



# Kinver Neighbourhood Development Plan

2023-2038



**Kinver**  
Neighbourhood  
Plan

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# Introduction



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Kinver's Neighbourhood Plan

The Parish Council decided to create Kinver's Neighbourhood Development Plan to give local people more influence over future planning decisions. The Kinver parish Neighbourhood Plans seeks to protect our local landscape and heritage, while enabling sustainable change and development which will enhance wellbeing and prosperity. The Neighbourhood Plan policies aim to represent what local people see as the way forward for the next few years. The Plan will run from date of adoption (expected to be 2023) to 2038, unless reviewed earlier.

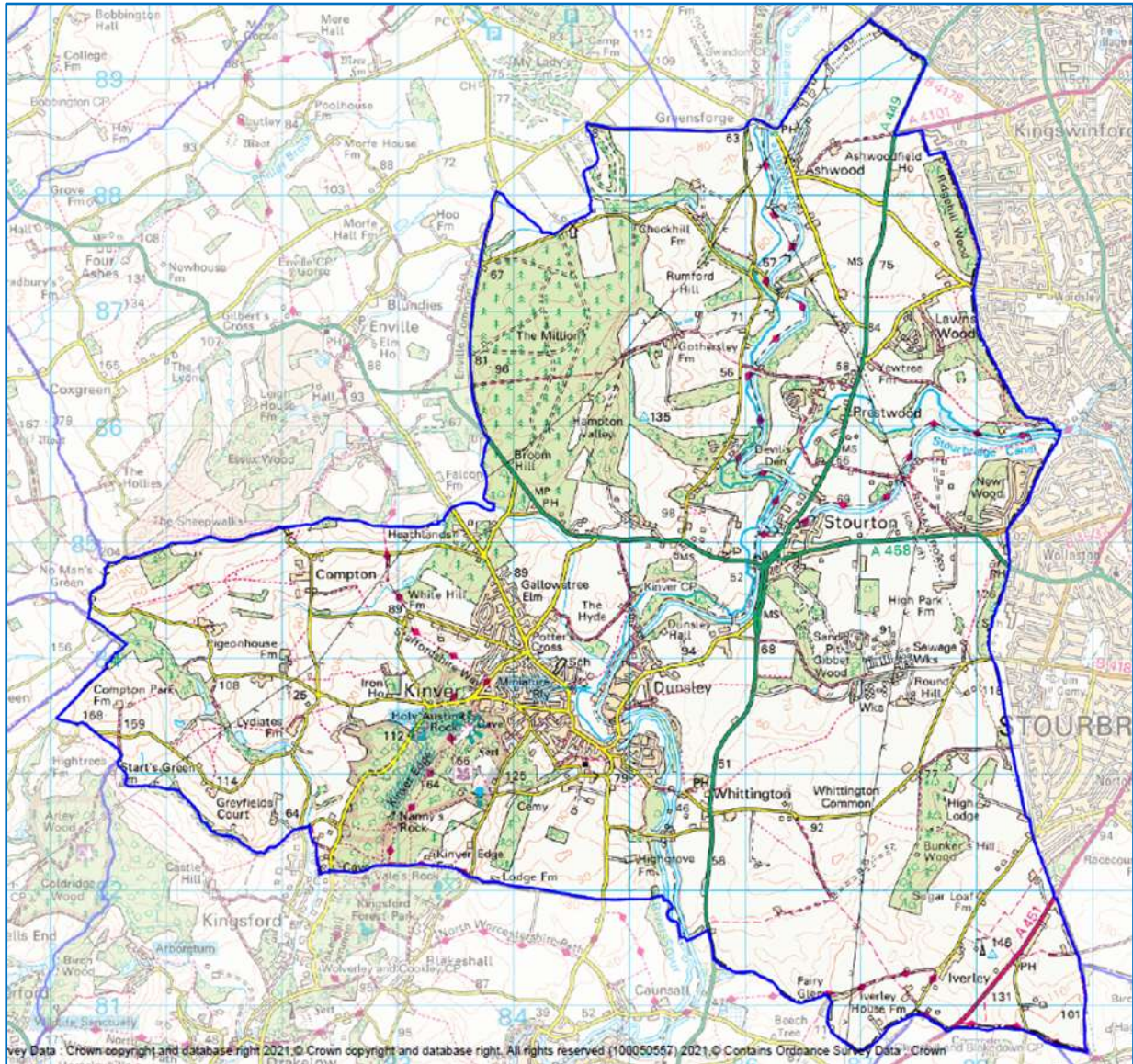


*Kinver High Street*

The policies of the Kinver Neighbourhood Plan are based on analysis of community and stakeholder engagement, and local evidence. We have engaged with the community through questionnaires and surveys, meetings, conversations, press and social media. Evidence and information have been made available via our website [kinvernplan.co.uk](http://kinvernplan.co.uk). The development of the Plan has been informed by additional evidence commissioned for this Plan including a Housing Needs Assessment, a Design Code, and Nature Recovery report by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. The policies have taken due account of the Basic Conditions for plans, which ensure they are coherent with wider policies and legislation.

## 1.2 Area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan

The Kinver Neighbourhood Plan covers the area of Kinver Parish, as shown on the map below.



Map 1.2-1 Kinver Neighbourhood Development Plan designated area

An aerial photograph of Kinver, showing a dense residential area of red brick houses with dark roofs in the foreground. A large, well-maintained green golf course is visible in the middle ground, surrounded by lush green trees. In the background, a thick forest covers a hillside under a clear blue sky with scattered clouds. A semi-transparent blue rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text 'Kinver Context' in white.

# Kinver Context

## 2 Kinver Context

### 2.1 Portrait of Kinver Parish

#### 2.1.1 Strategic Context

Kinver is a large semi-rural parish at the southernmost tip of South Staffordshire, bordering rural areas of Worcester and Shropshire to the south and west, and the Black Country conurbation to the east. Kinver is the main population centre, with outlying settlements including Stourton, Iverley and Lawnswood.

The nearest town is Stourbridge to the east, about five miles away, with Kidderminster at a similar distance to the south and Wolverhampton twelve miles north. The black country conurbation with its employment and commerce opportunities borders the east of the parish. The A449 runs north to south through the east of the parish, and the A458 runs east-west connecting Stourbridge to Bridgnorth. Kinver lies about a mile from their intersection. The nearest rail station is five miles away, and motorway intersection about twelve miles away.

Kinver village lies in the valley of the river Stour, with the sandstone eminence of Kinver Edge (National Trust) rising steeply above it. The Edge and its Rock Houses are a popular visitor attraction. The whole of the area of the parish outside settlement boundaries is Green Belt, creating a green corridor to the west of the Black Country. The Staffordshire and Worcestershire, and Stourbridge, Canal conservation areas follow the river valleys.

#### 2.1.2 Social and Economic Factors

The parish has a population of 7225 (2011) in 3074 households. The latest 2020 population estimate for Kinver is slightly lower at 7066, and population growth in South Staffordshire is below average at 2.2% between 2011 and 2021. The proportion of older people is greater than the national South Staffordshire or national average, and the trend is for this to increase. The number of young people (under 44 years) is correspondingly low, and falling. Almost half of the population are classed as not deprived in any dimension, which is above the national average.

Kinver parish covers 4196 ha, (about 42 square km), mostly rural. The landscape is made up of woodlands, pasture and arable. The pasture supports equine uses as well as sheep and cattle. The landscape is an attraction to visitors from nearby population centres, serving as a 'green lung' for the Black Country conurbation. It is estimated that Kinver Edge (National Trust) attracts more than 250,000 visits a year.



*Kinver from Kinver Edge*

Kinver's lovely setting and proximity to the conurbation create pressure on housing. Home ownership in Kinver is high relative to the national average, and rising. The proportion of detached homes and of 4+ bedroom homes is higher (32%), and of 3 bedroom homes lower (35%), than in South Staffordshire or England. House prices are also high, with the effect that those on average wages or below cannot afford to buy, even under most 'affordable housing' schemes (Housing Needs Assessment, AECOM 2021).

Kinver has 3 schools educating infants through to sixth form, and 3 pre-schools. Kinver village is well served with shops, eating establishments and takeaways. The wider parish also contains pubs and restaurants, as well as farms, garden centres, care and retirement homes, liverys, and a major anaerobic digestion facility. However commercial services to the village have declined in recent years, aggravated by the Covid pandemic.

Kinver has no train station, and public transport is poor except in some areas adjoining the Black Country conurbation. Most people commute to work by car. There is a strong network of footpaths and bridleways, as well as the canal towpaths. About 10% of respondents to the questionnaire said they ran a business in Kinver; and more than half of those of working age said that they worked from home or expected to do so. A significant issue with both businesses and homeworkers is poor and unreliable internet connection speeds.

Kinver village is centred along a narrow valley, constrained by Kinver Edge and the river Stour. Many of the roads around the parish are narrow and hilly, with only the High Street route suited to through traffic. The Neighbourhood Plan first consultation highlighted safety concerns at the Potter's Cross junction, adjacent to two schools, particularly in view of proposed substantial developments which would feed in to the junction. Concern was also expressed about both river and storm runoff flooding in the village, affecting the Community Centre and threatening the High Street.



### 2.1.3 Environment and Heritage

Kinver parish includes a wealth of built heritage and archaeological assets, and three conservation areas (Kinver; and the two canal corridors). Kinver High Street was laid out as a 13<sup>th</sup> century planned town with a wide central street, to house a market, flanked by houses each with long narrow plots (burgage plots), and the street retains a number of historic buildings. Earlier evidence of habitation includes the Hill Fort on Kinver Edge; and the Greensforge Roman Fort. Later, the Industrial Revolution brought great activity, largely sited along the River Stour, and a light railway to carry tourists from the conurbation. Kinver is the centre of the largest group of inhabited rock-cut buildings in Britain and one of the largest in Europe, many of which date back to the Middle Ages.

People who live in Kinver parish greatly appreciate the rural setting, the village feel, and the heritage assets, as evidenced by responses to community consultation. Many were concerned that the landscape, wildlife and heritage of the area are at risk from excessive development. Kinver Edge, and two tracts of stream-side ancient wet woodland, are designated SSSIs. Lowland heath, a rare habitat nationally, is present on Kinver Edge and other locations, and projects are underway to extend and connect these habitats within the area. In addition Kinver has more than 20 non-statutory wildlife sites (SBIs and BASs).

## 2.2 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group, comprised of Parish Councillors and local residents, has developed a programme of community and stakeholder engagement, and has used this to guide the process of developing the policies of the Plan. The Steering Group and the Parish Council have sought to inform and engage people in the process of producing the plan.

A dedicated website ([kinvernplan.co.uk](http://kinvernplan.co.uk)) is the primary source of information and contact details. Social media including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram were used, and news was posted on local sites widely read within the parish. Discussions have taken place with local stakeholders, organisations, and individuals, including businesses in the High Street and elsewhere, schools, and the housing association.

The first householder consultation in 2021 sought views on the main issues facing the parish, and how the Plan policies might address these. Most of the respondents elected to give contact details for further updates. An informal survey of proposed Local Green Spaces was also carried out, and the results were used to inform the policy within this Plan.

The main points arising from responses to the first questionnaire are summarised here as a ‘SWOT’ analysis. It should be noted that some issues are evolving, and the situation is not static. More detail is given in relation to individual policies.

***Kinver Parish Key Strengths and Weaknesses (SWOT analysis)***

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beautiful rural landscape setting, green belt, wildlife, canal and river corridor</li> <li>• Heritage especially ‘rockhouses’, and conservation area</li> <li>• Some good facilities</li> <li>• Good community feel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor public transport</li> <li>• Facilities for young people could improve</li> <li>• Health facilities struggling</li> <li>• High street economy has declined – made worse by Covid</li> <li>• High street parking not adequate</li> <li>• Potter’s Cross junction dangerous and not adequate to cope with increased traffic</li> <li>• Insufficient affordable and smaller homes for local people</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designate local green spaces to protect</li> <li>• List local heritage assets to protect</li> <li>• Use visitor economy to boost high street economy</li> <li>• Support home working to support local economy and low-carbon lifestyle</li> <li>• Enhance internet and phone connectivity</li> <li>• Encourage sustainable development, in appropriate locations and scale, with good design</li> <li>• Develop connectivity by walking, cycling and public transport routes</li> <li>• Facilitate improvements to Potter’s Cross junction</li> <li>• Ensure a mix of housing types including less expensive and smaller housing, flexible spaces, and increased provision for older people or those with care needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further degradation of facilities and infrastructure</li> <li>• Loss of green belt and landscape</li> <li>• Threat to heritage, especially the conservation area, and rock structures</li> <li>• Flood risk (storm surface flow and river overflow)</li> <li>• Infrastructure (roads, drains, sewage system) not adequate to cope with new development</li> <li>• Large new developments could damage style and cohesion of village, and the setting of Kinver Edge (NT) and the canal and village conservation areas.</li> <li>• Large developments outside the parish could cause congestion on A449 and its junctions within the parish</li> <li>• Housing stock needs upgrading to reduce energy costs / carbon emissions</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Vision and Aims

The vision for this Neighbourhood Plan is:

Kinver parish celebrates, protects and enhances its rich environmental setting, heritage, and character, while supporting the wellbeing and prosperity of its people. Development is planned to be sustainable, meeting the needs of local people both now and in the future.

To support the vision, six aims were set out at the start of the Neighbourhood Plan development

Aims:

1. Climate Change:

To ensure our buildings, places and infrastructure are future-ready, minimising carbon emissions and other environmental impacts, adapted to the changing climate, promoting biodiversity and protecting our planet for future generations.

