Hulcote is a place of special character and historic interest. This appraisal and management plan sets out the features that contribute to its distinctiveness and identifies opportunities for its preservation and enhancement.
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Figure 1: The boundary for Hulcote Conservation Area
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Summary of Special Interest

The estate village of Hulcote occupies a small hollow in the open countryside a mile to the north of Towcester; the village also lies to the north of Easton Neston House and its associated Registered Park and Garden.

The development and evolution of the village has been inextricably linked with that of Easton Neston, with much of the built form previously used to house the estate workforce. The houses flanking the east and south of The Green were built between 1800 and 1822 for the 3rd Earl of Pomfret as an early model village. The oldest surviving buildings within the settlement predate the model village dating from the early eighteenth century.

Hulcote is an excellent example of a former ‘closed’ village where the estate once owned much of the surrounding land and property. This, only recently adapted ownership, has allowed for greater control over development within the settlement visible today from the high standard of design over the built and natural form. Such unaltered examples of estate villages are rare within the District and indeed the wider local area.

Almost all of the properties within the conservation area are listed due to their unique design. This includes the cottages surrounding The Green and the earlier houses such as The Manor House.

Key Characteristics

Hulcote is a fine example of an estate village that has had limited change over time and as such has retained the majority of its original planned features.

The estate workers cottages create an enclosed feel around the small village green when looking southwards however this is juxtaposed by the open countryside along the northern side. Larger properties tend to sit back within their plots, such as the Manor House.

Brick is the dominant building material with the occasional use of limestone for boundary walls and extensions. Slate is used on the majority of properties within the village. This continuous use of similar materials further strengthens the character of the village.

Boundary treatments, where evident, tend to use various materials including hedges and stone walls.

Open space and trees contribute greatly to the rural character of the settlement. These are particularly evident to the north of the settlement.
Summary

Summary of issues and opportunities
Change is inevitable in all conservation areas and it is not the intention of the designation to prevent the continued evolution of a place. The challenge with conservation areas is to manage change in a way that preserves, reinforces and enhances the special quality of the area.

The preservation and enhancement of the special character and appearance of the conservation area will owe much to its positive management. In addition to the existing national legislation and local planning controls the following opportunities for enhancement have been identified:

- Establish a list of locally significant buildings and policies for their protection.
- Encourage the preservation and enhancement of surviving historic detail and the reinstatement of appropriately designed detailed fittings in buildings considered to be of significance to the character area and appearance of the conservation area. The use of Article 4 Directions, which remove the permitted development rights of dwelling houses, will help to achieve this.
- Ensure that all new development is sustainable, high quality, well designed and responds to its context in terms of urban and architectural design.
- Promote the sympathetic management of open spaces within the conservation area including verges, and work with the highways authorities to avoid the insertion of inappropriate kerbing and footpaths which would have a harmful urbanising effect.

The Conservation Area Boundary
Hulcote was first designated in March 1978, reviewed again in 2005 and, has been adopted in January 2018. The changes looked to rationalise boundaries where these had altered since initial designation. The adopted changes are as follows:

- The inclusion of the land to the rear of Manor House, which although within the properties boundary, seems to have been overlooked for inclusion within the Hulcote Conservation Area when last reviewed.
Figure 2: The boundary for Hulcote Conservation Area
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1. Introduction and Planning Policy Context

1.1 What is a conservation area?
Conservation areas were introduced under the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. That Act required Local Planning Authorities to identify areas, as opposed to individual buildings, of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas.

Since 1967 over 9800 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 61 in the South Northamptonshire District. A conservation area is

“...an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

1.2 What does Conservation Area Status Mean?
Conservation area status seeks to preserve and enhance the special character of the designated area. Designation confers a general control over development that could harm the area’s character. The details are complex but can be summarised as:

- Most demolition requires permission and is likely to be resisted if the building makes a positive contribution to the area.

- There are some minor works to houses which are no longer permitted development and will require planning permission. Examples are dormer windows, extensions, external cladding, alterations to the roof, and most satellite dishes on front elevations.

- Advertisement controls are tighter.

- Most work to trees has to be notified to the Council, who then have six weeks in which to impose restrictions in the form of a tree preservation order.

- Generally, higher standards of design apply for new buildings and alterations to existing ones.

1.3 What is the Purpose of this Appraisal?
This appraisal will provide the basis for making informed, sustainable decisions about the positive management, preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. It provides a clear understanding of the special interest of Hulcote Conservation Area by:

- describing how the settlement has developed;

- analysing its present day character; and

- identifying opportunities for enhancement.

The appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive and omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is not of interest.

1.4 Planning Policy Context
This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the wider national, regional and local planning policy and guidance including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) under which a conservation area is deemed to be a heritage asset.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides the legislative framework for the preservation and enhancement of the nation’s heritage of buildings and places of architectural and historic interest.

