

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY THE MAYOR

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

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

1. Description of decision

- (a) That under Section 34A (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Ravensden Neighbourhood Development Plan be 'made' with immediate effect.
- (b) That the Council congratulates the neighbourhood plan group and the local community on their work to develop the Plan.
- (c) That the Chief Officer Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Growth be authorised in conjunction with the Parish Council to make minor editorial textual changes to the neighbourhood plan prior to publication if required.

2. Date of decision

16th March 2023

3. Reasons for decision

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

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

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

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

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

5. How decision is to be funded

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

6. Conflicts of interest

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

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

Signed:



Date: 16th March 2023

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

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

Date decision published:16 March 2023.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in:28 March 2023.....

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

Bedford Borough Council - Report to the Mayor

Date of Meeting: March 2023

Report by: Chief Officer Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Growth

Subject Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Neighbourhood plans are statutory development plans produced by parish / town councils or neighbourhood forums. Ravensden Parish Council has produced a neighbourhood plan for the Ravensden parish area (Appendix A to this report).
- 1.2 The Plan was submitted to Bedford Borough Council on 23 May 2022 and in line with regulatory requirements, was subject to a six-week consultation (1 July – 14 August 2022). It has since been formally examined by Wendy Burden who is an independent examiner. The examiner produced a report, which recommended that the Plan be modified in order to meet legal requirements and then be progressed to a referendum of people who live within the designated neighbourhood area. On 13 December 2022, the Council resolved to progress to the referendum stage. The referendum took place on 23 February 2023 and a majority of those who took part voted in favour of the Plan. It must now be formally 'made' by Bedford Borough Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Mayor considers this report and, if satisfied, agrees:**
- (a) **That under Section 34A (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Ravensden Neighbourhood Development Plan be 'made' with immediate effect.**
 - (b) **That the Council congratulates the neighbourhood plan group and the local community on their work to develop the Plan.**
 - (c) **That the Chief Officer Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Growth be authorised in conjunction with the Parish Council to make minor editorial textual changes to the neighbourhood plan.**

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

4. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Issues

- 4.1 Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to 'make' a neighbourhood plan if more than half of those voting in a referendum have voted in favour. In such circumstances the making of a neighbourhood plan is therefore a legal requirement except in narrow circumstances where adoption of the plan would breach or otherwise be incompatible with EU or human rights obligations. In respect of this plan no such circumstances exist, therefore the Council is under a statutory duty to make the Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan and has eight weeks from the date of the referendum in which to do so.
- 4.2 Decisions to 'make' a neighbourhood plan are taken by Bedford Borough Council's Executive rather than Full Council¹.
- 4.3 Bedford Borough Council can be challenged on the making of a plan by way of judicial review. Challenges must normally be made within six weeks of the making of the plan.
- 4.4 Once 'made' the Council must publicise its decision in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Policy Issues

- 4.5 Neighbourhood plans are examined to ensure that they meet the 'Basic Conditions' which are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The 'Basic Conditions' ensure, amongst other things, that appropriate regard has been had for local and national policies. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:
- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area (in this case saved policies in the Local Plan 2002, policies in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 and Local Plan 2030);
 - Be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations; and
 - Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

¹ Section 9D of the Local Government Act 2000

- 4.6 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.

Resource Implications

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

Risk Implications

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

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

- 4.10 The Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan was screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) by Ravensden Parish Council with assistance from Bedford Borough Council. The SEA screening concluded that it was unnecessary to undertake SEA. The examiner supported this conclusion.
- 4.11 The Plan was further screened to determine if Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was necessary. This was carried out by specialist consultancy Bodsey Ecology Limited. It concluded that the Plan would not have a significant effect on European sites either alone or in combination. Natural England, as a statutory consultee, did not dispute this conclusion. The examiner found no reason to disagree. Both the SEA screening and the HRA screening were reviewed in light of the proposed modifications to the Plan. The conclusions of both remained unchanged.

Equalities Impact

- 4.12 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.
- 4.13 The development of the Ravensden Neighbourhood Development Plan is relevant to Ravensden Parish Council's General Equality Duty. The Parish Council is responsible for discharging their duty. An equality analysis has been carried out by the Parish Council and this is an appendix in the Basic Conditions Statement.

5. DETAILS

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

Preparing a neighbourhood plan		
Stage	Responsibility	Ravensden parish progress
Neighbourhood Area Designation	Application by parish council, publicity & decision by BBC	Complete (23 October 2019)
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 (19 February – 4 April 2022)
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 (1 July – 14 August 2022)
Examination	Examiner appointed by BBC (agreed by NP group/ PC)	Complete (21 November 2022)
Consider examiner's recommendations	BBC and NP group / parish council	Complete (13 December 2023)
Referendum	Organised by BBC	Complete (23 February 2023)
Plan 'made' (part of the development plan)	BBC	We are here

- 5.4 Bedford Borough Council resolved by way of Executive decision on 13 December 2022 that the neighbourhood plan should proceed to referendum. The referendum covered the parish area of Ravensden and anyone who can usually vote in a local election and who is resident in the referendum area was able to vote.
- 5.5 The referendum question was 'Do you want Bedford Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Ravensden Parish to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?' This form of wording is that required by the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations 2012. **From an electorate of 565 the turnout was 236 (42%) and the votes in favour 226 and against 10.**

- 5.6 As more than half of the people who voted were in favour of the plan, it must now be formally 'made'. It will be used in the determination of planning applications that fall within the parish of Ravensden. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the Parish Council and the need to review it to keep it up to date will be considered as part of this process.
- 5.7 Following Executive's decision to 'make' the Plan, the Parish Council and others who asked to be kept informed will be formally notified. The Plan and supporting documents, including a decision statement, will be published on the Council's web site and made available in line with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

6. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan achieved a majority vote in favour of the neighbourhood plan. The Regulations require that the plan must be made within 8 weeks following the referendum unless:
- the local planning authority considers that the making of the plan would breach, or otherwise be compatible with, any EU or human rights obligations, or
 - a legal challenge has been brought in relation to the decision to hold a referendum or around the conduct of the referendum.

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

7. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME

- 7.1 The Plan has been the subject of two statutory consultations. The neighbourhood plan group carried out pre-submission consultation on a draft plan, known as Regulation 14 stage, and the Council undertook post-submission consultation; the Regulation 16 stage. Details of the Regulation 14 responses are included in the Consultation Statement. The Regulation 16 responses were provided to the examiner of the Plan who considered them during the examination. They can be found on Bedford Borough Council's web-site on the [neighbourhood planning pages](#).
- 7.2 The following people have been consulted in preparing this report:
- Director of Environment
 - Chief Officer for Legal & Democratic Services
 - Chief Officer for Finance
 - Energy Team
- 7.3 No adverse comments have been received.

8. WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS

8.1 Not applicable for this report.

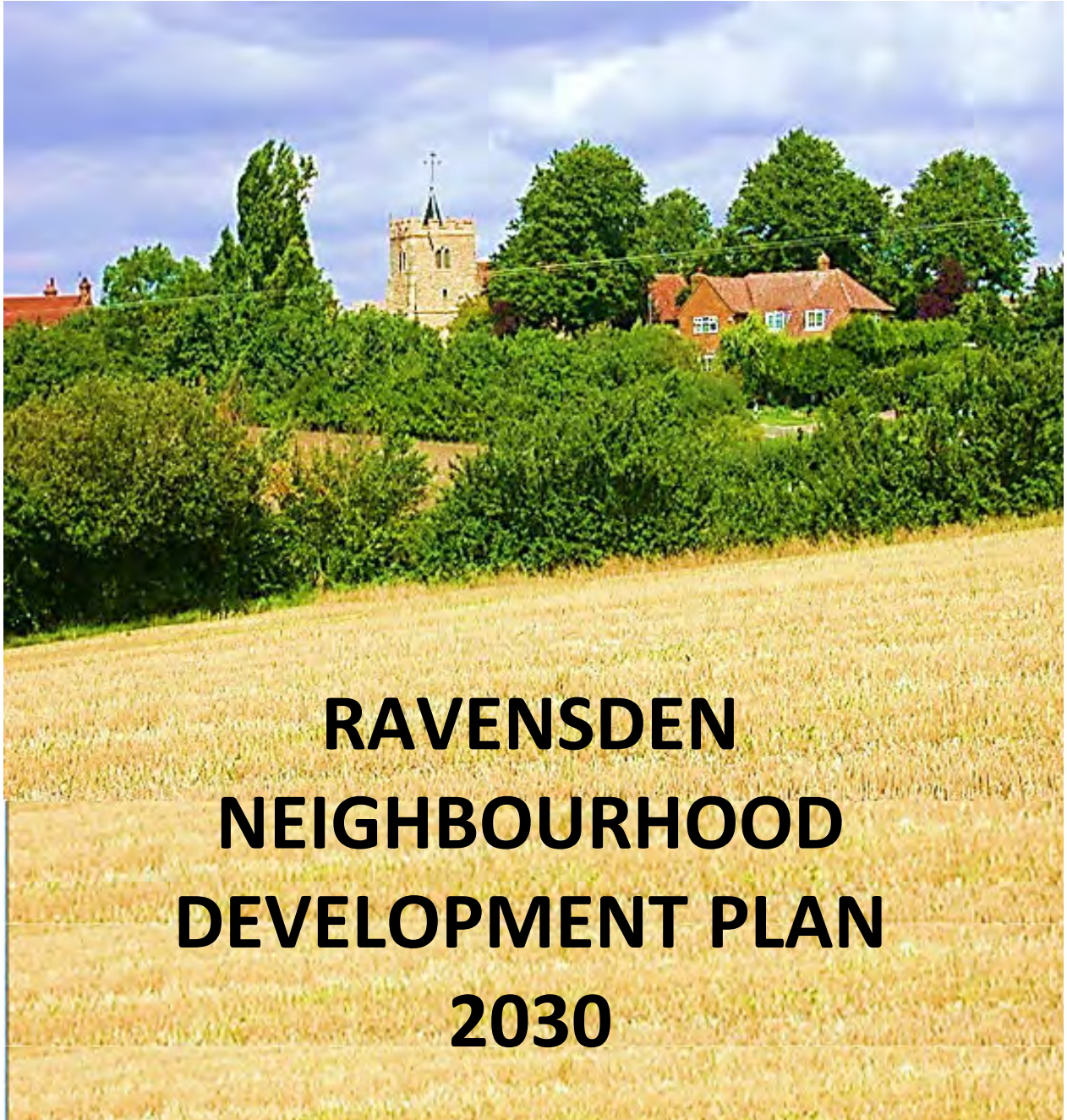
Report Contact Officer: Kim Wilson
(01234)228484
Kim.wilson@bedford.gov.uk

File Reference: Neighbourhood Plans

Previous Relevant Minutes: Executive decision 1650

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix A - Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan



RAVENS DEN NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2030

REFERENDUM - 23 FEBRUARY 2023

PLAN MADE - ?? MARCH 2023



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FOREWORD

Ravensden Parish stretches from Cleat Hill/Mowsbury in the south (adjoining the northern fringes of Bedford), to Church End in the east, Wood End in the west, and land at Tilwick in the north. This plan contains a positive vision for the future of the whole of Ravensden Parish and a set of policies and proposals to guide the scale, location, design, and sustainability of development; to preserve and enhance our unique rolling countryside, our heritage, local facilities and the character and identity of each of our settlements; and to improve coherence between the main places in the Parish.

The Plan has been produced by the Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, made up of Parish Councillors and local residents, on behalf of Ravensden Parish Council. Once the Plan has been finalised, and following a favourable local referendum, it will become part of the formal development plan (sitting alongside the Borough Local Plan 2030). This is the starting point for deciding planning applications for development in the Parish – namely, where it should take place and the scale, type and quality of that development.

The Plan has been drawn up in difficult times with most of the consultation activity and background work undertaken during the Covid pandemic. The Steering Group wishes particularly to thank local residents and interest groups who have taken part throughout this process, which has greatly helped the Steering Group produce a robust plan which reflects the objectives and aspirations of the local community.

The Steering Group has consulted and listened to the local community, landowners, local organisations, businesses, and statutory bodies to identify the issues which matter most to them; carried out its own surveys; and used consultants to draw up a Green Infrastructure Plan and Design Codes for the parish. The Plan has to be generally consistent with the Borough Local Plan 2030 (which

does not require the Parish to accept any significant development beyond what has already been approved) – and also respect national planning policy guidelines.

The emphasis of the Plan's policies and proposals is for only small-scale housing development in two new locations to meet local needs; the protection of our most valued open spaces; improving the design and environmental sustainability of new development, whilst protecting our heritage and local facilities; priorities for spending on infrastructure related to development; and mitigation measures if East-West railway is built across the Parish.

The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan comes against the background of the Borough Local Plan 2030 allocating a site for major residential development at Graze Hill – where outline planning permission was granted for up to 165 houses and an extension to the country park in 2020. Development has begun. The Parish Council will receive Community Infrastructure (CIL) monies from this scheme which it can put towards local projects – the Neighbourhood Plan contains a policy which sets out the Parish Council's spending priorities for CIL receipts.

A further issue which has galvanised local opinion is East West Rail. Following a consultation in 2019 into alternative route corridors for a new railway between Bedford and Cambridge, a decision was announced in early 2020 that the preferred route would come north from Bedford, then through Ravensden Parish as it turns to head east towards the East Coast mainline near St Neots/Tempsford and thence on towards Cambridge. In 2021, East West Rail Company held a further non-statutory consultation into a number of possible route alignments within this corridor – as far as Ravensden is concerned this boils down to two options, one through the south of the Parish and the other on a more northerly route through the Parish. A statutory consultation on a preferred route alignment is yet to take place.

Whatever one's opinion on the principle of this new railway, the hilly topography and the nature of the countryside in the Parish mean that, if built, the engineering works needed to construct the railway will have a highly significant – and damaging – impacts on the rolling, rural character of the landscape and the visual amenity of the Parish, the setting of our important heritage assets, the tranquillity of our settlements and residential areas, the enjoyment of our countryside and public rights of way, and on local habitats and wildlife. There will be long term operational impacts too.

The proposed railway is termed a “Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project” (NSIP) which ultimately will be decided by national Government under different planning legislation from Local and Neighbourhood Plans. However, because of the land-use impacts of the scheme, the Parish Council (which is adamantly opposed to a railway north of Bedford) strongly feels that, if it is built, the Neighbourhood Plan document should contain measures to mitigate the worst effects of the project both during its construction and its long-term operation. It will be for Government to decide what weight should be given to these measures if it decides to approve the project.

Whilst the main part of the Neighbourhood Plan can only concern itself with land-use and development matters, many other issues arose during public consultation which are important to local residents and stakeholders. The final section of this document identifies these issues and aspirations for future action.

The Plan is organised into 11 Sections.

1. **Introduction:** sets out the purpose of the Plan and the process followed in drawing it up.
2. **About Ravensden:** describes the Parish and its key features.
3. **Community Consultation and Key Issues:** describes the various stages of community consultation and the key issues identified.
4. **Vision and Objectives:** based on public feedback, there is a Vision for the Parish in 2030 and Objectives grouped under broad topic headings.
5. **Settlements and Housing:** contains policies for the Cleat Hill/Mowsbury area; additional requirements for any subsequent planning applications at Graze Hill (Ravensden Park); and for small scale housing on a formerly “brownfield” site at Butler Street, and the conversion of redundant barns next to Cleat Hill Farm to dwellings.
6. **Design and Sustainability of New Development:** contains a policy for good design and sustainability in all new development, and links to more detailed Design Codes for the Parish.
7. **Green Infrastructure, Local Green Space and Heritage:** allocates a number of local green spaces and requires that development should preserve or enhance the setting of heritage assets.
8. **Community and Employment Facilities:** Policies to protect existing community facilities and for new community facilities.