2. Community:

To promote the wellbeing and safety of all in Kinver parish by protecting and enhancing community infrastructure and amenities.

3. Nature:

To protect and enhance the local rural landscape, ecology and wildlife habitats, for local people and the wider community.

4. Heritage:

To protect and enhance the built heritage in the parish, for all to enjoy and to help make sure it remains in sustainable productive use.

5. Economy:

To support a thriving village centre and promote local business activity, including the visitor economy, and facilitating increased home/local working.

6. Housing:

To provide a positive planning framework to guide the development of the right mix of new homes, appropriately located, which work well within and enhance the village and community.

# Policy Background



## 3 Policy Background

### 3.1 Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan

The Kinver Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by Kinver Parish Council. Neighbourhood Plans are policy-based land use plans. The policies are used in the determination of planning applications.

A steering group was formed, and this ensured that residents and local groups were involved in producing policy, based on evidence and local knowledge and views.

The Kinver Neighbourhood Plan provides a positive strategy for growth, but also helps to ensure that such growth is sustainable. This plan does not make site allocations, but does make provisions for growth in its policies, including for employment, residential and community facilities. At the same time, there are policies on design, environment and infrastructure to ensure that development supports the sustainability of the parish.

The Neighbourhood area is the whole of the parish of Kinver. This was designated by South Staffordshire District Council in September 2020.

### 3.2 Status of the Plan

Neighbourhood Plans have to meet legal requirements set out in planning legislation, including meeting the Basic Conditions. This is tested at the Independent Examination stage.

Once made through a local referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory development plan for the area, together with the South Staffordshire Local Plan. Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the policies of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be in force until the end of 2038 or until an updated plan is made before that date.

#### 3.2.1 National and Local Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021 requires Neighbourhood Plans to set out a positive vision for the future of the local area, and to contain planning policies to guide decisions on planning applications. This Neighbourhood Plan has been written having regard to national planning policy and guidance.

The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with strategic policies in the adopted South Staffordshire Local Plan. These consist of the

- Core Strategy (2012) and the
- Site Allocations Document (SAD; 2018).

We have also taken account of the emerging South Staffordshire District Local Plan 2018-2039, along with its developing evidence base, including South Staffordshire's Spatial Housing Strategy; Climate Change Strategy; Surface Water Management Plan; Tourism Strategy; and others. The Plan policies are intended to augment those in the adopted South Staffordshire Local Plan, taking due account also of the policies in the Local Plan currently under review, by setting requirements which are more specific to the Kinver Neighbourhood Area.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has consulted with South Staffordshire District Council throughout the preparation of the plan to reduce the risk of disparities between the emerging Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan. The Steering Group has also responded to formal consultation on the South Staffordshire Local Plan.

### 3.3 Monitoring and Review

The Plan will be monitored throughout the Plan period. Monitoring will include:

- planning decisions to see how the plan is being used in practice;
- any changes in national policy, guidance or legislation;
- any changes in local plan policy or guidance; and
- any other changes in the Neighbourhood Area (social, economic and environmental).

The plan will be reviewed and updated if and when necessary, a regular report will be prepared on the monitoring.

### 3.4 Policies Overview

The structure of the policies is as follows:

**Purpose** (what the policy seeks to achieve)

**Planning Rationale** (concise summary of the thinking behind the policy).

Each individual policy is then structured as follows:

**The policy** (requirements for development proposals to meet)

**Interpretation** (notes on how the policy should be used)

The policies are:

- KN01. Economy
- KN02. Housing
- KN03. Community Facilities
- KN04. Sustainable Design
- KN05. Climate Change and Building for the Future
- KN06. Infill
- KN07. Natural Environment
- KN08. Historic Environment
- KN09. Kinver Conservation Areas
- KN10. Local Green Spaces
- KN11. Movement and Transport

Policies are often relevant to more than one of the aims of this Neighbourhood Plan. The policies which relate to each aim are listed below, with the major policies for that aim underlined.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Climate Change:      | KN02 <u>KN04</u> <u>KN05</u> KN07 KN08 KN11        |
| 2. Community:           | KN01 KN02 <u>KN03</u> KN04 KN11                    |
| 3. Natural Environment: | KN04 KN05 KN06 <u>KN07</u> <u>KN10</u> KN11        |
| 4. Heritage:            | KN02 KN04 <u>KN08</u> <u>KN09</u> KN10             |
| 5. Economy:             | <u>KN01</u> KN05 KN09 KN11                         |
| 6. Housing:             | <u>KN02</u> <u>KN04</u> KN05 <u>KN06</u> KN08 KN09 |

A dirt path winds through a lush green landscape. In the foreground, a large tree with dense green leaves and numerous small white flowers is in full bloom, partially obscuring the path. The path leads into the distance, flanked by green grass and bushes. In the background, there are more trees and a field under a clear blue sky. A blue rectangular box is overlaid on the top right of the image, containing the text "The Policies".

## The Policies



## 4 The Policies

### 4.1 Economy

#### **Purpose**

To create local employment, promote high street vitality and support home working.



*Farm buildings repurposed to high-specification offices*

#### **Planning Rationale**

Chapter 6 of the NPPF deals with ‘Building a strong, competitive economy’ and the need to create conditions for businesses to invest, expand and adapt. This includes consideration of economic and investment strategy, infrastructure, and flexibility to changing practices. The adopted Core Strategy 2012 of the South Staffordshire Local Plan contains policies relating to employment, community facilities and sustainable tourism. These are now somewhat out-of-date due to the age of the plan, changes to national policy and guidance, changes to Use Classes (Class E) and permitted development rights and the impact of COVID.

Core policy 7 ‘Employment and Economic Development’ sets out the policy framework working in partnership with businesses and local communities to support sustainable investment and economic development in the district. Core policy 8 ‘Hierarchy of Centres’ identifies Kinver as one of 13 Village Centres across the district.

Chapter 9 deals with economic vibrancy. Policies of particular relevance are:

- EV1 Retention of Existing Employment Sites
- EV2 Sustainable Tourism

- EV3 Canals and Canalside Development
- EV5 Rural Employment
- EV6 Re-use of Redundant Rural Buildings
- EV8 Agriculture

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to add detail and local focus to these policies. Kinver has a lively and popular village centre, used at least weekly by over 80% of respondents to our householder survey. However commercial services to the village have declined in recent years, and many businesses suffered during the Covid pandemic. The range of shops is adequate for most daily needs, but respondents identified a wish for a wider range of shops and services, and more competition from alternative supermarkets. Factors which prevented people from using the High Street more were cited as lack of parking and transport, and the limited range of shops and services, including lack of a bank. Business owners also suggested greater publicity for Kinver as a destination, and using well-publicised events to draw people in. Other population centres such as Stourton support few shops, although Potter's Cross in Kinver has a group of outlets including takeaway, vet, hairdressers and a thriving post office cum corner shop.

Public transport is poor. Car ownership is therefore necessarily high at 87% of households, and most people drive to work. Shopping facilities in the nearby conurbation offer serious competition to local businesses. Encouraging local shopping will increase viability of shops, and the range of services.

The visitor economy could contribute more to local businesses. Kinver Edge attracts an estimated 250,000 visitors a year, and Kinver's historic centre and the canal corridor are further attractions. Yet many visitors do not venture into the village centre. Overnight accommodation is also limited. Increased visitor footfall could contribute to the economy. However it is important to protect the landscape and environment which draws people in, and which is so highly valued especially by those in the nearby conurbation.

More than half of questionnaire respondents of working age said that they worked from home or expected to do so. While this was partly due to Covid, the trend seems likely to persist. Kinver has many small businesses, which are also often run from home. People reported benefits of less time wasted commuting, beautiful surrounding countryside, and local facilities. Recent experience confirms a strong demand for high-quality premises from local businesses and workers. Inadequate internet connectivity, and in some areas mobile phone signal, were identified by residents as barriers to working locally.

In the areas around Kinver, rural and farm buildings are often not fully used, with some falling into disrepair. These could present opportunities to diversify, for example by providing facilities for visitors or business premises, subject to protecting the local setting and environment.

## **Policy KN01: Economy**

- 1. Development to provide employment facilities will be supported adjacent to Kinver Village Centre (see Map KN01-1) and within the village development boundary where it would complement or enhance and cause no harm to the vitality of the village centre.**
- 2. Development for the diversification or enhancement of small businesses (Use Class E), will be supported, providing there is no significant adverse impact on the amenities of residential properties.**
- 3. Development to support tourism and the visitor economy will be supported, subject to there being no significant adverse impact on:**
  - a. the amenities of residential properties;**
  - b. the rural character of the area, including sensitive landscapes;**
  - c. heritage assets and their settings.**
- 4. The development and diversification of farmsteads and agricultural buildings will be supported within their curtilages, subject to there being no significant adverse impact on:**
  - a. the amenities of residential properties;**
  - b. the rural character of the area, including sensitive landscapes;**
  - c. retention, reuse and sensitive refurbishment of any heritage assets.**
- 5. All new dwellings and development providing employment space must have superfast broadband connectivity within the site, so as to be ready as local services are improved.**

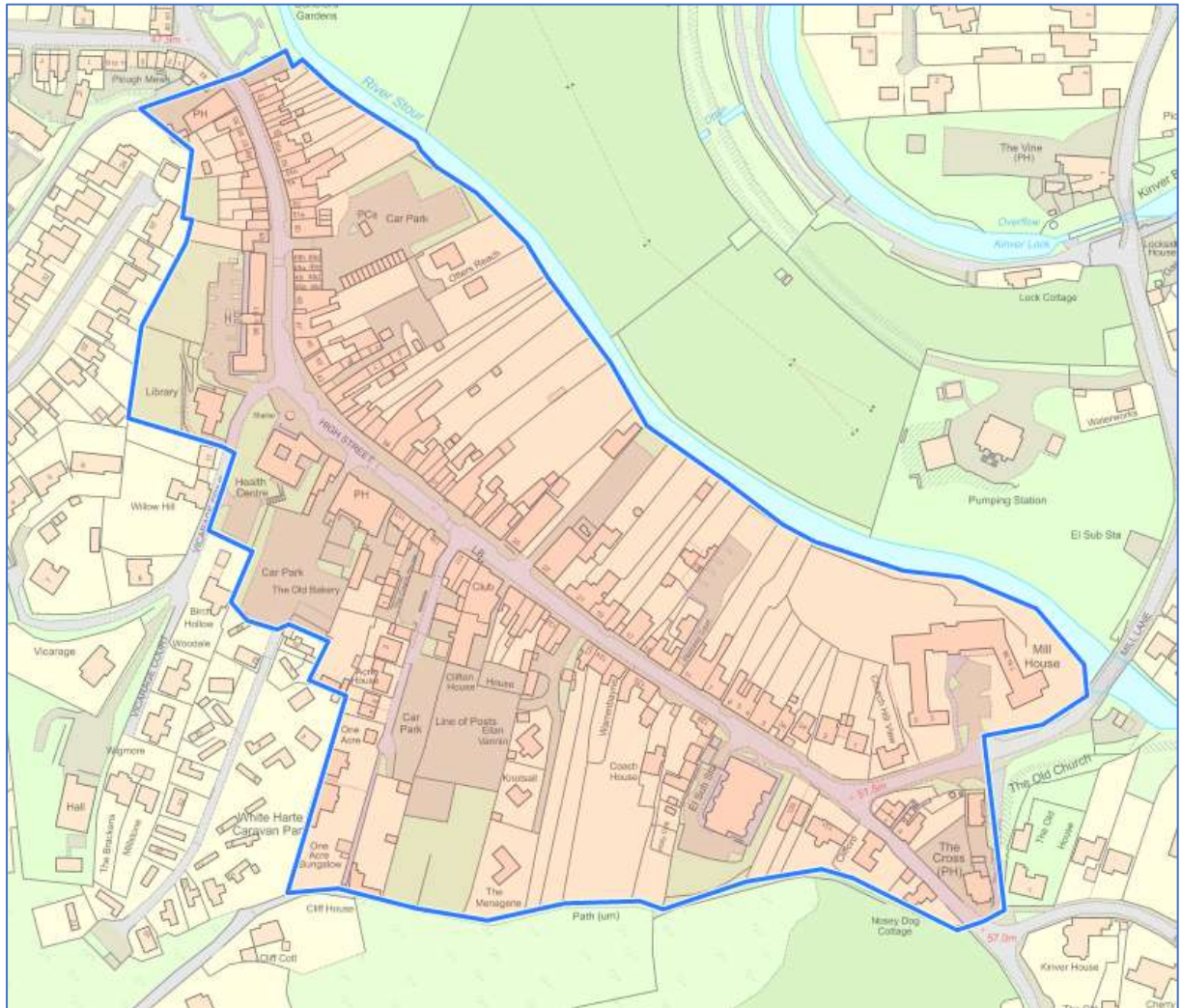
### **Interpretation**

Development that would complement the Village Centre could include Use Class E, F1 and F2 or recreational and cultural uses, entertainment and community facilities.

Harm to amenity of residential properties could include noise, disturbance (including from additional traffic movements and/or on-street parking), vibration, odour and other impacts. Development to support tourism and the visitor economy could include camping, glamping, visitor accommodation and eco-tourism.

The policy would not support inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Design, transport and other requirements for employment development are contained in other policies of this plan. Policy KN09 deals specifically with development affecting Kinver Conservation Area.



