POLESWORTH PARISH COUNCIL (WITH WARTON AND BIRCHMOOR) RESPONSE TO NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCILS REVIEW OF THE LOCAL PLAN 2026.

The consultation on the review of the Local Plan identifies a number of matters of relevance and concern to the Parish Council.

The spatial strategies and growth options set out within the consultation documents and response forms are of particular interest as they have potential implications for the settlements and rural areas covered by the Parish. Of note are the various approaches to site selection and designation which are proposed for consultation. The Parish Council would support, in principle, the proposal for a joint development strategy between Lichfield District and North Warwickshire Borough as a new settlement focused around Thorpe Constatine would be likely to have limited adverse impact on existing communities. As a comprehensively planned new settlement, it would allow for the timely provision of appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities designed to meet the needs of its future population , in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

The Parish Council strongly objects to the proposed growth option of a development to the west of Warton and to the east of the M42 . The Parish Neighbourhood Plan policies PNP6 and PNP9 seek to protect the distinctive nature and character of our communities and to prevent coalescence resulting from incremental and large scale development. The scale of this proposed development would significantly erode the physical and visual separation between settlements leading to unacceptable settlement coalescence. Furthermore, the pressure which would result from the very significant additional traffic resulting from such a development would put unacceptable pressure on the already strained and overloaded

junctions in Polesworth, Amington, Shuttington and Pinwall resulting in the prospect of frequent gridlock at peak times.

With regard to the Strategic gap separating Tamworth, Bichmoor, Polesworth and Dordon. This Council sees the preservation of this area of separation as absolutely essential in terms of preserving the distinctive nature and character of these communities. The local plan Policy LP4 is given prominent support in both the Polesworth and Dordon Neighbourhood plan. This policy was given full support by the inspector who examined the existing Local Plan and was further confirmed as being essential by the Inspector who presided over the recent public enquiry into the proposed Hodgetts development which sought to significantly reduce the size of the gap. Indeed, in order to preserve the long term integrity of Warton as a distinct settlement the Parish Council advocates the designation of an additional strategic gap defining an area of significant separation between Warton and Atherstone.

The Parish Council considers that Green belt policy is something that needs to be the subject of careful review. Green belt designations have been in place for a significant period of time. A further factor is the emergence of “Grey Belt” designation which brings a new element to this issue. Green belt designations were made at a time when the need for housing and the pressures resulting from shortages were not as they are today. As such we feel that green belt designations do need to undergo review. We also feel that current green belt designations put pressure on areas which have green field spaces. These spaces are of great importance to existing communities and are worthy of preservation but receive no support under existing legislation and indeed are at increased risk of elimination as such areas become the natural targets for future development which results in over development.

Finally, the Parish Council considers that in conjunction with the proposal for the joint development between North Warwickshire and Lichfield in the region of Thorpe Constantine that there is a case for a more balanced distribution of housing growth across North Warwickshire which should involve a redesignation of existing sites with an emphasis on placing a housing allocation to all communities in North Warwickshire. This should be directed towards social and affordable housing which would allow both those who have grown up in a community and those who face the need to downsize to remain in the community they know. Such a measure would also serve to ease pressure on communities such as Warton which we feel are subject to over development and may also allow for greater retention of Green field spaces for the communities of Polesworth and Dordon.

We would encourage members of the public to make their own responses to the consultation on line at:

planningpolicy@northwarks.gov.uk

You can send in a statement and are welcome to use the Parish Councils statement to help you, to endorse it or use extracts from it. You can respond on the 2 on line forms associated with the consultation,. though many people are finding this to be a complicated process. If you do put in a statement then please include your name, your email and home address as without these details your statement may not be accepted. Your statement must be submitted on or before 19th January as the consultation closes at midnight on the 19th.