The 1990 Act also places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to consider “from time to time” whether new areas should be designated or whether boundaries should be revised.
This document is based on advice contained within the English Heritage guidance “Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management” published in 2016.

The South Northamptonshire Local Plan was adopted in 1997.

Policies EV10 and EV11 of the document state:

“The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of conservation areas,” and that “Planning permission will not be granted for any development proposals outside of a conservation area which have an adverse effect on the setting of the conservation area or any views.”

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014 sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the whole of South Northamptonshire to 2029, including strategic policies for steering and shaping development.

Policy BN5 of that Strategy relates to the Historic Environment and states that:

‘Designated and non designated heritage assets and their settings and landscapes will be conserved and enhanced in recognition of their individual and cumulative significance and contribution to West Northamptonshire’s local distinctiveness and sense of place.’

In order to secure and enhance the significance of the area’s heritage assets and their settings and landscape development in areas of landscape sensitivity and/or known historic or heritage significance will be required to:

- Demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the impact of development on surrounding heritage assets and their settings in order to minimise harm on these assets.
- Sustain and enhance the heritage landscape features which contribute to the character of the area including: Conservation Areas.
2. Location

2.1 Location

Hulcote lies in the centre of the District, one mile north of Towcester just off the A43. Access is only available through one road just off the Northampton Road.

2.2 Topography and Geology

The Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Strategies were published by the River Nene Regional Park Community Interest Company in 2009. These strategies include environmental, landscape and biodiversity character assessments for the county.

Hulcote is located in the Tove and Ouse Catchment which encompasses the entire catchment of the River Tove within Northamptonshire and the headwaters of the Great River Ouse, which rises near Brackley. The Tove and Ouse Catchment lies in the south of the county on the border with Buckinghamshire.

The landscape is a broad elongated basin aligned east-west, with the more elevated edges of the basin underlain by Great Oolite Group limestone in the south and east. Tributary streams drain the landscape in a dendritic pattern to the Tove, which flows eastwards then southwards and occupies the central portion of the basin. These tributary streams have cut through the limestone and ironstone to expose the Lias group mudstones in the valley.

Land cover within this area is typically a combination of arable and pasture farming with improved pastures largely located around villages. An open and expansive character is experienced on the more elevated areas of the landscape, such as Hulcote. Typically however a sheltered character prevails due to the undulating landform and effect of vegetation screening long distance views.

Woodland cover is not widespread and indeed field trees and hedgerows provide cover across the majority of the landscape. However small concentrations of woodland belts can be observed in designed parklands such as Easton Neston. The date of enclosure for the common fields of Hulcote is not known, however some small-scale enclosure is recorded at Easton Neston in the sixteenth century.
3. History and Development

3.1 Background
The village name Hulcote, is Old English in origin indicating a Saxon settlement of which there has been no forthcoming archaeological evidence. The translation of the first part of name *hul* refers to a shed or hovel whilst *cot* refers to a cottage/hut/ or shelter.

Both Easton Neston and Hulcote are mentioned for the first time in 1086 however remained separate settlements until both were acquired by Richard Empson, minister of Henry VII (1450 -1510) in the late fifteenth century. In 1086 the Manor of Hulcote was held by Theolbald from Gunfrid de Chocques.

3.2 Romano-British
There is very little evidence within Hulcote to suggest any Romano-British or earlier occupation. Small quantities of archaeological finds however have been located within the parish which date from the Iron Age and Roman Period. There is a ditch in the woodland on the right of Hulcote Lane coming into the village, running parallel to the road, thought to be a Saxon (Grims) Ditch; potentially marking the boundary of a former Saxon settlement. There is no evidence to indicate constant occupation of either Hulcote or Easton Neston, but due to their close proximity to Roman Lactodorum (modern day Towcester) and Watling Street early activity was taking place in the wider landscape during this period.

3.3 Medieval
Little is known on the original settlement of pre medieval Hulcote, however a somewhat comprehensive line of ownership for the Manor at Hulcote has been documented. In 1086 Hulcote was divided between the Manor of Gunfrid de Chocques (¾ virgates), held of Gunfrid by Tetbald, and a smaller, one-carucate estate of bishop Odo of Bayeux, held by William Peveril. By the mid thirteenth century the Chocques fees in Easton Neston and Hulcote were held by Peter de Gines. In Hulcote the under-tenants had adopted the surname Hulcote, although they were occasionally known as Cut. John de Hulcote held the Manor in 1215 and the same man, or his son, was lord in 1242, when he was given license to have a chapel in Hulcote. In the same year Simon de Loges held one fee in Hulcote and elsewhere of Margery de Riparis, and Simon Vitor held a quarter of a fee in Hulcote of the honor of Huntingdon.

