

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, PLANNING & PROSPERITY

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).

The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

- (a) That, under Section 34A (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Staploe Neighbourhood Development Plan, reproduced at Appendix A to the attached report prepared to accompany this decision, be 'made' with immediate effect.
- (b) That the Council congratulates the neighbourhood plan group and the local community on their work to develop the Plan.
- (c) That the Head of Planning and Building Control be authorised, in conjunction with the Parish Council, to make minor editorial textual changes to the neighbourhood plan prior to publication if required.

2. Date of decision

1 July 2026

3. Reasons for decision

The purpose of this report is to formally 'make' the neighbourhood plan to confirm it as part of the development plan covering the Staploe neighbourhood area (Staploe Parish) and to recognise the significant amount of work undertaken by the neighbourhood plan group and local community in preparing the neighbourhood plan.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

As the Neighbourhood Plan achieved a majority vote in favour of the neighbourhood plan, the Regulations require that the plan must be made within 8 weeks following the referendum unless:

- the local planning authority considers that the making of the plan would breach, or otherwise be compatible with, any EU or human rights obligations, or
- a legal challenge has been brought in relation to the decision to hold a referendum or around the conduct of the referendum.

Neither circumstance exists in relation to the Staploe Neighbourhood Plan so it must be 'made' by the Council.

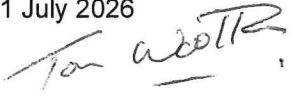
5. How decision is to be funded

Costs associated with assisting the neighbourhood plan group to prepare their plan are funded from the Plans and Strategies Reserve.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

1 July 2026


Signed: 

Date:

1 July 2026

Name of Decision Taker:

Cllr. Andrea Spice

Portfolio Holder for Economic Prosperity, Planning, Housing & Regulatory Services

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: 1 July 2026

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: 13 July 2026

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....NO.....)

Bedford Borough Council – Report to Portfolio Holder for Economic Prosperity, Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services

Date of Report: 1 July 2026

Report by: Head of Planning and Building Control

Subject: STAPLOE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Neighbourhood plans are statutory development plans produced by parish / town councils or neighbourhood forums. Staploe Parish Council has produced a neighbourhood plan for the Staploe parish area, attached at **Appendix A** to this report.
- 1.2 The Plan was submitted to Bedford Borough Council on 10 September 2025 and, in line with regulatory requirements, was subject to a six-week consultation (23 September 2025 – 6 November 2025). It has since been formally examined by Andrew Freeman who is an independent examiner. The examiner produced a report, which recommended that the Plan be modified in order to meet legal requirements and then be progressed to a referendum of people who live within the designated neighbourhood area. On 6 March 2026, the Council resolved to progress to the referendum stage. The referendum took place on 14 May 2026 and a majority of those who took part voted in favour of the Plan. It must now be formally 'made' by Bedford Borough Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Executive is asked to consider this report and, if satisfied, agree:**
- (a) **That under Section 34A (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Staploe Neighbourhood Development Plan be 'made' with immediate effect.**
 - (b) **That the Council congratulates the neighbourhood plan group and the local community on their work to develop the Plan.**

- (c) That the Head of Planning and Building Control be authorised in conjunction with the Parish Council to make minor editorial textual changes to the neighbourhood plan.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To formally 'make' the neighbourhood plan to confirm it as part of the development plan covering the Staploe neighbourhood area (Staploe Parish) and to recognise the significant amount of work undertaken by the neighbourhood plan group and local community in preparing the neighbourhood plan.

4. THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The referendum has been held and there was a majority vote in favour of the Staploe Neighbourhood Plan. The next stage is for the Council to make (adopt) the plan.
- 4.2 Once the plan has been made, it will form part of the development plan for Bedford Borough.

5. DETAILS

- 5.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011. New powers allow qualifying bodies (parish or town councils, or neighbourhood forums in areas without parish or town councils) to produce neighbourhood plans which enable communities to set planning policies for their area. Once part of the Council's statutory development plan they must be taken into account alongside Bedford Borough Council's local plans and national policy when planning applications are determined.
- 5.2 Producing a neighbourhood plan allows parish and town councils to increase the amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds they receive from developments within their area from 15% to 25%, incentivising the production of plans, especially those that propose growth.
- 5.3 The stages of preparation of a neighbourhood plan are similar to those for the preparation of a local plan. They are summarised in the following table.

Preparing a neighbourhood plan

Stage	Responsibility	Staploe parish progress
Neighbourhood Area Designation	Application by parish council, publicity & decision by BBC	Complete (7 September 2020)
Prepare draft neighbourhood plan	NP group / parish council with assistance from others	Complete
Pre submission consultation (Regulation 14)	NP group / parish council (6 weeks minimum)	Complete (12 April – 31 May 2025)
Finalise plan in light of comments made	NP group / parish council	Complete
Submit plan to the local planning authority	NP group / parish council	Complete
Pre-examination consultation (Regulation 16)	BBC (6 weeks minimum)	Complete (23 September – 6 November 2025)
Examination	Examiner appointed by BBC (agreed by NP group/ PC)	Complete (28 November 2025 – 5 February 2026)
Consider examiner's recommendations	BBC and NP group / parish council	Complete (6 March 2026)
Referendum	Organised by BBC	Complete (14 May 2026)
Plan 'made' (part of the development plan)	BBC	We are here

- 5.4 Bedford Borough Council resolved, by way of Executive decision on 6 March 2026, that the neighbourhood plan should proceed to referendum. The referendum covered the parish area of Staploe and anyone who can usually vote in a local election and who is resident in the referendum area was able to vote.
- 5.5 The referendum question was 'Do you want Bedford Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Staploe Parish to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?' This form of wording is that required by the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations 2012. **From an electorate of 275 the turnout was 85 (30.9%) and the votes in favour 78 and against 7.**
- 5.6 As more than half of the people who voted were in favour of the plan, it must now be formally 'made'. It will be used in the determination of planning applications that fall within the parish of Staploe. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the Parish Council and the need to review it to keep it up to date will be considered as part of this process.
- 5.7 Following Executive's decision to 'make' the Plan, the Parish Council and others who asked to be kept informed will be formally notified. The Plan and supporting documents, including a decision statement, will be published on the Council's web site and made available in line with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

6. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan achieved a majority vote in favour of the neighbourhood plan. The Regulations require that the plan must be made within 8 weeks following the referendum unless:

- the local planning authority considers that the making of the plan would breach, or otherwise be compatible with, any EU or human rights obligations, or
- a legal challenge has been brought in relation to the decision to hold a referendum or around the conduct of the referendum.

Neither circumstance exists in relation to the Staploe Neighbourhood Plan so it must be 'made' by the Council.

7. KEY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Legal issues – relevant legal power

Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to 'make' a neighbourhood plan if more than half of those voting in a referendum have voted in favour. In such circumstances the making of a neighbourhood plan is therefore a legal requirement except in narrow circumstances where adoption of the plan would breach or otherwise be incompatible with EU or human rights obligations. In respect of this plan no such circumstances exist, therefore the Council is under a statutory duty to make the Staploe Neighbourhood Plan and has eight weeks from the date of the referendum in which to do so.

Decisions to 'make' a neighbourhood plan are taken by Bedford Borough Council's Executive rather than Full Council¹.

Bedford Borough Council can be challenged on the making of a plan by way of judicial review. Challenges must normally be made within six weeks of the making of the plan.

Once 'made' the Council must publicise its decision in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

¹ Section 9D of the Local Government Act 2000

7.2 Policy Issues

Neighbourhood plans are examined to ensure that they meet the 'Basic Conditions' which are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The 'Basic Conditions' ensure, amongst other things, that appropriate regard has been had for local and national policies. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:

- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area (in this case saved policies in the Local Plan 2002, policies in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 and Local Plan 2030).
- Be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations; and
- Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

7.3 Resource Issues

Costs associated with assisting the neighbourhood plan group to prepare their plan are funded from the Borough Council's Plans and Strategies Reserve. No additional funding is required as a result of the recommendations in this report.

When a neighbourhood plan becomes part of the development plan, the percentage of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts payable to a Parish Council arising from development within the parish increases from 15% to 25% resulting in Bedford Borough Council's percentage decreasing to 75%. National Planning Practice Guidance explains that parish councils must use the CIL receipts passed to them to support the development of the parish council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area.

7.4 Risks

The making of a neighbourhood plan following a positive referendum outcome is a statutory duty under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. There is a risk that the making of the plan could be challenged in the courts.

7.5 Environmental Implications

The Staploe Neighbourhood Plan was screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) by Staploe Parish Council with assistance from Bedford Borough Council. The SEA screening concluded that it was unnecessary to undertake SEA. The examiner supported this conclusion.

7.6 Equalities Impact

In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

The development of the Staploe Neighbourhood Development Plan is relevant to Staploe Parish Council's General Equality Duty. The Parish Council is responsible for discharging their duty. An equality analysis has been carried out by the Parish Council. The findings can be found on the Parish Council's web site as an annex to the basic conditions statement.

7.7 Impact on Families

The proposed Neighbourhood Plan will not have an impact on families.

7.8 Community Safety and Resilience

The proposed Neighbourhood Plan will not have an impact on community safety.

7.9 Impact on Health and Wellbeing

The proposed Neighbourhood Plan will have no direct impact on health and well-being, however the plan does include policies on rights of way and sustainable development which may have an indirect positive impact.

8. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME

8.1 The Plan has been the subject of two statutory consultations. The neighbourhood plan group carried out pre-submission consultation on a draft plan, known as Regulation 14 stage, and the Council undertook post-submission consultation; the Regulation 16 stage. Details of the Regulation 14 responses are included in the Consultation Statement. The Regulation 16 responses were provided to the examiner of the Plan who considered them during the examination. They can be found on Bedford Borough Council's web-site on the neighbourhood planning pages.

8.2 The following people have been consulted in preparing this report:

- Interim Strategic Director for Environment
- Head of Legal
- Manager (BP) Environment and Strategic
- Energy Team
- Public Health
- Senior Officer for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Chief Officer for Education, SEND and Schools
- Manager for Early Help and Family Support
- Manager for Community Safety and Resilience

8.3 No adverse comments have been received.

9. WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS

9.1 Not applicable for this report.

10. **CONTACTS AND REFERENCES**

Report Contact Officer	<i>Gavin Chinniah Head of Planning and Building Control</i>
File Reference	<i>Neighbourhood Plans</i>
Previous Relevant Minutes	<i>N/A</i>
Background Papers	<i>None</i>
Appendices	<i>Appendix A – Staploe Neighbourhood Plan</i>

Staploe Parish Neighbourhood Plan

2025-2035



Duloe



Staploe



Honeydon



**Referendum – 14 May 2026
Plan made - ??**



Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
Role of this Neighbourhood Plan	4
Process	4
Drafting and Consulting on the Plan.....	4
Screening requirements from EU regulations	5
Examination and Referendum	5
Neighbourhood Area	5
Figure 1: Neighbourhood Area	6
2. The Strategic Policy Context.....	7
The National Planning Policy Framework	7
Sustainable development	7
The Local Planning Authority and Local Plan.....	7
3. Parish Description.....	8
History and Heritage.....	9
Bassmead Manor	10
Honeydon.....	11
Landscape and Biodiversity.....	11
Local services and facilities	12
Population & Household Data.....	13
4. Consultation	13
5. Vision and Aims	14
Neighbourhood Plan Aims	15
6. Sustainable Development	16
Sustainable Development Principles	16
7. Rural Character.....	17
Strategic Gaps	17
Policy RC1: Strategic Gaps.....	17
Duloe to Eaton Socon Gap.....	18
Staploe to Duloe Gap	18
Figure 2: Strategic Gaps.....	19
Landscape	19
Policy RC2: Rural Character and Landscape	21
Figure 3: Key Views	22
8. Natural Environment	23
Hedgerows, trees and woodland.....	23
Policy NE1: Hedgerows, trees and woodland.....	23
Biodiversity.....	24
Figure 4: Biodiversity Network in Staploe Parish: Policy Map.....	26
Policy NE2: Biodiversity	27



Goodwick Drive, Honeydon.....	28
9. <i>Historic Environment</i>.....	29
Non-Designated Local Heritage Assets	29
Book Exchange Phone Box	29
Archaeology.....	30
Policy HE1: Protecting and enhancing non-designated heritage assets	30
Policy HE2: Protecting and Enhancing Understanding of Archaeology	31
10. <i>Sustainable Development</i>	31
Affordable Housing and Housing mix	32
Policy SD1: New Housing Development.....	33
High Quality Design	34
Staploe (eastern end).....	35
Policy SD2: High Quality Design	36
Sustainable Buildings and construction	36
Policy SD3: Provision of energy efficient buildings.....	37
Water issues and infrastructure	38
Policy SD4: Water Management and Efficiency.....	39
11. <i>Community</i>.....	39
Community Facilities	39
Noel Bates Memorial Playing Field, Duloe.....	40
Policy C1: Community facilities	40
Local Green Spaces.....	40
Policy C2: Local Green Spaces	41
Figure 5: Local Green Spaces	42
Local Businesses & Agriculture.....	43
College Farm, Duloe	44
Policy C3: Supporting Local Employment and Agriculture	44
12. <i>Transport and Public Rights of Way</i>.....	45
Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders	45
Fishers Lane Bridleway 30, Staploe.....	46
Policy T1: Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders	46
13. <i>Aspirations, Implementation and Monitoring</i>.....	47
Implementation & Working in partnership.....	47
Funding and Implementation Mechanisms.....	48
Monitoring and Review	48
Annex 1: Policies Map	49
Annex 2: Table of Aims and Policies	50
Annex 3: Glossary.....	51



Foreword

This Plan has been prepared by Staploe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on behalf of Staploe Parish Council. Bedford Borough Council (BBC), as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), designated the Neighbourhood Plan area for Staploe Parish in September 2020 to enable Staploe Parish Council to prepare the Plan. Figure 1 below shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The purpose of the Plan is to shape any future development within the Parish, protect its rural character and provide guidance to any parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within Staploe Parish. As a tool to assist the determination of planning applications, the Plan will sit alongside the adopted Local Plan for Bedford Borough Council.