9. **Travel and Transport:** provides the context for measures to improve connectivity in the Parish and to mitigate transport and infrastructure impacts, which are set out elsewhere in this document.
10. **Implementation, Monitoring and Review:** identifies the Parish Council's priorities for investment in local community infrastructure, using developer contributions and receipts from the Community Infrastructure Levy.
11. **Other Actions and Aspirations:** identifies issues and aspirations which have been identified through the Neighbourhood Planning process but, cannot be included in the statutory part of the Plan. This is because they are either not directly related to the use or development of land, or they relate to the proposed East-West railway which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. Such projects are excluded by legislation from Neighbourhood Plans.

The Neighbourhood Plan includes a Policies Map to show which parts of the Parish and areas of land are covered by policies and proposals, together with more detailed Inset maps for Cleat Hill/Mowsbury, Ravensden Crossroads and Church End Ravensden.

Accompanying the Plan are eight supporting documents which can be found at www.ravensdenplan.info.

Basic Conditions Report

Consultation Statement

Housing Sites Assessment Report

Housing Needs Survey

Green Infrastructure Survey and Local Green Space Assessment

Ravensden Design Codes

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report



1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Changes to the land-use planning system in 2011 enabled local communities to draw up formal Neighbourhood Plans for their areas. The reforms give communities more say in development decisions in their locality, and in how their local environment could be protected and enhanced. Many parishes in Bedford Borough have started to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for their own area. A number of these plans have been made (adopted) and now form part of the overall development plan for Bedford Borough.

1.2 In 2019, Ravensden Parish Council decided that a Neighbourhood Plan should be drawn up for the Parish. Its decision was influenced by a number of factors, including

- Continuing pressure for significant new housing development on the fringes of Bedford and in possible new settlements in the area;
- Bedford Borough being located in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc where up to 1 million new houses had been proposed by the Government by 2050;
- Whether local housing needs (as estimated in a 2016 Survey for the Parish) were being met;
- The geographical separation of the Parish's main settlements from each other and the absence of effective, safe and sustainable connections between them;
- An aspiration that the Parish's unique local environment and heritage should be conserved and enhanced; and
- Concerns that proposals by the East West Rail Company (EWRCo) for a new railway linking Bedford and Cambridge would come through Ravensden.

1.3 Neighbourhood Plans set out planning policies which, along with those in the adopted Local Plans for the area, must be considered when applications for planning permission are decided by the local planning authority (Bedford Borough Council), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have to be in general conformity with the planning authority's Development Plan¹, but policies already in adopted Local Plans do not need to be duplicated in Neighbourhood Plans, as they sit alongside each other. The

¹ In Bedford Borough, these are: the saved Local Plan 2002 policies; the saved Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2005 policies (and the strategic sites policies 2014); the continuing policies in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan (2013); and the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (adopted in 2020). Bedford Borough Council is currently preparing a new local plan. The Draft Plan 2040: Submission Version consultation was held in summer 2022. It is due to be adopted in December 2023.

Neighbourhood Plan also has to take into account the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021). Policies and proposals must also focus on land-use matters.

- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan also has to meet a number of Basic Conditions to ensure it complies with official regulations and reflects wider policy considerations. There has to be a clear process of public consultation, and the Plan has to say how consultation responses have been taken into account. It has to ensure that statutory environmental assessment and nature conservation requirements have been properly considered. An independent examiner, appointed by the Borough Council in consultation with the Parish Council, has reviewed the draft Plan and its supporting documents to ensure it meets the Basic Conditions. She has recommended it can proceed to a local referendum with modifications. The Neighbourhood Plan comes into legal effect (“made”) if a majority of those registered electors in the parish who take part in a local referendum have voted in favour of it.
- 1.5 With backing given at a public meeting in August 2019, Ravensden Parish Council applied for the whole Parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area and this was approved by Bedford Borough Council in October 2019. Figure 1 below shows the designated area².

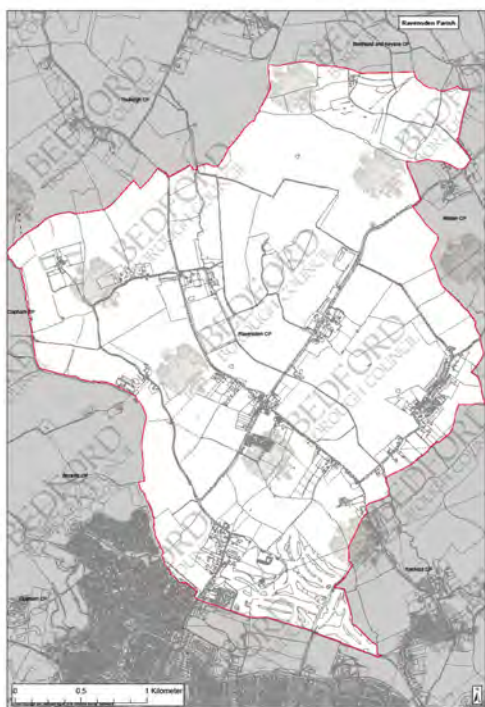


Fig. 1 Ravensden Parish – Designated Area

1.6 A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was set up by the Parish Council. Its membership is made up of a number of residents from different parts of the parish, together with several Parish Councillors. The Steering Group has responsibility for progressing the preparation of the Plan, including necessary research, the preparation of background documents, community and stakeholder engagement, and statutory consultation.

1.7 The Steering Group has carried out extensive consultations to promote awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan; to find out what the community thinks about the local area; what is valued; what should be changed or improved; and to present emerging proposals for public comment.

² In 2015, Woodlands Park was transferred from Ravensden Parish into Brickhill Parish (in the Bedford urban area) after a boundary review. The Neighbourhood Plan relates to the area embraced by the current Parish boundaries.

Community engagement has included regular newsletters and publicity flyers, social media, a dedicated website, drop-in events, Residents' surveys/questionnaires, a survey of local businesses, and a Green Infrastructure Survey and Local Greenspace assessment. Design Codes have been drafted by consultants. The Steering Group has sought to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan reflects local needs and aspirations, and feedback has helped shape the content of this Plan. The evidence gathered from public consultation is considered at appropriate sections of the Plan. The accompanying Consultation Report gives more details of each of the individual consultation exercises.

2. ABOUT RAVENS DEN

- 2.1 Ravensden Parish lies immediately to the north of the urban area of Bedford. It covers an area of approximately 930 ha of mostly open countryside. Its population is around 720³. There were approximately 338 dwellings within the current Parish boundaries at the time of the 2011 Census⁴. Given that only a few new dwellings have been completed since 2011⁵, there are now some 350 dwellings.
- 2.2 Historically, the Parish comprised a number of scattered hamlets known as “Ends”, which include Graze Hill and Wood End in the west of the Parish, Church End close to the eastern boundary of the Parish, and Struttle End on the borders of Renhold Parish. Settlement also developed at Ravensden Crossroads where Oldways Road and Butler Street/Thurleigh Road meet the Kimbolton Road, which is the main radial route (B660) running northwards from Bedford through the Parish. Oldways Road runs south-east from the Crossroads towards Renhold (and thence to the A421 Bedford bypass), and Butler Street/Thurleigh Road lead north-westwards towards Thurleigh (and thence to the A6). The Cleat Hill area in the south of the Parish, close to the edge of Bedford, is of a more suburban character - separate from Bedford but a transition from urban to rural - comprising some larger properties in well-landscaped grounds, two residential cul-de-sacs and the undeveloped and partly open frontage to Mowsbury Golf Course.
- 2.3 The landform of the Parish is distinctive: two steep ridges enclose the valley of the Ravensden Brook; the presence of steep hills and lanes rising up the valley sides or traversing ridges is a key local feature. The valley of Renhold Brook - which includes Freeman’s Common (a “gap” between Bedford and Ravensden) and Mowsbury Golf Course - lies in the south of the Parish, with its valley floor at around 40m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum). The land rises steeply to Mowsbury Hill, which, with Graze Hill, forms an extensive ridge running northeast–southwest at around 60m AOD, from which there are panoramic views north over the valley of Ravensden Brook towards Sunderland Hill (and the 30m high landmark water tower) and towards Church End

³ Woodlands Park was transferred from Ravensden into Brickhill parish in 2015 following a parish boundary review so the 2011 Census figures cannot be used directly. The Parish’s population in the 2011 Census within the former parish boundaries was 1,961, having increased by 1,250 between 2001 and 2011 due to the development of Woodlands Park, so by deduction approximately 720 is the resulting 2011 population estimate within the present day parish boundaries.

