

**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 Wootton Neighbourhood Plan can progress to the referendum stage of the neighbourhood plan making process, it is agreed:

- To make modifications to the Wootton 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 15 December 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 Wootton Neighbourhood Area represents the appropriate geographical area to be covered by the referendum

**2. Date of decision**

1<sup>st</sup> December 2021

**3. Reasons for decision**

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the examination of the Wootton 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 Wootton 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 DLUHC can be made in the next available claim window. 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: 1<sup>st</sup> December 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: .....1 December 2021.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: ...13 December 2021.....

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

**BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO THE MAYOR**

**DATE – DECEMBER 2021**

**REPORT BY THE CHIEF OFFICER PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE & ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**SUBJECT: WOOTTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

The Plan was submitted to Bedford Borough Council on 22 June 2021 and, in line with regulatory requirements, was subject to a six-week consultation (9 July – 23 August 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 Wootton Parish.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- To make modifications to the Wootton 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 15 December 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 Wootton 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 Wootton Neighbourhood Plan examination and to secure agreement to progress the Wootton 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 Wootton Neighbourhood Plan must be published by 15 December 2021.

The neighbourhood plan passes the referendum of local voters if it achieves a simple majority (i.e. 50% +1 or over). No minimum turn-out 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 and 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 Wootton 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. 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 Wootton Neighbourhood Plan was screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) by Wootton Parish Council with assistance from Bedford Borough Council. The SEA screening concluded that an SEA was required. The SEA report is included in the submission documents.

The Plan was further screened to determine if Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was necessary. The HRA was carried out by specialist consultancy Bodsey Ecology. It concluded that the Plan would not have adverse impacts on any European sites either alone or in combination. 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 Wootton 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 Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan is relevant to Wootton Parish Council's General Equality Duty. The Parish Council is responsible for discharging their duty. An equality analysis was included as part of the Basic Conditions Statement and is available to view on the Borough Council's neighbourhood plan webpage.

**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.

<b>Preparing a neighbourhood plan</b>		
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Progress</b>
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
<b>Consider examiner's recommendations</b>	<b>BBC and NP group / parish council</b>	<b>We are here</b>
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 neighbourhood plan 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.

Most neighbourhood plan examinations will not require a hearing session to be held though this is an option if the examiner considers it necessary.

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 Wootton Neighbourhood Plan**

<b>Progress of Wootton Neighbourhood Plan</b>	
Neighbourhood area designated	9 June 2015
Draft plan consultation (Regulation 14)	25 September – 6 November 2020
Post submission consultation (Regulation 16)	9 July – 23 August 2021
Submitted for examination by BBC	2 September 2021
Examiner's report received	9 November 2021

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

### **Main Findings - Executive Summary**

From my examination of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan/WNDP) 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 – Wootton Parish Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Neighbourhood Plan Area as identified in Figure 1 of the document;
- The Plan specifies, in paragraph 19, the period to which it is to take effect – 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:

<b>Proposed modification number (PM)</b>	<b>Submitted Neighbourhood Plan Para no/ other reference</b>	<b>Examiner's Recommended Modification</b>	<b>Reason for recommendation</b>
PM1	Front cover	Modify the title to read: Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan <b>to 2030</b> .	The period to which the Plan is to take effect should be prominently stated on the front cover of the Plan as well as in the main body of the text.

PM2	Paragraph 62	Modify the second bullet point to read: provision of substantial ( <del>17.53</del> <b>19.53</b> hectares) open space as described in Policy <del>W12</del> <b>W10</b> ;	To ensure that the correct area of open space is quoted and that the correct policy number is referred to.
PM3	Policy W4	Modify the end of the second bullet point to read: and <del>by</del> <b>will</b> respecting the existing <del>linear</del> form of development;	The reference to linear form has not be adequately justified, is unduly restrictive and therefore should be deleted.
PM4	Policy W4	Modify the start of the second bullet point to read: be sensitive to the site surroundings and nearby heritage assets ( <b>including Deep Thatches listed building</b> ) and demonstrate that the scheme will make a positive contribution to ....	Development can be undertaken without harm to the listed building or its setting, but in order to provide clarity it is recommended to specifically refer to the listed building in the policy.
PM5	Policy W5	Modify the end of the second bullet point to read: and <del>by</del> <b>will</b> respecting the existing <del>linear</del> form of development;	The reference to linear form has not be adequately justified, is unduly restrictive and therefore should be deleted.
PM6	Policy W5	Modify the start of the second bullet point to read: be sensitive to the site surroundings and nearby heritage assets ( <b>including Deep Thatches listed building</b> ) and demonstrate that the scheme will make a positive contribution to ....	In order to provide clarity for the decision maker.
PM7	Policy W6	Modify the end of the second bullet point to read: and <del>by</del> <b>will</b> respecting the existing <del>linear</del> form of development;	The reference to linear form has not be sufficiently justified, is unduly restrictive and therefore should be deleted.
PM8	Policy W6	Add wording to the end of bullet point three to read: ... of archaeological interest, <b>including the ridge and furrow earthworks on the site</b> ;	In order to provide clarity for the decision maker.

PM9	Paragraph 68	Paragraph <del>405</del> <b>107</b> of the NPPF	To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.
PM10	Paragraph 72	Paragraph <del>99</del> <b>101</b> of the NPPF	To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.
PM11	Paragraph 73	Paragraph <del>400</del> <b>102</b> of the NPPF	To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.
PM12	Paragraph 79	Paragraph <del>470</del> <b>174</b> of the NPPF	To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.
PM13	Paragraph 80	Paragraph <del>470</del> <b>174</b> of the NPPF	To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.
PM14	Policy W11 Policy Title	Modify the title of policy W11 to read: Protection of <b>Public</b> Views	To make it clear that the important views are public views.
PM15	Policy W11	Insert the word ' <b>public</b> ' before 'views' in policy W11	To make it clear that the important views are public views.
PM16	Policy W12 (c)	Modify the start of clause (c) to read:  <del>be designed to the size and shape of the building plot</del> <b>reflect the prevailing pattern and scale of development in the immediate location</b> and should ....	In the interests of clarity.
PM17	Paragraph 87	<b>Delete all of paragraph 87 and replace with: National planning policy acknowledges that design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development</b>	In order to reflect the most up to date situation with the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code.

		<b>acceptable to communities. This is reinforced within the guidance provided within the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. As confirmed within the NPPF, neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.</b>	
PM18	Policy W13	Modify the end of clause 2b) to read: ... protect the asset., <del>or</del>	In the interests of clarity.
PM19	Paragraph 90	Paragraphs 28, <del>83</del> <b>84</b> and <del>92</del> <b>93</b> of the NPPF	To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.
PM20	Paragraph 93	Paragraphs <del>83</del> <b>84</b> and <del>92</del> <b>93</b> of the NPPF	To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.
PM21	Paragraph 95	(paragraph <del>112</del> <b>114</b> )	To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.
PM22	paragraph 97	(paragraphs <del>83</del> <b>84</b> and <del>84</del> <b>85</b> )	To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.
PM23	Policy W18	Add an independent sentence after clause g) to read: <b>Monies from the local element of the Community Infrastructure Levy will be directed towards these various priority projects.</b>	To give clarity that these projects will be given priority when considering funding from the Parish Council's Community Infrastructure Levy.
PM24	Policy W19	Modify the last half of the policy to read: c. The positive elements of its setting and its relationship to its immediate surroundings; <b>and</b>	Clause e is not a consideration but a requirement, and the modification is required to provide clarity.

		<p>d. The contribution that the building or the site makes to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets.</p> <p>e Archaeological evaluation and excavation must .....</p> <p>[<u>Note</u>: the letter e above is deleted but the text remains to form a final paragraph].</p>	
PM25	Paragraph 103	Paragraph <del>493</del> <b>199</b> of the NPPF	To provide an update after the revised NPPF.
PM26	Page 36	Insert a plan(s) within the Historic Environment chapter which identifies the heritage assets within the Parish.	To provide a single plan of all the heritage assets in the parish to aid the decision maker.
PM27	Paragraph 106	<p>second sentence to read:</p> <p>The Plan will be reviewed <del>periodically</del> <b>every two years</b> to ensure ....</p>	To ensure that the policies remain valid and up to date and that it remains compatible with the rest of the Development Plan for the Bedford Borough area.

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

The Wootton 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. He concluded that the Plan as modified would have no policies or proposals which he considered significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary. As a result he 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.



Background Papers:

None

Appendices:

Appendix A - Examiner's Report

Appendix B - Wootton Neighbourhood Plan showing modifications

Appendix C – Decision Statement



**Intelligent Plans**  
and examinations

# **Report on Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan to 2030**

**An Examination undertaken for Bedford Borough Council with the support of the Wootton Parish Council on the June 2021 submission version of the Plan.**

Independent Examiner: David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT

Date of Report: 9 November 2021

Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd, 3 Princes Street, Bath BA1 1HL  
Registered in England and Wales. Company Reg. No. 10100118. VAT Reg. No. 237 7641 84

## Contents

	Page
<b>Main Findings - Executive Summary</b>	4
<b>1. Introduction and Background</b>	4
• Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan	4
• The Independent Examiner	5
• The Scope of the Examination	5
• The Basic Conditions	6
<b>2. Approach to the Examination</b>	6
• Planning Policy Context	6
• Submitted Documents	7
• Site Visit	8
• Written Representations or Public Hearing	8
• Modifications	8
<b>3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights</b>	8
• Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area	8
• Plan Period	9
• Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation	9
• Development and Use of Land	9
• Excluded Development	9
• Human Rights	9
<b>4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions</b>	10
• EU Obligations	10
• Main Issues	10
• General Issues of Compliance of the Plan	10
- National Policy, Sustainable Development and the Development Plan	10
• Specific Issues of Compliance of the Plan's Policies	11
- Introductory Sections I and II	11
- Housing Policies (W1 to W8)	11
- Environment Policies (W9 to W12)	16
- Village Facilities Policies (W13 to W15)	18
- Local Economy (Policies W16 and W17)	19
- Sustainable Community (Policy W18)	19
- Historic Environment (W19)	19
• Non-Land Use Actions	20
• Monitoring and Review	20
• Appendices	20
• Other Matters	20
<b>5. Conclusions</b>	21
• Summary	21

• The Referendum and its Area	21
• Overview	21
<b>Appendix: Modifications</b>	<b>23</b>

## **Main Findings** - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan/WNDP) 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 – Wootton Parish Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Neighbourhood Plan Area as identified in Figure 1 of the document;
- The Plan specifies, in paragraph 19, the period to which it is to take effect – 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**

### *Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan*

- 1.1 Wootton lies to the south-west of Bedford, and it is a relatively large village which has accommodated a significant level of growth in recent years. Indeed, I saw on my visit that the construction of houses to the south of the village is currently underway. The core of the village is designated as a Conservation Area and there are a number of distinctive buildings and features. Although elements of a village identity remain, the consequences of the recent sustained growth mean that there is a risk to the retention of that identity.
- 1.2 There is a good range of community facilities and services on offer, including schools, shops, churches, meeting venues, play areas and a library. At the time of my visit I did not experience any traffic issues but it is clear that a number of roads in the Parish are comparatively narrow.
- 1.3 The Wootton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was established in April 2014, the role of which was to drive forward the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and to lead on public consultation. A Community Engagement Strategy was adopted by the Parish Council in June 2017<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Consultation Statement Appendix A.

### *The Independent Examiner*

- 1.4 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan by Bedford Borough Council, with the agreement of Wootton Parish Council.
- 1.5 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector. I have extensive experience in the preparation, examination and implementation of development plans and other planning documents. 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*

- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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').

1.8 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*

1.9 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)<sup>2</sup>; and
- Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

1.10 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 ('the 2017 Regulations')<sup>3</sup>.

## **2. Approach to the Examination**

### *Planning Policy Context*

2.1 The Development Plan for this part of Bedford Borough Council, not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development, is the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030; those policies in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 which were not superseded by the adoption of the Local Plan 2030; and the saved policies of the Bedford Local Plan 2002.

<sup>2</sup> The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

- 2.2 Work is underway on the Bedford Local Plan Review, with pre-submission consultation proposed in 2022<sup>4</sup> and the examination programmed for February 2023. I am satisfied that the relationship between the policies in the submitted WNDP, the emerging local plan review and the adopted Development Plan have been given proper consideration by both the Parish and Borough Councils<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.3 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented. A revised NPPF was published on 20 July 2021, and all references in this report are to the July 2021 NPPF and its accompanying PPG. I have also taken into account the National Model Design Code that was also published in July 2021.

### *Submitted Documents*

- 2.4 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, including those submitted which comprise:
- the submission version of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan to 2030 (June 2021);
  - Figure 1 of the Plan (page 5) which identifies the area to which the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan relates;
  - the Consultation Statement (June 2021);
  - the Basic Conditions Statement (June 2021);
  - all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation;
  - the Habitat Regulations Assessment (July 2019) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (September 2020);
  - the Housing Needs Survey Report (August 2017);
  - the Site Assessments Report - Housing (undated);
  - the Wootton Green Infrastructure Plan (September 2018);
  - the Preliminary Transport Assessment for land at Keeley Lane (April 2019);
  - Access Assessment for land at Tinkers Corner, Keeley Lane (March 2019);
  - Site Access Appraisal for land off Bedford Road, Wootton (April 2019);
  - Access Assessment for land South of Keeley Lane (March 2019);
  - and
  - the request for additional clarification sought in my letter of 10 September 2021 and the responses of 24 September and 6 October from Wootton Parish Council and Bedford Borough Council.
- 2.5 I received and accepted a letter dated 8 October 2021 from Emery Planning (on behalf of Hollins Strategic Land) regarding a site to the west of Wootton Upper School. I invited comments on this letter from the

---

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 5 of the Bedford Local Development Scheme February 2021.

<sup>5</sup> PPG Reference ID: 41-009-20190509.

Qualifying Body and Bedford Borough Council on 11 October 2021 and received responses from both parties on 13 October 2021 (see paragraph 4.14 of this report). I also accepted a letter dated 12 October from Marrons Planning<sup>6</sup>.

### *Site Visit*

- 2.6 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 21 September 2021 to familiarise myself with the locality, and visit relevant sites and areas referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

### *Written Representations with or without Public Hearing*

- 2.7 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. It was suggested in a small number of the Regulation 16 representations that a hearing session should be convened. However, the expectation is that such an examination will not include a public hearing<sup>7</sup> and having assessed the situation I concluded hearing sessions to be unnecessary because the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the Plan and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum.

### *Modifications*

- 2.8 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 Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by Wootton Parish Council, which is a qualifying body for an area that was designated by Bedford Borough Council on 9 June 2015.
- 3.2 It is the only neighbourhood plan for Wootton and does not relate to land outside the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

---

<sup>6</sup> All documents referenced in paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 are available to view at: [Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan · Bedford Borough Council](#)

<sup>7</sup> PPG Reference ID: 41-056-20180222.

### *Plan Period*

- 3.3 The Plan specifies, in paragraph 19, the period to which it is to take effect, which is from the Plan being 'made' to 2030. However this should also be prominently stated on the front cover of the Plan (**PM1**).

### *Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation*

- 3.4 The Consultation Statement (June 2021) explains the consultation that has taken place and in Section 4 summarises the issues and concerns that have been raised. The WNDP was launched at a two day event (8 and 9 September 2017) and over 200 people attended. The Parish Council newsletter was delivered to all residents in the Parish and good use was made of the Parish Council Facebook page and website. Other means of consultation were employed, including the use of roadside banners; posters; leaflets; exhibitions and 'drop-in' sessions.
- 3.5 The consultation process has been sufficiently thorough, and I am confident that the opportunity to contribute to the plan preparation process has been available to all interested parties at the relevant stages, including at both the Regulation 14 stage (25 September 2020 to 6 November 2020) and the Regulation 16 stage (9 July 2021 to 23 August 2021). I can confirm that the consultation process has met the legal requirements and has had regard to the advice on plan preparation in the PPG.

### *Development and Use of Land*

- 3.6 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*

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

### *Human Rights*

- 3.8 I have seen no evidence that the Plan breaches human rights and no respondent, including Bedford Borough Council, has voiced concerns regarding this matter. From my independent assessment I am satisfied that the Plan does not breach Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).

## 4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

### *EU Obligations*

- 4.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment dated September 2020 (produced by AECOM) concludes (on page 24) that there is the potential for 'significant' and 'notable' positive effects and that 'no significant negative effects are predicted'. In other words, the policies in the WNDP would not have significantly damaging consequences on, for example, air quality, biodiversity, and health and wellbeing. I have seen no substantive evidence that would lead me to conclude otherwise.
- 4.2 A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) was produced by Bodsey Ecology Limited (dated July 2019). This concludes (on page 14) that there is 'no reason' arising from this HRA 'to prevent the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan from being adopted' in the context of the 2017 Regulations. From my independent assessment I concur with those findings.
- 4.3 I note that no objections to the policies in the WNDP were submitted by Natural England or by any other similar organisation and I am satisfied that the approach taken by the Parish Council is appropriate.

### *Main Issues*

- 4.4 I have approached the assessment of compliance with the Basic Conditions of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan 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*

#### National Policy, Sustainable Development and the Development Plan

- 4.5 The policies of the WNDP are set out under six main headings which are: Housing (W1 to W8), Environment (W9 to W12), Village Facilities (W13 to W15), Local Economy (W16 to W17), Sustainable Community (W18), and Historic Environment (W19). The policies are followed by sections on Non-Land Use Actions and Monitoring and Review. The Basic Conditions Statement (June 2021) summarises how the WNDP has had regard to national and strategic policies; contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and meets the other Basic Conditions.
- 4.6 Subject to the detailed comments that I set out below, I conclude that the WNDP has had proper regard to national policy and guidance. I also conclude that subject to the modifications that I recommend:
- The WNDP is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Bedford Local Plan and that overall, the document provides an appropriate framework that will ensure the satisfactory

achievement of the Vision for Wootton as set out in Section ii of the WNDP, providing a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development; and

- That the policies, as modified, are supported by appropriate evidence, are sufficiently clear and unambiguous and that they can be applied with confidence<sup>8</sup>.

### *Specific Issues of Compliance of the Plan's Policies*

#### Introductory Sections I and II

- 4.7 The Introduction on page 5 includes the Figure that identifies the Plan area and explains the process that has been followed in the preparation of the document, including in terms of consultation. An explanation is given regarding the purpose of the WNDP and its relationship to other elements of the Development Plan for the area. There is a section outlining the history and evolution of the settlement, the demographics of the Parish and the community facilities that can be found in Wootton.
- 4.8 Section II summarises the Vision for the Parish and sets out the objectives of the WNDP. I consider that the introductory paragraphs set the scene in a clear but relatively succinct manner and in particular I consider that the stated objectives appropriately establish the foundations for the WNDP – foundations that clearly take into account the views of the local community. It is helpful that the policy titles include references to the relevant objectives.

#### Housing Policies (W1 to W8)

##### Policy W1: New Residential Development (page 21)

- 4.9 The Bedford Local Plan 2030 (adopted in January 2020) identifies Wootton as a key service centre (see paragraph 6.14 and policy 3S) and clause (ix) of the policy confirms that the delivery of rural growth will be through neighbourhood plans. There is no specific housing allocation for the settlement of Wootton but policy 4S of the Local Plan allocates a total of 2,000 dwellings to the eight key service centres in the Borough.
- 4.10 The Parish Council has based its housing requirement on the 2017 Housing Needs Survey (with a reduction to take into account the reduced Local Plan Period from 2035 to 2030). The Borough Council has not objected to this approach and bearing in mind I am recommending review of the WNDP every 2 years (see paragraph 4.56), I am satisfied that, at this time, sufficient land has been identified for housing development in the village.
- 4.11 Policy W1 confirms that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within Wootton and it establishes the design and other

---

<sup>8</sup> PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

principles that will be applied in the consideration of development proposals. The requirements of the policy satisfactorily accord with the advice in the NPPF<sup>9</sup> and the National Model Design Code.

- 4.12 Some respondents to the Regulation 16 consultation raised concerns regarding the scale and appearance of new development and the fact that in the past visually inappropriate development has been allowed. I saw on my visit that there is a wide variety in the design and appearance of buildings in Wootton. However, one of the purposes of policy W1 is to ensure that new development will assimilate well into the fabric of the village and fit 'with the distinctive character of Wootton's built heritage' (objective 1 on page 18). There is no reason to doubt that the implementation of policy W1 will ensure that objective 1 (and its sub-objectives) is satisfactorily achieved.
- 4.13 A number of Regulation 16 respondents proposed other/alternative sites for residential development. However, I am satisfied that the 'Site Assessments Report – Housing' clearly sets out the methodology used and the justification for the sites that were selected.
- 4.14 As mentioned in paragraph 2.5, I received a letter regarding land to the west of Wootton Upper School, Hall End Road, expressing concern regarding the approach taken by the Parish Council towards the consideration of the site. It is clear to me, however, that the Parish Council has been well aware of the aspirations of the site promoter, especially as a planning application for up to 81 dwellings on the site was submitted in April 2019. It was at that time that the Parish Council arranged a public meeting to discuss the application. I am told<sup>10</sup> that there was significant objection to development on the site from local residents, including with regard to the scale of the proposed development and potential consequences in terms of highway safety. The planning application was refused<sup>11</sup> and was subsequently appealed. The Appeal was dismissed by the Inspector in September 2020. However, the applicant successfully challenged that decision, and the High Court has ordered that the Appeal be re-determined. However, as yet, no date has been agreed for the redetermination.
- 4.15 The site was not put forward for development at the 'call for sites' stage and I am told that the promoter did not engage with the Neighbourhood Plan process at any stage. In other circumstances it may have been appropriate for the site to be re-assessed now, as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process but I conclude that there would be no benefit in delaying progress on the WNDP, especially as no date has yet been arranged for the re-determination Appeal. It will be the conclusions of the Appeal Inspector that determine whether or not development on the site is justified. In any event I am recommending that the WNDP is reviewed

---

<sup>9</sup> Revised version: 20 July 2021.

<sup>10</sup> See Parish Council's response to Examiner's Joint Question 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ref 19/00894/MAO.

every two years (see paragraph 4.56) so if appropriate, the site can be reconsidered as part of that process.

#### Policy W2: Housing Delivery (page 22)

- 4.16 Up to 105 dwellings are proposed in policy W2 but it is made clear that this figure could be exceeded on suitable sites within the Settlement Policy Area, subject to the requirements of Policy W1 being met. This approach is based on the findings of the Housing Needs Survey (2017) and is supported by a majority of the local community. I am aware that Wootton is defined within the Bedford Local Plan as a 'key service centre' and on my visit I noted the wide range of community facilities and services available. However, I also saw that there has been significant development in the area over recent years and I consider that the Parish Council has adequately justified the reduction in housing numbers from 145 (as set out in policy W2 of the Pre-Submission version of the WNDP document – September 2020) to 105. This reduction is based primarily on resident feedback during consultation on the pre-submission version of the Plan and to reflect the reduced Bedford Borough Local Plan period from 2035 to 2030.
- 4.17 I note that some local residents questioned the need for more housing in the village and suggested that Wootton has 'reached the limit'<sup>12</sup>. However, the housing figure is based on the Housing Needs Survey (2017) and NPPF section 5 confirms that it is the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of homes. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that a sustainable pattern of development should be promoted. I consider that the wide range of community facilities and services that are available in Wootton contribute significantly to its credentials as a sustainable location for development.
- 4.18 Conversely it was suggested that in order to 'boost the supply of homes'<sup>13</sup> more housing should be allocated, and for example, it was suggested that there should be an allocation at the Chequers Public House<sup>14</sup>. On current evidence I am satisfied that the Parish Council has satisfactorily justified its approach<sup>15</sup>, but circumstances may change with the adoption of the Bedford Local Plan Review (scheduled for 2023) and that is one of the reasons I am recommending that the WNDP is reviewed every two years (see paragraph 4.56).
- 4.19 Paragraph 62 of the WNDP (page 23) refers to a total of 17.53ha of open space. However, policy W3 refers to 3.56ha and policy W10(b) refers to 15.97ha, making a total of 19.53ha. It is therefore recommended that the correct total is given in paragraph 62 and also that the correct policy number of W10 is referred to (not W12) (**PM2**). Concerns were expressed

---

<sup>12</sup> Regulation 16 response 15.

<sup>13</sup> NPPF paragraph 60.

<sup>14</sup> Regulation 16 response 9.

<sup>15</sup> See Parish response to Examiner's Question 2.

regarding the provision of the 15.97ha of open space<sup>16</sup>. In the response of the Parish Council to my Question 14 (dated 24 September 2021), it is confirmed that the Parish Council has already engaged with the relevant landowners and there is no reason to doubt that this open space provision can satisfactorily be achieved.

#### Policy W3: Land between Potters Cross and Wootton Road (page 23)

4.20 Land is allocated for up to 50 dwellings between Potters Cross and Wootton Road. The policy sets out a series of requirements and having seen the site I agree that the provision of open space and the green corridor are important components of the policy because they will contribute towards ensuring that the risk of physical coalescence with nearby development, in the future, will be significantly reduced. Concerns were expressed<sup>17</sup> regarding the loss of countryside and the proximity of the Bedford Link Logistics Park but having seen the site I am satisfied that, with the implementation of the stated criteria, the site could satisfactorily accommodate up to 50 dwellings.

#### Policy W4: Land south of Keeley Lane (page 24)

4.21 Up to 20 dwellings are proposed on land south of Keeley Lane. Concerns were expressed regarding the requirement for the new development having to respect the linear form of existing development (bullet point 2). It is important that any new development assimilates well into the existing townscape and paragraph 130 of the NPPF confirms that development should be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. It is also stated that development should be visually attractive, establish a strong sense of place but that appropriate innovation or change should not be discouraged. However, the Village Design Statement confirms, on page 7 (second paragraph) that 'there is no clear and prevailing settlement pattern or grain' and I agree. On that basis I consider that the specific reference to respecting 'linear form' has not been adequately justified and is unduly restrictive and therefore I recommend that it is deleted (**PM3**).

4.22 The Borough Council expressed concern regarding the impact of development on the setting of Deep Thatches listed building<sup>18</sup> and NPPF paragraph 199 places great weight on the conservation of designated heritage assets. Having visited the site I consider that development could be undertaken without harm to the listed building or its setting and in any event the policy makes it clear that any development must be sensitive to its setting. In order to provide complete clarity, I recommend that the listed building is specifically referred to in policy W4 (**PM4**).

---

<sup>16</sup> See Regulation 16 response 36.

<sup>17</sup> Regulation 16 response 16.

<sup>18</sup> See Borough Council's response to Examiner's Question 5.

- 4.23 Concerns were voiced<sup>19</sup> regarding requirement 6 of the policy which refers to contributions being made to both public transport and education transport. My understanding is that this clause was included at the request of the Borough Council. The NPPF, in paragraph 16, confirms that policies should take into account the need to contribute to achieving sustainable development and that they should be clear and unambiguous. This requirement complies with that advice.
- 4.24 I travelled along Keeley Lane and although it is comparatively narrow in parts the level of traffic at the time of my visit was low. I have seen no substantive evidence that would lead me to conclude that an increase in traffic levels would be unacceptable and I note that it is a requirement of all the allocation policies (W3, W4, W5 and W6) that there must be no unacceptable harm caused in terms of highway safety.

Policy W5: Land at Tinkers Corner, Keeley Lane (page 24)

- 4.25 Policy W5 proposes up to 15 dwellings on land at Tinkers Corner, Keeley Lane. It is important that any new development assimilates well into the existing townscape and paragraph 130 of the NPPF confirms that development should be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. It is also stated that development should be visually attractive, establishes a strong sense of place but that appropriate innovation or change should not be discouraged. However, as with policy W4 (see paragraph 4.21 and 4.25 above), I consider that the specific reference to respecting 'linear' form is unduly restrictive and has not been adequately justified and therefore I recommend that it is deleted (**PM5**). The second bullet point refers to 'heritage assets' but does not identify what they are. In the interests of clarity for the decision maker, I recommend in **PM6** that specific reference is made to the listed building known as 'Deep Thatches'.
- 4.26 I saw the character of the road layout in the vicinity of Tinkers Corner, but I am satisfied that the issue of highway safety is adequately addressed in the fifth bullet point of policy W5.

Policy W6: Land on south side of Keeley Lane (page 25)

- 4.27 There is an allocation of up to 20 dwellings to the south of Keeley Lane. It is important that any new development assimilates well into the existing urban fabric and paragraph 130 of the NPPF confirms that development should be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. It is also stated that development should be visually attractive, establishes a strong sense of place but that appropriate innovation or change should not be discouraged. However, as with policies W4 and W5 above (see paragraph 4.21 above), I consider that the reference to respecting 'linear' form in the second bullet point has not been satisfactorily justified and is unduly restrictive and I therefore

---

<sup>19</sup> Regulation 16 response 8.

recommend in **PM7** that it is deleted. The second bullet point refers to 'heritage assets' but does not identify what they are. In the interests of clarity for the decision maker, I recommend in **PM8** that specific reference is made to the ridge and furrow earthworks which are referred to in the Site Assessments Report – Housing.

- 4.28 I saw the character of the road layout in the vicinity of Keeley Lane, but I am satisfied that the issue of highway safety is adequately addressed in the fifth bullet point of policy W6.

Policy W7: Local Housing Needs (page 25)

- 4.29 Policy W7 refers to the need to provide a mix and range of house types and this approach accords satisfactorily with the policies in the Bedford Local Plan 2030 and the aspirations of the local community.