The Parish Council would like to thank the following for their contribution to the plan:

- Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:
 - T. Tagg, L. Crawford, K. Abrahams, G. Meola, C. Quince, P. Yockney, C. Kent and V. Zwetsloot
- Locality for their funding and technical support
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) for their work on the Green Infrastructure Plan. In particular:
 - Mike Fayers and Cliff Andrews
- AECOM for their work on the Design Codes and the Housing Needs Assessment. In particular:
 - Nicholas Pascalli (Design Codes), Olivia Carr and Chris Binns (Housing Needs Assessment)
- Sally Chapman of Chapman Planning for drafting the plan
- P. Squire Ltd. For agreeing to the designation of green spaces in Staploe
- Steve and Caroline Kent for agreeing to the designation of the orchard in Staploe as green space
- Nigel Cutts for his aerial photographs
- Residents of the Parish for responding to our numerous questionnaires and our workshop



Begwary



1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2011, the Localism Act introduced a new opportunity for local communities to shape their future formally as part of the planning system. Neighbourhood Plans can be produced by Parish Councils and when they have progressed through all the required steps and processes, they become part of the development plan for the area. This means that any planning applications will have to take account of policies contained within the document.
- 1.2 Neighbourhood planning provides local people with a say on how land use and buildings can develop over time, such as protecting green spaces and improving local character. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to prevent future development, but it can guide development to the right places and ensure that it is the best it can possibly be.

Role of this Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.3 This plan deals with the important land use and environmental qualities of the Parish that have been identified by the residents during various consultation events.
 - It sets out a clear vision for the Parish over the plan period, from 2025 to 2035.
 - It refers to the issues raised and suggests how they can be approached through planning policies and aspirations.
 - It contains policies to protect the Parish and to guide appropriate development.
 - It acknowledges that some development might be appropriate, provided it meets the policies in this plan and the current strategic plan for the whole area.
 - It contains maps of the Area (both in the Neighbourhood Plan and within associated documents) showing the features protected for various reasons for example, important local views and Local Green Spaces.
 - It is accompanied by the 'Staploe Parish Design Codes and Guidance' and the "Staploe Housing Needs Assessment" (the latter covers the whole Parish), background technical documents supporting the Neighbourhood Plan, produced by AECOM for the Parish Council.

Process

- 1.4 Producing a Neighbourhood Plan is a formal process involving several stages, governed by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (referred to as the Regulations), but critically important is that the Plan is developed with continuing community involvement from the beginning of the process to ensure that the document is a reflection of the community's needs and aspirations.

Drafting and Consulting on the Plan

- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan document has to be formally consulted upon at two stages in production, 'Pre-Submission' (required by Regulation 14) which is organised by the Parish Council which gives people an opportunity to make comments on the first draft of the Plan and then 'Submission' (required by Regulation 16) organized by Bedford Borough Council. Both consultations are formal six week consultations requiring representors to make written comments.



Screening requirements from EU regulations

- 1.6 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations (Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004) and the Habitats Regulations (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017) previously implemented the requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directives in England. These Regulations continue to apply and have been transposed into English law. In most cases, Neighbourhood Plans do not require a full Assessment but must be screened to confirm that this is the case. Staploe Parish have undertaken screening and no full assessment is required for either set of Regulations.

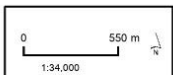
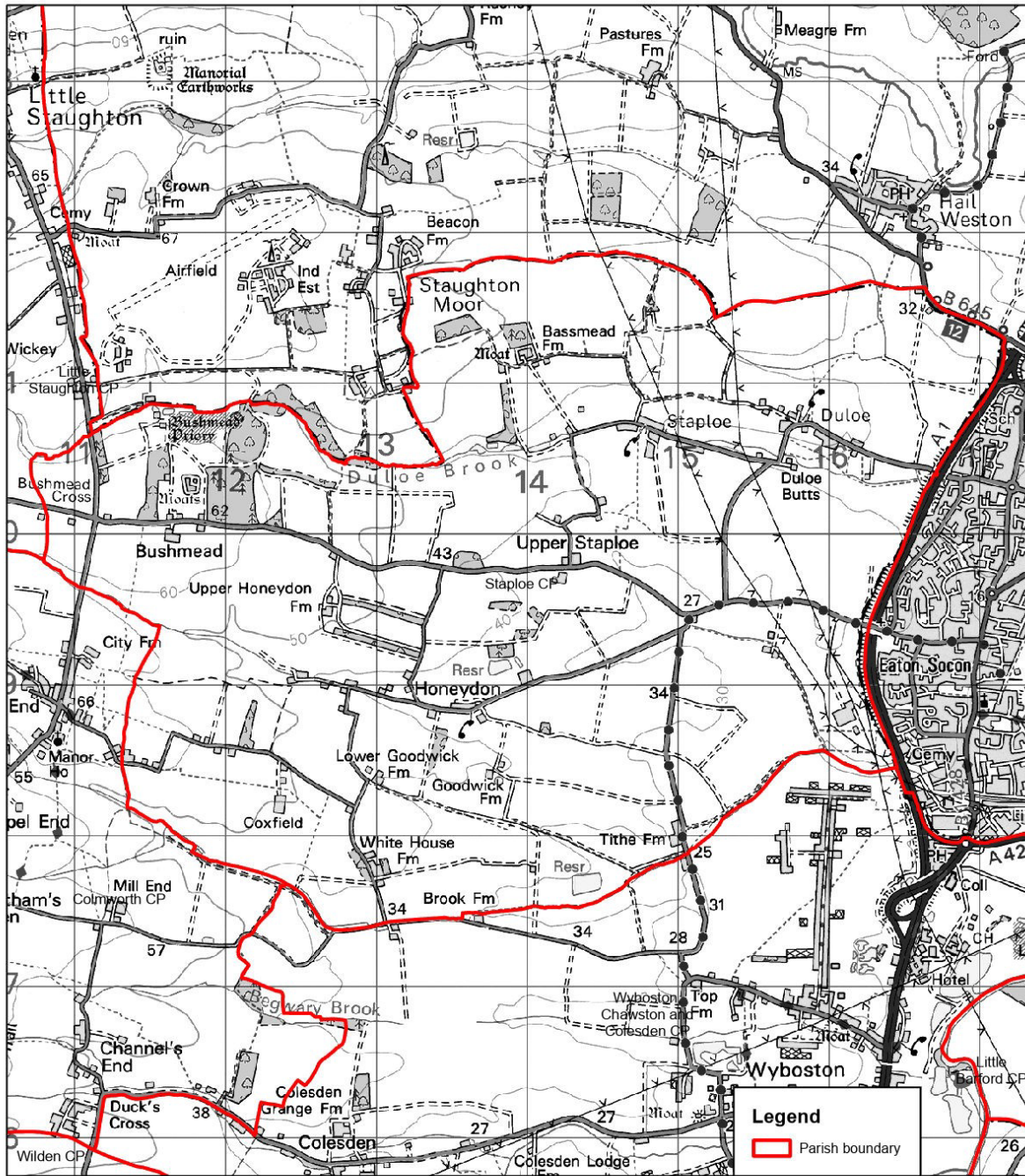
Examination and Referendum

- 1.7 In order to rigorously test the policies of a Neighbourhood Plan, an independent Examination is carried out. The Neighbourhood Plan must conform to the following 'basic conditions':
- consistency with local planning policy
 - demonstrates how the plan will contribute towards sustainable development
 - regard to national policy;
 - general conformity with strategic local policy;
 - contributing to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - compatibility with EU obligations (now transposed into English law); and
 - meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.
- 1.8 Once the Plan has passed Examination, it is voted upon in a referendum by Parish residents and if a simple majority 'yes' vote is achieved, then the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' by Bedford Borough Council and comes into force as a planning document with legal weight in decision-making.

Neighbourhood Area

- 1.9 Staploe Parish Council resolved to proceed with making a Neighbourhood Plan and the Neighbourhood Area was approved as being the whole of the Parish on 7th September 2020.

Figure 1: Neighbourhood Area



Staploe Neighbourhood Area





2. The Strategic Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) version was published in December 2024 and sets out the Government's approach to sustainable development. At the heart of the NPPF is the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. Essentially, it is about positive growth with economic, social and environmental gains being sought simultaneously through the planning system. Neighbourhood planning forms part of the NPPF approach to planning, to allow local communities to shape sustainable development within their area and to enable local communities to address their strategic needs and priorities. The NPPF states that Neighbourhood Plans should set out a positive vision for the future of the local area with planning policies to determine decisions on planning applications, including policies which set out the quality of development that should be expected for the area, based on stated objectives for the area's future and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. However, a Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and plan positively to support these policies.

Sustainable development

- 2.2 The Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development means 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (United Nations Brundtland Commission 1987).
- 2.3 The NPPF states that pursuing sustainable development helping to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, ensuring a sufficient number and range of homes is provided in a well-designed, beautiful and safe built environment with accessible services and open spaces and to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.
- 2.4 Therefore, the aims, objectives, policies and proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan should be assessed against their ability to achieve sustainable development. Wherever possible the Neighbourhood Plan should actively promote the achievement of sustainable development.

The Local Planning Authority and Local Plan

- 2.5 The current Local Plan consists of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 which was adopted in January 2020 and the Allocations and Designations Local Plan which was adopted in July 2013. The Borough Council had embarked on the next Local Plan to cover up to 2040, which was at Examination, but is likely to be withdrawn. The future of the local plan process in Bedford Borough is currently unknown.
- 2.6 Staploe Parish Neighbourhood Plan is required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Bedford Borough Development Plan.



3. Parish Description

- 3.1 Staploe Parish is a rural civil Parish located in North East Bedfordshire. The Parish boundary borders the A1 to the east which separates the Parish from nearby town of St Neots, where the closest railway station is located. The Parish has routes to Cambridge via the A428, Bedford via the A421 and London via the A1.
- 3.2 It comprises three distinct hamlets: Staploe, Duloe and Honeydon as well as a number of smaller settlements: Bassmead (sometimes also spelled Basmead), Upper Staploe, Begwary, Bushmead and outlying properties located along the Bushmead Road, on the B645 near Hail Weston, on Moor Road south of Great Staughton, and around Tythe Farm on the road to Honeydon. The nearest town is St. Neots in the neighbouring county of Cambridgeshire; just two miles east of the A1 which forms the eastern boundary of the Parish. It is bordered to the north by rural Parishes in Cambridgeshire and to the south and west by rural Parishes in Bedfordshire including Wyboston, Colmworth and Little Staughton.
- 3.3 The Parish is home to Bassmead Manor Barns wedding venue along with a small number of industrial units in Duloe, Staploe and at Tythe Farm.
- 3.4 The hamlets are linear with houses generally on only one side of the road with views over fields in most directions. Staploe and Honeydon follow the line of Duloe Brook and Honeydon Brook respectively. Colmworth Brook forms the southern boundary of the Parish. Duloe is located on slightly higher ground with the brook running to the south of the hamlet.
- 3.5 The Bushmead Road runs east west through the centre of the Parish and is an important link between St Neots and the villages of Staploe, Honeydon, Little Staughton, Colmworth, Bolnhurst and Keysoe. The road is largely bounded by agricultural fields and woodland.
- 3.6 The remaining roads are rural with grass verges, no pavements, very few curbs and limited street lighting. They are narrow; often single track, with some sharp bends. Several are bordered by Roadside Nature Reserves.
- 3.7 There is a large network of footpaths and bridleways in the Parish. Many of those in the northeast are popular with residents and visitors from neighbouring St Neots. They provide a variety of natural environments and opportunities to observe our wildlife. The Parish is host to a notably abundant population of skylarks, and the unusual Small Eggar Moth. Residents often enjoy watching wildlife such as badgers, owls, birds of prey, hares, foxes, and muntjack from their gardens and from the local footpaths and water voles and otters have been sighted in the Parish. The circular routes north of Staploe and west of Duloe are particularly popular with walkers.
- 3.8 There are 16 listed properties and three scheduled monuments.

Listed buildings:

- Duloe: The Anchor, Thatched Cottage, Dovecote at 49, Duloe, Maye Cottage, 53, Woodhouse Lane.
- Staploe: Walnut Tree Cottage 35, Staploe, Old Farm Cottage, Danvers Thatch, Bassmead Manor.
- Honeydon: Chestnuts Farmhouse, Dairy Farm Cottage.
- Bushmead: Thatched Cottage, The Grotto, Bushmead Priory House, Bushmead Priory, The Coach House.
- Eaton Tithe Farmhouse, Staploe Road, Wyboston.



Scheduled Monuments:

- Bassmead Manor moated enclosure.
- The Camps at Bushmead.
- Bushmead Priory.

3.9 Staploe is the largest hamlet in the Parish with 40 homes, followed by Duloe and Honeydon with 36 homes each respectively. There are 151 households in the Parish in total (2021 census data). Staploe Parish is one of the largest Parishes in Bedford Borough by area (second only to Bolnhurst and Keysoe in size) at 1889 ha. However, it has the lowest population density in the Borough at 0.175 person per hectare with a total population of only 330 (2021 census data). It is notable for its rural character which is in significant contrast to the suburban / urban character of Eaton Socon and St Neots immediately to the east of the A1.