The Chocques fee passed from Peter de Gines to the Preston family. At his death in 1274 Geoffrey de Preston held several Chocques, Manors of the King, including Hulcote. In Hulcote itself, John de Hulcote held eight virgates, Geoffrey Friday four, and Robert Faber of Easton Neston and John de L'Estre one each; in addition, Simon the chaplain of Boycott held a messuage and one acre. The same tenants held land in Hulcote under Geoffrey de Preston's son Laurence, when John de Hulcote's widow Alice held the Manor itself. In 1307, 65 people from Hulcote and Easton paid the Lay Subsidy and the two places together paid a told of £4-03d in tax in 1334, a relatively large sum for the area.

In 1428 Richard Peck held the Manor by the enfeoffment of John Hulcote. In 1457 Fulk de Hulcote and Agnes his wife acknowledged that they held the Manor of Hulcote from Richard Woodville and his heirs. John Hulcote's grandson, also named John, died in 1482, leaving his wife a life interest in Hulcote, with reversion after her death to his cousin Richard Hulcote. In 1493 Empson purchased the Manor of Hulcote from John Dive, who had himself bought from Richard Woodville. Other lands of John Hulcote's passed to his nephew Robert Prudde, who later sold them to Thomas Fowler; he in turn sold on to Richard Empson in 1486.

3.4 16th, 17th & 18th Centuries
In 1499 Empson received license to enclose and impark land and wood in Easton Neston and Hulcote to crenellate his Manor of Easton Neston.
3. History and Development

After Empson was attainted and beheaded in 1510 all his Northamptonshire estates, including the Manors of Easton Neston and Hulcote were initially granted in 1512 to William Compton. In 1513, however Thomas Empson, Richards’s son and heir, recovered the estates. In 1527 Empson conveyed the Manors of Easton Neston and Hulcote to William Fermor of Somerton.

In 1540 Richard Fermor was indicted for breaches of the statutes of provisors and praemunire, attainted and his land and possessions forfeited to the Crown. Richard was pardoned in 1541 and in 1542 some of his estates were returned to him however Easton Neston and Hulcote were annexed to the honour of Grafton on its establishment.

A number of piecemeal purchases took place on behalf of the Fermor family for the Manors at Easton Neston and Hulcote up until the sixteenth century.

In 1523 and 1525 Lay Subsidy Returns respectively list 33 and 29 people paying tax, however only 27 people paid the Hearth Tax in 1673 but it is likely that most of these lived at Hulcote and that Easton Neston was deserted by then. Furthermore Bridges, writing in 1720, described Hulcote as a ‘considerable hamlet.’

From the mid sixteenth century to the mid nineteenth century, agriculture and farming was the mainstay of the economy within and around Easton Neston and Hulcote. A number of farms were located in both settlements including a large farm at Sowardsley (now Showsley).

Figure 5: c.1765 Estate Map of Easton Neston centred on Hulcote village—HER Northamptonshire.
3. History and Development

3.5 19th century onwards

The earliest map of the village, dated 1765, shows three farmsteads and four other house’s or cottages in addition to the two lodges of Easton Park all set around a triangular green (Fig.5). A period of rebuilding took place between 1812-1849 when a number of farmhouses were removed and rebuilt as the properties we see today.

In 1816 the trustees of the Hulcote Charity Estate resolved that, after setting aside sufficient funds for the repair of the church at Easton Neston, the remainder of the income should be used to erect and support a school for the poor children of Easton Neston Parish and provide a master. The school ran until the early twentieth century when it was closed due to lack of funds and attendance. After the school closed children from the Parish attended the Church of England school in Towcester.

The estate at Easton Neston appears to have relied solely on farming the local area for income, housing workers in Hulcote. Throughout the nineteenth century, apart from the solitary shopkeeper and schoolmaster, the cottages in Hulcote were occupied entirely by farm labourers and estate servants.

Figure 6: c.1806 Estate Map of Easton Neston centred on Hulcote village– HER Northamptonshire.

Figure 7: c.1843-1893 Map of Hulcote 2018 © Bluesky World international Ltd.
3. History and Development

3.6 Archaeology

A quern stone, perhaps prehistoric or Roman, was discovered in an undocumented location within the parish between 1860 and 1870 and a complete Roman 'flagon' was discovered in 1889, during the construction of the railway 'near Showsley'.

Iron Age and Roman Settlement lies in the north east of the parish. A scatter of Roman material extending over 2 hectares, including samian, colour coated and grey wares as well as some possible Iron Age sherds, a coin of Constans (323 AD–350 AD) and a brooch, have been recorded from this site.

Medieval settlement remains lie on the north side of the present village green in Hulcote. Here there are buried archaeological remains of some of the medieval and post-medieval tofts (building platforms) and crofts (gardens) are located. Ploughing also revealed large areas of stone-rubble and brick, associated with post-medieval pottery, tiles, glass and bone in places where buildings are shown on the 1806 map.

