AN ANALYSIS OF THE

NORTH & MIDDLE LITTLETON

QUESTIONNAIRE

CONDUCTED IN SUPPORT OF THE

DEVELOPMENT OF A

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the analysis of the questionnaire undertaken by North and Middle Littleton Parish Council as an initial stage in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. The questionnaire sought residents' views on the future development of the parish, its facilities, environment and transport, together with an opportunity for respondents to raise any other matters of importance to them.

A total of **122 valid responses** were received, representing approximately **27% of the 455 houses within the parish**. Responses came from both Middle Littleton and North Littleton and provide a substantial body of evidence about residents' priorities, concerns and aspirations. While not every question was answered by every respondent, the overall results and accompanying comments present a consistent picture of the issues that matter most to the community.

THE CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGES

The strongest and most consistent message throughout the questionnaire is the importance residents attach to the **rural character, landscape, heritage and tranquillity of North and Middle Littleton**. Residents value the villages not simply because of individual buildings or green spaces, but because these features combine to create a distinctive sense of place.

There is exceptionally strong support for protecting historic buildings and landscape features. The Tithe Barn and St Nicholas Church are regarded as important assets by **97% and 96%** of respondents respectively, while **100%** consider dry stone walls, hedgerows and the character and setting of historic buildings important. Similarly, **98%** value agricultural, horticultural land

and orchards, **99%** value local green spaces and **98%** consider countryside views important.

The questionnaire therefore demonstrates a clear community desire to protect the **whole historic and natural setting of the villages**, rather than simply individual heritage assets.

HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

There is a strong level of opposition to further housing development, with **76% either opposing or strongly opposing** new housing. The principal concerns are the effect of additional development on roads and traffic, the scale and cumulative impact of development, loss of village character and green space, pressure on drainage and utilities, and additional demands on local facilities.

However, the results should not be interpreted as opposition to all possible change. A minority of respondents recognise that some carefully controlled development could help maintain a viable community, particularly by providing affordable, family and starter homes and allowing younger people and families to remain in the villages. The overriding condition for their approval is that developments should be **limited, appropriately located, sympathetic to the character of the villages and supported by adequate infrastructure**.

There is similarly strong opposition to further large-scale industrial or commercial development, with **80% opposed**, while **79% oppose further renewable-energy sites** such as solar farms and wind turbines. Nevertheless, there is some support for small-scale local businesses, farm shops and other enterprises that serve the community without generating substantial additional traffic. Renewable energy is more acceptable where it uses rooftops, car parks or previously developed land rather than productive agricultural land.

ROADS, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

Road safety is one of the most significant practical concerns identified by the questionnaire. Some **89%** of respondents regard vehicle speeds as a concern and **83%** regard HGV movements as a concern. Narrow roads, speeding, HGVs, inadequate pedestrian provision and the behaviour of drivers combine to create particular concerns for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

Cleeve Road is repeatedly identified as a particular problem, alongside School Lane, Arrow Lane, Blake's Hill and other narrow or through routes. There is substantial support for measures such as **20 mph limits, improved enforcement, speed cameras, better signage and greater control of HGV movements**. The responses also make clear that signage alone is unlikely to solve the problem where existing restrictions are not being observed.

Parking is a more geographically concentrated issue, with **School Lane** being the principal area of concern and a substantially greater level of concern in Middle Littleton than North Littleton. Footpaths and pavements are generally regarded more positively in the numerical responses, but the written comments reveal significant concerns about overgrown vegetation, narrow or missing footways, obstructive parking and poor maintenance.

FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

Flooding is another important concern. **93%** consider minimising the risk of flooding important. The issue is particularly significant in North Littleton, where **56%** reported that their local area had been affected by flooding and **22%** reported damage to their homes. The comments identify recurring problems with roads, gardens, land, properties and drainage infrastructure.

The responses also demonstrate a strong concern that further development and additional hardstanding could increase existing flooding and drainage problems. Improving drainage, sewerage and flood resilience is therefore seen as an important consideration in relation to any future development.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Despite the concerns about development and infrastructure, the questionnaire demonstrates a **strong underlying appreciation of village life and community facilities**.

The Village Hall is considered an important asset by **85%** of respondents, while the two village pubs are considered important by **75%**. The Littleton Football Club, although personally used by fewer residents, is widely recognised as an important facility for the wider community, particularly younger people. The bus-shelter book exchange is also well regarded.

The **Littleton Link is particularly successful as a means of community communication**, being used by 93% of respondents. In contrast, the Parish Council website is used much less frequently, suggesting an opportunity to improve its visibility, content and currency.

Public transport is currently used by relatively few residents, but the comments indicate that this should not be interpreted as a lack of need. Respondents identify infrequent and unreliable services, inconvenient routes, poor accessibility to bus stops and inadequate connections as the principal problems. Many indicate that they would make greater use of public transport if services were improved, particularly as they become less able to rely on private cars.

OVERALL MESSAGE

Taken as a whole, the questionnaire reveals a community that is **strongly attached to its existing environment and way of life and cautious about change**, but which is not necessarily opposed to all development or improvement.

The central message is that residents would prefer the focus to be on **protecting and improving what already exists** rather than simply accommodating additional growth. Roads, traffic, flooding, drainage, footpaths and other infrastructure are repeatedly identified as matters requiring attention. At the same time, residents want the historic environment, countryside, green spaces, community facilities and distinctive character of the villages to be protected.

The responses therefore provide a strong foundation for a Neighbourhood Plan centred on **appropriate scale and location of development, protection of landscape and heritage, improved infrastructure and road safety, flood resilience, maintenance of existing assets, and the preservation and strengthening of community life**.