History and Heritage

- 3.10 Originally, it formed part of the Parish of Eaton Socon, but became an independent civil Parish in 1965 after Eaton Socon merged with the neighbouring town of St Neots.
- 3.11 Staploe is pronounced with a long “a”. It is shown on the 1836 map as Staplehoe. Duloe pronounced as “dew” not “dull” is shown on the 1836 map as Devilhoe or Dewlhoe). It appears that Honeydon was known as “Camoys” in the late Norman period until the 18th Century.
- 3.12 There are a few interesting place names mentioned in the Domesday Survey document of 1086. Daneshill in Duloe (reminder of the Danelaw), The Butts at Duloe (archery practice site), Old Workhouse Close (former pest house for plague victims), Sheaker’s Way (road south from Duloe following this ancient track), St Dunstan’s Farm in Upper Staploe in the former estate of St Dunstons in the west, School Farm (Honeydon) in the former estate of Orwell School. Bushmead place names include Garden Wood, Dovehouse Yard, Brickhill Field, Ram Close, Hop Ground which suggest it was a self supporting community. Steeple Wood just east of Bushmead Cross suggests this may have been the location of the Priory Church.
- 3.13 Bushmead Priory was founded in the late 12th century, Bushmead Priory was home to a small community of Augustinian canons. Throughout its history it enjoyed the support of local elites, who made grants of land to the priory in return for prayers for their souls. Their generosity helped fund the construction of the Priory’s buildings, of which only the refectory – the canons’ dining hall – survives. Although much altered over the centuries, it retains its impressive late 13th-century timber roof and medieval wall paintings. After Henry VIII’s Dissolution of the Monasteries, the site passed into the ownership of the Gery family, who transformed the former priory buildings into a substantial house.



3.14 Bassmead Manor dates from between the late 15th Century to the 18th Century. In 1845, Sir Peter Squire bought the farm to grow herbs for his apothecary business in London. Sir Peter was a royal chemist to Queen Victoria, and it is believed that herbs grown at Bassmead Manor Farm were used in the Coronation Oil used at royal coronations.



Bassmead Manor

3.15 Honeydon shows evidence such as crop marks, and enclosure ditches suggesting occupation in the Iron Age, Roman & possibly late Bronze Age in the area from Upper Honeydon Farm to Lower Honeydon Farm. Pottery from the 12th to 20th Century has been found in the garden of East Cottage. The hamlet is first mentioned in historical records in 1302 as part of the barony of Eaton. The Jeffreys Map of 1765 indicates that Begwary Lane was not then the main access route into Honeydon from Colmworth. At that date the map shows that the main access was via a lane running north from what is now Honeydon Road, Colmworth past Manor Farm and into the present Manor Farm Lane from the west. Most of this lane is now an overgrown 'green lane', although the approach to Manor Farm still exists as a single track metalled lane, which degrades into a farm track. The current road layout is a product of enclosure. It is suggested that the narrow section of road from the junction of Manor Farm Lane and Begwary Lane up to Hillside Bungalow may have been a baulk or access lane to the medieval open field to the south of Honeydon, known as South or Sow Field. It has no verges and is different in character to the rest of Begwary Lane which has wide verges, typical of post enclosure roads. A number of founding members of the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints (Mormon Church) were born in Honeydon. Joseph Fielding and two of his sisters emigrated to Canada from Honeydon in 1832 where Joseph became a leader in the early Mormon church and conducted missionary trips to England. Mary married the founder Joseph Smith's brother Hiram Smith and her son Joseph Fielding Smith became a leader of the Mormon church. John Marriott (also of Honeydon) also emigrated to America with many family members to join the Mormon church where he helped build the town of Marriott in Utah which was named after him. Ivor Spencer-Thomas – the agricultural inventor and entrepreneur lived in Honeydon during his childhood in the early 20th Century.

3.16 During WWII, the hamlets hosted children evacuated from Walthamstow and the Parish focussed on food production for the war effort. In August 1940 bombs landed south west of the Two Brewers pub and south west of Goodwick Farm. In October a German reconnaissance plane was shot down near the Crown Public House ins Eaton Socon and two airmen baled out and landed near Cobhoden. In the middle of 1941, a Junkers 88 bomber was shot down by a night fighter just inside the Parish east of Colmworth. It blew up leaving a deep crater.

3.17 In 1941 an aerodrome was built at Little Staughton with the bomb dump within the Parish near Bushmead Priory. Little Staughton Airfield was constructed in 1941-42 on the edge of the Parish. It was initially used by the USAAF's 1st Bomb Wing as a maintenance base for B-17 bombers. It hosted the RAF Path Finder Force These squadrons, equipped with Mosquitoes and Avro



Lancasters, played a critical role in marking targets for the main bomber force during the Normandy invasion.

- 3.18 German and Italian prisoners of war worked on local farms, many of whom were taken prisoner in north Africa. Many stayed on in the Parish after the war.
- 3.19 In 1971 the A1 dual carriageway was built; creating a clear boundary on what is now the eastern edge of the Parish. In 1974 the new civil Parish of Staploe was created when Eaton Socon became part of Cambridgeshire (having previously been part of Bedfordshire). Staploe and Duloe remain in the Church of England Parish of Eaton Socon.



Honeydon

Landscape and Biodiversity

- 3.20 The rural lanes and three brooks are lined with notably biodiverse hedgerows and there are extensive roadside nature reserves. Staploe Parish has the greatest area of Roadside Nature Reserves in Bedford Borough. These were designated due to the prolific presence of Bath Asparagus (*Ornithogalum pyrenaicum*) – also known as Spiked Star of Bethlehem, with smaller populations of Crested Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum cristatum*). Both are classified as local and rare. They also contain Sulphur Clover (*Trifolium ochroleucon*) which is classified as scarce and local.
- 3.21 There are a number of ancient woodlands and the Parish is host to a notably abundant population of skylarks, and the unusual Small Eggar Moth (*Eriogaster lanestris*). There are thriving populations of badgers, owls, birds of prey, hares, bats, foxes, and muntjac and there have been sightings of water voles and otters.
- 3.22 In Bedford Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment 2020 Staploe Parish is classified as Thurleigh Clay Farmland. This is characterised by an open, largely level area founded on Oxford



Clay overlain by Boulder Clay. It is dominated by arable farmland generally with large irregular fields with a cluster of smaller fields in the more ancient landscape around Bushmead Priory. Remnant areas on unimproved grassland persist along road verges. Hedgerows are in mixed condition with some lost leaving areas of open arable land with long views. Hedgerow trees are prominent in the level landscape, many of them mature plus substantial recent plantings lining some rural roads. A few scattered woods give variety to the distant views. In Staploe Parish there are substantial woods near Bushmead Priory and Bassmead. Minor tributaries of the River Great Ouse cross the eastern part of the area from east to west causing subtle variations in topography. Dispersed low density settlement, consists of scattered farmsteads and villages, often made up of loose knit small groups of buildings known as 'ends', with some villages spreading along roads. Stone churches with tall towers are landmarks in the level landscape for example St Denys Church in Colmworth can be seen from the southwestern parts of the Parish. Farms and cottages are built of brick and render, with thatch and clay tile roofs, large scale modern farm buildings are highly visible on the skyline in some sections. Settlements often shelter amongst mature trees, with occasional coniferous or poplar shelter belts associated with farmsteads. A network of small rural roads and lanes cross the area. Rich heritage of earthwork sites (particularly moats), including the Priory and moats at Bushmead, and Bassmead. Historic parkland at Bushmead Priory includes blocks of ancient woodland, and a complex moated site. Views are generally distant over the largely level farmland.

- 3.23 Most of the Neighbourhood Area is occupied by open fields separated by ditches, hedges, and small areas of woodland; with some extensive woods in the northwest of the Parish which are County Wildlife Sites (Garden Wood and Bushmead Big Wood in Bushmead and Hook Wood and Home Wood at Bassmead). There is a large solar farm just beyond the northern boundary of the Parish with further solar farms proposed in the north and east of the Parish.
- 3.24 Oxford clay rock is covered by chalky boulder clay. Glacial sands are exposed beside Duloe Brook at Bushmead and alluvium lines the valleys of the three brooks.
- 3.25 Staploe Parish has a network of footpaths, bridleways and green lanes which connect settlements with one another and the wider countryside.
- 3.26 Staploe and Duloe Village Playing Field (also known as the Noel Bates Memorial Playing Field) provides a valued open recreational space including a play area, a sports pitch and is the location of the Community Cabins.
- 3.27 Green Infrastructure (GI) is a descriptive term which describes the network of open spaces, countryside, footpaths, the heritage landscape, rivers/stream etc. A Green Infrastructure Plan and Local Green Spaces Plan have been prepared as supporting documents for this neighbourhood plan.

Local services and facilities

- 3.28 There are limited services or facilities in the Parish apart from one playing field managed by the Parish Council at Duloe, two "Community Cabins" on the playing field (which contain toilets, a small kitchenette and changing rooms), a play area and the Hamlets Exchange book exchange housed in the old BT phone box in Staploe.
- 3.29 Most residents will travel to St Neots for shopping, and to access public transport. Children attend a variety of schools – some in Eaton Socon and St Neots, others in Bedfordshire e.g. in Wilden,



Sharnbrook, Sandy and Bedford. Similarly, residents access medical facilities outside the Parish in a variety of locations in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. There are a few industrial units in each of the larger three hamlets and a wedding venue at Bassmead in Staploe.

Population & Household Data

- 3.30 Staploe Parish is one of the largest parishes in Bedford Borough in area (second only to Bolnhurst and Keysoe in size) at 1889 ha. However, it has the lowest population density in the Borough at 0.175 person per hectare with a total population of only 331 at Census 2021. There has been no population growth since the previous census in 2011. There have been a small number of barn conversions in the Parish in recent years.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 In August 2020 the Parish Council called an extraordinary Parish Council meeting which was advertised on paper to every household to consider whether to start preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. There was considerable support for this and so the Neighbourhood Plan area was designated as the whole Parish in September 2020. A paper newsletter (The Hamlets Voice which is distributed to every home and also available online) was published in October 2020 explaining that we were commencing the Neighbourhood Plan and inviting residents to join the steering group. This was followed by an online request for members to join the group in November 2020.
- 4.2 The inaugural public meeting of the steering group was held in December 2020.
- 4.3 An initial questionnaire was distributed to residents of the Parish in March 2021 to ask what people's priorities were for the Parish and their opinions about future development. There were 78 responses which is around a 24% response rate for a population of 331 people, considered to be a very good response rate. The overwhelming majority of residents wanted no development or very limited small-scale development. Most expressed a desire to retain the rural setting and countryside views. The results were published online, in the annual Parish meeting and in the March 2021 Hamlets Voice.
- 4.4 An initial Housing Needs Survey was conducted in April 2021 with paper copies delivered to each house, along with links from online posts and an option to complete on paper or on Survey Monkey.
- 4.5 The Housing Needs Survey was followed up immediately afterwards with a shorter survey of those who had expressed a housing need or interest.
- 4.6 The Green Infrastructure Plan began with an online public meeting in January 2023 and an online survey in February 2023. There was an in person public workshop in March 2023 and a public consultation in September 2023.
- 4.7 There were Neighbourhood Plan reports in all Annual Parish Meetings.
- 4.8 The Housing Needs Assessment, Design Codes and Green Infrastructure Plan were all published online in September 2024 following endorsement by the Parish Council.
- 4.9 Formal Consultation under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) was carried out in April and May 2025. Emails were sent to statutory undertakers, Bedford Borough Council and other interested parties. Full details of the publicity given to the consultation and the responses are set out in the Consultation Statement. The Neighbourhood Plan has been amended in the light of some of these comments.



5. Vision and Aims

- 5.1 The Vision and Aims of this Neighbourhood Plan have been carefully developed and refined by the Parish Council to reflect the priorities of the community and help set the future of the Parish. The Vision is the overall aim of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Aims are more detailed, allowing the development of policies which in turn will be used to comment on and determine planning applications

Vision

We aim to retain and enhance the sustainability of our Parish and protect our thriving rural community and visual landscape such that we:

- ***retain three distinct, peaceful, rural hamlets***
- ***maintain our thriving natural environment and protect biodiversity***
- ***meet the housing, economic and infrastructure needs of its residents.***

Any future development must therefore be sensitive, proportionate and respect the rural character of the hamlets which make it so special.



Neighbourhood Plan Aims	
Environment	
Rural environment	To retain and enhance the rural character of the Parish
Historic Environment	To protect and conserve all structures of historical importance and their environs including below ground archaeology
Natural Environment	Protect and enhance important green spaces, woodlands, rights of way and the agricultural landscape
	Promote biodiversity and protect wildlife
Sustainable Development	
New development	To deliver housing which sustains the current and meets the future needs and demographic of the community
	Development should be of high quality, designed to maximise efficiency, respect the character of the hamlets and the countryside and have a positive impact on the existing biodiversity of the countryside.
	The three hamlets should remain distinct from one another and from surrounding settlements such as Eaton Socon.
	Protect views and street scenes of value to local residents
	Ensure the Parish benefits from sufficient infrastructure, facilities and services
Community	
Facilities	Parish facilities and services will be supported, enhanced and retained
	Important green spaces will be protected, retained and enhanced
Business	Support the local economy, sustain existing businesses and support opportunities for new, suitable small businesses.
Traffic and Transport	
Traffic	Vehicular traffic will be encouraged to drive safely through the Parish.
Transport	Enhance sustainable transport provision and safe provision for active travel
Rights of Way	Provision for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders will be retained and extended



6. Sustainable Development

- 6.1 Reflecting the NPPF and the consideration of locations for new development by Bedford Borough Council through the existing and emerging Local Plan, new development must be sustainable, achieve high design & environmental standards, reflect local preferences in terms of location and especially important, deliver new community infrastructure.
- 6.2 The Parish has a distinctive character and new development should protect, reflect and enhance that character.
- 6.3 It is generally accepted that some new development may be necessary but there is a strong feeling that this should meet the needs of local people - existing and future generations, applying the principles of sustainable development to reflect environmental, economic and social needs. The policies reflect the issues facing the Parish, the Vision and the Aims.
- 6.4 For Staploe Parish, the meaning of sustainable development is set out below.