Policy W8: Residential parking in new development (page 26)

- 4.30 Policy W8 on car parking sits comfortably with the Borough Council's Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities and is justified.

Conclusion on Housing Policies

- 4.31 I am satisfied that all the Housing policies (as modified) have proper regard to national policies and advice and meet the other Basic Conditions.

Environment Policies (W9 to W12)

Policy W9: Local Green Spaces (page 26)

- 4.32 The Plan seeks to designate four areas of land as Local Green Space. Three of the areas are owned by Bedford Borough Council (and one by the Parish Council) and as owners, the Borough Council have been properly advised regarding the proposed designation. I saw the areas in question on my visit and I am satisfied that they meet the requirements as set out in paragraph 102 of the NPPF and are, in my view, capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period. Therefore, the four sites should be designated as Local Green Space.

- 4.33 The NPPF reference in paragraph 68 (page 26) needs up-dating and I recommend accordingly in **PM9**.

Policy W10: Other Important Green Spaces (page 27)

- 4.34 Wootton has accommodated significant levels of growth over recent years and the designation of a total of 19.53 ha of Important Green Space will go some way in redressing the balance between new development and

open space provision, the latter being important for the health and well-being of the community<sup>20</sup>.

- 4.35 There are four out-of-date references to the NPPF which need to be changed – in paragraphs 72 and 73 (page 27); paragraphs 79 and 80 (page 28). **PM10, PM11, PM12** and **PM13** are therefore recommended.

#### Policy W11: Protection of Views (page 29)

- 4.36 The Wootton Village Design Statement (page 25) identifies a number of important views which contribute to the character of the village. Having seen the views I agree that they do contribute positively to the character of the settlement and that their protection is justified. However, it should be made clear that the important views are public views and therefore **PM14** and **PM15** are recommended.

#### Policy W12: Development Design Criteria (page 29)

- 4.37 Policy W12 includes a list of 9 criteria which, if implemented, will ensure that new development assimilates well into the existing urban fabric of the Parish. Chapter 12 of the NPPF emphasises the need to create high quality places and confirms that there is a role for Neighbourhood Planning Groups in identifying the special qualities of an area (paragraph 127). However, a decision maker may be unable to satisfactorily decipher clause (c) of policy W12 which refers to development being 'designed to the size and shape of the building plot'. In the interests of clarity, I therefore recommend modified wording in **PM16**. I am satisfied that policy W12 is based on appropriate evidence (for example the Village Design Statement), has regard to national advice and will result in the achievement of objective 2 of the WNDP.
- 4.38 Paragraph 87 refers to national planning policy and design but there is no reference to the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. In order to reflect the up-to-date situation, I recommend the deletion of paragraph 87 (page 30) and its replacement by up-dated text (**PM17**).

#### Conclusion on Environment Policies

- 4.39 As proposed to be modified, the Environment policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area and meet all the other Basic Conditions.

---

<sup>20</sup> NPPF paragraph 98.

## Village Facilities Policies (W13 to W15)

### Policy W13: Village Facilities (page 31)

- 4.40 There is a large number of community facilities in Wootton, and they are identified in Policy W13. With an increasing population it is important that where possible these facilities are retained and improved. The only exception would be if the facility moved elsewhere in the village or if it was satisfactorily demonstrated that the use was no longer viable. Such an approach is consistent with the advice in chapter 2 of the NPPF regarding the achievement of sustainable development.
- 4.41 In the interests of clarity for the decision maker, it should be made clear that there is no clause 2 c) by the deletion of the final 'or'. **PM18** is therefore recommended.

### Policy W14: The Provision of New Community Facilities (page 32)

- 4.42 Public consultation has confirmed that villagers support the provision of additional community facilities, for example a doctor's surgery, a youth centre and upgraded play areas. Whilst some such provision may be beyond the resources or remit of the Parish Council, it is nevertheless important that the aspirations of the community are properly recognised. Policy W14 sets out the requirements for any improvements to community facility provision and are important elements in securing the provision of sustainable development.
- 4.43 There are four up-dates required regarding the publication of the revised NPPF. They are in paragraphs 90, 93, 95 and 97 and in the interests of consistency I recommend them accordingly in **PM19, PM20, PM21** and **PM22**.

### Policy W15: Supporting Communications Infrastructure (page 33)

- 4.44 The NPPF, in chapter 10, supports the provision of advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure. There is also significant local support for such provision<sup>21</sup> and I am satisfied that the inclusion of policy W15 has regard to national policies and advice.

### Conclusion on Village Facilities Policies

- 4.45 The policies relating to Village Facilities (as modified) will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, have regard to national policies and meet all the other Basic Conditions.

---

<sup>21</sup> See results of Neighbourhood Questionnaire.

## Local Economy (Policies W16 and W17)

Policy W16: Supporting the Development of Small Businesses (page 34)

4.46 Paragraph 96 of the WNDP confirms that local residents support the development of appropriate small businesses and policy W16 states the type of development that will be supported and sets out the criteria against which such a proposal would be assessed. In this way sustainable development should be achieved.

Policy W17: Working from Home (page 34)

4.47 In some cases the ability to work from home provides much needed flexibility, especially in the case of start-up businesses. However, the provision of such accommodation must not be to the detriment of the character of the area or the living conditions of residents. Building a strong economy is a key national objective<sup>22</sup> and policy W17 accords with that approach.

Conclusion on Local Economy Policies

4.48 The Local Economy policies have regard to national policies and advice and meet all the other Basic Conditions.

## Sustainable Community (Policy W18)

Policy W18: Developer Contributions and Community Infrastructure (page 35)

4.49 Policy W18 is currently just a list of projects identified for investment. In order to provide clarity to the decision maker it should be made clear that these 'projects' will be given priority when considering funding from the local element of the Community Infrastructure Levy. **PM23** is therefore recommended.

Conclusion on Sustainable Community Policy

4.50 I am satisfied that policy W18 (as modified) will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and meets all the other Basic Conditions.

## Historic Environment (W19)

Policy W19: Protection of Heritage Assets including Listed Buildings (page 36)

4.51 Policy W19 sets out the matters that must be considered for development within the Wootton Conservation Area. These requirements are important if the building/feature in question is to be conserved and enhanced. However, clause (e) is not a consideration (as it currently reads) but a

---

<sup>22</sup> NPPF chapter 6.

requirement and the policy should be modified to provide clarity. **PM24** is therefore recommended.

4.52 An up-date to the NPPF reference in paragraph 103 is recommended in **PM25**.

4.53 There is no single plan in the WNDP which identifies all the heritage assets within the Parish. Such information would, in some circumstances, be of value to the decision maker. I therefore recommend in **PM26** that such a plan is included in the chapter on the historic environment.

#### Conclusion on Historic Environment Policy

4.54 Policy W19 (as modified) has regard to national policies and advice and meets all the other Basic Conditions.

#### *Non-Land Use Actions*

4.55 Planning guidance on neighbourhood planning<sup>23</sup> confirms that neighbourhood plans can refer to wider community-led aspirations but that any such aspirations that do not relate to the development and use of land, should be clearly identifiable. I am satisfied that this advice has been followed with regard to Section IV of the WNDP.

#### *Monitoring and Review*

4.56 The monitoring and review of the WNDP is an important requirement in order to ensure that the policies remain valid and up-to-date. The approach that is set out in Section V is reasonable and clear. However, in paragraph 106 it should be made clear that the WNDP will be reviewed every two years, and I recommend accordingly in **PM27**. This is to ensure that the WNDP remains compatible with the rest of the Development Plan for the area (i.e. the Bedford Local Plan Review).

#### *Appendices*

4.57 There are three Appendices: the Policies Map; the Village Design Statement; and a Glossary of Terms. All three of them enable the decision-maker in the formulation of conclusions.

#### *Other Matters*

##### Brownfield Sites

4.58 NPPF paragraph 120 c) confirms the value in making use of suitable brownfield land for development. However, the Parish Council confirmed that in its view there are no brownfield sites within the village that are

---

<sup>23</sup> PPG Reference ID: 41-004-20190509.

suitable for development<sup>24</sup>. I have received no evidence to the contrary and on my visit, I saw no obvious 'candidates' for such development.

## **5. Conclusions**

### *Summary*

- 5.1 The Wootton 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 for all the responses made following consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, and the evidence documents submitted with it.
- 5.2 I have made recommendations to modify a number of policies and text to ensure 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. The Wootton 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, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

### *Overview*

- 5.4 The WNDP is written in a clear and relatively succinct style and tackles a range of issues which evidence shows are of particular interest to local people. Considerable effort has been made to ensure that interested parties have been made aware of the opportunities to contribute to the plan-making process and I am confident that the resultant document is one that appropriately reflects the land use aspirations of the local community.
- 5.5 Wootton has accommodated significant growth over several years and a number of residents consider that the village has reached its optimum size. However, in my view the proposed level of growth is not excessive (105 dwellings allocated) and I am confident that with the implementation of the policies on, for example design and the environment, any further growth can be satisfactorily accommodated without harm to the intrinsic elements that are valued by local people.

---

<sup>24</sup> See Parish response to Examiner's Question 21.

*David Hogger*

Examiner

## Appendix: Modifications (27)

Note: Insertions are shown in bold and deletions are shown in strikethrough (unless otherwise stated).

<b>Proposed modification number (PM)</b>	<b>Page no./ other reference</b>	<b>Modification</b>
PM1	Front cover	Modify the title to read: Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan <b>to 2030</b> .
PM2	Page 23 paragraph 62	Modify the second bullet point to read: provision of substantial ( <del>17.53</del> <b>19.53</b> hectares) open space as described in Policy <del>W12</del> <b>W10</b> ;
PM3	Page 24 Policy W4	Modify the end of the second bullet point to read: and <del>by</del> <b>will</b> respecting the existing <del>linear</del> form of development;
PM4	Page 24 Policy W4	Modify the start of the second bullet point to read: be sensitive to the site surroundings and nearby heritage assets ( <b>including Deep Thatches listed building</b> ) and demonstrate that the scheme will make a positive contribution to ....
PM5	Page 24 Policy W5	Modify the end of the second bullet point to read: and <del>by</del> <b>will</b> respecting the existing <del>linear</del> form of development;
PM6	Page 24 Policy W5	Modify the start of the second bullet point to read: be sensitive to the site surroundings and nearby heritage assets ( <b>including Deep Thatches listed building</b> ) and demonstrate that the scheme will make a positive contribution to ....

PM7	Page 25 Policy W6	Modify the end of the second bullet point to read:  and <del>by</del> <b>will</b> respecting the existing <del>linear</del> form of development;
PM8	Page 25 Policy W6	Add wording to the end of bullet point three to read:  ... of archaeological interest, <b>including the ridge and furrow earthworks on the site;</b>
PM9	Page 26 paragraph 68	Paragraph <del>105</del> <b>107</b> of the NPPF
PM10	Page 27 paragraph 72	Paragraph <del>99</del> <b>101</b> of the NPPF
PM11	Page 27 paragraph 73	Paragraph <del>100</del> <b>102</b> of the NPPF
PM12	Page 28 paragraph 79	Paragraph <del>170</del> <b>174</b> of the NPPF
PM13	Page 28 paragraph 80	Paragraph <del>170</del> <b>174</b> of the NPPF
PM14	Page 29 Policy title	Modify the title of policy W11 to read:  Protection of <b>Public</b> Views
PM15	Page 29 Policy W11	Insert the word ' <b>public</b> ' before 'views' in policy W11
PM16	Page 29 Policy W12 (c)	Modify the start of clause (c) to read:  <del>be designed to the size and shape of the building plot</del> <b>reflect the prevailing pattern and scale of development in the immediate location</b> and should ...
PM17	Page 30 paragraph 87	Delete all of paragraph 87 and replace with:  <b>National planning policy acknowledges that design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in</b>

		<b>which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. This is reinforced within the guidance provided within the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. As confirmed within the NPPF, neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.</b>
PM18	Page 31 Policy W13	Modify the end of clause 2b) to read: ... protect the asset. <del> or</del>
PM19	Page 32 paragraph 90	Paragraphs 28, <del>83</del> <b>84</b> and <del>92</del> <b>93</b> of the NPPF
PM20	Page 32 paragraph 93	Paragraphs <del>83</del> <b>84</b> and <del>92</del> <b>93</b> of the NPPF
PM21	Page 33 paragraph 95	(paragraph <del>112</del> <b>114</b> )
PM22	Page 34 paragraph 97	(paragraphs <del>83</del> <b>84</b> and <del>84</del> <b>85</b> )
PM23	Page 35 Policy W18	Add an independent sentence after clause g) to read: <b>Monies from the local element of the Community Infrastructure Levy will be directed towards these various priority projects.</b>
PM24	Page 36 Policy W19	Modify the last half of the policy to read: c. The positive elements of its setting and its relationship to its immediate surroundings; <b>and</b> d. The contribution that the building or the site makes to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

		e Archaeological evaluation and excavation must .....  [ <u>Note</u> : the letter e above is deleted but the text remains to form a final paragraph].
PM25	Page 36 paragraph 103	Paragraph <del>193</del> <b>199</b> of the NPPF
PM26	Page 36	Insert a plan(s) within the Historic Environment chapter which identifies the heritage assets within the Parish.
PM27	Page 39 paragraph 106	Modify second sentence to read: The Plan will be reviewed <del>periodically</del> <b>every two years</b> to ensure ....



WOOTTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN **TO 2030**

**SUBMISSION VERSION**

Version with Examiner's modifications

Additions in **yellow**

Deletions in strikethrough and **red**

WPC comments have been added in green.

**VERSION 15.0**  
**22.06.2024**

## **CONTENTS – page numbers to be changed in referendum version**

Foreword	3
How the plan is organised	4
<b>Section I: Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
i Introduction	
ii What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan?	
iii The Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Development Plan Context	
iv Community Engagement and Consultation	
v About Wootton	
vi Demographics	
<b>Section II: Vision, Key Themes and Objectives</b>	<b>15</b>
i Vision for Wootton	
ii Key Issues	
iii Objectives of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan	
<b>Section III: The Policies of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Section IV: Non-Land Use Actions</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Section V: Monitoring and Review of the Plan</b>	
<b>Section VI: Appendices</b>	<b>39</b>
1 Policies Map	
2 Village Design Statement	
3 Glossary of Terms	

## **FOREWORD**

Neighbourhood Development Plans come out of the Government's determination to ensure local communities are closely involved in the decisions which affect them.

The Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) has been produced to establish a vision for the Parish and to help deliver the local community's aspirations and needs for the plan period through to 2030.

Our Neighbourhood Development Plan is a statutory document that once adopted will form part of the development plan.

Our plan has been produced by the Wootton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (WNPSG) taking into account the views of the residents of Wootton Parish. The WNPSG has consulted and listened to the community, land owners, local businesses and organisations on a wide range of issues that will influence the wellbeing, sustainability and long term preservation of our community. Every effort has been made to ensure the views and policies contained in this document reflect those of the majority of residents in the Parish.

The Parish Council would like to thank the members of the Steering Group and pay tribute to their work since 2014. The Parish Council is also grateful for the help and engagement of many others in the village without whom it would not have been possible to produce this plan.

Gareth Lloyd – Chair of Wootton Parish Council.

## **How the plan is organised**

The plan is organised into four sections:

### **Section I: Introduction**

This section sets out:

- What is the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) and what is its relationship to the Local Plan;
- A summary of the initial stages of public consultation and how it has influenced the development of the WNDP;
- About Wootton – a brief overview of its history and present situation.

### **Section II: Vision, Objectives and Key Themes**

This section sets out:

- The overall vision for Wootton;
- Key Issues;
- Objectives of the WNDP.

### **Section III: The Policies of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan**

This section sets out:

- Policies to deliver the objectives of the WNDP.

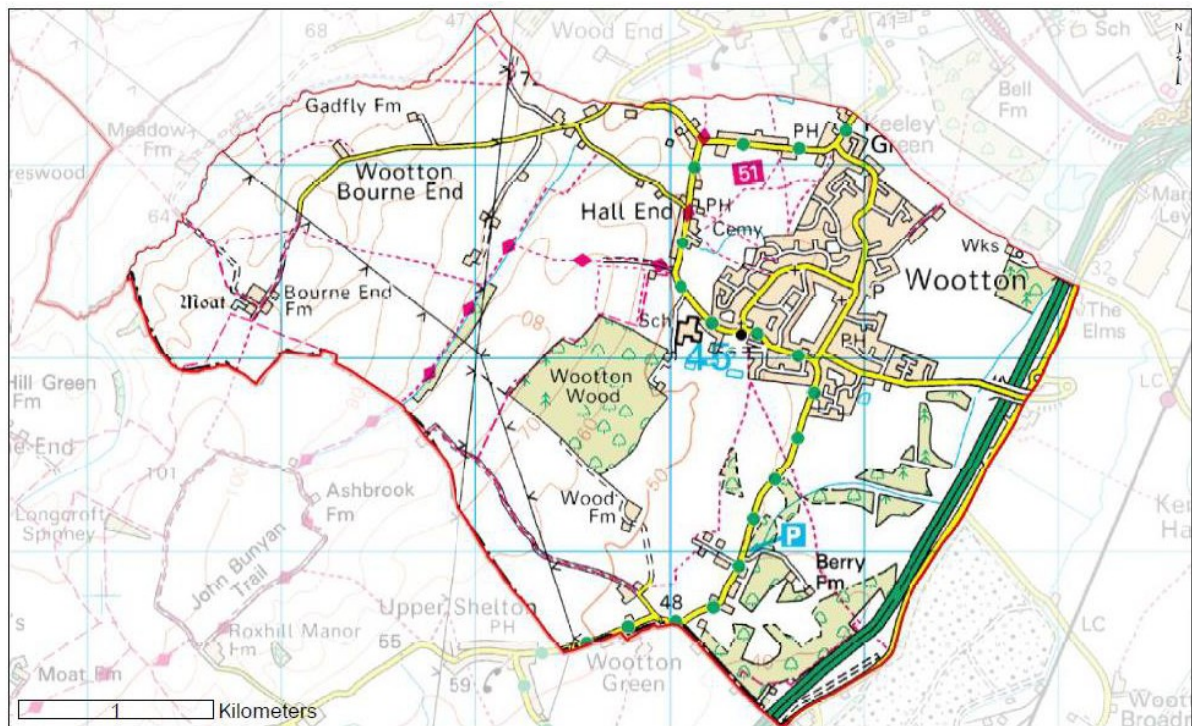
### **Section IV: Non-Land Use Actions**

### **Section V: Monitoring and Reviewing of the Plan**

## SECTION I

### i. Introduction

1. This document has been prepared by the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group (WNDPSG), led by Wootton Parish Council.
2. The Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) is designed to achieve the vision for Wootton through to 2030. Neighbourhood planning enables communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work and in supporting new development proposals.
3. On 9 March 2015, Wootton Parish Council applied to Bedford Borough Council (BBC) for designation of the whole Parish as a Neighbourhood Planning Area. On 9 June 2015, BBC approved the Neighbourhood Plan Area as shown on the map attached at Fig. 1. The village of Wootton has been classified as a Key Service Centre by BBC in their Local Plan 2030.



**FIGURE 1 – WOOTTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA**

4. The WNPSPG, comprising Parish Councillors and local residents was established in April 2014, to drive forward the preparation of the Plan and to lead on the public engagement and consultation process.
5. The WNDP provides a vision for the future of Wootton and sets out clear policies to help realise this ambition. These policies have regard to national planning policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted development plan which presently comprises the 'saved' policies of the Bedford Local Plan 2002, the 'saved' policies of the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 and the adopted Local Plan 2030.
6. The WNDP has been developed through extensive consultation with the residents, land owners and others stakeholders with an interest in our community. It provides local people with the opportunity to have control over where development should take place within the Parish, and to influence it for the benefit of the community.

7. It is intended that the WNDP will assist not only in guiding future development, but also ensure that the Conservation Area, heritage assets, and existing designated Village Open Spaces, all of which give the Parish its special character, are protected.
8. A Neighbourhood Development Plan describes the area it serves and details the developments, improvements and changes that local residents, community and voluntary groups, and service providers, would like to see. This is done by:
  - Forming a Steering Group;
  - Use of consultations to reach those whose voice is not normally heard;
  - Use of consultations to identify the most important local issues;
  - Evidence gathering to inform the Plan and its policies;
  - Creating opportunities for residents to work out practical steps to improve issues identified.
9. The final WNDP will be 'made' formally by BBC. Local people will be given the chance to endorse the WNDP publicly by means of a referendum which ensures that the Plan has the backing of local residents.
10. The Steering Group identified key themes which it was felt were particularly pertinent to Wootton, and which have guided both the process of the consultation and the reporting of the findings described in this document. The key themes identified are:
  - Environment;
  - Historic Environment;
  - Housing;
  - Local Economy;
  - Sustainable Community;
  - Village Facilities.
11. The WNDP has been produced on behalf of the people of Wootton. It has been developed from the views of local people and organisations using a variety of consultation methods including:
  - Exhibitions and Events;
  - Feedback from Launch and Open Days;
  - Residents Questionnaire;
  - Regular meetings of the Wootton Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group;
  - Parish Council meetings;
  - Social Media Platforms (including Facebook);
  - Parish Council website.
12. A detailed summary of the public consultation carried out is provided within the Consultation Statement which accompanies the Submission Version of the WNDP.
13. Prior to consultation of the WNDP, the Parish Council have commissioned a number of documents which have informed and supported the plan which are listed below:
  - Village Design Statement;
  - Green Infrastructure Plan;
  - Site Assessment Report;
  - Housing Needs Survey;
  - Habitats Regulation Assessment; and
  - Strategic Environmental Assessment.

## ii. What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan?

14. The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is a plan for the community as a whole. It looks at a wide range of issues including:
  - The development of housing (location, type, tenure etc.);
  - Transport, access and connectivity (roads, cycling, walking etc.);
  - The protection and creation of open spaces (allotments, open spaces, play areas etc.);
  - The protection of important buildings and heritage assets.
15. Although the Localism Act 2011 aims, via the NDP, to give local people the power to decide what happens in their community it also sets out a number of 'basic conditions' that must be met. These are:
  - To have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
  - To contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - To be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan<sup>1</sup> for the area, or any part of the area;
  - To be compatible with EU obligations; and that prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan<sup>2</sup>.
16. The production of a NDP gives the local community the power to decide where new housing, infrastructure and any community facilities should go and how the village should develop.
17. The WNDP will be subject to an independent examination. An independent examiner will be appointed by BBC in consultation with the Parish Council. The appointed examiner will assess whether the Plan meets the 'basic conditions' and if found to meet these, the Plan can proceed to local referendum. The referendum will give all eligible voters in the Parish the opportunity to vote and decide if the WNDP should form part of the development plan and be used in the determination of planning applications.
18. The WNDP has been prepared to generally conform to the strategic policies of the development plan. Neighbourhood Plans do not cover minerals and waste matters. Minerals and waste policies are contained in Local Plan 2030 and the Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
19. The WNDP has been prepared for the period to 2030 in accordance with Bedford Borough Council's Local Plan 2030.
20. Once 'made', the WNDP will form part of the development plan for the area. Planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

---

<sup>1</sup> Development plan is defined in Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made

<sup>2</sup> The prescribed condition is that the 'making' of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects)

### iii The Neighbourhood Plan and the Development Plan Context

21. The Basic Conditions Statement will map the various policies in the submitted WNDP against the policies in the current development plan. In summary, the following policies have been particularly important in underpinning the neighbourhood plan policies:

#### ***Allocations and Designations Local Plan***

- AD1 Sustainable Development Policy;
- AD24 Green Infrastructure Opportunity Zones;
- AD28 Provision of Open Space and Built Facilities in Association with New Development;
- AD36 Pedestrian Routes;
- AD40 Village Open Spaces and Views.

22. In regard to the policies of the Local Plan 2030, the following policies have been taken into account in resolving the WNDP policies:

#### ***Local Plan 2030***

- 3S Spatial Strategy;
- 4S Amount and distribution of housing development;
- 5S Development in villages with a Settlement Policy Area;
- 7S Development in the countryside;
- 28S Place making;
- 29 Design quality and principles;
- 30-33 The impact of development;
- 35S Green Infrastructure;
- 37 Landscape character;
- 38 Landscaping in new development;
- 39 Retention of trees;
- 40 Hedgerows;
- 41S Historic environment and heritage assets;
- 42S Protecting biodiversity and geodiversity;
- 43 Enhancing biodiversity;
- 44 River Great Ouse;
- 45 Local Green Space;
- 46S Use of previously developed land & use of undeveloped land;
- 50S Water resources;
- 51S Climate change strategic approach;
- 52 Water demand;
- 54 Energy efficiency;
- 58S Affordable housing;
- 59S Housing Mix;
- 65 Reuse of rural buildings in the countryside;
- 75 New employment development in the countryside;
- 82 Local centres (including rural key service centres) – changes of use;
- 83 Neighbourhood centres and individual shops – changes of use;
- 86S Delivering infrastructure;
- 87 Public transport;
- 88 Impact of transport on people, places and environment;
- 90S Transport infrastructure and network improvements;
- 92 Flood risk;
- 93 Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);
- 97 New sports and leisure facilities;
- 98 New community facilities;
- 99 Loss of existing sports and community facilities.

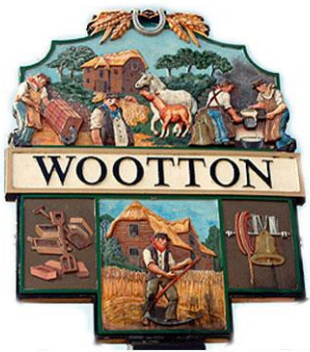
23. It is clear that the WNDP has been prepared within the context of the existing development plan and the Local Plan 2030. This is good practice and reflects key elements within the Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.

#### **iv Community Engagement and Consultation**

24. The WNDP has been produced on behalf of the residents of the Parish of Wootton. It has been developed from the views of local people using a variety of consultation methods.
25. Extensive consultation has been undertaken in order to inform the development of the WNDP and the policies that it provides. A Community Engagement Strategy was adopted by the Parish Council in June 2017 to help inform the process of community and stakeholder engagement needed to produce an informed and relevant community-led Neighbourhood Plan for Wootton.
26. Prior to the preparation of the WNDP, public consultation took place over a 6 week period (ending on 1 August 2018) on an Issues and Options document in order to inform policies. This consultation attracted a total of 254 responses which is equivalent to 15% of households in the Parish.
27. A draft WNDP was written by April 2019 and shared informally with BBC. Following receipt of detailed comments, amendments were made, and a draft was prepared for public consultation which was endorsed by the Wootton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
28. The Pre-Submission Version of the WNDP was discussed at the Full Parish Council meeting on 9 September 2020 and the Parish Council resolved that the Neighbourhood Plan be subject to the statutory 6 week “pre-submission consultation” in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012) (as amended). The consultation period extended to 6 weeks (from 25 September 2020 to 6 November 2020) and the consultation took place with bodies whose interests were considered may be affected by the draft Plan and also those bodies that are required to be consulted as outlined in the regulations.
29. Posters and literature on the Pre-Submission consultation were distributed in relevant areas of the village. Information was posted on the Parish Council Facebook page as well as the Parish Council website. Public exhibitions were held on 25<sup>th</sup> (evening), 26<sup>th</sup> (daytime) & 27<sup>th</sup> (daytime) September 2020 as well as on 9<sup>th</sup> (evening), 10<sup>th</sup> (daytime) & 11<sup>th</sup> (daytime) October 2020. Completing the response forms online was encouraged.
30. A Consultation Statement detailing the consultation process is provided to accompany the Submission Version of the WNDP.

#### **v About Wootton**

31. Wootton is a settlement located to the south-west of Bedford in the north of Bedfordshire. It is one of the largest villages within Bedford Borough covering an area of 984 hectares within the Forest of Marston Vale (one of 12 areas within England with community forest status). The historic core of the village is designated as a Conservation Area, and has many distinctive buildings and features.



32. The Parish has been significantly affected by development over recent years, yet it still retains a village identity. The boundaries of Wootton parish extend from Keeley Green in the north to Wootton Green in the south.

#### *History and Context*

33. Evidence indicates that Wootton has been a large village as far back as Domesday. Remarkably, it did not suffer the great decrease in population in the latter quarter of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries experienced by so many Bedfordshire villages as people left the land for jobs in towns during and after the great agricultural depression which lasted from 1873 to 1896. By 1901, the population had risen to 1,252. The population remained steady throughout the first half of the 20th century, however, by 1971, the population had climbed to 2,386. By 2001 that figure was 4,230. According to the 2011 Census, the area covered by Wootton civil parish had 4,156 residents who lived in 1,654 households. With the latest expansion at Fields Road South, Sherwood Drive, Berryfields, and Little Wootton, Wootton now has approximately 5,000 residents.
34. Wootton is built on the Oxford clay belt and as such has a long association with brick making including 17<sup>th</sup> century references to bricks made in the tithe kiln at Wood End. In both the early and late part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century church bells were made in Wootton for several churches in Bedfordshire and adjoining counties. The early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the opening of the Baptist Church and at the latter part of the same century, saw the opening of Wootton's first school and the Methodist Church.
35. Wootton has a solid, or underlying, geology known as Peterborough Member, a mudstone. Bourne End, Hall End, Keeley Lane and the south-western part of Church End all have a solid geology of Oxford Clay. The superficial geology overlying this is a clay soil, though Hall End, Keeley Lane, and the south-western part of Church End are covered in a mixture of gravel, sand, silt and clay known as Head. Wootton is close to the River Great Ouse and in the Clay Vale of Bedford, is a relatively low-lying place.