The former Manor House site lies west of the village within a field called Hall Close. Alongside the numerous earthworks are two rectangular fishponds, both now dry, once linked by a shallow ditch. A further pond lies to the east of Hulcote; it is roughly circular with an island in the middle.

Elsewhere large quantities of earlier pottery including twelfth century Stamford ware and thirteenth and fourteenth century sherds of Olney, Lyveden and Potterspury types were discovered. Other closes, potentially the sites of former houses, lie to the east of the Manor House site.

Ridge and furrow survives on the ground and is visible on aerial photographs of the parish, although in the west it has been mainly destroyed through modern cultivation. Surrounding the village of Hulcote there are considerable areas of surviving medieval ridge and furrow.

Figure 8: Archaeological map of Hulcote and surrounding area
4. Spatial Analysis

4.1 Land Use

Hulcote is inextricably linked to Easton Neston Estate and as such was primarily an estate village for estate workers. The Old School closed in the twentieth century. Residents, who do not work on the estate, out commute to Towcester, Milton Keynes, and Northampton.

4.2 Settlement Form

Hulcote has grown focused around a central Green. The village shrank but was not deserted, unlike Easton Neston, in the post medieval period. Little else is known on the evolution of the original settlement of Hulcote.

In the early nineteenth century the 3rd Earl of Pomfret erected eight new cottages in two groups of four whilst also enlarging the green.

With its origins as an agricultural estate village the conservation area comprises of mainly estate designed cottages with the Manor House and Hulcote Lodge, which pre date the estate village, still present on the western side of The Green.

The estate cottages sit towards the front of their plots orientated parallel to the road edge facing inwards to The Green. Plot division and size has altered very little in the last two centuries with minor expansion and development occurring to the north west of the village centre.

Figure 9: Settlement remains at Hulcote (3), Site of Manor House (4), and Pond (5) taken from RCHM Vol.4
4. Spatial Analysis

4.3 Street pattern, means of enclosure and footpaths

There is not a through road in the settlement, as such the main road is village access only. Historically the road would have continued to run south west towards Easton Neston House, however this is now private access.

Two twentieth century houses, similar in design to the cottages within the centre of the village are the first properties viewed when entering the conservation area (Fig. 29). Whilst these are modern properties, effort has been made to ensure their design is in keeping with the settlement.

The two main houses which pre date the estate village, Manor House and Hulcote Lodge are along the western edge of the green. Hulcote Lodge is set forward within its plot contributing to the enclosure around The Green. Manor House however is set back from the road edge with outbuildings to the side and rear (Fig. 27). A sense of enclosure around the property is created by a red brick wall. This contrasts from the open character provided by not only the green but the countryside to the north (Fig. 11).

Along the southern and eastern sides of The Green the almost uniform cottages sit close to the highway edge which reinforces the sense of enclosure. However, once again, this is balanced by the open pasture to the north.

Easton Neston Estate was historically accessed through the Lodges to the south of The Green; one of the five drives designed alongside the House. This access is now private however it demonstrates the settlements former links with the House and is an important feature of the history and design of the village.

A number of footpaths still exist that link Hulcote to the surrounding countryside and settlements. To the north a footpath runs to the site of the former nunnery at Showsley, to the south a footpath connects the village to Easton Neston House, and finally a footpath runs east-west connecting the village to the former railway and Shutlanger respectively. Whilst some of these are no longer public rights of way they are still visible on earlier maps of the settlement (Fig. 7).
4.4 Public Realm

The somewhat remote and contained nature of the village may have contributed to the minimal amount of street furniture. Nevertheless there are several features within the village which add to the historic character, and which warrant every effort being made to maintain them.

On the outside of the Old School Room there is a VR post box set in the wall and a K6 phone box is located just to the south.

There are no road markings within the village which helps maintain the rural character. The on street parking which does occur where off street parking is not available can weaken the overall aesthetic of the area. Wherever possible off-road parking, especially away from The Green, should be encouraged.

Overhead wires are evident within Hulcote particularly along the southern side of The Green (Fig. 13). Wires and telegraph poles can have a tendency to mar views of the historic streetscape and contend with the vertical scale provided by the built form. Antennas on chimney pots are also disruptive to the overall roofscape of the area.

Figure 12: The Old School Room with VR post box set in the wall and a listed K6 phone box.

Figure 13: Unfortunately wires can detract from the historic streetscape marring views and contending with vertical scale.
4. Spatial Analysis

4.5 Open spaces, trees and hedges

Set in a hollow in the landscape the village is distinctly different in character to the formal parkland to the south and is not visible from the public realm.

A large area of pasture land lying to the north of the conservation area is important to the setting of the village and conservation area.

The section of green bounded by the estate cottages has a sole tree, a Cedar of Lebanon, standing centrally forming a distinctive feature (Fig. 14). The northern part of The Green which abuts open space and older properties on the western edge, has four impressive oak trees and a number of less mature oaks which are an important part of the village character.