Sustainable Development Principles

Sustainable development for Staploe Parish means that development should be:

- ***At an appropriate scale and in locations where it would support the community,***
- ***Of a high standard of design, reflecting the rural character of the surroundings,***
- ***Contributing towards community infrastructure,***
- ***Providing superfast broadband connections,***
- ***Ensuring that there is no increase in the risk of flooding,***
- ***Meeting contemporary construction, energy efficiency and water management standards***
- ***Low carbon – with features such as renewable energy generation prioritized where viable***

The following adverse impacts must be avoided:

- ***The loss or inappropriate diversion of public rights of way,***
- ***Avoidable intrusion into open countryside,***
- ***The loss of or damage to wildlife habitats and hedgerows and trees,***
- ***A loss of amenity for existing residential properties,***
- ***Overloading existing utilities and services (water, drainage, sewage and waste).***



7. Rural Character

- 7.1 The defining character of the Parish is the scattered pattern of development set within a rural landscape, with the few small settlements mainly being linear in character, connected by a rural road network. The modest scale of buildings in the Parish reflects its agricultural past with few more modern buildings interspersed.
- 7.2 The top positive attributes of living within Staploe Parish given by residents in response to the questionnaire are the rural location and quiet, peaceful atmosphere, the quantity of open space and views of the countryside. Residents wish to see the green areas preserved wherever possible, particularly near the settlements and it is clear that the rural character is valued enormously by local people.

Strategic Gaps

- 7.3 To ensure that the settlements of Staploe and Duloe and Duloe and Eaton Socon (outside the Parish boundary) remain as separate entities, Strategic Gaps have been identified and are shown as arrows on the map below (Figure 2) and on the Policies Map at Annex 1. It is recognised that coalescence does not occur with one single development. It is not the final infill development that joins two settlements that can be attributed with their coalescence, but rather the creep of settlement expansion that occurs over time. It is therefore very important that both the separation between the two hamlets (Staploe and Duloe) and the gap which provides the distinction between the rural area and the larger built up area of Eaton Socon in the eastern part of the Parish is not 'nibbled away' through piecemeal development. Some necessary work may be carried out by statutory undertakers (such as Anglian Water) but for any essential works requiring planning permission should take into account the need to maintain a gap.
- 7.4 These gaps should be retained as open land and not be developed for proposals which will result in the physical or visual coalescence of the settlements.

Policy RC1: Strategic Gaps

The undeveloped gaps between Staploe and Duloe and Duloe and Eaton Socon are defined as Strategic Gaps on the Policies Map and Figure 2.

Development will only be permitted where it does not result in the physical or visual coalescence of settlements and would not undermine the separate character, appearance and/or identity of settlements.



Staploe to Duloe Gap



Duloe to Eaton Socon Gap



scattered small scale settlements and farmsteads, and historic earthworks and ancient woodlands of high biodiversity value.

- 7.7 **Settlement Pattern:** Buildings are scattered throughout the Parish, with clusters forming the hamlets of Staploe, Duloe and Honeydon as well as a number of smaller settlements: Bassmead, Upper Staploe, Begwary, Bushmead and outlying properties located along the Bushmead Road, on the B645 near Hail Weston, on Moor Road south of Great Staughton, and around Tythe Farm on the road to Honeydon. An unusual characteristic of the settlement pattern is that buildings are often only along one side of the road. This settlement pattern is an important feature which ensures that the views of the countryside beyond the buildings are always present given the lack of standardised housing patterns and layouts.
- 7.8 **Views:** A number of views were identified by residents (as part of the work on the GI Plan) to be important and contributing to the character of the Parish. These Key Views are shown on the map at Figure 3 (and on the Policies Map at Annexe 1) and should not be blocked by development.

	Key View (FP = footpath, BW = Bridleway)
i	View of Danvers Thatch and Bassmead Farm from FP6 and BW30
ii	View of Highwood and Huntingdon Woods
iii	View north along Gypsy Lane
iv	View west from Cadbury Lane
v	Short view along Begwary Lane looking towards thatched cottage
vi	View of Bassmead and Danvers Thatch from BW29
vii	View south-west from Sharps Barns on FP16 towards Staploe and Duloe
viii	Views behind Duloe Common north and east to Hail Weston
ix	View from BW29 looking south-east
x	View north-east towards Duloe from end of Shakers Way
xi	View looking west from Gypsy Lane towards Bushmead Big Wood

These views are shown in more detail including photographs, viewpoints and arcs of view in the document entitled “Staploe Parish Key Views” available with the other Neighbourhood Plan documents.

- 7.9 **Boundary treatments:** Outside the hamlets, hedgerows are a strong feature of the rural landscape. Within the hamlets, the lack of consistent formal boundary treatments to houses contributes to the rural feel of the area. Boundary treatments include low stone walls, open timber fencing and hedgerows.
- 7.10 Some change that occurs in the landscape is outside planning control, but where planning permission is required for development, landscape features should be considered in a systematic way. Proposals for new development should include an appropriate landscape analysis either as a freestanding report or as part of a design and access statement

Policy RC2: Rural Character and Landscape

The rural character of the hamlets of Duloe, Staploe and Honeydon, the smaller settlements of Begwary and Bushmead and their surrounding landscape setting should be respected by new development by ensuring that:

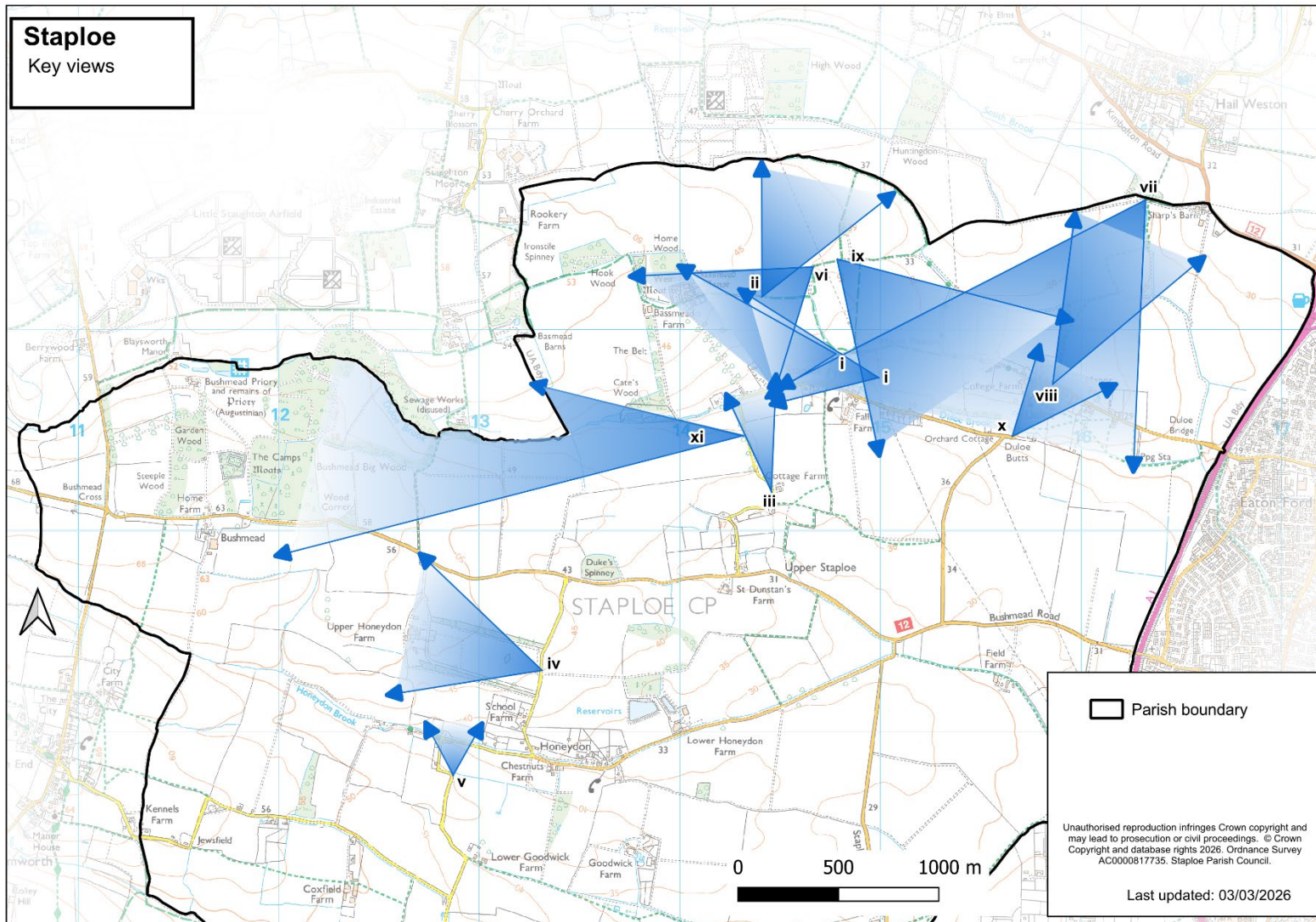
- *the scale and character of new buildings are in keeping with the rural setting,*
- *the variable sense of space between and around existing buildings is retained where appropriate,*
- *new development preserves the settlement pattern of the hamlets including the ribbon development layout where existing buildings are generally on one side of the road.*
- *boundary treatment and landscaping schemes are carefully designed so as to maintain the rural character of the area,*
- *proposals take advantage of the local topography, landscape and water features, trees and plants in the vicinity and on the site.*

Key views of particular importance as defined on the Policies Map (and Figure 3) should be protected and not be obstructed by new development.



Staploe (western end)

Figure 3: Key Views



8. Natural Environment

- 8.1 The natural environment is a precious resource, not just for its intrinsic value, but also for the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings. The top answer to the questionnaire when asked about the natural environment was to preserve the environment as it is, with the second most popular answer is plant trees. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment is one of the principles set out in the NPPF with reference to the important habitats and landscape identified in the Green Infrastructure Plan, the Landscape Character Assessment and the Staploe Parish Design Guidance and Codes.
- 8.2 The Parish Council commissioned Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity to produce a Green Infrastructure Plan (GI Plan) which has been endorsed by the Parish Council in 2024. It is a standalone document but also serves as a background evidence document to the Neighbourhood Plan. The aim of the GI Plan is to identify the key existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets, accessible greenspace and rights of way and to plan new features that will provide a connected network of green infrastructure for the benefit of present and future generations.

Hedgerows, trees and woodland

- 8.3 Much of the landscape of the Parish is characterised by hedgerows, trees and woodland in varying proportions across the area. These natural features provide important visual elements for the wide open landscape, contribute to biodiversity including as wildlife corridors and also form part of the historic landscape. Particularly important features include:
- Trees protected under Tree Preservation Orders and veteran trees,
 - Woodland designated as County Wildlife Sites
 - Hedgerows, many of which are ancient, species-rich hedgerows.
- 8.4 Hedgerows are a very important feature of the Parish, particularly along the roadsides. In England the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 are intended to protect important countryside hedges from destruction or damage. This does not include domestic or residential hedgerows.
- 8.5 All these features will need to be respected when development proposals are designed, wherever possible retaining existing features. The British Standard "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations" (BS 5837) (as updated), details the steps that should be taken to ensure that trees are appropriately and successfully retained when a development takes place. Where there is no alternative to such features being removed, it is expected that replacements using species of local provenance will be required.

Policy NE1: Hedgerows, trees and woodland

Proposals should be designed to retain trees and hedgerows of arboricultural and amenity value in accordance with the Hedgerow Regulations and BS5837 national best practice (as updated). Proposals should be accompanied by a survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees or hedgerows.

Development that damages or results in the loss of trees or hedgerows will not normally be permitted.

Where they are unavoidably lost, replacement trees and hedgerows will be required using species of native provenance.

Biodiversity

- 8.6 Protection of the biodiversity in the Parish, which is valued by local people, is very important, national policy (NPPF paragraphs 187, 192 and 193) states that the natural environment should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. Local Plan Policy 42S states that biodiversity will be protected, conserved and Policy 43 seeks to enhance biodiversity.
- 8.7 Habitats in the Parish include arable field margins, hedgerows, ponds, ditches and improved grassland. There are also occasional blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland dominated by oak and ash such as those at Bushmead Priory. Within the Parish there are several designated sites, three are Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR) and five are County Wildlife Sites (CWS). None of the CWS in Staploe Parish are accessible to the public. They are all privately owned.
- 8.8 The Roadside Nature Reserves are extensive across the Parish, important for their populations of rare Bath Asparagus / Spiked Star-of-Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum pyrenaicum*) and other nationally scarce species. Upper Staploe RNR is composed of two narrow wooded verges along both sides of unclassified roads south of Duke's Spinney. It is a wood edge and species rich grassland site. Honeydon RNR is also a designated County Wildlife Site, Honeydon Road Verge CWS. It is important as it has extensive road verges with a wide range of plant species characteristic of unimproved grassland. Staploe and Honeydon RNR is also recognised for the prevalence of nationally scarce



plants, Sulphur Clover (*Trifolium ochroleucon*), and rare Crested Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum cristatum*). The remaining RNRs in Upper Staploe and Honeydon are recognised for the prevalence of Bath Asparagus. In the UK Bath Asparagus is local (largely in Somerset and Staploe Parish) and rare.

Bath Asparagus in Honeydon

- 8.9 Bushmead Meadows CWS in the northwest of the Parish is an area of Lowland Meadow habitat, a good example of grassland on Boulder Clay or decalcified Boulder Clay. The site is one of the largest and most species rich areas of County Wildlife Site grassland north of Bedford. Hook and Home Woods CWS in the north of the Parish contains areas of ancient woodland. Bushmead Big Wood CWS in the northwest of the Parish also contains areas of ancient woodland, moats and three small areas of unimproved neutral grassland on its eastern side. Bushmead CWS, also in the northwest of the Parish, contains ancient woodland and an area of neutral grassland surrounding Bushmead Priory buildings and containing two fishponds at its northern end.