#### *Demographics*

36. As detailed earlier in the WNDP, over recent years there has been a substantial number of housing developments. The information below is a synopsis of the population and household characteristics.

Source: 2011 Census

### Age Breakdown of Residents within Wootton Parish

0-15	16-29	30-49	50-74	75+	All Ages
815	544	1123	1351	323	4156
19.6%	13.1%	27%	32.5%	7.8%	100%

### Housing and Households within Wootton Parish

Accommodation Type	Parish		Borough	Parish (%)
	No.	%	%	
Detached	749	43.5	27.4	43.5
Semi-Detached	574	33.4	32.2	33.4
Terrace	309	18.0	21.9	18.0
Flat	85	4.9	17.6	4.9
Caravan/Mobile	4	0.2	0.9	0.2

Household Tenure	Parish		Borough	Parish (%)
	No.	%	%	
Owned	1,349	81.6	66.8	81.6
Social Rented	190	11.5	16.1	11.5
Private Rented	115	7.0	17.2	7.0

### Economic Activity

Economic Activity (16-74)	Parish		Borough	Economic Activity (16-74)	Parish		Borough
	No.	%	%		No.	%	%
<b>Active</b>	<b>2,143</b>	<b>71.0</b>	<b>71.9</b>	<b>Inactive</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>28.1</b>
FT Employee	1,182	39.2	40.4	Retired	530	17.6	12.8
PT Employee	460	15.2	13.9	Student	134	4.4	5.5
Self-Employed	338	11.2	9.5	Looking After Home	104	3.4	4.3
Unemployed	77	2.6	4.4	Sick/Disabled	77	2.6	3.3
Full-Time Student	86	2.8	3.6	Other	30	1.0	2.3

### Village Facilities

37. Presently, there are three general convenience stores and a post office in the village. The village also has a petrol service station and MOT testing centre as well as four public houses, The Chequers, The Cock Inn, The Fox and Duck and The Legstraps. It also has a medical practice known as the 'Wootton Vale Healthy Living Centre' with a pharmacy located at Folkes Road. A Sainsbury's Local store, fish bar (Rumbles) and barbers are located at Folkes Road. In addition, there is a fish & chip/takeaway (Pat's Plaiçe) and a hair and beauty salon (Charlie's Hair and Beauty) located at Yewtree Court. The village benefits from a community café known as 'The Hub' which is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and provides a focus for community gatherings.



38. In addition, the village also has a library which is located in Lorraine Road. In regard to places of worship there are the following:-

- St Mary's (Church of England) – located in Church Road;
- Wootton Baptist Church – located in Bedford Road; and
- Wootton New Life Methodist Church – located in Cause End Road.

39. There are a number of meeting places located within the village including:-

- Memorial Hall (Bedford Road)
- Village Hall (Church Road)
- Community Centre (Harris Way)
- Scout Hut (St Mary's Road)
- Wootton Blue Cross (Bedford Road)
- The Hub (New Life Methodist Church, Cause End Road)

40. In regard to school provision, the village has the Wootton Lower School providing education for ages 4 to 9 and Wootton Upper School providing for children aged between 13-18 years. At present, most children aged between 9-13 travel to Holywell School in Cranfield. In respect of pre-school education this is currently provided at 'Bizzy Bees' which is held in the Memorial Hall (located on Bedford Road), St Mary's Pre-School held at St Mary's Church Hall and the Wootton Community Nursery located off Fields Road.

41. With regard to sport, leisure and play facilities, the recreation ground is located in Church Road and provides football pitches, a skateboard park, a children's play area, a multi-use games area as well as changing facilities. Other children's play areas are located at Folkes Road and adjacent to Memorial Hall.

42. In addition, Wootton Blue Cross Football Club is based at Weston Park in Bedford Road. The football ground also has a licensed social club.

43. The allotments are located at Hall End which are leased to the Parish Council by Wootton Pools Land Charity. At the present time, the current demands for allotment plots is being met.

44. The parish church is a Grade I listed building. The church has origins in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the lead spire is a notable feature which can be seen at numerous points around the parish.



45. There are 35 listed buildings (a full list is provided within Appendix 1 of the Village Design Statement). These include St Mary's Church (Grade I listed), Wootton House, a small country house from the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Grade II\* listed) and The Chequers Inn located along Hall End (Grade II listed). Eleven of the parish's listed buildings lie within the Wootton Conservation Area. In addition to its listed buildings, Wootton also contains a number of non-designated heritage assets which contribute to its unique character. These and other significant listed buildings as well as other notable local buildings are described within the Village Design Statement (please refer to Appendix 2).

## Section II: Vision, Key Themes and Core Objectives

### i Vision for Wootton

46. It is essential that the special characteristics of the Parish are protected and enhanced. In recognition of this and with overwhelming community support, the following Vision Statement has been adopted for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

***To protect and strengthen Wootton's strong local identity and integrity as a historic rural village, working together to improve quality of life for those living, studying and working in Wootton.***

In terms of level of support, 209 of 233 respondents (90%) to the issues and options consultation undertaken in summer 2018 strongly agreed or agreed with the vision.

47. The WNDP will

- Facilitate a lively, diverse and distinct village identity to underpin our thriving community and ensure day to day services are provided that enable the social and recreational needs of our population to be satisfied whilst protecting and enhancing its built environment, open spaces, adjacent countryside and green infrastructure;
- Ensure new development contributes to the provision of the necessary infrastructure improvements, enhances the present built and historic environment, prevents physical coalescence with surrounding settlements and secures open spaces (including Local Green Space), woodlands and the networks of footpaths and cycleways;
- Encourage measures to reduce traffic congestion within the village;
- Preserve and enhance the significance of the village's heritage assets;
- Ensure that Wootton remains an attractive place to live and work.

48. The Vision will be achieved by focusing on:

- Developing and deploying a strategic level of thinking enabling a coordinated approach to any future development within the parish;
- Retaining the open countryside, developing footpaths and bridleways, and protecting local green spaces and heritage assets;
- Providing community infrastructure to ensure all residents needs are met.

### ii Key Themes

49. The responses to the surveys and various consultation events have provided a good level of data which has been invaluable in establishing priorities, identifying problems and generating ideas. The following issues, by theme have been highlighted:

#### Housing

- The need for a better mix of housing (tenure and price);
- The type, tenure and cost of new housing should meet the housing needs of the local area;
- Any new housing should help to broaden the range of stock available in the Parish with a priority for elderly accommodation, bungalows and 2-3 bedroom houses;
- The need for some good quality affordable housing provision;
- Growth will impact on local services and facilities and, as such, capacity issues must be addressed with careful integrated planning;
- The need to avoid major growth due to the impact on local services and facilities;
- To enable new and existing homes to be better served by utility infrastructure;
- Small scale housing developments (e.g. less than 25 homes) are preferred to meet identified need, growth targets and help sustain local services and facilities.

## Environment

- The need to protect green space and open spaces in the village;
- Support for creating new open spaces (building on the Green Infrastructure Plan);
- Increase accessible public open space (including potential provision of a community orchard, Country Park or wild British Meadows);
- The Marston Vale Forest should be a continuous area of green space around Wootton (and expanded);
- Countryside views and vistas must be maintained to retain the “village feel” and to avoid coalescence;
- Open spaces of amenity, ecological or recreational value within the built up area should be retained;
- The need to protect trees, hedgerows, and other distinctive features in the village;
- The potential need for a tree planting scheme;
- The need to protect natural resources;
- The need to protect heritage assets;
- The importance of ridge and furrow fields;
- Support for an improved network of footpaths and bridleways (eg Parish Walks);
- A commitment to improve accessibility for all throughout Wootton to support healthy communities;
- The need to consider the allocation of land for future cemetery provision to ensure the availability of future capacity for a period of 100 years;
- The need to protect existing allocation land; but no significant additional demand identified;
- The scope to deliver local environmental improvements and the need to develop an action plan to respond to local issues raised via the consultation process;
- The need to ensure quality design and building standards for all new development;
- The need to ensure that the village retains its character, rural atmosphere and, in particular, respect environmental and heritage features.

## Village Facilities

- The need to protect existing community facilities;
- There was recognition that existing facilities were good and highly valued but that scope exists to secure improvements that would benefit the village, some of which may be justified from small scale development;
- Mobile phone coverage and improved broadband regularly featured as being important.
- There is some scope to improve facilities for particular age groups (e.g. the young);
- There is scope to improve local services (such as the provision of a permanent Doctor's surgery, dental care provision, more shops etc);
- Wootton Lower School and Pre-School offers excellent provision for the village's children;
- Wootton Upper School is a well-respected School and this reputation needs to be maintained;
- The need to maximise the potential of these Schools as a contributor to economic success;
- The need to actively support the Milton Keynes to Bedford canal route;
- There is a good level of support for protecting the Medical Health Centre, Library, existing local shops/Post Office;
- There is scope to extend community and social facilities over time;
- The need to encourage clubs or societies to use the community facilities, including the Community Centre, Village Hall, Memorial Hall and The Hub;
- The need to support and promote existing clubs and facilities in the area;
- The scope to deliver improvements to local facilities and the need to develop an action plan to respond to local issues raised via the consultation process.

## Local Economy

- Job opportunities in the village are poor and appropriate new businesses to suit the rural environment and local needs (e.g. service trades, agriculture/food production) should be encouraged as long as the village character is not adversely affected;
- Existing and new small to medium sized enterprises and micro-businesses should be encouraged to develop in the Parish;
- Scope exists for the possible provision of small affordable units for new business use, particularly rural arts studio space;
- Any new development must be of a scale that will have limited adverse impact on existing services and infrastructure;
- Growth will impact on already constrained infrastructure and, as such, capacity issues must be addressed with careful integrated planning. Concerns about the type of business, noise pollution and adequacy of parking must also be addressed;
- Community reaction to already planned growth, in particular the scale, location and use of buildings proposed - a planning presumption against large warehouse type buildings;
- Employment activity will continue to focus on the existing Marston Vale Innovation Park;
- The scope to deliver improvements to the local economy and the need to develop an action plan to respond to local issues raised via the consultation process.

## Sustainable Community

- The need for improved highway/footpath maintenance standards;
- Parking issues in the village and the support for more dedicated parking facilities;
- Traffic issues and, in particular, speeding of vehicles through the village and HGV traffic;
- Some support for traffic calming measures, such as road humps or average speed cameras;
- The impact of new development on traffic movement;
- The issue of traffic movement associated with the Upper School via Church Road;
- Delivering new infrastructure to assist entry to and egress from the village (eg new road from Tinkers Corner to Wood End Lane/Gibraltar Corner);
- The need for improved broadband provision and improved mobile coverage;
- There is some support for better public transport;
- Potential scope exists to improve accessibility for all throughout Wootton to support healthy communities;
- The need to balance the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers;
- Support for improved provision in the village for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians;
- Growth will impact on infrastructure such as drainage, sewage, health services, public transport etc;
- Scope to deliver local improvements to access and safety and the need to develop an action plan to respond to local issues raised via the consultation process.

## Historic Environment

- The need to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area;
- The need to ensure that any new development in Wootton positively respects and does not negatively impact on the shared heritage;
- The need to ensure that both the fabric and the setting of listed buildings and heritage assets continue to be protected;
- The need to ensure that archaeological sites are preserved or where necessary subject to archaeological evaluation and subsequent investigation.

### iii The Objectives of the Wootton Neighbourhood Plan

50. The views expressed by local residents at the various consultation events reflected and reinforced much of the evidence gathered through the Evidence Base particularly in respect of the concerns that residents have on the impact of additional housing on local infrastructure, facilities and services. The core objectives are based on the key issues raised by local people and have been summarised to form the basis of the Wootton Neighbourhood Plan.

#### Housing:-

- 1) *To provide housing which meets the needs of the diverse and growing community and to influence the location, scale, design and type of new housing to ensure that it fits with the distinctive character of Wootton's built heritage and meets identified local housing needs.*

The following sub objectives are identified as:-

- 1a) To deliver a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of Wootton Parish, ensuring that a mix of housing types is delivered across all tenures and seeking to provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home;
- 1b) To meet new housing demand in a way that ensures that the right type of housing is built in the right locations, and that protects the village from uncontrolled, large scale, or poorly placed development;
- 1c) To ensure that development provides adequate and enhanced physical and communications infrastructure;
- 1d) To provide new housing which is high quality in design, layout and materials, appropriate in size and suitable for the whole life needs of residents;
- 1e) To support sensitive development which is sympathetic to the area, protects and enriches the look and feel of the village and that minimises the impact of such development on the natural, built and historic environment.

#### Environment:-

- 2) *To protect the place defining characteristics of Wootton's special local environment and enriched countryside, including the existing local green spaces, and to ensure that new development creates new space and contributes to the open space needs of the local community, including the preservation of the natural features in the distinctive landscape.*

The following sub-objectives are identified as:-

- 2a) To protect, improve and enhance community open spaces;
- 2b) To ensure that any new development includes new appropriate and proportionate green spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment;
- 2c) To minimise the impact of new development on the local area and, in doing so, to protect the views identified in the Village Design Statement;
- 2d) To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our area, our local wildlife and its habitat and trees and preserve ecological corridors and sites of special interest;
- 2e) To maintain the distinct character of the village by preserving, protecting and enhancing the high quality and distinctive rural landscape for present and future generations.

#### Village Facilities:-

- 3) *To protect and improve local facilities, amenities and services which provide a community focus and help sustain the vitality, health and quality of life of all residents.*

The following sub objectives are identified as:-

- 3a) To protect and enhance local amenities which provide a community focus;
- 3b) To encourage opportunities to expand local facilities with a presumption in favour of specifically identified uses (e.g. doctors surgery and dental care facility);
- 3c) To encourage opportunities for all generations to participate in a range of educational, sporting and leisure activities;
- 3d) To sustain the vitality, health and safety of the community by ensuring that all residents have easy access to community facilities and community green, open spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment;
- 3e) To ensure that any new housing development of a type likely to create a demand, provides for appropriate and proportionate open space and recreation facilities.

#### **Local Economy:-**

*4) To protect and strengthen the economic benefits of Wootton as a key service centre and to encourage and support local business and local measures to improve employment prospects in the village.*

The following sub objectives are identified as:-

- 4a) To enhance the prospects for local employment by creating and maintaining an environment that makes it attractive for micro and small business to locate and flourish in the area;
- 4b) To ensure, through our planning policies, that any future employment development within the Parish is sensitive, sustainable and low impact and built in the right location (specifically, previously built developed/brownfield sites).

#### **Sustainable Community:-**

*5) To promote infrastructure and access improvements (such as improved traffic management, car parking, pedestrian and cycle routes) needed to support new development and to encourage safe and accessible movement for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and public transport.*

The following sub objectives are identified as:-

- 5a) To ensure that any proposal for development ensures adequate and enhanced physical and communications infrastructure;
- 5b) To ensure that Wootton is well connected for pedestrians and cyclists in the village and to surrounding destinations and that our roads and paths provide safer and more accessible routes, better balancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers;
- 5c) To seek ways of addressing and reducing the problems of traffic congestion on our roads and the lack of parking and to ensure that new developments contribute to this in every respect;
- 5d) To promote sustainable transport, by encouraging viable alternative methods to move around the village;
- 5e) The presumption in favour of sustainable development.

#### **Historic Environment:-**

*6) To preserve and enhance Wootton's historic environment to protect and improve features which contribute to this environment.*

The following sub objective is identified as:-

- 6a) To support sensitive development which preserves and enhances the special interest of the conservation area as well as the significance of the village's designated and non-designated heritage assets.
51. The delivery of the non-land use actions (as listed in Section IV of the Plan) arising will be achieved in partnership with public sector, private bodies and stakeholders such as landowners, developers and the community.
52. The WNDP fully meets the requirements for public consultation as set out in the Localism Act 2011. Details of the consultation will be recorded in the Consultation Statement which will accompany this document.
53. For a locally distinctive plan it is right that a range of locally specific objectives should be developed. These will underpin the policies whose use and implementation will support and deliver the objectives and contribute to sustainable development within the Parish. The objectives intend that the plan should
- Provide a framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made for the benefit of continuing sustainability across the Parish;
  - Encourage provision of housing, including affordable housing and homes for the elderly to meet identified housing needs where doing so would not significantly affect the quality of the local environment;
  - Support and encourage the continued provision of social, community, recreational and other leisure infrastructure to meet community needs; and
  - Conserve and enhance the landscape, biodiversity, natural habitats and cultural heritage of the Parish.

### Section III: The Policies of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan

54. This section sets out the planning policies of the WNDP. The policies have been developed from the issues, evidence, vision and objectives as detailed in this document. These policies will be used to determine planning applications in the Parish and to shape the future of the Parish as a place to live and work in, and to visit.

#### Housing

55. The NPPF states that 'Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan'. The WNDP seeks to positively provide for the needs of its existing residents while also allowing a limited amount of development to provide for the wider needs and priorities of the local area.

#### Policy W1 – New Residential Development (Objective 1, 1b, 1d and 1e)

*The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Wootton Settlement Policy Area boundary, as shown on the Policies Map, to shape the physical growth of the village over the plan period.*

*There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the settlement boundary, subject to development complying with the provisions of this plan and the development plan.*

*Development proposals within the village should demonstrate that each of the following design principles are met as and where applicable:*

- a. the scale, form and character of the existing settlement is maintained;*
- b. new development shall be of a scale to complement the traditional character and historic core of the village;*
- c. new proposals are sympathetic to the significance of heritage assets, including the conservation area, listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets including ridge and furrow earthworks;*
- d. new proposals shall not affect or compromise open land which is of particular significance to the form and character of the village;*
- e. buildings should be no more than two storeys high unless supported by a defined need;*
- f. landscaping and boundary treatments should use native species and, where practical and possible retain mature trees. However, where this is not possible, non-native species which are beneficial for wildlife will be acceptable alternatives;*
- g. residents' amenity should be protected from any noise, light or other pollution; and*
- h. existing local habitats and wildlife corridors should be protected and enhanced, and new ones created where practical and possible.*

56. **Local Evidence:** Due consideration has been given to whether the settlement boundary should be changed to include new development allocations proposed by the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Local residents expressed (59.9%) for maintaining the existing SPA as well as the village retaining its existing environmental and heritage features that give the Parish its special character. In addition, there was strong support for protecting nature conservation, local wildlife and habitats together with preserving hedgerows and trees from further loss.

57. **Technical Evidence:** National planning policy acknowledges that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. The NPPF confirms that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.
58. Wootton is defined within the Local Plan as a 'Key Service Centre'. The settlement boundary was reviewed in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan in 2013. Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan has provided the opportunity to review the existing boundary and update it to take into account the extent of the settlement as it currently stands as well as addressing the proposed allocations covered in this plan.
59. This policy is further supported within the requirements of, amongst others, Policy AD40 of the Allocations and Designations Local Plan and Policies 4S, 28S and 29 of the Local Plan 2030.

**Policy W2 – Housing Delivery (Objective 1a and 1b)**

*Provision will be made over the plan period for up to 105 homes as proposed within site specific policies W3 to W6.*

*Development in excess of this figure will only be permitted where the proposal relates to a site within the SPA in accordance with Policy W1.*

60. Local Evidence: The Neighbourhood Plan will identify sites considered suitable for potential housing development. On the basis of current need based upon the Housing Needs Survey (2017) commissioned by the Parish Council and in order to facilitate key objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan that cannot be delivered by any other means, this plan will allocate sites to accommodate a total of 105 dwellings within the plan period. Public consultation was carried out in June/July 2018 on the proposed scale of development in the WNDP, with 73% of respondents strongly agreeing/agreeing with the allocation of sites sufficient to accommodate a total of 145 residential units within the plan period, on the basis of need ascertained by the Housing Needs Survey. This survey aimed to assess the need of local people for either affordable housing or market housing in Wootton, at the time when it was envisaged that the Bedford Borough Local Plan would cover the period to 2035. The quantum of development has been marginally reduced in response to further resident feedback and to reflect the reduced Local Plan period to 2030.
61. Technical Evidence: Wootton is defined within the Local Plan as a 'Key Service Centre' which are identified as containing a good range of services; well connected to larger town centres by regular public transport; and provide a strong service role for the local community and surrounding area. Whilst, the spatial strategy does not allocate a level of housing within Wootton itself, the Local Plan recognises growth in the key service centres will provide primarily new homes but also services for the local community. Policy 7 states that development outside defined SPAs will be permitted if it is appropriate in the countryside including within a Neighbourhood Development Plan has been made. This policy supports development proposals where it can be demonstrated that: it responds to an identified community need; identifiable community support and it is made or supported by the Parish Council; its scale is appropriate to serve local needs or to support local families; and the development contributes positively to the character of the settlement and the scheme is appropriate to the structure, form, character and size of the settlement.
62. When considering locations for new development, an assessment of potential housing sites was undertaken. The Site Assessment report is provided in the Evidence Base. The allocation of these 4 sites for growth in the Neighbourhood Development Plan enables:
- modest growth targeted to local need over the next 10 years;
  - provision of substantial (17.53 19.53 hectares) open space as described in Policy W12 W10;
  - protection of countryside views and the safeguarding of considerable green space for

- current and future generations; and
- compliance with expressed community preferences.

### **Policy W3 – Land between Potters Cross and Wootton Road**

*The Plan allocates 4.08 ha of land between Potters Cross and Wootton Road, as shown on the Policies Map for housing development for up to 50 dwellings and the provision of open space (3.56 ha).*

*The development will be permitted provided that the following criteria are met:*

- *a maximum of 50 dwellings with an affordable housing contribution in line within policies within the development plan and to provide a range of housing types including bungalows and smaller starter homes;*
- *the provision of open space (approximately 3.56 ha as identified on the Policies map as Other Important Green Space (Policy W10));*
- *the provision of a green corridor along the northern boundary of the site to provide a satisfactory relationship with the adjoining countryside;*
- *developer contributions will be sought towards both public transport and education transport, if required;*
- *be sensitive to the site surroundings and nearby heritage assets and demonstrate that the scheme will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area by reference to other policy objectives of this plan where possible and appropriate;*
- *pre-determinative archaeological evaluation to mitigate any impact of any heritage assets of archaeological interest;*
- *comply with the guidelines of the Village Design Statement;*
- *the existing public rights of way which extend around the site are to be protected;*
- *the provision of vehicular access off from Bedford Road that will not result in unacceptable harm in terms of highway safety; and*
- *As far as possible, existing hedges and trees should be retained, and where removal is necessary, compensation for the loss of the biodiversity asset must be incorporated into the proposal.*

63. This allocation will facilitate the avoidance of further physical coalescence with the urban area of Kempston and the adjoining areas of growth. The provision of open space within the allocation, which will be transferred to the Parish Council will provide a suitable green/landscape buffer to retain the separation between the Parish and the immediate surrounding area thereby meeting with the objectives of the plan. The provision of 50 dwellings will assist to meet the needs identified within the Housing Needs Survey and by providing the housing specified in the policy will assist to broaden the range of house type in the Parish with a priority for bungalows and 2-3 bedroom house meeting issues raised during public consultation.

## Policy W4 – Land south of Keeley Lane

*The Plan allocates 3.79 ha of land south of Keeley Lane, as shown on the Policies Map for housing development for up to 20 residential dwellings.*

*The development will be permitted provided that the following criteria are met:*

- a maximum of 20 dwellings providing a low density development with an affordable housing contribution in line within policies within the development plan and to provide a range of housing types including bungalows and smaller starter homes;
- be sensitive to the site surroundings and nearby heritage assets (including Deep Thatches listed building) and demonstrate that the scheme will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and by will respecting the existing linear form of development;
- pre-determinative archaeological evaluation to mitigate any impact of any heritage assets of archaeological interest;
- comply with the guidelines of the Village Design Statement;
- the provision of vehicular access off from Keeley Lane that will not result in unacceptable harm in terms of highway safety;
- developer contributions will be sought towards both public transport and education transport if required; and
- As far as possible, existing hedges and trees should be retained, and where removal is necessary, compensation for the loss of the biodiversity asset must be incorporated into the proposal.

## Policy W5 – Land at Tinkers Corner, Keeley Lane

*The Plan allocates 1.85 ha of land at Tinkers Corner, Keeley Lane, as shown on the Policies Map for housing development for up to 15 residential dwellings.*

*The development will be permitted provided that the following criteria are met:*

- a maximum of 15 dwellings providing a low density development with an affordable housing contribution in line within policies within the development plan and to provide a range of housing types including bungalows and smaller starter homes;
- be sensitive to the site surroundings and nearby heritage assets (including Deep Thatches listed building) and demonstrate that the scheme will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and by will respecting the existing linear form of development;
- pre-determinative archaeological evaluation to mitigate any impact of any heritage assets of archaeological interest;
- comply with the guidelines of the Village Design Statement;
- the provision of vehicular access off from Keeley Lane that will not result in unacceptable harm in terms of highway safety;
- developer contributions will be sought towards both public transport and education transport if required; and
- As far as possible, existing hedges and trees should be retained, and where removal is necessary, compensation for the loss of the biodiversity asset must be incorporated into the proposal.

## Policy W6 – Land on south side of Keeley Lane

*The Plan allocates 1 ha of land south of Keeley Lane, as shown on the Policies Map for housing development for up to 20 residential dwellings.*

*The development will be permitted provided that the following criteria are met:*

- *a maximum of 20 dwellings providing a low density development with an affordable housing contribution in line within policies within the development plan and to provide a range of housing types including bungalows and smaller starter homes;*
- *be sensitive to the site surroundings and nearby heritage assets and demonstrate that the scheme will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and **by will** respecting **the existing linear** form of development;*
- *pre-determinative archaeological evaluation to mitigate any impact of any heritage assets of archaeological interest, **including the ridge and furrow earthworks on the site;***
- *comply with the guidelines of the Village Design Statement;*
- *the provision of vehicular access off from Keeley Lane that will not result in unacceptable harm in terms of highway safety;*
- *developer contributions will be sought towards both public transport and education transport if required; and*
- *As far as possible, existing hedges and trees should be retained, and where removal is necessary, compensation for the loss of the biodiversity asset must be incorporated into the proposal.*

64. The provision of dwellings specified in Policies W4 to W6 will assist to meet the needs identified within the Housing Needs Survey and by providing the housing specified in the policy will assist to broaden the range of house type in the Parish with a priority for bungalows and 2-3 bedroom house meeting issues raised during public consultation. In respect of all the designated sites, the Parish Council have been in discussions with the respective landowners in regard to the scale of development and as part of the work, preliminary transport assessments have been carried out which have confirmed that safe and suitable access can be provided and the additional dwellings proposed would not have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network.

## Policy W7 – Local Housing Needs (Objective 1 and 1a)

*To meet defined local housing needs, all housing development shall provide a mix and range of house types and tenures, ensuring provision of affordable housing (where applicable thresholds have been met) and housing designed to meet the needs of the elderly and disabled people.*

65. **Local Evidence:** Consultation carried out during the neighbourhood planning process demonstrates a strong support for more affordable homes for sale or rent, for young people and the elderly (over 70% of respondents of Neighbourhood Questionnaire), and new market housing to broaden the range of stock in the Parish, with a particular need for as 2-3 bedroom semi-detached/terraced houses.
66. **Technical Evidence:** A comprehensive Housing Survey was completed by Bedfordshire Rural Community Charity (BRCC) in August 2017. The survey recommends 12 units to be provided through a rural exception site to be taken up by people with a local connection to Wootton in order to address the need identified. This policy is further supported within the requirements of Policies 58S and 59S of the Local Plan 2030.

## Policy W8 – Residential parking in new developments (Objective 1c and 5c)

*The need for parking provision within new residential developments will be assessed against the Borough Council's Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities: Design and Good Practice SPD or any successor document. Proposals should:*

- a) *provide sufficient parking to meet the assessed need;*
- b) *ensure that any additional on-street parking does not result in significant congestion for other road users or a serious threat to road safety; and*
- c) *avoid the creation of car-dominated environments through the appropriate location, layout and detailed design of the parking spaces.*

67. **Local Evidence:** Within the Neighbourhood Questionnaire and consultation carried out to date, residents were concerned about parking in the village. The outcome of the Neighbourhood Questionnaire showed strong support (over 90% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing) for establishing car parking space standards. Whilst on-street parking can bring activity to the street and help to calm traffic speeds, inadequate off-street parking can result in an environment dominated by cars, restricted traffic movements and unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Providing an appropriate balance between the amount, type and form of car parking is therefore a key factor in designing a quality development.

68. **Technical Evidence:** Paragraph 105 107 of the NPPF indicates that parking standards are influenced by the accessibility of the development, the availability of public transport, the size and type of property and local levels of car ownership. Bedford Borough Council's Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities sets out the overarching vision for parking within the Borough.

69. Policy W10 conforms with the provisions of the NPPF and Policy 31 of the Local Plan 2030.

## Environment

### Policy W9 – Local Green Spaces (Objective 2 and 2a)

*The following parcels of land as shown on the Policies Map are designated as Local Green Spaces:*

- a. *Amenity Open Space, Lorraine Road (LGS 1);*
- b. *Recreation Ground, Church Road (LGS 2);*
- c. *Berry Wood (west) (LG3);*
- d. *Berry Wood (north) (LG4).*

*Development on land designated as Local Green Space will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it can be clearly demonstrated that the development will not conflict with the purpose of the designation.*

70. **Local Evidence:** The consultation carried out demonstrates that residents were concerned for protecting existing green space and open spaces in the village.