Map KN01-1. Plan of Kinver Village Centre area. OS maps

## 4.2 Housing

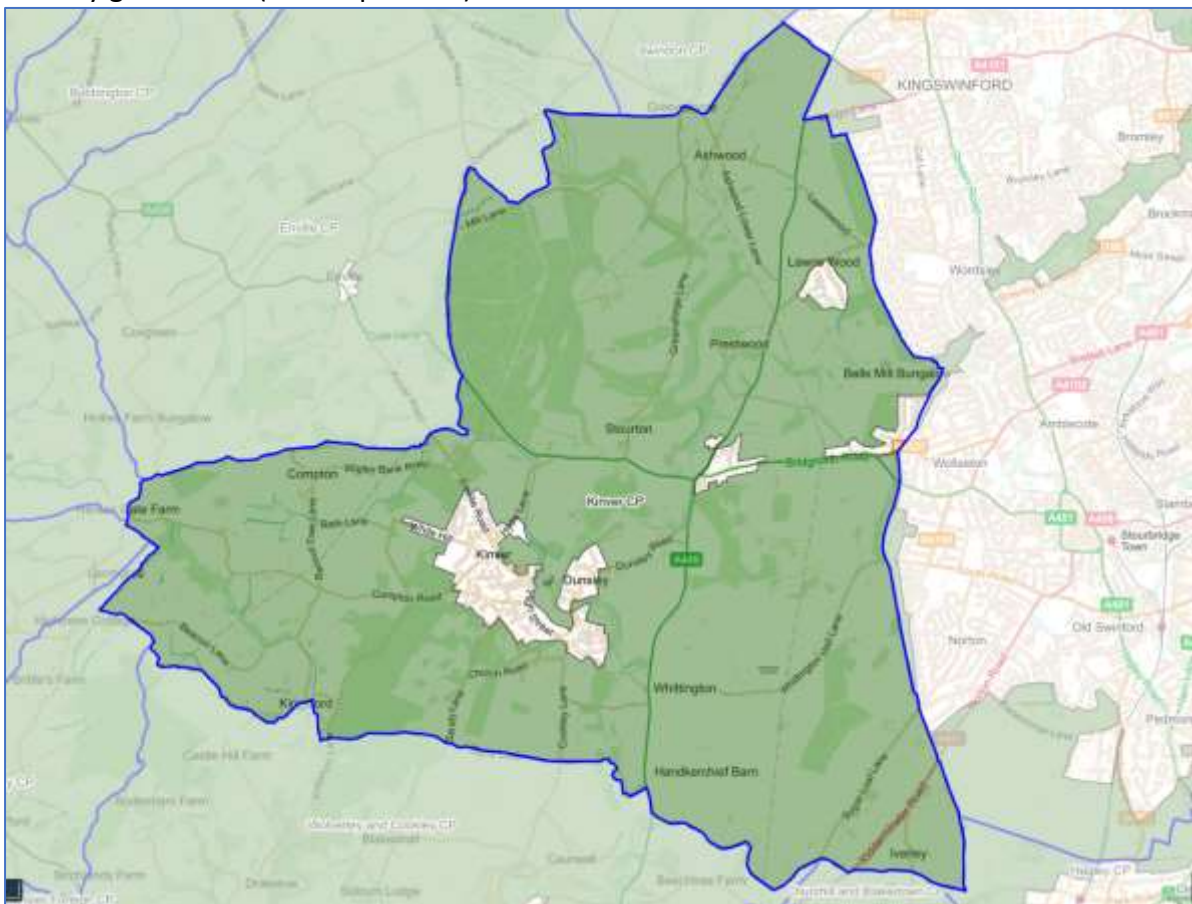
### Purpose

To provide sound, well-built homes and surroundings, which fit well within the community, and provide for local people's needs.

### Planning Rationale

The NPPF (Chapter 5) makes it clear that plans and decisions should contribute to meeting housing need. The local authority establishes the housing requirement for the district. Policies on quantity, size, tenure and affordability of housing needs for different groups in the community should be informed by housing needs assessment. Specific support is given to use of smaller, brownfield and 'windfall' sites, especially within settlements, to achieve housing targets. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places (Para 92).

Kinver parish abuts the Black Country conurbation, and contains the major settlement of Kinver, and minor settlements including Stourton and Iwerley. The non-settlement area is entirely green belt. (see map below).



*Map 4.2-1 Kinver Neighbourhood Plan area: green belt overwhelms all non-settlement areas.*

The adopted Core Strategy 2012 of the South Staffordshire Local Plan Spatial Strategy identifies Kinver as one of the Main Service Villages, which will be the main focus for housing, employment and service provision. The Strategy seeks to protect the attractive rural character of the countryside.

Core Policy 6 deals with Housing Delivery. Policies of particular relevance are:

- Policy H1: Achieving a Balanced Housing Market
- Policy H2: Provision of Affordable Housing
- Policy H4: Delivering Affordable Housing

House prices in Kinver are high, and market prices are beyond the range of those on average earnings and therefore beyond most young people (HNA, Housing Needs Assessment for Kinver, 2021, AECOM). Lack of housing affordable for young people or those on moderate incomes emerged as a major concern in the Neighbourhood Plan first consultation. The Kinver Housing Needs Assessment also found that the proportion of detached homes and of 4+ bedroom homes is higher (32%), and of 3-bedroom homes lower (35%), than the average for S Staffordshire or England. It estimated that the majority of new homes in the market sector should be 3-bedroom (76% was suggested), followed by 2-bedroom (21%). Many of the sites coming forward will be for small numbers of houses. Therefore the housing mix policy is based on the threshold of 3 houses or more.

Dwelling type		Kinver	S Staffordshire	England
Whole house or bungalow	Detached	50.1%	39.0%	22.4%
	Semi-detached	29.5%	39.2%	31.2%
	Terraced	10.3%	10.7%	24.5%
Flat or apartment		8.5%	9.2%	21.2%

#### *Housing types in Kinver parish*

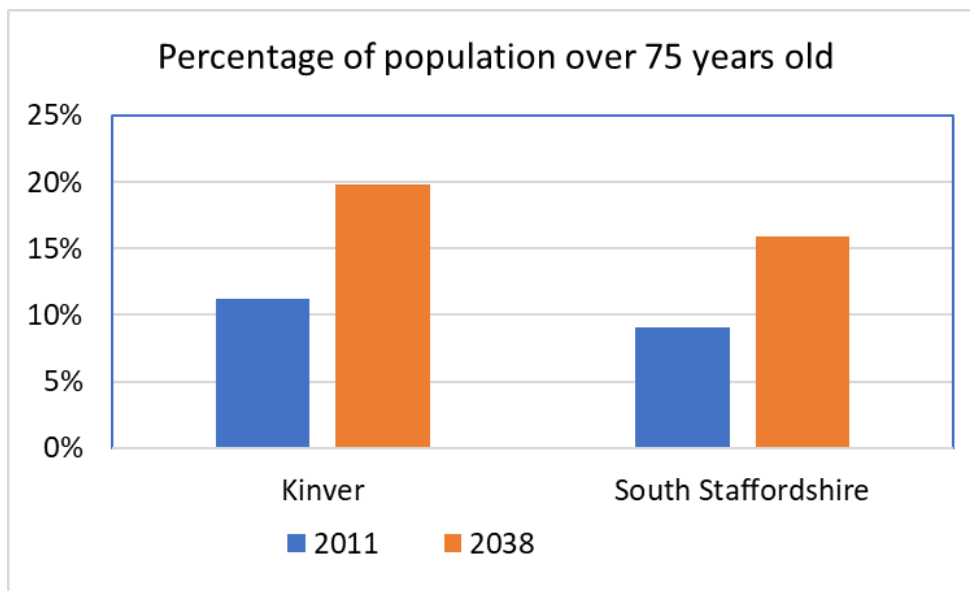
Home ownership is high relative to the local or national average, and rental properties were shown to be in relatively short supply. With the recent increases in house prices, those on average incomes would be unable to afford to buy without substantial discounts, but could probably afford market rents. The HNA identified substantial potential demand for affordable home ownership properties such as First Homes, Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy. Most of these households are accommodated in the private rented sector, but would prefer home ownership. Substantial discounts need to be provided on market sale prices for households on average incomes to be able to afford these homes.

Tenure	Kinver	S Staffordshire	England
Owned; total	79.1%	75.7%	63.3%
Shared ownership	0.1%	0.6%	0.8%
Social rented; total	10.2%	13.9%	17.7%
Private rented; total	8.9%	8.5%	16.8%

#### *Tenure types in Kinver parish*

Lower income households may well be unable to afford market rents unless they receive housing benefits.

A need for more accommodation with specialist and flexible care provision was also identified by the HNA, partly due to our ageing population. Kinver has a higher population of older residents compared to the local and national average, and it is rising. The care homes in the area do not provide sufficient quantity or flexibility of care to meet expected need.



*The ageing population, Kinver and South Staffordshire*

The Kinver Design Codes (AECOM 2022) describes ways to design homes and their settings, to provide flexibility, adequate space, links to transport of all types, promote active travel and in other ways create spaces which work for residents.

The Covid epidemic has highlighted the importance of flexible living accommodation, able to be adapted to changing needs including home working, and with adequate space for storage inside and out. More than half of questionnaire respondents of working age said that they worked from home or expected to do so; and post-Covid home-working continues, at least part time. Broadband speed was cited as a factor which required improvement especially for businesses and those working from home.

## **Policy KN02: Housing**

- 1. In addition to housing sites allocated through the Local Plan, housing growth will be supported in sustainable locations which include:**
  - a. Within the Kinver development boundary;**
  - b. Infill development of gaps in existing built frontages, subject to meeting the requirements of Policy KN06;**
  - c. Redevelopment of existing buildings, providing it does not involve the loss of heritage assets;**
  - d. The sensitive refurbishment of existing buildings, including historic buildings;**
  - e. The development of brownfield sites.**
  
- 2. The mix of accommodation in schemes of three dwellings or more should address local need, in particular the need for 2-3 bedroom dwellings in both the market and affordable elements of the scheme.**
  
- 3. Specialist accommodation will be supported, including:**
  - a. Accommodation for older people, including extra care;**
  - b. Accommodation for adult supported living;**
  - c. Self-build housing;**
  - d. Community-led housing.**
  
- 4. Provision of affordable housing should include:**
  - a. First Homes;**
  - b. Rent-to-buy;**
  - c. Shared Ownership.**
  
- 5. The layout of dwellings should take account of flexibility to allow home working.**
  
- 6. New dwellings should include screened storage space for bins and recycling.**

### **Interpretation**

Support for housing growth is subject to meeting the requirements in design, transport and other policies of this plan.

Where development of brownfield sites or infill development is proposed in the Green Belt, it would clearly be subject to meeting national and Local Plan requirements for Green Belts.



Although the policy does not specify a proportion for 2 to 3 bedroom dwellings, the Kinver Housing Needs Assessment indicates that the majority of new homes in the market sector should be 3-bedroom (76% is suggested), followed by 2-bedroom (21%).

Compliance with 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard 2015' is encouraged and may help in meeting the requirement of clause 5 of the policy. Clause 5 should not be interpreted as suggesting larger homes, but flexibility in the use of living space in dwellings of all sizes.

The later Transport policy includes a requirement for all new dwellings to have secure and covered storage for cycles.

## 4.3 Community Facilities

### **Purpose**

To support a healthy and thriving community by ensuring that communal facilities for a good life are maintained and improved.

### **Planning Rationale**

Chapter 8 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of ‘promoting healthy and safe communities’, including providing social, recreational and cultural facilities; supporting healthy lifestyles; and planning for outdoor public spaces; and provide necessary services. Sport England have a statutory consultee role in protecting playing fields, and the presumption against loss of playing field land.

South Staffordshire Local Plan’s adopted Core Strategy 2012 in Core Policy 10 deals with ‘Sustainable Community Facilities and Services’ including protection and enhancement of facilities and services. Relevant policies are:

- Policy EV9: Provision and Retention of Local Community Facilities and Services
- Policy EV10: Telecommunications
- Core Policy 14: Open Space, Sport and Recreation deals with sport and recreation facilities.
- Core Policy 15: Children and Young People deals with provision of, and access to, facilities for young people.

The emerging Local Plan evidence documents show Kinver as having a community leisure centre based at the High School. This in fact closed for refurbishment some years ago, and has not yet reopened to the community.

Kinver has 3 schools (Infant, junior and high school). It has a flourishing social life with a wide variety of clubs and places to meet, for all ages from toddler groups to the University of the Third Age (U3A). The Edward Marsh community centre is a not-for-profit organisation providing a venue for meetings, exercise classes, theatre, antique fairs, a youth café and all manner of other community activities, with catering. The site has sports pitches, children’s playground, bike track, skate park, outdoor gym; and adjoins the bowling green, and the Kinver miniature railway.

Indoor and outdoor sports facilities, and theatre, previously provided at the high school, have been out of action during refurbishment. Their community use is a vital part of the provision for Kinver parish, which it is hoped will soon be fully re-established. Facilities elsewhere in the parish include tennis clubs, rugby and football pitches and golf courses, all serving a wide area beyond Kinver.

The community library in the centre of the High Street is run by volunteers, and provides computer workstations, hosts the volunteer bureau, and disseminates information of all kinds. Local churches also provide services and venues.

Health services are provided in the High Street surgery, and on occasion in Kingswinford, which is not accessible by public transport.

The consultation showed a clearly felt need by many residents for additional and more effective provision for village activities, especially for the young, but also for adults and the elderly.

