

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

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 Democratic and Registration 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 Democratic and Registration Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

To secure the necessary agreements so that the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan can progress to the referendum stage of the neighbourhood plan making process, it is agreed:

- To make modifications to the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan in line with the recommendations set out in the examiner's report (Appendix A) and that as modified (Appendix B), the Plan meets the basic conditions
- That the formal Decision Statement (Appendix C) be published by 29 October in order to comply with the statutory deadline, and to inform those interested about the Council's decision
- That arrangements to progress the Plan to the referendum stage of plan preparation are made
- That the designated Great Barford Neighbourhood Area represents the appropriate geographical area to be covered by the referendum

2. Date of decision

18th October 2021

3. Reasons for decision

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the examination of the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan; to explain the examiner's recommended modifications to the plan and to set out the Council's response to those modifications. The Council must decide whether to progress the plan to referendum and in doing so, decide the area over which the referendum should take place.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

Consideration has been given to the need for modifications not proposed by the examiner. It has been determined that no such modifications are required in order for the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan to meet the basic conditions. Consideration has also been given to the need to extend the referendum area beyond the neighbourhood area but it has been determined that this is not necessary.

5. How decision is to be funded

Once the date for the referendum is published, a claim for £20,000 from MHCLG can be made in the next available claim window (December 2021). This represents a contribution towards the Council's costs associated with fulfilling its duty to assist the Parish in the preparation of its plan, and the costs associated with the examination process (including the examiner) and the referendum. Any costs in excess of £20,000 will need to be borne by the Council, though it is not anticipated that the examination process and the referendum combined will be more than this amount. 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

Signed: 

Date: **18th October 2021**

Name of Decision Taker: **Mayor Dave Hodgson**

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

Date decision published:**19 October 2021**.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in:**28 October 2021**.....

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

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO THE MAYOR

DATE – OCTOBER 2021

REPORT BY THE CHIEF OFFICER PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE & ECONOMIC GROWTH

SUBJECT: GREAT BARFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Neighbourhood plans are statutory development plans produced by parish/town councils or neighbourhood forums. Great Barford Parish Council has produced a neighbourhood plan for the Great Barford parish area.

The Plan was submitted to Bedford Borough Council on 17 March 2021 and, in line with regulatory requirements, was subject to a six-week consultation (1 April – 16 May 2021). It has since been formally examined by an independent examiner.

The examiner has produced a report (Appendix A) which recommends that the Plan is modified in order to meet legal requirements and is then progressed to a referendum of people who live within the designated neighbourhood area.

Bedford Borough Council must decide:

- whether to progress the Plan to a referendum and
- whether to modify it (in the ways recommended by the examiner or otherwise) or
- whether to refuse the Plan.

The Council must consider each of the examiner's recommendations on the content of the Plan and decide what action to take. If the Plan is to progress to referendum, the Council must also decide whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area, which in this case is Great Barford Parish.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mayor is asked to consider this report and if satisfied to agree:

- To make modifications to the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan in line with the recommendations set out in the examiner's report (Appendix A) and that as modified (Appendix B), the Plan meets the basic conditions
- That the formal Decision Statement (Appendix C) be published by 29 October 2021 in order to comply with the statutory deadline, and to inform those interested about the Council's decision
- That arrangements to progress the Plan to the referendum stage of plan preparation are made
- That the designated Great Barford Neighbourhood Area represents the appropriate geographical area to be covered by the referendum

3. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To give information about the outcome of the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan examination and to secure agreement to progress the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan to referendum, which is the next stage of the plan-making process.

4. **IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Legal

The scope of a neighbourhood plan examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The examiner must consider:

- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions;
- Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
 - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
 - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development';
 - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area;
 - whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum; and

- Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

The examiner must also consider if the neighbourhood plan is compatible with the Convention on Human Rights.

On receipt of the examiner's report, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 require that a Local Planning Authority must publish a decision statement setting out what actions will be taken in response to each of the examiner's recommendations. If the authority proposes to accept the examiner's recommendations, a decision statement must be published within 5 weeks of receiving the examiner's report. Arrangements for the referendum must then commence.

If the authority proposes to make a decision which differs from that recommended by the examiner, it must notify relevant people and invite representations for a period of 6 weeks. The local planning authority may, if it considers it appropriate to do so (for example if the Council's proposed changes are significant or controversial), refer the issue to further independent examination and receive a further report. Once any period for further representations is over, the local planning authority must issue its final decision within 5 weeks and proceed to referendum.

In this case it is recommended that the examiner's proposed amendments are accepted. If this is agreed, the decision statement relating to the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan must be published by 29 October 2021.

The neighbourhood plan passes the referendum of local voters if it achieves a simple majority (i.e. 50% +1 or over). No minimum turnout is required. If a plan passes referendum, the council must 'make' (adopt) it as soon as reasonably practicable unless the Council considers that the plan breaches EU obligations or human rights legislation. If there is a majority 'No' vote or a tied vote then the neighbourhood plan will not come into legal force.

The Council must hold a referendum within 56 working days from the date that the decision to take the plan forward to a referendum is published. The Council must also publish notice that the referendum will take place not fewer than 28 days before the referendum date.

The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended) cover all aspects of organising and conducting polls.

The Referendum question is 'Do you want Bedford Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Great Barford Parish to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area'.

Decisions to proceed to referendum and to 'make' the neighbourhood plan are taken by Bedford Borough Council's Executive rather than Full Council. Bedford Borough Council can be challenged on the making of the plan by way of judicial review. Challenges must normally be made within six weeks of the making of the plan.

(b) Policy

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, continuing policies in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 and the 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.

(c) Resource

The Government provides funding to assist councils to fulfil their neighbourhood planning duties. Once the date for the referendum is published, a claim for £20,000 can be made in the next available claim window (December 2021). This represents a contribution towards the Council's costs associated with fulfilling its duty to assist the Parish Council in the preparation of its plan, and the costs associated with the examination process (including the examiner) and the referendum. Any costs in excess of £20,000 will need to be borne by the Council, though it is not anticipated that the examination process and the referendum combined will be more than this amount. Costs associated with assisting the neighbourhood plan group to prepare their Plan are funded from the Plans and Strategies Reserve.

When the neighbourhood plan is formally 'made', the percentage of community infrastructure levy (CIL) receipts payable to the Parish Council arising from development within the parish will increase 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.

(d) Risk

The recommendations in the examination report are not binding, but if the Council chooses not to agree with the examiner's recommendations without a sound reason, there is a risk of legal challenge which could lead to reputational damage and financial

costs. Whilst there is also a risk of legal challenge if the Council does follow the examiner's recommendations, it must be considered that the risk is lower.

Any modifications made to the content of the plan should be done so only in order to make the plan meet the basic conditions and other legislative requirements. Making modifications for any other reasons (other than formatting or spelling corrections) could lead to a legal challenge.

(e) Environmental implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Council by 2030

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

The Plan was further screened to determine if Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was necessary. The HRA was carried out by specialist consultancy Bodsey Ecology Limited. It concluded that the Plan would not have a significant effect on European sites either alone or in combination. Natural England, which was consulted on the Plan, did not dispute this conclusion. The examiner found no reason to disagree.

Both the SEA screening and the HRA have been reviewed in light of the proposed modifications to the Plan. The conclusions of both remain unchanged.

(f) 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.

A relevance test for equality has been completed. The equality test determined that consideration as to whether the Great Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan should progress to referendum has no relevance to Bedford Borough Council's duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. An equality analysis for this decision is not needed.

However, the development of the Great Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan is relevant to Great Barford Parish Council's General Equality Duty. The Parish Council is responsible for discharging their duty. An equality analysis will be carried out by the Parish Council and the findings of the equality analysis was included in the Basic Conditions Statement.

5. DETAILS

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 adopted, neighbourhood plans become part of the Council's statutory development plan and must be taken into account alongside Bedford Borough Council's local plans and national policy when planning applications are determined.

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.

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	Progress
Neighbourhood Area Designation	Application by parish council, publicity & decision by BBC	Complete
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
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
Examination	Examiner appointed by BBC (agreed by NP group / parish council)	Complete
Consider examiner's recommendations	BBC and NP group / parish council	We are here
Referendum	Organised by BBC	
Plan 'made' (part of the development plan)	BBC	

The examination

Neighbourhood plans must be examined by a suitably qualified independent person, appointed by the Council and agreed by the qualifying body.

The examiner's role is limited to considering whether the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other relevant legal requirements. The examiner does not consider whether the plan is sound. The examiner also considers whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area.

Legislation requires that the Council considers each of the recommendations made by the examiner in his/her report and decide what action to take in response. This decision must be published within five weeks of the receipt of the examiner's report.

However, if the authority proposes to make a decision which differs from that recommended by the examiner, it must notify relevant people and invite representations. This is further explained in the 'Legal Issues' section above.

If the plan proceeds to referendum and passes by a simple majority, Legislation does not allow any further amendments to be made to the plan. Therefore, the stage between examination and referendum (this stage) is the only point at which further amendments can be made.

The referendum

Anyone who can usually vote in a local election and who is resident in the referendum area can vote in a neighbourhood plan referendum. The referendum area is usually the neighbourhood area, but the examiner may recommend that it be extended if there are matters that are of interest to nearby communities. The plan must pass by a simple majority and there is no minimum turnout. If a simple majority is achieved the Council will be required to 'make' (adopt) the plan unless it breaches EU or human rights legislation.

The decision on when to hold the referendum falls to the Council's returning officer. The Council must hold a referendum within 56 working days from the date that the decision to take the plan forward to a referendum is published. The Council must also publish notice that the referendum will take place, not fewer than 28 days before the referendum date.

The qualifying body (the parish council or neighbourhood forum) can withdraw a plan at any time up until the point that the decision on the modifications is publicised.

The Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan

Progress of Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan	
Neighbourhood area designated	23 April 2015
Draft plan consultation (Regulation 14)	14 December 2020 – 1 February 2021
Post submission consultation (Regulation 16)	1 April – 16 May 2021
Submitted for examination by BBC	25 May 2021
Examiner's report received	25 September 2021

The following extract from the examiner's report summarises her findings. The full report can be found at Appendix A.

Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Great Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan/GBNP) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body (QB) – Great Barford Parish Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Parish of Great Barford, as shown on page 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan;
- The Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect: 2020 to 2030; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements. I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

The examiner proposes recommendations as follows:

Proposed modification number (PM)	Submitted Neighbourhood Plan Para no / other reference	Examiner’s Recommended Modification	Reason for recommendation
PM1	Page 5 Paragraph 1.4	Add at the end of the final sentence: “in the period from 2020 to 2030”.	In the interests of clarity.
PM2	Page 49 Annex 1 Policy Map 1	Add the boundary of the SPA as shown on the BBLP Policy Map for Great Barford.	In the interests of clarity.
PM3	Page 30 Policy ROS1	Delete Policy ROS1.	Lack of any local justification for a policy more onerous than the NPPF and provision already in the NPPF for protection of the sites listed in the policy.

PM4	Page 30 Policy ROS2	Line 1: delete “should” and insert “must”. Third bullet after “developments”, delete “should” and insert “must”.	To make the policy more effective.
PM5	Page 31 Policy ROS3	Replace the final clause of Policy ROS3 with: “Policies for managing development within Local Green Space should be compatible with their designation, being consistent with those for Green Belt.”	To make the policy consistent with the management of development in the Green Belt.
PM6	Page 50 Appendix 1 Policy Map 2	Amend the GBNP Policy Map to include those sites which are designated as Village Open Space in ADLP Policy AD40 and shown on the BBLP Policy Map where this designation has not been replaced by a designation in the GBNP as LGS.	In order to maintain consistency with the Local Plan 2030 Policy Map and the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan Policy Map.
PM7	Page 33 Policy HE1	Delete the first sentence of Policy HE1 and replace with: “Development within the Great Barford Conservation Areas or likely to affect the setting of a Conservation Area must have regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the historic environment and of making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”	To ensure it accords with the NPPF.
PM8	Page 34 Policy HE2	Delete Policy HE2.	The policy does not add any local dimension to existing provisions in the NPPF and Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 Policy 41S.
PM9	Page 34 Policy HE3	Delete Policy HE3.	The policy does not add any local dimension to Policy 41S of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.

PM10	Page 37 Policy TT1	Delete Policy TT1.	The policy does not add any local dimension to the matters covered in policies in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 and detailed design considerations are already covered by criteria in Policy D1 of the GBNP.
PM11	Page 37 Policy TT2	Delete first clause of Policy TT2 after “transport”. Merge the second clause after “transport”.	The first clause would repeat Policy 89 in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.
PM12	Page 39 Policy TT3	Delete Policy TT3.	To avoid unnecessary duplication of Policy 91 in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.
PM13	Page 41 Policy CF1	Replace the final sentence (including deletion of all the bullet points) of the first paragraph of Policy CF1 to read: “The main facility in the village to which this relates is the village hall.”	To delete from the list of community facilities those premises which would be subject to the provisions of other national and Local Plan policies, together with those premises which lie outside the local policy definition of community facilities.

These recommendations serve to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions. Officers therefore recommend that they are agreed and the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan be amended accordingly.

The examiner explains that it is open to the Parish Council to make minor modifications to the Plan such as attending to typographical errors and consequential amendments (para 4.71 of the examiner’s report). A small number of these have been identified. Officers recommend however that no further changes are required in order for the Plan to meet the basic conditions and therefore if agreed, no further consultation is necessary before proceeding to referendum.

The Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan incorporating the examiner’s proposed modifications and other minor modifications can be found at Appendix B.

Examination area

The examiner considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. She concluded that the Plan as modified would have no policies or proposals which she considered significant enough to have an impact

beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary. As a result she recommends that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area. Officers agree with this conclusion and recommend that the neighbourhood area as designated should be agreed as the referendum area.

Next steps

Bedford Borough Council must publish a statement (Appendix C) setting out with reasons its decision on each of the examiner's recommendations. Preparations must then be made to hold the referendum.

6. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME

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 posted on the neighbourhood plan web site. 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.

The following people have been consulted in preparing this report:

Management Team

- Management Team
- Chief Officer for Legal, Personnel & Monitoring
- Chief Officer for Corporate Finance & Financial Control

No adverse comments have been received.

7. WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS

Not applicable for this report.

Report Contact Officer: Kim Wilson
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File Reference: Neighbourhood Plans

Previous Relevant Minutes: None

Background Papers: None

Appendices:
Appendix A - Examiner's Report
Appendix B - Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan showing modifications
Appendix C – Decision Statement



Intelligent Plans
and examinations

Report on Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2030

An Examination undertaken for Bedford Borough Council with the support of Great Barford Parish Council on the March 2021 submission version of the Plan.

Independent Examiner: Wendy J Burden BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

Date of Report: 24 September 2021

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Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Great Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan/GBNP) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body (QB) – Great Barford Parish Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Parish of Great Barford, as shown on page 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan;
- The Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect: 2020 to 2030; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

1. Introduction and Background

Great Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 1.1 A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) was set up in 2014 consisting of residents and Parish Councillors. The Neighbourhood Plan Area for Great Barford was approved by Bedford Borough Council (BBC) in April 2015, and in May 2015 Great Barford Parish Council (GBPC) called their first Neighbourhood Plan Committee meeting.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan Area comprises the Parish of Great Barford, which lies some 5 miles to the north east of Bedford within Bedford Borough Council, and 7 miles south west of St Neots. The centre of the village is the crossroads between Bedford road and Roxton road (north east/southwest), and the High Street and Green End Road (northwest/southwest). The A421 has bypassed the village since 2006. It links the village towards the A1, M1, and M11 and to the major centres of London, Milton Keynes and Peterborough.
- 1.3 This is a village of some historic importance, having been a settlement at Great Barford since well before Roman times. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book, with its importance probably due to its river crossing,

which was originally a ford. The ford appears to have been replaced in the early 15th Century with a bridge. There is reference to an eight arch bridge in the 15th Century with further works to the bridge recorded in 1753, 1818 and 1874. There are now seventeen arches and the bridge is a Scheduled Monument.

- 1.4 There are a number of listed buildings within the village which is dominated at its southern end by the Grade 2* listed 15th Century church tower of All Saints. There are three Conservation Areas comprising the main Great Barford Conservation Area, the Green End Conservation Area and the Great Barford Hill Conservation Area. Within the Parish there are 35 Grade II listed buildings and 3 scheduled Monuments. The Barford Bridge and Causeway is also Grade 1 listed.
- 1.5 Great Barford lies among the meadowlands of the river Great Ouse in a landscape area known as the Great Ouse Clay Valley. The Parish lies at the intersection of 2 of the 11 strategic Green Infrastructure (GI) corridors identified in the 2007 Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Plan and as such is a significant component of Bedford's GI network. There are large areas of green within the village which are both natural and manmade, including the village green next to the bridge on the bank of the river, parcels of agricultural meadow along the High Street towards the centre of the village and fields of arable crops up to the A421 and close to the village centre.
- 1.6 In terms of services the village has the Primary Academy School, a playing field, playgrounds and a bowls club, a number of small and medium size business enterprises, a Post Office, farm butcher, 2 shops, 2 public houses with restaurants and a coffee shop.
- 1.7 The 2011 Census shows a population of 2003 in 881 dwellings. There is 80% home ownership, with 8% renting from social landlords and 12% renting privately. The Village of Great Barford is the main settlement within the Parish.
- 1.8 The GBNP is required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the statutory Development Plan, which is now the Bedford Borough Local Plan (BBLP 2030) and the Bedford Borough Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 (ADLP). I address the matter of general conformity of the GBNP with the strategic policies of the Development Plan throughout my report.

The Independent Examiner

- 1.9 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the GBNP by BBC, with the agreement of GBPC.
- 1.10 I am a chartered town planner and retired government Planning Inspector, with more than 45 years of experience in the private and public

sectors. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the draft Plan.

The Scope of the Examination

- 1.11 As the independent examiner I am required to produce this report and recommend either:
- (a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
 - (b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 1.12 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)('the 1990 Act'). The examiner must consider:
- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions.
 - Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
 - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
 - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'; and
 - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.
 - Whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum.
 - Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)('the 2012 Regulations').
- 1.13 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

1.14 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. 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;
- Be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations (under retained EU law)¹; and
- Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

1.15 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.²

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

2.1 During the early preparation of the draft GBNP, the Development Plan for BBC, not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development, comprised the following documents:

- Saved Local Plan 2002 (LP 2002) policies;
- The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (CSRI) 2008 (to 2021); and
- The Allocations and Designations Local Plan (ADLP) 2013.

2.2 As the emerging BBLP was being drafted, the GBNP has been developed to reflect the reasoning and evidence informing the Local Plan process. The importance of minimising any conflicts between those policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and those in the emerging Local Plan during its preparation has been recognised.³

¹ The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.

² This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

³ PPG Reference ID: 41-009-20190509.

- 2.3 The BBLP 2030 was adopted by BBC in January 2020 and largely replaces the policies in the LP 2002 and the CSRI 2008. It does not replace some policies in the ADLP, which remain a part of the Development Plan.⁴
- 2.4 In view of the close attention paid to the BBLP emerging policies during the preparation of the GBNP, and the opportunity for review and updating of the GBNP prior to its submission in March 2021, the submitted GBNP has been prepared to be generally in conformity with the most up to date strategic Development Plan policies.
- 2.5 The GBNP was prepared having regard to the 2019 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A revised NPPF was published on 20 July 2021, and it is this document to which I have had regard in determining whether the GBNP meets the Basic Conditions. In addition, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented, and was also updated in July 2021.

Submitted Documents

- 2.6 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, alongside those submitted. These include:
- Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2030, March 2021;
 - AECOM Site Assessment Support Final Report, May 2019;
 - AECOM Site options and Assessment Addendum, February 2020;
 - Background Evidence, November 2020;
 - Basic Conditions Statement, March 2021;
 - Character Assessment and Design Guide, November 2020;
 - Consultation December 2019 Report, November 2020;
 - Consultation Statement, March 2021;
 - Green Infrastructure Plan, 2019;
 - Habitats Regulations Assessment, November 2020;
 - Housing Needs Survey, September 2012;
 - Local Green Space Assessment Report, March 2021;
 - Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report, November 2020;
 - Site Allocations Report, March 2021;
 - Responses to submission consultation - document one;
 - Responses to submission consultation - document two;
 - Examiner Procedural Matters Letter 14 June 2021;
 - GBPC and BBC joint response of 12 July to examiner's questions of 29 June 2021;
 - Response of 29 July (BBC) and 5 August (GBPC) to examiner's letter of 22 July 2021; and
 - Letter to examiner from DLP, 19 July 2021.⁵

⁴ BBLP 2030, Appendix 1.