- 8.10 Species records of note found across the Parish include Brown Hare, Water Vole, Otter and Badger, Skylark, Barn Owl, Marsh Tit, Turtle Dove and birds of prey and plants such as Bee Orchid and Bluebells. There is a notable collection of Bee Orchids at East Cottage, Manor Farm Lane, Honeydon – some in the garden and some in the paddock.
- 8.11 Green infrastructure planning can help to link or buffer existing wildlife sites, providing them with increased protection from harmful activities and making their wildlife populations more sustainable. The Biodiversity Network recognised in the GI Plan and shown on Figure 4 below suggests where this could be most beneficial. All proposals for new development will be required to demonstrate how the design has taken into account its potential impact on local habitats and species. This will include sites and features that are locally important in the Parish, including streams and ponds, trees, hedges, woodland and unimproved grassland. Developers will be required to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to protect wildlife and take every available opportunity to enhance biodiversity and important habitats.
- 8.12 **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** is a concept proposed in the Governments 25 Year Environment Plan and mandated as a condition of planning permission in the 2021 Environment Act. Biodiversity Net Gain requires a 10% increase in biodiversity after development, compared to the level of biodiversity prior to the development taking place in locations such as this where all new development will be close to the countryside, it is really important that this principle is adopted to mitigate the impact of losing biodiversity value of undeveloped land to development. Not all new development is required to provide this uplift, exceptions include householder extensions.
- 8.13 In order to objectively assess net ecological impacts and therefore achieve net gains in biodiversity, as required by the NPPF, it is vital that a fair robust mechanism for measuring these impacts is applied. To ensure they are consistently quantified, when required, applications must be accompanied by a Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculation using the Natural England Biodiversity Metric. The application of this metric (which may be periodically updated) will be required for all development with negative impacts on biodiversity.
- 8.14 For any windfall developments where development falls within 10m of a watercourse, a watercourse metric should be applied to the assessment.
- 8.15 Examples of how enhancements could be achieved include:
- Planting native trees and species rich hedgerows of local provenance
 - Creation of orchards, wildflower grasslands and nature reserves
 - Connecting existing habitats and enhancing migratory routes with additional planting (including green roofs, walls and hedgerows)
 - Creation of ponds
 - Provision of integrated roosting opportunities for bats and birds
 - River or stream restoration following guidance and advice from specialists, who can share best management practices.

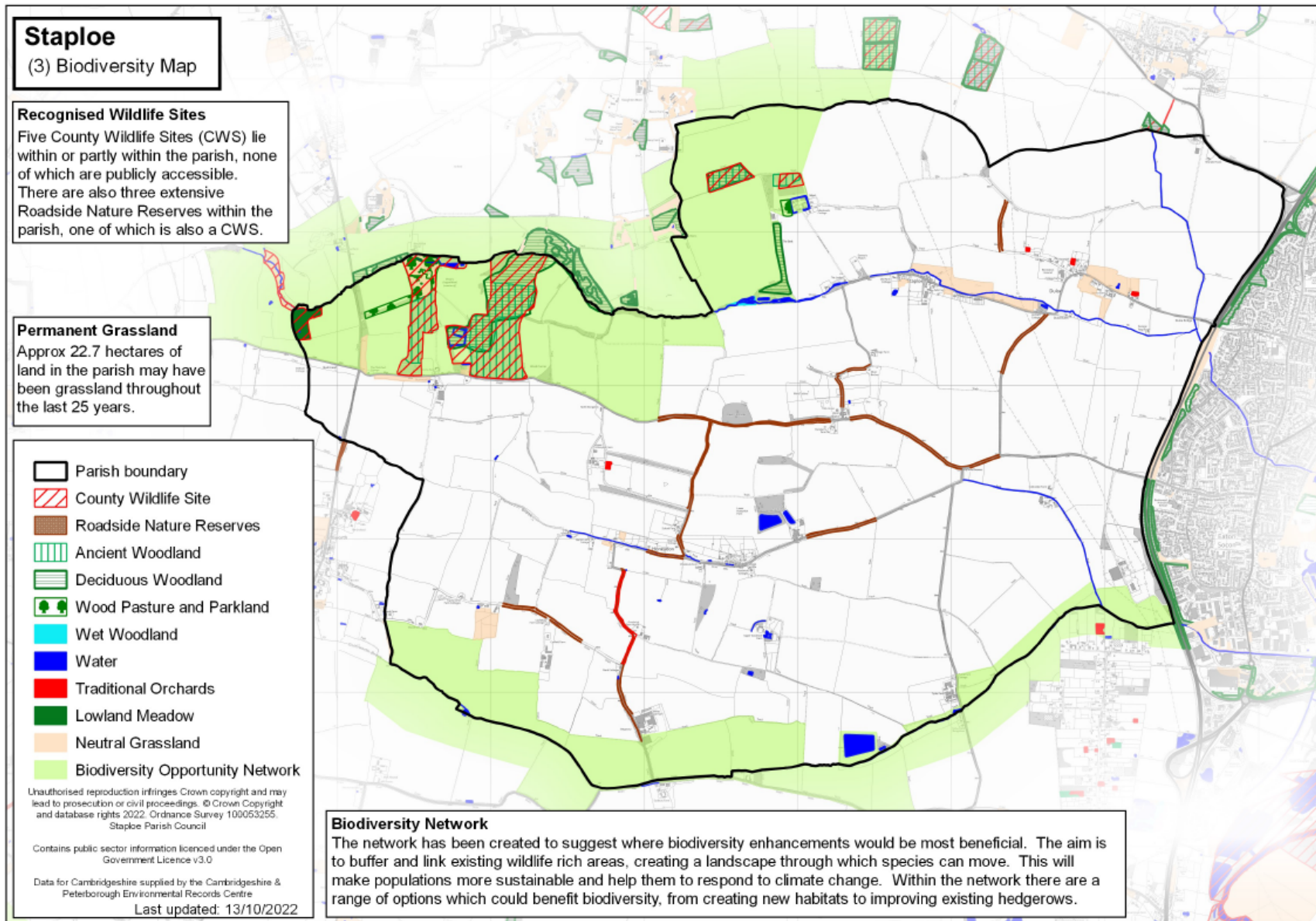


Figure 4: Biodiversity Network in Staploe Parish

- 8.16 Where Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDS) are required to serve new developments, every opportunity to link them into habitats should be taken.
- 8.17 Implementation of biodiversity net gain should in the first instance be made on site. If on-site enhancement isn't possible, preference will be given to contributions within the Parish. This can be achieved by contributing either financially or through direct works towards aspirations set out in the Staploe Green Infrastructure Plan such as tree planting and hedgerow planting or enhancing wildlife at specific locations in the Parish.
- 8.18 New buildings and their immediate surroundings should be enhanced for biodiversity as part of the design and landscaping scheme (if applicable). Species-related measures include hedgehog friendly boundaries. If a site is near water, then gentle, varied margins and hibernation sites for Great Crested Newts should be included. Bee bricks and swift bricks (or similar) should be added in suitable locations. Blackthorn and hawthorn planting should be included to support the Small Eggar Moth (present in the Parish) and Brown Hairstreak. Planted wildlife margins should also feature. They should remain unmown until mid-August to enable the rare wild flower *Ornithogalum pyrenaicum* to seed and grow.
- 8.19 Wherever possible, locally sourced plants and trees should be used. For example, trees should be sourced from a Woodland Trust-approved regional supplier to ensure that they are sourced and grown within the UK and traceable from seed collection through to planting.

Policy NE2: Biodiversity

New development will be required to protect and enhance existing natural features of sites and where appropriate provide at least 10% net gain in biodiversity. Where this is not possible on-site, gains should be preferably focused within the Parish.

Proposals to enhance the Biodiversity Network as shown on Figure 4, will be encouraged, including linking sites important for biodiversity through wildlife corridors.

Provision of appropriate species-related measures will be required around new buildings including, for example, bat and owl boxes.

Appropriate native species should be incorporated into landscaping schemes, preferably locally sourced where possible.

Opportunities should also be taken by developers and landowners to link sustainable drainage solutions in new development to complement nature conservation objectives.

The roadside nature reserves and county wildlife sites should be protected.



Goodwick Drive, Honeydon

9. Historic Environment

- 9.1 Occupation of this area began during the Bronze Age, as is indicated by the cropmarks of ploughed out barrows in some of the tributary valleys. By the late Iron Age and Roman period, the landscape was extensively settled and would have been comparatively open. The Parish has a great variety of buildings in style, age and building materials.
- 9.2 It is essential that the location and design of new development has regard to the historic character of the local area. National guidance regarding historic assets contained in paragraphs 202, 203 and 207 to 217 of the NPPF requires that great weight is attached to the assets conservation and that clear and convincing exceptional justification would be needed to justify any loss or harm to the asset. Local Plan Policy 41S also protects listed buildings and scheduled monuments from harmful development.
- 9.3 Staploe Parish has a total of 16 listed buildings and structures including Basmead Manor which is Grade II* listed and Bushmead Priory which is Grade I listed.
- Listed buildings:
 - Duloe: The Anchor, Thatched Cottage, Dovecote at 49, Duloe, Maye Cottage, 53, Woodhouse Lane
 - Staploe: Walnut Tree Cottage 35, Staploe, Old Farm Cottage, Danvers Thatch, Bassmead Manor,.
 - Honeydon: Chestnuts Farmhouse, Dairy Farm Cottage
 - Bushmead: Thatched Cottage, The Grotto, Bushmead Priory House, Bushmead Priory, The Coach House.
 - Eaton Tithe Farmhouse, Staploe Road, Wyboston
 - Three scheduled ancient monuments: Bassmead Manor moated enclosure, The Camps at Bushmead, and Bushmead Priory. Further information is provided about these in the Parish Description Section 2. History and Heritage. 3.13 and 3.14

Non-Designated Local Heritage Assets

- 9.4 Neighbourhood Plans may identify important heritage assets which are not already protected by listing. The buildings and features identified which may not be of sufficient architectural or historic merit to justify listing, but nevertheless, are an important part of the character of the Parish. The policy will help to ensure they are retained.



Book Exchange Phone Box



Policy HE1: Protecting and enhancing non-designated heritage assets

All development proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets set out below will be required to take into account the character, context and setting of the assets. Development should be designed taking account of local styles, materials and detail.

The effect of an application on the significance of an identified local heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect a local heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset concerned.

Identified Non-Designated Heritage Assets are:

- ***Victorian post box in Staploe (8585 on Staploe historic map – see Green Infrastructure Plan)***
- ***Post box in Duloe***
- ***Lion head water pump, Fishers Lane, Staploe at entrance to FP30 by bridge (5211 on historic map in GI Plan)***
- ***Lion head water standpipe, Woodhouse Lane, Duloe (8586)***
- ***Old red phone box in Staploe (book exchange)***
- ***Dovecote Manor Farm, Duloe***

Other assets may also be considered local heritage assets upon review.

Archaeology

- 9.5 The Parish has a rich archaeological heritage with the earliest evidence of human activity in the area dating back around 5,000 years. There are records of medieval settlements at Upper Staploe, Honeydon and Duloe and extensive cropmarks, ditches, ridge and furrow and enclosures across the whole of the Parish. There is evidence of two Roman Roads, and a Royal Observer Corps post north of Bushmead Road. The Green Infrastructure Plan includes a map of these records on p12 and a list of the references on p13-15. While some of the archaeological remains in the Parish are protected as Scheduled Monuments, many have no statutory protection.
- 9.6 The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Bedford Borough is a key source of information for the area's historic environment. The HER holds data on all nationally protected monuments, buildings, structures and parks and gardens. It also has records on over 3,000 archaeological sites, most of which are not protected and some of these are non-designated heritage assets. The HER is maintained by Bedford Borough Council and is available for all to consult.



- 9.7 The policy will help to ensure that the designated and non-designated archaeological remains of the Parish are protected and where they are affected by development, a publicly available record is made of all work.
- 9.8 Non-designated archaeological sites are sites of value that have remained undiscovered but come to light during the application process.

Policy HE2: Protecting and Enhancing Understanding of Archaeology

All development proposals that affect archaeological remains or are within areas that have the potential to include archaeological remains should demonstrate that they have considered the impact on archaeology. Where archaeological remains will be unavoidably affected by development, developers will be required to implement mitigation strategies to ensure that evidence of the past is not lost before it is investigated and recorded. Where significant archaeological remains are revealed, mitigation strategies may include preservation in situ. As a minimum, information derived from all archaeological investigations should be made publicly available via the Historic Environment Record.

Development proposals that affect Scheduled Monuments whether directly or by virtue of development within their setting will need to demonstrate that they will not cause substantial harm to the significance of the monument, unless the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated archaeological site, should be taken into account in determining any planning application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect a non-designated archaeological site, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the site concerned.

10. Sustainable Development

- 10.1 Sustainable development means ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (Brundtland Report 1987). Paragraph 8 of the NPPF expands on what this means in practice and the Neighbourhood Plan must support sustainable development. For Staploe Parish, this means small scale development over time which integrates well into the Parish without damaging the natural and historic environment. The Parish has only had a very small number of new dwellings built since 1990 and almost all of these have been barn conversions. Bedford Borough Council has determined that there is no housing requirement for the Parish for the timescale of the Neighbourhood Plan. A number of sites were put forward in the call for sites for Bedford Borough Council’s Local Plan 2040 including a large



development of approximately 11,000 homes known as Dennybrook proposed between Wyboston, Honeydon and Colmworth and a further site known as Eaton Bank proposing 4000 homes just west of the A1 near Duloe. Dennybrook was proposed in the first Local Plan 2040 consultation as one of the sites which might be considered. However, it did not make it into the final draft of the Local Plan 2040. Progress of the Local Plan has been paused for a number of reasons including the difficulty in delivering large sites and further information is available here: [Local Plan 2040 Examination | Bedford Borough Council](#).