Services which respondents felt the parish needed, or which needed improving, included:

- GP services and surgery
- Bus service, including more useful timings eg to allow commuting, travel to education, and evening travel
- Facilities for teenagers – other age groups were also mentioned
- Community sports facilities - the High School's community leisure centre is still not back to full community use, and is the only such facility in the village.

More than half of all respondents felt that allotments were important, and 10% stated that they would use them if available. There is no formal allotment provision in Kinver. Currently Kinver benefits from the generosity of a local landowner who provides informal allotment space. This is over-subscribed despite being too far from settlements for easy access on foot.



*Platinum Jubilee, Edward Marsh Centre playing fields*

## **Policy KN03: Community Facilities**

- 1. New community facilities will be supported in suitable locations, providing there is no adverse impact on the amenities of residential properties or on the historic and rural character of the area.**

### **Interpretation**

Community facilities could include facilities for health, play, recreation, entertainment or sports, including pitches. Some community facilities comprise buildings and spaces, such as a pub or sports centre and their grounds.

Suitable locations would include locations readily accessible and convenient for intended users, in addition to usual planning considerations.

Harm to amenity of residential properties could include noise, disturbance (including from additional traffic movements and/or on-street parking), vibration, odour and other impacts.

## 4.4 Sustainable Design

### **Purpose**

To provide sound, well-built homes and neighbourhoods which provide for local people's needs, and enable a good life, without harm to the local environment or to the needs of future generations.

### **Planning Rationale**

Chapter 2 of the NPPF discusses 'achieving sustainable development', which comprises economic, social and environmental objectives. Chapter 8 deals with 'Promoting healthy and safe communities'; Chapter 9 with 'Promoting sustainable transport'; and Chapter 12 with 'Achieving well-designed places'.

The National Design Guide sets out principles and practice of good design, and provides a framework for local Design Codes. The National Model Design Code gives detailed guidance on policies to promote successful design of developments.

The adopted Core Strategy 2012 of the South Staffordshire Local Plan contains various policies relating to good housing design. Core Policy 4: Promoting High Quality Design covers a wide range of issues, further developed in:

- Policy EQ11: Wider Design Considerations and
- Policy EQ12: Landscaping.

The Kinver Design Codes were commissioned for this Plan, to draw together national policies and best practice and adapt these to the Kinver context.

Kinver has a distinct heritage, and both the central conservation area and outlying areas and settlements show local styles, from terraced workmen's cottages in local brick, to large detached homes in extensive grounds. Materials and forms of building can be echoed and complemented in developments, avoiding bland uniformity, as outlined in the Kinver Design Codes (AECOM 2022). The Codes also give guidance on settings, landscaping and layout.

The household consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan showed clearly that Kinver parish residents greatly appreciate the varied landscape, village feel, history and sense of place. Developments should complement and enhance this location. Over 90% said that developments should be small in scale; and that it was important to have a building design policy to ensure materials, scale and appearance of buildings were in harmony with their surroundings.

Many respondents to the questionnaire expressed dismay at how intrusive some recent developments had been, including some within the conservation area. More than 90% of

respondents said that it was important to have a building design policy to ensure materials, scale and appearance of buildings were in harmony with their surroundings.

Kinver is naturally wooded, with many mature trees and old hedgerows which support wildlife and create a structured, small-scale feel to the countryside. Protection of both the green infrastructure; and the visual setting are important to local residents.

Covid experience and national policy have highlighted the importance of connectivity with local natural spaces and footpaths; and the need for private gardens and outdoor spaces. Residents expressed strongly the need for decent sized gardens and more green space in developments. People also felt strongly that developments should have safe play areas (on site), and should be designed to encourage walking and cycling. Living more sustainably creates a need for facilities including EV charging, secure cycle storage and space for multiple refuse bins.



Kinver has high car dependency due to its semi-rural nature and poor public transport. Encouraging more walking and cycling requires investment: roads are narrow, making separation of cycles from cars difficult. The advent of electric bikes could encourage cycle use by making Kinver's many steep hills less intimidating, if safer routes could be developed. Attempts to encourage walking to school have met with limited success, partly because roads are perceived as unsafe. To enhance village vitality and community feel, developments need to provide natural and easy access to the centre, for all.

Community consultation raised concern over whether local infrastructure could cope with further expansion of Kinver, especially given the constraints of its situation in a narrow valley with narrow surrounding roads.

## **Policy KN04: Sustainable Design**

- 1. Development must complement the local context, including the scale, height massing, siting, set back of building frontages, any established pattern of front and rear gardens, and other characteristics of the area.**
- 2. Development that includes new roads and layouts should create high quality streets, public spaces and green infrastructure, with an emphasis on pedestrian activity, recreation, safety, and convenience.**
- 3. Layouts should create permeable environments for pedestrians and connections to surrounding paths, designed for people with varying levels of mobility.**
- 4. The public realm and green infrastructure should be designed to support movement, recreation, social interaction, food growing, play and exercise.**
- 5. Landscaping schemes for streets and private spaces should take opportunities to include street and garden trees, hedges and other landscape features to create a greener environment.**
- 6. Development should present active frontages to streets and spaces, to create overlooking and natural surveillance.**
- 7. Development should use high-quality and durable materials and support will be given to the use of local and recycled materials and construction and materials with superior environmental characteristics.**
- 8. Development should use trees, hedges and other planting and boundary treatments to create a green environment and also a softer transition between built development and the open countryside.**
- 9. Development should not detract from the unlit environment of the Parish and should avoid creating unnecessary light pollution.**
- 10. Housing should be separated by gaps of a minimum of 2 metres to allow access for maintenance.**

### **Interpretation**

The policy requires development to be designed for the specific site and context, so analysis is the starting point. Off-the-peg design would be unlikely to meet the requirements of the policy.

Local materials include redbrick, clay tiles, Dreadnought tiles, and grey slate.

The National Design Guide and the Building for Healthy Life standard may be useful in securing compliance with the policy. Compliance with Lifetime Homes standard is encouraged. Secure by Design may also be helpful.

Gaps between housing to allow for maintenance would normally be a minimum of 2 metres.



## 4.5 Climate Change and Building for the Future

### **Purpose**

To ensure new developments minimise energy use, foster a low-carbon lifestyle and are adapted to our changing climate; and to work towards energy reduction, renewable energy generation and low-energy lifestyles.

### **Planning Rationale**

Chapter 14 of the NPPF sets out that plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, including the long terms implications for flood risk, water supply, and overheating risks.

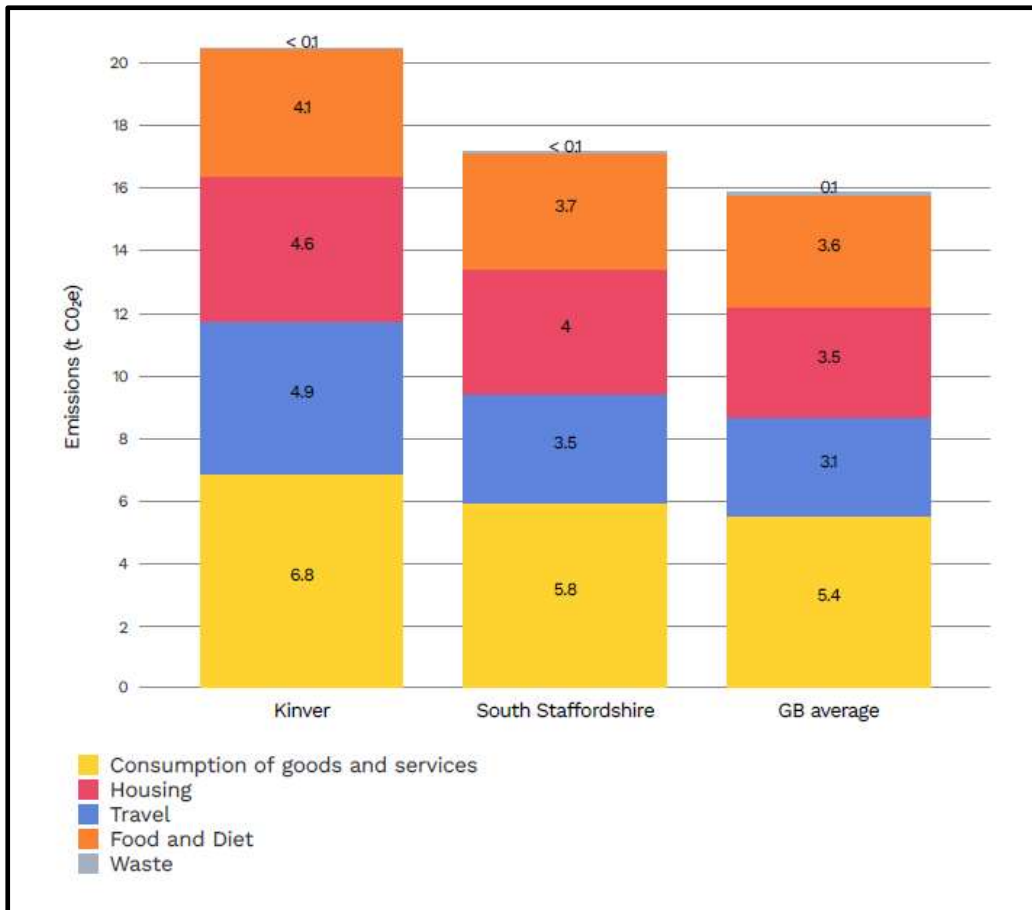
Core Policy 3 of the South Staffordshire Core Strategy ‘Sustainable Development and Climate Change’ requires that development be designed to address the effects of climate change and minimise environmental impacts. Relevant policies include

- Policy EQ5: Sustainable Resources and Energy Efficiency
- Policy EQ6: Renewable Energy

Staffordshire and South Staffordshire councils have declared climate emergencies. There is an urgent need to trim our energy use and adapt to using renewable energy. Residents support measures to reduce carbon footprints and energy use, as evidenced in the Neighbourhood Plan householder survey.

In Kinver currently, more than a quarter of the carbon footprint is due to heating (mostly gas), largely due to poorly insulated housing. Fixing this on existing buildings is far more expensive than building right in the first place. New housing can be designed to be close to net zero energy use, at modest cost, and with huge lifetime savings. Homes can be designed to benefit from passive solar gain while avoiding overheating during summers, which are expected to become hotter. We believe that the demand for housing with evidenced low energy costs will increase as energy prices rise. The build process, and materials, can and should be of low embodied energy to minimise lifetime environmental costs. Alterations and extensions, as well as new builds, provide an opportunity to build for the future. Technical advances, and new guidance (e.g. Code for Sustainable Homes; BREEAM standards and Part L of the building regulations) are increasingly providing effective tools for ensuring lower energy use.

The Carbon Impact Report for Kinver shows that our household emissions are greater than the national average. Incomes and therefore resource use are above average, and the semi-rural setting with limited public transport means car usage is high. We therefore have the potential and the responsibility to make greater reductions than average.



*Kinver parish: Household annual carbon footprint kg CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, compared to District and National figures. (Carbon Impact Report Kinver 2022)*

Car travel is another major local contributor to our carbon footprint which can be addressed by local policies and infrastructure. Active Travel, improved public transport, home working and increased local employment and facilities can all contribute to reduction in car travel, while conversion to electric vehicles will reduce the carbon footprint as more and more of our supply is sustainably generated. All these are addressed in other policies within this Plan.

The falling cost of green energy is encouraging community renewable energy projects, creating local revenue and replacing fossil fuels. Local energy generation reduces our reliance on imported energy, and reduces the load on the grid, providing resilience.

Maintaining green cover, and even increasing it, will maintain carbon fixation, and can help with the protection of biodiversity. However such measures alone are not enough to mop up all the current carbon emissions from fossil fuel combustion.

## Policy KN05: Climate Change and Building for the Future

- 1. Development should incorporate positive design features and specifications to reduce carbon impacts, be water-efficient, proportionate to the scale and nature of the development.**
- 2. Support will be given to innovative and creative design with superior environmental performance and low carbon footprint.**
- 3. Development to provide renewable energy will be supported, including micro-generation, local and/or community energy schemes or as an integral part of the design of housing and other development, subject to there being no significant harm to the amenities of residential properties or to the area's historic and rural environments.**

### Interpretation

To demonstrate compliance with the policy, developers should describe the design features and specifications included and demonstrate how they would reduce carbon emissions or energy use. These measures should not be tokenistic, but should aim to achieve at least 10% energy use reduction relative to current regulations.

Micro-generation could include photovoltaic roof panels and small wind devices. Local energy schemes could include solar fields and wind turbines.

Compliance with design and environmental standards such as Passivhaus or BREEAM 'excellent' or 'outstanding' is encouraged and will be helpful in meeting the requirements of the policy.

Even very small-scale development can include design features or specifications to reduce carbon emissions and energy use, for example in the careful selection of materials from sustainable sources, and efficient insulation.

Retention and reuse of buildings preserves the energy embodied in their materials and construction and avoids landfill.

Ways of building to reduce energy use and increase climate resilience include:

- use of efficient heating and cooling systems;
- design to reduce dependency on heating and cooling systems;
- micro generation such as solar, and battery storage;
- avoiding use of gas boilers;

- superior insulation properties including use of thermally efficient building materials;
- airtightness;
- natural ventilation and air flow (for warmer months) to help avoid over-heating;
- orientation to take account of microclimate, including sun, shading and wind;
- overhanging roofs to provide solar shading;
- use of local, low-embodied energy, recycled and recyclable materials;
- living (green) walls or roofs;
- providing allotments and space for food growing;
- rainwater capture, storage and reuse (grey water);
- space for natural drying of clothes;
- space for bins for recycling.