⁵ View at: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-its-purpose/neighbourhood-planning/great-barford-neighbourhood-development-plan/>

Site Visit

- 2.7 I visited the Neighbourhood Plan Area unaccompanied by any interested party on the 7 July 2021. I carried out a general review of the area in terms of its setting and character in order to familiarise myself with it and visited relevant sites and areas referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

- 2.8 This examination has been carried out on the basis of the written submissions (written representations). The Regulation 16 consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the Plan and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum. Requests have also been submitted from some parties for evidence to be heard at a hearing. However, as noted, in addition to the Regulation 16 responses I have received further clarification from the QB and BBC, in response to my letter of 29 June 2021.⁶ As a result, in terms of the appropriate level of scrutiny for the GBNP, I consider that hearing sessions are not necessary.

Modifications

- 2.9 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the Plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications separately in the Appendix.

3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 3.1 The Great Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by GBPC, which is the qualifying body for an area that was designated by BBC in April 2015.
- 3.2 It is the only Neighbourhood Plan for Great Barford Parish and does not relate to any land outside the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Plan Period

- 3.3 The Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect on the front cover, which is 2020-2030. The GBNP covers the same period as the BBLP and does not therefore raise any issues of compliance. It may however be necessary to review the GBNP when the BBLP is carried forward beyond

⁶ See paragraph 2.6 above and footnote 5.

2030.⁷ In the interests of clarity, it would be helpful for the Plan to state the period within the text of the Plan in the Introduction at paragraph 1.4 [PM1].

Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.4 In April 2015 BBC approved the designation of the Great Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan Area as shown on page 6 of the submitted GBNP. The GBNP was developed with the involvement of the local community over a period of more than 5 years and is based on evidence from surveys, expert reports and local consultations. Details of the consultation are set out in the Consultation Statement. A timeline which shows engagement activities relating to the GBNP is included in the submitted Plan (pages 10-12).
- 3.5 Great Barford Parish Council formally launched the Neighbourhood Plan on 21 June 2014 and production of the Neighbourhood Plan has been led by the steering group. The steering group has met monthly since May 2015 (apart from most Decembers and March to June 2020) and provided updates at Parish Council meetings. A robust programme of community engagement has helped to make sure that the Neighbourhood Plan is based on a proper understanding of the area and of the views, aspirations, wants and needs of local people.
- 3.6 An initial survey was carried out and the output of this was used to prepare a draft vision statement and to shape the key topics for the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan. Before all events, and at key stages, leaflets, or information in the Parish Newsletter 'The Bugle' were delivered to every household in the Parish; a Parish Council website page was established, and alongside posts on Facebook, regular updates on progress and notification of forthcoming events were published.
- 3.7 Several further communications and consultations were held throughout the process of developing GBNP. These are set out in the Consultation Statement and included consultation on the Green Infrastructure Plan which was prepared between November 2018 and September 2019, and on the process of site selection as presented in the AECOM Site Assessment and Options Report. The public consultation was focussed on assessing the views of the community on the development site options identified in the AECOM report of May 2019. The Report included the three potential site options identified by BBC.
- 3.8 The Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation period ran from 14 December 2020 to 1 February 2021 for a period of 7 weeks. The submission version of the Plan was then the subject of a further round of consultation, as required by Regulation 16 of the 2012 Regulations, from

⁷ Work is underway on the Bedford Local Plan 2040. A consultation on the Draft Plan: Strategy options and draft policies, ran from 29 June to 3 September 2021, with a Pre-Submission consultation planned in 2022: [Local Plan 2040 · Bedford Borough Council](#)

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1 April to 16 May 2021. I have considered the representations that were made at the Regulation 16 stage in preparing this report. I am satisfied that a transparent, fair and inclusive consultation process has been followed for the GBNP. Due regard has been had to the advice in the PPG on plan preparation and engagement, and the GBNP is procedurally compliant in accordance with the legal requirements.

Development and Use of Land

- 3.9 Subject to some changes recommended in proposed modifications, the Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

Excluded Development

- 3.10 The Plan does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'.

Human Rights

- 3.11 No issues have been raised in relation to any potential for a breach of Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). From my independent assessment, I see no reason to find otherwise.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

EU Obligations

- 4.1 A screening report has been carried out for the GBNP to determine whether or not the GBNP requires a SEA. The screening assessment concludes that it is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the GBNP. Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency have been consulted and agree with the conclusion. I have read the SEA Screening Report and have no reason to disagree with its findings.
- 4.2 Great Barford is designated as being a Key Service Centre in the BBLP. The Key Service Centres contain a good range of services and are well connected to larger town centres by regular public transport. They provide a strong service role for the local community and surrounding area. BBLP Policy 4S requires the allocation of land in the Neighbourhood Plan to provide for the development of 500 new homes at Great Barford generally in and around the defined Settlement Policy Area boundaries.
- 4.3 The SEA Regulations⁸ require the consideration of the significant environmental effects of the plan or programme, and of reasonable alternatives that take into account the objectives and the geographical

⁸ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
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scope of the plan or programme. A thorough assessment of the alternatives for housing site allocations has been carried out on behalf of GBPC in the preparation of the GBNP.

- 4.4 AECOM carried out an assessment of potential housing sites starting with 15 sites in Great Barford identified in BBC's Local Plan call for sites. Local criteria were applied to the 15 sites identified by BBC and as a result AECOM put forward Options 1a and 1b to accommodate the level of housing required in the BBLP. In addition, AECOM set out the 3 options identified by BBC⁹ as suitable to accommodate the new development.
- 4.5 Following the adoption of the BBLP in January 2020, an Addendum to the Site Assessment report of May 2019 was produced in February 2020. The Addendum considered whether the 2019 assessment remained valid against the adopted LP policies; it considered representations from agents on behalf of the owners of sites assessed in the 2019 report; and at the request of GBPC, a new site was assessed using the approach employed in the May 2019 report.
- 4.6 As a result of this additional work, it was concluded that the results of the original assessment remained valid and that no further options should be considered.¹⁰ I have considered this conclusion and also taken into account additional information which has been submitted in the course of my examination of the GBNP. I have no reason to consider that the process of site evaluation carried out on behalf of GBPC is not soundly based.
- 4.7 Consultation was carried out with the community in late 2019 on the options which had been identified in the AECOM site assessment report. Developers were invited to present their proposals at an exhibition in the village school, then a second event was held at which residents were invited to express their views and preferences. A clear preference was expressed for all the development to be in one location, known as Great Barford West. Traffic from the site could avoid using the High Street and side roads within the village, the site would avoid flood risk as identified to the east of the village, and development of the high ground to the north of the village would be avoided thus respecting the sensitivity of the landscape in that area.
- 4.8 I have considered the results of that consultation together with the evidence on the site assessment process. I am satisfied that GBPC has taken an appropriate and thorough iterative approach to the consideration of reasonable alternatives for the location of new housing in accordance with the SEA Regulations.
- 4.9 A HRA was carried out for the BBLP 2030, which identified the potential for likely significant effects on two European sites, The Ouse Washes

⁹ Local Plan 2035 Consultation Paper (April 2017).

¹⁰ Site Options and Assessment Addendum Section 6: Conclusions.

(Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Ramsar) and Portholme (Special Area of Conservation), downstream of Bedford. Although the policies within the Local Plan should protect the European sites if followed, detail was not available from the other emerging neighbourhood plans in the authority area to confirm this for all developments. Further screening of the GBNP has been carried out to ensure that there were no unforeseen likely significant effects.

- 4.10 This screening of the GBNP identified the same likely significant effects on the two European sites as the BBLP to 2030, but at a reduced scale. Following Appropriate Assessment of the GBNP (AA Stage 2) some rewording of the policies of the GBNP has been undertaken to provide protection to the European sites. The policies provide the framework to avoid or mitigate against any likely significant effects, and their subsequent adverse impact on the qualifying features and site integrity.
- 4.11 The HRA concludes that the Great Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan can proceed as it will not have significant effects on any European sites itself or in combination with other plans, on the assumption that other plans avoid or have mitigated against the likely significant effects. Based on my own independent assessment, I agree with this conclusion.

Main Issues

- 4.12 I have approached the assessment of compliance of the GBNP with the remaining Basic Conditions as two main matters:
- General issues of compliance of the Plan, as a whole; and
 - Specific issues of compliance of the Plan policies.

General Issues of Compliance of the Plan

Regard to National Policy and Advice

- 4.13 The GBNP sets out the background and context to its preparation and provides a broad description of the extensive history, and the character and appearance of the Plan area, with its village rich in heritage and its diverse and attractive rural setting. The vision and objectives for Great Barford are identified in Section 5. These seek to maintain the rural identity and character of the village and its rural location, whilst offering high quality housing to meet the needs of the different stages of residents' lives with the facilities and services required for a sustainable, friendly and safe environment.
- 4.14 The policies have been developed to address the vision and objectives of the GBNP, and generally relate to the matters identified in NPPF paragraph 28 as appropriate matters to be addressed through non-strategic policies in neighbourhood plans. The GBNP is positively prepared, with an aspirational but deliverable approach to the development of the Parish, and it has been shaped through early, proportionate and effective engagement within the local community.

- 4.15 In general, the policies of the GBNP are clearly written and unambiguous¹¹ and I recommend modifications where necessary to achieve this requirement. Where there is some duplication of the policy set out in the BBLP 2030¹², I recommend deletion where appropriate.
- 4.16 It is a requirement of the NPPF that neighbourhood plans do not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.¹³ The GBNP can provide for the delivery of the housing requirement established through the strategic policies of the BBLP and thus accords with Government policy.
- 4.17 The allocation of land for housing has been the subject of a thorough appraisal of alternative sites and a process of public consultation to ensure the involvement of the community in the development of the GBNP. Together with the range of policies formulated to meet its vision and objectives, the GBNP demonstrates a positive approach to the level of growth identified for the Parish in the BBLP. Subject to the modifications which I recommend in this report, the GBNP has had regard to national policy and advice.

Contributes to the Achievement of Sustainable Development

- 4.18 By taking a positive approach to the delivery of residential development to meet the requirements of the BBLP, the GBNP provides for sustainable development through its housing and other development policies. Whilst the Plan provides for new housing in the village, in doing so it has regard to the economic, social and environmental needs of the local community. The GBNP accords with paragraph 29 of the NPPF since it complements and delivers the strategic policies for the area.
- 4.19 The three overarching objectives of sustainable development are integral to the core objectives of the GBNP. Together with the policies of the BBLP 2030, the policies and proposals of the GBNP contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in accordance with national policies and advice.
- 4.20 Subject to the detailed comments and modifications which I set out below for individual policies, I am satisfied that the Plan makes a positive contribution to the achievement of the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

General Conformity with Strategic Policies in the Development Plan

- 4.21 I set out the planning policy context for the GBNP in section 2 above. The GBNP was prepared alongside the emerging BBLP 2030 and the policies,

¹¹ PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

¹² NPPF, paragraph 16 f).

¹³ NPPF, paragraph 29.

as submitted in the GBNP March 2021, seek to be in general conformity with those in the BBLP 2030, as adopted in January 2020.

- 4.22 As noted in paragraph 4.2 above, the village of Great Barford is identified in the BBLP 2030 as being a Key Service Centre. Policy 3S of the BBLP provides for “vi. Strategic residential development in key service centres in association with expanded education provision where necessary”; and Policy 4S requires that “it will be necessary to identify sites to meet the following levels of development, generally in and around defined Settlement Policy Area boundaries”. The level of development for Great Barford is 500 new homes.
- 4.23 Following a full assessment of alternative options for meeting the requirement for 500 homes, and the engagement of the community in the choice of options, one site is allocated to accommodate the full requirement for 500 homes. Great Barford has a Settlement Policy Area (SPA) as defined in the BBLP Policies Map Inset Map 14. The proposed allocation lies outside but adjacent to the SPA boundary. There are no proposals to amend the SPA boundary in the GBNP, but there is no requirement in the BBLP for such an amendment to be made in the Neighbourhood Plan. I return to this matter below in relation to Policy H1, but in the interests of clarity I recommend that the boundary of the SPA as shown on the BBLP Policies Map is included on Policy Map 1 on the GBNP [**PM2**].
- 4.24 Within and adjacent to the SPA are sites which were designated as Village Open Space in the ADLP (Policy AD40 - Village Open Spaces and Views). The BBLP designates areas for Local Green Space (LGS) in accordance with national policy but does not designate any LGS in Great Barford. GBPC has carried out its own assessment of proposals for LGS designation as part of the preparation of the GBNP. Six sites are identified under GBNP Policy ROS3 for designation as LGS. I consider the detail of this policy below, but in principle the identification of LGS in the GBNP is appropriate since LGS can only be identified in local or neighbourhood plans.¹⁴
- 4.25 The GBNP has been developed with proper regard to the strategic direction and policies of the BBC Development Plan Documents, which I identify in Section 2 above. In addition, with some modifications which I recommend below, the GBNP demonstrates general conformity with the adopted strategic policies of the BBLP. BBC has been involved throughout the preparation of the GBNP and is generally supportive of its policies. Subject to some detailed comments and the modifications which I make to the Plan’s policies below, I am satisfied that the GBNP is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan.

¹⁴ NPPF, paragraph 101.

Specific Issues of Compliance of the Plan Policies

Design Policies

- 4.26 The criteria to be applied for the consideration of the design of new development in Great Barford are set out in Policy D1. They reflect the importance given in the GBNP to maintaining and enhancing the special qualities of the area and raise no issues of compliance with the Basic Conditions.
- 4.27 Policy D2 addresses sustainable design and construction. In the BBLP, Policies 51S and 54 set out clearly the requirements for new development to address climate change and the measures to be taken to achieve energy efficiency. Policy D2 identifies detailed measures which may be taken to contribute to energy efficiency. It is appropriate for a neighbourhood plan to indicate a preference for such measures but not to stipulate technical standards higher than those set out in the BBLP. I am satisfied that Policy D2 does not breach Government policy in this respect and raises no issues of compliance with the Basic Conditions.

Housing Policies

- 4.28 I have considered the process of site assessment which resulted in the allocation of one site to accommodate the 500 new homes required by Policy 4S of the BBLP and found the process to be soundly based. Issues relating to potential archaeological assets across the site have been raised, but Historic England have no objection to the allocation and archaeological investigations are currently underway.
- 4.29 Initial master planning work on the site is at an early stage and the potential impact of the extensive archaeology across the site is still being assessed with BBC Officers. It is intended that the development will provide sports pitches, a range of play areas, formal and informal public open space, allotments, biodiversity net gain and sustainable drainage/blue infrastructure commensurate with a development of 500 dwellings.
- 4.30 In addition, increased lower/primary schooling provision and a new medical centre is expected to be located in the existing village with funding being provided by the new development through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)/Section 106 contributions. However, the allocation site has ample capacity to deliver a primary/lower school and a new medical centre if required.
- 4.31 The list of criteria identified under Policy H1 refer to the requirement for these provisions, but do not specify the extent or location of the various facilities. I note that the exact location and scale of facilities and landscaping is dependent on the ongoing archaeological assessment work and a number of other factors that may influence the master planning of the site. The Policy does specify a maximum of 500 dwellings to be

accommodated within the allocation, and it will be for BBC as local planning authority to ensure through the development management process that the provisions listed in Policy H1 are included in the scheme. Having regard to the policies in the BBLP which will also be applied to a future proposal, I am satisfied that Policy H1 is sufficient to ensure that a comprehensive scheme supported by appropriate infrastructure, landscaping and facilities can be achieved.

- 4.32 Having regard to the early stage reached in the preparation of a comprehensive scheme, there is some question as to whether the full 500 homes can be delivered on this site by 2030. However, the BBLP Policy 4S requires the identification of land to accommodate 500 new homes in Great Barford. The allocation in Policy H1 would fulfil this requirement. In the event that the site cannot be completed by 2030, Policy 1 of the BBLP provides for the early review of the Local Plan. The review is currently in progress and it provides the opportunity for BBC to make further site allocations in the rural part of the Borough if there is likely to be a shortfall in housing land supply as a result of a delay in housing delivery at Great Barford.
- 4.33 As noted, the allocated site lies outside the SPA boundary. There is no proposal to amend the current SPA boundary in view of the lack of certainty with regard to the location of built development, open spaces and other facilities within the area allocated in the GBNP. The principles to be followed in the definition of SPAs are set out in the ADLP Chapter 13, and it will be necessary to establish the future layout of the site for these to be followed. There will be the opportunity to establish a new SPA for Great Barford through future reviews of the Local and Neighbourhood Plans.
- 4.34 With the identification of the location for the new development to the south west of the village in the GBNP, I am satisfied that the requirement to allocate land for 500 new homes in Great Barford in accordance with Policy 4S of the BBLP is met and Policy H1 meets the Basic Conditions.

Natural Environment

- 4.35 The countryside setting of Great Barford has been the subject of a Landscape Character Assessment (2014) and a more recent Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2018) as part of the BBC Local Plan preparation. The particular visual sensitivities together with development guidelines are set out in a table on page 25 of the GBNP. Policy NE1 identifies the key matters to be addressed in proposals for new development in order to protect the local landscape, taking into account the particular characteristics and sensitivities of the landscape of Great Barford.
- 4.36 Nature conservation is addressed in Policy NE2. Whilst this Policy deals with matters covered primarily in the BBLP Policies 42S, 43 and 93, there is reference in Policy NE2 to matters which are of particular relevance to

Great Barford. As a result, I consider that the repetition of matters which are covered in the BBLP policies is acceptable.

- 4.37 I am satisfied that Policies NE1 and NE2 raise no issues of compliance with the Basic Conditions.

Recreation and Open Space

- 4.38 The various green spaces within Great Barford are identified in the Green Infrastructure Plan, and the village has a number of areas identified as Village Open Space under the ADLP Policy AD40. In the GBNP, Policy ROS1 lists all existing open spaces in Great Barford which are to be protected from development. The open spaces listed in the Policy include sites which are proposed for allocation in Policy ROS3 as Local Green Space (LGS).
- 4.39 I address Policy ROS3 below, but with regard to ROS1, the NPPF states that development plans should avoid the unnecessary duplication of policies which apply to a particular area.¹⁵ Sites which are subject to Policy AD40 and which are to be included in Policy ROS3 as LGS do not require any further policy provision and should be deleted from Policy ROS1.
- 4.40 With regard to the remaining sites, at paragraphs 98–99 the NPPF provides a high level of protection for open space, sport and recreation facilities which would apply to the open spaces identified in ROS1. The NPPF sets out criteria against which proposals for the development of these sites must be assessed. I note that Policy ROS1 seeks to prevent development unless the existing facilities are re-provided to a better quality or quantity in an appropriate location. However, that is a more onerous requirement than the criteria in national policy and in the absence of any special justification, it is unreasonable.
- 4.41 In view of the provision made in the NPPF for the protection of sites listed in ROS1, and the lack of any local justification for a more onerous requirement in the GBNP, I recommend that Policy ROS1 be deleted [**PM3**].
- 4.42 Policy ROS2 addresses the provision of open spaces as a part of new development. It appropriately deals with matters particular to the local area but would be more effective if requirements are set out in the imperative rather than conditional verbal tense. I recommend changes to the wording of the Policy to make it more effective [**PM4**].
- 4.43 The GBNP designates 6 sites as LGS in Policy ROS3. BBC carried out an assessment of sites for designation as LGS in 2018. GBPC submitted eleven sites for consideration, of which three were assessed as appropriate for designation. However, BBC decided not to designate LGS

¹⁵ NPPF, paragraph 16 f).

in Great Barford as part of the BBLP 2030 since the preparation of the GBNP had started and it was considered that the LGS should be designated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 4.44 GBPC has carried out an assessment of potential LGS sites¹⁶ using its own methodology, having regard to the criteria for LGS set out in the NPPF and supplemented by the advice in the PPG. Ten sites were considered, including the three identified by BBC, but not all met the standard required in the methodology.
- 4.45 It is stated in PPG that “If land is already protected by designation, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space”. The site listed as Village Green is protected as a statutory village green and the public footpath included in the site is protected as a public right of way. In these circumstances it is not necessary for the site to be included as LGS for it to be protected from development. However, this is clearly an area that is of particular importance to the local community and its designation as LGS would recognise its significance. In these circumstances, I am satisfied that there should be no change to the designation of the Village Green as LGS.
- 4.46 Having regard to the careful and detailed assessment carried out by GBPC, I am satisfied that the sites proposed as LGS generally meet the criteria for designation as set out in the NPPF and PPG and should be capable of enduring beyond the Plan period.
- 4.47 As regards the wording of the final clause of Policy ROS3, policies for managing development within a LGS should be consistent with those for Green Belts (NPPF, paragraph 101). National guidance is that inappropriate development (as opposed to any “Development”) is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in ‘very special circumstances’. Therefore, I recommend a modification of the Policy to make it consistent with the management of development in the Green Belt [**PM5**].
- 4.48 In order to maintain consistency between the GBNP Policy Map and that of the BBLP, I also recommend that the GBNP Policy Map 2 includes the sites which are designated as Village Open Space in ADLP Policy AD40 and shown on the BBLP Policy Map (Inset 14), where this designation has not been superseded by a designation as LGS [**PM6**].
- 4.49 I am satisfied that with the modifications identified above, the GBNP meets the Basic Conditions in regard to Recreation and Open Spaces.