⁴ By deducting housing completions in the Ravensden part of the Woodlands Park development at March 2011 from the Census dwelling figures, it is possible to derive a reasonably accurate estimate of the number of dwellings remaining within the new Ravensden parish boundary as at 2011 (i.e., 338).

⁵ Source: Bedford Borough Council Annual Housing Monitoring reports

(including the 12th Century Grade I listed All Saints Church); and south over the urban area of Bedford towards the Marston Vale. The site of the Mowsbury Hill Fort Scheduled Monument, surrounded by the Golf Course on three sides, commands a prominent position at the eastern end of this ridge.

- 2.4 From the top of Cleat Hill/Graze Hill, land drops northwards towards Ravensden Brook (around 40m AOD), before rising sharply to around 70m AOD to form a broad clay plateau, which merges into the neighbouring Parishes of Thurleigh and Wilden. The boundaries with these Parishes are largely unmarked by physical features. Blocks of ancient woodland lie in the centre and north of the Parish - Great and Little Woods on the valley side, and Tilwick Wood on the plateau to the north.
- 2.5 Ravensden Brook and Renhold Brook join to the east of the Parish to form a minor tributary which flows into the River Great Ouse near Castle Mill Lock, east of Bedford.
- 2.6 Nature conservation designations in the Parish include Tilwick Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (one of 8 such sites in Bedford Borough), Mowsbury Hill Local Nature Reserve, 5 County Wildlife Sites, and the Traylesfield Roadside Nature Reserve (Graze Hill Lane). There are no designated European nature conservation sites in the Parish, although much further downstream on the River Great Ouse are the Portholme and Ouse Washes Special Areas of Conservation.⁶
- 2.7 The Parish has numerous public rights of way (footpaths, bridleways and Bridleways Open to All Traffic (BOAT), such as the historic Green Lane along the ridge between Church End and the Kimbolton Road), and some narrow lanes (e.g., at Traylesfield in the north-west of the Parish).
- 2.8 Agriculture is the primary land-use – the Parish has productive arable and livestock farming. Much of the upper farmland is Grade 2, which means it is some of the most valuable and versatile agricultural land in the country. Some areas retain a strong hedgerow framework, particularly where there are smaller fields and pasture, such as the land between the site of Mowsbury Hill Fort and Oldways Road.
- 2.9 The main settlements are geographically separated from each other by intervening countryside. Each settlement has its own unique character. In the east, the settlement of Church End has spread out north-eastwards from All Saints Church. Much of this is linear, frontage development, consisting of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows built in the 1960's and 1970's,

⁶ Special Area of Conservation is a European nature conservation designation. Ouse Washes is also a Special Protection Area and a Ramsar site, which are also European designations.

filling gaps between older dispersed properties, whilst a cul-de-sac (Vicarage Close) of detached houses and bungalows on the eastern side leads to the local primary school. Charity Field provides a break in the built frontage on the western side. With Ravensden Village Hall at its foot, Church Hill climbs up towards Church End and includes a number of attractive listed properties. There are about 95 dwellings in Church End and Church Hill combined.

- 2.10 On the western side of Ravensden Crossroads is modern terraced housing at Sunderland Close and (recently completed) at the former Curry Mansion site on Bedford Road. Mixed residential development leads south part of the way up the west side of Bedford Road. The Wayside Farm residential park homes site is a retirement community located off the east side of Bedford Road, somewhat detached from the rest of this settlement. In Butler Street there are various residential and commercial premises (including a telephone exchange building served off a stopped-up length of highway) on the south side, whereas the north side is generally open countryside, with views of Sunderland Hill, the iconic water tower, and the Grade II listed Lower Grange. Immediately to the east of the Crossroads is the village shop and commercial garage premises, and further housing including a short cul-de-sac of bungalows to the south (New Close) and a small gated development on the north side of Oldways Road. There are some 50 dwellings around the Crossroads and another 53 at Wayside Farm Park.
- 2.11 In the south of the Parish, there are two residential closes to the east of B660 Kimbolton Road (Glenrose Avenue and Wagstaff Close). As the Kimbolton Road climbs north towards Cleat Hill, there is, on its east side, the largely undeveloped and open frontage of the Mowsbury Golf Course and its car park, which also provides pedestrian access to the Mowsbury Hill Fort site. Several large residential properties in extensive grounds are located to the north of the car park. On the west side of Cleat Hill (separated from the Bedford urban area by agricultural land at Freemans Common) are further individually designed detached houses and bungalows, which turn the corner on to the ridge. Here, on the northern side, is the Grade II listed Cleat Hill Farmhouse and distinctive brick-built agricultural and storage barns. There are some 75 dwellings in the Cleat Hill area.
- 2.12 As the B660 turns north from Cleat Hill down towards Ravensden Crossroads, a new roundabout has been formed to provide the sole means of vehicular access to a proposed housing development at the southern foot of the hill (Ravensden Park, 165 dwellings) and to an extended Brickhill Country Park.

- 2.13 The narrow Graze Hill Lane leads along the ridge before turning east to descend into the valley and join the Thurleigh Road at Wood End. There are scattered dwellings (some listed) and farms along parts of this narrow and winding country lane.
- 2.14 Beyond Great and Little Woods (designated as ancient woodlands) and on the plateau is an area of open agricultural land leading towards Tilwick Wood (County Wildlife Site) and Tilwick Meadow SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) with a network of bridleways and footpaths. This area has a remote and tranquil feel, despite its relatively close proximity to Bedford and the B660. The landmark Ravensden Water Tower sits at one of the highest points in the Parish.
- 2.15 Residential commitments as of April 2022 (i.e., unexpired planning permissions yet to be built out) comprise Ravensden Park (up to 165 units), and 3 other single dwellings, giving a total of 168 dwellings with planning permission but not yet completed. Assuming all these commitments are built, there will be some 518 dwellings (350 existing and 168 yet to be built) within the designated Parish boundary – more than a 50% increase over the 2011 dwelling estimate.
- 2.16 Employment facilities are small-scale and include a commercial garage, village shop, builders' yard and office, cattery, several livery businesses/stables, the primary school, a public house/restaurant, small light industrial and storage units (e.g., at Willow Farm and at Struttle End), a commercial green waste facility, and several large farms.
- 2.17 Traffic is a significant issue. The B660 carries large volumes of traffic into and out of Bedford, including HGVs serving the commercial green waste facility at Sunderland Hill. Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) data has been collected at locations on Cleat Hill and on Oldways Road. At Cleat Hill 100-150 southbound vehicles were recorded in the weekday morning peak hour in September/October 2021, out of an average weekday daily flow of around 730 vehicles. A survey conducted at the same location in 2017 recorded between 80 and 120 vehicles in the morning peak.⁷ A further concern is the proportion of vehicles on Cleat Hill which exceed the 30mph speed limit - in 2021, this was nearly 40% of vehicles, and an even higher proportion occurred in the 2017 survey. Coupled with the absence of footways/cycleways along parts of the B660 and the limited width/standard of repair of some existing footways, there are serious road safety concerns, which are likely to be exacerbated by increased traffic from the Graze Hill (Ravensden Park) development.