Such design features not only reduce carbon emissions: most of them also result in lower household running costs.

Use of traditional hedges for boundary treatments creates a greener environment and enhances the historic and rural character of the area. Native species should be used in planting.

Community and local green energy schemes could include photovoltaics, ground source heat pumps, wind power, biomass and other technologies. Such schemes can have high impacts on residential amenity and historic and rural character, so the location and design of such facilities needs careful consideration.

## 4.6 Infill

### **Purpose**

To support appropriate use of spaces and redevelopment within settlements for housing, thereby reducing resource use and minimising the need to take land out of green belt.

### **Planning Rationale**

Chapter 14 of the NPPF 'Protecting Green Belt land' emphasises the importance placed on preserving green belt, and the requirement that before it is released, as much use as possible should be made of brownfield sites and underutilised land. Paragraph 69 states that brownfield sites and windfall sites should be supported as an important contribution to housing requirement.

The South Staffordshire Local Plan Core Strategy's Core Policy 3: Sustainable Development and Climate Change states that preference will be given to development on brownfield land, and encouraging re-use of buildings, for reasons of sustainability.

Within the neighbourhood area, infill and brownfield sites have often made a significant contribution to housing need provision. Such developments have generally been closer to amenities and more convenient than larger new developments on the edge of the settlement, thereby reducing car use.

The Neighbourhood Plan householder questionnaire showed that infill and use of existing developed sites were strongly preferred by local people to building on green belt.

It is important to preserve the amenity of neighbouring properties, and to ensure that the result is appropriate in context. This policy seeks to define some of the parameters to consider.



## **Policy KN06: Infill**

- 1. Infill development will be supported for gaps in existing built frontages in sustainable locations within settlements, providing:**
  - a. The scheme fronts the road, continuing the existing building line and orientation of properties;**
  - b. The scheme complements the site and local context in terms of scale, height massing, siting, set back of building frontages, patterns of garden space, and other characteristics of the area;**
  - c. The scheme does not involve the complete or substantial loss of garden space of existing properties;**
  - d. The scheme maintains gaps for maintenance between it and existing properties.**

### **Interpretation**

The policy should be applied in conjunction with design and other policies. The policy applies to gaps and would not allow ribbon development on the ends of built frontages.

A realistic gap for maintenance would normally be at least 2 metres.

## 4.7 Natural Environment

### **Purpose**

To protect and enhance the green environment of the parish, including the landscape settings, wildlife habitats and their connectivity, flora, fauna and their biodiversity, for the future.

### **Planning Rationale**

Chapter 15 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' describes how planning should protect and seek to enhance the natural and local environment, including landscapes, biodiversity, soils, and natural habitats.

Core Policy 2 of South Staffordshire's Core Strategy, 'Protecting and Enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment' states that developments should not have a detrimental effect on the District's natural assets. Relevant policies include:

- Policy EQ1: Protecting, Enhancing and Expanding Natural Assets
- Policy EQ4: Protecting and Enhancing the Character and Appearance of the Landscape

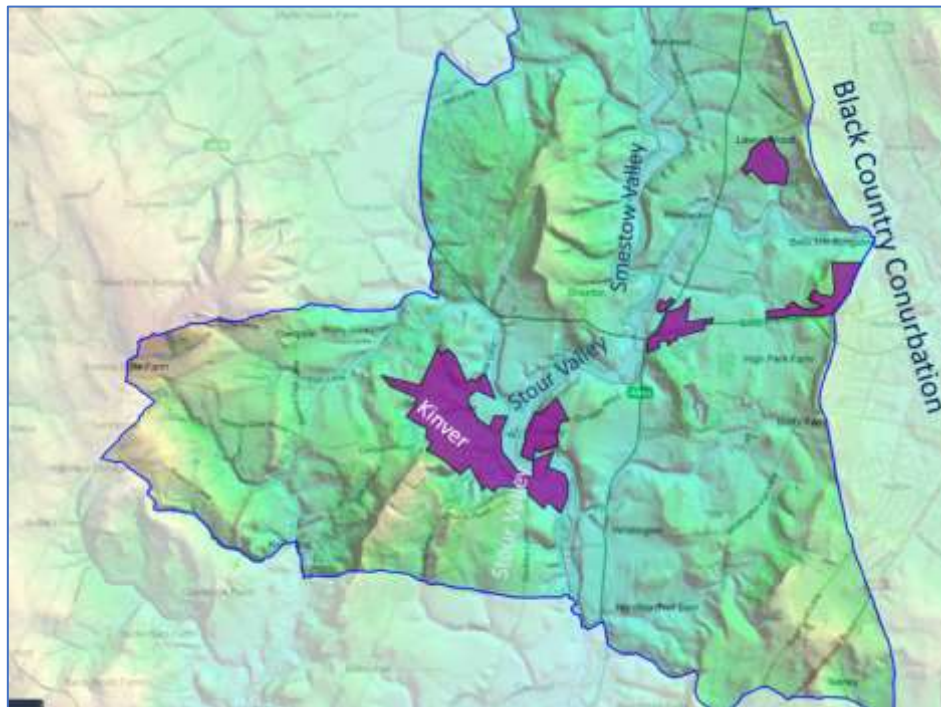
The Environment Bill sets out that a 10% net gain in biodiversity, will be required for all developments, from 23 November 2023. A neighbourhood plan could set a higher percentage requirement for the parish, or for particular areas; bearing in mind any impact on viability. A register of suitable and available sites must be set up by local planning authorities by the time that mandatory net gain becomes law.

The Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (SBAP) has been in place since 1998 in order to co-ordinate conservation efforts in delivering the UK BAP targets at a more local level. Most of the west of Kinver Parish is covered by the Southern Heaths Ecosystem Action Plan, and the east by the Southern Parklands EAP.

Kinver parish is set entirely within Green Belt, and has a particularly varied landscape, including wetlands, woodlands, arable and grasslands. Kinver Edge, a sandstone escarpment looming above the village, has a large area of the rare lowland heath habitat. A heathland wildlife corridor is being strengthened from here to Highgate Common. The valleys of the rivers Stour and Smestow, with canals alongside, provide a chain of wetland and woodland habitats with many sightings of protected species.

Kinver's location in the Stour valley means it is largely hidden from the surrounding countryside. The adjoining Black Country conurbation is also screened from the rural area by a steep ridge, much of it wooded. The views as one heads west out of the Black Country change suddenly to open green countryside and woods, with little habitation in sight. This continuous belt of green is at risk if settlements coalesce, or are allowed to grow beyond the natural screening provided by the landscape. Residents strongly supported protection of

important views, settings and landscapes in and around Kinver, and the openness of the surrounding landscape.



*Map 4.7-1 Kinver parish showing settlements (purple) and topography*

More than 95% of respondents to the household questionnaire rated protection of landscape, wildlife and habitats as important or very important.

Additional comments included:

- Preserve Green Belt land from development (the most frequent comment)
- Encourage wildflower verges.
- Protect wildlife corridors
- Restore local wetlands
- Protect meadows and unploughed grassland
- Improve relationship between village and National Trust / Kinver Edge
- Plant trees, re-connect habitats, and re-wild for biodiversity

The Staffordshire Way starts in the parish, and a strong network of footpaths and bridleways is used by locals and visitors, the parish providing a 'green lung' to the Black Country conurbation.



The parish contains a wealth of designated Wildlife Sites and irreplaceable habitats

- 3 SSSIs including Kinver Edge (lowland heath) and ancient woodlands
- Irreplaceable habitats include four ancient semi-natural woodland sites
- over 20 non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (SBA and SIB)



*English bluebells, indicative of old woodland, are widespread in Kinver parish*

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust in their Kinver parish Nature Recovery Report have identified 6 priority Nature Recovery Areas for wildlife enhancement, to fulfil planning policy objectives (see maps below):

- Heathland Mosaic
- Wooded waterways
- Mill Brook Catchment
- Wooded ridge along eastern edge of parish (bounding the conurbation)
- Urban watersheds
- Bird-rich farmland

Priorities were identified for each Nature Recovery Area, including:

- Link, buffer and extend habitats, especially of Kinver edge SSSI to Highgate Common SSSI, allowing key rare/priority species to move between sites.
- Restore heathland mosaic.
- Manage slopes to slow runoff, especially along Mill Brook catchment

The diversity of habitats in the parish supports a large number of protected and priority species. Connectivity of habitats is vital to maintain healthy populations of local wildlife.

## **Policy KN07: Natural Environment**

- 1. Development must avoid any significant harm to Kinver’s landscapes, habitats and ecology.**
- 2. Existing landscape features, landform and green infrastructure should be retained and be incorporated into redevelopment with enhancement where possible.**
- 3. Development should avoid causing loss of landscapes with high biodiversity value, including heathland, wetland and woodland and should take opportunities to achieve 10% biodiversity net gain (see Maps KN07 1 and 2 ).**
- 4. Development should take opportunities to enhance Kinver’s habitat corridors and habitat distinctiveness and must not cause harm to designated wildlife sites or habitats identified as ‘high’ and very high’ levels of distinctiveness (see Maps KN07-1 to KN07-4).**
- 5. Development should take opportunities to enhance and not cause harm to watercourses, including Mill Brook, rivers Stour and Smestow, the Canals and their environs and wooded and sloping landscape adjoining them.**
- 6. Development should**
  - a. not lead to the loss of trees or hedges; or**
  - b. where loss of trees or hedgerows is unavoidable or they are of poor quality, replacement trees and hedgerows must be provided within the development site, using native species, to provide a similar level of amenity and value in addressing climate change.**

### **Interpretation**

Planning applications should be accompanied by sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the policy. This may include appropriate evidence through appropriate surveys, a biodiversity metric calculation, suitable landscaping details including soil specifications, drainage design, and long-term management plan for any green infrastructure.

Clause 1 could take account of mitigation as a part of a development scheme.

In terms of impacts on habitats, the following hierarchy should be used to help achieve compliance with the policy:

- Avoid habitat damage;
- Minimise habitat damage;
- Restore damaged or lost habitat;
- Compensate for habitat loss or damage (as a last resort).

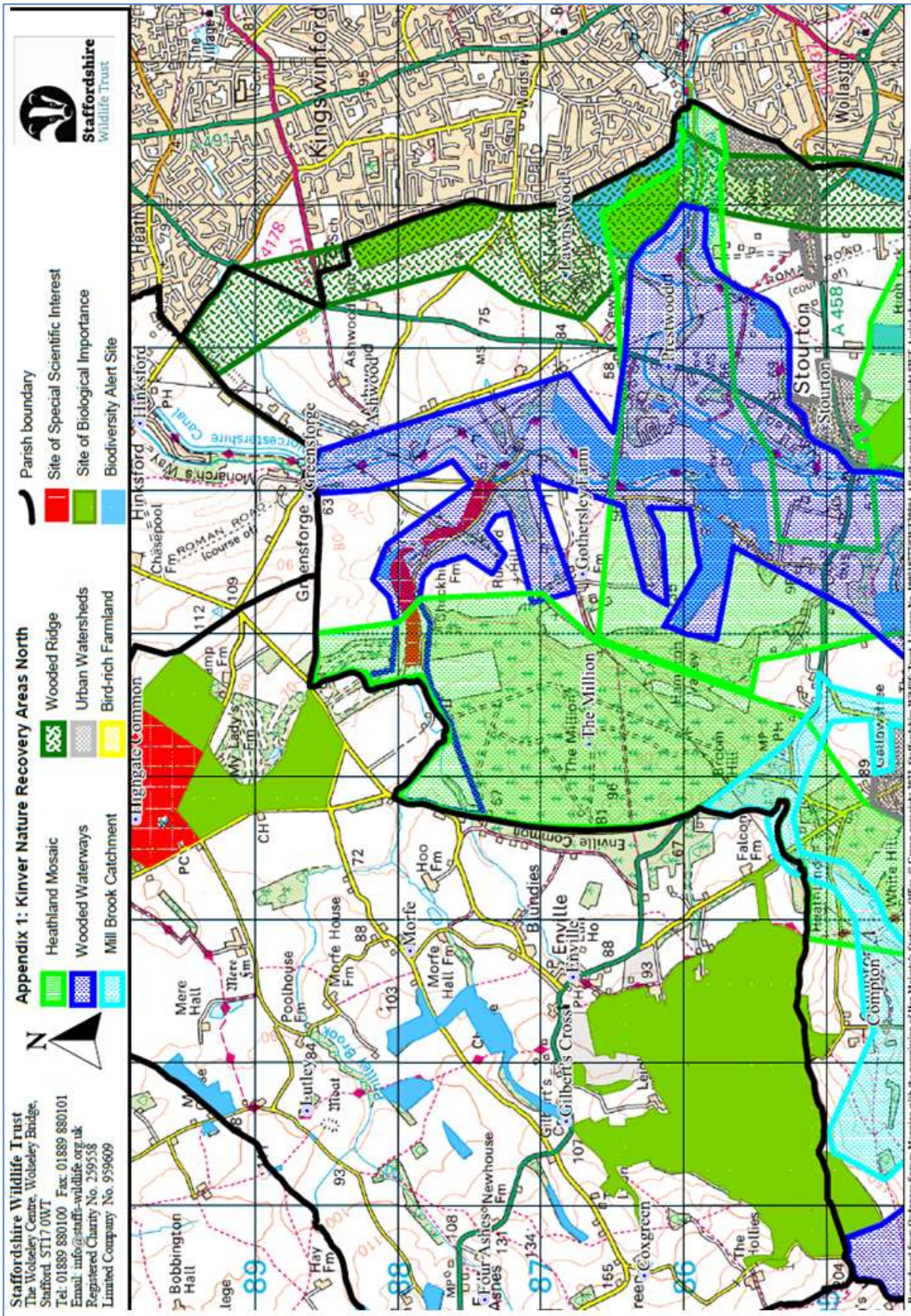
Development potentially affecting wildlife sites should show that the integrity and function of the site will be protected and/or enhanced. Development adjacent to a designated wildlife site can help to avoid adverse impacts by including a natural habitat buffer (recommended minimum 20m) to the site. Developments may provide an opportunity to link and extend designated sites and could contribute to their enhancement as part of biodiversity net gain.