¹⁶ Local Green Space Assessment Report, March 2021.

Historic Environment

- 4.50 Policy HE1 deals with the Great Barford conservation areas and their settings. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are subject to statutory control under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), with policy for the management of development affecting the historic environment set out in the NPPF and PPG.
- 4.51 In the GBNP, Policy HE1 lists criteria which reflect the particular local character of the village and as a result the inclusion of the Policy in the GBNP is appropriate. However, I consider that some amendment to the first clause of the Policy is required to ensure that it accords with the NPPF at paragraph 190. This sets out the approach to be taken in development plans towards the historic environment. The NPPF refers to new development taking account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the desirability of development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. I recommend a modification to Policy HE1 to secure compliance with national policy [**PM7**]
- 4.52 Local Heritage Assets are addressed in Policy HE2. This deals with both designated and undesignated heritage assets, but there is no identification of the undesignated heritage assets to which the Policy is intended to apply.
- 4.53 The NPPF sets out the strategy to be taken towards the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets¹⁷ and the approach to be taken in determining applications which might have some effect on heritage assets.¹⁸
- 4.54 In BBLP Policy 41S (Historic environment and heritage assets), the Council's requirements when considering an application which might affect a designated or non-designated heritage asset is comprehensively established. Whilst the desire of GBPC to include Policy HE2 in the GBNP is understood, the Policy does not add any local dimension to the provisions set out in the NPPF and BBLP Policy 41S. In these circumstances I recommend the deletion of Policy HE2 [**PM8**].
- 4.55 With regard to Policy HE3, Archaeological sites and Scheduled monuments are protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended). BBLP Policy 41S provides a detailed set of requirements which relate to sites which have recognised or potential archaeological significance. The GBNP Policy adds no local dimension to that Policy and should therefore be deleted [**PM9**].
- 4.56 I am satisfied that with the modifications identified above, the GBNP meets the Basic Conditions in regard to the Historic Environment.

¹⁷ NPPF, paragraph 203.

¹⁸ NPPF, paragraphs 194–208.

Traffic and Transport

- 4.57 In the BBLP, there are a number of policies which deal with requirements for the design of vehicular access and the management of traffic and transport in new development.¹⁹ Policy TT1 in the GBNP seeks to address this matter but does not add any particular local dimension to the matters which are comprehensively covered in the BBLP. I note that the third clause of the Policy deals with the design of transport infrastructure, but detailed design considerations are generally covered by the criteria set out in Policy D1 of the GBNP. I recommend Policy TT1 be deleted [**PM10**].
- 4.58 The provision of charging points for electric vehicles in new development is required in BBLP Policy 89. The first clause in Policy TT2 would repeat this requirement which is not necessary. The second clause of the Policy is appropriate since it reflects local priorities. I recommend the deletion of the first clause of Policy TT2 after “transport” [**PM11**].
- 4.59 Policy TT3 deals with Rights of Way. BBLP Policy 91 sets out a comprehensive approach to public rights of way which deals with those matters addressed in GBNP Policy TT3. To avoid unnecessary duplication, I recommend Policy TT3 be deleted [**PM12**].
- 4.60 I am satisfied that with the modifications identified above, the Traffic and Transport policies of the GBNP meet the Basic Conditions.

Community Facilities

- 4.61 Policy CF1 provides for the protection of community facilities. The Policy includes shops and public houses. It is appropriate for the GBNP to include a policy which identifies the community facilities which it wishes to retain, but in the choice of facilities to include in the list the definition has been widely drawn. In the BBLP, community facilities are identified as follows: “*meeting places, village halls, social club venues, sports venues, cultural buildings and places of worship*”.²⁰ Policy 99 (Loss of existing sports and community facilities) provides for the protection of such facilities and it is appropriate for the GBNP to identify these types of facilities for protection within Great Barford.
- 4.62 With regard to locally essential shops and public houses in the rural key service centres, provision for their retention is provided through BBLP Policy 82 (Local centres (including rural key service centres) – changes of use). Great Barford is identified as a local centre in BBLP Policy 77S.
- 4.63 Whilst the BBLP Policy does not specifically name the premises to be protected in Great Barford, it is clearly structured to ensure that any change of use of a number of the premises which GBPC seek to retain would be subject to an appropriate level of scrutiny to provide sufficient

¹⁹ These include BBLP Policies 31, 87, 88 and 90S.

²⁰ BBLP, paragraph 12.60.

protection. There is therefore no justification for them to be listed in Policy CF1 of the GBNP.

- 4.64 In these circumstances I recommend a modification to Policy CF1 to delete from the list of community facilities those premises which would be subject to the provisions of other national and Local Plan policies, together with those premises which lie outside the local policy definition of community facilities [**PM13**].
- 4.65 I am satisfied that with the modification identified above, the Community Facilities Policies of the GBNP meet the Basic Conditions.

Local Employment and Business

- 4.66 Support for local employment and business is set out in Policy LE1. The first clause of the Policy seeks to protect existing employment sites from development for other uses unless it can be demonstrated that employment use is no longer viable. In view of the limited employment opportunities within Great Barford and the benefits of maintaining local employment opportunities, I consider that this approach is justified. The other parts of the Policy take a positive and supportive approach to new employment development as appropriate to the character and status of the village.
- 4.67 I am satisfied that the Local Employment and Business policies of the GBNP meet the Basic Conditions.

Non-Land Use Actions and Aspirations

- 4.68 In addition to the GBNP policies which I am required to consider against the statutory tests, Section 15 of the Plan lists the issues and projects from the Green Infrastructure Plan and the Parish Plan 2010-2015, for which financial contributions will be sought from developers through CIL, unilateral undertakings and Section 106 agreements. This section addresses issues which are not land use matters but which are of importance to the local community. They relate to measures which may be sought in order to improve the general quality of life and well being within the village, rather than land use issues which relate to the development and use of land in the statutory sense. As such they are not matters that can be addressed through a policy in the GBNP.
- 4.69 Although I have taken note of these aspirations, they will not form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area and are not therefore considered against the Basic Conditions.²¹

²¹ PPG Reference ID: 41-004-20190509.

Implementation and Monitoring

- 4.70 The approach to be taken for the implementation and monitoring of the GBNP is set out in Section 16. This sets out the role of GBPC in the future development of the Parish and identifies the key organisations with which it will be working in partnership. This section of the GBNP raises no issues of compliance with the Basic Conditions

Factual and Minor Amendments and Updates

- 4.71 I have not identified any typographical errors in the text of the GBNP that would affect the Basic Conditions. Minor amendments to the text can be made consequential to the recommended modifications, alongside any other minor non-material changes or updates, in agreement between GBPC and BBC.²² These can include those identified by GBPC in their letter of 5 August 2021 relating to the revised descriptive and updated paragraph references to the 2021 NPPF, where no substantive changes in policy have occurred.

5. Conclusions

Summary

- 5.1 The Great Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard to all the responses made following consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, together with the evidence documents submitted with the Plan and in the course of my examination.
- 5.2 I have made recommendations to modify some of the Policies to ensure that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

The Referendum and its Area

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates.
- 5.4 The Great Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan, as modified, has no policy or proposals which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary and which would require the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary. I therefore recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

²² PPG Reference ID: 41-106-20190509.

Overview

- 5.5 The production of the GBNP has undoubtedly required a high level of commitment and hard work by a group of volunteers from the local community. This task has no doubt been made more difficult by the abnormal conditions arising from COVID-19. I commend the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for producing a well written and effective Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.6 The Plan has achieved the difficult task of setting out positive proposals to enable Great Barford to accommodate the new housing required by the BBLP. GBPC has consulted with and taken into account the views of the local community, whilst seeking to allocate a new housing site which will benefit the community and protect the character and setting of Great Barford as an attractive and historic village within the countryside. As a result, the GBNP meets the Basic Conditions with the recommended modifications appended to my report, and the GBNP should provide an effective Plan for the management of the future planning of Great Barford.

Wendy J Burden

Examiner

Appendix: Modifications

Note: Some consequential renumbering, amendment to alphabetical listings etc within the Plan will be necessary as a consequence of the PMs set out below.

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Page 5 Paragraph 1.4	Add at the end of the final sentence: "in the period from 2020 to 2030".
PM2	Page 49 Annex 1 Policy Map 1	Add the boundary of the SPA as shown on the BBLP Policy Map for Great Barford.
PM3	Page 30 Policy ROS1	Delete Policy ROS1.
PM4	Page 30 Policy ROS2	Line 1: delete "should" and insert "must". Third bullet after "developments", delete "should" and insert "must".
PM5	Page 31 Policy ROS3	Replace the final clause of Policy ROS3 with: "Policies for managing development within Local Green Space should be compatible with their designation, being consistent with those for Green Belt."
PM6	Page 50 Appendix 1 Policy Map 2	Amend the GBNP Policy Map to include those sites which are designated as Village Open Space in ADLP Policy AD40 and shown on the BBLP Policy Map where this designation has not been replaced by a designation in the GBNP as LGS.
PM7	Page 33 Policy HE1	Delete the first sentence of Policy HE1 and replace with: "Development within the Great Barford Conservation Areas or likely to affect the setting of a Conservation Area must have regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the historic environment and of making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."

PM8	Page 34 Policy HE2	Delete Policy HE2.
PM9	Page 34 Policy HE3	Delete Policy HE3.
PM10	Page 37 Policy TT1	Delete Policy TT1.
PM11	Page 37 Policy TT2	Delete first clause of Policy TT2 after "transport". Merge the second clause after "transport".
PM12	Page 39 Policy TT3	Delete Policy TT3.
PM13	Page 41 Policy CF1	Replace the final sentence (including deletion of all the bullet points) of the first paragraph of Policy CF1 to read: "The main facility in the village to which this relates is the village hall."

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Foreword

With changes in Central Government planning legislation, the Localism Act 2011 introduced to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the idea of local communities being able to shape development and land use in their locality. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 came into force on 06 April 2012.

Around this time, Bedford Borough Council was already reviewing local planning policies to bolster the existing Local Plan 2002. Bedford's Development Plan was made up of a series of Local Development Documents. The overall strategy for the borough was set out in the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan 2008, and the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan 2008. The adoption of these led to the deletion of some saved Local Plan policies, and were supplemented by the later adoption of the Allocations and Designations Local Plan in 2013. Together, these would shape the borough's development requirements up to 2021.

The recent changes to the planning system meant that Bedford Borough must consider future local need and identify its own targets for growth and development. This manifested itself in the production of a new Local Plan for Bedford Borough that will set out how much growth there should be, and where it should take place. That work has culminated in the emergence, and adoption on 15 January 2020, of the Bedford Local Plan 2030, to identify and define development growth for the next ten years.

It was during the early stages of evolving the Local Plan that the Borough started consulting on various spatial growth strategies. It soon became apparent that growth was not going to be contained within the previous developments concentrated towards the south and west of Bedford; there was a desire to branch out into the rural parts in the northern part of the borough. This strategy started to put focus on the Rural Key Service Centres, to include Great Barford, in delivering some of the required growth.

Stories from around the rest of the country started painting a picture of the rural idyll coming under fire, with development growth taking place without regard for the community's view of where it should be located. Other regional communities were taking advantage of legislation to provide planning policies for their local area.

In 2014, Great Barford Parish Council became aware that there would be a benefit to become actively involved in what was seen to be happening. There was a desire to have a say in determining our own future, and in a way that would also support development in the Borough. At the Parish Council meeting of 18 November 2014, it was resolved to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish. A new Sub-Committee was established to administer the process; a Chairman was proposed, and two other Councillors volunteered to establish the new Neighbourhood Plan Committee.

The decision was publicised in our Parish Magazine, the Barford Bugle, and we started a recruitment drive to elicit the help from parishioners, both Residents and Councillors. By May of 2015 we had sufficient support to call our first Neighbourhood Plan Committee meeting. Although some members

have come and gone as time moved on, we have always managed to maintain a really good balance of broad skills, knowledge and experience. Key members have many years experience in Local Planning, Architecture, Accountancy, Project Management and other supplementary expertise.

As we have found, enthusiasm counts for a lot, and where specific knowledge may have been wanting, there has always been copious information available from the likes of Locality. This organisation is a national membership network, supporting local communities; they are the go-to people for all things about Neighbourhood Planning. But we would not have got where we are today without the specialist knowledge and meticulous steering from our Neighbourhood Plan Consultant, Sally Chapman.

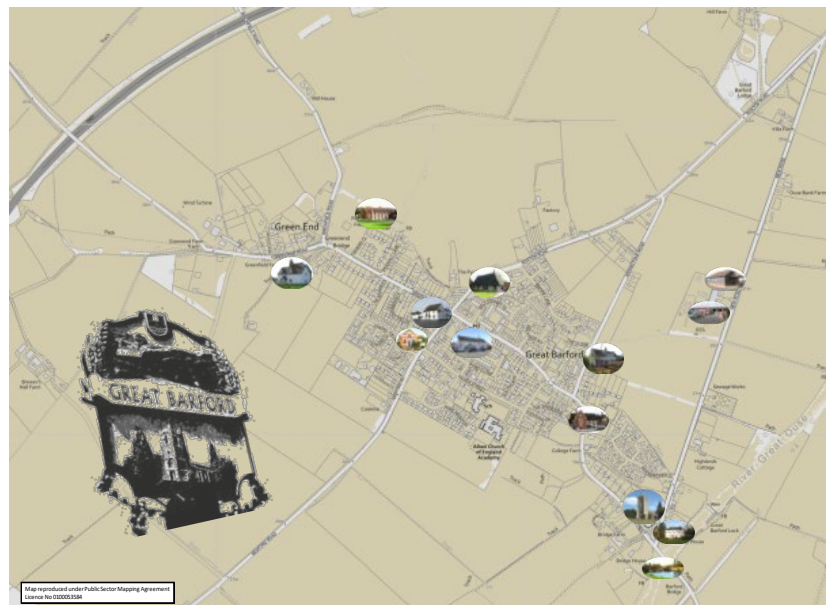
This Neighbourhood Plan for Great Barford has been created by Residents and Councillors for the benefit of the parish. It has identified local issues, developed a vision and objectives to prepare policies that will support planning, development and sustainability throughout the parish. When made, it becomes part of the technical evidence base in support of delivery of the Bedford Local Plan. The Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan provides guidance, policies and allocates development site opportunities, to meet the requirements set out in the Local Plan. It bestows control to the local community, to define and manage the future of our parish.

Graham Pendrey

Chair
Neighbourhood Plan
Great Barford Parish Council

The Neighbourhood Plan Team

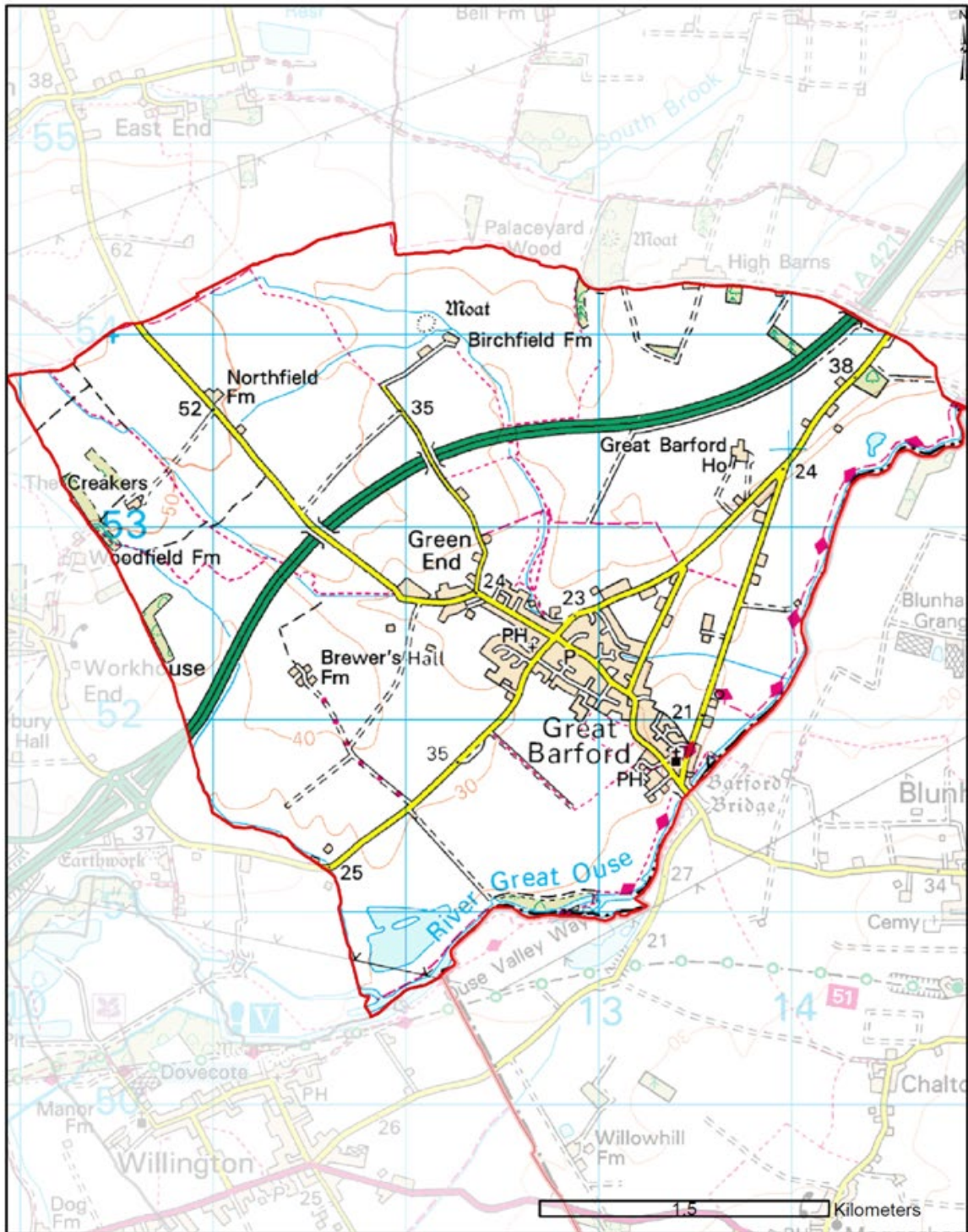
- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Di Ames | Councillor |
| Neil Ayers | Resident |
| Keith Blaxill | Resident |
| Noreen Byrne | Councillor |
| Jon Digweed | Resident |
| Duncan Edgar | Councillor |
| David Garrard | Councillor |
| Barry Harris | Resident |
| Simon Holt | Resident |
| Cliff Mace | Resident |
| Graham Pendrey | Councillor |
| Anne Sammé | Resident |
| Siobhan Vincent | Resident |
| Tim Wood | Councillor |
|
Sally Chapman |
Consultant |



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 gone 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 Neighbourhood Plan. It also provides local people with a say on how land use and buildings can develop over time, such as protecting open spaces and improving local character.
- 1.2. Producing a Neighbourhood Plan is a formal process involving several stages, governed by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, but critically important is that the Plan is developed with continuing community involvement. 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; and
 - meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. Great Barford Parish Council decided on 18 November 2014 to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish, to enable the local community to have a say in determining their own future, and in a way that would also support development planning in the Borough **in the period from 2020 to 2030**.
- 1.5. On 23 April 2015, BBC designated the area within the Great Barford Parish Boundary, as a Neighbourhood Area as shown on the map.

Parish Map



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Parish of Great Barford

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2. The Strategic Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) ~~2019~~ 2021 version was published in ~~February 2019~~ July 2021 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. The NPPF states that pursuing sustainable development includes making it easier to create jobs in villages, to promote gains in biodiversity, to achieve better quality design, to improve people's quality of life, and to provide a wider choice of high quality homes.
- 2.3. 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.

