residents at all stages of their lives, from young to old, and to increase local employment opportunity by encouraging the development of more businesses in Masham.

The growth of Masham must be supported by a commensurate growth in services. These include education and medical facilities as well as utilities, including high speed broadband, sewage disposal, gas, electricity and water. Parking for visitors is already an issue, which will only become more problematic as the community grows, and needs addressing.

Above all, the unique character of Masham must be preserved. Architecturally the core of the town is protected through the Conservation Area, but further developments in housing should be interesting and characterful to complement this ancient town.

The Parishes of Burton on Yore, Ellington High & Low and Swinton with Warthermarske are more rural than Masham. The latter contains the listed castle and parkland of Swinton Park. This is now a leading tourist destination which helps to maintain the buildings and gardens

and is also a major employer in the area. There is a requirement for more local housing for employees.

There are a number of commercial aspects to the countryside around Masham namely agriculture, forestry, sporting and recreation. These businesses need to be allowed to either adapt existing buildings or construct new ones to continue to operate commercially in today's business environment. If old buildings become redundant for their current purpose alternative uses should be looked at in order that they can be maintained rather than fall into dis-repair.

The services to the more rural areas, water, electricity, broadband should be equal to those provided in Masham.