

HIGH LITTLETON AND HALLATROW COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING PLAN

DOCUMENT 3 of 4

SNAPSHOT CHARACTER SUMMARY – HALLATROW

Context

B&NES Landscape type: Area 6 Farrington Gurney Farmland/ Area 12 Cam and Wellow Brook Valleys

Designations: RA2 village. Lies within the Parish of High Littleton.

There is a Village Design Statement for Hallatrow and High Littleton, approved by Bath and Northeast Somerset Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Introduction

This Snapshot Character Summary responds to the requirements of B&NES Placemaking Workshop Toolkit guidance, and derives from a comprehensive community-led settlement assessment and landscape assessment which together have informed the Sites assessment for Hallatrow. This Snapshot Character Summary should be read in conjunction with that of High Littleton, within which Parish it lies.



Character Summary

Hallatrow is a small, attractive, valley-bottom hamlet crossed by the River Cam, and straddling the A39, with its westernmost extent spanning the A37 at White Cross.

The settlement, with its strong rural character, centres at the cross-roads of the A39 with Paulton Road and Harts Lane. Close by, the Triangle provides a communal space, but community amenities are few, generally being provided either in the larger villages of High Littleton or Paulton.

To the north and the west, but mostly remote from housing, are two business and light-industry parks, providing some local employment opportunities. There is also a thriving pub but no village shop.

There are large rural spaces all around, and the river is generally hedge and tree-lined, providing green edges to the landscape. The land immediate to the village comprises small fields of permanent pasture, with the grazing cattle and sheep creating a pastoral feel. Beyond, the fields are larger with a wider range of arable cropping.

In recent years, this rural environment has been increasingly threatened, not just by the general growth in traffic on the A39, but additionally from the dramatic large scale development of nearby Paulton which has hugely raised pressure on the Paulton Road/A39 junction

Harts Lane is very narrow but, unfortunately, serves both as a congestion rat run and an inadequate access for large vans and lorries servicing the Highbury Farm Business Park.

Landscape Description

The land is all traditionally farmed and in a number of different ownerships and tenancies.

West of the village centre and the old railway line, the land bounding the A37 is an 'enclosures landscape', -open and relatively flat with wide, uncluttered views westwards to the Mendips and eastwards to the Cam valley. Nearer to, and around the village centre and the River Cam, the landforms and views are more intimate and the fields are 'pre-enclosure' in character, being smaller and less regular. On the north side, the land rises up more steeply away from the Cam valley, towards High Littleton. There is a noticeable change in the 'feel' of the landscape from one side of the village to the other, due not least to topography. The Cam valley, running west to east, is an important and highly valued swathe of attractive landscape, which contains subtle references of a rich historic mining heritage.

The field boundaries are defined by well-maintained hedges, with intermittent trees. Around the railway line, along the Cam valley and closer to the village centre, the density of trees increases. Combined with the large woodlands on the north edge, this makes the village's landscape setting a rich bio-diverse environment and part of an important wildlife corridor. Mammals include dormice, bats, badgers, deer, foxes, water vole and otters. Wildflowers abound in the pastures, woods and hedgerows; there are increasing numbers of birds attracted here – permanent and seasonal migrating species, including numerous birds of prey such as buzzards and hobby.

The fields are crossed with many public footpaths, many of which derive from the mining heritage of the area. With the exception of the A37 on the parish periphery, the roads are limited in width and are often gently winding.

Key Views and Landmarks

Views out

There are upslope views towards Paulton and High Littleton, including Greyfield, Highbury and Stephen's Wood, set within a rural landscape of fields, trees, hedges and river. In such views the woodlands often provide a hugely important backdrop. From higher ground the views stretch far over to the Mendips.

Views in

These abound from virtually anywhere around the village, looking down into the valley settlement.

Landmarks

There are many, including:

- an ancient iron plaque milestone on Harts Lane
- remains of mining and other industrial history and heritage
- artifacts and buildings relating to the former Victorian railway line and station
- the commemorative Quaker Stone at the Triangle
- Turnpike Cottage at White Cross
- The old Roman drove road coming west from the Mendips into White Cross
- The old workhouse at Clutton

Settlement Character Pattern

Hallatrow is an attractive residential hamlet and has a mixed, but mostly prosperous housing stock. The older houses and cottages are individual in style and varied in construction materials. The older buildings are mainly of stone, white lias or templestone, (pennant stone), with clay tile or slate roofs.

The Claremont development is of spacious modern houses and several properties on the Paulton Road have been extensively modernised and refurbished. The Grove is a small mixed, modern development.

Towards High Littleton are several '30's' style bungalows, and the former Local Authority homes of Highbury Road.

To the south west, following the A39, is some infill development, roadside cottages and the village public house.

Houses of note include The Court, The Grange, and Brook Farm

The village has, to the very most part, coherent and well established boundaries defining the edge of the village and its surrounding countryside. There is clear separation by open countryside of the settlements of Hallatrow and (northwards) High Littleton.

The industry and commerce tends to be away from the residential properties and comprises:

- Local farms and smallholdings
- Highbury Farm Business Park
- The Old Station Business Park
- The Old Station Public House
- Book Barn
- The Carwash on the A37 at White Cross.

Collectively they contribute significantly to local employment.

Sense of Place

Hallatrow, despite its lack of resources, is an attractive place to live. It is well placed for commuting to Bath, Bristol, Wells and Shepton Mallet, and nearby Midsomer Norton satisfies 'everyday' commercial requirements. Whilst some community activities take place in the hamlet, many are met in conjunction with nearby High Littleton. The Hallatrow housing stock is well maintained and residents take a pride in its appearance and nurture their local environment.

Positive Features and attributes

An unspoilt, rural hamlet with close proximity to the countryside and beautiful rural surroundings.

The picturesque nature of the Cam Brook landscape and valley, its permanent meadows and associated wildlife, and its network of public footpaths.

Negative Features and detractors

Traffic! The size and ever increasing volume has overwhelmed the road network. Congestion of the A37 and A39 has forced inappropriate traffic onto the narrow Harts Lane. The continued residential and commercial expansion of Paulton has brought additional traffic directly onto the Hallatrow junction with the A37.

The pavement provision is incomplete which is highly dangerous, given the increasing volume of traffic.

The increased risk of 'disproportionate' development of more than very modest scale, which would overwhelm a small hamlet and undermine rural life.

Looking Ahead

Given a choice, most Hallatrow residents would like things to stay just as they are. However, they recognise that their hamlet cannot be exempted from the need for communities to grow and

develop. On that basis, very modest growth will be accepted, provided it is of a type and at a scale that maintains the spirit of Hallatrow's hamlet community, and the identifiable green space and open countryside which frames it and which provides clear separation between itself and neighbouring villages.

Prepared by the High Littleton and Hallatrow Community Assessment Team

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