Local Planning Documents

- 2.4. The Local Plan currently consists of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 which was adopted on the 15th January 2020. There are also some remaining relevant policies in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 and these are referenced in the Local Plan 2030. The Borough also has a suite of Supplementary Planning Documents which provide more detailed information and application of policies. The current list is available on the Borough Councils website.

3. Parish Description

- 3.1. Great Barford is a village which historically owes its location to the Ouse River crossing and its proximity to the "Great North Road". The village is approximately 5 miles northeast of Bedford and 7 miles southwest of St Neots. It has good links to Milton Keynes (22 miles), Cambridge (25 miles), Peterborough (35 miles) and London (62 miles).
- 3.2. The centre of the village is the crossroads between the Bedford Road and Roxton Road (northeast southwest) C44 (formerly A428) and the High Street and Green End Road (northwest southeast). New Road links Barford Bridge towards the A1 Black Cat roundabout.
- 3.3. The A421 has bypassed the village since 2006. The A421 dual carriageway, which will form part of the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, links the village towards the A1, M1 and M11 for connections to the major centres of London, Milton Keynes and Peterborough.

History and Growth of the Village

- 3.4. Great Barford has been inhabited since well before Roman times. This is evident in crop marks, which are seen by a variation in the growth of crops, visible from the air during certain times of the year.
- 3.5. One meadow situated along the High Street shows traces of an old medieval ridge and furrow field, probably the only one to be found within the village confines. This land was cultivated in the two-field system, one year for crop and the next for fallow. The field would have been a furrow long (furlong).
- 3.6. There is a mention of Great Barford in the Domesday Book. Local administration was divided into 'Hundreds', and 'The Hundred of Bereforde' was one of nine in 'Bedefordscire'. Its importance was probably due to its river crossing. Each 'Hundred' had a court which met in the open air. The Barford Court was probably marked by a cross, the base of which still exists, although at some unknown point it was moved to its present position on the corner of Silver Street and the High Street.
- 3.7. There appears to have been a bridge crossing since the 15th Century, when in 1427, £100 was left in the will of Sir Gerald Brayrooke "to replace a ford", the Barford Bridge was built. There is mention of an eight arch bridge in the 15th Century, with another arch being added in 1753. The bridge was widened in 1818 and finally, in 1874 a brick face was built out on the south east side to give the present width. There is no record of the additional arches being added, although there are now seventeen. It is a Scheduled Monument. The original area of the ford, from which Great Barford gained its name, was dug up in 1973 and was found to be formed of gravel, riverine clay, bricks and tiles. The first locks on the river were built in the 17th Century, with improvements during the 18th and 19th Centuries. All boating, except by canoe, became impossible when the sluice collapsed in 1933. Between 1974 and 1977 the river was dredged and the new weir and lock were constructed and moorings provided for pleasure boats. The adjacent grass terrace was taken over by the Parish Council and landscaped to create a village green.

- 3.8. The southern end of the village is dominated by the 15th Century church tower at All Saints Church which is listed at Grade II*. The date of the remaining nave is 15th or 16th Century, but the rest of the building is predominately 19th Century.
- 3.9. The school in the High Street was built in 1848, and in 1855 a house was added for the use of the headmaster. In 1958 it became a primary school, then in 1969 two new classrooms were built in Silver Street. The school continued on the two sites until the whole school relocated to Silver Street in 1980, making use of mobile classrooms.
- 3.10. Several buildings in the village are of significant interest and listed. There are three Conservation Areas in the parish – Great Barford Conservation Area; Great Barford Green End Conservation Area and Great Barford Hill Conservation Area.
- 3.11. During the 1960's and 1970's the development of Willoughby Farm (Maltings Way and Willoughby Close), Chapel Fields and Pym's Close increased the size of the village rapidly. More recently, developments have been built at Woodpecker Close and Hare Meadow, with a current new development underway at Roxton Road.

Landscape

- 3.12. The village of Great Barford lies in a shallow bowl within the landscape area known as the Great Ouse Clay Valley. The openness of the landscape in the Parish and long views across the gently rising slopes link with the adjacent Renhold Clay Farmland, to the north and north-west of the village, and East Marston Clay Vale landscape type to the south east. The relatively level topography means that tall structures and large scale buildings are highly visible. The visual sensitivities around the village are evident by views to All Saints Church with its 15th century tower and the early 15th century Scheduled Monument Barford Bridge. Close by there are tranquil views across the open water and along the river corridors enclosed by woodlands.

Green Infrastructure (GI)

- 3.13. Green Infrastructure (GI) is a descriptive term which describes the network of open spaces, countryside, footpaths, the heritage landscape, rivers/stream etc. A good GI network can significantly improve people's quality of life and health as well as providing habitats for plants and wildlife.
- 3.14. The Bedfordshire & Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan (2007) identifies 11 strategic GI corridors across the county. The parish lies at the intersection of two of these corridors – the River Ivel Valley and the Greensand Ridge – and as such is a significant component of Bedfordshire's GI network.
- 3.15. Great Barford contains large green areas which are both natural and manmade. The village green is at the far south of the village next to the bridge on the bank of the river.
- 3.16. There are parcels of agricultural meadow along the High Street towards the centre of the village that give open views. There are fields which grow arable crops up to the A421 and come quite close to the centre of the village.
- 3.17. New estates have been built with their own greens. Trees are in abundance along New Road and the High Street. There are footpaths and bridleways within easy walking distance from the centre of the village.

Education

- 3.18. Great Barford Primary Academy provides children with education from ages 3 to 11. For secondary education, children have to commute away from the village.

Recreation Facilities

- 3.19. There is a playing field in Green End Road at the north end of the village, play and outdoor gym equipment, cricket and football pitches are part of this playing field. Other playgrounds are located at Jubilee Park, Hare Meadow and Woodpecker Close. A Bowls Club is also at Woodpecker Close.

Local Business, Services and Employment

- 3.20. Several small and medium scale business enterprises can be found in Great Barford. These range from arable and livestock farming, tool and plant hire, small industrial units and home workers. There are also a Post Office, Farm Butchers, 2 Shops, 2 Public Houses with Restaurants and a Coffee Shop.

Population & Household Data

- 3.21. The Census 2011 data shows the Parish of Great Barford to have a population of 2003, in 881 dwellings. Great Barford has a broadly similar age profile to Bedford Borough.
- 3.22. Great Barford has high home ownership (80%) with 8% of households renting from social landlords and 12% renting privately. Housing is a mix of detached (46%), terraced (28%) and semi-detached (24%) dwellings.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. The Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan has engaged with local residents and stakeholders throughout its development. The Parish Council have been working on the Neighbourhood Plan since 2014. The Parish Council is updated on Neighbourhood Plan Progress at every meeting. A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was set up in 2014 and consists of residents and Parish Councillors. The minutes of each meeting is published on the Parish Council website.
- 4.2. The timeline shows engagement activities relating to the Neighbourhood Plan. Public events are highlighted in green.

Year	Period	Day	Item	Detail
2014	May	20	GBPC Minutes Item 18 - NP Group to be formed	Resolution made
2014	Jun	21	Village Fun Day Stand - Notice for volunteers	Public Event
2014	Q3		Bugle article - affordable housing survey	
2014	Q3		Bugle article - request volunteers	
2014	Nov	18	GBPC Minutes Item 4 - NP to move forward	Resolution made
2014	Q4		Bugle article - request volunteers	
2014	Dec	Xmas	Bridge article - request volunteers	

2015	Jan	07	GBPC Apply to designate NP area	
2015	Jan	09	BBC receive NP application letter	
2015	Feb	22	BBC publish NP application in Beds on Sunday	
2015	Q1		Bugle article - request volunteers	
2015	Q1		Bugle article - copy of BBC NP application notice	
2015	Mar	28	Information Day - recruitment drive	Public Event
2015	Apr	23	BBC Decision Statement Great Barford - signed	
2015	May	03	BBC publish decision statement in Beds on Sunday	
2015	Jun		GBPC Website NP Page created	
2015	Q2		Bugle article - NP Update	
2015	Jun	13	Village Fun Day - questionnaire	Public Event
2015	Q3		Bugle article - NP Update	
2015	Q4		Bugle article - NP Update	
2016	Q1		Bugle article - NP Update	
2016	Jun		NP Questionnaire issued	
2016	Q2		Bugle article - NP Update	
2016	Jun	11	Village Fun Day display	Public Event
2016	Q3		Bugle article - Questionnaire Results in VH - Advert	
2016	Q3		Bugle article - NP Update	
2016	Dec	04	Questionnaire Results in VH - Compiled results & presentation	Public Event
2017	Q1		Bugle article - NP Update	
2017	Q2		Bugle article - NP Update	
2017	Jun	17	Village Fun Day display - photos	Public Event
2017	Q3		Bugle article - NP Update	
2018	Q1		Bugle article - NP Update + call for small sites	
2018	Jun	23	Village Fun Day display - photos	Public Event
2018	Q2		Bugle article - NP Update	
2018	Q4		Bugle article - NP Update	
2018	Nov		GI Plan - Workshop - Invite to key stakeholders	
2018	Nov	13	GI Plan - Workshop - Event at VH	Public Event
2019	Q2		Bugle article - NP Update	
2019	Q2		Bugle article - GI Plan	
2019	May		AECOM - Site Assessment Report issued	Commissioned Report
2019	Jun	22	Village Fun Day display - photos	Public Event
2019	Jun		Bridge - GI Plan advert	
2019	Jun	29	GI Plan - Drop-In - Event at VH	Public Event
2019	Sept		Bridge - GI Plan advert	
2019	Sept	10	GI Plan Workshop Poster	
2019	Sept	10	GI Plan - Workshop 2 - Event at VH	Public Event
2019	Q3		Bugle article - NP Update	
2019	Q3		Bugle article - GI Plan	
2019	Nov		Facebook advert - Meet the Developers - Event Poster	

2019	Nov	23	Meet the Developers -Posters	
2019	Nov	23	Meet the Developers - Event at GBPA	Public Event
2019	Nov		Facebook advert - Feedback Consultation - Event Poster	
2019	Nov	05	Feedback Consultation - Event Posters	
2019	Dec	05	Feedback Consultation - Event at GBPA	Public Event
2019	Q4		Bugle article - NP Update	
2020	Q1		Bugle article - NP illustrations request	
2020	Q1		Bugle article - NP Update	
2020	Feb		GI Plan - Final issued	Commissioned Report
2020	Mar		AECOM - Site Assessment Report - Addendum issued	Commissioned Report
2020	Q2		Bugle article - NP Update	
2020	Q3		Bugle article - NP Update	
2020	Q4		Bugle article - NP Update Plus Reg 14 Centrefold Information	Reg 14 Flyer 4 page Pullout
2020	Dec	14	Reg 14 Pre Submission Consultation 7wk to 01 Feb 2021	Public Event
2021	Q1		Bugle article - NP Update	

- 4.3. Publicity for events and disseminating information about Neighbourhood Plan progress is given through the local newsletter, 'The Barford Bugle' which is distributed to all households in the Parish quarterly. Particular events are publicised through posters on lampposts and Parish Council Notice Boards, the Facebook Page and Parish Council website.



Swan by Village Green and Bridge

5. Vision and Objectives

- 5.1. The Vision and Objectives 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 village. The Vision is the overall aim of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Objectives are more detailed, allowing the development of policies which in turn will be used to comment on and determine planning applications.

Vision

Great Barford will continue to be a thriving village, nestled in open countryside with a historic association with the River Great Ouse to the south. It will maintain its rural identity and character offering high quality housing suitable for the many different times in resident's lives with facilities and services to help them enjoy a friendly and safe environment.

Businesses will be able to grow in the area with high quality infrastructure and communications.



The Old Crown – High Street

Objectives

- 1. Designs for future developments, whether for housing, business or leisure should maintain and enhance the essential rural ambience of the village, should be of an appropriate scale so as not to overwhelm its position or surroundings and should not detract from the visual aspect when entering the village.**
- 2. New development will incorporate measures to provide high speed broadband and sustainable building features and the use of householder sustainable environmental features will be encouraged.**
- 3. New housing developments should include a mix of housing types, sizes and affordability to create a framework in which a balanced community can grow and become established.**
- 4. New housing development will be visually attractive in design and landscaping and integrate as fully as possible with the existing village.**
- 5. The landscape, wildlife and habitats will be protected and enhanced. Existing green spaces will be protected, enhanced where appropriate and new spaces will be provided.**
- 6. The historic environment will be conserved and enhanced with new development respecting the characteristics and appearance of surrounding heritage assets.**
- 7. Well developed and integrated transport links to many places will be required, giving its residents travel options that reduce the dependence on the car in order to reduce the traffic through the village centre.**
- 8. Safe and attractive walking, riding and cycling will be provided through the provision of a complete and connected network of Public Rights of Way in an environment with protected rural and riverside character. Existing village facilities will be retained and enhanced, whilst new facilities to provide for the increasing population will be encouraged.**
- 9. Local businesses will be supported, any new commercial development will be appropriate in scale to the village.**

6. Sustainable Development

Introduction

- 6.1. Reflecting the NPPF and the consideration of locations for new housing development by Bedford Borough Council through the adopted Local Plan, there are several overarching Development Principles to ensure that new development is sustainable, achieves high design & environmental standards, reflects local preferences in terms of location and delivers new community infrastructure.
- 6.2. The Parish has a distinctive character and new development should protect, reflect and enhance that character. There is a need for development to contribute to the quality of life for residents, including healthy lifestyles, access to local services, green open spaces, safe places for active play, and to be accessible by walking and cycling and public transport.
- 6.3. It is generally accepted that new development is 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. However, in many ways the social implications of accepting more development underlie the key issues and need; namely for an investment in new community infrastructure, including a medical centre. The policies reflect the issues facing the Parish, the Vision and the Objectives.
- 6.4. For Great Barford, the principles of sustainable development are set out below.

Sustainable Development Principles

Sustainable development for Great Barford 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 character and landscape of the surroundings,*
- *Contributing towards community infrastructure,*
- *Providing superfast broadband (fibre-optic) connections,*
- *Ensuring that there is no increase in the risk of flooding,*
- *Meeting contemporary construction, energy efficiency and water management standards,*
- *Located and designed to enable safe walking and cycling to local services and facilities.*

The following adverse impacts must be avoided:

- *Avoidable intrusion into open countryside, and unacceptable impact on the landscape,*
- *Unacceptable impact on the significance of heritage assets including the Conservation Areas and their settings, and in particular the riverside area,*
- *The loss or inappropriate diversion of public rights of way,*
- *The loss of, or damage to, hedgerows, trees and local wildlife habitats and also internationally designated sites downstream on the River Great Ouse,*
- *A loss of amenity for existing residential properties and reduced efficiency for nearby businesses,*
- *Overloading existing utilities and services (water, drainage, sewage and waste,*
- *Increasing traffic through the already congested High Street area.*

7. Design of New Development

High Quality Design and Rural Character

- 7.1. The NPPF and the Neighbourhood Plan recognises that well-designed buildings and places improve the quality of life and that it is a core planning principle to secure good design. The Neighbourhood Plan wishes to reflect community opinion and aspirations and add a local dimension to the assessment of proposals for new housing. 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. Great Barford Character Assessment and Design Guide is a background document to the Neighbourhood Plan and gives more detailed design guidance.
- 7.2. Great Barford is a rural village set in a hollow, surrounded by open countryside and therefore hidden from distant view. The following are some of the key features and characteristics of the village and Parish and therefore important attributes that should be respected when considering any further development:
- The River Great Ouse and its water meadows, the established brook running through the village.
 - The relationship to adjacent countryside is part of the village; open fields (some of which are used for grazing) still run right into the heart of the village around the southern end of the High Street and either side of the A421 between Great Barford House and Green End.
 - The main exterior building material used in Great Barford is exposed brick of colours varying from red to yellow or buff. Rendering is also prevalent. Roofing types are almost universally pitched and consist of brown and grey tiles, slate and thatch. Buildings generally do not exceed two storeys in height.
 - Black weather boarded barns opposite the Church in the High Street, New Road and Addingtons Road.
 - Mature trees, ditches and ancient hedgerows.
 - Large areas of green, natural and manmade, all around the village.
 - Important Conservation Areas with buildings, listed and unlisted, and important archaeological remains all of which contribute positively to the character and unique identity of the village.



Roxton Road



Addingtons Road



Silver Street

- 7.3. Any new development should be of the density in keeping with its immediate area and where appropriate include landscaped open areas. It should not encroach upon surrounding landscape or spoil the views approaching the village. Materials and street furniture, that are inappropriate to the village setting, should be avoided.
- 7.4. Woodpecker Close, a relatively new housing development off New Road, is a good example of modern design and layout which respects the character of Great Barford in terms of building scale, layout, type and materials and relates well to its setting and the Conservation Area.
- 7.5. 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 village is protected, and its local distinctiveness is enhanced and reinforced.

Policy D1: High Quality Design and Rural Character

Proposals for good quality new development (including new buildings and extensions to existing buildings) will be supported, where they address all of the following criteria.

All new development will:

- *Relate to the existing development pattern in terms of enclosure and definition of streets/spaces, variation in plot size and position of buildings on the plot;*
- *Be of an appropriate scale, mass and density in relation to its setting;*
- *Use materials appropriate to the development's context;*
- *Create a place with a locally inspired or distinctive character;*
- *Buildings, landscaping and native planting should create well defined streets and spaces;*
- *Take advantage of any existing views into/from the site to enable easy access and navigation through and retain the rural feel of the village;*
- *Respect the local topography, landscape and water features, trees and plants, wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimate;*
- *Be well integrated with surroundings; reinforcing connections, taking opportunities to provide new ones; provide convenient access to community services and facilities;*
- *Have good access to public transport or otherwise help reduce car dependency;*
- *Integrate car parking within landscaping so that it does not dominate the street or cause excessive run-off from precipitation;*
- *Provide convenient well-screened storage; for bins and recycling that avoid pollution, bicycles and motor vehicles.*

Sustainable Design and Construction

- 7.6. Domestic heating and electricity requirements make up approximately 27% of the UK's total carbon emissions and heating (across all sectors) accounted for 37% of emissions in 2016). Decarbonising heat is therefore critical to tackling climate change at a national level and therefore also a key area in which Neighbourhood Plans can contribute to mitigation. The Local Plan 2030 deals with this issue through Policy 54, covering a reduction in carbon emissions as part of new development. This means that developments in Bedford Borough are required to achieve a better outcome than required through Building Regulations. Given the average cost of housing in Great Barford and the associated profit margin that developers are therefore making, it is considered that more ambitious energy efficient design could be incorporated into new buildings and the policy below gives further detail on this issue.

- 7.7. Great Barford has a significant proportion of traditional buildings (which are unlikely to have cavity walls). Properties without cavity walls (largely built before 1919) are likely to be less energy efficient, cost more to heat, and householders will therefore potentially be more vulnerable to ill health or fuel poverty depending on their economic situation. Importantly, these buildings will also have a higher carbon footprint associated with the lack of efficiency. Fitting of sustainable design features to existing properties will therefore also be encouraged. The retrofit of heritage properties/assets is also encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate, providing it preserves their heritage significance and only once the appropriate permissions and consents are secured prior to any works commencing.

Policy D2: Sustainable Design and Construction

The design and standard of any new development must include sustainable design and construction features and be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting zero carbon emissions.

Where appropriate, developments should include the following:

- ***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;***
- ***Non-residential developments should aim to meet the Buildings Research Establishment BREEAM building standard 'excellent';***
- ***Any new development to incorporate on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels, where possible;***
- ***The retrofit of heritage properties/assets is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate, providing it safeguards historic characteristics and development is done with engagement and permissions of relevant organisations;***
- ***Alterations to existing buildings must be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with or preferably exceed sustainable design and construction standards.***

8. Housing

New Housing

- 8.1. Great Barford is classed as a Key Service Centre in the Local Plan 2030, one of 8. These are villages which contain a good range of services and are well connected to larger town centres by regular public transport. They provide a strong service role for the local community and surrounding area. Local Plan Policy 4S Amount and Distribution of Homes, requires Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan to allocate a site or sites for 500 homes. The policy places a short timescale upon the Neighbourhood Plan, it must be

submitted by the 15th January 2021 or Bedford Borough Council will allocate additional sites.