Existing landforms, habitat and landscape features such as linear corridors and 'stepping stones' should be retained and enhanced. Biodiversity, water management and accessible green space uses should be integrated to achieve high quality design, in keeping with local character.

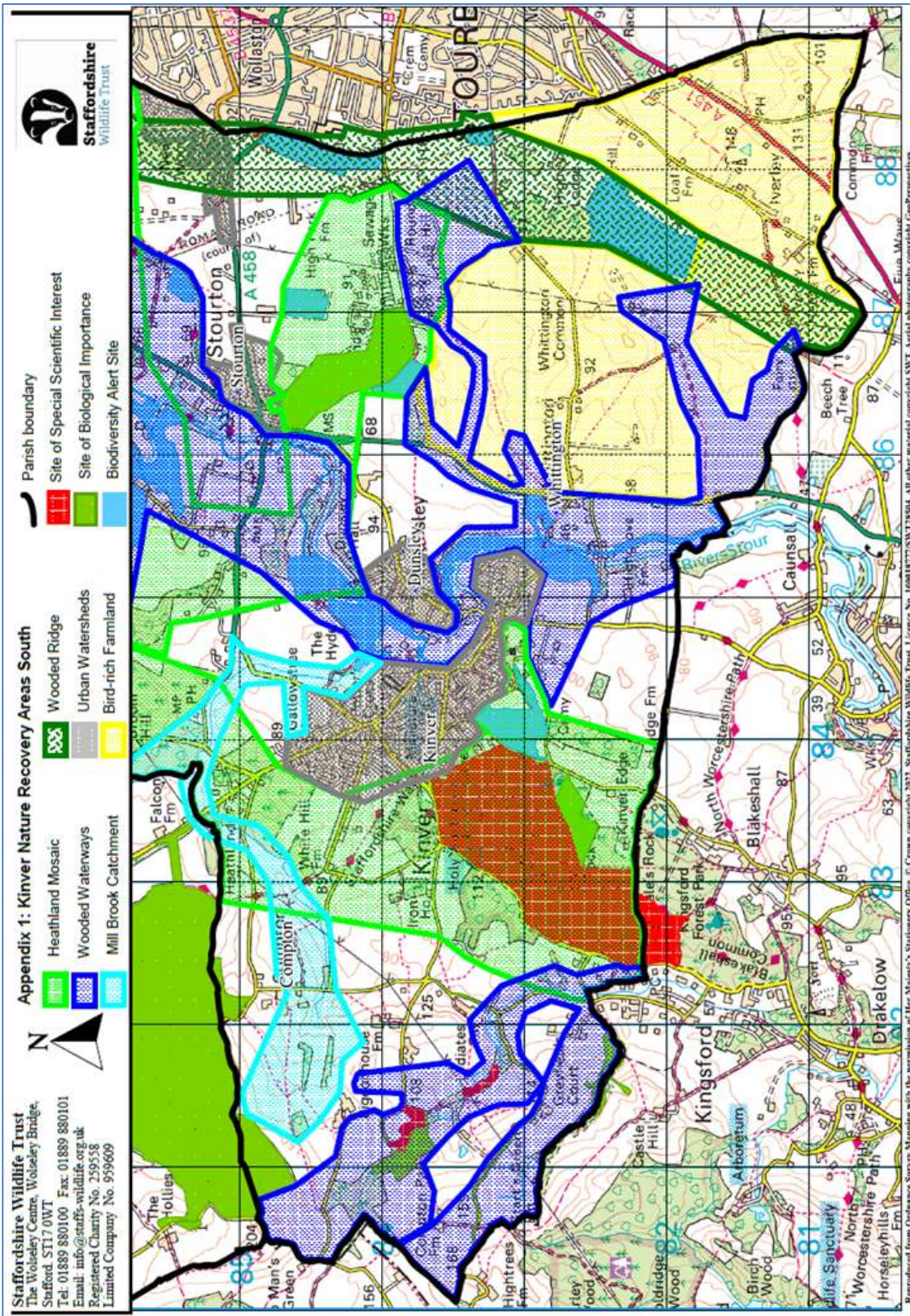
Design features to support wildlife include:

- Bat boxes and bird boxes;
- Hedgehog gaps in fences;
- Badger routes;
- Wildlife connectivity via grass verges and footpath edges;
- Meadow edge grasses and wildflowers (bee friendly);
- Sustainable drainage features such as swales, wetlands and ponds or ornamental rain gardens.
- Boundary mixed native hedgerows with banks and ditches.
- Native trees or orchard trees.
- Green or brown roofs and walls.

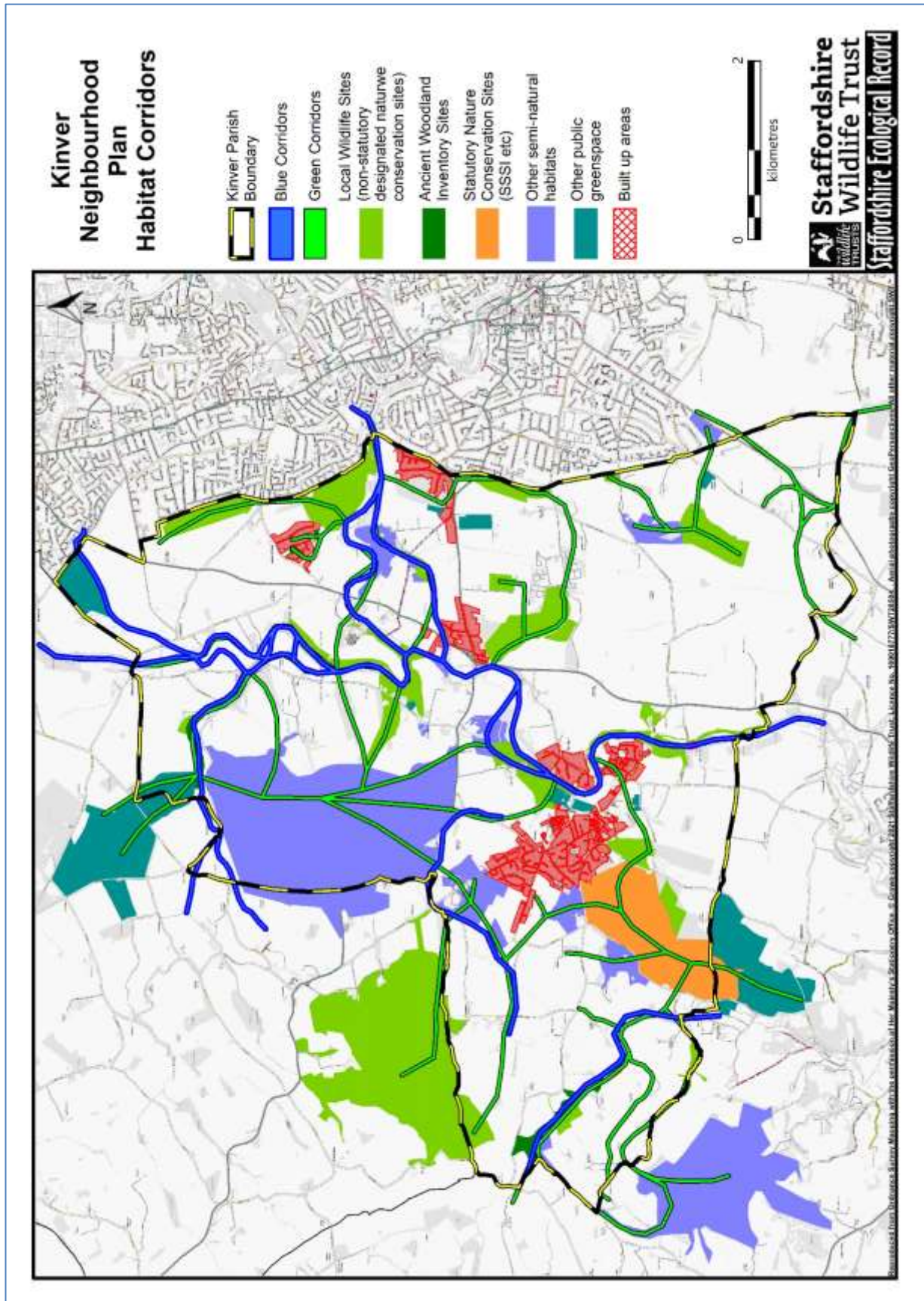
Maps of Nature Recovery Areas, habitat connectivity and habitat distinctiveness are given below, with further information and maps in the Kinver Nature Recovery Report (Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, 2022).



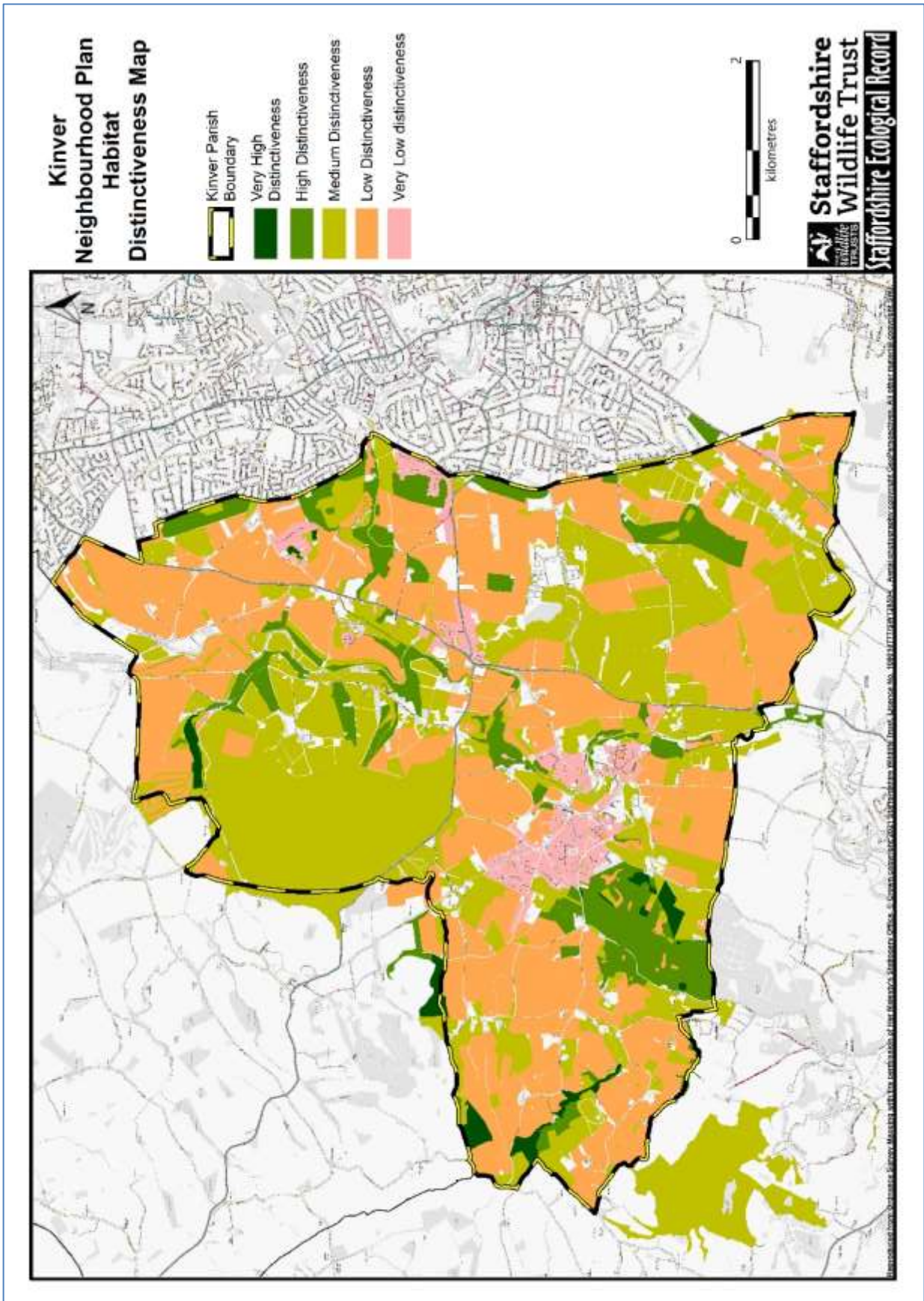
Map KN07-1. Kinver Nature Recovery Areas, North parish: Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, 2022



Map KN07-2 Kinver Nature Recovery Areas, South parish: Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, 2022



Map KN07-3. Kinver Habitat Corridors. Prepared by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust



Map KN07-4. Kinver Habitat Distinctiveness map (preliminary). Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

## 4.8 Historic Environment

### Purpose

To identify, protect and enhance Kinver's heritage, while enabling appropriate and sensitive change.