- 10.2 It is acknowledged that the NPPF promotes sustainable development and encourages consolidation of smaller rural settlements where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. In terms of the Local Plan, there are no small settlements, villages or service centres within the Parish and places with a scattered development form, comprising no reasonably substantial definable core are considered to form part of the countryside. Given this, Policy 7S of the Local Plan 2030 applies which limits new development to the reuse of rural buildings, replacement and extensions to dwellings, local needs affordable housing and accommodation for rural workers. Some development, for example community buildings, may also be acceptable under this policy.
- 10.3 Given that there are no amenities at all in the Parish and residents have to rely on cars to get them to all services, facilities and work means that new housing development in this countryside location would represent unsustainable development.
- 10.4 Nevertheless, as referred to in the Local Plan, small scale opportunities for new homes may arise from converting existing buildings, or building on redeveloped sites and subject to appropriate design, these will be supported in the Parish.
- 10.5 Some residents made it clear that they would be prepared to accept a small quantity of housing over the Neighbourhood Plan period. 32% of respondents felt there was a need for new housing, but 36% said not. Comments included '*Only if small scale and carefully planned/No housing estates/Only if infrastructure services can cope and only if there is a need*'. The majority of respondents wanted fewer than 20 houses in total and over 50% wanted to see both new family homes and bungalows. Notwithstanding this, no allocations are to be made for new development in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Affordable Housing and Housing mix

- 10.6 The Parish commissioned a Housing Needs Survey as a background document to the Neighbourhood Plan in March 2021. Some households had housing needs for several parts of their household e.g. for a new house for the whole family soon but for a house for a home leaver in 5-10 years. Therefore, we conducted a follow up with those who had expressed a need to capture those with several needs. There were 6 households who expressed a housing need and 5 who expressed an interest. Of these 11 households three had multiple needs. This means that 15 new homes were needed or of interest in total. 9 were needed, 6 may have been of interest. Many of these people have left the Parish or resolved their housing need at the time of writing this plan in January 2025 but the information is presented as a snapshot of the needs at the time. Of those who had a housing need / interest: 12 wanted to own the new property, 4 rent to buy, 3 private rent and 1 housing association rental. 4 wanted a 1-bedroom home, 6 a 2-bedroom home, 3 a 3-bed, 4 a 4-bed and 1 a home with more than 4 bedrooms. Most (21) wanted to live on a site with just one



new home or up to 5 new homes. 6 people would consider living on a site with more than 5 homes. The majority of the respondents were home leavers looking to buy for the first time but a smaller proportion found that their current home was too large or too small or they had family members who wanted to move closer to them.

- 10.7 At the time of the 2011 Census the NA was home to 331 residents, formed into 137 households and occupying 146 dwellings. The 2021 Census indicates that there was no population growth since 2011, recording a total of 331 residents and 146 households. The number of households increased over the 10-year period however and so the average household size fell from 2.42 to 2.27. Completions data provided by Bedford Borough Council shows that there have been 6 net completions in the Parish since 2011, none of which were affordable housing. This increase does align with the fact that the population has not increased, as household size has fallen slightly meaning there are the same number of residents, spread amongst more properties. When adding the 6 net completions to the 2011 Census data, it is estimated that there are currently 152 dwellings in the Parish.
- 10.8 The majority of the dwellings in the Parish are detached (47.9%) and semi-detached (39.7%). As a result, terraced properties and flats make up a much smaller proportion, accounting for 7.5% and 3.4%, respectively. The largest proportion of properties in the Parish have 4+ bedrooms (37.7%), followed by 3-bedroom properties (37.0%). 2-bedroom and 1-bedroom dwellings account for much smaller proportions, at 19.2% and 6.2% respectively. House prices over the last 10-year period have increased substantially and it appears that local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of a higher than average income, is likely to remain out of reach to most. The median house price would require an annual income 124.0% higher than the current average. Renting is also only available to those on a large salary and there are no affordable rented properties available in the Parish.
- 10.9 Therefore, the lack of smaller properties (and therefore cheaper to buy) means that any new housing development should include an element of smaller homes (one and two-bedroom homes).

Policy SD1: New Housing Development

On new developments of 3 or more dwellings, the size of dwelling should be mixed, with a larger proportion of smaller, more affordable homes to balance the predominance of large, expensive homes in the Parish.



High Quality Design

- 10.10 The NPPF and the proposals for planning reform recognise that well-designed buildings and places improve the quality of life and that it is a core planning principle to secure good design. Good design is not just about appearance, but also functionality and the relationship to surroundings and it is not about copying past styles or preventing innovative modern design. The aim is to create site-specific creative design, which is contextual by referencing form and materials to surroundings.
- 10.11 In keeping with the questionnaire respondents' views about the rural feel of the Parish, the Neighbourhood Plan requires all developments, including alterations to existing buildings, to be sympathetic to the character and scale of surrounding buildings and landscape.
- 10.12 The Parish has a wide variety of density, building date and materials, testifying to its historic past. It is important that this variety is carried through in new development whilst respecting the immediate surroundings. A Design Guidance and Codes document for the Parish has been prepared and is a separate technical background document to the Neighbourhood Plan. This document sets out design guidance and codes based on the existing features of Staploe Parish. The document is intended to sit alongside the Neighbourhood Plan to provide guidance for applicants preparing proposals in the Parish and as a guide for Staploe Parish Council and Bedford Borough Council when considering planning applications. It includes four Design Codes with several elements making up each one, as summarised below.

Maintaining a rural, informal character

10.13 This set of codes includes:

- ensuring the settlement pattern retains the dispersed characteristics of the hamlet,
- stating that the building line and setbacks of new buildings retains informality and creates variety
- boundary treatments are appropriate for the rural setting
- new development reflects local vernacular architecture, materials and features, including keeping new dwellings modest in scale, no more than 2.5 storeys high.

Ensuring conversions, extensions and infill respects the surrounding countryside

10.14 This set of codes seeks to ensure that:

- Infill development is responsive to the surrounding context and doesn't detract from the existing rhythm and pattern of development
- Parking is integrated on the plot, preferably to the side of new buildings
- Extensions should be appropriate to the scale massing and layout of the original building
- Barn conversions should retain original structures and features
- New commercial buildings should not create abrupt changes in the landscape

Enhancing the surrounding landscape and biodiversity

10.15 This set of codes is intended to protect the existing landscape features and enhance biodiversity, whilst retaining and enhancing settlement edges and gateways, views and connectivity.

Sustainable Development

10.16 New development needs to:

- Incorporate sustainable building methods such as passive eco-design and energy efficiency



- Use Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and manage water efficiently
- Reduce lighting glare at night

10.17 Development proposals should include a Design and Access Statement, or other written statement related to the scale and complexity of the scheme, which shows that the development has been designed to specifically relate to its setting. This is essential to ensure that the special character of the Parish is protected and its local distinctiveness is enhanced and reinforced.

Staploe (eastern end)





Policy SD2: High Quality Design

Proposals for good quality development (including conversions and extensions to existing buildings) will be supported, where they are in accordance with the guidelines and design principles set out in the Staploe Parish Design Guidance and Codes and other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

All new development must (where relevant to the proposal):

- ***Avoid coalescence of the three distinct hamlets;***
- ***Development should maintain the ribbon pattern of development with housing only on one side of the road;***
- ***Relate to the existing development pattern in terms of positioning of the building; enclosure and definition of streets/spaces;***
- ***Be of an appropriate scale and density in relation to its setting;***
- ***Use materials appropriate to the development's context;***
- ***Be of a design with a locally inspired or distinctive character;***
- ***New dwellings should not be more than 2.5 storeys in height; and***
- ***Integrate car parking within landscaping so that it does not dominate the street and use permeable materials.***

Sustainable Buildings and construction

10.18 The reality is that the homes built today will still be in use in 2050. Therefore, to achieve the UK carbon reduction targets cost effectively, new housing built today must be built to zero carbon standards as soon as possible. However, even if all new housing were to be carbon neutral from tomorrow, this would still not be enough to achieve the carbon emission reductions, as around 70% of buildings that will be in use in the 2050s already exist. If carbon reduction targets are to be met, and if fuel poverty is to be tackled, it is essential that the energy efficiency of existing buildings, including historic and listed buildings is also improved.

10.19 Local people, through the questionnaire, when asked “how can the Parish reduce the impact of climate change?”, said that green energy use, planting trees and hedgerows and energy efficient homes were important.

10.20 The Parish already has the access track for a 50MW solar farm at Top End Farm and Bassmead – the solar farm being just beyond the boundary of our Parish. Another 50MW solar farm has been approved for Bassmead and High Wood. There is another proposal for a 50MW solar farm at Cobholden and a Battery Energy Storage Facility has been approved at Cobholden. In addition, a 400MW solar farm has been proposed at East Park to the north of our Parish (to which the Parish Council has objected).



- 10.21 There are two main elements in achieving net zero carbon buildings: achieving net zero ‘whole life’ carbon emissions, which takes into account the building, operation and disposal of the building; and achieving net zero operational carbon – where a building uses no fossil fuels; all energy use has been minimised; it meets local energy use targets and all energy use is generated on- and/or off-site using renewables. Further information and definitions are available from several sources including the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) and the UK Green Building Council.
- 10.22 A “whole building” approach means looking at the entire building as an interconnected system when designing retrofit features rather than treating measures in isolation. For example, ensuring that insulation does not affect ventilation and cause damp, and using solutions that suit the building’s specific characteristics and materials. Historic England has produced an advice note (No 18) to assist in adapting historic buildings for energy and carbon [efficiency](#).
- 10.23 More detailed information and design solutions are set out in Design Codes SD1 and SD2. Relevant information should be submitted, where required in relation to the scale and type of development being proposed, in an Energy Statement and/or in a Design and Access Statement accompanying planning applications.

Policy SD3: Provision of energy efficient buildings

The design and standard of any new building should aim to meet a high level of sustainable design and construction and be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting net zero operational carbon emissions This includes the following measures (where relevant to the proposed development, feasible, and viable):

- ***Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain,***
- ***The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials,***
- ***Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing.***
- ***Incorporation of on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels.***

Alterations to existing buildings should be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with sustainable design and construction standards.

The retrofit of features to existing buildings to reduce energy demand and generate renewable energy is encouraged, particularly where the proposals adopt a “whole building” approach. Historic characteristics of heritage buildings should be safeguarded.



Water issues and infrastructure

- 10.24 Climate change is resulting in more extreme weather events in the UK with heavier rainfall and increasing risk of flash flooding. Changing rainfall patterns will also affect water supplies. Too much rainfall in some areas and not enough in others will contribute to both flood and drought conditions. Flooding occurs adjacent to rivers and other watercourses, but it can also occur elsewhere, such as groundwater flooding, or where buildings or other structures affect the natural drainage of the land, known as surface water flooding. The Parish is classed as being of low risk or very low risk of surface water flooding over a 20 year period [Where do you want to check? Check your long term flood risk – GOV.UK](#).
- 10.25 The Parish does occasionally experience fluvial flooding onto the roads from the brooks within Staploe and Honeydon that separate the road and dwellings. This, however, does not typically affect the properties currently. There are occurrences of Zone 2 and 3 flood zones within the Parish. Zone 3 is primarily contained to the area surrounding the brooks adjacent to local roads. Zone 2 flooding spreads a bit further, notably to the northeast of Duloe and to the east of Lower Honeydon farm. These parts of the Parish are at medium risk of flooding over a 20-year period [Where do you want to check? Check your long term flood risk – GOV.UK](#) and should undertake a flood risk assessment and use appropriate mitigation measures as advised by Bedford Borough Council who are the flood risk authority.
- 10.26 Proposals for development should demonstrate that surface water will be managed effectively on site and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere, including sewer flooding. Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDS) should be provided for development in accordance with Local Plan Policy 93. SUDS are designed to both manage the flood and pollution risks resulting from urban runoff and to contribute wherever possible to environmental enhancement and place making by employing both attenuation and infiltration. Bedford Borough Council's requirements and advice are set out in the following documents: [Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2022](#) and [Sustainable Drainage SPD](#).
- 10.27 Pre application engagement with Anglian Water on water supply and wastewater and network infrastructure requirements is required. The Neighbourhood Area is served by small water recycling centres (referred to as Descriptive Works). Locations with descriptive works are unsustainable for any form of growth that requires a connection to Anglian Water's network, unless proposals are supported by flow data for a one-year period to demonstrate there is headroom available to accommodate the proposed growth. Alternatively, development may be served by alternative/ private wastewater treatment facilities.
- 10.28 Bedford Borough is in an area of 'water stress'. This means it has poor overall water quality and quantity of water resources. A small local contribution can be made by requiring that all new homes are provided with water butts for harvesting and storage of water for garden use and other measures designed to reduce water consumption.



Policy SD4: Water Management and Efficiency

Proposals must incorporate a sustainable and integrated approach to the management of flood risk, surface water (including run off) and foul drainage.

All development involving the loss of permeable surfaces, loss of trees, loss of soft landscaping or loss of any other feature that reduces flood risk is required to use appropriate mitigation measures to prevent an increase in flood risk within the site or elsewhere. This should be proportionate to the scale of the proposal, with small interventions (such as planting or use of impermeable surfaces) acceptable for minor developments in areas of low flood risk.

New developments must incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to reduce the runoff of surface water in line with the requirements of Bedford Borough Council.

All developments must be designed taking into account best practice in water efficiency, such as water harvesting and storage features.

Any development that occurs within the medium flood risk areas in the Parish should have additional flood mitigation measures from the outset of the design process.