71. **Technical Evidence:** A Green Infrastructure Plan has been prepared by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC). The plan was prepared with two community workshops to which local stakeholders and the wider community were invited. Following consultation events, a LGS assessment was carried out as a methodology for identifying spaces suitable for designation as LGS in accordance with the criteria set out in the NPPF.
72. Paragraph 99 101 of the NPPF advises that ‘ the designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them’. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services.
73. Paragraph 100 102 of the NPPF goes on to add that ‘the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - 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), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and
  - local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
74. This policy is further supported within the requirements of Policy 46 of the Local Plan 2030.

**Policy W10 – Other Important Green Spaces (Objective 2)**

*The following land, identified on the Policies Map at **Appendix 1**, shall be designated as Other Important Green Space and shall comprise:*

(a) *Land between Wootton Road and Bedford Road, Wootton [comprising 3.56ha], forming part of Policy W3 relating to new housing provision, shall be allocated and retained for the provision of a valuable green space and woodland and shall provide a significant landscape buffer between the Parish and the immediate surrounding areas. The Local Planning Authority should secure the transfer of this open space to the Parish Council to safeguard the identified significant features for the long term benefit to Parish residents.*

(b) *Land between Keeley Lane and Hall End Road, Wootton [comprising 15.97ha and as identified on the Policies Map], shall be allocated as a significant, valued and popular area of green space which would be retained and made accessible to the local community (developed to incorporate community managed facilities and community areas such as nature trails, community garden, community orchard, picnic and performance areas and/or wild British meadows). The Local Planning Authority should secure the transfer of this open space to the Parish Council to safeguard the identified significant features for the long term benefit to Parish residents.*

75. **Local Evidence:** The village has been significantly affected by development over recent years. Feedback from the public consultations carried out demonstrates (i) that residents were keen to protect existing green space and open spaces in the village, (ii) keen to ensure that any new development includes new appropriate and proportionate green spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment and (iii) an overwhelming support for the protection of the open countryside, distinctive countryside views, visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside, landscape as well as the prevention of physical coalescence with neighbouring settlements. The designated sites are of historic (including ridge and furrow), ecological and nature conservation interest.
76. The WNDP also recognises that the enhancement of local green space and green infrastructure

is a key consideration in planning for housing growth in the Parish and, as such, makes provision for the allocation of new areas of village open space that are significant and valuable in adding to the range of local facilities and further add to the character of the rural area. Policy W12 below identifies the scale and extent of provision of new areas of public green open space that have evolved from the allocation of land for small scale developments.

77. The Green Infrastructure Report embraces the overwhelming support from residents for the allocation and use of identified parcels of land for public open space in Wootton, including land between Hall End Road, Keeley Lane and Canons Close for use as:
- Wild British meadows (91% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to the proposal);
  - A country park (89% of respondents) or;
  - Community orchard (79% of respondents).
78. In addition to the above points, the same survey placed strong emphasis on the planting of trees (93% of respondents) and improved maintenance of existing rights of way or new provision of footpaths and bridleways to improve accessibility to Wootton's distinctive landscape and to encourage healthy leisure opportunities and a sense of wellbeing for residents.
79. **Technical Evidence:** Paragraph 170 174 of the NPPF recognises the need for the planning system to contribute and enhance the natural and local environment. In addition, Policy W12 supports conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in regard to Section 11 of the NPPF. The formal designations are derived from the evidence within the Green Infrastructure Plan prepared by the BRCC.
80. Green space and green infrastructure plays a key part in the retention of the character of rural settlements, and Development Plan policies seek to ensure that both the retention and enhancement of green space and green infrastructure is a foremost consideration if and when new development is planned. Access to a network of high quality open spaces is also a key feature of the NPPF. In addition, paragraph 170 174 of the NPPF recognises the need for the planning system to contribute and enhance the natural and local environment.
81. This policy is further supported by the requirements of Policies 35S, 41S and 43S of the Local Plan 2030.
82. **Delivery:** Where development proposals are brought forward within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area, the Local Planning Authority should identify appropriate opportunities to protect or enhance the identified significant features through planning conditions, Section 106 planning obligations, or as a payment in kind for Community Infrastructure Levy purposes, as appropriate. The Local Planning Authority should secure the transfer of the open space land identified at Policy W10 (a) and (b) to the Parish Council to safeguard the identified significant features for the long term benefit of the local community users.

#### **Policy W11 – Protection of Public Views (Objective 2 and 2 (c))**

*Development on prominent sites on the edge of Wootton should be avoided to protect the profile and skyline of the settlement and to ensure public views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Village Design Statement are not adversely affected.*

83. Local Evidence: The consultation carried out identified the need for countryside views and vistas must be maintained to retain the "village feel" and to avoid coalescence with adjoining settlements. The important views identified in the Village Design Statement provide vistas from points which contribute in a positive manner to the character of Wootton. The important views are:
- (i) across and through the north and west of the village;
  - (ii) across and through the area around Bedford Road; and

(iii) across and through the village centre.

84. **Technical Evidence:** The NPPF confirms that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. This policy is supported within the requirements of Policy AD40 of the Allocations and Designations Local Plan and Policies 28S and 29 of the Local Plan 2030.

**Policy W12 – Development Design Criteria (Objective 2, 2c and 2e)**

*New development within Wootton will only be supported where it preserves and enhances the local character and appearance of the village. Proposals should:*

- a. be designed to take account of site characteristics, respecting the locally distinctive, built, historic and natural environment as detailed in the Village Design Statement;*
- b. preserve and enhance the significance of Wootton’s heritage assets, including listed buildings, the conservation area and non-designated heritage assets;*
- c. be designed to ~~the size and shape of the building plot~~ reflect the prevailing pattern and scale of development in the immediate location and should protect and enhance the existing street scene and the residential amenity for existing and future residents;*
- d) incorporate sustainably sourced materials, where possible;*
- e) protect residential amenity from direct overlooking, loss of daylight, sunlight, visual bulk and noise pollution;*
- f) not be in areas at risk of flood or increase flood risk elsewhere and shall include the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems;*
- g) provide adequate off-street vehicle parking to meet the assessed need;*
- h) be able to be adapted to accommodate changing lifestyles and technologies;*
- i) seek to incorporate high quality landscaping within and around new developments together with protecting and enhancing wildlife habitats.*

85. **Local Evidence:** Responses from the public consultation supports the need to ensure high quality development, to protect and enhance the characteristics of the local environment and to ensure that new development contributes positively to the area.

86. **Technical Evidence:** The original village has properties dating back to the 16th century, with gradual development over the centuries and therefore much character and heritage. To ensure the preservation of Wootton design heritage, a Village Design Statement has been commissioned by the Parish Council to support the Neighbourhood Plan.

~~87. National planning policy acknowledges that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. The NPPF confirms that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.~~

87. National planning policy acknowledges that design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. This is reinforced within the guidance provided within the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. As confirmed within the NPPF, neighbourhood plans can play

an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.

88. This policy is also supported within the requirements of Policies 28S, 29, 30, 37 and 41S of the Local Plan 2030.

## Village Facilities

### Policy W13 - Village Facilities (Objective 3)

1. *The identified community facilities are:*
  - a) *Medical Health Centre;*
  - b) *Wootton Library;*
  - c) *Wootton Lower School (at both Bedford Road and Harris Way);*
  - d) *Wootton Upper School;*
  - e) *The Village Hall;*
  - f) *Memorial Hall;*
  - g) *The Community Centre;*
  - h) *Tesco Wootton Store;*
  - i) *Sainsbury's Local Store;*
  - j) *Wootton Post Office;*
  - k) *The Chequers Public House;*
  - l) *The Cock Inn Public House;*
  - m) *The Fox and Duck Public House;*
  - n) *The Legstraps Public House;*
  - o) *The Blue Cross Hall;*
  - p) *Wootton Pharmacy;*
  - q) *Wootton Garage (Fields Road);*
  - r) *St Mary's Church Hall;*
  - s) *Wootton Community Nursery;*
  - t) *Scout Hut (St Mary's Road);*
  - u) *Allotment Gardens (Hall End);*
  - v) *Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and Play Area (Harris Way);*
  - w) *Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and Play Area (Church Road).*
  
2. *Development that would result in the loss of these community facilities will not be supported unless the following can be demonstrated:*
  - a) *the proposals include alternative provision, on a site within the SPA of equivalent or enhanced facilities. Such sites should be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and have adequate car parking, or*
  
  - b) *satisfactorily evidence (including independently marketed for at least 12 months) to demonstrate that there is no longer an economic justification to protect the asset.*

89. **Local Evidence:** Local residents value the community assets and facilities that the Parish offers and confirmed the need to protect community facilities. A majority of the respondents to the Neighbourhood Questionnaire regard the village shops, schools, the village hall/Memorial hall, the village pubs as important, or very important. This policy seeks to protect community assets within the village and reflects the views expressed from the Neighbourhood Questionnaire.

90. **Technical Evidence:** The “golden thread” running through national planning policy is the promotion of sustainable development. This has economic, environmental and social dimensions. The maintenance and enhancement of the village’s range of social and community assets will allow the village to function and allow for some growth provided it is modest in scale and proportion to the whole village. Specifically, in rural areas, national planning policy promotes the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. Paragraphs 28, 83 84 and 92 93 of the NPPF are of particular relevance to the protection of local services). This policy seeks to protect community assets within the village and reflects the views expressed by residents during the public consultation events carried out as part of the

neighbourhood planning process.

91. Policy W15 is therefore consistent with the provisions of the NPPF and Policies 82 and 99 of the Local Plan 2030.

**Policy W14 – The Provision of New Community Facilities (Objectives 3 and 3b)**

*Proposals that diversify or enhance the range of community facilities will be supported provided that the development:*

- a) will not result in unacceptable traffic movements, noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance to residential properties;*
- b) will not cause harm to the significance of Wootton’s heritage assets;*
- c) will not generate a need for parking that cannot be adequately catered for; and*
- d) is of a scale appropriate to the needs of the locality and conveniently accessible for residents of the village wishing to walk or cycle.*

92. **Local Evidence:** Public consultation carried out to date supports the need for a permanent doctor’s surgery in the village, the provision of a dental surgery, a youth centre as well as upgrading existing play areas which were afforded the highest priority from respondents.

93. **Technical Evidence:** National planning policy promotes the provision of the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs and identifies the need for planning policies and decisions to plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. This is of particular importance to the commitment to support a prosperous rural economy. Paragraphs 83 84 and 92 93 of the NPPF are of particular relevance. Policy W16 seeks to address the potential for new community facilities within the village and reflects the views expressed by residents during the consultation processes. In addition, Policy 86S and 98 of the Local Plan 2030 states that development proposals should ensure that they do not have a harmful impact (including cumulative impact with other development) on the adequacy of existing infrastructure, including community facilities.

## Policy W15 – Supporting Communications Infrastructure (Objective 3)

*All new major developments should be served by a superfast broadband (fibre-optic) connection to premises unless it can be demonstrated, through consultation with Next Generation Access (NGA) Network providers, that this would not be either possible, practical or economically viable.*

*Where this is the case, sufficient and suitable ducting should be provided within the site and to the property to facilitate installation at a future date.*

*The development of new communications infrastructure to serve the village will be supported where the siting and appearance of the proposed apparatus and associated structures seek to minimize impact on the visual amenity, character or appearance of the surrounding area.*

94. **Local Evidence:** The need to improve high speed broadband within the village was supported and expressed within the results of the Neighbourhood Questionnaire (92%). There is significant support for the provision of adequate services to meet expectations for modern living (including telephone land line and next generation broadband services) and a requirement that, wherever possible, practical and economically viable, all new residential, commercial and community buildings within the Neighbourhood Plan area should be served by a superfast broadband (fibre-optic) connection to premises. In this regard, Bedford Borough Council are currently working in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council, Milton Keynes Council, BroadBand Delivery UK (BDUK) and BT Openreach, to deliver superfast broadband to homes throughout the three Local Authority areas.
95. **Technical Evidence:** For the purposes of this policy, major development is defined where 10 or more homes will be provided for housing and for non-residential development, it means an additional floorspace of 1,000sqm or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more<sup>3</sup>. The NPPF recognises that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being (paragraph 112 114).

---

<sup>3</sup> Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

## Local Economy

### Policy W16 - Supporting the Development of Small Businesses (Objective 4 and 4a)

*Proposals for the development of small business within and beyond the Settlement Policy Area will be supported where they involve:*

- a) New builds or the conversion of existing buildings; and*
- b) The diversification of existing rural enterprises.*

*All such proposals will be assessed against the following:*

- i) Impact on residential amenity;*
- ii) Access, traffic and car parking arrangements;*
- iii) Impact on the landscape and character of the area;*
- iv) Design.*

96. **Local Evidence:** Most residents who are in employment work outside of the village. However, residents support the development of small businesses in the village and many already operate from home. It is important to support the opportunities that exist, e.g. homeworking, rural diversification, and small-scale businesses, in order to ensure that the village does not become a purely residential community.
97. **Technical Evidence:** The NPPF seeks to encourage economic growth and identifies how planning policy can support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development (paragraphs 83 84 & 84 85). It is also compatible with the NPPF objective of promoting a strong rural economy through neighbourhood planning. Policy W18 conforms to the provisions of the NPPF and Local Plan 2030 Policy 65.

### Policy W17 – Working from Home (Objectives 4 and 4a)

*Small scale, home based businesses will be supported provided it can be demonstrated that:*

- a) residential amenity and the character of the surrounding area will not be unacceptably harmed by virtue of noise and disturbance, nuisance and pollution associated with the work activity;*
- b) such development will not result in unacceptable traffic movements and that appropriate parking provision is made; and*
- c) the operation of the business activity can be confined within the existing curtilage of the property.*

98. **Local Evidence:** Small businesses can find it difficult to start up or continue trading because of a lack of flexible premises within their means and Policy W17 seeks to address this within the Parish. This policy seeks to maximise the opportunities for entrepreneurial activity and employment. Furthermore, the impact of the pandemic has resulted in a change to working patterns and this policy seeks to address this issue.

99. **Technical Evidence:** The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to encourage economic growth and identifies how planning policy can support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.

### Sustainable Community

#### Policy W18 – Developer Contributions and Community Infrastructure (Objective 5, 5 and 5b)

*The following projects are identified as priorities for investment in local community infrastructure:*

- a) *Improvements to cycle paths, footpaths and bridleways within the Parish with improved surfaces and lighting;*
- b) *To support and incorporate community managed facilities and community area such as parish walks, nature trails, community garden, community orchard, picnic areas and wild meadow areas;*
- c) *Contribution to traffic surveys and implementation of improved traffic management in the village centre;*
- d) *Enhancement to community;*
- e) *Support future cemetery provision including extension to the existing cemetery at Lorraine Road;*
- f) *Improvements to communications;*
- g) *Contribution towards education.*

**Monies from the local element of the Community Infrastructure Levy will be directed towards these various priority projects.**

100. **Local Evidence:** The listed projects have been derived from the outcome of the consultation carried out to date. In addition, concerns and matters raised included improvement of footpaths, cycle routes and improvement of traffic management within the village. In addition, the need to support future cemetery provision within the Parish and in particular the extension to the existing cemetery at Lorraine Road arises from the community workshops held during the preparation of the Green Infrastructure Plan.

101. **Technical Evidence:** Policy 86S of the Local Plan 2030 states that new development will be required to provide, or contribute towards the provision of, measures to directly mitigate its impact on existing infrastructure which will be normally secured through the use of site specific planning obligations and/or community infrastructure levy payments as permitted by the regulations.

## Historic Environment

### Policy W19 – Protection of Heritage Assets including Listed Buildings (Objective 6, 6a and 6b)

*Planning permission will normally be granted for developments within the Wootton Conservation Area that lies within the SPA, provided that proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.*

*Proposals for the demolition, redevelopment or substantial alterations to important character buildings and sites should demonstrate the consideration that has been given to retaining:*

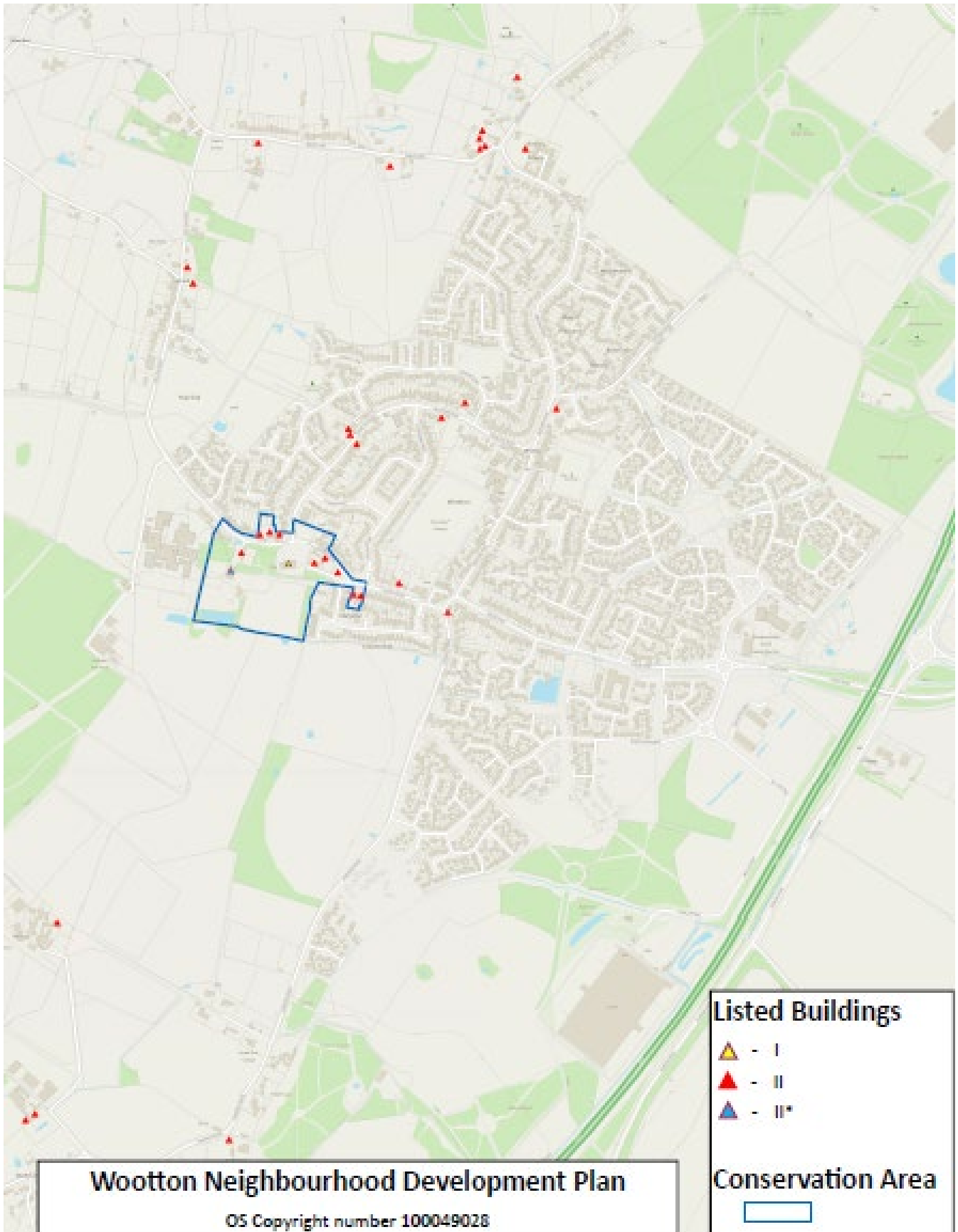
- a. The important character of the building or site itself;*
- b. Its most distinctive and important features;*
- c. The positive elements of its setting and its relationship to its immediate surroundings;  
and*
- d. The contribution that the building or the site makes to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets. and*
- e. Archaeological evaluation and excavation must be undertaken prior to development where there is likelihood of archaeological remains (including ridge and furrow), if deemed necessary the evaluation should take place prior to the determination of any planning application.*

102. **Local Evidence:** Local residents strongly agreed that the existing environmental and heritage features should be preserved and enhanced. The continued protection of important built heritage assets has been supported within the public consultation carried out due to their contribution to the historic and natural environment. The Village Design Statement prepared to support the Neighbourhood Plan identifies both designated and non-designated heritage assets which are of importance to the character and identity of Wootton.

103. **Technical Evidence:** Both national and local policy make it clear that all development affecting a Heritage Asset and/or its setting must pay special regard to the need to conserve and enhance the building or its setting and any special features of significance. Paragraph 193 199 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight, should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). Any harm or loss to the significance of a designated heritage asset (including listed buildings and the Wootton Conservation Area) should require clear and convincing justification. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse permission unless the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits. Where a proposal leads to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset; the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

104. Both designated and non-designated heritage assets contribute much towards the distinct character of the village and so their significance should be preserved and enhanced in recognition of their individual and cumulative interest. This is further supported within the requirements of Policy 41S of the Local Plan 2030.

Map of Heritage Assets in Wootton Parish



## Section IV - Non-Land Use Actions

105. A few issues have been raised whilst preparing the WNDP that are not directly related to land-use matters (although they might indirectly relate to the use of land in some form). As such, these issues cannot be addressed directly by the provision of planning policy in the WNDP. However, they are important to the residents of the Parish. These issues together with actions for dealing with them are detailed below, which if implemented will help to achieve the vision and objectives of the WNDP.

### (i) Environment

*To protect, improve and enhance community open spaces by:-*

- The Parish Council will work to create more formal and informal green spaces in the village and to ensure the better landscaping of public areas.

*To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our area, our local wildlife and its habitat and preserve ecological corridors and sites of special interest.*

- The Parish Council will identify areas of land for tree planting in the Parish;
- The Parish Council will seek to encourage the protection of locally designated and non-designated wildlife sites/areas and habitats and will support the development of wildlife corridors; the extension of green space and new nature conservation sites wherever possible.

*To maintain the distinct character of the village by preserving, protecting and enhancing the high quality and distinctive rural landscape for present and future generations.*

- The Parish Council will expect new developments to demonstrate connectivity to the existing Public Rights of Way network and to provide new footpaths and cycle ways (where appropriate), allowing improved access to the local amenities and services, to green spaces and to the open countryside;
- The Parish Council will work with BBC to develop improve Public Rights of Way links to neighbouring parishes in order to support and enhance health and well-being within the Parish;
- The Parish Council will work with BBC to promote and enhance the existing network of Parish Walks through signage and environmental improvements to improve accessibility for all.

### (ii) Village Facilities

*To protect and enhance local amenities which provide a community focus.*

- Local facilities and services will be protected and supported by the Parish Council in accordance with other policies in the development plan;
- The Parish Council will support the development of the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Park and recognise the tourism/economic benefits to the Parish;
- The Parish Council will support Wootton School to realise its ambitions to be a first class Upper School and the provider of educational excellence for young people in the village and the immediate locality;
- The Parish Council will work with the Church Authorities and local landowners to identify suitable land for additional cemetery provision to meet the future needs of the community.

*To ensure that any development includes new appropriate and proportionate green spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment*

- The provision of new or enhanced recreational facilities will be supported, provided that the design and scale are in keeping with the local character and there is no adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding residential properties;
- The Parish Council will work with the Wootton Playing Field Association to ensure that the future development of the village fully encompasses the sporting and social requirements of the community.

*To encourage opportunities for all generations to participate in a range of educational, sporting and leisure activities.*

- The Parish Council will continue to promote the use of the Community Centre, Village Hall, Memorial Hall and The Hub and will support appropriate plans to improve community provision. The Parish Council will also support and promote other existing clubs and facilities in the area and will assist to identify sources of funding available;
- The Parish Council will appraise options to enable the provision of a viable new Youth Centre, including feasibility and identification of potential sources of funding.

### **(iii) Sustainable Community**

*To seek ways of addressing and reducing the problems of traffic congestion on our roads and the lack of parking and to ensure that new developments contribute to this in every respect.*

- The Residents Survey highlighted that residents regarded parking within the village as an important issue which needs to be addressed. The Parish Council will work together with the Highway Authority and residents to develop measures to manage car parking in and around the village to mitigate the impact of development on the community.

*To promote sustainable transport, by encouraging viable alternative methods to move around the village.*

- The Parish Council will work with local schools to create and enhance 'Safer Routes to Schools' schemes;
- The Parish Council will work with relevant stakeholders to assist in alleviating school traffic congestion in particular in regard to existing conditions in Church Road;
- The Parish Council will ensure that development proposals seek to make a contribution towards improvements to existing and/or new public and community transport services in the WNDP area and will be supported subject to there being no conflict with any other policies within the WNDP.

*To ensure that Wootton is well connected for pedestrians and cyclists in the village and to surrounding destinations and that our roads and paths provide safer and more accessible routes, enhancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.*

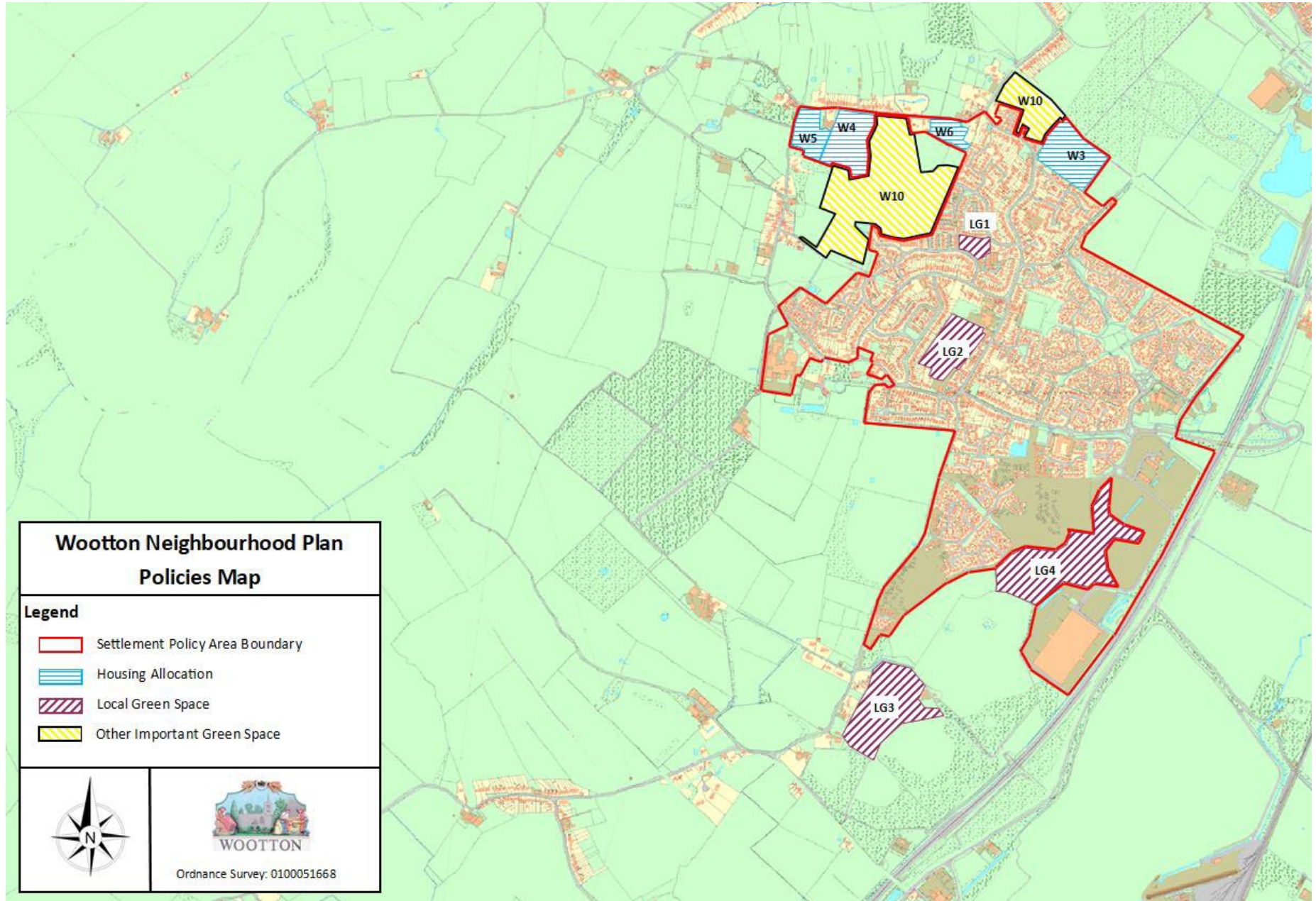
- The Parish Council will work together with the Highway Authority and other relevant agencies to develop a long term sustainable strategy for improvements to the existing highway network to: alleviate local traffic congestion, provide safer routes in order to create a safer environment for all, in particular pedestrians and cyclists;
- The Parish Council will work with the Highway Authority to secure and enhance traffic calming measures in the Parish;
- The Parish Council will work with the Highway Authority to introduce, in appropriate locations, the introduction of white lines along the side of roads to mark recommended places for pedestrians and cyclists.