### Planning Rationale

The NPPF Section 16 emphasises that Local Authorities should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

The South Staffordshire Core Strategy recognises the importance of heritage through *Strategic Objective 5*. The principal policy which deals with heritage is

- Policy EQ3; Conservation, Preservation and protection of Heritage assets.

Kinver has a rich history dating back to prehistoric times, much of it still visible. Kinver is at the centre of a unique concentration of rock-cut structures, (for example the Rock Houses at Kinver Edge), which have often been overlooked and damaged. This heritage and its significance are summarised in Kinver Heritage Assessment (Prof. E Simons, Forthcoming) Other key documents for understanding and managing Kinver's heritage resource in a planning context include the Kinver Conservation Area Management Plan (2012) and the Kinver Historic Character Assessment (2008) undertaken as part of the Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey (EUS).

The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan seek to protect elements of Kinver's heritage, whether it be heathland, rock-cut structures or the historic plan form of the village core.

Protection is based on significance and particularly focusses on:

- Areas of former heathland (now largely wooded) such as Kinver Edge and The Million have been demonstrated to have considerable potential for the survival of prehistoric and later landscape features, settlements, and undisturbed archaeological deposits. These areas are of considerable significance.
- Listed buildings and other heritage assets. New significant buildings have been identified for local listing
- With the neighbouring parishes of Wolverley, Cookley and Enville, Kinver is at the heart of the greatest concentration of habitable rural rock-cut dwellings in the UK, with over 50 sites in Kinver parish. They range in date from the medieval to the 1850s. The National Trust owned examples at Holy Austin Rock and Kinver Edge are among the most visited tourist sites in South Staffordshire.
- Kinver's rock-cut structures provide evidence of lost ways of life, whether it be marginal rural people, medieval hermits, ironworkers, or those who ran the tea gardens of the early 20th century day tripper boom. They are, by far, the most intact and largest group of habitable rural rock houses in the UK, as such in evidential terms they are of **exceptional significance**.



Local residents feel strongly about protection of heritage and historic buildings. More than 95% rated protection of rock houses in the parish as important or very important, reflecting the unique nature of these structures and their exceptional prominence in this area. Protection of other historic sites was also rated as important or very important by over 85% of respondents.

The most frequently mentioned heritage assets which should be protected included

- the High Street, as a whole, and many individual buildings;
- the Vine pub; and also the White Harte (links to the civil war), Royal Exchange and Cross pubs;
- the canal-side areas, including the Hyde and Hyde Lock and ironworks area;
- the 'Roman' baths on Bath Lane;
- the waterworks in Mill Lane;
- St Peter's Church;
- Kinver Edge and the rockhouses.

Other issues raised included the special nature of Kinver as an industrial heritage site in a rural setting; achieving balance to allow for the needs of residents as well as preservation and a feeling that some recent developments were out of character and scale with the Conservation Area.

This Policy seeks to strengthen the protection of Kinver parish heritage, while clarifying how the needs of local people should best be accommodated.

Key documents include:

- The Kinver Conservation Area Management Plan (2012)
- the Kinver Historic Character Assessment (2008), undertaken as part of
- the Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey (EUS).

Other documents to consider include;

- Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 - 2020
- Village Design Guide (SSDC Supplementary Planning Document 2009)
- Kinver Heritage Assessment ( E Simons, 2022)
- Historic Environment Character Assessment (SCC 2011)
- West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project 2010

## **Policy KN08: Historic Environment**

- 1. The layout of development must preserve or enhance evidence of burgage plots and avoid compromising the open character of gardens based on the burgage plot layout.**
- 2. Rock cottages and other rock cut structures and their settings should be preserved or enhanced.**
- 3. Where demolition of an historic building is justified, the replacement building should:**
  - a. Reinforce the predominant townscape character, including height, massing and setback from the road;**
  - b. Demonstrate exceptional design quality, to make up for the loss of historic fabric and character;**
  - c. Incorporate features to reduce carbon emissions, to compensate for the loss of embodied energy involved in demolition.**
- 4. Support will be given to works to upgrade the environmental performance of historic buildings, provided the works preserve or enhance the character of the historic building.**
- 5. Development should enhance the character and appearance of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area or Stourbridge Canal Conservation Area, including waterway, towpath, other features and setting.**

### **Interpretation**

The policy applies to designated heritage (including listed buildings and Conservation Areas) and non-designated heritage assets.

The policy adds a local dimension to national and Local Plan policies on heritage. It also sets requirements for replacement development, where historic fabric is lost.

Where a heritage statement is required, it provides an opportunity to explain how the requirements of the policy are being met.

The intention of the policy is not to impose stylistic imitation or to restrict creativity.

## 4.9 Kinver Conservation Area

### **Purpose**

To protect and enhance the features of Kinver Conservation Area, and the two canal conservation areas, for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, now and in the future.

### **Planning Rationale**

The NPPF Section 16 emphasises that Local Authorities should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

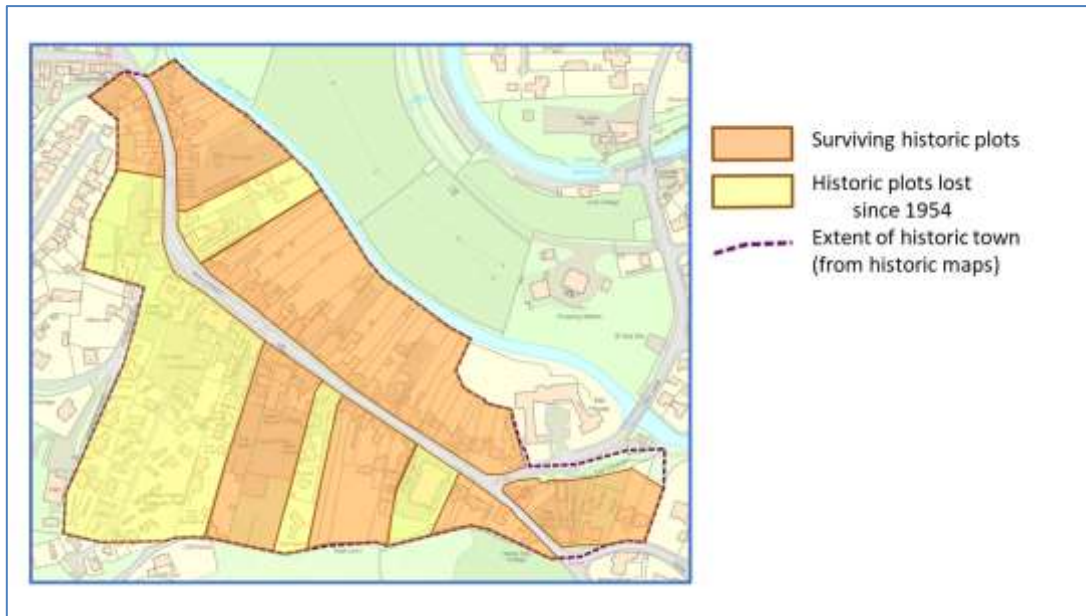
The South Staffordshire Core Strategy recognises the importance of heritage in its Strategic Objective 5: To protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets and ensure that the character and appearance of the District's Conservation Areas is sustained and enhanced through management plans and high quality design; and through Policy EQ3: Conservation, Preservation and protection of Heritage assets.

The Conservation Areas were designated in recognition that the whole area has a value which is greater than the individual structures within it, and that by protecting everything in that location, the value of the whole is enhanced. The Kinver conservation area is significant both for its historic buildings and its plan form. Kinver parish is also home to parts of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and the Stourbridge Canal conservation areas, which in addition to their historic canal structures, provide habitats of high biodiversity and beautiful spaces for exercise and enjoyment.

Kinver's St. Peter's Church is the oldest building in the parish and its significance is reflected in its Grade I status. Other listed buildings are found throughout the conservation area, including a number of locally listed buildings which have not been considered in previous planning applications.

The survival of a 13th century planned medieval town, complete with legible burgage plots and a number of timber-framed buildings is significant and it is possible to get a good impression of how the medieval and early post medieval town must have looked. The planned town and the surviving buildings associated with it are therefore of exceptional significance in architectural, evidential, and historic terms. Unfortunately, despite earlier policies, historic plots have been subdivided and have new houses inserted in recent times, this has detracted from the character of both the conservation area and from the significance of listed buildings. The loss has been greatest on the southern side of the High Street, but a few historic plots remain. There have always been ancillary buildings in these plots, but the new policy aims to prevent any further subdivision or the insertion of new homes which will detract from the significance of the planned medieval town (see plan below).

Kinver is fortunate in that it still retains a number of shops and businesses on the High Street. Many of these retain historic shopfronts and the Neighbourhood Plan policy seeks to maintain these and prevent the insertion of inappropriate elements. The conservation areas are of social and economic value to Kinver, attracting visitors, and the historic shopping area is a major element of this which must be protected.



*Map 4.9-1 Location of Burgage plots in Kinver historic centre (Kinver Heritage Assessment)*

The function of the village centre, within the Kinver Conservation Area, is also vital to the community, and this Plan aims to support that function while protecting the unique heritage assets of the village. The Plan policies seek to make sure proper understanding of the significance of heritage is considered in the planning process. Unlisted structures are part of the setting of listed buildings and contribute to the character of the conservation area. In recent years the loss of historic features (such as the replacement of historic windows and doors with plastic rather than wood) has been a problem and is against policy. The plan will seek to remedy such possibly harmful work.



*Varied styles and periods in heritage buildings, Kinver High Street*

## **Policy KN09: Kinver Conservation Area**

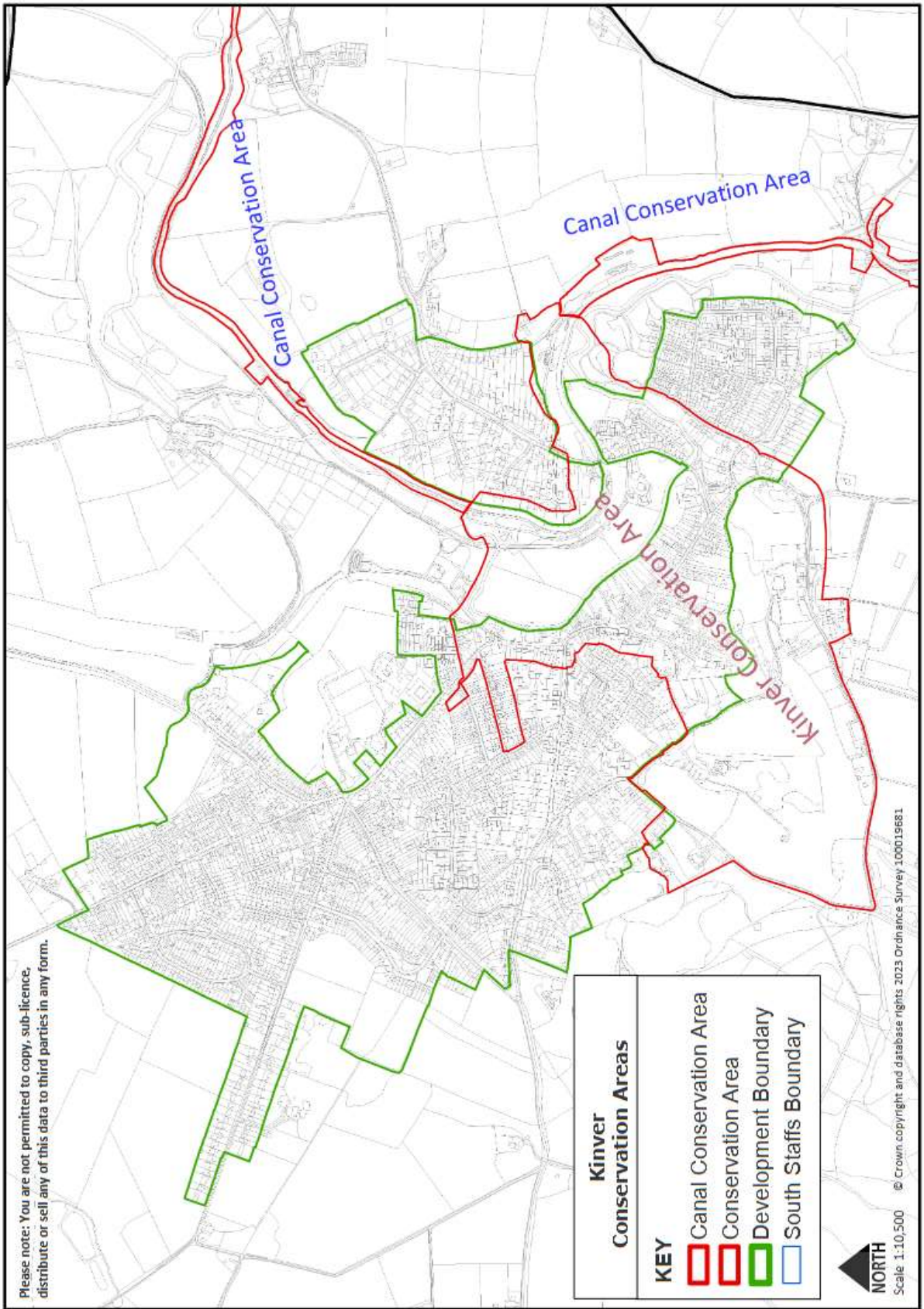
- 1. Buildings that contribute to the special architectural or historic interest and character of the Conservation Area should be preserved and sensitively reused, retaining their original architectural or historic features, as part of any development proposal.**
- 2. Development within the High Street should complement the key townscape characteristics of the Conservation Area, including:**
  - a. the predominant two or three storey height of buildings;**
  - b. rear-of-the-pavement frontages;**
  - c. layout and open gardens reflecting burgage plots.**
- 3. Development within High Street shopping area must maintain active frontages and shopfronts at ground floor level.**
- 4. Shopfronts should be designed to complement the building in their form, design and materials and surviving historic shopfronts or elements from historic shopfronts should be retained.**
- 5. The reinstatement of historic shopfronts will be supported.**
- 6. Roller shutters and projecting boxes should be provided internally and must not project forwards of the shopfront.**

### **Interpretation**

The policy addresses the Kinver Conservation Area both in terms of preserving or enhancing character and the economic vitality of the High Street.