A tree preservation order or a TPO is a form of legal protection that can be placed on important trees by the Local Planning Authority. This protection means that before any works are carried out to the tree, for example, pruning or felling, permission from the Local Planning Authority must be sought.

Figure 14: Mature vegetation positively contributes to the rural character of the area,

Figure 15: Tree lined western approach leading to Easton Neston.

Figure 16: View of the trees across the Green.
4. Spatial Analysis

4.6 Scale and Massing

The scale of the built form within the conservation area has little variation indicating the controlled nature of the settlement. Most of the properties are of 2 storeys with some having the additions of lean-tos and extensions to the rear.

The western side of The Green comprises four, largely identical distinctive detached cottages whilst along the southern edge lie four pairs of semi-detached cottages (Fig. 17).

Given the almost uniform nature of the cottages, the footprints of each are the same. The footprint of earlier dwellings, predating the remodelling, differ as a mixture of farmhouses and lodges. Due to the agricultural nature of the settlement these buildings also have outbuildings such as stables and barns, usually of 1 – 1 1/2 storeys.

The design of the village around The Green has resulted in undeveloped space in the centre, however smaller pockets of open space do exist behind the larger properties such as Manor House, where these are set back within their plots.

Figure 17: The cottages around the periphery of The Green have identical footprints and uniform appearance and layout.

Figure 18: The eastern lodge marking the gateway to one of the former avenues to Easton Neston House.

Figure 19: The associated outbuildings of the Manor House.
4. Spatial Analysis

4.7 Key Views and Vistas

Views within the village are mostly restricted to the immediate surroundings when looking inward to the south. Approaching the conservation area from the west the combination of built form and the open green provides a quintessentially English village view of a nucleated settlement (Fig. 20).

Views out into the open countryside are often screened by the built form. However along the northern periphery of the conservation area, where no built form resides, there is an extensive view of the surrounding countryside truncated by topography (Fig. 22).

To the south of the settlement the view out of the village is spoilt by the development of a very large barn and grain silo associated with Home Farm which is at the top of the rising ground. This is the only modern intrusion which adversely affects the appearance and setting of the village (Fig. 21).
4. Spatial Analysis

Figure 23: Important spatial features in the Hulcote Conservation Area
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5. Architectural Analysis

5.1 Building Age, type and style

The western side of the green comprises four, largely identical distinctive detached cottages all in brick. Along the southern edge lie four pairs of cottages broadly similar in appearance to the detached properties but with single storey flanking wings. Pevsner describes these houses as “A group of eight very loveable and little funny houses along two sides of the green.” These buildings are two storeys in height and are built directly onto the road facing the green. Notably these houses are largely unaltered and retain their original plan form, symmetry and original features which are important to their character and appearance individually and as a group. Any proposals which adversely affect the important characteristics of the houses are unlikely to be permitted.

At the south western edge of the village lies one of the former main entrances to Easton Neston Estate which is marked by two matching listed lodges built either side of the road (Fig. 18). These lodges and lodge gates were built in the early nineteenth century and altered in the twentieth century. The lodges are symmetrical; both two storey, T plan buildings. The elevations facing the village have canted gables and a wing to the rear. Changes made to the doors and windows in these lodges mean that the character of these buildings has been eroded and they would benefit from the reinstatement of more traditional windows and doors. These lodges previously marked the entrance to the estate from the northern approach off Showsley Road.

Figure 24: An example of the uniquely designed cottages within Hulcote, note the symmetry in both the architectural features but also the brick work.
To the north of the lodges lies the Old School Room. This building, also listed, is dated 1816 (Fig. 25). On the outside of the building there is a VR post box set in the wall and a K6 phone box is located just to the south, both of these traditional features should be retained.

Whereas all the functional buildings front directly onto the green, the two main houses in the village are slightly set back in their own grounds on the western edge of the green (Fig. 26 & 27).

A further house, Millers, lies off the road to the east of the village core. This attractive stone building has a more recent red brick extension to the front which fits in well with the rest of the village. A red brick wall around the front of the property and red brick outbuildings complete this part of the village.

The only other buildings in the village are a pair of red brick semis located at the entrance to the village where the road veers off to Easton Neston House (Fig. 28) and a modest detached house set back off the green between the two rows of estate cottages.

**Figure 25:** (top right) The Old School Room dating from the 1860s.

**Figure 26:** Hulcote Lodge, one of the properties which predate the remodelling of the estate village.

**Figure 27:** Manor House, the second property which predates the remodelling of the estate village. Note that both are set back within their own plots which helps further differentiate them from the later estate cottages which sit directly onto the highway.