11. Community

Community Facilities

- 11.1 Staploe Parish has no facilities and services apart from the playing field at Duloe which is managed by the Parish Council.
- 11.2 Duloe Village Hall was closed in 2018 and then subsequently demolished in February 2021 due to its structural issues and asbestos. Parish Council meetings are held outside the Parish at Wyboston Village Hall. New facilities will be encouraged and supported, particularly a village hall if funding and volunteers are available.

Policy C1: Community facilities

The provision of new community facilities will be encouraged and supported.

The provision of a new village hall will be supported.

The improvement of existing facilities such as the playing field, play area and community cabins will be supported.



Noel Bates Memorial Playing Field, Duloe

Local Green Spaces

11.3 Consultation showed that people place a high value on the relationship between the Parish, the countryside and on the open spaces that help to define the landscape and character of the area. In the NPPF it is stated that in Neighbourhood Plans, local communities can identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection and to rule out new development, other than in “very special circumstances”. The proposed designations are in accordance with the requirement in Paragraph 107 of the NPPF:

- The green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- The area is 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;
- The area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.



11.4 Designation of Local Green Spaces (LGS) give a very high level of protection to such open spaces. Para 108 of the NPPF says that policies and decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts set out in chapter 13 of the Framework. An audit has been carried out of the green spaces identified in the GI Plan and they were assessed to determine which of them fulfil the Local Green Space Criteria. Nine sites were identified as fulfilling the NPPF criteria. However, the Parish Council decided that only the four sites where the landowners agreed should be designated through the Neighbourhood Plan. The assessment is included within the GI Plan available as a background document to the Neighbourhood Plan and the sites are shown in Figure 5 and on the Policies Map at Annex 1.

Policy C2: Local Green Spaces

The following areas shown on the Policies Map (Figure 5 and Annex 1) are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- ***Noel Bates Memorial Playing Field, Woodhouse Lane, Duloe (12 on the map)***
- ***The Orchard opposite Falling Water House, Staploe (14 on the map)***
- ***Horse Field north of eastern Staploe Lane (15 on the map)***
- ***Open space, west of Falls Farm, Staploe (16 on the map)***

Proposed development within the Local Green Spaces will be treated consistently with those for the Green Belt. Inappropriate development will be resisted to protect their special character and contribution to the Parish.

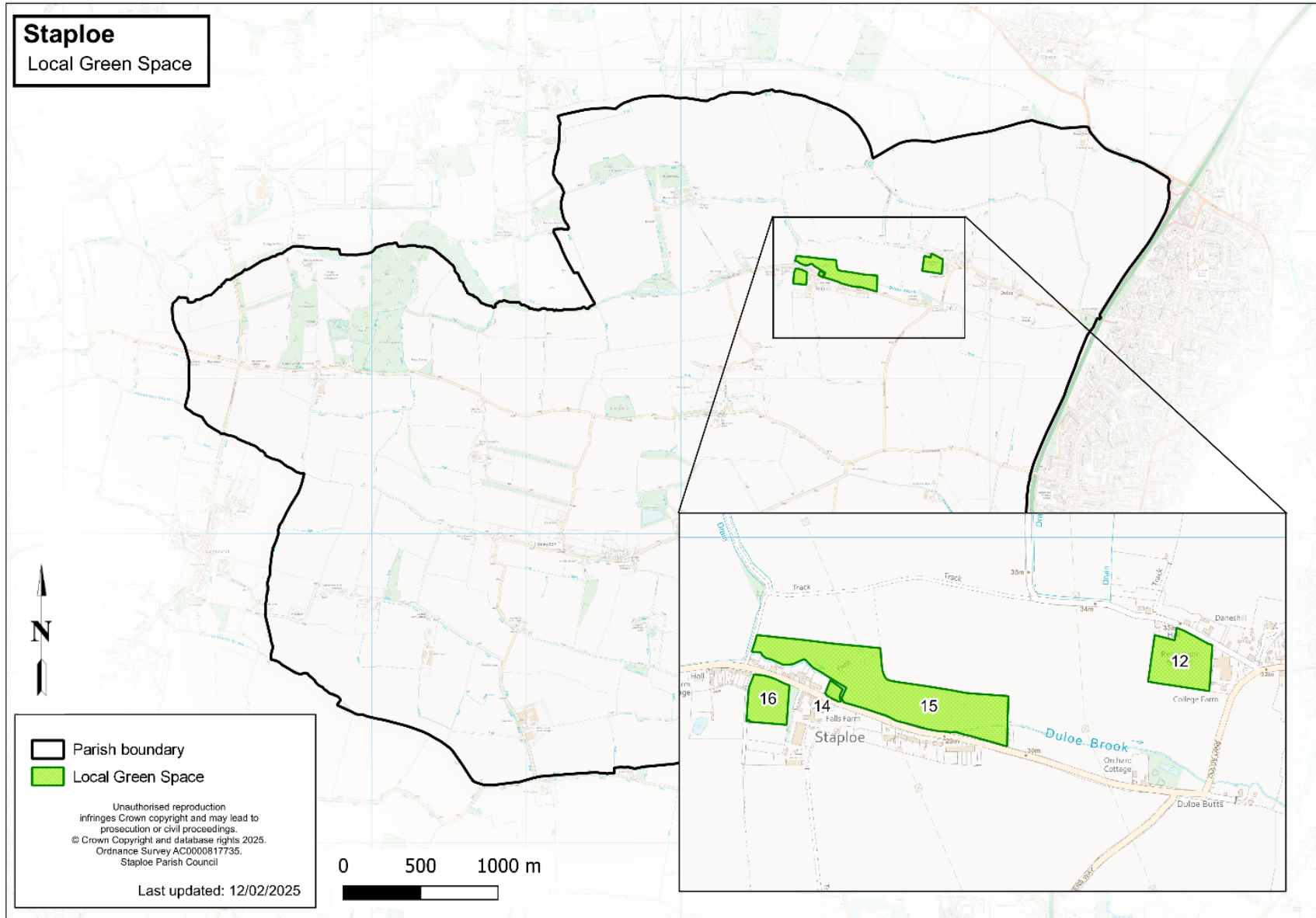


Figure 5: Local Green Spaces

Sites assessed and proposed for LGS Designation within the Staploe Neighbourhood Plan	
Map number	Site name
12	Playing field
14	Orchard – opposite Falling Water House, Staploe
15	Horse field – north of eastern Staploe Lane
16	Open space – west of Falls Farm

Local Businesses & Agriculture

- 11.5 Staploe Parish has very limited employment opportunities within the Parish with the vast majority of working people working elsewhere. Local businesses include:
- Bassmead Manor Barns (wedding venue) at Bassmead, Upper Staploe
 - Elite GSS (non mechanical plant & equipment) at Whitehouse Farm, Honeydon
 - a number of smaller businesses operating from industrial units in Duloe, Tythe Farm (Wyboston) and Staploe.
- 11.6 Residents through the questionnaire showed support for the maintenance and development of rural businesses but the second most popular answer was for no new businesses.
- 11.7 The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate employment sites, but it supports the viability of local businesses and their expansion, where this is proportionate and appropriate in the individual circumstances. The diversification of agriculture and agricultural buildings is supported in principle. However, development must be of a scale and intensity appropriate to its context, must not impact detrimentally on residential amenity or the rural road network, particularly not increase HGV traffic given the narrow roads and sharp bends. Any built development must have an acceptable visual impact on the character and scale of the hamlets and their rural hinterland.
- 11.8 Home working is also seen as a means of encouraging business and creating a sustainable community with less commuting and a more sustainable lifestyle, saving individuals the cost of travel and increasing their leisure time.
- 11.9 The provision of high-speed broadband is particularly important in rural areas and in supporting the viability and sustainability of rural enterprise and home-working. Residents saw this as the priority when asked about infrastructure



College Farm, Duloe

Policy C3: Supporting Local Employment and Agriculture

Proposals for the development of new small businesses and for the expansion or diversification of existing businesses, including farm-based operations, will be encouraged, providing that:

- it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impact from increased traffic, lighting, noise or other emissions or activities arising from the proposed development;***
- it will not significantly increase the number of large or long HGVs on the rural road network in the Parish;***
- new buildings would have an acceptable impact on the character of the Parish, its rural hinterland and landscape; and***
- where relevant, opportunities are taken to secure the re-use of vacant or redundant historic buildings as part of the development. and***
- the proposals make adequate provision for car parking and bicycle spaces for employees and visitors.***

Applications for extensions or part change of use of dwellings to enable flexible or home working within the development boundary will be supported, subject to there being appropriate parking and that the residential amenity of neighbouring properties is maintained.

In each instance, the provision of effective high speed broadband services will be encouraged and appropriate measures should be incorporated into the design of workplaces.



12. Transport and Public Rights of Way

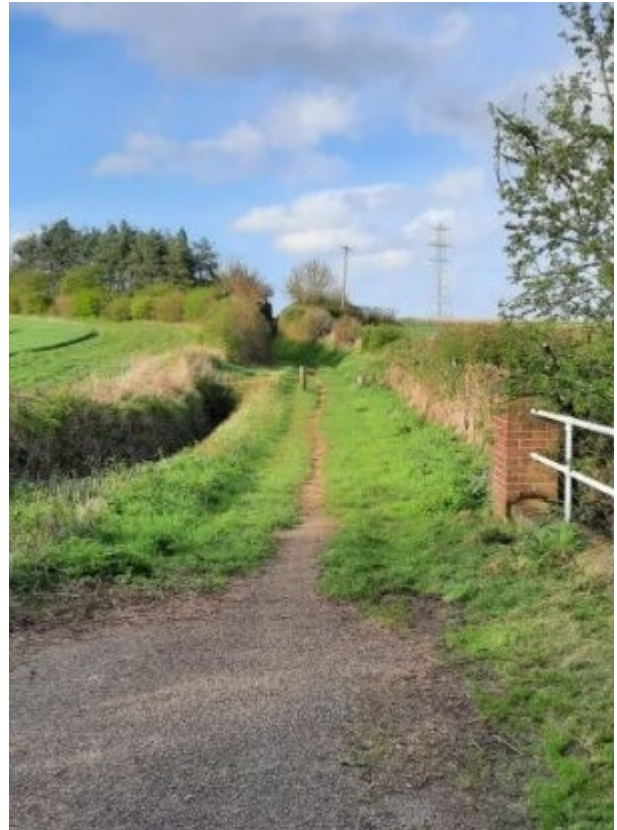
- 12.1 In terms of traffic, residents through the questionnaire had concerns over speeding and wish to see improved road maintenance and traffic calming in the settlements. The Parish Council acknowledges that measures to slow traffic and motorists' speed and behaviour are not within the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan unless associated with new development but will consider how these issues can be addressed, including the use of money received through the Community Infrastructure Levy. There is particular concern from residents and the Parish Council that the corner at Dairy Fram Cottage is a particular safety issue and improvements/measures to reduce the issue are encouraged.
- 12.2 There is no public transport other than the school buses. Many children in the Parish do not use the school buses because they do not serve their preferred schools. Car use is important in the Parish because there are no facilities at all so cars are the only way to access healthcare, most education and almost all employment.
- 12.3 Electric vehicles are a broadly sustainable mode of travel that is increasing market penetration and current building regulations require that every new dwelling is supplied with electric car charging point.

Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders

- 12.4 A partnership approach between the Parish Council, Bedford Borough Council and developers will be required to improve highway safety and minimise conflicts between road traffic, cyclists and pedestrians. It is intended to support new ways of managing the traffic throughout the Parish by promoting pedestrian and cyclist safety and resident well-being through lower traffic speeds and traffic volumes and, where possible, new off-road routes.

Public Rights of Way

- 12.5 The Parish is crossed with PRow including footpaths and bridleways. Many of these follow the brooks that run east–west through the Parish and others cut through open fields. As the Parish is formed of dispersed hamlets, these networks are critical to connect the settlements without an overreliance on roads and streets which would negatively impact the rural setting through increased traffic, pollution and urbanized surfacing.
- 12.6 Additionally, the National Cycle Network passes through a section of the Parish in the southeast, connecting Staploe Parish with Bedford in the south and Huntingdon in the north.



Fishers Lane Bridleway 30, Staploe

- 12.7 Improvements to the network will always be encouraged, in particular provision of new footpath links and upgrades and maintenance of surfaces and gates/stiles. The GI Plan shows the bridleway and footpath network and sets out the aspirations for improving and extending the network, a summary of which is shown in the Aspirations section of this Plan below.

Policy T1: Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders

New development should include measures that that keep traffic speeds low and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and horse riders.

Where they require planning permission, new roads, junctions, pavements and traffic management measures should be designed for the safety and convenience of pedestrians and cyclists and be sympathetic to the rural character of the Parish and the significance of local heritage features.

The rights of way network will be retained and improved and new links both within the Parish, to neighbouring Parishes and to the wider countryside will be encouraged.



13. Aspirations, Implementation and Monitoring

13.1 The Parish Council has the following aspirations (in no particular order) –

- A new village hall in Duloe
- Improvements to the Community Cabins
- Green Infrastructure aspirations – see the Green Infrastructure Plan
- An upgraded play area in Duloe with more play equipment
- An improved surface on the football pitch in Duloe
- Improved rights of way connecting the hamlets to each other and to neighbouring Parishes and providing safe off-road routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders
- Speed reduction measures
- To connect properties in Honeydon and Begwary to mains drainage
- New or improved street furniture eg. Grit bins, noticeboards, signs, street lights, road safety measures where needed

13.2 Community Infrastructure Levy / Section 106 funds and potential funds from e.g. Solar farms will be prioritized to meet these aspirations.

Implementation & Working in partnership

13.3 Staploe Parish Council is committed to Localism and locally informed influence over planning decisions and it will be the key organisation in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will build upon its excellent track record in engaging in planning decisions (reactively through consultation and proactively through promoting the policies of this plan) and by delivering related projects for the local community.