## Section V: Monitoring and Review of the Plan

106. The WNPSG will ensure that the Plan is actively managed over the Plan period. The Plan will be reviewed **periodically every two years** to ensure that it addresses and takes into account any changes in both national and local planning policies.
107. Responsibility for providing the leadership for the WNDP will rest with Wootton Parish Council. Each Annual Parish Council meeting, after the Plan implementation, will include an agenda item and a detailed report in order to provide an update on the WNDP. This will monitor the progress of the Plan in the previous year and the likely implications and impact of the Plan for the forthcoming year.
108. The Parish Council website: <https://wootton-pc.gov.uk/> will carry an up to date report on progress with the Plan during its lifetime.
109. There will be a mid-period review of the progress of the WNDP in 2024/2025 by a Steering Group which has a wider community base. The purpose of the review will be to guide the Parish Council in its stewardship of the Plan and to consider whether a review of or amendment to the Plan needs to be proposed to Bedford Borough Council.
110. In 2028, or a date consistent with the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme for the production of local development documents by Bedford Borough Council, the Parish Council will recruit a new Steering Group to undertake a review and decide on the need for a subsequent WNDP. If it is decided that a new Plan is required the Steering Group will develop it so that it is effective from 2031, or a date consistent with new local development plan documents produced by Bedford Borough Council.

## **SECTION VI: APPENDICES**

# APPENDIX 1 – POLICIES MAP



## APPENDIX 2 – WOOTTON VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

This village design statement is intended to help to inform and ensure that new developments in the settlement are designed and located so that local, traditional architectural characteristics are respected, and that the distinctive character of Wootton is amplified, in line with the expectations of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

### CONTENTS

<b>WOOTTON VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT</b> .....	1
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	3
<b>NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK</b> .....	3
<b>POPULATION</b> .....	4
<b>SETTLEMENT EVOLUTION AND HISTORIC MAPS</b> .....	4
<b>CHARACTER</b> .....	6
<b>Open Spaces</b> .....	6
<b>Footpaths</b> .....	6
<b>Grain</b> .....	7
<b>Designated and non-designated heritage assets</b> .....	7
<b>Topography</b> .....	8
<b>Main Character Areas</b> .....	8
<b>Interest</b> .....	8
<b>Conservation Area</b> .....	10
<b>Hall End Character Area</b> .....	15
<b>Keeley Lane Character Area</b> .....	17
<b>Keeley Green Character Area</b> .....	18
<b>Bott End Character Area</b> .....	19
<b>Tag’s End Character Area</b> .....	21
<b>Causeway End Character Area</b> .....	24
<b>Important Views and Landmarks</b> .....	25
<b>Important Buildings</b> .....	28
<b>Street Scenes</b> .....	29
<b>Significant Features</b> .....	31
<b>Negative Views and Spaces</b> .....	33
<b>Social Places and Spaces</b> .....	35
<b>Built Form</b> .....	38
<b>Wall materials</b> .....	41
<b>Windows – type, materials, colour</b> .....	41
<b>SO - WHAT DOES WOOTTON NEED.....?</b> .....	42

<b>Local Materials .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Front doors and porches.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Windows .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Clay roof tiles .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Slate .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Thatch.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Chimneys.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Garden sizes and character .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Relationship to the street .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Integrated pockets of new development .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Windfall sites.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Appropriate density .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Urban Meadows .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Woodland, groves and verges .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Footpaths and kerbs, verges and boundaries .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Street furniture .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Settlement guidelines .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Design guidelines .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Landscape guidelines.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Street furniture guidelines.....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1 – LISTED BUILDINGS .....</b>	<b>61</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

The village of Wootton lies in the north-east of the parish, and to the south west of Bedford. The hamlet of Bourne End lies in the north-west of the parish and the hamlet of Wootton Green in the south and is divided between the civil parishes of Wootton and Cranfield. Bourne End is the highest part of the parish, at approximately 315ft. The land slopes from west to east. In the north-east of the parish it is no more than 107 ft. The southern boundary with Cranfield is also the boundary between the unitary councils of Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.

The parish of Wootton currently consists of approximately 5000 people and, according to the Office for National Statistics, the parish is 1.01 km<sup>2</sup>. The population density, as at 2017, was 4831 people per km<sup>2</sup>. It covers over 3700 acres. The soil is clay with a subsoil of gravel and marl, which helps sustain crops of beans, barley and wheat. The village is approximately 150ft or 46mtrs above ordnance datum, (AOD) though the church lies at approximately 165ft AOD.

### **NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Development pressure on the village has resulted in recent housing schemes in various parts of the settlement, to the south, east and west of the village centre. While the houses approved by Bedford Borough Council are no doubt pleasant places to live their siting, disposition and architecture do not always amplify the local distinctiveness of Wootton, in accordance with the expectations of the Neighbourhood Plan and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

In terms of the NPPF, sustainable development is achieved when three overarching objectives are met. These objectives are economic, social and environmental.

The environmental objective focuses on protecting the natural, built and historic environment and only when all three objectives are met is development considered to be sustainable.

Ch.12 of the NPPF, entitled 'Achieving well-designed places' states that 'plans or supplementary planning documents [such as the Neighbourhood Plan which this Village Design Statement (VDS) feeds into] should use visual tools such as design guides or codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places'.

Ch.16 entitled 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' states that 'Plans [including Neighbourhood Plans which are a part of the Local Plan] should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment...' And that 'this strategy should take account of... the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to character and distinctiveness'. Local Planning Authorities, in determining planning applications should take account of that same desirability for new development to make a positive contribution to character and distinctiveness.

The question that follows therefore concerns the character and distinctiveness of a place, and this must be addressed to ensure that any and all future development within a place is sustainable as defined within the NPPF, and as amplified by the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.

## POPULATION

Wootton is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and whilst it grew slowly over the medieval period it nevertheless continued steadily to expand. By the turn of the C19th there were over 700 people here. By 1900 there were 1200 and by 1950, 1300.

The village did not experience the decrease in population during the latter quarter of the C19th and early part of the C20th, as people left the land for jobs in towns during and after the Great Agricultural Depression of the late C19th. It is suggested that this may have been because Bedford and Kempston were in easy reach of Wootton, which allowed people to live in one place and work in the other.

## SETTLEMENT EVOLUTION AND HISTORIC MAPS

The village developed piecemeal and coalesced around the various parish manors during and after the medieval period.



Plate 1 is an extract of the OS from 1901. The various 'Ends' which make up the current settlement of Wootton are circled.

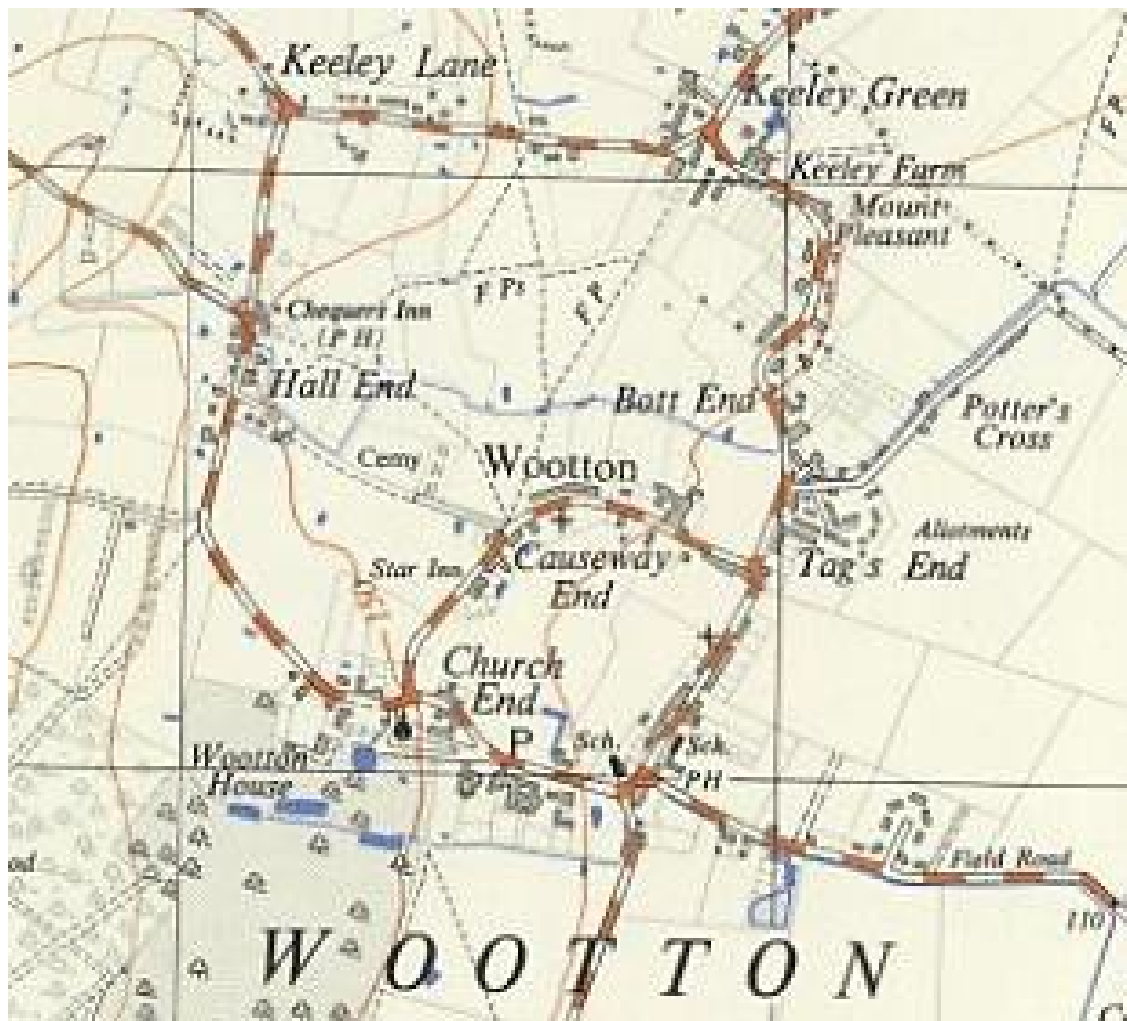


Plate 2 shows that even by the mid-1950s Wootton and the Ends were only loosely allied through intermittent development along the linking roads between the groups of historic buildings. No comprehensive urban expansion had yet taken place. Extract taken from the OS map from 1956.

## **CHARACTER**

### **Open Spaces**

Wootton has, like most settlements, grown notably during the C20th and C21st. Up until approximately the turn of the C20th population, economic growth and the development of housing, industry and commerce, was slow, as is evidenced in the extracts from the OS. Since then, open space that might be identified on the early maps has to a large extent been systematically hemmed in or encroached upon by the development of housing and schools.

140 years ago the land between all the Ends was agricultural. Public open space as we know it was traditionally limited to village greens, the church yard and any waste used by the villagers to feed their livestock.

Agricultural land across which footpaths run is open in the literal sense of the word, but is not freely accessed by pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders. Nevertheless, the sense of space afforded by following a footpath or bridleway can contribute to an appreciation of a place and can play a positive role in defining the character of a settlement.

Current open space has been created from private or Local Authority land and includes the playing field attached to the village hall, the football pitch immediately east of the post office, the open space between Lorraine Road and Mepham Road and, in the ongoing residential development at Wootton Park, the play park off Ashpole Road. Smaller parcels of land within the village include the church yard and two parcels of land to the south of Grovebury Court.

The interface between the residential edge and the adjacent open land is quite clearly defined in the majority of the village, due to the layout of the post war housing which largely encircles the older properties. These houses generally turn their backs on the open land, with rear gardens fenced in to create a clean break with the landscape beyond. This results in an introspective village, effectively turning its back on the wider parish and agricultural land.

However, the relationship between the built form and the open space is less segregated in the various Ends, where small clusters or individual houses relate to and address the landscape in a way more typical of village morphology. It is the volume and the form of post war residential development in Wootton which has resulted in the dislocation of residents and landscape. In developing further housing, a reconnection to the surrounding landscape should be encouraged.

### **Footpaths**

The footpath which leads from the western end of Mepham Road and heads north west towards Keeley Lane offers good views across the land towards the church in the south, and over the fields above Hall End to the west. This positively benefits the character and appearance of the village, and one's appreciation of it.

Two other notable footpaths start at the western end of Lorraine Road, by the cemetery, and head west towards Hall End Road, and Hall End Farm, offering views of the outlying settlement heading west, and the low lying village expansion, which nestles beneath the church spire, heading east.

Further footpaths stretch like fingers to the north of the village towards North End Road and Wootton Road, across fields, through The Kill and towards Gibraltar. To the north east, footpaths criss-cross Wiles Wood.

## Grain

The village consists of Ends, linked via single roads. C20th development has largely joined the various ends together, using typically sinuous through roads, and culs de sac. The Ends themselves are simple affairs, consisting of roads through the place from one End to another, and to the settlements beyond, around which a selection of post medieval, and early modern houses have gathered. Density in these places is extremely low.

New development will inevitably reflect the linear forms of parts of Wootton with linking roads from one area to another, but where residential expansion is required beyond individual access roads, the nature of the roads, and the density of the village, should be reflected, to help amplify the characteristic form of Wootton. However, because the settlement consists of the various Ends and a notable volume of infill predominantly from the C20th, there is no clear and prevailing settlement pattern or grain which it is expected new development should follow. Towards the periphery of Wootton the density inevitably reduces, and towards the centre it rises. This rhythm of development should be amplified to ensure the essential character of the village is retained and notwithstanding the lack of prevailing character, there is scope to amplify the oldest – and most attractive – parts of the village by building at densities which reflect the current patterns.

## Designated and non-designated heritage assets

There are 35 designated heritage assets, or listed buildings, within the parish. There are more than 20 other properties which date from the early C18th which are not listed and whilst they all contribute to defining the character of the settlement they have not as yet been defined as 'non-designated heritage assets' by Bedford Borough Council.

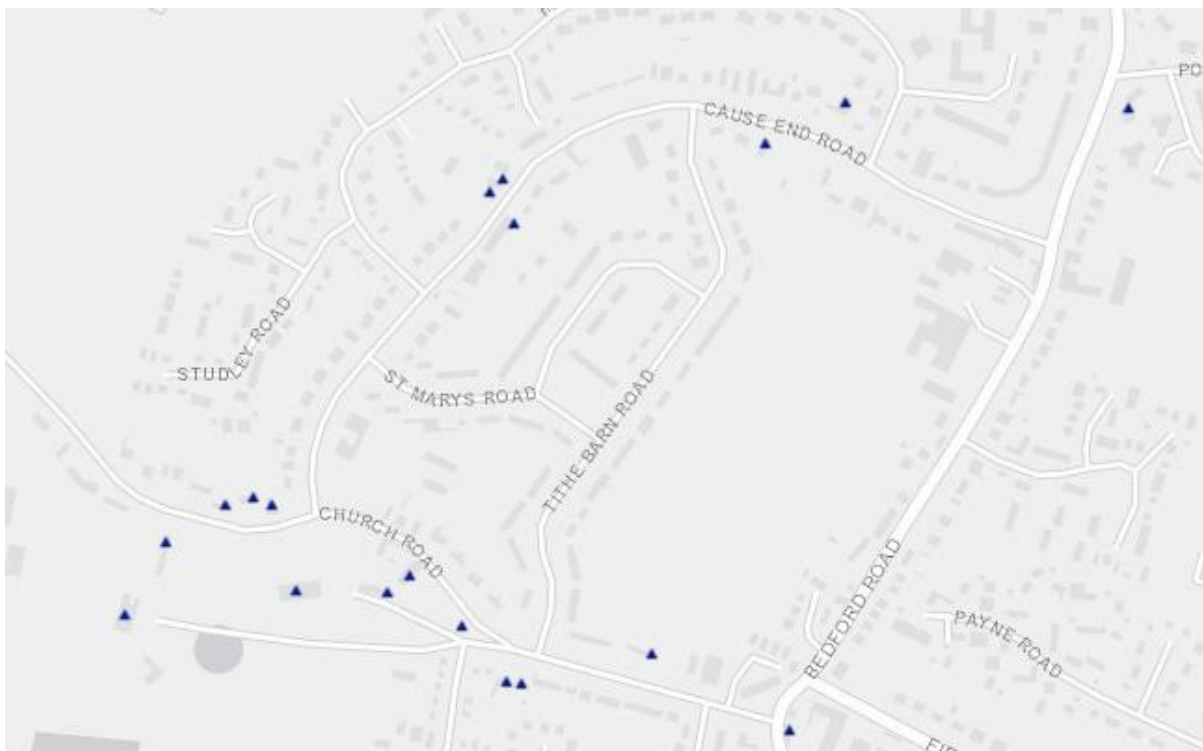


Plate 3 shows the listed buildings within the Conservation Area, along Cause End Road and at the junction of Bedford Road and Potters Cross. Extract taken from the Historic England (HE) map.



Plate 4 shows those properties to the north and west of the Conservation Area which are listed. Extract taken from the HE map.

### **Topography**

The land is relatively flat and quite low lying. The church stands at 165ft or approximately 46m above Ordnance datum and is the highest point in the parish.

### **Main Character Areas**

These are areas which are viewed as an assembly of attractive buildings and spaces and which contribute in a positive fashion to the distinctiveness, and the character of the village. By virtue of the binary nature of development in the settlement – individual, small scale organic growth up until the mid C20th, and the later, larger scale C20th and C21st suburban expansion - the main character areas refer to historic areas, spaces and buildings which hold some form of value for residents, workers and visitors.

In assessing the significance of heritage assets, HE has defined various sorts of value or 'interest', in their guidance, 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' (draft 2017), which helps define how and why certain places are considered special.

### **Interest**

The following text is taken from the current draft of HE's 'Conservation Principles' document.

Historic Interest – 'This is sometimes called historical value. A heritage asset is most commonly valued for its historic interest – because of the way in which it can illustrate the story of past events, people and aspects of life (illustrative value, or interest). When these stories become enmeshed with the

Identity of a community, in addition to the asset's historic interest it can be said to hold communal value'.

Archaeological Interest – 'This is sometimes called evidential or research value. There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity that could be revealed through investigation at some point. Archaeological interest in this context includes above-ground structures as well as earthworks and buried or submerged remains more commonly associated with the study of archaeology. Heritage assets with archaeological interest may be the only source of evidence for human activities in the distant past. Equally, they may contain evidence that complements or contradicts the evidence of written records or verbal accounts in more recent times'.

Architectural and Artistic Interest – 'Architectural and artistic interests derive from a contemporary appreciation of the asset's aesthetics. Architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is derived from the use of human imagination and skill to convey meaning through all forms of creative expression. This might include the use, representation or influence of historic places or buildings in artworks (contributing to their significance through their association with art), as well as the meaning, skill and emotional impact of works of art within our environment that are either part of heritage assets or assets in their own right. There is often an overlap between architectural and artistic interest. However, when making decisions about conservation it can be useful to draw a distinction between design created through detailed instructions (such as architectural drawings) and the direct creation of a work of art by a designer who is also in significant part the craftsman (such as a sculptor)'.

Principle 4 of the 6 referred to in the guidance states that 'Heritage assets should be managed to sustain their heritage values' – and in this scenario, a VDS could be used to help define how new development would sustain and perhaps amplify the heritage values as defined.

The Framework for helping ensure that heritage values are sustained in listed buildings and the Conservation Area is the requirement in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to preserve the significance of both listed buildings and the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. This is reiterated in the NPPF and the policies within the Local Plan.

Outside the Conservation Area, and in regard to buildings and spaces that are not statutorily protected, the VDS should work alongside the policies within the Local Plan and the NPPF to help sustain and amplify the heritage values. Paragraph 197 states that 'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'

## Conservation Area

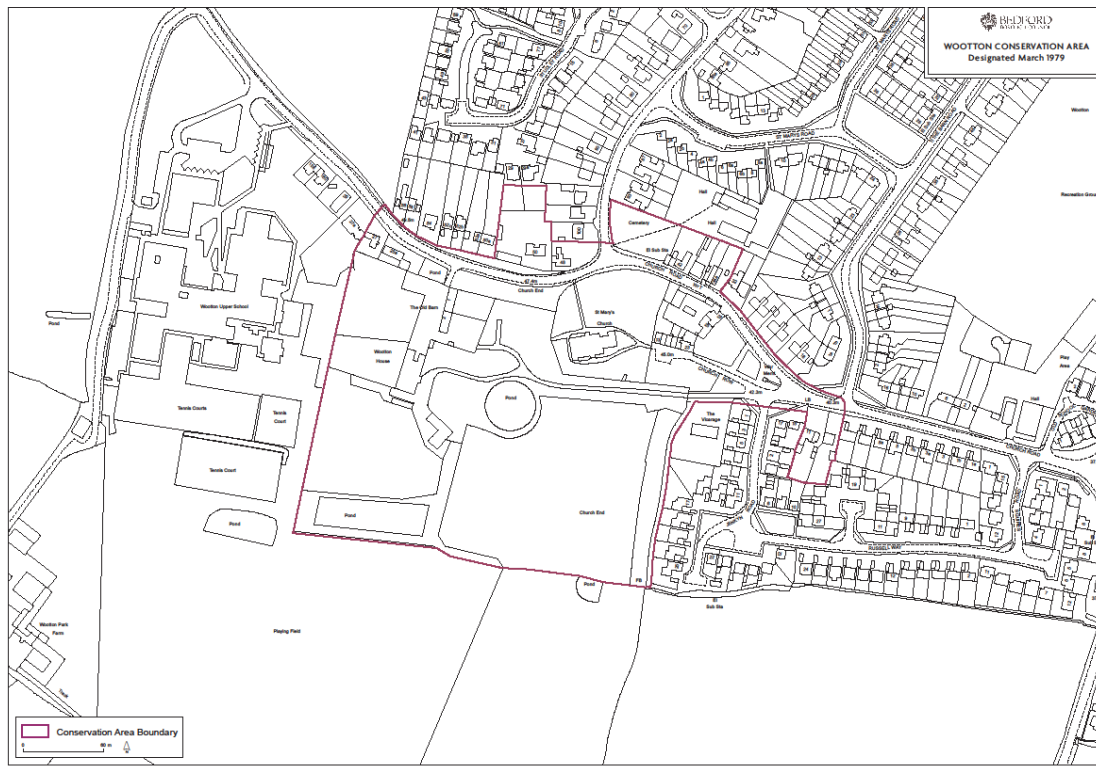


Plate 5 shows the CA boundary.

There is no Conservation Area Appraisal for Wootton. However, the VDS has assessed the character of the place, and uses the language of a Conservation Area Appraisal, because only when the character of a place has been considered, understood and defined can a VDS successfully describe and justify what are considered appropriate forms of new development.

The Conservation Area in Wootton is quite contained, and is focused upon the parish church, a fine Grade I listed C14th Decorated building, and a discrete collection of historic properties surrounding it. To its north, a cemetery situated on the opposite side of Church Road is included, as are a small cluster of dwellings to its north east, along Church Road. East of the church is 13-23 Church Row. At the eastern extent the Conservation Area takes no.7 Church Road and the cottage adjacent, no.s 9-11 Church Road, which is also listed as The Pink House. To the west of the church, Wootton House, no.s 1 and 2 the old barn are included as well as the land surrounding Wootton House.

The Conservation Area is small but because the area is designated it helps to ensure that the spatial and architectural qualities of the place are protected from inappropriate development, and by default that the currency of Conservation Areas in general is sustained.

The character of the place is distinct and is defined by the spatial arrangement, and the scale and form of the buildings. HE state that 'The historic character of a place is the group of qualities derived from its past uses that make it distinctive. This may include: its associations with people, now and through time; its visual aspects; and the features, materials, and spaces associated with its history, including its original configuration and subsequent losses and changes'.

The open nature of the churchyard, and the cemetery opposite affords a relaxed, and to some extent tranquil area. The scale of the buildings, and their disposition and relationship to each other, amplifies the organic development of the place. Small domestic properties, limited quite prosaically in their scale by the length of timbers the house builder or owner could afford to buy, create a scale of dwelling associated today with traditional housing.

The use of timber framing in unique, early modern houses from the C15th to the mid C18th speaks of the history of a place and with it the lives of inhabitants over generations. The other locally available material, red brick, is prevalent in the parish, and is used in the majority of the remaining traditional properties. Soft red brick, employed in the huge majority of properties in Wootton constructed before WWII, was laid well using either Flemish or Stretcher bond, by a time served bricklayer. The uniformity of the brick and of its laying, its detail around window and door heads and the patination of the brickwork brought about by weather and atmospheric pollution, give these buildings a robust, attractive, and honest aesthetic.



Plate 6 shows the church, an approximately oval enclosure which is commensurate with early glebe land, and the satellite buildings around it, including Wootton House and the vicarage. Extract taken from the Second Edition OS map from 1901.



Plate 7 shows the junction between what are now Bedford Road and Cause End Road. The tight knot of non residential properties, including The Cock Inn, the smithy, two schools and the Pound reinforce the idea that this part of the village was the heart of Wootton, about which new development, both organic and planned, coalesced. Extract taken from the Second Edition OS map from 1901.



Plate 8 illustrates the considered yet simple brick detailing which reinforces the quality and sensitivity with which builders in the late C19th and earlier C20th built houses.

Wootton House was listed at Grade II\* in 1952 and is described as a 'small country house' from the late C17th. It is uncomfortably close to the school almost immediately to its west, which has resulted in the diminution of its setting, to its notable detriment.

However, it is the parish church which is inevitably the main focus of attention. Designed to inspire awe and to be at the heart of the settlement, its fine stonework and tranquil setting lends it a unique quality within Wootton. The relatively enormous scale of the building and its location behind an old set of railings within a well-tended church yard, creates a sombre air, but a high quality environment, to which the other properties within the Conservation Area seem to defer and respond.

The diminutive row of 7 terraced properties along Church Row are arguably quintessential cottages, lined up in close proximity to the church and amplifying the grand scale of the building. Their scale, their form and their location, huddled up against the boundary of the church cemetery, almost in an attempt to seek spiritual refuge, confer on them a very positive character, which is reinforced by the narrowness and soft landscape of the lane which turns into the church footpath, and the view of the church spire above the treetops.

In terms of the 'Interests' that the Conservation Area holds, there is an almost tangible sense of history. The church, a medieval structure which has been gazed upon, considered, worshipped in and worked upon through many centuries is clearly the most important and historic above ground structure in the parish. It helps explain past events, people and aspects of life which define Wootton and in so doing it creates a collective, if unacknowledged sense of belonging amongst many of the residents.

The archaeological interest of the entire Conservation Area is defined by the development of the church, and with it the spiritual life of the village. Wootton House to the west, the cottages to the east and the cemetery to the north all hold archaeological interest and this amplifies the value of the place.

In terms of its architectural and artistic interest, this is extremely high, and derives from a contemporary appreciation of the aesthetics. A finely designed and constructed parish church is always one of the most attractive and distinguishing features in a village, the porch or spire a diagnostic feature which helps define it as 'local'.

As well as the Conservation Area the parish features various other character areas which it is considered should also be analysed and used to help guide appropriate forms of development in the parish.

## Hall End Character Area

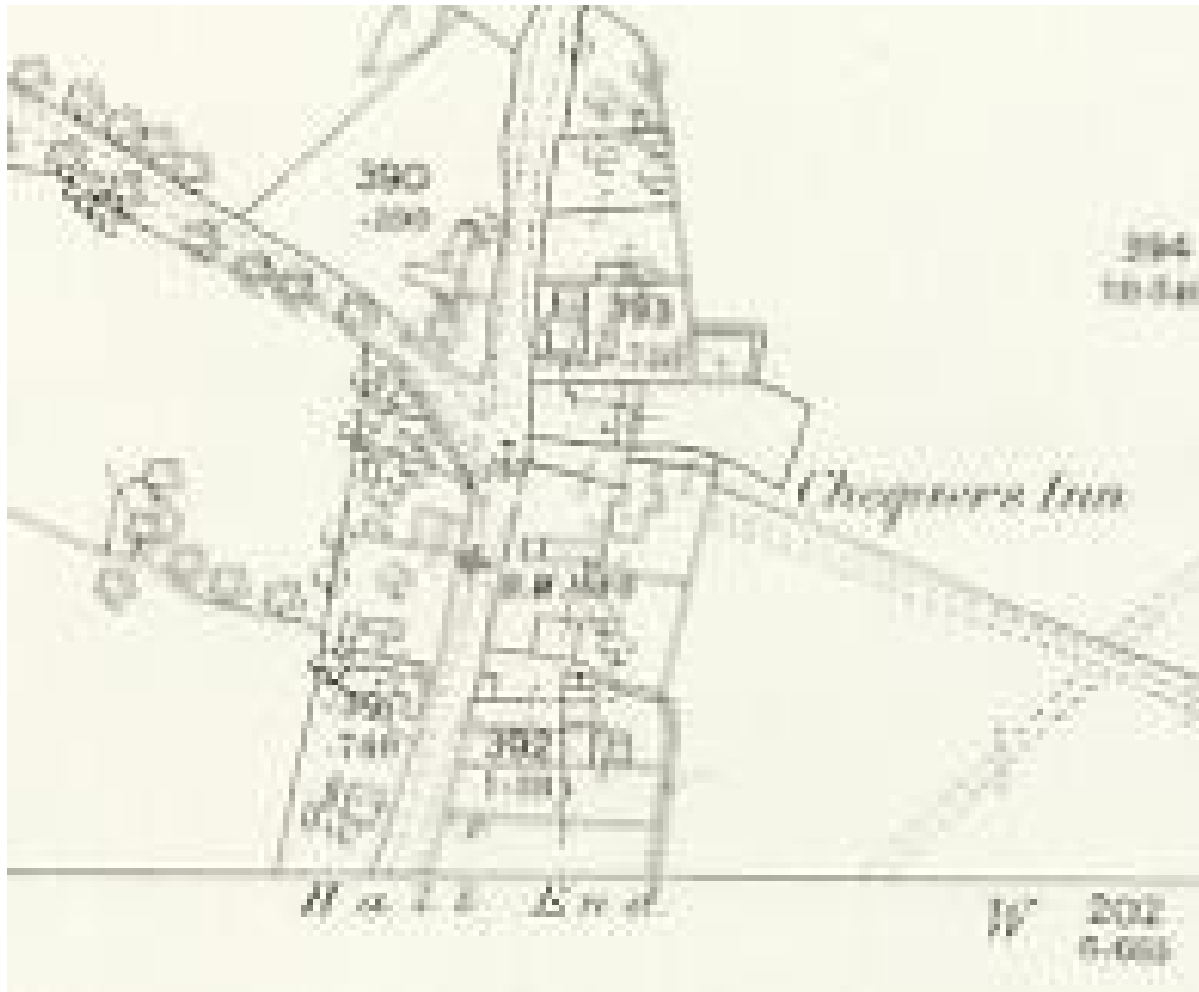


Plate 9 shows Hall End, with the Chequers Inn on the eastern side of the road, and a track leading from rear of the building towards Causeway End. Extract taken from the Second Edition OS map from 1901.