- 8.2. In 2019, in order to independently assess the options for developing 500 homes in Great Barford, a Site Assessment report was commissioned by the Parish Council and carried out by AECOM, an independent company and funded through the Government Neighbourhood Planning Grant Scheme. An assessment was carried out of all the sites submitted to Bedford Borough for their 'call for sites'. Three options were forthcoming from the commissioned report, two from the investigations and a third which had already been produced by BBC. All three options were considered to give the development required and minimising the impact on the village.
- 8.3. Consultation was carried out in late 2019, firstly via a 'Developers Forum' where all potential developers were invited to present their proposals to the public via an exhibition in the School Hall. A second event was held where residents could express their likes and dislikes of the options. Developers did not attend the second event which allowed residents to express their views freely. Residents were asked to fill in a form, which was then analysed. The outcome was that residents clearly preferred the option of one site providing all the development in one location, known as Great Barford West. On balance, this site would involve less direct impact on residents in terms of traffic flows (assuming the trend that most traffic would travel towards Bedford, and therefore not through the constricted High Street and side roads) as presented in Transport Assessment Reports supporting recent planning applications (BBC Ref: 20/00138/MAO and 20/00139/MAO); not building to the east avoids flood risk areas identified on government flood risk maps; and avoiding the high ground to the north would respect the recommendations in the BBC Landscape Sensitivity Study for Group 1 & 2 Villages – a document in support of the BBC Local Plan 2030. The site is therefore allocated for development and shown on the Policies Map. The settlement boundary, (defined as the Settlement Policy Area in the Local Plan) will not be updated to include the allocation in this Neighbourhood Plan. This is because the allocated site is much larger than needed to accommodate 500 houses. The final development will also incorporate substantial landscape buffers, green infrastructure, play spaces etc. Until the layout of the developed area is decided, it is not appropriate to define the settlement boundary.
- 8.4. Further detail of the site allocation process and extensive consultation is set out in the Consultation Statement and the Site Allocations Report.
- 8.5. In allowing development on this site for 500 dwellings, it is very important that safe pedestrian access to the school and shops is easy and a means of crossing the road is essential infrastructure. In terms of landscape impact, a substantial buffer will be required to the countryside and that green spaces are used throughout the new development to provide an attractive environment for residents, linking into the existing housing development in the village. Any existing public Right of Way or private access agreement shall be maintained. Different developers will need to work together to ensure that the development principles are delivered across the whole site and a Design Code will be required to ensure that the development is appropriate to its 'gateway' village location and sensitive to the nearby Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.

- 8.6. Development must be designed to mitigate any potential adverse impacts to both surface water runoff and groundwater levels. Flood risk, on and off the site, must be reduced through good design to safeguard both the new development and existing properties throughout the village. The Brook as well as the River Great Ouse contribute to the drainage for the majority of land up to the bypass to the north and around Green End, and the proposed new development must not adversely affect the current drainage.

Affordable Housing

- 8.7. Affordable housing will be required to be delivered as part of the new development and Local Plan Policy 58S requires that housing development on sites of 10 or more residential units or 0.5 hectares or more will provide 30% affordable housing with 78% of the dwellings as social or affordable rented properties and the remainder (22%) as other forms of affordable housing.
- 8.8. The Housing Needs Survey in 2012 identified 24 households in some form of housing need. As some of this was to fall within the next three years (up to 2015), the actual requirement was set for 18 new homes. There were also 14 households already on the Borough's Housing Register with connections to Great Barford at that time.

Affordable Housing Mix	(2012 Housing Needs Identified)	Woodpecker Close	Hare Meadow	Roxton Road New Development	Totals
1 x bed	(10)	1	4	4	9
2 x bed	(5)	10	8	21	39
3 x bed	(3)	5	4	6	15
4 x bed	0	1	0	0	1

- 8.9. This data shows that in terms of the identified need in 2012, the requirements for 2 and 3 bed units have been exceeded by development already constructed in the village, while that for 1 bedroom units will still not be met after Roxton Road has been completed. It is interesting also to observe that whilst the provision of housing focuses very much on 2 and 3 bedroomed units, the identified demand showed a clear skew towards a need for 1 bedroomed units. This has not been reflected proportionally when development has been brought forward.
- 8.10. It is therefore considered essential that when affordable housing is brought forward in conjunction with development allocated in this Plan, it comprises a full range of housing, specifically to include 1 bedroomed units. It is recommended that an up to date Housing Needs Survey should be carried out at the time of the Development Brief, but acknowledged that the new housing development in Great Barford will need to cater for Borough wide housing need.

Market Housing Mix

- 8.11. The mix of housing to be provided on this site gives an opportunity to redress the balance of house size in the Parish which may also help with affordability issues. House prices in Bedford Borough are higher than the national average and increased by about 20% from 2012 to 2017. Affordability is an issue with the average house price costing 8.4 times average earnings. This situation is getting worse.
- 8.12. Great Barford, with an overall average price of £366,427, was similar in terms of sold prices to nearby Renhold (£375,289), but was more expensive than Sandy (£272,962) and cheaper than Blunham (£458,000). Of the 87 properties sold in the last 2 years (Jan 2018-Jan 2020) the least expensive was a terraced house at £104,000, the most expensive, just above £1 million (source Rightmove January 2020). Overall sold prices in Great Barford over the last year were 6% down on the previous year and 14% up on the 2015 level of £322,423.
- 8.13. When the Housing Needs Survey was undertaken in 2012, the household survey identified that 40% of respondents were in favour of smaller houses for first time buyers and young families. 37% wanted to see more bungalows for older people to buy, and 29% wanted extra care housing. This latter finding is particularly interesting, as there is presently no accommodation within the Parish for those needing additional care.
- 8.14. Assessment of the new market housing provided on the three sites (Hare Meadow, Woodpecker Close and Roxton Road) developed more recently in the village shows a clear market emphasis on 3 and 4 bedroomed properties. There have been no 1 bedroom units constructed for the open market, and only one 2 bedroomed unit. In addition, the 2011 Census demonstrated that the village has 45.7% detached housing, compared with 27.4% in the Borough, and only 2.5% of its homes in flats, compared with 17.6% in the Borough. These figures further emphasise the market share of properties is slanted towards more expensive detached properties.
- 8.15. Therefore, in order to ensure the potential for families to continue to thrive within our village across the generations, it is considered essential that all new development should comprise a full range of market housing, to include a variety of bedroom number options, and a range of attached and detached properties, of single storey, two storey and two and a half storey proportions. Extra care housing would also be welcomed, as those in need currently have to leave the village, and it would also provide a source of local employment.



Woodpecker Close



Green End Road

Policy H1: Location for Future New Housing Development

Land at Great Barford West as shown on the Policies Map will be developed for residential use for a maximum of 500 dwellings and associated open space. A Development Brief must be prepared for the site prior to any planning application being submitted encompassing the requirements of Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and these key principles for development:

- ***A Design Code to ensure the appearance and layout of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and the design approach is cohesive across the whole site;***
- ***The 'gateway to the village' location must be appropriately designed for, to ensure that the appearance of development along the Bedford Road frontage reflects the rural village location;***
- ***The provision of a range of housing types and sizes, including affordable housing. A generous proportion of smaller housing units, including 1 bedroom, must be provided both for affordable and market homes;***
- ***The provision of extra care housing will be required;***
- ***The provision of footpaths, cycleways and a pedestrian/cycleway crossing on Bedford Road to provide safe access to the school and village services;***
- ***The provision of footpath and cycle links to integrate with neighbouring development and improve the cycle network to Bedford;***
- ***A Transport Assessment detailing impact on highways network and mitigation measures;***
- ***Evaluation of impacts on the historic environment including archaeology and measures to minimise harm and provide mitigation measures where necessary;***
- ***A site specific Flood Risk Assessment to determine effects of development on the adjacent flood plain and any mitigation measures required;***
- ***A site specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required to determine the developable area of the site. New development will be steered towards areas at least risk of flooding and measures will be required to reduce existing surface water flooding in the vicinity of the site and minimize the consequential impact of surface water flooding through the Brook and the village to the river;***
- ***Avoiding flooding is especially important as it will also protect the National Site Network sites downstream of Great Barford that are protected by law;***
- ***Contributions to recreational and community facilities, in particular the provision of a new medical centre whether on or off site;***
- ***Provision of additional secondary school capacity to be agreed by the Local Education Authority;***
- ***Provision of on-site green infrastructure including informal open spaces to enhance the character of the village and substantial planting at the perimeters to provide a definitive 'edge' to the development and to assimilate it into the surrounding landscape;***

9. The Natural Environment

- 9.1. The top priority identified by residents through consultation is protection of the countryside; furthermore 83% of respondents stated that they used country walks often or sometimes. Open/green spaces/the riverside and the rural atmosphere rated highly as factors contributing to the quality of life rated as very important by 87% and 85% of the respondents respectively.

Landscape

- 9.2. Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan demonstrates the value that local people place on the countryside setting of the village. The Landscape Character Assessment (2014) for this part of Bedfordshire indicates a high-quality landscape, where characteristic features are well represented and in good condition and there is a wide and long history represented in the landscape. Policy 37 of the Local Plan requires that development will protect and enhance the key landscape features and visual sensitivities of the identified landscape character areas.
- 9.3. BBC as part of their Local Plan preparation, produced reports for individual villages which highlights the key landscape and visual sensitivities. This document is called the Landscape Sensitivity Study; Group 1 and Group 2 Villages, Bedford & Kempston Urban Edge (January 2018). The purpose of this was to form part of the site selection process to identify whether or not a potential site is consistent with the guidelines of the Landscape Character Assessment. This helps in choosing between sites and considering their effect on landscape sensitivities. It has been used during the site selection process as set out in the AECOM Site Assessment Report 2019.
- 9.4. The character analysis also helps for smaller scale development and in identifying mitigation measures that may be necessary to minimise the impact of development and enhance important landscape features. It supports an approach that requires development to be unobtrusive and not lead to loss of characteristic features.
- 9.5. The village itself falls within the 4A Great Ouse Clay Valley landscape character area, Character area 1E Renhold Clay Farmland lies to the north and west of the village. Much of the village is low lying with the majority of buildings located in the Clay Valley area. More detailed information is set out in the Background Evidence Document, however the visual sensitivities and development guidelines in landscape terms are summarised below.

Visual Sensitivities	Development Guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is the sense of openness and wide views across the gently rising slopes linking with the adjacent Clay Farmland and Clay Vales landscape types which give variety by the subtly changing landform and the scattered woodlands which would be sensitive to inappropriate development. • The landscape would be sensitive to change from the expansion of the village with small scale development at its edges and also from small scale infill development. • The visual sensitivities around the village are evident by views to All Saints Church with its 15th century tower and the early 15th century Scheduled Monument Barford Bridge. Close by there are tranquil views across open water bodies and along the river corridors enclosed by woodlands. • The level topography means that tall structures and large scale buildings are highly visible. • Seek to avoid adverse impacts on the character of the river corridor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain the separation of individual villages - avoid linear development along roads merging settlements. • Preserve an open setting of the distinctive medieval Barford Bridge and All Saints church tower. • Consider visual impact of development in terms of massing, rooflines, scale, materials and visual appearance. • Conserve the rural setting of the settlement and enhance the settlement edge for example by appropriately designed woodland planting to foil large-scale development. • Explore options for improving recreational opportunities and public access to the river. Monitor the associated development of facilities e.g. visitor centres and car parking that might impact upon the surviving sections of rural, tranquil character in the immediate river corridor.



Barford Bridge - Scheduled Monument and Grade I Listed

- 9.6. The Green Infrastructure Plan has identified the key views in the local landscape and these should be preserved by ensuring that new development does not block or intrude on them. They are shown on the Policies Map.
- 9.7. 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 NE1: Protecting the Landscape

Any proposals for development in the Parish should recognise and seek to protect and enhance the historic and natural landscape and local character of the Parish, including key views as shown on the Policies Map.

New buildings must be assessed for their impact on the landscape and where significant adverse intrusion on the landscape is identified, particularly at the edge of the village, mitigation will be required or proposals will be resisted.

Field patterns and elements of the landscape heritage of the area, including ridge and furrow, field ponds, mature trees and historic hedgerows should be protected and incorporated into any landscape design schemes and their long-term maintenance ensured.

Nature Conservation

- 9.8. Protection of the nature conservation interest in the Parish, which is valued by local people, is critical, with reference to the important habitats and landscape identified in Green Infrastructure Plan 2019 (GI Plan) which is a background document to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 9.9. The Local Plan provides protection to locally important sites, habitats and species under Policy 42S, seeking biodiversity enhancement through Policy 43. 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 2019 Environment Bill. 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 Great Barford where new development will abut the countryside, it is really important that this principle is adopted to mitigate the impact of losing biodiversity value of undeveloped land to development.
- 9.10. Within the parish are three County Wildlife Sites (CWS). Birchfield Farm Meadows CWS is recognized because the site supports a range of habitats including species rich neutral grassland meadows, an area of ruderal vegetation, a pond, ditch, mature trees and a traditional apple orchard. Great Barford House Grassland CWS is recognized because it

is a good example of grassland on Boulder Clay or decalcified Boulder Clay and comprises a single field of neutral grassland and a very narrow roadside belt of broadleaved woodland adjacent to the southeast. The third CWS within the parish is Great Barford Gravel Pits CWS, the pits were created relatively recently following gravel extraction, and are important for birds, including breeding, passage and wintering species as well as dragonflies and damselflies. There are also two CWS adjacent to the parish boundary, Palacey Wood CWS to the north of the parish, recognized for its ancient semi-natural woodland. The site also contains earthworks and a moat. The River Great Ouse CWS also runs along the southern boundary of the parish, recognized because it is a river and because of adjacent riparian habitats. There are no nationally important nature conservation sites or veteran trees within the Parish.

- 9.11. Species records of note include birds from the gravel pits in the south of the parish; amphibians (Smooth and Great Crested Newt) and mammals (Hedgehog, Otter, Stoat and Weasel) around Great Barford village and near the river; and plants and invertebrates within the churchyard and along the river. There is a scattering of other notable records.
- 9.12. A wildlife corridor is an area of habitat connecting wildlife populations separated by human activities or structures (such as roads and built development). The most obvious example of such a corridor is the River Great Ouse and its banks. The GI Plan identifies a biodiversity network which suggests where biodiversity enhancements would be most beneficial.
- 9.13. 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. 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. Landscaping schemes will be required to use native species for planting schemes, particularly those found locally. All new development should seek to increase biodiversity such as incorporating bat boxes etc into new buildings, particularly at the edges of the settlement.
- 9.14. Where Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDS) are required to serve new developments, every opportunity to link them into habitats should be taken.

Policy NE2: Nature Conservation

New development will be required to protect and enhance existing natural features of sites, enhance biodiversity and support the biodiversity network and aspirations identified in the Green Infrastructure Plan.

Development should provide a net biodiversity gain of 10% as set out in the Environment Bill 2019 (or as superseded). Provision of appropriate species-related measures will be required, including, for example, swift bricks, bat and owl boxes and the incorporation of native species into landscaping schemes.

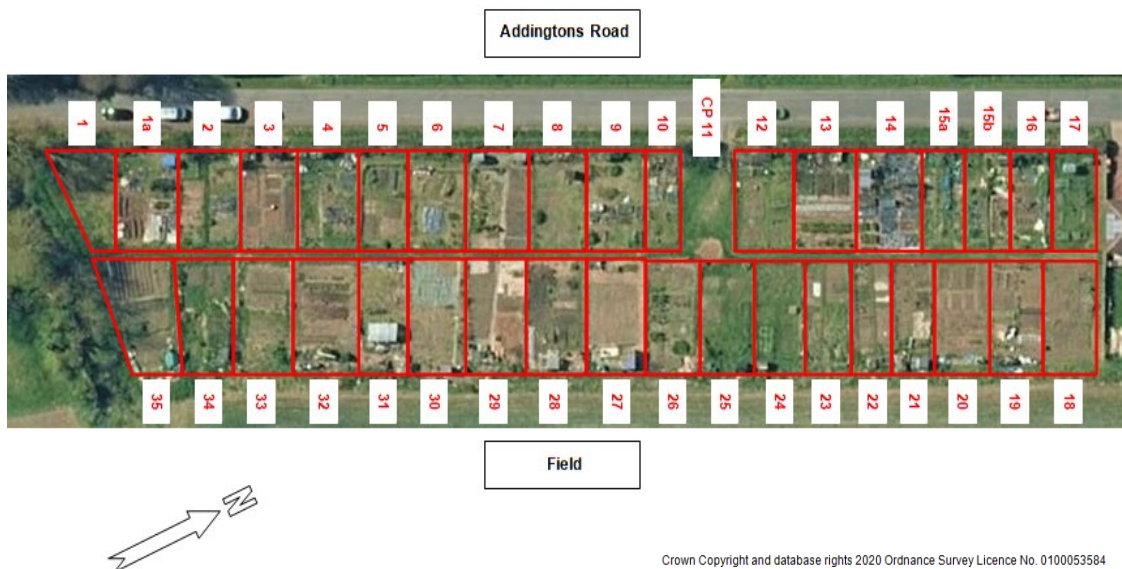
Opportunities should also be taken by developers and landowners to link sustainable drainage solutions in new developments to complement local nature conservation objectives and to protect National Site Network sites downstream on the River Great Ouse.

10. Recreation and Open Space

- 10.1. The Parish has a reasonable number of green spaces of different types. The GI Plan sets out the number and location of these, they range from formal equipped recreation grounds to sites that are protected by wildlife designations.
- 10.2. The Parish Council owns and maintains the land next to Barford Bridge lying between New Road and the River and adjacent to the footpath running from New Road to the weir, opposite The Anchor public house. This is registered as a Village Green, and has considerable protection in law under the Victorian statutes of the Inclosure Act 1857 and Commons Act 1876. These statutes confer that inhabitants of the locality within which a Village Green is situated have the right to use that green for lawful sports and pastimes, but the right to take part in lawful sports and pastimes on a green extends only to local inhabitants, not the public at large. The Parish Council hold the fishing rights, the Environment Agency has 48 hour mooring rights, and the slipway structure is privately owned and built on a parcel of land leased from the Parish Council for that sole purpose. Locals have limited slip access rights, but otherwise fees may be applicable and paid to the slip owner.
- 10.3. Great Barford Bowls and Petanque Club has its facilities in the heart of the village behind the old schoolhouse, but accessed by vehicle through Woodpecker Close. The club is in use most days of the week between May and September, with bowling on the green and petanque on the floodlit piste. The clubhouse is also used by additional local organisations for yoga, pilates, whist and other activities throughout the year.
- 10.4. Great Barford Playing Fields Association is a charitable trust, Charity No. 284811, set up with the objective to manage a Recreation Ground for the benefit of the inhabitants of the parish of Great Barford. Currently the GBPFA is trying to raise awareness and secure

funds to develop a site that it already owns behind the Great Barford Primary Academy school premises, to build multi-sports courts which can be used for tennis, 5 aside football and netball/basketball. The courts will be available to use by the residents of Great Barford. The project will benefit all ages in the local village.

- 10.5. Allotments are well used and located at Addingtons Road. Covering an area of 0.66 hectares, there is a total of 36 Plots, including two ½ Plots, all of which are in current



Allotments – Addingtons Road

use, with a waiting list of 7 applications as of February 2020. The land is in the ownership of Bedford Borough Council, but Allotment Tenancy is administered locally by Great Barford Parish Council. The Green Infrastructure Plan identifies the Allotments as a high priority green space, with aspirations to create new Allotments and extend the existing Allotments site at Addingtons Road.

- 10.6. Within new development, the requirement for new open spaces for sport and recreation alongside new development is included in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 Policy AD28 and these standards will continue to apply as explained in the Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (2013) and the Local Plan 2030.
- 10.7. Open spaces can always be improved, through management plans, improvements to access and boundary treatments. The GI Plan gives more detail and it would be appropriate for new housing developments to contribute towards such improvements, where possible.
- 10.8. There are currently two small Community Orchards situated in the open spaces at Woodpecker Close and Willoughby Close.

Policy ~~ROS1~~: Existing Open Spaces

~~Existing open spaces and recreation facilities, including the following will be protected from development:~~

- ~~• Village Green (by Barford Bridge),~~
- ~~• Woodpecker Close amenity greenspace and children's play area,~~
- ~~• Woodpecker Close Community Orchard,~~
- ~~• Willoughby Close amenity greenspace,~~
- ~~• Willoughby Close Community Orchard,~~
- ~~• Jordans Close,~~
- ~~• Great Barford Playing Fields,~~
- ~~• Jubilee Play Area (between Green End Road and Chapel Field),~~
- ~~• Hare Meadow children's play area,~~
- ~~• Allotments,~~
- ~~• Bowling Club and Green.~~

~~Proposals which would reduce the quality or quantity of these facilities will only be permitted where the existing facilities are re-provided to a better quality or quantity in an appropriate location.~~

Policy ~~ROS2~~ **ROS1: Open Space Provision as Part of New Development**

*Open space should **must** be provided within new development to accord with the standards set by Bedford Borough Council and the following criteria should be met:*

- Contributions/improvements to open space should be targeted towards those set out in the Great Barford Green Infrastructure Plan where appropriate;*
- Efforts should be made to develop green corridors between the village and the countryside;*
- Developments ~~should~~ **must** incorporate tree and shrub planting, preferably native and local species to be used;*
- Suitable arrangements must be incorporated for the costs of future maintenance of these spaces.*

Local Green Spaces

- 10.9. Consultation showed that people place a high value on the relationship between the village, the countryside and on the open spaces that help to define the landscape and character of the area. Designation of Local Green Spaces (LGS) gives a very high level of protection to such open spaces. 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 100 102 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.