⁷ The higher figure in 2021 may in part be due to traffic diverting away from major roadworks on the A6 in Bedford, but the Ravensden Park development will add to traffic demand on this part of the network once development proceeds.

- 2.18 On Oldways Road, eastbound flows in the morning peak hour in 2018/9 occasionally exceeded 200 vehicles (i.e., higher than the peak flow at Cleat Hill), and in the evening peak hour, flows westbound sometimes reached 150 vehicles. Whilst the morning peak hour traffic flows on Oldways Road were higher than those on the B660 at Cleat Hill, the average daily weekday flow was somewhat lower (600). This confirms anecdotal evidence that Oldways Road is heavily used during the peak as a “rat run” as part of a route between the A6 to the west and eastern Bedford and the A421 to the east but is quieter outside the peak. Some 25% of vehicles were recorded exceeding the 40mph speed limit on Oldways Road. The volume and speed of traffic allied with incomplete roadside footways and the width, standard of construction and condition of this minor road, give rise to serious highway safety concerns for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.
- 2.19 Although there is no VAS data for B660 Bedford Road, similar traffic flows and daily patterns are experienced as have been recorded at Cleat Hill. Despite there being a 30mph speed limit through Ravensden Crossroads, its location between two downhill stretches of the B660 with either a 50mph (Sunderland Hill) or a 40mph limit (Bedford Road), gives rise to a significant speeding problem on this section of the road. In addition, the proximity of some residential properties near the Crossroads to the B660 renders them liable to higher levels of traffic noise and pollution. There is no footway between the Wayside Farm Park site and the top of Cleat Hill, nor up Sunderland Hill. Given concerns for road safety in various parts of the Parish, even short distance journeys are heavily weighted towards use of the private car.
- 2.20 The Ravensden Crossroads junction is over capacity at peak periods⁸ with queues regularly forming on the approach arms of both Oldways Road and Thurleigh Road/Butler Street. There is little or no scope for physical improvement to the capacity of this junction, notably on Oldways Road due to the proximity of neighbouring premises which include a Grade II listed building. This section of the Parish road network also stands to be adversely affected by traffic generated from major new residential developments, including the Ravensden Park scheme in the south of the Parish and also developments further afield.
- 2.21 There are currently three scheduled bus routes through the Parish, two connecting the Crossroads and Cleat Hill with Bedford to the south and other villages further north (28 and 28A). The third service is a loop linking Church End and villages to the east with Bedford (27). The Crossroads and Church End services do not interconnect within the Parish. There are bus stops in Church End (southbound near the Horse and Jockey PH), and on the B660 at Ravensden

⁸ Appeal reference APP/K0235/W/20/3256134, Salph End Renhold, Statement of Common Ground – agreed position between the appellant and Bedford Borough Council as highway authority

Crossroads (southbound) and at the top of Cleat Hill (northbound)⁹. None of the local public transport services is well patronised but they remain vital to an ageing local population as well as to younger people for journeys to school or college, for example. The limited service frequency, and lack of services in the evenings and on Sunday/Bank Holidays, adds to dependence on the use of cars in the Parish.



2.22 The public consultation held in 2019 by the East West Rail Company into alternative route corridors for the central section of East-West Rail between Bedford and Cambridge, followed by the announcement in early 2020 that the preferred route corridor would run through the Parish, will, if it is implemented, have very significant implications. Each of the railway alignments subsequently consulted on in 2021 (see Figure 2) would cut across the undulating and sensitive topography of the parish, as the railway rounds the north side of Bedford before heading eastwards towards St Neots/Tempsford, and then on to Cambridge. Very extensive earthworks, cuttings, embankments, bridges, and viaducts would be required on either alignment, drastically changing the character of the local landscape, taking away prime agricultural land, and seriously impacting local visual and recreational amenity. This notably tranquil Parish, its settlements and many residential properties will be subjected to considerable disturbance, both during construction and then throughout the operation of the railway. The settings and significance of

⁹ A southbound bus stop is being added at the top of Cleat Hill, as part of the Ravensden Park development

the nationally important Mowsbury Hill Fort Scheduled Monument and All Saints Church (Grade I listed) as well as other listed buildings throughout the Parish could be adversely affected; and parts of the ancient woodlands at Great and Little Woods could potentially be compromised.

- 2.23 Subject to statutory approvals, construction of a railway between Bedford and Cambridge could start in 2025 with its opening projected for 2030. As East West Rail is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), a formal decision on it will be made by Government outside the normal development plan/development management system. However, the Neighbourhood Plan will be a matter to be taken into account in a Local Impact Report which the planning authority has to prepare. The Secretary of State is obliged to have regard to any matters he considers are both important and relevant to the decision.
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3. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Effective community engagement is an integral part of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, at all stages of the process. A full record of consultation activity is contained in the Consultation Report. A number of activities were held to promote local awareness of the Plan, to find out what Parish residents thought about the local area, including what was good, what should be changed, what could be improved, and what residents considered to be the main priorities.
- 3.2 Residents were kept informed throughout the process through newsletters and flyers delivered to all dwellings in the Parish, posters on noticeboards, consultation events, and a dedicated Neighbourhood Plan website (<https://ravensdenplan.info>), which contains all relevant information (for example, feedback from the various consultation events and the results of separate questionnaires). The newsletters are also available on this website. A Parish email network and social media were also used.
- 3.3 In addition to resident consultation, it was recognised at the outset that the views of local employers, landowners and stakeholder bodies were central to developing the Plan. Electronic communication was encouraged, and all email activity was logged in a central record. Postal or hand-delivered responses were also accepted.

Start-up and Launch 2019-2020

- 3.4 Following designation of the Neighbourhood Plan area, a newsletter from the Parish Council delivered to all dwellings in the Parish in November 2019 initiated the start of the Neighbourhood Planning process and informed everyone that a Steering Group had been established, explained its purpose, and set out an approximate planning timeframe. This was followed in January 2020 by the first of a number of newsletters from the Group to all households in the Parish (sent both by email and delivered in hard copy form to each dwelling). This newsletter reinforced the purpose of the planning exercise and invited everyone to two launch meetings, and it was supplemented by posters located in strategic places in the Parish.
- 3.5 The launch events took place on 29th February 2020 and 7th March 2020, the former at the Mowsbury Golf Course clubhouse (located at the southern end of the Parish) and the latter at Ravensden Village Hall (at the north-eastern end). The format was identical at both, and they were organised with the aim of achieving events that were open and accessible to all members of the local community. The launch consultation event provided details of what a Neighbourhood Plan is and the stages and timelines to take the initiative forward.

3.6 108 people attended the launch events (approximately 15% of Parish residents) and shared their views and thoughts on what challenges the Parish faced and how these should shape its future. Members of the Parish Council and Steering Group were on hand to answer questions, and attendees were encouraged to share their ideas and comments using 'post-it' notes which were later collated and used to help formulate the Plan and inform the content of further consultation¹⁰.

Residents' Survey March 2020

3.7 The Steering Group undertook a survey of residents of the Parish in March 2020. The survey was conducted by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC), using both 'Survey Monkey' for electronic responses and hard copy returns (delivered to each dwelling) using pre-paid post envelopes¹¹.

3.8 In total 122 responses were received, equivalent to about 35% of the dwellings, or about 17% of the population in the Parish. The majority opinion was for future residential development to be strictly limited, and the rural and semi-rural character of the Parish to be maintained. Respondents strongly valued the quality of the Parish environment and its quietness. For some, these were key reasons why they choose to live in the Parish, and there was little desire to see this threatened by substantial development. The majority of respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with many aspects of the infrastructure and environment, including the sense of community, the provision of communication within the Parish, the availability of green spaces and footpaths, and the general provision of services and facilities.