This linear settlement on the north western edge of the parish consists of low level, well scaled domestic properties from the C17th to the C20th. They frame the road on either side but are sufficiently irregular in their disposition to allow views across and through the land to the fields beyond. This ensures the place remains tied to the land, and not the suburban extension of the village which centres around the spine of Lorraine Road in the west. The open space between the two elements of Wootton is arable land and paddock but is sufficient to generate a feeling of a rural enclave, an edge of Wootton not yet subsumed by houses.



Plate 10 shows a well detailed pair of cottages with good quality brickwork.

individual properties in the street, interspersed with views through create a visual permeability which helps define the shape of the place, and its architectural narrative.

Gardens are small at the front and help ensure the buildings create an intimate relationship to the road. Spatially, this not only creates a sense of closeness, which is amplified by the human scale of the buildings, but its rhythm and human scale generates a sense of wellbeing which modern urban extensions seek to replicate.

## Keeley Lane Character Area

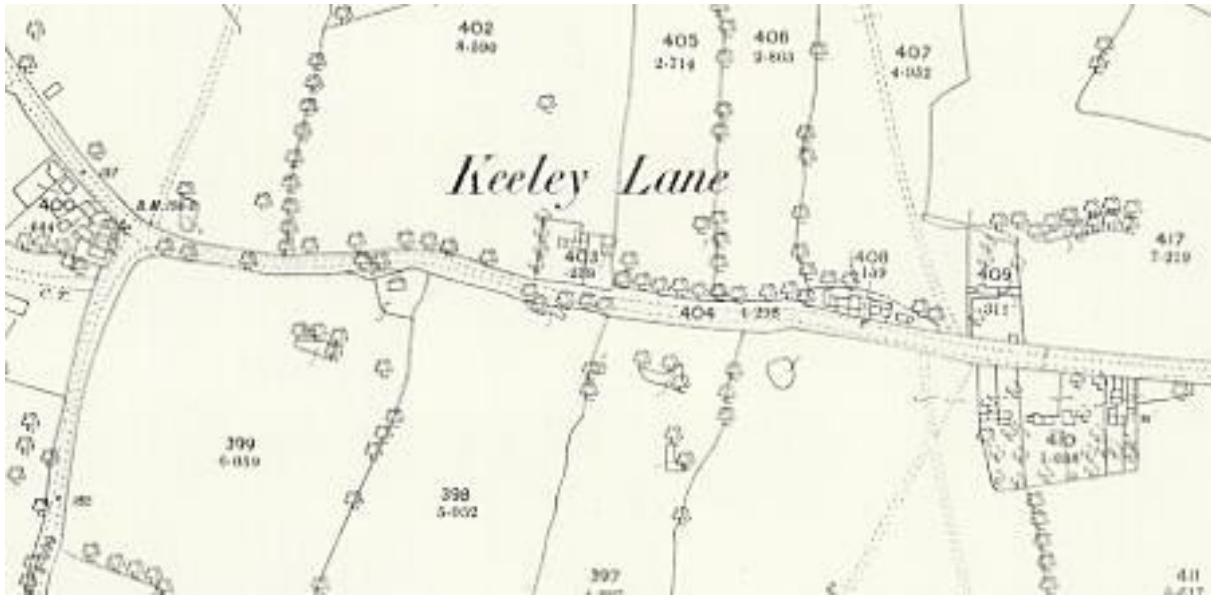


Plate 11 shows the small group of cottages at the western junction with Keeley Lane and Hall End Road and the occasional property along the lane including the Grade II listed properties known as Deep Thatches and 35 Keeley Lane, both located on the south side of the road. Extract taken from the Second Edition OS map from 1901.

By definition, this Area is linear in its form, and consists of properties to the north and occasionally to the south of the lane which date from the C17th to C20th. The Area almost touches the top of Hall End at its western extent and at its southern it reaches to Keeley Green. The loose string of housing along the road and the soft landscape which identifies the place as rural, and this is amplified by the nature of the road itself; narrow, un-engineered and largely peaceful, bounded by hedgerows with fields beyond.

## Keeley Green Character Area

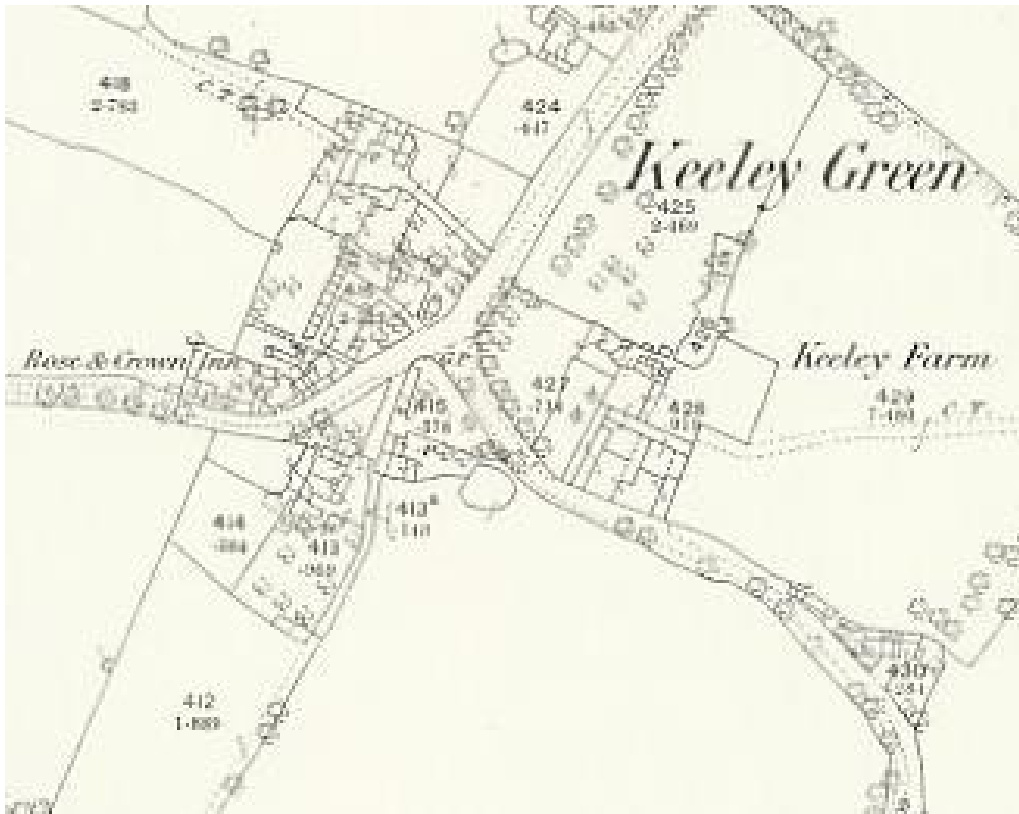


Plate 12 shows the junction at Keeley Green and The Legstraps, which was known in the later Victorian era as The Rose and Crown. Taken from the Second Edition OS map from 1901.

The small green is triangular in shape, and consists of a knot of diminutive, vernacular properties gathered around it. A rural architectural typology of small scale pre-C20th properties, their relationships to each other and to the land beyond them creates an area strongly characteristic of a hamlet. Here, the typology of buildings includes a public house, small workers houses of early modern and Victorian origins, Victorian or Edwardian agricultural buildings, and the imposing C17th and C19th Grade II listed Keeley Farmhouse located on the eastern side of the road.

In terms of the 'interests' which could be attributed to the little group, there is as much an historical interest here as elsewhere in the parish. The agricultural work that most of the residents would have been engaged with for several centuries is almost tangible, as the residents of Keeley Farmhouse no doubt oversaw production.

The architectural and artistic interests are well displayed. The public house is not statutorily protected, but is an attractive centre piece on the green, its scale and articulation conforming to the local vernacular. The Grade II listed C18th Pear Tree Cottage to its east, and the row of cottages behind it, listed as 4, 6 and 8 Keeley Lane are C18th timber framed and brick houses which quietly describe the tranquillity of the place. No.s 18 and 20, to the west are also timber framed, which amplifies the vernacular tradition of framing into the C18th in the village. However, the architectural showpiece is Keeley Farmhouse and rightly so, its full architectural and artistic intention being to demonstrate the wealth and fashionable status of its owners.

## Bott End Character Area

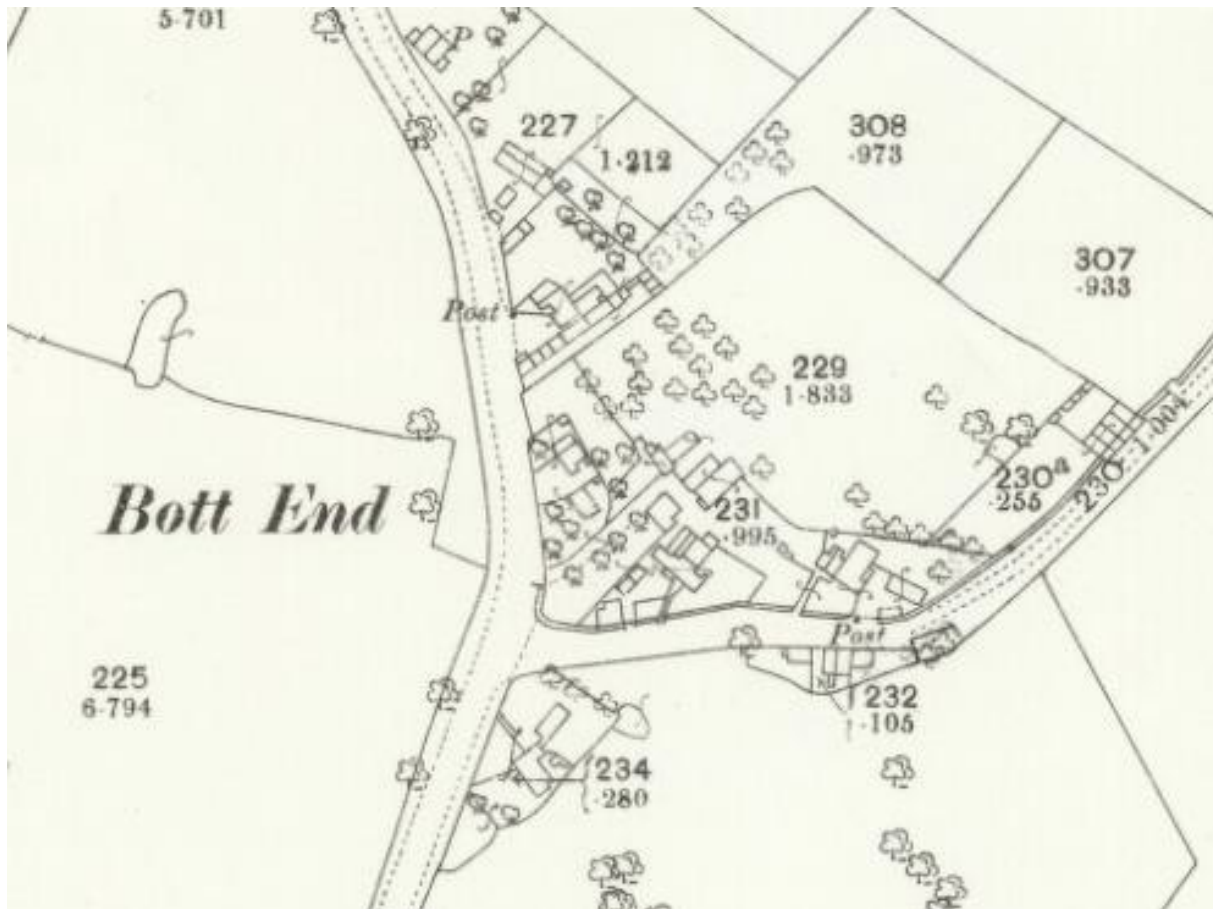


Plate 13 shows Bott End, which still includes the little Grade II listed cottages known as 72 and 74 Bedford Road. Extract taken from the Second Edition OS map from 1901.

This area features several historic buildings, but they are strung out along Potters Cross. Whilst their settings have largely been diminished, there is nevertheless the vestige of a character area. Nevertheless, inappropriate C20th development within very close proximity, incoherent in its form and incongruous to the historic buildings, has irrevocably damaged the area. Unfortunately, this is a good example of how a lack of concern for the setting of historic buildings can impinge upon their settings through poor design and over-scaled buildings. These same buildings contribute nothing positive to the local distinctiveness of the place.

Notwithstanding the architectural damage caused in the last few decades, the loose string of attractive, well scaled and characteristic buildings contribute to the character of Wootton in a positive manner. The use of timber frame and render is clearly a theme in the village, as are small rows of Victorian or Edwardian terraces, as evidenced on both sides of the road, towards its north eastern end.

The historic interest is no doubt there to be discovered, but in terms of the narrative that such a compromised corner of the village can offer, it is very limited. The continuous and incremental infilling of the open land between the cottage and terraces has severed the relationship between house and land, and with it any association of the resident with his or her labour.

Architecturally and artistically the picture is more positive. The essential forms of the historic housing along Potters Cross amplify the traditional scale and simple building forms prevalent in the village.

## Tag's End Character Area

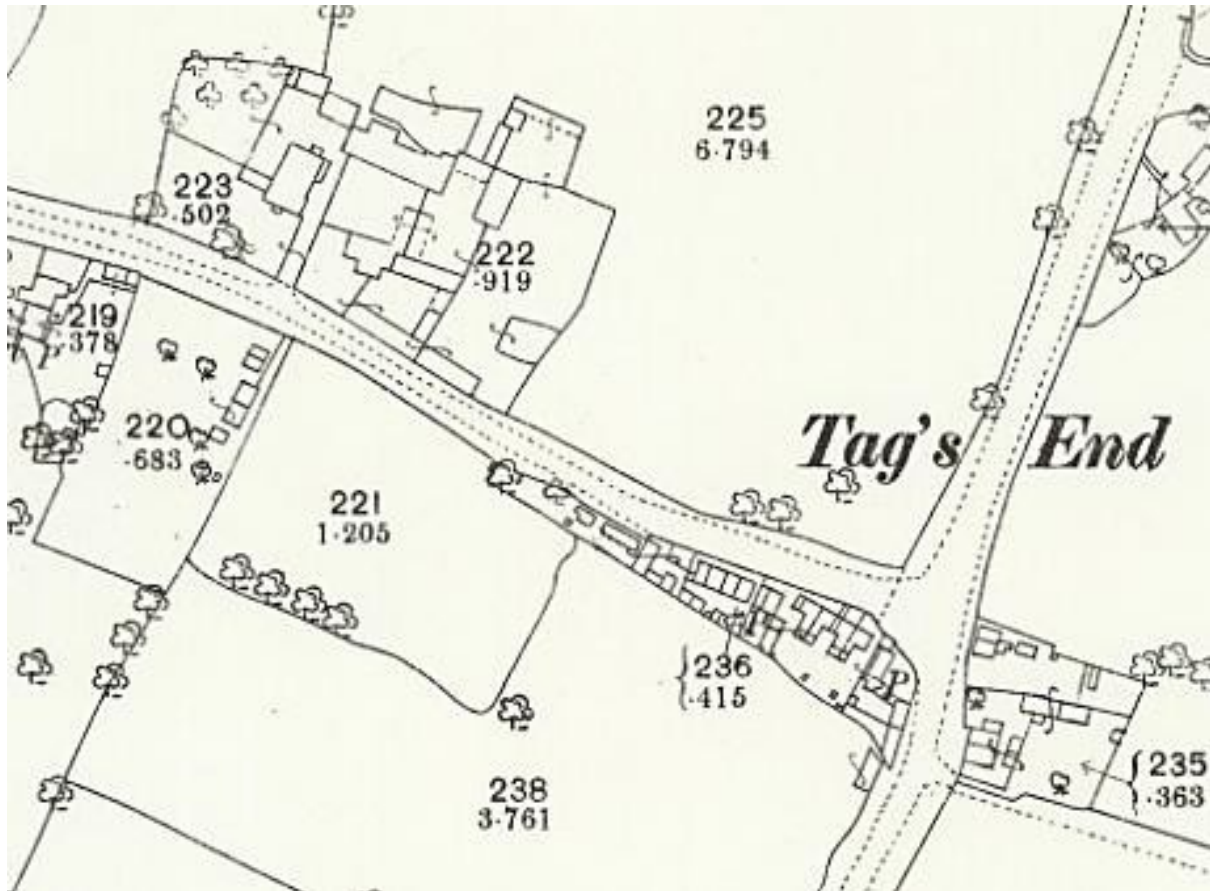


Plate 14 shows Tag's End, the attractive row of cottages on the south side of Cause End Road. Further along the road are a range of agricultural buildings. Extract taken from the Second Edition OS map from 1901.

This is a small area which focuses upon the junction between Bedford Road, which runs North-South, and Cause End Road, which runs East-West.

A small group of diminutive dwellings is supplemented by a polychromatic brick building which appears to have been associated with the agricultural functions of the village.



Plate 15 Whilst not statutorily protected, this row of properties on the junction of Cause End Road and Bedford Road are strongly characteristic of the Victorian and Edwardian scale and appearance of Wootton. They are locally distinctive and contribute as positively to a sense of place as any others in Wootton.



Plate 16 around the corner from the cottages is this building, which recalls an agricultural heritage and benefits the character of the settlement.

Together the cottages, the red brick outbuilding and the small green space to the north are a small vestige of the End, and a reminder of the scale and function of the place before the post-war expansion, which engulfed the village and with it, its relationship to the countryside surrounding it.

## Causeway End Character Area

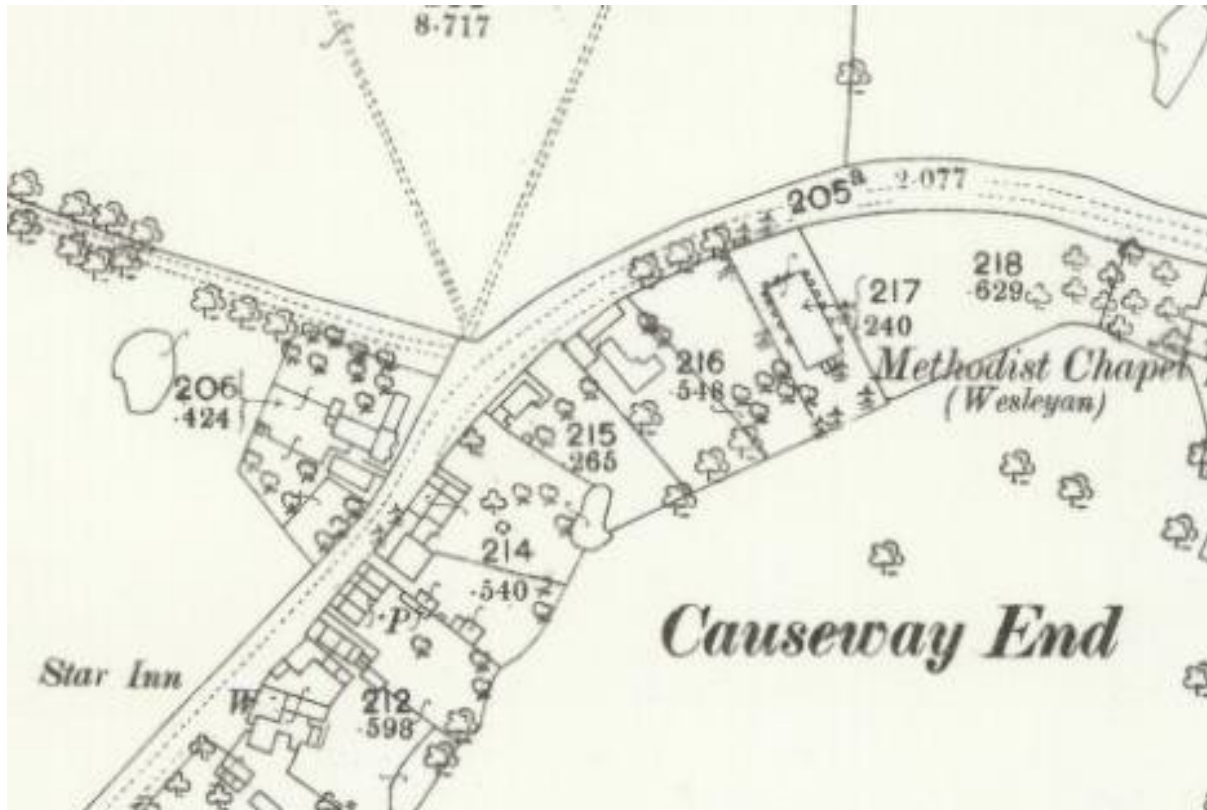


Plate 17 shows the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, and a range of dwellings to its west, including the Star Inn. Extract taken from the Second Edition OS map from 1901.

This Character Area is very small and is centred upon the **the** listed buildings half way along Cause End Road, which include three listed buildings: Yew Tree Cottage on the south side of the road, a small Grade II listed timber framed cottage: 52-56 Cause End Road, a C17th timber framed house clad in a Victorian brick: and 54, also a Grade II listed timber framed C17th cottage.

These little houses relate, architecturally historically, to the properties around the church, to the cottages at Bott's End and those at Keeley Green – and are collectively the oldest remaining dwellings in the village.

All these buildings feature early modern timber frames, some with render applied at a far later date. They also feature wooden windows and steep roofs which were originally thatched. Together these houses reinforce the local vernacular and contribute notably to the character and appearance of the place.

### **Important Views and Landmarks**

Despite it being relatively flat, there are several views across the land which are significant and contribute in a positive manner to the character of Wootton. Key amongst them are the vistas available when crossing the fields from south of Hall End towards the cemetery at Lorraine Road, or the western end of Mepham Road. Fields are a breathing space on the edge of the settlement, and they create a positive experience of the village when approaching along the footpaths from the west, even in spite of the rather uneventful post-war architecture to be found in these suburban estates. Views across and beyond these swathes of housing allow glimpses both of the church spire in the south, and of the individual and historic houses backing on Keeley Lane and the Green to its east. Fields in locations at the edge of a settlement act as green fingers reaching into the settlement and out into the countryside and link the two in a liminal space in which small edge of village settlements gather, but in the case of Wootton they have to date remained remarkably untouched by suburban expansion.

In looking west from these footpaths, views towards Hall End in the west, or towards Keeley Lane in the north and west, offer glimpses of houses and trees, with fields beyond, as the village dissipates into the surrounding countryside.



Plate 18 shows the views north from Hall End Road, beyond the school. Vistas open up as one heads north along this road, both to the east and the west.



Plate 19 shows the views north north west, across the pasture towards the agricultural fields over the hill.



Plate 20 This view, through wintry trees towards the church tower and spire in the south south west, is afforded from Keeley Lane, near the junction with Bedford Road and Wootton Road. The low lying post-war housing along Lorraine Road, Causeway Road, Hall End Road and all roads in between, are insignificant in this view, to the great benefit of the vista and the broad setting of the parish church.



Plate 21 The winding road at this point in the village may be as a result of the glebe land associated with the church, which was historically sometimes oval or roughly round. The road skirts around the church to its north and creates important glimpses and views in both directions, in which traditional buildings of a human scale line the road but are kept subservient by the quality and scale of the parish church.

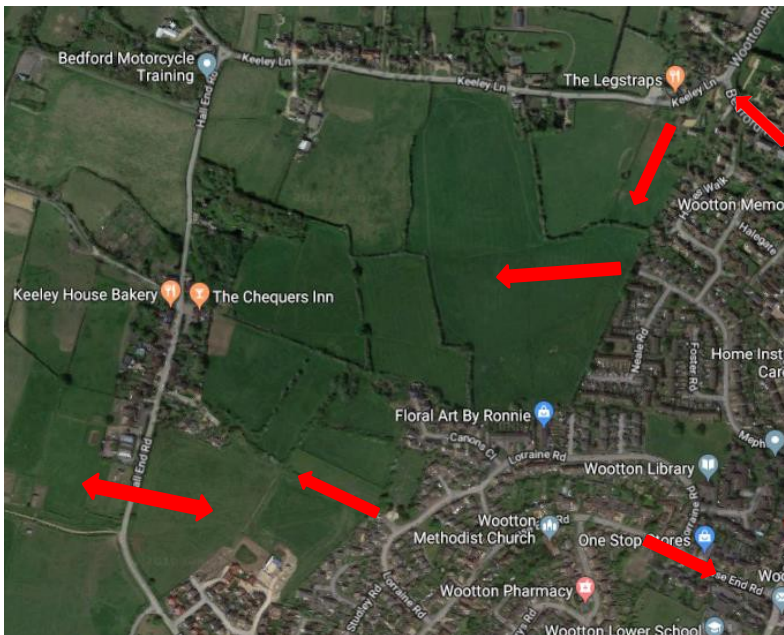
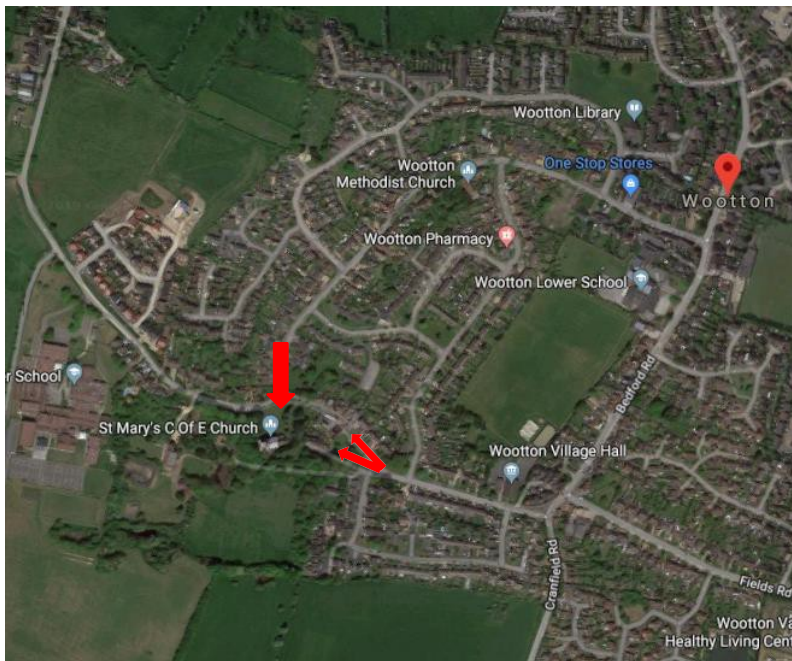


Plate 22 shows the important views across and through the north and west of the village



Plate 23 shows the important views across and through the area around Bedford Road.

Plate 24 shows important views across and through the village centre.



### Important Buildings

As in many small settlements, historic culturally important buildings are few, but at the top of the list is undeniably the Grade I listed parish church of St Mary The Virgin, a C14th Decorated building with a Perpendicular upper tower. The church is often the most significant building in the villages and a beacon for its community. The unique scale, appearance, architectural quality and meaning of the church places it at the apex of historic, communal, archaeological, architectural and artistic interest.

Arguably the second most important historic building in the village is Wootton House, a small country house from the C17th, which is listed at Grade II\* and no doubt known and renowned

by residents of the village for centuries. Its interest is similarly based on its historic, archaeological, architectural and artistic values to the village and in particular its close proximity to the church may reference the site of a former property the owner of which perhaps gave the land for the church during the medieval period. Such an association between a parish church and the biggest house in the village, which is sometimes termed the manor house, often reflected the medieval origins of the church, the land being gifted to the parish by the lord of the manor, who wished to illustrate his largess, his religious devotion and his influence over matters spiritual.

In terms of a communal role, the public houses would be considered the second most important buildings. The Cock Inn and the Fox and Duck along Bedford Road, the Chequers Inn along Hall End Road and the Legstraps in Keeley Green are all historic buildings, though only The Chequers is listed, at Grade II. Each plays its part in the life of the place and are therefore positive contributors to the character and aesthetic of the parish.