13.4 The Plan will be used by the Parish Council to:

- guide comments on planning applications,
- negotiate with landowners and developers to achieve the best possible outcomes from new development,
- direct financial resources to the Parish in a structured way,
- bring together groups or working parties to improve the Parish environment,
- lobby local authorities to support the Parishioners' wishes and aspirations.

13.5 However, it is recognised that partnership working is needed for the potential of the plan to be realised. Partnership and joint working will be key elements in the successful implementation of the plan. The main organisations and the roles that they can play are summarised below.

- **Bedford Borough Council** - Planning Policy, Development Control, Housing Management and Improvement, Economic Development, Open Spaces, Recreation and Community Facilities and unitary authority functions, including: Drainage, Highways and Transport, Education, Landscape, Minerals and Waste and Social Services.
- **Adjoining Parish Councils** – Assessing impact of large scale planning applications and discussing local facilities.



- **Environment Agency** - The planning, design and delivery of development, taking account of: Flood risk management; Water quality and water resources, Waste management, Land contamination and soil and other regulation.
- **Site owners and developers** will need to liaise with the Parish Council as well as the other agencies involved in development.

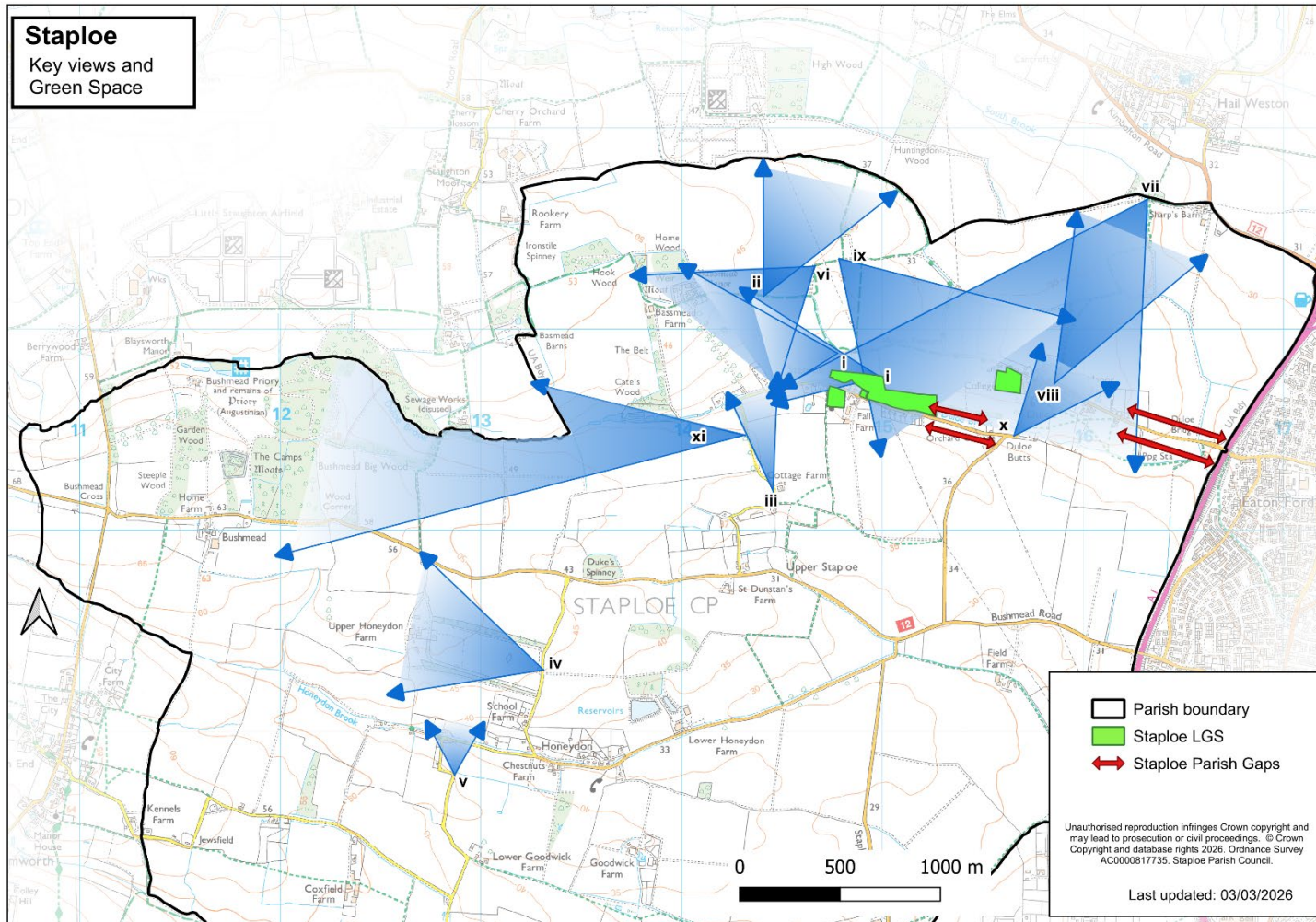
Funding and Implementation Mechanisms

- 13.6 Financial contributions will be sought from developers through Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which provides a legal framework to raise funds to provide the infrastructure needed to cope with new developments.
- 13.7 The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations of the 2011 Localism Act enable areas with a Neighbourhood Plan in place to receive at least 25% of the CIL raised in their area to direct to their own local infrastructure priorities. These contributions will be targeted on the priority need to deliver new community infrastructure.
- 13.8 In addition, the Parish Council will seek to influence annual and other budget decisions by Bedford Borough Council on housing, open space and recreation, economic development, community facilities and transport, through the Local Transport Plan.
- 13.9 The Parish Council will also work with the appropriate agencies and organisations to develop funding bids to help to achieve Neighbourhood Plan policies and objectives. This might include: The Lottery; UK Government programmes; land fill tax credits, and LEP funding.

Monitoring and Review

- 13.10 It is important to check that progress is made towards meeting the objectives and policies of the Plan. The Parish Council will report on the implementation of the Plan every 5 years and consider
 - if progress is being made to achieve the vision and the objectives of the Plan
 - if progress is being made towards the implementation of the policies in the Plan
 - if financial contributions available to the community arising from development is being targeted towards the identified plans and projects
 - if the Plan remains based on the most up to date information
 - if the Plan is being taken into account by Bedford Borough Council when determining planning applications
- 13.11 However, it may prove necessary to formally review the Plan prior to 2035, for example following a future review of the Local Plan or changes in national policy. The Parish Council will conclude whether a review is required. If so, it will commence the review at an appropriate time and secure opinions of residents and stakeholders to update the Plan.

Annex 1: Policies Map



Annex 2: Table of Aims and Policies

Neighbourhood Plan Aims		Policies
Environment		
Rural environment	To retain and enhance the rural character of the Parish	RC1, RC2
Historic Environment	To protect and conserve all structures of historical importance and their environs	HE1, HE2
Natural Environment	Protect and enhance important green spaces, woodlands, rights of way and the agricultural landscape	NE1, NE2,
	Promote biodiversity and protect wildlife	NE1, NE2
Sustainable Development		
New development	To deliver housing which sustains the current and meets the future needs and demographic of the community	SD1
	Development should be of high quality, designed to maximise efficiency, respect the character of the hamlets and the countryside and have a positive impact on the existing biodiversity of the countryside.	RC2, NE2, SD2, SD3, SD4
	The three hamlets should remain distinct from one another and from surrounding settlements such as Eaton Socon.	RC1, SD2
	Protect views and street scenes of value to local residents	RC2, SD2
	Ensure the Parish benefits from sufficient infrastructure, facilities and services	C1
Community		
Facilities	Parish facilities and services will be supported, enhanced and retained	C1
	Important green spaces will be protected, retained and enhanced	C2
Business	Support the local economy, sustain existing businesses and support opportunities for new, suitable small businesses.	C3
Traffic and Transport		
Traffic	Vehicular traffic will be encouraged to drive safely through the Parish.	T1
Transport	Enhance sustainable transport provision and safe provision for active travel	T1
Rights of Way and pavements	Provision for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders will be retained and extended	T1



Annex 3: Glossary

Adoption		The procedure by which a plan becomes formal council responsibility. The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations also call this stage 'made' for the purposes of a Neighbourhood Plan.
AECOM		AECOM is an American multinational infrastructure consulting firm. They provide professional services throughout the project lifecycle, including advisory, planning, design, engineering, and construction management. Their UK office provide technical services to Locality to support neighbourhood planning.
Affordable housing		Housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision
Allocation		A piece of land that has had a particular use earmarked via a Neighbourhood Plan or Local Plan. This might be for housing, employment or another use such as open space.
Amenity		A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the interrelationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.
Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity	BRCC	Community development agency Beds RCC – Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
Biodiversity		The whole variety of life encompassing variations, including plants and animals.
Biodiversity Net Gain	BNG	BNG makes sure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before development. It is mandatory for certain types and sizes of development.
Brownfield		Land that has been previously developed on (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings and residential gardens)
Consultation Statement		A document which details when, where and how the public and stakeholders have been consulted, issues that were raised and how they were addressed.
Countryside		Land not within settlement boundaries
Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL	An amount of money payable to the Council on new housing and other development which is used for infrastructure and community facilities and services
Design Code		A document containing a set of design principles for a specific location or site.
Developer Contributions/Planning		Developer contributions, also known as planning obligations, can be secured via a section 106 legal agreement or planning condition



Obligations/Section 106		attached to a planning permission. They help mitigate any adverse impacts generated by new development on infrastructure and facilities.
Employment Land		Land that is used or is proposed to be used for offices, industry and/or storage and distribution – covered by the B Class in the Use Classes Order
Evidence Base		The information and data gathered by local authorities and other plan makers to inform and support the policy approaches to be set out in a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan
Examination		For neighbourhood planning, an independent assessment carried out by an examiner to determine whether your plan meets the Basic Conditions
Flood risk		The combination of probability of a particular flood event and its corresponding hazard and is used to refer to the scale of flood effect, combining hazard and probability, upon a particular site. Flood Zones 1-3b describes land with a specific probability of flooding with 1 being the least affected. Development may be restricted by Flood Zones.
General Permitted Development Order	GPDO	A statutory document that allows development (such as small house extensions) to be undertaken without planning permission.
Greenfield		Land where there has been no previous development.
Green Belt	GB	Designated areas around major built up areas which can only be developed under very special circumstances set out in the NPPF
Green Infrastructure	GI	A network of multi-functional green space and other environmental features, urban and rural, including both established and new sites - which support natural and ecological processes, and are capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
Habitats Regulation Assessment	HRA	Tests the impacts of a plan or project on nature conservation sites of European importance and is required under EU legislation.
Heritage asset		A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and undesignated heritage assets identified by the local planning authority or Neighbourhood Plan (sometimes called local listing).
Infrastructure		Refers to the fundamental facilities and systems serving an area, including the services and facilities necessary for its residents and economy to function, including transport.
Local Planning Authority (Bedford Borough Council)	LPA BBC	The local government body that is empowered by law to exercise planning functions for a particular area



Local Green Space	LGS	Highest level of protection once designated through a Local or Neighbourhood Plan. Equivalent to Green Belt.
Local Plan		The main planning document in an area which sets out what type and how much development will occur across the area for the next 15 years or so. It also provides a suite of policies that help manage development including for design, access and amenity etc.
Local Wildlife Site (some areas County Wildlife Site)	LWS/CWS	Non statutory sites of substantive nature conservation interest determined locally according to national, regional and local biodiversity needs.
National Planning Policy Framework	NPPF	Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
National Planning Practice Guidance	NPPG	A web-based resource, provides more detailed guidance on the contents of the NPPF
Neighbourhood Area		This is the area that the Neighbourhood Plan will focus on. For town or parish councils, the designated area is usually the boundary.
Neighbourhood Development Plan or Neighbourhood plan	NDP/NP	Will set out the vision for a neighbourhood area and the planning policies for the use and development of land. These policies will be at a local level to support the strategic policies within the emerging Local Plan. Plans should guide development rather than stop it. If adopted, a Neighbourhood Plan will become a statutory plan carrying equal weight with adopted local plan policies
Policy		A concise statement of the principles that a particular kind of development proposal should satisfy in order to obtain planning permission.
Public Rights of Way	PRoW	Includes footpaths and bridleways. Legally designated routes.
Policies Map (s)		Illustrates the spatial extent of the planning policies and designated areas.
Qualifying Body		Either a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum, which can initiate the process of neighbourhood planning.
Referendum		A vote by the eligible population of an electoral area who may decide on a matter of public policy. Neighbourhood Plans are subject to a referendum of the eligible voters within a neighbourhood area. There is a specific question set in Regulations which has a yes or no answer.
Settlement Hierarchy		Many Local Plans set out a hierarchy of settlements according to their population and facilities. Different levels of growth may be attributed to each tier.
Site of Special Scientific Interest	SSSI	Designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 by Natural England they are a protected area designated as being of special interest by virtue of its flora, fauna, geological or geomorphological features.



Strategic Environmental Assessment	SEA	European requirement assesses the significant environmental impacts of plans and programmes.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	SFRA	An assessment of the probability of flooding within a particular area.
Supplementary Planning Document	SPD	A document which elaborates upon a policy (ies) of the Local Plan to provide additional guidance for a particular topic or type of development.
Sustainability Appraisal	SA	An assessment of the environmental, social, and economic impacts of a Local Plan to check that the plan accords with the principles of sustainable development.
Sustainable Development		An approach to development that aims to allow economic growth without damaging the environment or natural resources thereby development which 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'
Sustainable Drainage System	SuDS	An artificial drainage solution which reduces and slows the quantity and rate of surface water run off from new development, dealing with it as close to the source as possible
Tree Preservation Order	TPO	An order made by a local planning authority to protect a specific tree, a group of trees or woodland. TPOs prevent the felling, lopping, topping, uprooting or other deliberate damage of trees without the permission of the local planning authority.
Windfall Site		Sites which have not been identified as available in the Local Plan. They often comprise previously developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.