**Figure 28:** The two modern red brick semis are located at the entrance of the village. Whilst they are modern in construction, their design has been considered and sensitive allowing them to be in keeping with village core.
5. Architectural Analysis

5.2 Materials

The use of brick predominates in Hulcote due to the designed nature of the village and the local availability of the material. A brick kiln was established on the west side of Northampton Road in the early nineteenth century as is visible on the c.1843 map (Fig. 7). On one of the detached cottages (No.4) two bricks stamped “The Earl of Pomfret 1815” can be seen.

Brick is laid in a combination of diapered pattern and Flemish Bond with flared headers. The uniformity and distinctiveness of these cottages are integral to the character and appearance of Hulcote Conservation Area.

Limestone and ironstone are not a common material featured in Hulcote Conservation Area although there are examples of its use within the village. These tend to occur in relation to the status buildings such as the Lodges and Gates of course squared ironstone, Hulcote Lodge of coursed limestone rubble, and The Manor House of coursed limestone rubble to the rear and red brick in Flemish bond to the front range.

Boundary walls are commonly built of brick whilst the outbuildings within the settlement are a combination of brick and limestone. This continuing use of similar materials gives a great visual homogeneity to the streetscape.

5.3 Roofscape

The roofscape within the village is uniform due to the similar form of the cottages. This uniformity positively contributes to the unique character of the settlement.

The detached cottages on the western side of The Green are gable end to the road with deep overhanging eaves and graded slate roofs. These cottages also have single storey flanking wings with lean to roofs. The semi detached cottages and Parish Room are again similar with slate roofs.

The lodges to the south of the conservation, which mark one of the entrances to Easton Neston Estate, are identical in appearance with hipped slate roofs and stone chimneys.

The Manor House, like the cottages, also has a slate roof with brick chimneys. Hulcote Lodge on the other hand differs slightly with a twentieth century plain tile roof with brick chimneys (Fig. 29).
5. Architectural Analysis

5.4 Windows

Window types and styles are uniform throughout the conservation area. The estate cottages all have a blind attic window at the centre with a 3 bay window range. The windows are primarily 2 light ‘gothic’ style casements with pointed arched head and timber Y tracery (Fig. 32), however there are a few, which match the blind windows, having six panes in each arched frame.

The two lodges also have a 3 bay window range consisting of twentieth century casements windows. There are similar windows to the 1st floor, all with flat arched heads. The reinstatement of more traditional windows would be more in keeping with the conservation area.

The Old School, dating from 1816, has a 3 bay window range made up of an unusual 5 over 10 sash style. A central lunette in the central bay possibly replaced a blocked door or is set in a blank recess (Fig. 25).

The two main houses within the village have more vernacular windows. Hulcote Lodge on the west side of the Green has a 3 bay window range made up of casement windows. The Manor House has a 4 bay window range made up of 12-pane sash windows to the ground and 1st floors with rendered heads (Fig. 26 & 27).

Fortunately the majority of properties within the conservation area have retained their original windows. This greatly contributes to the character of the area. The removal or replacement of original windows within modern PVCu alternatives will have a detrimental affect on the character of the building as well as a negative impact on the conservation area as a whole. As such this will be discouraged within Hulcote Conservation Area.

5.5 Doors and Porches

Due to the designed nature of the settlement, doors are not visible within the conservation area, either located on the rear or side elevation obscured from the road edge. However where present they do favour the use of timber panels.

The entrances to the estate cottages lie through the porches to the left and right hand side of the cottages; the central doors are blind.

The estate lodges are symmetrical and each has a twentieth century door in the centre facing the old lodge. Changes made to the doors have eroded some of the character of the area as such reinstatement of a more traditional material would be recommended.

Due to the two main houses within the village, Hulcote Lodge and Manor House, being set back in private grounds their doors are not fully visible from the public highway. Both have porches which are not traditional to the area, however their style and size are in keeping with the properties they face (Fig. 29 & 33).

Figure 32: (top) The symmetrical windows, some blind, of the estate cottages.

Figure 33: Porch to front elevation of Hulcote Lodge.
5. Positive Buildings

5.6 Positive buildings

Fig 34. identifies buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. This contribution may be in one or more of the following ways:

- Buildings which provide evidence of the area’s history and development
- Buildings of architectural merit
- Buildings which exemplify local vernacular styles
- Groups of buildings which together make a positive contribution to the streetscape

There should be a presumption in favour of their retention in all but exceptional circumstances.

A number of these important buildings are listed as they are of national importance due to their historic and/or architectural interest. It is an offence to undertake alterations to a listed building without first gaining permission to do so from the Local Planning Authority.

Figure 34: Significant buildings in Hulcote including those listed buildings of architectural or historic interest.© Crown copyright and database right 2018. Ordnance Survey 100022487.
6. Boundary Justification

6.1 Boundary Justification

Northern Boundary
The northern boundary starts at Northampton Road in the north west corner of Corner House. It runs south east towards the centre of Hulcote and The Green. It continues to follow the northern boundary of The Green all the way to the north western corner of the plot of Millers.