10.10. As a result of detailed considerations, using the Great Barford LGS Assessment Methodology as set out in the Local Green Space Assessment Report, Great Barford has six sites that are to be designated Local Green Spaces. Three of these (Jubilee Play area off Chapel Field, Playing Field at Fishers Close and the Allotments on Addingtons Road) were originally assessed by Bedford Borough Council and recommended for designation. A further three sites (Jordans Close Activity Centre, Woodpecker Close and The Village Green) were assessed using the Great Barford Local Green Space Assessment Methodology and met the criteria necessary for designation.

10.11. Four further sites were assessed, but did not meet the requirements for designation. The Local Green Spaces are shown on the Policies Map

Policy ~~ROS3~~ ROS2: Local Green Spaces

The following areas shown on the Policies Map are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- Jubilee Play area off Chapel Field,
- Playing Field at Fishers Close,
- Allotments on Addingtons Road,
- Jordans Close Activity Centre,
- Woodpecker Close amenity space,
- Village Green.

~~*Development will be resisted in the Local Green Spaces to protect their special character and contribution to the Parish unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.*~~

Policies for managing development within Local Green Space should be compatible with their designation, being consistent with those for Green Belt.

11. Historic Environment

Conservation Areas

- 11.1. Located on the eastern boundary of Bedford Borough, Great Barford lies amongst the meadowlands of the river Great Ouse, with Conservation Areas that reflect very much the development of the village. There were prehistoric and Roman settlements along the river valley before the parish of Great Barford was established in the late Saxon period. The village originated around the river crossing, which was a ford before the medieval bridge was built. There were other hamlets in the vicinity such as at the crossroads, where the north to south route running to the river meets the east to west route to Bedford, and at Green End. The scattered buildings of these older settlements have been linked over the last five centuries by later developments, mostly post war, so that Great Barford is now primarily a linear settlement.
- 11.2. The loosely curving thread of the High Street forms the basis for the Great Barford Conservation Area and it links the various older buildings established in Silver Street and Addingtons Road with the area around the Church. The northern end of the Conservation Area is fairly well covered with trees, principally around Brook House and fringing the brook, an area characterised by varied well spaced buildings and individual plots. The High Street in general is characterised by an attractive combination of walls, trees, and older historic buildings, mainly cottages and houses of brick or colour washed plaster or rough cast, and timber frames.
- 11.3. The main Conservation Area contains several listed buildings (in addition to the Scheduled Monument and Grade 1 listed Bridge) of which a number are in relatively close proximity to All Saint's Church and The Anchor Public House. An important characteristic of this Conservation Area is the variation that exists in building groups. The intimate grouping around the church and The Anchor Public House contrasts with the open land and buildings opposite, on the west side of the High Street, where buildings are well set back from the road and generally spread out.
- 11.4. This area includes the open space alongside the river and the complimentary water meadows on the Blunham side, from which excellent views of the bridge and church can be gained.
- 11.5. At the northern end of the built part is Green End Conservation Area contains more listed buildings at Green End, with several old Farm Houses, rural green space to the south and further open space around the recent Village Hall and Playing Field.
- 11.6. Great Barford Hill Conservation Area encompasses the land to the east, around Great Barford House, and includes other listed buildings in this vicinity.

Policy HE1: Great Barford Conservation Areas and their Settings

~~Development within the Conservation Areas and their settings should seek to preserve or enhance their special interest through high quality design, set in a clear context in terms of materials, scale, setting and layout.~~ **Development within the Great Barford Conservation Areas or likely to affect the setting of a Conservation Area must have regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the historic environment and of making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.** ~~The following criteria apply:~~

- *New houses or conversions should have active frontages, orientated to face the roadway;*
- *The intimate character of the area is retained;*
- *Development should be of an appropriate scale and mass for the immediate area;*
- *Use of locally distinctive details, (materials, openings/access and boundary treatments);*
- *The impact of development on views into and out of the Conservation Areas;*

Applicants must explain, in a Design and Access Statement and/or Heritage Statement, how the proposal will address these criteria.

Built Heritage Assets

- 11.7. It is essential that the location and design of new development has regard to the historic character of the local area. This protection is in accordance with the guidance contained in paragraphs ~~192-199~~ **197-205** of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 11.8. There are 35 Grade II listed buildings in Great Barford Parish, the Grade II* listed Church of All Saints and Barford Bridge and Causeway which is a Scheduled Monument as well as Grade I listed. There are 2 further Scheduled Monuments, Birchfield Farm and Palaceywood. Other historic buildings and features, which may not be of sufficient architectural or historic merit to justify listing, are an important part of the character of the Parish. These are known as non-designated heritage assets and many of them are within the Conservation Areas. The policy will help to ensure they are retained. Enhancements to the local features may be sought through funding bids to support their management.

Policy HE2: Protecting and Enhancing Local Heritage Assets

All development proposals affecting local heritage assets, both designated and undesignated 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 loss of, or substantial harm, to a local asset, will be resisted unless exceptional circumstance is demonstrated.

Barford Bridge, Causeway and the surrounding setting must be respected and development which would adversely affect this asset and its surroundings will be resisted.



Barford Bridge and Causeway

Archaeology

- 11.9. The NPPF identifies the historic environment as a Core Planning Principle. The extent of Iron Age, Roman and mediaeval archaeology in Great Barford as summarized in the Great Barford Green Infrastructure Plan is a key element of the historic environment and this policy will ensure that development takes account of archaeological considerations.

Policy HE3: Protecting and Enhancing Archaeological Sites

Development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the potential impact on above and below ground archaeology including if appropriate the results of predetermination archaeological evaluation, so as to inform mitigation strategies to ensure that evidence of past environments is not lost.

12. Traffic and transport

- 12.1. Great Barford is a rural village and transport is essential for residents to move between locations either for work, education, leisure or business. Very few journeys are made for no purpose, and most people want to travel efficiently and safely to their destination. Starting from the premise that sustainable growth cannot be fully realised without a range of supporting infrastructure, the following policies and text set out the context for delivering transport infrastructure.
- 12.2. Transport and accessibility are fundamental to the delivery of Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan's spatial strategy. It is important that new development is located in the most sustainable locations and accessible by a choice of travel modes, including walking, cycling and public transport. This will help to reduce the need for people to travel by car, minimise congestion, improve road safety and meet climate change reduction targets. This also links with the need to improve people's health by creating more opportunities for people to walk or cycle rather than using a car.
- 12.3. Great Barford's rural character make car use necessary for many residents and so it is essential that new developments are planned from the outset to provide sufficient parking spaces for residents and visitors and are equipped with domestic charging facilities for electric vehicles.
- 12.4. The road network provides good links for the village to the nearby towns of Bedford, St Neots and Sandy. The A421 dual carriageway, which will form part of the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, links the village towards the A1, M1 and M11 for connections to the major centres of London, Milton Keynes and Peterborough.
- 12.5. One of the main concerns of residents identified through consultation is traffic related, the top result for identified 'dislikes' about the village. The 2011 Census reveals that only 9% of households do not have a car, 42% have 2 cars, and 13% have 3 or more. Most people travel to work by car (78%), 6% work from home, 4% commute by train, but 8% of those in employment cycle or walk to work, which is above the average for rural parishes.

A428 - Black Cat Roundabout to Caxton Gibbet

- 12.6. Development of the new Oxford to Cambridge Expressway has begun. The new dual carriageway A428 Black Cat Roundabout to Caxton Gibbet will link with the A421 to provide part of the expressway between Milton Keynes and Cambridge and link the M1, A1, A45 and M11. The planned project to improve the A1 in Bedfordshire has been delayed but the improvement of the Black Cat Roundabout Junction will allow for continuous dual carriageways north-south along the A1 and east-west on the A421/A428.
- 12.7. Although these new developments will eventually benefit the village, during their construction the increase in traffic will have a significant impact. The recent resurfacing work on the A421 has resulted in large volumes of heavy traffic using the C44 at night. When the A421 was moved in 2006 there was an agreement that the old road would not be used as a diversion route; however, because many drivers use satellite

navigation systems many vehicles follow the quickest route and not the official diversion via the A603.

A1 - Future Developments

- 12.8. The A1 Great North Road runs within 2 miles of Great Barford. The section of the A1 through Bedfordshire is the only one which is not motorway standard and has roundabouts and farm vehicles. The plan to improve this section of the A1 has been delayed but is a priority. In the past the preferred option for a new route was to the west of the existing A1 and could come between Roxton and Great Barford.

Other Issues

- 12.9. Great Barford has already witnessed an increase in local traffic as a result of new developments in the neighbouring village of Blunham. The increase in traffic using the Barford Bridge is resulting in structural damage to the Scheduled Monument.
- 12.10. Covid-19 has highlighted an issue caused by the use of the River Ouse by swimmers, canoeists and other water sports enthusiast. Online listing of Great Barford as a safe place for these activities has drawn people to the village from as far away as London. The resulting traffic has caused issues with parking on New Road and the High Street.
- 12.11. Great Barford has become a “rat run” for traffic at times of congestion on the A1 and A421. The new Black Cat roundabout development will eventually improve this situation but it is likely that there will be significant disruption during its construction.

Buses

- 12.12. The village is served by a regular bus service towards Oxford and Cambridge. On 30 August 2020, the Stagecoach X5 service was split and the service through Great Barford was renamed the Stagecoach 905. The new service is now operated on a double decker bus and still provides public transport to the nearby towns of Bedford and St Neots. The Stagecoach 905 runs from Bedford Bus Station to Cambridge via St Neots, Cambourne and the Cambridge Science Park. The Stagecoach X5 runs from Bedford Bus Station to Oxford via Milton Keynes coach way (a major hub on the National Coach network), MK Central and MK Rail Station (on the West Coast Mainline), Buckingham and Bicester. Although it is still possible to buy a through ticket for both services, it is now necessary to change at Bedford Bus Station for Milton Keynes and Oxford.
- 12.13. The other bus services are far less frequent. The only bus to Sandy (Grant Palmer 112) runs on Thursday while the GP5 services to Biggleswade only runs on the 3rd Monday of each month. The GP27 service provides links to Bedford and some local villages on school days only.
- 12.14. Great Barford’s rural character makes it unlikely that new developments will be able to comply with Bedford Borough Council Policy 87 which requires every residence to be within 400 metres of a bus stop. It is therefore essential that safe pedestrian and cycle routes are provided to the central village bus stops.
- 12.15. All developments which will increase traffic should be accompanied by a Transport Statement or Assessment and should address the following matters:
- Road safety and parking, including the avoidance of congestion;

- A local focus on providing pedestrian and cycle links between new housing to the Village Hall, schools, shops, bus stops and recreation areas;
- Developers should identify the realistic level of traffic their development will generate;
- Development should not add to existing traffic congestion, but should strive to reduce it.

Policy TT1: The Traffic Impact of New Development

~~*Proposed developments that would generate a significant amount of movement or would potentially affect a known traffic hazard should be supported by realistic measures to maintain highway safety and avoid vehicular/pedestrian conflict.*~~

~~*Where appropriate it may be necessary to consider off site measures where these are required to accommodate the traffic impact of the scheme.*~~

~~*Where they are proposed, new roads, junctions, footpaths and traffic management measures should be designed to complement the rural character of the village and reflect local heritage.*~~

Sustainable Modes of Transport

12.16. As part of the underlying approach to achieving sustainable development in the Neighbourhood Plan any development should encourage walking, cycling, and the use of public transport. The increasing use of electric vehicles also contributes to sustainable methods of travel due to the reduction in harmful vehicle emissions.

12.17. The Parish Council will seek to maximise the use of sustainable transport in developments, and support low carbon public and personal transport such as electric cars, bikes and buses. Accordingly, new facilities for low emission vehicles should be integrated into new major development schemes where local centres or communal facilities are proposed. Rapid and fast charging points will be located throughout Great Barford as well as at key locations in employment, outside schools, local centres and car parks.

Policy TT2 TT1: Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

~~*To maximise the use of sustainable modes of transport, new residential developments should be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations and, where appropriate, provide electric charging points at a rate of one per dwelling. the installation of electric charging points and bicycle storage and parking at locations throughout the village will be supported.*~~

Active Travel and Accessibility

- 12.18. Active Travel (walking and cycling) has the potential to achieve major population-wide health benefits and is an ideal form of physical activity. It is one of the most cost-effective ways of embedding physical activity in people's lives, to achieve health benefits but can also produce added benefits such as reduced congestion and improvements to air quality. The evidence is that with the right planning and transport policies, active travel can become a natural choice for much of the population. To ensure that active travel is accessible to as many people as possible, the form of pedestrian and cycle facilities should reflect the changing demographic structure. Surface treatments and the design of facilities should reflect the local context and user needs (such as those who are visually impaired) as well as the journey purpose.
- 12.19. Great Barford is on National Cycle Route 12 and 51, although the routes are on roads through the village. There is a cycle route close to the village along the old Oxford to Cambridge disused railway, which links the village to Bedford and Sandy. A safe, off road, link to this cycle path would encourage people to use this route for recreation and commuting to work or school. A cycle link to the new St Neots/Sandy station on the East Coast Mainline will be beneficial in the future.
- 12.20. A partnership approach between the Great Barford 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.
- 12.21. Great Barford Parish Council regularly lobbies Bedford Borough Council Highways Department to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and resident well-being. Traffic surveys have showed high volumes of traffic during school run and commuting periods and a significant number of vehicles not adhering to the speed limits. Some of the issues raised include:
- Provision of new safe pedestrian crossings on High Street, Silver Street and Green End Road.
 - Installation of traffic calming and speed cameras on High Street, New Road and Green End Road.
 - Provision of a footpath along New Road route used regularly by runners and walkers.

Rights of Way

- 12.22. Public rights of way include footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic which allow access by foot, cycle and horse riders to access the countryside. The public rights of way are shown on the Council's definitive map which is available on the Council's website. The Public Rights of Way Network complements existing pedestrian and cycle ways in the village and includes river crossings. The provision, enhancement and protection of existing pedestrian and cycle routes is also addressed by Policies AD36 Pedestrian Routes and AD39 Cycling in the adopted Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013.
- 12.23. The Bedford Borough Rights of Way Improvement Plan sets out the proposed aims, objectives and actions for the use of the Borough's public rights of way network for the next five years. New developments should provide opportunities for increased health benefits, community use and enjoyment of the public rights of way network.
- 12.24. In addition to the public rights of way network, there are permissive paths, which can help to fill in gaps in the network. These can range from informal paths that have been locally agreed through to a permissive path legal agreement. In the case of a legal agreement, this is made between the landowner and the local authority and can include clauses such as the time limit of the specific path and who is responsible for the maintenance of the path. The legal agreement can then lead onto the formal dedication of a public right of way following the expiration of the initial legal permissive path agreement.
- 12.25. New development should retain and enhance existing rights of way, diversion should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. New links, for pedestrians and cyclists will be supported, and in new housing developments, will be an important factor in providing links to existing facilities and other parts of the village to reduce car usage for short journeys. The Green Infrastructure Plan sets out potential improvements to the Rights of Way network.

Policy TT3: Rights of Way

New development will be required to

- Safeguard existing public rights of way and ensuring the existing routes are incorporated into the proposed development or an appropriate diversion is provided;***
- Provide improvements to the public rights of way network including river crossings;***
- Ensure that all developments are designed to enable safe crossing of roads and other infrastructure from new and existing public rights of way.***

Where diversions to the existing public rights of way are proposed, it should be demonstrated that there are no other alternatives and that the benefits of the development outweigh the harm resulting from the proposed diversion.

New permissive paths are encouraged to fill in gaps in the public rights of way network.

13. Community Facilities

13.1. The village has a Post Office and General Store, Farm Butchers, Mini-Supermarket and a Coffee Shop. There is also a Methodist Chapel as well as All Saint's Parish Church. The Village Hall is a modern facility situated at Fishers Close, off Green End Road. There is a large, hall for indoor sports or capable of seating 160 people, a small meeting room, licensed bar, kitchen, showers and changing rooms, and parking for 56 cars.

13.2. The parish also boasts two Public Houses both of which have restaurants, The Golden Cross and The Anchor.

13.3. The results of the questionnaire clearly show that the post office and village shop are well used by the vast majority of respondents, and 'never used' by very few. Other well used facilities were the doctors' surgery, village hall and pubs, although about one third of respondents rarely or never use either pub. It seems that "membership" facilities, such as the bowls club or scout group, are not so well used by people outside of these organisations.



Post Office & General Stores – High Street

13.4. Great Barford Surgery provides a vital service to the population of Great Barford. The proposal to build an additional 500 houses could result in an increase in patients between 1500- 2000. The surgery currently has 4,887 patients with two full time General Practitioners. There is a team of 20 staff, 2 consulting rooms and one nurse treatment room.

13.5. Patients registered are from Great Barford, Moggerhanger, Blunham, Renhold, Roxton, Wilden, Colmworth, Chawston, Wyboston and Chalton as well as extending services to some patients in Sandy. The practice no longer accepts patients from the Cambridge area; however patients leaving Great Barford often request to stay with the practice for continuity of care.

13.6. The current premises are owned by the 2 General Practitioner partners, who still hold an outstanding mortgage. There is no space to expand the building to accommodate additional services and parking is a real issue. There is a need to build/obtain a new premise as a matter of urgency. Discussions are being held with BBC, the Bedford Clinical Commissioning Group and the Parish Council, looking at various options for the Surgery to relocate and expand. Options being looked at include a new building on a new housing site, or change of use of the Lower School (Silver Street), which is no longer required for educational purposes.

13.7. The Parish Council will continue to support the requirements of the General Practice to provide Multi-Disciplinary services for the population of Great Barford and aim to meet the health/social needs of our growing population. The Parish Council will continue to liaise with the CCG and Bedford Borough Council as soon as it is possible to revisit this project.

- 13.8. During the Covid pandemic, health care services have undertaken many changes to keep patients safe, this may influence 'new ways of working' in the future. It is important therefore to continue to work in partnership with all statutory services to ensure that health/social care services are delivered in a safe and appropriate environment.

Policy CF1: Community Facilities

*Development proposals that will result in either the loss of or significant harm to a community facility will be strongly resisted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that ~~that~~ its continued use is no longer viable. This will require evidence that the property has been actively marketed, commensurate with its use, at an open market value for a period of at least 12 months. **The main facility in the village to which this relates is the village hall.** Facilities include;*

- ~~the Village Hall,~~
- ~~the Public Houses, The Golden Cross and The Anchor,~~
- ~~the Great Barford Mini-Supermarket,~~
- ~~the Coffee Shop,~~
- ~~the Post Office and General Store.~~

Proposals to improve the viability of a community facility by way of the extension or partial replacement or redevelopment of buildings, structures and land, will be supported, provided the design of the scheme respects heritage in terms of traditional frontages and character in general, and the resulting increase in use are appropriate in design terms and will not have negative impact on the amenities of adjoining residential properties.

The provision of new community facilities will be encouraged.



The Anchor – New Road

14. Local Employment & Business

Local Businesses

- 14.1. Great Barford has limited employment opportunities within the parish with almost three-quarters of working people working elsewhere. Local businesses include some long-established firms in the building supplies (garage doors, fireplaces, tiles, lighting), printers, plant & equipment hire, several hospitality and retail businesses and a number of motor sales and maintenance firms. There are a number of self employed tradespeople and professionals in the village.
- 14.2. 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 intention is to avoid Great Barford becoming even more of a “dormitory” settlement which is over dependent on outward commuting. It also encourages appropriate diversification of existing economic activities, as this will make the local economy more robust and more sustainable. 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. Young people can find it difficult to find a first job where they can develop workplace skills and local businesses provide jobs for school leavers moving into work for the first time.
- 14.3. The aim is to facilitate economic development within Great Barford which is appropriate in scale, supports existing local businesses, and where appropriate brings vacant historic buildings back into beneficial use. However, development must be of a scale and intensity appropriate to its context, must not impact detrimentally on residential amenity, and must have an acceptable impact on the character and scale of the village and its rural hinterland.
- 14.4. The provision of good telecommunications is particularly important in rural areas and in supporting the viability and sustainability of rural enterprise and home-working. The majority of the village has access to a fibre internet connection.