3.9 Nonetheless, some concerns were expressed, with major ones being traffic related issues (increased volumes, including the growth in rush hour A6 to A421 traffic, speeding, HGV use on inappropriate roads, and the associated dangers to pedestrians), and the proposed East-West rail route which was widely opposed and thought to be totally inconsistent with the character of the Parish. Other concerns were also frequently expressed about: the availability of regular bus services; the speed and capacity of broadband; the provision of leisure areas at Church End; and the maintenance of footpaths.

¹⁰ A summary of the outcomes and issues raised can be found on the Plan website at https://ravensdenplan.info/application/files/2915/9221/0085/Launch_Events_Comments_Summary.pdf (see Appendix B).

¹¹ The full report (and other survey data) is available at https://ravensdenplan.info/application/files/3215/9051/0907/Residents_Survey_Mar_2020_Reports_and_Data_Contents_List.pdf <https://ravensdenplan.info> (see also Appendix C).

- 3.10 In relation to the future of housing provision, given that outline planning approval had recently been granted for the Ravensden Park development at the south of the Parish at Graze Hill, there was very little support for any further substantial residential development, with 52% of respondents wanting little or no more housing development. If some development was to be considered, a majority supported growth limited to 10-50 properties over a 15–20-year period, using brownfield or small available sites throughout the Parish. There was some support for smaller dwellings suitable for starter homes and downsizing. There was no support for larger single site developments or the use of agricultural land for building, or for any significant social housing.
- 3.11 Respondents were cautious about the desirability of and opportunities for further economic growth in the Parish. Improving public transport was identified as the highest priority to support any development, but the only other factor to gain any significant support was a modest growth in individual business units, perhaps using surplus farm buildings. Overall, whilst there was some support for enhancing local businesses (e.g., the shop, pub, etc.) there was little support for developing significant new employment in recognition of the Parish's close proximity to Bedford.

Business Survey 2020

- 3.12 Separately, a survey was also conducted of local businesses, although given the rural and semi-rural nature of the Parish, these are very few in number. Despite a follow-up, very few responded and the comments (although taken account of by the Steering Group) were not significant.

Green Infrastructure and Local Greenspace Survey Consultation 2020/1

- 3.13 Further resident and landowner participation took place in relation to the Green Infrastructure Plan and Local Green Space Assessment in 2020/21. The outcomes of this consultation process are set out in more detail in Section 7.

Landowner Consultation 2021

- 3.14 Owners of sites in the Parish put forward for potential housing development in Bedford Borough Council's Calls for Sites for the 2030 and 2040 Local Plans were also consulted about the conclusions of the Steering Group's report on site suitability. Owners of land potentially affected by proposed Local Green Space designations were also consulted. Several responses were received and logged.

Residents Consultations September/October 2021

- 3.15 At the end of September 2021, a “drop-in” event was held at Ravensden Village Hall to update residents on the work undertaken by the Steering Group, to seek views on a Vision and Objectives for the plan, to obtain opinions on emerging proposals for housing sites and Local Green Space designations, and on design guidance/codes for the parish. Although the event was limited to a single location as we emerged from Covid-related restrictions, it was attended by over 50 residents. This event had been publicised in advance by way of a newsletter distributed to every household, posters, and email/social media. All the drop-in event material was published on the Neighbourhood Plan website.
- 3.16 At the same time, a questionnaire was made available to residents both in hard copy at the drop-in event and through email, social media channels and the website – to capture more views on the emerging proposals for the Plan. This closed in the first week of October 2021 and obtained 66 responses. There was almost complete support for the Plan’s suggested Vision and Objectives, for the need for design guidance and codes in the Plan, and for the modest scale of housing growth proposed. Significant majority support was given to the two small scale housing sites put forward and the suggested Local Green Space allocations.
- 3.17 Based on all the feedback received to the various stages of public consultation, the draft Neighbourhood Plan was published for formal consultation (Regulation 14) in February 2022, for the statutory 6-week period. This process was launched by a further drop-in event and exhibition, which was attended by 51 people. A further residents survey was sent out, together with formal invitations to comment sent to local landowners, businesses, and other relevant organisations, including statutory consultees. The details of individual comments received were individually logged and a schedule of responses prepared, together with amendments which were considered necessary to improve the Plan. All this detail can be found in the accompanying Consultation Statement.

Key issues from public consultation

1. There was confirmation that there should be limited or even no more housing once Ravensden Park and the Curry Mansion sites are developed. If there is to be more housing, there should be some smaller properties for starter homes and downsizing, to meet local needs. Small brownfield sites should be used in preference to agricultural land. The two proposed small housing sites gained significant backing from those who replied to the 2021 questionnaire.
 2. Our environment and green spaces are highly valued and should be protected. The Local Green Space proposals obtained considerable support.
 3. More needs to be done to protect local heritage, improve design quality, and enhance the character of each of the separate localities in the parish. The suggestion that there should be design codes for each locality, as well as the Parish as a whole, reinforced by policies in the Plan, received almost complete support from questionnaire respondents.
 4. Traffic issues are prominent amongst residents' concerns. Highway safety improvements are considered to be much needed (e.g., footways alongside the main roads and speed restrictions).
 5. There need to be better and safer physical linkages between the various parts of the parish, so they are more sustainably interconnected.
 6. If implemented, the East-West Rail scheme will seriously harm local residential, visual, and recreational amenity and damage local landscape character.
-

4. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Neighbourhood planning gives communities the opportunity to develop a shared vision for their area¹². This Neighbourhood Plan sets a Vision for what the Parish could be like in 2030. Based on the issues identified at the various stages of public consultation, the research undertaken by the Steering Group, and the policies set at Local Plan and at national level, a draft Vision was presented to and endorsed by a large majority of attendees at the September 2021 public consultation event and through the related questionnaire responses.

4.2 The **Neighbourhood Plan Vision** is as follows:

By 2030, Ravensden Parish will be:

- **A sustainable, safe and well-integrated place in which to live, work and spend leisure time, and which is responsive to climate change and decarbonisation objectives**
- **A rural/semi-rural area containing compact settlements which meet local needs; whose character and integrity are safeguarded through high quality design; and which are set in attractive and accessible countryside which also provides a buffer to large-scale expansion of Bedford**
- **Part of a thriving, cared-for natural and historic environment**

Objectives

4.3 The Neighbourhood Plan sets some Objectives for achieving the Vision and which in turn will frame the policies and proposals in the Plan.

4.4 The Objectives have been drawn up directly through the feedback received to consultations with local residents at key stages of the Neighbourhood Planning process; through resident participation in the Ravensden Green Infrastructure Survey and Local Green Space Assessment; and through preparing Design Codes. With general support given to the Objectives as worded and to the aspirations underlying them, there is confidence that the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan will help meet these Objectives as well as the overall Vision for the Parish.

¹² NPPF 2021 paragraph 29

4.5 The Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan are grouped under five broad topics, namely Housing; Design and Sustainability; Green Infrastructure, Local Green Space and Heritage; Community and Employment Facilities; and Travel and Transport. Each of the Policy Sections of this Neighbourhood Plan considers relevant Objectives, together with the supporting evidence, to provide the context and justification for each of the individual Policies. Appendix 3 lists the Plan's policies and how they relate to each of the Objectives. The Objectives are:

SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING

OBJECTIVE 1: To meet future local housing needs of the parish where appropriate

DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY

OBJECTIVE 2: To protect and enhance the character and identity of existing settlements within the parish and improve sustainable connectivity between them

OBJECTIVE 3: To promote and include good design and sustainability principles in all new development

OBJECTIVE 4: To ensure new development is well integrated into the local environment and landscape setting

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, LOCAL GREENSPACE AND HERITAGE

OBJECTIVE 5: To protect and where possible enhance local landscape, biodiversity and the historic environment

OBJECTIVE 6: To provide a multi-functional Green Infrastructure network

OBJECTIVE 7: To designate and protect important green sites as Local Greenspaces

COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYMENT FACILITIES

OBJECTIVE 8: To ensure existing community and employment facilities are protected and new facilities are promoted where possible

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

OBJECTIVE 9: To encourage safe and sustainable movement across the whole parish

5. SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING

5.1 Historically, Ravensden comprised a number of distinct “Ends” (e.g., Church End, Wood End, Struttle End) separated by open countryside containing scattered smallholdings, farms and commercial premises. As described in Section 2, housing development has taken place mostly at Church End, at Ravensden Crossroads and at Cleat Hill; and a major new housing scheme (in association with an extended country park) is proceeding south of Graze Hill (to be known as Ravensden Park), following an allocation which was made in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (Policy 24).