Eastern Boundary
The boundary then runs south, following the plot boundary of Millers behind (and including) the estate cottages on the eastern side of The Green.

Southern Boundary
The boundary continues to run west behind the estate cottages on the southern side of The Green. It diverts slightly north to incorporate The Lodges, culminating at the south-west corner of Manor House plot.

Western Boundary
The boundary picks up the southern boundary at the south-west corner of the Manor House plot. It continues to run north, following the plot of the Manor Farmouse, and Old Manor Farm before terminating at the northwest corner of Corner House.
7. Management Plan

7.1 Policy Context

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas. Conservation Area Management Plans should be published as part of the process of area designation and review. Their aim is to provide guidance through policy statements to assist in the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

7.2 Threats

Hulcote is an attractive rural village. However, there are a number of threats and issues arising which have the potential to detract from its historic character. Addressing these now offers the opportunity to enhance the conservation area. Positive conservation management will ensure the on-going protection to preserve and enhance the village’s special character.

Hulcote was designated as a Restricted Infill Village in the South Northamptonshire Local Plan adopted in 1997. Policy H5 of that Plan (saved in part in September 2007) restricts development within such villages to the infilling of a small gap in an otherwise built frontage; or a small group of dwellings or the conversion of existing buildings.

Such development and the increasing urbanisation and extension of existing properties could, if not handled sensitively, pose a threat to the character and appearance of the Hulcote Conservation Area, which could lead to the erosion of its special character.

Ill-considered alterations to the public realm can also result in the loss of an area’s special character and appearance. Boundary treatments and street furniture have a cumulative and sometime detrimental effect on the quality of the streetscape.

A further threat to the village is the parking on the green. Historic villages were not designed for modern traffic needs, and therefore the management of this can be a difficult task. On road parking can have a detrimental effect on the character of the area. Appropriate measures could be considered to monitor the availability of parking.

The conversion of traditional farm buildings may also pose a threat with the desire to alter both the internal and external space to accommodate new use. This may include the insertion of rooflights, new openings and the subdivision of space (Fig. 36).

Buildings that remain vacant for extended periods of time are at risk of neglect and decay due to the lack of maintenance and general upkeep. Not only will this affect the individual building, but also the visual aesthetic of the conservation area as a whole.

Figure 36: Vacant traditional farm buildings within Hulcote which, if developed, should be done sensitively and in keeping with the character of the buildings and conservation area.
It is not just inappropriate alterations to dwellings that pose a threat. Ill-considered alterations and poor maintenance within the public realm can also result in the loss of an area’s special character and appearance. Signage, street furniture and public utilities can have a cumulative effect on the quality of the streetscape.

The aim of the management plan is not to prevent changes, but to ensure that such changes are sympathetic to and enhance the character of the conservation area.

### 7.3 Management proposals

#### 1. Sensitive new development in the conservation area

To be successful any future development within the conservation area needs to be mindful of the local character as appraised in the above document, whilst at the same time being distinctly of the 21st century and addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability. Successful new development in historic areas should:

- Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land.
- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through, in and around it.
- Respect important views.
- Respect the scale of the neighbouring buildings.
- Use material and building methods which are as high in quality as those on existing buildings.
- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of their setting.

**Action 1:**

New development must respond sensitively and creatively to the historic environment.

#### 2. Protect surviving historic architectural forms

As a result of the quality of buildings within the village and the number of buildings without statutory protection, there has been some incremental loss of traditional architectural detailing and features in the conservation area. The replacement of traditional windows, doors and roofing with inappropriate materials and designs is a negative feature that affects both the individual buildings and the wider area.

Owners of significant properties, not just those that are listed, should be encouraged to maintain traditional materials and features that are found in Hulcote. Owners are also encouraged to replace inappropriate features with traditional materials.

Establishing a list of locally significant buildings and policies for their protection would be encouraged as part of the forthcoming Local Plan.

**Action 2:**

Consider the imposition of Article 4 Directions on buildings of significance across the conservation area to ensure that positive architectural details and features are retained and any alterations do not harm the character of the conservation area.

**Action 3:**

Establish a list of locally significant buildings and policies for their preservation as part of the forthcoming Local Plan.
7. Management Plan

3. Boundary walls

Boundary walls and strong boundary lines are a significant feature of Hulcote Conservation Area. Any new boundaries should be clearly delineated and be of an appropriate material and height. Any new or existing development that is set back from the highway should, where appropriate and not interrupting important open space (another key feature of the conservation area), try to maintain and enhance the sense of enclosure and built form as seen across the conservation area.

**Action 4:**

Boundary walls, picket fences and hedges which make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area will be retained. New boundary treatments should fit with the character of existing boundaries.