The Golden Cross – Bedford Road

Policy LE1: Supporting Local Employment and Businesses

The loss of existing employment sites to other uses, including housing, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that employment use is no longer viable.

Proposals for the development of new small-scale 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, noise, smell, lighting, vibration or other emissions or activities arising from the proposed development;*
- *it would have an acceptable impact on the character and scale of the village, 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.*

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.

15. Aspirations for Great Barford

- 15.1. Financial contributions will be sought from developers through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), unilateral undertakings and Section 106 agreements which provide a legal framework to raise funds to provide the infrastructure needed to cope with new developments. 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.
- 15.2. The Parish Council will continue to work in partnership with other organisations including Bedford Borough Council, to bring improvements to the village in a number of ways. These issues/projects from the Green Infrastructure Plan and Parish Plan include:

Green Infrastructure Plan Aspirations

Ref.	Great Barford GI Aspirations
1a	Create public bridleway linking High Street to river at FP4
1b	Upgrade section of FP4 to bridleway
1c	Create public bridleway link from Aspiration 1b to the Bedford – Sandy Country Way
2	Create public bridleway (or footpath if Aspiration 1 is not achieved) along the north bank of the river at Old Mills Cottage and on farm track linking river to Bedford Road
3	Create public bridleway on farm tracks between Bedford Road and Green End
4	Create cycleway alongside Bedford Road towards Renhold
5	Improve signage and access of existing public bridleway (BW22) through garden of Kingfisher Cottage
6	Create public footpath from New Road to river at Kingfisher Cottage
7	Create public footpath from BW22 (by sewage works) to footbridge at Great Barford lock
8	Create public footpath to link Addingtons Road with New Road
9	Create public footpath to link FP20 to BW18 on northern parish boundary
10	Create public footpath to link FP3 at Birchfield Farm to FP20 to the east
11	Create public footpath on western bank of ditch between BW 24 and FP3
12	Create public footpath on farm track between Birchfield Road and Barford Road
13	Create public footpath from Northfield Farm to Woodfield Farm, past the Creakers and south from Northfield Farm along Barford Road to link with Aspiration 12
14	Create new public footpath to link BW24 with FP3 using farm track and alongside Aspiration 19
15	Formalise dog walking area as public amenity land
16	Create new allotments
17	Extend existing allotments on Addingtons Road
18	Create multi-functional green space corridor incorporating natural flood management features, habitat creation and provision of benches at viewpoints, and add woodland planting behind Green End Road housing
19	Create accessible community woodland alongside A421
20	Make CWS and surrounding area publicly accessible
21	Plant tree avenue along Bedford Road
22	Plant additional fruit trees at Willoughby Close Orchard
23	Create community orchard at The Pyghtle off Roxton Road
24	Plant a tree belt behind playing field to link Birchfield Road to Aspiration 18

Parish Plan 2010-2015 Proposals

Protecting the Environment
To provide more dog waste bins
To provide more litter bins and ensure they are emptied regularly
To ensure details of annual litter pick are advertised widely
To increase the amount of road sweeping carried out
To encourage reporting of illegal dumping
Managing the Environment
To ensure proper maintenance and upkeep of Road Side Verges
To ensure proper maintenance and upkeep of Footpaths and Bridleways
To investigate the street lighting throughout the village
To launch a Glass Recycling Scheme
Improving the Environment
To provide trees and planted tubs
Set up Environmental Action Group
To investigate whether there is enough Public Seating in the village
Traffic Calming
To investigate traffic calming schemes and speeding limitations
To reduce the number of heavy lorries passing through village
To discourage dangerous and inconsiderate parking throughout the village especially in High Street and Silver Street
Improve safety at road junctions in the village
To implement more Cycle tracks to separate different modes of transport to improve safety for ALL road users and pedestrians
Bus Services
To improve Bus services by communicating the requirements of public transport users to transport providers (eg: choice of destinations and lack of bus stops)
To encourage more people to walk on short journeys around the village
Community
To create a new Village Directory and maintain the PC Website
To establish a general Events Committee to organise and advertise more community events for everyone
To support the village shop and post office and ensure there is no likelihood of losing the post office in the future
Health
To investigate the possibility of having more health facilities at the Surgery (chiroprody, dental, home nursing)
Give help and assistance to parishioners in the following areas: i. Improve disabled access to public areas ii. Prescription collection iii. Voluntary car sharing scheme iv. Good Neighbour scheme v. Over 60's Club

Leisure

To research the possibility of more local leisure and sports classes, clubs and groups, and evening activity classes

To see if more accessible fishing is possible

To ascertain whether picnic benches and public toilets can be put near play areas

Housing and Development

To ensure details of current developments and future development proposals are more widely available

To investigate the likelihood of affordable housing in the village for first home buyers and the elderly

Crime and Safety

To make parishioners more aware of the various policing and crime prevention schemes currently operating in the village and any future plans

To combat anti-social behaviour

Education

To research the possibility of a range of adult education classes being offered at a suitable village venue

To investigate the possibility of setting up a Homework Club with the safe use of Internet facilities

Young people

To investigate the possibility of a village Youth Club and/or a village Youth Drop in Centre

To explore the option in setting up a Youth Council

To research the possibilities of setting up the following clubs: Junior and Youth Football; Girls Football; Junior and Youth Basketball; Junior and Youth Cricket; Junior and Youth Rugby and Youth Tennis

Play Facilities

To explore the options that could facilitate the villages requests for:

- A Youth Shelter
- Picnic Benches near play areas
- Public Toilets near play areas
- Separate Play areas
- Playgrounds situated in other areas of the village

16. Implementation and Monitoring

- 16.1. This section outlines the approach to the implementation of the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan, including: working in partnership, funding mechanisms, priority projects and monitoring/review. The approach will be that new development should be supported by the timely delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to provide a balanced, self-sufficient community.

Working in Partnership

- 16.2. Great Barford 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. 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 and Social Services.
- **Highways England** – traffic and transport.
- **Adjoining Parish Councils** – Assessing impact of large scale planning applications.
- **South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnerships (SEMLEP)** - The LEP is a potential partner for joint working, funding and implementation and activity may be relevant to rural businesses.
- **Environment Agency** - The planning, design and delivery of development, taking account of:
 - (1) Flood risk management,
 - (2) Water quality and water resources,
 - (3) Waste management,
 - (4) Land contamination & soil, and
 - (5) Environmental permits and other regulation.
- **Site owners and developers** - will need to liaise with the Parish Council as well as the other agencies involved in development.

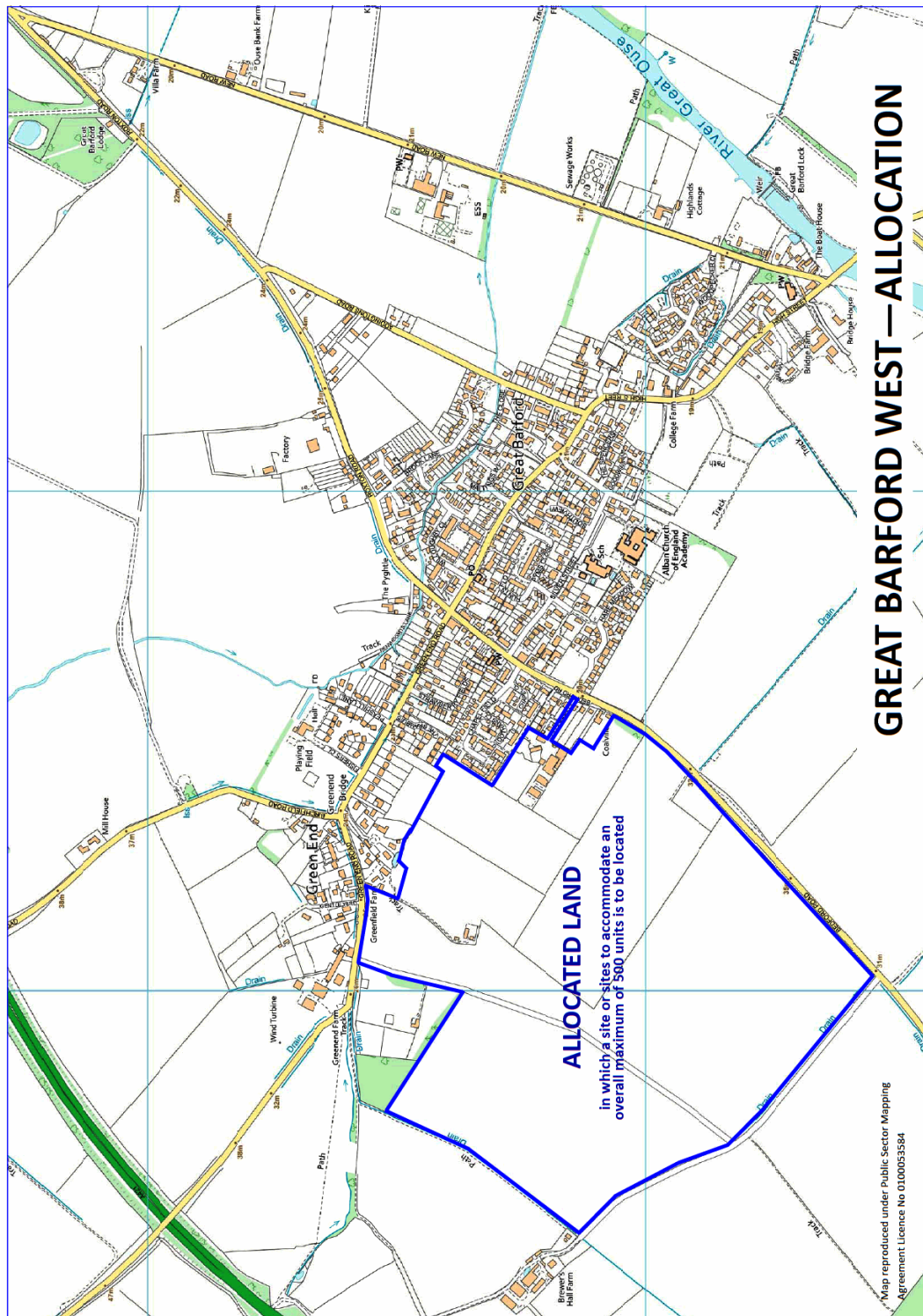
Funding and Implementation Mechanisms

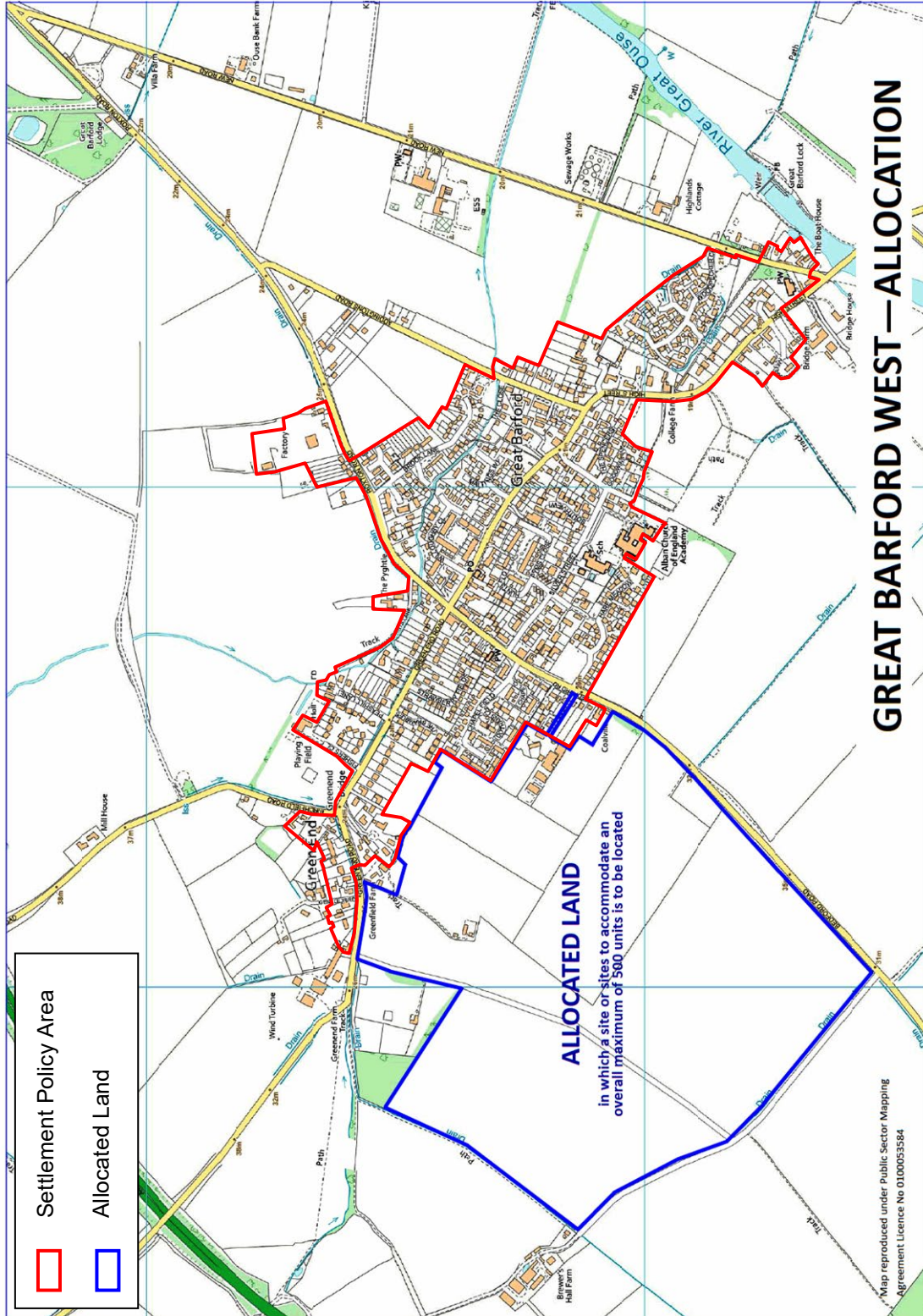
- 16.3. Financial contributions will be sought from developers through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which provides a legal framework to raise funds to provide the infrastructure needed to cope with new developments.

- 16.4. 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.
- 16.5. 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 National Lottery; UK Government programmes; land fill tax credits, EU Funds and LEP funding.
- 16.6. 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 village in a structured way,
 - bring together groups or working parties to improve the village environment,
 - lobby local authorities to support the parishioners' wishes and aspirations.
- 16.7. 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 BBC when determining planning applications,
- 16.8. It will then conclude whether a review is required. If so, it will secure opinions of residents and stakeholders to update the Plan.