5.2 In the Borough Local Plan 2030, Ravensden Church End is defined as one of a number of villages



Figure 3 - Ravensden Church End Policy Inset
(Ref Appendix 1)

in Bedford Borough with its own Settlement Policy Area (“SPA”) boundary (Local Plan Policy 5S) within which development or redevelopment will be acceptable in principle, provided it is consistent with other policies in the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan does not propose to change the boundary of the SPA for Church End¹³. The Neighbourhood Plan Policy Map Inset for Church End (Figure 3) shows its SPA boundary.

5.3 Ravensden Crossroads is defined in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 as one of a number of Small Settlements in the Borough which do not have a defined Settlement Policy Area (SPA) boundary but nevertheless do have a definite built form. Within its built form, the Local Plan states

that development will be supported where the proposal contributes positively to the character of the settlement and is appropriate to the structure, form, character, and size of the settlement as a whole (Local Plan 2030 Policy 6). The Neighbourhood Plan does not change the status of Ravensden Crossroads in the settlement hierarchy or define a boundary to the settlement. Following the site assessment work and the support for its conclusions received through public consultation, the Neighbourhood Plan is proposing a housing allocation on a part-brownfield site

¹³ SPA boundaries were last reviewed by Bedford Borough Council for the 2013 Allocations and Designations Local Plan



Figure 4 – Ravensden Crossroads Policy Inset
(Ref. Appendix 1)

to the south of Butler Street– see Policy RNP3 below – which is considered appropriate to the structure, form, character and size of Ravensden Crossroads Small Settlement and has the potential to contribute positively to its character and function. The Small Settlement of Ravensden Crossroads is surrounded by countryside within which more restrictive policies apply. (Figure 4).

5.4 Despite its largely built-up character, the Cleat Hill/Mowsbury area (including Wagstaff Close and Glenrose Avenue) is rather unusually covered by policies in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 relating to the countryside (Policy 7S) rather than policies relating to existing settlements or the urban area (Figure 5). If the countryside policies had been

strictly applied in the past, development would have been significantly restricted. In the absence of an explicit Local Plan policy for determining applications for development in this area, decisions have been made on an ad hoc, site-specific basis, notably on sites along the Cleat Hill (B660) frontages, leading to concern that the visual character and amenity of the area could be gradually eroded. Therefore, to provide greater clarity and certainty for householders and other interested parties as to how planning applications will be considered – but also to retain consistency with the Local Plan 2030 - the Neighbourhood Plan defines the Cleat Hill/Mowsbury as a Special Character Area within the countryside, with a defined boundary, within which the following policy applies:

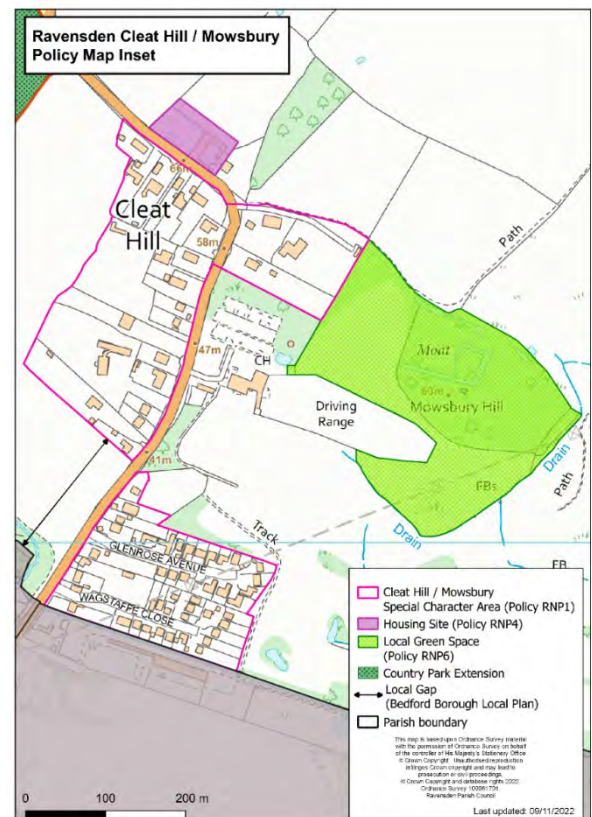


Figure 5 – Cleat Hill/Mowsbury Policy Inset
(Ref. Appendix 1)

Policy RNP1: Cleat Hill/Mowsbury Special Character Area

Within the Cleat Hill/Mowsbury Special Character Area as defined on the Policy Map Inset, development will be permitted where:

- the siting, design, scale, density and orientation of the proposed development is compatible with the character of the surrounding area and does not involve back-land or tandem development;
- the proposal does not involve the loss of or prejudice the retention of existing healthy mature trees or hedgerows on the site;
- the proposal is accompanied by a detailed planting scheme, including native species beneficial to wildlife, which is designed to assimilate the development into its surroundings;
- sufficient on-site car parking with car charging points is provided for residents and visitors;
- it does not result in unacceptable levels of traffic generation;
- it seeks to preserve the significance of surrounding heritage assets, including Mowsbury Hill Fort Scheduled Monument and Cleat Hill Farmhouse; and
- it reflects appropriate design guidance/codes in this Plan, as required by Policy RNP5.

- 5.5 *Local evidence: In some development management decisions in the Cleat Hill/Mowsbury area which have taken Bedford Borough Local Plan settlement policies into account, justification has been given on a case-by case basis for granting planning permission contrary to policies relating to the development in the countryside. In most cases, however, the locational policy implications have not been considered.*
- 5.6 *Technical evidence – NPPF 2021 para 15: the planning system should be genuinely plan-led; and para 16(d): policies should be clear and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision-maker should react to development proposals. Bedford Borough Council Planning Policy Briefing Note (May 2020) states that Local Plan 2030 policy 7S seeks to restrict development in the countryside to exceptional circumstances and there are risks of unintended consequences if the policy is not applied strictly, so it will be monitored to see if it achieves its intended purpose. Future reviews of the plan will provide the opportunity to amend policies if necessary. A similar approach to development management in clearly identifiable settlements in the countryside can be found in the Bedford Borough Allocations and Designations Plan 2013 (Policy AD44 Former Land Settlement Association Area, Wyboston, Chawston and Colesden Parish).*
- 5.7 In the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (Policy 24), agricultural land at Graze Hill (Ravensden Park) is allocated for residential development and an extension to the Brickhill Country Park. Outline planning permission for up to 165 dwellings and the extended country park was granted

in 2020. The outline planning permission and its conditions specify the maximum number of dwellings, the dwelling mix, site area, layout, means of access, open space, drainage and landscape and other requirements. Reserved matters applications seeking approval for the details of the scheme were first submitted in 2021. Comprising up to 165 dwellings with 30% social housing, this will be a significant development, increasing the Parish's dwelling stock by over 50% and broadening local tenure mix. It will become a new "locality" with its own character and identity. The terms of the outline planning permission (and any approved reserved matters) entitle the developer to build out the scheme as consented. However, because development will proceed over a number of years, planning applications to amend the terms of the planning permission or its conditions could be put forward, in which case, a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan is appropriate. The following policy supplements and should be read in conjunction with Local Plan Policy 24, to ensure good assimilation of this new locality into its surroundings and to enhance its sustainability credentials.