### **Street Scenes**

There are various street scenes which benefit the village, and in each case it is the scale, disposition and narrative of the buildings that enhance the immediate area and contribute to the overall character of the place. Chief amongst them are the roads associated with the church. The view north west along Church Row is strongly characteristic of the parochial environment.



Plate 25 looks north west along Church Row. Small gables and natural roof claddings



Plate 26 The diminutive scale of the houses and the two storey stable building with the tall trees opposite lend the place an idyllic character which imbues the area with a positive rural identity.



Plate 27 The view south west from Keeley Lane describes a cluster of little cottages hard against the road.

Other views evolve as the viewer arrives and travels through a significant point, but various additional views can be counted as contributing positively to the character of the place. Seeing the parish church from a range of places, experiencing the cottages on Causeway Road and Keeley Lane and passing through Hall End all offer fine and positive views which amplify the historic narrative of Wootton, and enhance the traditional architectural narrative of the settlement.

### **Significant Features**

The church spire is the most notable feature in the village, but there are a variety of aspects of the built and natural landscape which contribute to the character of the place and help confer on the village its individuality.



Plates 28, 29 and 30 show the spire from Keeley Lane, Cause End Road and Hall End Road. A small stand of evergreen trees located immediately outside the Grade II listed buildings known as no.s 9 and 11 Church Road, and its neighbour, at no.7 Church Road, is a landmark feature and gives the place an air of tranquillity and history. Opposite this is a similarly small stand of trees, this time deciduous, which together funnels views west along Church Road, towards the war memorial and the church. The landscape, the little listed buildings and the view towards Church Row consist of a range of significant features which combine to create an important street scene.

Bedford Road snakes into the village from the north and, as with most settlements a range of old properties intermingle on the outskirts of the place with an eclectic mix of post war houses, including bungalows and small blocks of flats, which creates a confusing narrative. Ironically, in building between historic clusters of houses the essential character of the village has to date been diluted, rather than amplified.



Plate 31 A well-constructed pair of probably turn of the C20th cottages, altered and extended but exhibiting the form and scale of traditional brick built dwellings of the period.



Plate 32 A pair of houses displaying the scale and articulation of much of the traditional property in the village, these featuring a symmetrical facade and axial stacks (though it appears one has been removed since construction).

## **Negative Views and Spaces**

Wootton has endured its fair share of development since WWII, and in various parts of the village there are views which detract from the character of the place.

Views can be restricted to tight glimpses in angles of no more than a few degrees, offering the briefest snapshot of a scene, which probably does little justice to the experience of a place generally; but they can also incorporate broad, sweeping vistas which can include as much as 150 degrees of vision and take in settlement pattern and landscape. Views are dynamic and change as one moves through a place. The nearer the viewer is to a subject, the more rapidly that view – and the experience and perception of that place - changes. Distant vistas change more slowly and usually offer a broader understanding of a scale, morphology and character of a place.

Negative views are largely experienced in close proximity to the buildings and for the sake of clarity have been expressed from a single standpoint.

Whilst residential development in any settlement, in any decade since the war includes a selection of stereotypical and locally uncharacteristic housing, it is in the views that feature an interface between old buildings and new, and that have been diminished as a result of that development, that are illustrated in this VDS.

The concentration of post war housing could be broadly divided into two areas within the village: namely along and to either side of Bedford Road to the north of the village; and around Cause End Road, to the south and west. A small area of green, which is accessed off Lorraine Road in the south, and Mephram Road to the north, could be described as dividing the two areas.

The remainder of new housing has developed within the last decade or so and focuses on the land to the north of Fields Road, to the east of the settlement towards the A421. However, because there is no historic interface to assess, the views are considered no further.

These small groups of houses are all evident on the second edition OS map from 1901. They are diminutive, well-proportioned and quite probably made of locally sourced brick. Symmetrical, well scaled windows and steeply pitched roofs conspire to create buildings 'traditional' to the village. Houses of this scale and status tended until the war to reflect and reinforce the local styles and traditions of a settlement, and in so doing they avoided architectural ubiquity. Single houses, small pairs and little groups were built by local builders to service a local need – sometimes the needs of the local landholder and farmer – and by addressing that small scale requirement, the properties preserved and amplified the local vernacular, both in terms of their form and their materials.

Views along Bedford Road include various little knots of historic housing, interspersed with the pervasive, post war mass housing which was constructed to address the burgeoning population and change in family circumstances, which saw young couple striking out for a place of their own.

Perhaps the most emphatic example of detrimental post war development, (which at the time might have been considered architecturally bold and socially democratic) are the pair of squat, flat roofed tower blocks on four floors, which were placed in a plot of land between Bedford Road and two roads to the east called Potters Cross and Manor Road. Immediately to the north of the block, and within a matter of metres, are a pair of late C18th Grade II listed cottages under thatched roofs, known as 72 and 74 Bedford Road.

Their settings have been detrimentally affected perhaps more than any other in the parish. The views incorporating no.s 72 and 74 and the flats beyond illustrate a commonly held attitude towards post war housing development, in that it needed to be seen to be different,

experimental and arguably unapologetic. Those ambitions were certainly met in the flats - and by today's standards, and with today's sensitivities towards historic buildings, they are considered to severely harm the settings, and therefore the significance of the cottages.



Plate 33 Despite appearing restrained in their overall height, these blocks are entirely inappropriate to their immediate surroundings, in their massing, form and detailing.



Plate 34 shows the uncomfortable visual relationship between the listed cottage and the blocks beyond. The setting of the cottage has been seriously eroded through the construction of these blocks, to their great detriment.

Towards the southern end of Bedford Road, The Cock Inn contributes positively to the historical narrative of the area, as do the attractive pair of double fronted cottages to its north. However, the broad, engineered road junction and roundabout, as well as the petrol garage and forecourt to the south of The Cock disrupts the aesthetic and this is considered a negative view.

There are other, less emphatic and less remarkably negative views in Wootton, but in these instances the interface between the historic and post war buildings is usually less obvious.



Plates 35 and 36 illustrate 'leaking space'. The sense of enclosure evident in parts of the village appears to fall away in various locations because of poorly defined or removed boundaries. The result is that the distance between building frontages is uncharacteristic of Wootton. Indeed, details such as this are atypical of traditional villages generally but are unfortunately now a feature of villages across the country.

### **Social Places and Spaces**

The obviously social places include the historic public houses in the village and those in the outlying Ends. The Cock sits on Bedford Road and its visual dominance and central location on the main road attracts activity.



Plate 37 shows The Cock Inn, a fine later C19th public house in a prominent location at the southern end of the settlement.

The Fox and Duck, a smaller scale property is an equally attractive building and it too sits on Bedford Road. Its smaller, vernacular character takes the form of a typical country public house from the C18th.

The Chequers on Hall End Road is a fine timber framed public house with cross wing, dating from the C17th. Its diminutive scale, characterful roof form and large chimney stack contribute enormously to its appearance and significance.



Plate 38 shows The Chequers. This early post-medieval building relates, architecturally, to the last remaining timber framed properties in Wootton which gather around the parish church

The Legstraps is another early modern timber framed property, whose human scale, steeply pitched roof and articulation confers on the place a sense of tradition. Being in close proximity to other historic buildings, including the listed pair to the east, as well as adjacent to the fields – and affording glimpses of the parish church to the south - reinforces its significance and its typically rural demeanour.



Plate 39 shows The Legstraps, a non-designated heritage asset of some architectural, historic and no doubt communal interest.

### **Built Form**

Those buildings in the parish which are considered attractive are those which are generally small, unique and hold some form of connection with the past. Overwhelmingly those properties began life as dwellings or public houses.

Broadly, it is the buildings erected before WWII which tend to be considered attractive and traditional, though there are always exceptions. It is pertinent to note that in considering what is and what is not considered attractive, individual and collective memory plays an important role.

While there are no doubt a range of reasons for the admiration of and attachment to older property, including memories of family and community, before the rise in mass housing and the changes they brought to the shape of settlements and the concomitant increases in population, it is the following aspects of built form which have influenced the physical appearance of Wootton, and which it is considered need to be employed in future development, to sustain and amplify the architectural traditions of the village.

Fundamentally, it is the human scale of more historic housing which endears. This is brought about by a strong horizontal emphasis and a low eaves and ridge line. These buildings are 'legible', and innately recognisable. They are neither awkwardly scaled nor clumsily detailed, but individual homes with small windows and doors and appropriately scaled roofs. Low floor to ceiling heights undoubtedly help create a more human scale, and even when the choice of materials or the size of windows appears uncharacteristic, their overall massing allows them to blend comfortably into the settlement.

The revolution in construction during the C20th, and the increasing population, saw the use of reinforced concrete and steel, which were uncharacteristic materials to any settlement. These materials helped buildings to grow rapidly, not only in terms of absolute numbers, but also in

scale.

Alongside the use of new and uncharacteristic materials came the increased use of bricks from Stewartby and elsewhere which, combined with the requirement to build ever more houses from the 1950s onwards a more generic architecture sprang up, which had the effect of diluting the local distinctiveness of Wootton.

Rarely is there a single building type which is distinct to a particular settlement, and to the exclusion of all other built form. So it is with Wootton. Whilst the majority of positive contributors to the character of Wootton are dwellings, their massing, articulation, shape and materials vary.

Locally distinctive materials include timber framing, red and buff brick, clay roof tiles, thatch and slate.



Plate 40 illustrates no.s 21-23 Church Row, a range of timber framed cottages which were later rendered over. Most timber frames are eventually covered for the purposes of utility and fashion. However, some later timber framed buildings were actually rendered, or weather boarded from the beginning, but evidence for these forms of house is scant.



Plate 41 shows the use of a range of red bricks mixed with buff brick both in the houses and the boundary wall. The porches are recent additions but upset the simple facades. However, whilst a relatively large, rendered block is a traditional form of porch, a timber framed one applied to the front of a brick cottage is a modern phenomenon which confuses the architectural narrative and diminishes the reserved simplicity of the property.



Plate 42 shows the patina that clay roof tiles obtain. The gathering of moss and lichen, and the vagaries of individual manufacture, add notably to the character of a roof.

**Wall materials**

Along with low rise buildings which feature a horizontal emphasis, it is the use of local materials which amplifies the character of the place. Whilst the remaining C16th and C17th buildings in Wootton were constructed of timber framing with wattle and daub panels, local brick was - and is - as characteristic to the settlement. Stewartby, where the majority of the bricks were made is a matter of two or three miles away. The muted range of colours and their patination add significantly to the character of the settlement.

**Windows – type, materials, colour**

Traditional windows were usually manufactured from softwood timber and featured timber glazing bars. Their form is widespread and is certainly a characteristic of the village. Both side hung casement windows, either in pairs or threes with a fixed central light, are very usual in smaller properties, whilst vertically sliding sash windows in a variety of sizes and divided in innumerable way by glazing bars, are more a feature of the larger, or later properties – or those properties which have been altered during the Victorian or Edwardian periods.

## **SO - WHAT DOES WOOTTON NEED.....?**

In analysing the built form, spaces and landscape of Wootton and in considering the other features that make the village special, suitable forms and details for new developments are described and illustrated, below.

### **Design Principles**

- The character and appearance of the Conservation Area must be protected.
- The scale and form of new development needs to reflect the best examples of those properties in the vicinity – but should not in any event exceed two storeys.
- The density of all new development must be low, as befits edge of village developments, with soft landscaped fingers which stretch into the landscape beyond.
- The morphology of new development should avoid culs de sac, which create difficult areas for pedestrians to access. Through roads and footpaths should link all areas.

### **Local Distinctiveness**

The thrust of the VDS is to help ensure thoughtful, sensitive new development in Wootton. Fundamentally, this comes down to two things: scale and articulation. In order to 'fit in' with the pattern, form and character of the existing positive contributors to the character of Wootton, new homes must be of an appropriate scale, and sensitively articulated, to respect and reinforce local distinctiveness. The following aspects of design are crucial to ensuring that new dwellings are suitable.

### **Appropriate scale**

New residential development should be constructed on either one or two storeys – ground and first floor – with limited floor to ceiling heights. This will help keep the scale of new buildings in line with more historic forms. Tall floor to ceiling heights, and buildings with three floors, spread over three full storeys, or two storeys with roof dormers, are generally uncharacteristic of the village – though of course there are occasional examples. Nevertheless, these forms of dwelling do not reinforce the character of the village and will not be supported.

In traditionally roofed buildings, roof height, roof pitch and the depth of the building are inextricably linked. The depth of buildings in Wootton is modest, which reflects either the age of the buildings, or the social status of the original tenants. A depth of more 5m creates problems inasmuch as the roof must either be reduced to an uncharacteristic pitch, or it results in such a high ridge as to appear uncharacteristically tall. The flat roofed alternative, a favourite of post war architecture, is uncharacteristic of Wootton and should be avoided, unless concealed by surrounding pitched roofs, or boundary walls.

The height of a roof should be the result of the depth and a traditional pitch of roof. However, because all three aspects of design are linked, it is perhaps the overall character of a new place which should reflect the spaces and places in Wootton.

Roads dominate the village and in many cases result in dwellings on opposite sides of the road being a long way from each other. However, in historic areas such as around the parish church, and in small clusters around Hall End, Keeley Lane and the junction at the eastern end of Cause End Road, the distance between properties on opposite sides of the road reduces. This 'human scale' creates a more intimate feeling where the pedestrian might be seen to have right of way – despite the reality of the situation. This relationship between the height of the buildings and the spaces between their frontages – the height to width ratio – is important in defining space, and subject to the location of new housing, it could be used as a tool to inform layouts to amplify the traditions of the village.

### **Local Materials**

The Borough of Bedford consists predominantly of red brick buildings, constructed from the Georgian period onwards. The soft red clays, easily won, make fine bricks and the works at Stewartby and elsewhere have helped create and sustain an architectural tradition that is now so well-known and readily identified that it has become a diagnostic feature of Bedfordshire housing. Whilst a variety of other bricks including whites and mixed 'multis' abound, the more historic brick buildings in Wootton are formed of red clay bricks.



Plates 43 illustrate the Victorian range of reds available. The red bricks on the right have been supplemented with a red and white façade, as likely to have been dug and fired in Bedfordshire as the red bricks on the left. Both structures are well built, and feature 'Flemish bond', a very traditional brick bond throughout Britain and most commonly seen on buildings of all sorts during the C18th and C19th.

In order to amplify this fundamental aspect of local distinctiveness, new homes should be clad more often than not in soft red brick than either white brick or a multi. However, those bricks should be lightly textured and consist of a range of tones and hues, rather than one plain, almost characterless finish, which diminishes the appeal of a façade and certainly does not reinforce the traditions of the village.



Plates 44 and 45 Whilst the wall on the left features the occasional overburnt brick, it is nevertheless a characterless brick which does not automatically amplify the Wootton vernacular. The brick on the right is on a recent building, and further removes the structure from its locality by its uncharacteristically bland façade.

White bricks or multis were also made in Bedfordshire, and feature in a range of historic buildings in the village. These bricks are traditionally seen on Victorian and Edwardian buildings.



Plates 46 and 47 The buff or white brick on the left is characteristic of the later Georgian (and Regency) periods, as well as the Victorian periods, and is seen in part of Wootton. The houses on the right display a range of white and reds. The property on the left utilises a polychrome patterning, whilst that on the right uses a range of tones and hues on its side elevation, because they were cheaper bricks than those used on its façade.

Importantly, historic brickwork in Wootton is good. Apprentices typically served for 7 years before becoming tradesmen proper, and their work reflects a respect for the trade, the material and for the finished product. The joints between bricks are nominally 3/8" (or 10mm) and the bricks were fired and laid to imperial dimensions. The mortar was traditionally lime based and employed a gritty aggregate and a soft sand, lending any wall a textured and organic appearance.

Patination, the formation of an apparently weathered brick skin, is the result of an accumulation of airborne pollution over many years – and during the Victorian era the ongoing industrial revolution resulted in extremely unclean air – which meant the majority of brick buildings were coated in varying levels of dirt. Despite unhealthy environments, patination is considered to have benefitted the appearance of brickwork. It reduced the visual impact of new masonry and appeared to age it. It is a characteristic of many masonry surfaces and typically gives buildings a softer, more organic appearance.

Polychromatic brickwork was a very Victorian and Edwardian fashion. Its use was usually restricted to front elevations as it was expensive to construct, but on The Cock Inn it is visible on both the front and the side elevation as they were - and still are – both quite visible from the road.



Plates 48, 49, 50 and 51 show the simple and effective use of two tones of brick. All images illustrate the fun that Victorian architects and builders had with the bricks which had become readily available. This is notably a feature of the village.

In Wootton there are also poor, contemporary examples of polychrome brickwork, which contribute nothing positive to the character of the village, but rather caricature the architectural styles which prevail.



Plates 52 and 53 illustrates the result of atypical bricks used poorly in combination. Those on the left are too varied, and those on the right, too regimented. Both walls are built in 'Stretcher bond,' a brick bond which developed in popularity after WWI, with cavity wall construction. It is not generally considered as attractive as the earlier bonds which were used in 9" brickwork, as which are seen in the vast majority of buildings pre-dating approximately WWI.

The bricks in the left-hand image are 'tumbled', which results in their corners being knocked off. The overly conscious mix of hues and tones attempt to reflect various architectural historical periods, but in attempting to do this, they are contrived. The use of a plain red brick soldier course above reinforces the uncharacteristic nature of both bricks (and a soldier course in itself is a poor detail, diagnostic of the use of flat steel lintels which are typical only of post war construction).

The bricks used on the right are plainly finished and lacking in sufficient tone or texture. In combination with the brick on edge capping they illustrate the simplistic detailing of post-war construction and the reductive nature of mass housing design.

Rendered elevations are also a feature of Wootton and are employed to cover the timber frames of older cottages. Irrespective of their actual construction, rendered finishes suggest wattle and daub on smaller cottages and, in their use on brick villas and terraces Victorian and Edwardian properties they reflect early C20th fashion - and the desire to weatherproof their homes in the newly available cement-based renders.

Render could be used in a similar proportion on new housing, to the proportion found in Wootton today. This could reflect either the form and polite architectural meaning of the C19th and C20th, or the scale and vernacular form of the older properties.

### **Front doors and porches**

Houses which contribute positively to the character of Wootton feature their own appropriately scaled front doors. They address the road and, in many cases, include small porches or storm porches around them. They help define the formal front of the property. Small porches create legibility and reinforce the human scale of houses.



Plates 54, 55, 56 and 57 illustrates storm porches on timber framed cottages and recessed (and flush) entrances in Victorian and Edwardian houses.



Plates 58 and 59 illustrate forms of porch which might be more appropriate on other buildings. Despite accommodating a window on the left, what appears as an oversized porch in a contrasting material creates an unbalanced facade on the little cottage. The house adjacent employs a large timber framed porch, and whilst well-constructed, is more appropriate on larger, timber framed houses. The final image uses a fair-faced brick finish though the main body of the house is rendered. Mixing brick, timber framing and render is uncharacteristic in history and in the village and confuses the architectural history of a place.

New development should also feature suitably scaled doors front which address the road. If porches are proposed, they should also be appropriately scaled.

### **Windows**

The windows in a traditional house, are relatively small. The price of glass and the imposition of the window tax, which was in force for 150 years, both ensured that when many of Wootton's older houses were constructed, they employed small, infrequent windows. Small windows in vernacular houses contribute enormously to the character of property and help define those buildings as historic.

By the time of Queen Victoria, the window tax had been repealed, the manufacturing cost of glass had reduced, and it was acknowledged that light and air were beneficial to health. As such, Victorian houses saw larger windows, typically arranged in a symmetrical fashion in a brick façade.

The ratio of masonry to opening, the arrangement and location of windows in facades and the adoption of details such as porches, low eaves and breaks in the elevation all contribute to creating attractive properties and should be used in conjunction to reflect the overall character of the village. Smaller houses could employ windows asymmetrically on the façade, whilst larger properties could adopt the formality and symmetry of Victorian and Edwardian style, all of which are evident in the village.

Casement and sash windows are both well represented in Wootton. Their form and modelling should be the starting point for windows in new property. Casements are older in their design than sashes, but the timber framed cottages have all seen windows replaced since their construction. Openings in timber framed properties have also been created or enlarged at later dates, too. The windows we see today are probably Victorian (or even C20th) replacements. They are, nevertheless, characterful and contribute to the appeal of many houses.

Balanced or symmetrical windows are a tradition of Victorian windows, in which the frame sections of both fixed lights and openers appear the same.



Plates 60, 61 and 62 show some of the various forms of window which prevail. Casements in the first two photographs are flush framed. The bay window features a well detailed frame typical of the earlier C19th – though of course like many designs, they continued well into the C20th. The sash windows in the red brick property are simple and elegant and describe later C19th joinery, when glass was cheap to produce, and Victorian joiners sufficiently versed in the manufacture of frames to accommodate the weight of large panes of glass.

PVCu is cheap and readily available, but the inherent strength of the material means that frames are usually large and clumsy. Stormproofing, the term used to describe the way an opening window overlaps the frame of the fixed window adjacent, is a post war design which does nothing to further the traditional character of Wootton – and as such should be avoided. Timber windows are usually more delicate and can ensure better sightlines. However, aluminium might also be employed – and in which case, stormproofing is possible because the material is sufficiently robust to ensure frames remain slim.

### **Clay roof tiles**

Roofs in Wootton consist traditionally of both clay tile and slate. Clay tiles were usually made either in the same factory as bricks, or in close proximity, using the same clays. In Wootton they are predominantly red clay, with concrete tile on the post war properties. Some of the traditional houses have also changed their tile from clay to concrete, which has diminished the visual appeal of the roof.

Concrete tiles are far more uniform, they are usually thicker than clay and their leading edge is generally flat, which results in a very uniform, less interesting roof. Clay tiles on the other hand are cambered, or curved, sometimes in both their length and their width, which results in more lively roofs. The inconsistencies in the surface are illustrated best when the roof catches the morning or evening light and on historic properties amplifies the form of the underlying roof structure.

Both clay and concrete tiles have a texture which attracts moss and lichen to grow on them. This in turn contributes to the character of the roof.

Inconsistent quality of repair, or the incomplete replacement of tiles over time results in the sometimes varied qualities and tonal variety of many roofs.



Plate 63 The dwellings in the foreground illustrate the use of clay roof tile, with clay ridges and valley tiles.

New roofs should feature either a hand-made or machine-made red clay tile, rather than concrete, and employ a neat clipped eaves, as above.

### **Slate**

Slate was introduced following the coming of the railways. It was mined in Wales, Cumbria and Cornwall, and transported nationally, and then internationally. British slate is a fine material. Its larger size reduces the inconsistency evidenced on roofs clad with small tiles and is diagnostic of Victorian and Edwardian houses.



Plates 64 and 65 highlight the consistency of roof finish obtained through the use of slate. Of course, by the Victorian era roofs were being engineered and constructed well, so the scope for individual, erratic roof slopes reduced. Plate\* shows the neatly clipped verge of the same roof, which is characteristic of slate roofs, and exacerbates the Victorian taste for fine detail. The gutter appears historic (though may be somewhat undersized by today's standards).

### **Thatch**

There are a couple of thatched properties within the village, though all timber framed cottages would have originally been roofed in the material. Long straw is a characteristic of the county, and whilst it has been largely replaced with tile and slate it could nevertheless be considered traditional to the village.

New dwellings could employ long straw thatch to reinforce the identity of the smaller, older properties in Wootton, and by so doing help re-establish the tradition in the county which has largely been replaced with combed wheat and/or water reed.

### **Chimneys**

A characteristic of all post C16th dwellings, they are the result of a combination of introducing first floors to early framed houses, and the (as then) new way of heating the home. Wootton displays the usual range of chimneys, and they contribute notably to the visual appeal of the village. They reference the past and on new buildings help to embed them within their surroundings.

Tall red pots are a feature of many houses and were probably manufactured from the same clay as the tiles and bricks.



Plates 66, 67, 68 and 69 show a variety of chimney stacks in a variety of locations. They are always built of brick though some are rendered to reflect fashion. They vary from single chimneys to multiple stacks.

### Garden sizes and character

Front gardens in traditional houses, or those side gardens evident from the public view, are generally small and green. Where the properties are in close proximity to each other, situated across a narrow piece of roadway, the gardens are small and are either contained behind low boundary walls or picket fences, or left open for vehicular access.



Plates 70, 71 and 72 show a low boundary wall, picket fencing and hedging. Though the pickets have been replaced they were frequently used in the Victorian era, and their use both defines the property boundaries and allows visual permeability.

Low brick walls and boundary hedges are also a feature of Wootton and together all three means of enclosure should be used in new development.

The removal of boundary features to facilitate the storage of vehicles is unfortunate. The loss of the feature, and the leaking away of space weakens the sense of enclosure that houses in close proximity, create. The result is a reduction in the legibility of the place and a diminution of the human scale. Consequently, the omission of boundaries in new design, to allow the storage of vehicles, will not be supported. Free standing garages, both individual and en bloc, as well as undercroft storage, is preferred.

This include thoughtfully landscaped car parking spaces integrated into the dwelling, or located to the rear, out of sight of the public gaze – as well as small pocket car parks for perhaps 5 to 10 vehicles, well designed using local materials and landscaped using native species.

### Relationship to the street

Houses in Wootton are generally close to the street. Whether they are defined by a front boundary or are located hard against the back edge of the pavement, their position helps contain the space and create a positive experience.



Plates 73, 74 and 75 The relationship of a property to the street is a part of the character of Wootton

– and despite the various arrangements, which are a result of the development of a village over several centuries, the boundaries and the relationship of spaces of traditional properties should be amplified in new development.

There are however traditional houses which recede behind a hedge or fence. This is no less typical, and in isolation can look attractive. One can appreciate the setting of a villa behind a mature hedge or a set of railings, but in terms of future development they weaken enclosure and as a result diminish the sense of place that the VDS attempts to define.



Plates 76 and 77 show an Edwardian and C17th property located well behind the road. In these situations the road plays a more prominent role than the house, which is detrimental to the character of the village.

### **Integrated pockets of new development**

New development in Wootton will take various forms and be located on sites of differing sizes and with differing relationships to the centre of the village or the Ends. It is anticipated however that there will be small sites close to the centre of the Ends which can effectively 'plug in' to the existing environment. In so doing, the existing infrastructure would be relied upon.

In terms of development patterns, new housing should reflect both the density and morphology of the centre of the village or the Ends. The 'urban design' of the place cannot be over-emphasized. The spaces between new houses and the scale and design of new roads should at the same time reflect the most traditional spaces, scale and designs in the village, and meet the requirements of the Local Authority Highways Department.

### **Windfall sites**

Infilling on small plots between existing properties can, subject to the scale and sensitivity of the new building(s), enhance an area by amplifying the characteristics of the immediate surroundings.

### **Appropriate density**

This is crucial. In order to achieve a character which reinforces the traditions of the village, the density of new development should reflect the loose, lower density of pre-C20th village layout. A figure of 20 to 30 dwellings per hectare could, subject to design, reinforce the general patterns of development in Wootton. Densities of 40 or 50 dwellings per hectare would, however, diminish the significance of the historic cores of the settlement and result in urban extensions tipping the sense of gravity away from the historic cores, which currently exist.

### **Urban Meadows**

The village can be seen as a string of little gems loosely allied. Previous green space, whether accessible or not, has largely disappeared underneath C20th residential development. Therefore, new housing should not only reflect the form and density of the existing settlements, but should be punctuated by urban green space, used to reflect historic morphology and help showcase sensitivity towards the historic environment.

### **Woodland, groves and verges**

Along with urban meadows and an appropriate residential density woodland, groves and green verges could act as a buffer between the village and the A421 immediately to the east, and help amplify the semi-rural character of Wootton, rather than as a convenient edge of town village suitably located for large scale, anonymous residential sprawl.

### **Footpaths and kerbs, verges and boundaries**

Footpaths in Wootton not only run parallel to link the individual roads and clusters of housing, but they also link the various Ends across the fields to the north and west of Wootton. In so doing, they provide positive views across the parish, which help to generate or amplify an understanding of the settlement. They can be seen to divide one side of a road from another or, they can be seen to stitch the place together. Within the village, footpaths are metalled, but on the periphery and across fields they are left as trodden earth.

In new development, their width and finish should reflect their locale. In stitching the various new developments together, they might most appropriately be surfaced in resin bound gravel, or left as earth, to be trodden by pedestrian traffic. In the village itself, they would most suitably be finished in either resin or, in the heart of the settlement, tegula block. Footpaths and roads within Wootton – as opposed to those which lead out of the settlement – should be designed in combination with the new housing – as opposed to separate from it - to create a sense of place.

Raised tables in either contrasting, or complementary brick setts or tegula blocks could emphasize the pedestrian-friendly nature of small-scale new developments, and whilst not reflecting tradition in terms of detail or material, would nevertheless amplify the desire for a less car oriented space, in which the pedestrian is seen as more important to the vitality of the village than the car.

When employed as shared surfaces, ideally in small areas where car speeds are inherently low, bound gravel helps create a sense of place. The opposite is true however of the large swathes of tarmac footpath and engineered road which divide the buildings and diminish any sense of place.



Plates 78 and 79 illustrate the characterless, engineered surfaces in the village which diminish any sense of place.



Plates 80 and 81 show resin bound gravel and a tegula block road, which because of its width and finish appears more as a private driveway. The low kerb and green verges between encourage slower vehicular speeds and therefore pedestrians to walk in the road. These photographs were taken in the new Berryfields development, to the east of the village centre.