**Action 5:**

Any new or existing development that is set back from the street should be encouraged to maintain the character of the area and, where appropriate not interrupting important open space, create boundary treatments.

4. Paving and surfacing

Opportunities should be taken to enhance areas of paving and kerbing where appropriate. Careful design and sensitive use of materials will be expected in any future resurfacing works of Hulcote.

**Action 6:**

Encourage statutory undertakers to rationalise and remove unnecessary clutter within the conservation area and replace with appropriate solutions. Highways authorities should try to avoid the insertion of inappropriate kerbing and footpaths, which would have a harmful effect.

5. Open spaces

Open spaces play a very important part in Hulcote Conservation Area contributing to its historic and rural character. Opportunities should be taken to preserve and where appropriate enhance, the character and appearance of these spaces.

**Action 7:**

Promote the sympathetic management of open spaces, including verges, The Green, and the Woodyard.

6. Renewable energy sources

Whilst the Council is supportive of the sustainable energy agenda it also recognises that many sources of renewable energy and micro-generation have the potential to harm the character and appearance of a conservation area. Care therefore needs to be taken to balance the needs of climate changes with the preservation of the historic environment.

**Action 8:**

Encourage the sympathetic location of solar panels, wind turbines etc to inconspicuous roofslopes and building elevations where they will not have a detrimental impact on the character of the conservation area.

7. Satellite antennas

Satellite and radio antennas are non-traditional features which have the potential to disfigure the appearance of traditional buildings. Care must be taken to ensure that they are located where they will not have an impact on the significance of heritage assets and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

**Action 9:**

Require the location of satellite antennas in inconspicuous sites to prevent harm to the historic character and visual appearance of the area.
7. Management Plan

8. **Telegraph poles, lamp standards and overhead cables**

The visual impact of overhead wires and telegraph poles has the potential to dominate and disfigure the character and appearance of the conservation area.

**Action 10:**

*Encourage the undergrounding of cables and wires to reduce the visual impact caused by these on the historic streetscape.*

9. **Tree management**

Conservation area designation affords protection to trees from unauthorised felling or lopping. They contribute to the scale and form across the village and promote the rural character of the settlement.

**Action 11:**

*Large mature trees should be retained wherever possible in order to preserve the character of the conservation area.*

10. **Development affecting the setting of a conservation area**

It is important that development around the conservation area does not harm the setting. Any development in or around Hulcote which affects the setting of the conservation area should have regard to views in and out of it, the setting of positive buildings and the character of the landscape.

**Action 12:**

*The impact of development on the character and appearance of the conservation area should be considered. This applies equally to development outside the conservation area if it is likely to affect the setting of the conservation area.*

11. **Protect archaeological remains**

Hulcote has been inhabited for many centuries and buried evidence of past occupation survive in the settlement. Development proposals should take into account the potential for remains of archaeological interest. Professional advice should be sought and appropriate assessment undertaken.

**Action 13:**

*Development which involves below-ground excavation must have regard to the potential remains of archaeological interest.*
8. References and Sources of Further Information

8.1 Sources


English Heritage (2001) *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*.


8.2 Internet sources
- www.british-history.ac.uk
- www.englishheritage.org.uk

8.3 Further information
Further information on the local history of Northamptonshire can be found at:
- Northamptonshire Records Office
- Northamptonshire Libraries

South Northamptonshire Council have also produced some guidance notes on conservation areas which provides further information on what designation means. This can be found at the following address:

[www.southnorthants.gov.uk/3891.htm](http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/3891.htm)

There are also a wide range of national societies devoted to the study and conservation of historic areas and buildings, a few of which are listed below:

**Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)**
www.spab.org.uk
A good source of practical information about looking after buildings of all periods.

**Ancient Monuments Society**
www.ams.org.uk
Devoted to the study and conservation of ancient monuments, historic buildings and fine, old craftsmanship with a particular interest in church buildings.

**Georgian Group**
www.georgiangroup.org.uk
Interested in the study and conservation of 18th and early 19th century buildings.

**Victorian Society**
www.victoriansociety.org.uk
Interested in the appreciation and conservation of 19th and early 20th century buildings of all types.

The following sites are a useful source of local history information:
- [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)
  Historic public records online.
- [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/)
  Digital library of local history resources
8. References and Sources of Further Information

8.4 Copyright
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8.5 Community involvement and adoption
Many thanks to Harry Mellor and the Parish Group of Hulcote for their guidance and advice whilst producing this draft. Their help and communication has been indispensable and very much appreciated.

The appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is not of interest.

This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was made subject to public consultation and adopted by South Northamptonshire Council. It is now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the conservation area and its setting and the making of other decisions.

Please note that the information contained within this appraisal is correct at the time of publication. South Northamptonshire Council cannot be held liable for any changes that may have occurred since that time.

The views of residents of the village are important and all comments should be directed to:
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