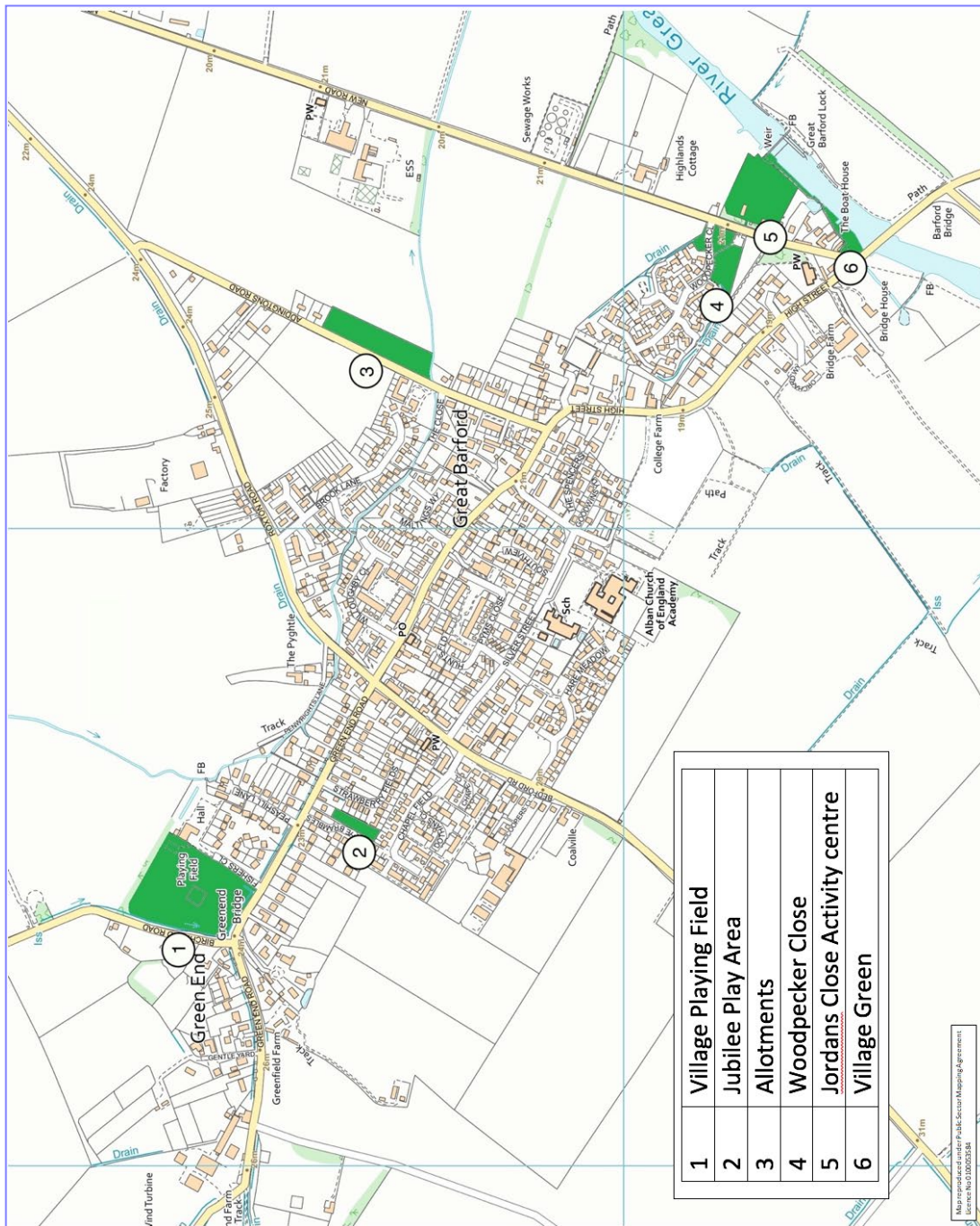
Annex 1: Policies Maps

Policy Map 1: Map of Development Allocation Land West of Great Barford

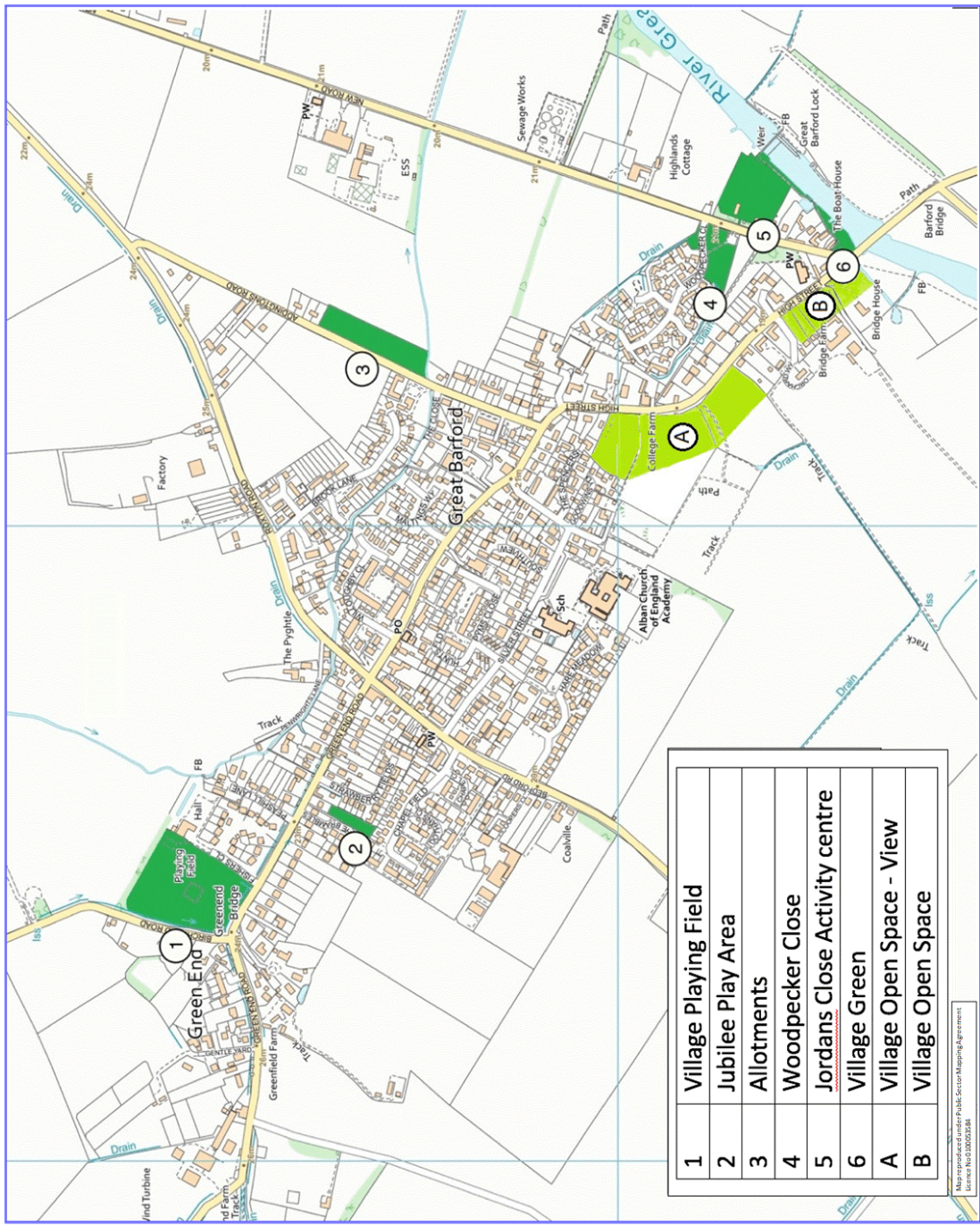




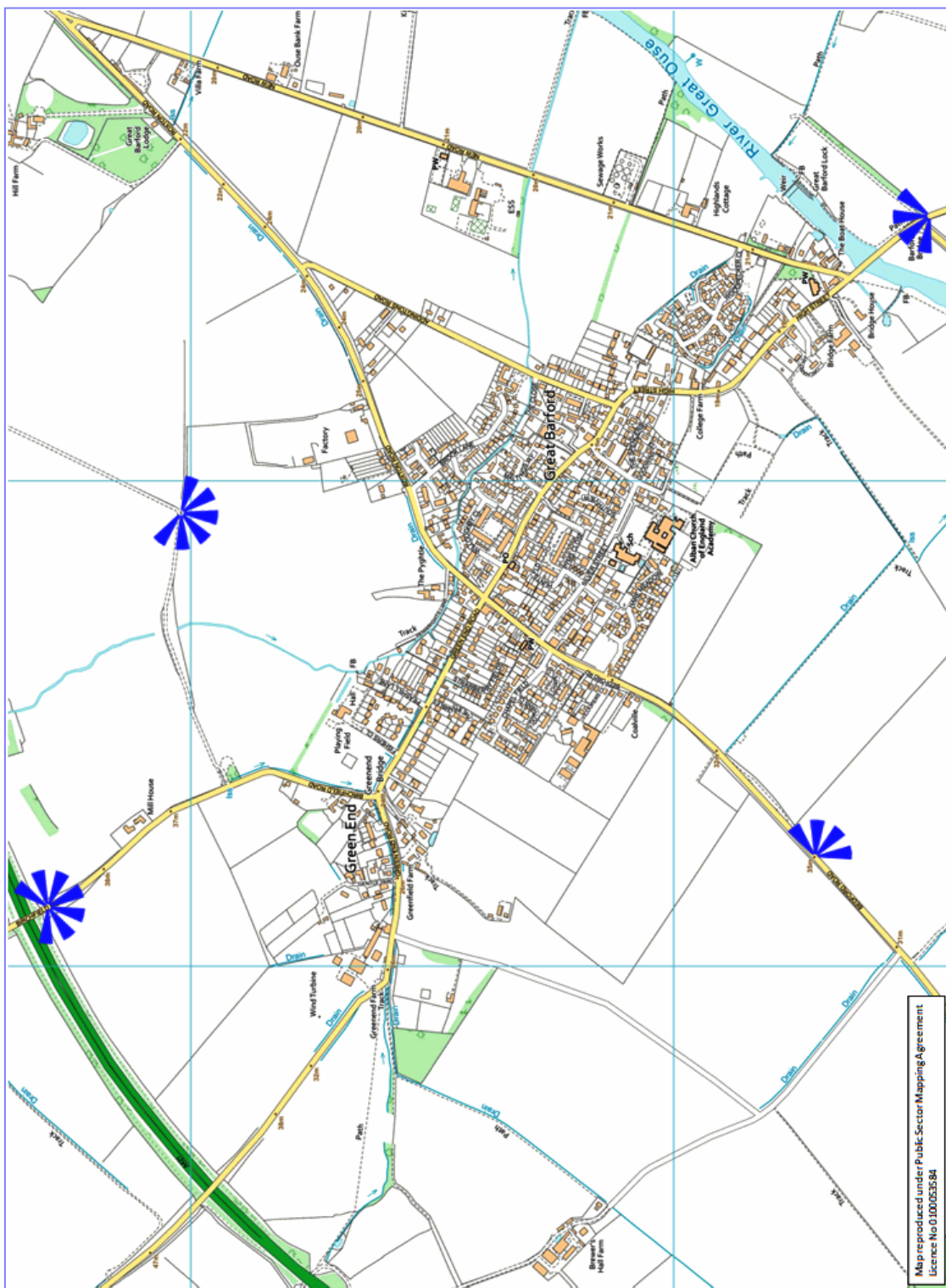
Policy Map 2: Local Green Spaces



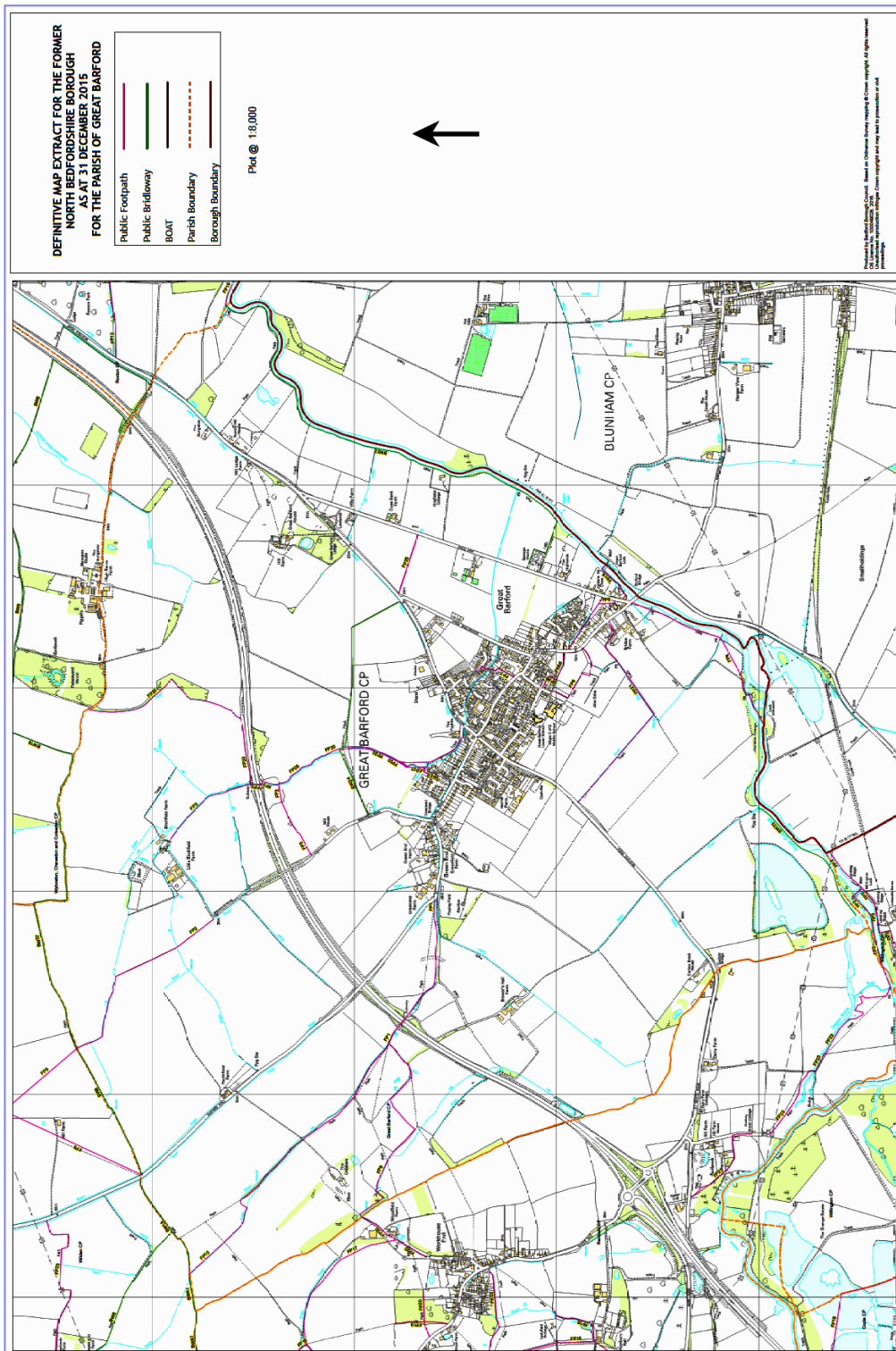
Amended Policy Map 2



Policy Map 3: Key Views – from GI Plan



Policy Map 4: Rights of Way – from BBC Definitive Map



Annex 2: Relationship Between Objectives and Policies

Objective No.	Objective	Policy
1	Designs for future developments, whether for housing, business or leisure should maintain and enhance the essential rural ambience of the village, should be of an appropriate scale so as not to overwhelm its position or surroundings and should not detract from the visual aspect when entering the village.	D1, D4 , H1, NE1, TT1
2	New development will incorporate measures to provide high speed broadband and sustainable building features and the use of householder sustainable environmental features will be encouraged.	D2, H1, LE1
3	New housing developments should include a mix of housing types, sizes and affordability to create a framework in which a balanced community can grow and become established.	H1
4	New housing development will be visually attractive in design and landscaping and integrate as fully as possible with the existing village.	D1, H1
5	The landscape, wildlife and habitats will be protected and enhanced. Existing green spaces will be protected, enhanced where appropriate and new spaces will be provided.	D1, H1, NE1, NE2, ROS1, ROS2, ROS3
6	The historic environment will be conserved and enhanced with new development respecting the characteristics and appearance of the old.	H1, HE1, NE1, CON1 , CON2 , CON3
7	Well developed and integrated transport links to many places will be required, giving its residents travel options that reduce the dependence on the car in order to reduce the traffic through the village centre.	D1, H1, TT1, TT2 ,
8	Safe and attractive walking, riding and cycling will be provided through the provision of a complete and connected network of Public Rights of Way in an environment with protected rural and riverside character. Existing village facilities will be retained and enhanced, whilst new facilities to provide for the increasing population will be encouraged.	D1, H1, TT1, TT2 , CF1
9	Local businesses will be supported, any new commercial development will be appropriate in scale to the village.	D1, D2, LE1

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.
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.
Biodiversity		The whole variety of life encompassing variations, including plants and animals.
Brownfield		Land that has been previously developed on (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings and residential gardens).
Conservation Area	CA	An area designated under Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as being of ‘special architectural or historical interest’ the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.
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.
County Wildlife Site	CWS	Sites that have been recognised as important for wildlife when assessed against a set of criteria. The selection guidelines consider aspects of the site such as size, diversity, rarity, fragility, typicalness and recorded history.

Developer Contributions/Planning Obligations/Section 106		Developer contributions, also known as planning obligations, can be secured via a section 106 legal agreement or planning condition 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 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 assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
Infrastructure		Refers to the fundamental facilities and systems serving a country, city, or other area, including the services and facilities necessary for its economy to function, including transport.

Listed Buildings		Any building or structure which is included in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.
Local Enterprise Partnership	LEP	Voluntary partnerships between local authorities and businesses, set up in 2011 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within the local area.
Local Authority		The administrative body that governs local services such as education, planning and social services.
Localism Act 2011		A major piece of new legislation, which includes wide-ranging changes to local government, housing and planning. Significantly, the Act abolishes regional planning, and introduces the possibility of Neighbourhood Plans as part of the development plan.
Local Green Space	LGS	This is a formal designation that may be made by Neighbourhood Plans, to provide protection for green spaces valued by the local community.
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. It also provides a suite of policies that help manage development including for design, access and amenity.
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. Sometimes Parishes will combine to form one area.
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. Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 7: Glossary May 2017 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.

Parish Plan		A Parish Plan or community led plan can include planning related issues but they can focus purely on areas other than development. Parish Plans will not have the same legal status in planning terms as a Neighbourhood Plan.
Planning Gain		The increase in value of land resulting from the granting of planning permission. This value mainly accrues to the owner of the land, but sometimes the local council negotiates with the developer to secure benefit to the public, either through section 106 planning obligations or the setting of a community infrastructure levy.
Policies Map		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.
Rural		Areas of land which are generally not urbanised; usually with low population densities and a high proportion of land devoted to agriculture.
Scheduled Monument		A nationally important archaeological site, building or structure which is protected against unauthorised change by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
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.
Settlement Policy Area	SPA	Settlement Policy Areas are defined for villages with a built-up character. The Settlement Policy Area boundary encloses the main built-up part of the village but excludes subordinate built-up areas that are detached from the main built-up area, more loosely knit development associated with the village or undeveloped areas surrounding the village.
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.
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	SHLAA	Assesses the suitability, availability and deliverability of land that have been promoted as sites for housing development.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment	SHMA	Assessment of the local housing market, which studies the supply and demand of housing, the need for affordable housing and the affordability of the local housing market.
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 of 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 runoff from new development, dealing with it as close to the source as possible.
Town and Country Planning Act 1990		Currently the main planning legislation for England and Wales is consolidated in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; this is regarded as the 'principal act'.
Urban		Having the characteristics of a town or a city; an area dominated by built development.
Village Design Statement		Contains a description and analysis of the distinctive aspects of a village and outlines design guidance for further development. A Village Design Statement can then be considered in assessing planning applications.

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**Bedford Borough Council
Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan
POST- EXAMINATION DECISION STATEMENT**

Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

This document is the decision statement required to be prepared under Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). It sets out the response of Bedford Borough Council (“the Council”) to each of the recommendations contained within the independent examination report of the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan (“the Plan”) by independent examiner Wendy Burden, which was received by the Council on 24 September 2021.

This decision statement, the independent examiner’s report and the submission version of the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents can be viewed on the [neighbourhood planning pages](#) of the Council’s website.

BACKGROUND

Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the Council has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of neighbourhood plans and to take plans through a process of examination and referendum. The Localism Act 2011 (Part 6, Chapter 3) sets out the Local Planning Authority's neighbourhood planning responsibilities.

This statement confirms that the modifications proposed in the examiner's report have been considered and accepted and that subject to making the recommended modifications (and other minor modifications) the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan may now be submitted to referendum.

The Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan relates to the area that was designated by the Council as a Neighbourhood Area on 23 April 2015. This area is coterminous with the boundary of the parish of Great Barford and is entirely within the Local Planning Authority's area.

Between 14 December 2020 and 1 February 2021, Great Barford Parish Council undertook consultation on the draft Plan in accordance with Regulation 14.

Following the submission of the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan to the Council on 17 March 2021, the Council publicised the draft Plan for a six-week period and representations were invited in accordance with Regulation 16. This consultation took place between dates 1 April to 16 May 2021.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION

The Council appointed Wendy Burden, with the agreement of Great Barford Parish Council, to undertake the independent examination of the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan and to prepare a report of the independent examination.

The examiner examined the Plan by way of written representations supported by an unaccompanied site visit of the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 7 July 2021.

The examiner's report was formally received by the Council on 24 September 2021. The report concludes that subject to making the modifications recommended by the examiner, the Plan meets the basic conditions set out in the legislation and should proceed

to referendum. The examiner also recommends that the referendum area should be the same as the designated Neighbourhood Area, which is the same as the administrative boundary for Great Barford parish.

Following receipt of the examiner's report, legislation requires that the Council considers each of the modifications recommended, the reasons for them, and decides what action to take. The Council is also required to consider whether to extend the area to be covered by the referendum.

DECISION AND REASONS

Having considered each of the recommendations made in the examiner's report and the reasons for them, the Council has decided to accept all of the examiner's recommended modifications to the draft Plan. These are set out in Table 1 below.

The Council considers that, subject to the modifications being made to the Plan as set out in Table 1 below, the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions explained in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), is compatible with the Human Rights Convention and that the requirements of paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) have been met.

The examiner recommended that the Plan should proceed to a referendum based on the designated Neighbourhood Area. The Council has considered this recommendation and the reasons for it, and has decided to accept it. The referendum area for the final Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan will therefore be based on the designated Great Barford Parish Neighbourhood Area.

These decisions were made by the Mayor on behalf of the Council's Executive on 18 October 2021

As a consequence of the required modifications, the Council will alter the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan in order that it can proceed to referendum.

The Neighbourhood Plan document will be re-titled **Referendum Version**. The date for the referendum and further details will be publicised shortly once a date is set by the Council.

Table 1: Decisions on the Examiner’s Recommended Modifications to the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan

Proposed Modification Number	Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan Reference	Examiner’s Report Reference	Recommended Modification and Reason	Bedford Borough Council Decision/reasoning
PM1	Page 5 Paragraph 1.4	Page 9 Para 3.3	Add at the end of the final sentence: “in the period from 2020 to 2030”. In the interests of clarity.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner’s report.
PM2	Page 49 Annex 1 Policy Map 1	Page 15 Para 4.23	Add the boundary of the SPA as shown on the BBLP Policy Map for Great Barford. In the interests of clarity.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner’s report.
PM3	Page 30 Policy ROS1	Page 18 Para 4.41	Delete Policy ROS1. Lack of any local justification for a policy more onerous than the NPPF and provision already in the NPPF for protection of the sites listed in the policy.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner’s report.
PM4	Page 30 Policy ROS2	Page 18 Para 4.42	Line 1: delete “should” and insert “must”. Third bullet after “developments”, delete “should” and insert “must”. To make the policy more effective.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner’s report.
PM5	Page 31 Policy ROS3	Page 19 Para 4.47	Replace the final clause of Policy ROS3 with: “Policies for managing development within Local Green Space should be compatible with their designation, being consistent with those for Green Belt.”	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner’s report.

			To make the policy consistent with the management of development in the Green Belt.	
PM6	Page 50 Appendix 1 Policy Map 2	Page 19 Para 4.48	Amend the GBNP Policy Map to include those sites which are designated as Village Open Space in ADLP Policy AD40 and shown on the BBLP Policy Map where this designation has not been replaced by a designation in the GBNP as LGS. In order to maintain consistency with the Local Plan 2030 Policy Map and the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan Policy Map.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM7	Page 33 Policy HE1	Page 20 Para 4.52	Delete the first sentence of Policy HE1 and replace with: "Development within the Great Barford Conservation Areas or likely to affect the setting of a Conservation Area must have regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the historic environment and of making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness." To ensure it accords with the NPPF.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM8	Page 34 Policy HE2	Page 20 Para 4.54	Delete Policy HE2. The policy does not add any local dimension to existing provisions in the NPPF and Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 Policy 41S. .	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.

PM9	Page 34 Policy HE3	Page 20 Para 4.55	Delete Policy HE3. The policy does not add any local dimension to Policy 41S of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030. .	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM10	Page 37 Policy TT1	Page 21 Para 4.57	Delete Policy TT1. The policy does not add any local dimension to the matters covered in policies in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 and detailed design considerations are already covered by criteria in Policy D1 of the GBNP.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM11	Page 37 Policy TT2	Page 21 Para 4.58	Delete first clause of Policy TT2 after "transport". Merge the second clause after "transport". The first clause would repeat Policy 89 in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM12	Page 39 Policy TT3	Page 21 Para 4.59	Delete Policy TT3. To avoid unnecessary duplication of Policy 91 in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM13	Page 41 Policy CF1	Page 22 Para 4.64	Replace the final sentence (including deletion of all the bullet points) of the first paragraph of Policy CF1 to read: "The main facility in the village to which this relates is the village hall."	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.

			To delete from the list of community facilities those premises which would be subject to the provisions of other national and Local Plan policies, together with those premises which lie outside the local policy definition of community facilities.	
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October 2021