The intention of the policy is not to impose stylistic imitation or to restrict creativity, but to complement the historic layout and townscape characteristics of the Conservation Area. Development that obliterates evidence of the burgage plots would not comply with the policy requirements.

In traditional buildings, timber shopfronts would complement the existing building. Materials that are out of character or have high carbon impact, such as uPVC, would be unlikely to meet the requirements of the policy.



Map KN09-1. Kinver Conservation Area (with part of the S & W Canal Conservation Area).

## 4.10 Local Green Spaces

### **Purpose**

To protect green spaces which are of particular importance to local people.

### **Planning Rationale**

The NPPF (para 101-103) supports designation of Local Green Space through neighbourhood plans, and sets out the criteria for designation. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Local Green Space designation gives communities the chance to protect places of special value to local people. We identified a number of spaces in the parish which are much appreciated by local residents, and which we therefore believe merit protection. They include spaces within the village which invite a stop and rest; open spaces hosting sports and local events; nature reserves and wildlife sites; woods and fields which provide green lungs to adjacent settlements; spaces with historic significance and spaces which create beautiful settings for other important sites.

We tested the evidence for the community value of these spaces, against the criteria within the NPPF. We consulted with the community; and took evidence from landowners. The Neighbourhood Plan consultations have shown strong popular support for this policy, both in general, and by proposing specific sites. The list proposed was the result of this evidence gathering and testing but amended following the subsequent examination.

This policy seeks to designate these places as Local Green Spaces, by demonstrating their value to the community.

## Policy KN10: Local Green Spaces

**1. The following spaces are designated as Local Green Space:**

- K10 Jubilee gardens, High Street, Kinver, DY7 6ER**
- K11 Daneford gardens, High Street, Kinver, DY7 6ER**
- K13 Marketplace Green, High Street, Kinver, DY7 6HL**

**2. Proposals for development on a Local Green Space will only be allowed if it is satisfactorily demonstrated that they are consistent with policies for managing development in Green Belts.**

### Interpretation

The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Green Space has similar protection to Green Belts. It should be noted that the purpose of Local Green Space designation is related to community value, so is quite different to the five purposes for Green Belts.

The second clause of the policy takes account of the National Design Guide and would apply to development within or adjacent to Local Green Space. Normally, it would preclude development that encroached onto the space, though there may be exceptions where the development supported the community value of the space, for example public art or a tool store to help with maintenance.

Maps of the proposed Local Green Spaces are given below, and the individual detailed descriptions may be found on the [KinverNplan.co.uk](http://KinverNplan.co.uk) website.





- LGS K10      Jubilee gardens
- LGS K11      Daneford gardens



LGS K13 Marketplace Green

## 4.11 Movement and Transport

### **Purpose**

To promote sustainable transport which meets the needs of local people, and promote active travel including walking and cycling.

### **Planning Rationale**

Chapter 9 of the NPPF 'Promoting sustainable transport' makes it clear that transport impacts of developments should be considered from the earliest stages of planning, with the aim of reducing journey lengths and car travel, and encouraging public transport, walking or cycling.

The Government's Decarbonising Transport Plan (2021) sets out a vision for future transport which aims to address the climate agenda, improve health and wellbeing, create better places to live whilst providing ways of travelling which are affordable and reliable. The neighbourhood plan positively addresses this through policies which address sustainable transport, including walking and cycling

Core Policy 11 of the South Staffordshire Core Strategy ('Sustainable Transport') enhancing sustainable transport opportunities and encouraging development that reduces the need to travel. Relevant policies and documents include:

- Policy EV11: Sustainable Travel
- Policy EV12: Parking Provision
- The Local Transport Plan.

The parish has few major employers, and most people commute to work: 87% by car, since public transport is limited. Car ownership exceeded 90% of households in 2011, with more than half of households having two or more vehicles. Very few cycle to work, and there are no good cycle routes to nearby towns. Those without cars are excluded from many educational and work opportunities.

Kinver village grew up along a narrow river valley. The road system is difficult to widen within the village, and pavements also are often narrow. The High Street is the main artery through the village, and can only be avoided by either a long detour onto the A449 and A458; or using steep and narrow (partly single-track) back lanes. Many respondents to the household survey feared that the road system and infrastructure would not be adequate for an increased population. Vehicle congestion in the High Street, aggravated by delivery vehicles and pinch points, was a concern for many, and inadequacy of parking was perceived as a major issue limiting the use of High Street services.

Developments outside of Kinver are also expected to increase traffic on the A449, causing increased congestion at the Stewponey junction, through which most commuters to and from Kinver pass.

## Benefits of cycling and walking<sup>30</sup>

### Health

Physical inactivity costs the NHS up to **£1 billion** per annum, with further indirect costs calculated at

**£8.2bn** 

### Wellbeing

**20 minutes** of exercise per day **cuts risk** of developing depression **by 31%** and increases productivity of workers.



### Congestion

The new east-west and north-south cycle routes in London are moving **46% of the people** in only **30% of the road space**.



### Local businesses

Up to **40% increase** in shopping footfall by well-planned improvements in the walking environment.



### Environmental and air quality

By 2050, future active travel spending is expected to deliver savings from air quality improvements alone and provide opportunities to improve green space and biodiversity.

**£20–100m**

### Climate change

Mode shift to active transport is one of the **most cost-effective ways** of reducing transport emissions.



### Economy

Bike manufacture, distribution, retail and sales **contributes £0.8 billion** per year to the economy and **supports around 22,000 jobs**.



### Benefits of cycling and walking

National and local policies promote Active Travel i.e. walking and cycling. To achieve this means providing safe and pleasant routes for people to use in their everyday lives, and which go where they wish to go. Riding is a popular pastime in the parish and much of the local farmland provides equine grazing and services. Existing public rights of way need to be protected, and opportunities sought to connect them safely. Making public roads safer for non-car users could encourage such healthy activities.

Car users will increasingly need EV charging points. Provision of adequate charging infrastructure will encourage the transition away from fossil fuels. Equally, as electric bikes become widespread, charging for these – and for personal vehicles – should be widely provided.

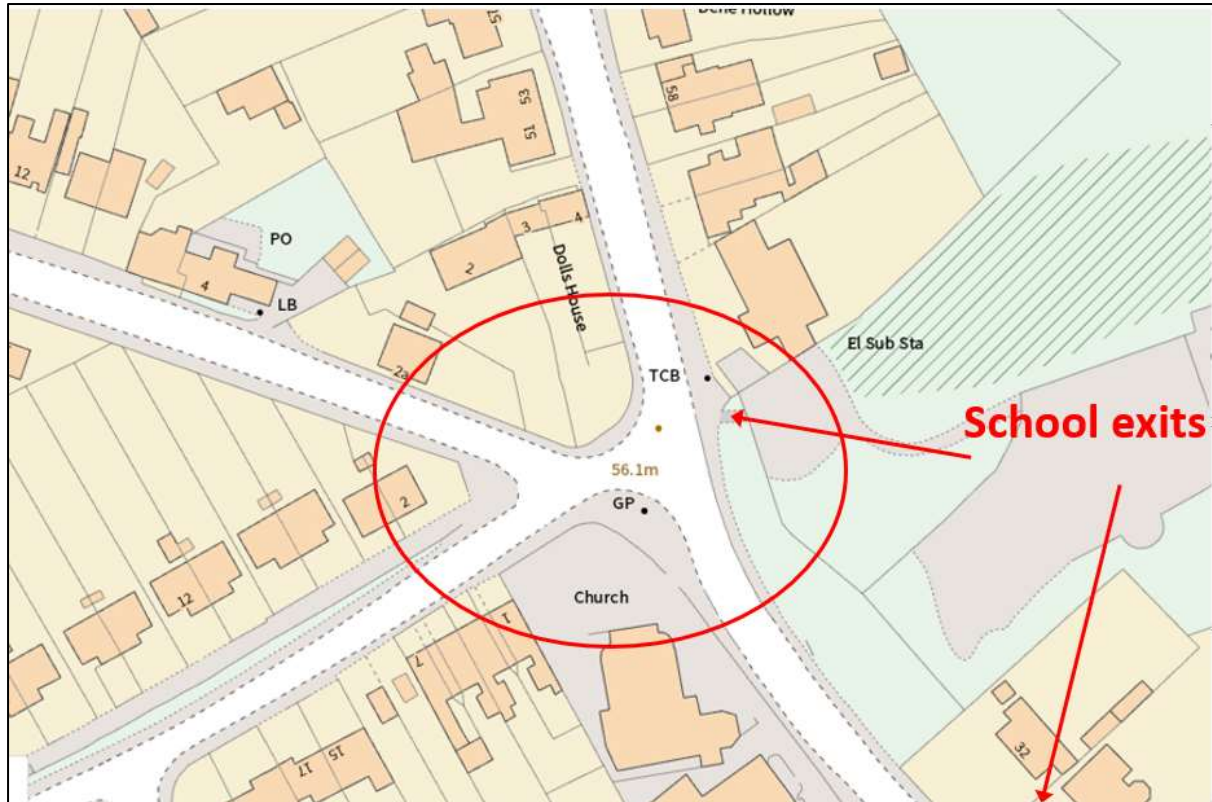
Traffic safety is a concern in the village, especially in the area around schools, but also along the High Street. The dominant concern centres around Potter's Cross, a set of road junctions near to two schools and a nursery school, where a heavily congested, complex and potentially unsafe traffic situation arises especially when afternoon school finishes. Proposed developments are expected to aggravate the problems, and assessment of the options is important before further development.



*Potter's Cross junction, adjacent to schools*

## Policy KN11: Movement and Transport

1. Development that generates journeys must have a balanced transport provision including active travel and sustainable transport, meeting the following requirements of this policy, proportionate to the scale and nature of the development.
2. Development must give priority to pedestrians and cyclists, meeting the requirements of Policy KN04 Sustainable Design.
3. Development should encourage low vehicle speeds through its design and layout.
4. Development should take opportunities to provide or improve links to surrounding public transport facilities.
5. Development likely to add to existing traffic safety and capacity problems on Potter's Cross junction should include measures to mitigate those impacts.
6. Development should take opportunities to enhance and avoid causing adverse impacts to the Staffordshire Way and other footpaths, cycle routes, bridleways, or towpaths in terms of their functioning, amenity, safety and accessibility.



Map KN12-1 Plan of Potter's Cross junction area

## **Interpretation**

The policy should be applied closely with the Design and Place policy in relating to pedestrians and cyclists.

Active travel would include cycling and walking.

The policy would normally prevent any form of encroachment onto paths and would apply to development adjacent or near to paths. Harm to amenity or safety could include insensitive boundary treatments, for example walls or fences that present an unattractive aspect to paths or prevent natural surveillance.



# Infrastructure Priorities





## 5 Infrastructure Priorities

This Neighbourhood Plan has identified priorities for infrastructure and other beneficial changes in the parish. These could be seen as priorities for the use of S106 or similar development monies, or as pointers to opportunities for improvements alongside other developments, subject to full consultation with the community at the time.

Priorities for infrastructure expenditure include the following:

- Improvements to Potter's Cross junction to increase safety.
- Community energy projects to address climate change and fuel poverty, and to generate investment for community projects.
- Community allotments.
- The improvement/creation of cycle routes, particularly useful routes between settlements and facilities (including Sustrans routes); and safe routes for families.
- Improvements to community facilities including the Edward Marsh Centre
- Provision of land for play and recreation, to supplement the playground at the Edward Marsh centre
- Improvements to green spaces where a need has been identified





# Appendix

## 6 Appendix: Documents and Sources

**Website** [kinvernplan.co.uk](http://kinvernplan.co.uk)

The website contains the draft plan, background information, and the documents produced during Plan development, as referred to in the text above. The main documents are listed below.

### **Evidence Base Generated for this Plan**

In preparation of the Kinver parish Neighbourhood Development Plan, several strands of evidence were developed and brought together. These are available via the website.

- **Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM) 2021**
- **Kinver Design Codes (AECOM) 2022**
- **Kinver Parish Nature Recovery Report (Staffordshire Wildlife Trust) 2022**
- **Kinver Heritage Assessment, (ER Simons) 2022**
- **Kinver Carbon Footprint Report, (Centre for Sustainable Energy) 2022**

### **Reports on Development of the Plan**

- Report on first Householder Consultation, June 2021
- Identification of Local Green Spaces for designation, 2022
- Kinver NDP Basic Conditions Statement 2022
- Kinver NDP Consultation Statement 2022

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### ***Photograph Acknowledgements***

*Thanks are due to those who provided the lovely photographs used in this document: particularly Dave McGirr for the majority of them; John Clark for the endpiece; and members of the Steering Group.*



*Kinver Edge, the toposcope*



**Kinver**  
Neighbourhood  
Plan

Kinver Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Kinver Parish Council