### **Street furniture**

Street furniture includes amongst other things street lighting, benches, bins, bus shelters, railings and road signs. To date, the furniture in Wootton could be seen as functional, and in some cases does not contribute to a sense of place. Obvious exceptions include the street lights within the Conservation Area and along Hall End Road.



Plates 82 and 83 show the old-fashioned lamps with swan necks employed in the Conservation Area.

A recent program of replacement LED lamps across the pre-C21st parts of the village has established a theme of contemporary lamps, albeit on functional columns.



Plates 84, 85 and 86 illustrate the consistent use of LEDs across both rural and village centre areas of Wootton. The image on the right however shows the use of lanterns to line the western end of the village, along Hall End Road, which amplifies a sense of place - but in so doing are inconsistent with the lamps employed in the Conservation Area, and in the other parts of the village.

In the future, furniture should be replaced or introduced wholesale, in a coordinated program, to reinforce local identity.

Other furniture is in evidence across the village, but in order to further the sense of place, these elements should also be replaced wholesale, rather than piecemeal.

Railings, which were a tradition in much of Victorian and Edwardian England, can be seen in Berryfields as a link between properties, and could be employed in other areas as appropriate to knit together otherwise disparate parts of the urban fabric.



Plates 87 and 88 show both railings and picket fencing, which amplify local tradition.



Plates 89 and 90 illustrate similar, traditional details bordering more historic property.

In conclusion, Wootton's new residential development should be considered in light of the observations made in the Neighbourhood Plan and in particular the VDS, and as illustrated in the guidelines noted below.

### **Settlement guidelines**

- Small groups of houses arranged around open spaces, linked via footpaths. Any perimeter blocks should be as small as possible.
- Roads designed to cater primarily for the pedestrian. Shared surfaces as appropriate.
- Connections to the more established areas of Wootton must be considered at an early stage to ensure the pedestrian has easy access to services.
- Views to the church across the fields must be retained.

### **Design guidelines**

- New dwellings in Wootton should be no more than two storeys tall, with a variety of one and one and a half storey alternatives. Traditional forms of house include single dwellings, pairs and small terraces, with a range of windows. Generally, the larger the house, the more formal it should be, with symmetry to the openings and slightly larger windows.
- Smaller property should feature smaller windows, sometimes asymmetrically located

about the façade. Wooden windows are most appropriate, but aluminium is very long lasting, whilst the sections of PVCu joinery now available are approaching traditional forms, and could be used, subject to final detail.

- All forms of property should feature either chimneys or mock stacks in suitable locations.
- Groups of houses should all employ the same, or a very similar, cladding material. If brick is selected, it should be sourced from within the central and east midlands areas and should reflect the character and texture of Stewartby brick.
- Contemporary claddings such as vertical timber boards would be acceptable, partly because Wootton does not display a range of timber clad properties – and as such new dwellings clad in timber should appear overtly contemporary, to ensure an architectural distinction.
- Render should be hand finished using wooden floats and painted in a range of shades to match the colours already in evidence.
- Roofing materials should consist either of clay tile or natural slate, ideally from Wales or Canada, whose geology is similar. Chinese, Spanish and Brazilian slates are not usually suitable because they do not match traditional slate and some of their quarries produce second rate material.

#### **Landscape guidelines**

- Shared surfaces should employ tegula block, or other surface to match the roadway. Footpaths should be finished in a resin bound gravel. Avoid black top.

- Brick setts could be employed as raised tables on roads.

**Street furniture guidelines**

- Railings, benches, street lights, bollards and other furniture should be conservative in their forms and employed across the village, to ensure a cohesive environment.

## APPENDIX 1 – LISTED BUILDINGS

### 34/652 Wootton House 7.5.1952 GV II\*

Small country house. Late C17. Red brick now plaster rendered. Hipped old clay tile roof. Building is eight bays long by five bays deep. Two storey and attics. Facade of two storeys with dentil eaves. Eight sashes with glazing bars in architrave surrounds on first floor. Six ground floor sashes. Central classical gabled porch with broken pediment on paired Doric pilasters. Half glazed door with semi-circular fanlight. Two bay recessed wing to right hand side. Side and rear elevations are two storey and attics with hipped dormers. Similar windows though the rear elevation has a tall semi-circular headed window with glazing bars, to right of centre, lighting the staircase. Panelled red brick chimney stacks. Simple interior with some remaining original panelling.

Listing NGR: TL0023845046

### 4/653 Wootton House Stables - GV II

Late C17 stable block contemporary with the house. Red brick with hipped old clay tile roof. Ten bays with central pediment. Two storeys. Eight windows to each floor. Central carriageway, now blocked. C20 one-storey lean-to. Included for group value with Wootton House.

Listing NGR: TL0026945103

### WOOTTON CRANFIELD ROAD SP 14 SE 12/665 Wootton Green Farmhouse - GV II

Early C19 house. Local mottled red brick with old clay tile roof. Main block has hipped roof. Recessed subsidiary wing to left hand side is gabled. Main wing has three first floor sashes with glazing bars under gauged red brick heads. Ground floor has two canted bay windows with moulded cornices. Central doorway with moulded canopy supported on four Doric columns. Left hand wing has two first floor sashes. Ground floor left hand 3-light casement with glazing bars and right hand side-sliding sash. The rear doorway has flat bracketed doorhood.

Listing NGR: SP9980043737

### **Statutory Address: Church Road, Wootton, Bedford, MK43 9HD**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

**District:** Bedford (Unitary Authority)

**Parish:** Wootton

**National Grid Reference:** TL0050445043

#### Summary

First World War memorial, unveiled in 1922, with further names added after the Second World War.

#### Reasons for Designation

Wootton War Memorial is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: \* Historic interest: as an eloquent witness to the tragic impact of world events on this local community, and the sacrifice it has made in the conflicts of the C20; \* Architectural interest: an elegant and striking Latin cross.

## History

The aftermath of the First World War saw the biggest single wave of public commemoration ever with tens of thousands of memorials erected across England, both as a result of the huge impact the loss of three quarters of a million British lives had on communities and the official policy of not repatriating the dead, which meant that the memorials provided the main focus of the grief felt at this great loss.

One such memorial was raised at Wootton as a permanent testament to the sacrifice made by 43 members of the local community who lost their lives in the First World War.

The memorial was originally located at the junction of Church Road and Cranfield Road but was relocated in the late 1970s. It was unveiled in 1922.

Following the Second World War, the names of seven who lost their lives in that conflict were also added.

## Details

The memorial is located on a green off Church Road in Wootton and it comprises a stone Latin cross surmounting a rectangular tapered shaft set on a rectangular plinth. This is set upon a three-stepped base. Two decorated brackets support the arms of the cross and the dates 1914 1919 are carved in relief on the arms of the cross.

Stone plaques have been fixed to the memorial; the one on the front face of the plinth bears the inscription ERECTED/ TO THE MEMORY/ OF THE MEN OF THE/ PARISH OF WOOTTON/ WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN/ THE GREAT WAR. The other faces carry plaques inscribed with the names of the fallen.

The base of the shaft carries a plaque which is inscribed 1939 – 1945/ (NAMES).

This List entry has been amended to add the source for War Memorials Online. This source was not used in the compilation of this List entry but is added here as a guide for further reading, 6 March 2017.

## **12/666 Dovecote at Wootton Green Farmhouse - GV II**

C18 dovecote. Red brick with pyramid old clay tile roof. The building is now used as a garage. It is included for group value with the farmhouse.

Listing NGR: SP9977543723

11/639 No. 157 - - II

C18 house. Exposed timber-framing to front elevation, remainder colourwashed plaster. Old clay tile roof. L-plan with rear wing. Two storey. Facade first floor has three casements with glazing bars, the two outer ones of 3- lights, the central of 2- lights. 6 panel door with flat doorhood flanked by two 5-light casement windows with glazing bars.

Listing NGR: TL0089946246

## **11/642 Keeley Farmhouse - - II**

C17 timber-framed farmhouse refaced C19 in local light red mottled brick. L- plan. Two storey and attics. Rectangular stacks with recessed side panels. Front elevation has three hipped dormers. Five first floor sash windows with slightly cambered stucco heads and keystones.

Two ground floor sashes with right hand french doors. Flat door canopy supported on Doric columns.

Listing NGR: TL0093146079

**WOOTTON, BEDFORD ROAD (west side), No. 153, Pear Tree Cottage**

II

C18 timber-framed house. Exterior colourwashed roughcast with pantile roof. Three bays, right hand one is later addition. Two storeys. First floor has two 3-light and one 2-light casements with glazing bars. Three 2-light casements to ground floor. C20 flat-roofed porch.

Listing NGR: TL0086546102

**WOOTTON CRANFIELD ROAD TL 04 SW 13/662 Nos. 3 and 5 - - II**

Mid-C19 pair of houses. Red brick with fishscale tile roof. 4 casement windows to each storey with drip mouldings. Two 4- centred arched doorways with drip mouldings.

Listing NGR: TL0076444965

34/659 No. 48 - - II

C18 timber-framed-house with colourwashed brick nogging. Old clay tile roof. L-plan with rear hipped wing. One storey and attics. Two gabled dormers. Two 3-light casement windows. C20 gabled doorhood with trellis sides.

Listing NGR: TL0035245135

**TL 0045-0145 34/661 WOOTTON Church Road (North side) Barn to Number 50**

GV II C16 timber-framed and weatherboarded on red brick plinth. Old clay tile roof. Include for group value with Ivy Cottage.

**WOOTTON CRANFIELD ROAD TL 04 SW 13/663 No. 71, Hoo Farmhouse - - II**

c.17. L-plan house with angle filled by later gabled wing. Timber-framed with red brick nogging. Old clay tile roof. C20 casement windows. C20 red brick gabled porches to N and S elevations.

Listing NGR: TL0026843684

**34/655 Nos. 21 and 23 - GV II**

Pair of C18 houses, probably originally divided into three. Roughcast exterior covering timber-framing. Old clay tile roof. One storey and attics. Three gabled dormers. Three ground floor 3-light casements.

Listing NGR: TL0044445069

**WOOTTON HALL END ROAD TL 0045-0145 34/668 Nos. 41 - 45 (odd) 6.8.79 - II**

C17 house. Timber-framed now cement rendered. T-plan with projecting two storey porch to main wing. These two have old plain clay tile roof; cross wing has pantile roof. Two storeys. C20 casement windows.

Listing NGR: TL0012045774

**WOOTTON BOURNE END ROAD sP 94 NE 10/643 Vine Cottage - - II**

C17 house. Timber-framed with red brick nogging. Old clay tile roof. Left hand bay is later addition in local red bricks with C20 rear one storey wing. One storey and attics. Three gabled dormers. Five ground floor casements with glazing bars. C20 flat-roofed porch.

Listing NGR: SP9948446147

**34/645 No. 67, Yew Trees Cottage - GV II**

C18 house. Timber-framed under colourwashed pebbledash. Some brickwork to front elevation. Double pitched old clay tile roof. Two storeys. First floor has two side sliding sashes with glazing bars, same to ground floor. C20 gabled porch.

Listing NGR: TL0053845360

**34/648 No. 54 - GV II**

C17 house. Timber-framed and plastered with framing exposed to east gable end. Machine-made tile roof. One storey and attics. Two gabled dormers. Two ground floor casements with glazing bars and central C20 gabled porch.

Listing NGR: TL0051945384

**34/658 Nos 2-8 (even) - - II**

Terrace of four C18 timber-framed houses with colourwashed brick nogging. Concrete tile roof. One storey and attics. Eight gabled dormers and eight ground floor casement windows. Each house has central doorway.

Listing NGR: TL0065445024

**34/647 Nos. 52 and 56 - GV II**

C17 house. Exterior pebbledashed with old clay tile roof. H-plan. The front wing remodelling in the C19 and early C20. Refaced in brick and the roof clad in fishscale tiles. Carved bargeboards and finials. Two storey. First floor has two early C20 casement windows. Two ground floor canted bays. Rear wing has gabled attic dormer. C20 ground floor porch/conservatory.

Listing NGR: TL0052945395

**34/660 No. 50, Ivy Cottage - GV II**

C17 or slightly earlier timber-framed house. Now pebbledash rendered. Old clay tile roof. T-plan with central projecting two storey porch to main wing. Two storeys. Gabled dormer to right of porch. Casement windows, some with glazing bars.

Listing NGR: TL0033745140

**WOOTTON HALL END ROAD TL 0045-0145 34/667 The Chequers Public House - - II**

Public House. C17. Timber-framed building now roughcast rendered. Old clay tile roof. T-plan with left hand cross wing of two storeys. Main wing of one storey and attics. Gabled attic dormer. C20 casement windows. C20 lean-to porch in angle between wings. Right hand one storey colourwashed brick wing. Steeply pitched old clay tile roof.

Listing NGR: TL0013345732

**11/669 No. 35 - - II**

C18 timber-framed house now pebbledashed. Old clay tile roof. One storey and attics. N. elevation (facing road) has ground floor left hand 3-light casement with glazing bars and right hand C20 casement. One storey C19 brick lean-to. S. elevation has two gabled attic dormers. Three ground floor casements. C20 flat-roofed porch. E. gable end one storey lean-to with hipped roof.

Listing NGR: TL0060746032

**11/670 No. 95, Deep Thatches - - II**

C17 or early C18 house. Timber-frame now pebbledash rendered and colourwashed. Thatched roof. One storey and attics. North elevation has one ground floor casement. South elevation three ground floor casements and central doorway.

**11/672 Nos. 6 and 8 - GV II**

Pair of houses. C17 or early C18 altered. Two storey. First floor partly timber-framed with plaster infill; remainder brick, rendered and colourwashed. Old clay tile roof. Three first floor casements with glazing bars. Ground floor C20 leaded casements and porch. Left-hand slightly lower brick wing colourwashed rendered with old clay tile roof.

Listing NGR: TL0081946103

**11/671 No. 4 - GV II**

C17 house altered in C20. Timber-framing now cement rendered and colourwashed. Concrete tile roof. One storey and attics. Two hipped dormers. Ground floor C20 leaded casements and C20 gabled porch.

Listing NGR: TL0082546116

### **34/650 Nos. 9 and 11 The Pink House - GV II**

C18 timber-framed houses, with C19 brick wing to rear. Facade of colourwashed pebbledash. Some timber-framing with brick nogging visible to rear though east end mainly rebuilt in brick. Old clay tile roof. Two storeys. Facade has three casements with glazing bars to each floor and three ground floor tongued and grooved plank doors. Rear wing has asymmetrically spaced casements with cambered heads. Also rear one storey lean-to of colourwashed brick with a pantiled roof.

Listing NGR: TL0054045000

### **34/656 No. 25 - GV II**

Late C17 or early C18 house with C19 red brick wing to north-east. Original block, colourwashed roughcast over timber- framing. Concrete tile roof. One storey and attics. Three hipped dormers to south-east elevation. Three ground floor casement windows; central one C20, outer ones of 3-lights with glazing bars. C19 red brick wing is slightly lower. Old clay tile roof. One storey and attics. Two gabled dormers. Three ground floor triple doorways beneath cambered arches.

Listing NGR: TL0046145081

### **34/644 Nos. 49 and 51 (Formerly house approximately 100 yards E. of Methodist Chapel) 13.7.1964 - - II**

C16 house. Colourwashed brick ground floor, timber-framed first floor with colourwashed brick nogging. C18 clay tile roof. One storey and attics H- plan. Central block has heavy brick ridge stack. Two gabled dormers with medallions depicting male and female figures. Three ground floor casements with glazing bars. Gabled wings have 2-light casement to first floor, 4-light casement to ground floor.

Listing NGR: TL0073545427

### **34/646 Manor Farmhouse - - II**

Surviving two bays of C17 timber-framed farmhouse. Exterior of colourwashed roughcast. Old clay tile roof. One storey and attics. Two hipped dormers. Ground floor modern casements and lean-to porch. To rear are two C18 brick- faced wings; the right hand one slightly taller. Both are colourwashed with clay tile roofs. Left hand one has cat-slide roof. To south end facing road a new main wing was added in the C19. Colour-washed brick with clay tile roof hipped to right hand side. Two storey. All C20 windows and hipped roof porch.

Listing NGR: TL0079845460

### **34/649 No. 7 - GV II**

Remains of timber-framed house refaced early C19 in red brick. Hipped old clay tile roof. Front block with rear projecting double pitched wing. Two storey. Facade first floor has two casement windows with glazing bars under, gauged brick heads. Same to ground floor with central 6-panel door under flat bracketed doorhood.

Listing NGR: TL0055244998

### **34/651 Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin 13.7.1964 - I**

Parish church built of coursed limestone rubble. Mainly C14 with very high nave arcades. The top of the tower is C15 as are the large 4-light aisle windows. The tower has a recessed lead spire. The west bays of the nave embracing the tower are early C19. In the chancel are a pair of fine memorial tablets to Sir Humphrey Monoux 1685 and to Philip Monoux 1707. The tops are open scrolly pediments with an urn set in.

Listing NGR: TL0037245068

### **WOOTTON KEELEY LANE (north side) Nos. 18 and 20**

II

Pair of C18 houses. Timber-framed now rendered and colourwashed with mock timbering applied to the front elevation. Old clay tile roof. Two storeys. Large projecting gable end chimney stacks, the left hand side one has a sandstone base. Two first floor casements with glazing bars. Ground floor has taller 2-light casements.

Listing NGR: TL0081846070

### **TL 0045-0145 BEDFORD ROAD (east side) 1869-/34/640 Nos. 72 and 74**

27/8/87 II

Cottage, sub-divided into two. Probably late C18 or early C19, altered in C20. Timber framed, clad in pebbledash. Thatched roof with central rendered stack and side stack to No.74. One storey and attics; two windows. L-plan. West elevation has two eyebrow dormers, that to right with sliding sash. Ground floor has left-hand C20 casement, right-hand casement with glazing bars. Central doorcase. Single-storey addition to right of No. 72, pebbledashed with pantiled roof, end brick chimneystack and casement window. South front of No. 74 has C20 casements and large gabled porch.

Listing NGR: TL0102145461

### **WOOTTON CRANFIELD ROAD SP 94 SE 12/664 Wood Farmhouse - - II**

Original house C17. Timber-framed with rendered infill. Concrete tile roof. Two storeys. Three first floor Yorkshire casements; two ground floor C19 casements and C20 gabled porch bearing the date 1620. Left hand bay altered in the C18 by being brought forward to project beyond the building line of the original house. Also in the C18 a rear timber-framed and plastered lean-to was added. The right hand has been extensively altered. The front was rebuilt in the late C18 or early C19 in brick and plastered over. Two storeys, higher than the C17 building. Hipped roof. First floor two C19 sashes with glazing bars. Two ground floor C20 French doors. To rear timber- framed and plastered gabled wing of one storey and attics.

Listing NGR: SP9983844197

## APPENDIX 3 – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Affordable Housing** Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- b) **Starter homes;** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan- preparation or decision making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- c) **Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

**Archaeological interest** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

**Biodiversity** The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variations, including plants and animals.

**Conservation Area** An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

**Consultation Statement** Consultation statements explain and demonstrate how engagement took place with the community and others to shape the development of the neighbourhood plan. The consultation statement will include and summarise all the statutory (i.e. the pre-submission consultation) and non-statutory consultation that has taken place with the community, organisations and other relevant bodies to develop the plan.

**Designated heritage asset** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

**Development Plan** A document setting out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area. This includes adopted Local Plans, neighbourhood plans and is defined in Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Flood Risk Assessment** An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

**Green Infrastructure** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**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).

**Highway Authority** Highways authorities are responsible for producing the local transport plan and for managing existing or proposed new local roads in the area. Bedford Borough Council is the local highway authority.

**Historic environment** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

**Housing Needs Survey** The survey is an integral part of planning for future housing requirements. It is an independent produced document which identifies the housing needs of people in their locality including type, size and tenure.

**Infrastructure** Basic services necessary for development to take place: for example roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

**Listed Building.** A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II\* or II with Grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well the exterior of the building and any buildings or permanent structures within the curtilage of that listed building.

**Local Plan Authority** The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for an area. The Local Planning Authority is Bedford Borough Council.

**Local Plan** A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

**Localism Act** The Localism Act has devolved greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and given local communities more control over housing and planning decisions.

**Material Consideration** A matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application or an appeal against a planning decision.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people can produce their own Neighbourhood Development Plans.

**Neighbourhood Plans** A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular Neighbourhood (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

**Open Space** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

**Parish Council** Parish Councils are the first tier of Local governance, and the closest to the community. Parish Councils are elected bodies and have the power to raise taxes via the precept. Their responsibilities vary.

**Planning Condition** A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

**Planning Obligation** A legal agreement entered into under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Planning Permission** Formal approval sought from a local planning authority allowing a proposed development to proceed. Permission may be sought for in principle through outline planning applications, or sought in detail through full planning applications.

**Public Open Space** Urban space, designated by a council, where public access may or may not be formally established, but which fulfils or can fulfil a recreational or non-recreational role (for example amenity, ecological, educational, social or cultural images).

**Rural Exception Site** Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seeks to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where residential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

**Saved Policies/Saved Plan** Policies within unitary development plans, local plans and structure plans that are saved for a time period during replacement production of Local Development Documents.

**Section 106 Agreement** A legal agreement under section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. Section 106 agreements are legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertaking offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken.

**Setting of a heritage asset** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)** Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the Development plan.

**Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)** Supplementary Planning Guidance may cover a range of issues, both thematic and site specific and provide further detail of policies and proposals in a development plan.

**Sustainability Appraisal** An appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan, from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.

**Windfall Site Sites** which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously developed sites that have unexpectedly become

available.



**Bedford Borough Council  
Wootton 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 Wootton Neighbourhood Plan (“the Plan”) by independent examiner David Hogger, which was received by the Council on 9 November 2021.

This decision statement, the independent examiner’s report and the submission version of the Wootton 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 Wootton Neighbourhood Plan may now be submitted to referendum.

The Wootton Neighbourhood Plan relates to the area that was designated by the Council as a Neighbourhood Area on 9 June 2015. This area is coterminous with the boundary of the parish of Wootton and is entirely within the Local Planning Authority's area.

Between 25 September to 6 September 2020, Parish Council undertook consultation on the draft Plan in accordance with Regulation 14.

Following the submission of the Wootton Neighbourhood Plan to the Council on 22 Jun 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 9 July – 23 August 2021.

#### INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION

The Council appointed David Hogger, with the agreement of Wootton Parish Council, to undertake the independent examination of the Wootton 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 21 September 2021.

The examiner's report was formally received by the Council on 9 November 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 Wootton 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 Wootton 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 Wootton Neighbourhood Plan will therefore be based on the designated Wootton Parish Neighbourhood Area.

These decisions were made by the Mayor on behalf of the Council's Executive on 1 December 2021.

As a consequence of the required modifications, the Council will alter the Wootton 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 Wootton Neighbourhood Plan**

<b>Proposed Modification Number</b>	<b>Wootton Neighbourhood Plan Reference</b>	<b>Examiner's Report Reference</b>	<b>Recommended Modification and Reason</b>	<b>Bedford Borough Council Decision/reasoning</b>
PM1	Front cover	Paragraph 3.3	Modify the title to read:  Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan <b>to 2030</b> .  The period to which the Plan is to take effect should be prominently stated on the front cover of the Plan as well as in the main body of the text.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM2	Paragraph 62	Paragraph 4.19	Modify the second bullet point to read:  provision of substantial ( <del>17.53</del> <b>19.53</b> hectares) open space as described in Policy <del>W12</del> <b>W10</b> ;  To ensure that the correct area of open space is quoted and that the correct policy number is referred to.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM3	Policy W4	Paragraph 4.21	Modify the end of the second bullet point to read:  and <del>by</del> <b>will</b> respecting the existing <del>linear</del> form of development;  The reference to linear form has not be adequately justified, is unduly restrictive and therefore should be deleted.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM4	Policy W4	Paragraph 4.22	Modify the start of the second bullet point to read:  be sensitive to the site surroundings and nearby heritage assets ( <b>including Deep Thatches listed</b>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.

			<p><b>building)</b> and demonstrate that the scheme will make a positive contribution to ....</p> <p>Development can be undertaken without harm to the listed building or its setting, but in order to provide clarity it is recommended to specifically refer to the listed building in the policy.</p>	
PM5	Policy W5	Paragraph 4.25	<p>Modify the end of the second bullet point to read: and <del>by</del> <b>will</b> respecting the existing <del>linear</del> form of development;</p> <p>The reference to linear form has not be adequately justified, is unduly restrictive and therefore should be deleted.</p>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM6	Policy W5	Paragraph 4.25	<p>Modify the start of the second bullet point to read: be sensitive to the site surroundings and nearby heritage assets <b>(including Deep Thatches listed building)</b> and demonstrate that the scheme will make a positive contribution to ....</p> <p>In order to provide clarity for the decision maker.</p>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM7	Policy W6	Paragraph 4.27	<p>Modify the end of the second bullet point to read: and <del>by</del> <b>will</b> respecting the existing <del>linear</del> form of development;</p> <p>The reference to linear form has not be sufficiently justified, is unduly restrictive and therefore should be deleted.</p>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.

PM8	Policy W6	Paragraph 4.27	Add wording to the end of bullet point three to read: ... of archaeological interest, <b>including the ridge and furrow earthworks on the site</b> ;  To provide clarity for the decision maker to provide specific reference to ridge and furrow which is referred to in the Site Assessments Report – Housing.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM9	Paragraph 68	Paragraph 4.33	Paragraph <del>405</del> <b>107</b> of the NPPF  To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM10	Paragraph 72	Paragraph 4.35	Paragraph <del>99</del> <b>101</b> of the NPPF  To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM11	Paragraph 73	Paragraph 4.35	Paragraph <del>100</del> <b>102</b> of the NPPF  To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM12	Paragraph 79	Paragraph 4.35	Paragraph <del>470</del> <b>174</b> of the NPPF  To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM13	Paragraph 80	Paragraph 4.35	Paragraph <del>470</del> <b>174</b> of the NPPF  To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.

PM14	Policy W11 Policy Title	Paragraph 4.36	Modify the title of policy W11 to read:  Protection of <b>Public</b> Views  To make it clear that the important views are public views.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM15	Policy W11	Paragraph 4.36	Insert the word ' <b>public</b> ' before 'views' in policy W11.  To make it clear that the important views are public views.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM16	Policy W12 (c)	Paragraph 4.37	Modify the start of clause (c) to read:  <del>be designed to the size and shape of the building plot</del> <b>reflect the prevailing pattern and scale of development in the immediate location</b> and should  ....  In the interests of clarity.	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM17	Paragraph 87	Paragraph 4.38	Delete all of paragraph 87 and replace with:  <b>National planning policy acknowledges that design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. This is reinforced within the guidance provided within the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. As confirmed within the NPPF, neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the</b>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.

			<p><b>special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.</b></p> <p>In order to reflect the most up to date situation with the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code.</p>	
PM18	Policy W13	Paragraph 4.41	<p>Modify the end of clause 2b) to read:</p> <p>... protect the asset., or</p> <p>In the interests of clarity.</p>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM19	Paragraph 90	Paragraph 4.43	<p>Paragraphs 28, <del>83</del> 84 and 92 <b>93</b> of the NPPF</p> <p>To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.</p>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM20	Paragraph 93	Paragraph 4.43	<p>Paragraphs <del>83</del> <b>84</b> and <del>92</del> <b>93</b> of the NPPF</p> <p>To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.</p>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM21	Paragraph 95	Paragraph 4.43	<p>(paragraph <del>112</del> <b>114</b>)</p> <p>To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.</p>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM22	paragraph 97	Paragraph 4.43	<p>(paragraphs <del>83</del> <b>84</b> and <del>84</del> <b>85</b>)</p> <p>To update the text as a result of the revised NPPF.</p>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.

PM23	Policy W18	Paragraph 4.49	<p>Add an independent sentence after clause g) to read:</p> <p><b>Monies from the local element of the Community Infrastructure Levy will be directed towards these various priority projects.</b></p> <p>To give clarity that these projects will be given priority when considering funding from the Parish Council's Community Infrastructure Levy.</p>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM24	Policy W19	Paragraph 4.51	<p>Modify the last half of the policy to read:</p> <p>c. The positive elements of its setting and its relationship to its immediate surroundings; <b>and</b></p> <p>d. The contribution that the building or the site makes to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets.</p> <p><del>e</del>-Archaeological evaluation and excavation must .....</p> <p>[<u>Note</u>: the letter e above is deleted but the text remains to form a final paragraph]</p> <p>Clause e is not a consideration but a requirement, and the modification is required to provide clarity.</p>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.
PM25	Paragraph 103	Paragraph 4.52	<p>Paragraph <del>193</del> <b>199</b> of the NPPF</p> <p>To provide an update after the revised NPPF.</p>	Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.

PM26	Page 36	Paragraph 4.53	<p>Insert a plan(s) within the Historic Environment chapter which identifies the heritage assets within the Parish.</p> <p>To provide a single plan of all the heritage assets in the parish to aid the decision maker.</p>	<p>Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.</p>
PM27	Paragraph 106	Paragraph 4.56	<p>second sentence to read:</p> <p>The Plan will be reviewed <del>periodically</del> <b>every two years</b> to ensure ....</p> <p>To ensure that the policies remain valid and up to date and that it remains compatible with the rest of the Development Plan for the Bedford Borough area.</p>	<p>Agree with the recommendation for the reasons set out in the examiner's report.</p>

December 2021