Policy RNP2: Ravensden Park and Country Park Extension

Land at Graze Hill, as defined on the Policies Map, will be developed for up to 165 dwellings and an extended country park. Any future planning application for the development of the site should address:

- The provision, retention and ongoing maintenance of footpath and cycle links to the surrounding area including Graze Hill, Freemans Common, Woodlands Park, Brickhill Country Park, and the wider countryside;
- The prominent location of the site within the countryside in the design of any on-street lighting strategy;
- The design guidance/codes as set out in Policy RNP5 and the Ravensden Design Codes, as appropriate;

5.8 *Local evidence: Consultations with local residents in 2019 and 2020 identified the site as a pre-existing residential commitment which the Neighbourhood Plan would take into account.*

5.9 *Technical evidence: Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 Policy 24 allocated land at Graze Hill for residential development and a country park extension and specified key principles for development. Outline planning permission was granted in 2020¹⁴, but the area permitted for residential use is larger than is shown on the Local Plan Policies Map and the country park extension is correspondingly smaller. The Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map inset clarifies the internal boundary. NPPF 2021 para 30 states that once a Neighbourhood Plan has been brought*

¹⁴ Planning application reference:19/00593/MAO

into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a Local Plan covering the Neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict. Policy RNP2 sets out considerations to be taken into account in any future planning applications within the site.

SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING

OBJECTIVE 1: To meet future local housing needs of the Parish where appropriate

- 5.10 In 2016, Ravensden Parish Council received the results of a Housing Needs Survey it had commissioned from the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)¹⁵. This identified a small need for affordable housing from households resident in the parish, which was unlikely to be met by normal market provision. Six affordable housing units were recommended based on two 2 bed shared-ownership houses and four 1-2 bed bungalows (rented). Between 5 and 10 open market units were also recommended to meet some demand for bungalows/retirement properties and/or starter homes.
- 5.11 Recent population trends in the parish have included an ageing resident population, which could result in potential under-occupancy of some larger dwellings leading to some demand for properties suitable for downsizing. The 2020 Residents Survey highlighted that if there was to be more housing development in addition to the Graze Hill allocation, consideration should be given to providing retirement properties and starter homes.
- 5.12 The Ravensden Park housing development is proposed to include 49 affordable units (30%) comprising a mix of houses (mostly 2-3 beds), and apartments and bungalows (mostly 1-2 beds). The affordable tenures will comprise not less than 78% provided by way of affordable rent, and not more than 22% as intermediate rent. It is likely that demand for the social housing will be drawn from a relatively wide area in the Borough and beyond, and local needs as identified in the 2016 Housing Needs Survey and in the 2020 Residents Survey may not be met.
- 5.13 Although there is no requirement in the Borough Local Plan 2030 for any additional housing to be provided in the Parish in the Plan period – and the emerging Borough Local Plan 2040 appears to be maintaining this stance¹⁶ – communities are encouraged to bring forward development through their own Neighbourhood Plans if they choose to do so, for example to respond to

¹⁵ https://ravensdenplan.info/application/files/8315/8151/7626/HNS_report_Ravensden_Mar_16.pdf

¹⁶

changing local circumstances. In the 2020 Residents Survey, a significant minority of respondents considered if there was to be more housing, it should be limited and small scale, with priority given to brownfield sites. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore proposes to take the opportunity to allocate suitable small scale opportunities for residential development in the Plan period to 2030. Small scale development could also help support and sustain local services and facilities (see Policies RNP8 and 9).

5.14 The Steering Group has carried out its own thorough assessment of potential housing sites put forward by landowners in response to Bedford Borough Council's Call for Sites exercises for both the adopted Local Plan 2030 and the emerging Local Plan 2040, following a nationally accepted appraisal process. Sixteen sites of varying scales were considered from across the Parish¹⁷. This assessment was carried out mindful there is no policy requirement for additional housing in Ravensden. A shortlist of potential sites was produced within a framework set by identified local housing needs, residents' aspirations, the policies of the Borough Local Plan 2030 and National Planning Policy guidance. The findings of this report were subject to consultation with relevant landowners and then with local residents in September/October 2021 when the conclusions gained significant support. The Housing Site Assessment report identified land adjoining Willow Farm at Butler Street, Ravensden Crossroads (0.8 hectare) (partly brownfield land and partly land reclaimed in recent years for agriculture) as being a suitable site to be allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan. It also identified the conversion of the existing barns adjacent to the Grade II listed Cleat Hill Farm (0.5 hectare) as a potential residential opportunity if a satisfactory vehicular access can be provided. Proposals for each of these sites are set out in Policies RNP3 and RNP4 respectively, as follows:

Policy RNP3: Land adjoining Willow Farm, Butler Street

A residential development of 10 - 15 dwellings on land adjoining Willow Farm, Butler Street, as identified on the Policy Map Inset, will be supported, subject to the following:

- The design and layout respects and enhances the built, local and wider natural environment;
- The provision of a range of house types and sizes. It should be demonstrated that the mix and tenure meet an identified local need;
- Vehicular access to be obtained from Butler Street/Sunderland Close at the eastern end of the site;
- The provision/improvement of pedestrian links to local services and facilities;

¹⁷ https://ravensdenplan.info/application/files/8316/2935/8465/Site_Options_and_Assessments_Complete_V1.4_1.pdf

- The provision of a contaminated land assessment and the implementation of any necessary remediation measures;
- Provision of a comprehensive landscaping and tree planting scheme, including native species beneficial to wildlife, including appropriate boundary screening;
- Sufficient on-site car parking with car charging points is provided for residents and visitors;
- Provision of on-site informal amenity space; and
- Development to follow appropriate design guidance/codes as required by Policy RNP5, including, where appropriate, sustainable transport connectivity to community assets and facilities.

5.15 Local evidence: *The Ravensden Housing Sites Appraisal report identified this site as the most suitable small-scale opportunity in the Parish, and this was endorsed in the 2021 consultation. A development of 10 or more residential units will provide 30% affordable housing in accordance with Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 Policy 58S. Informal amenity space should be provided in accordance with Bedford Borough Council Open Space SPD 2013.*

5.16 Technical evidence: *NPPF para 70 states that neighbourhood planning groups should give particular consideration to the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites suitable for housing in their area. Para 120 (c): policies should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield¹⁸ land within settlements for homes and other identified needs.*



Figure 6 – Willow Farm at Butler Street/Ravensden Crossroads

¹⁸ See Glossary for definition of brownfield/previously developed land.

Policy RNP4: Former Barns at Cleat Hill Farm

The conversion of existing agricultural/storage barns for up to 5 dwellings, adjacent to the Grade II listed Cleat Hill Farmhouse, as identified on the Policy Map Inset, will be supported subject to:

- External lighting, including access road lighting, to be appropriate to the prominent hilltop location and the surrounding rural area;
- A comprehensive landscaping and tree planting scheme, using native species beneficial to wildlife, to assimilate the site into the surrounding area. Open boundaries should be defined by a dense landscape buffer to protect the countryside beyond;
- Development to follow appropriate design guidance/codes as set out in Policy RNP5, including, where appropriate, sustainable transport connectivity to community assets and facilities.

5.17 Local evidence: The Ravensden Housing Sites Appraisal report identified the retention and conversion of these historic barns, adjacent to the Grade II listed Cleat Hill farmhouse, as a suitable small-scale opportunity in the Parish if a satisfactory vehicular access to the B660 can be achieved. The proposal was endorsed in the 2021 public consultation. This proposal in part reflects a planning permission which was granted for this form of development in 1989 and renewed in 1993, but which was never implemented in the required time-period and which therefore lapsed. This planning permission included provision for a new vehicular access to serve the site from the B660 to the west of the barns.



Figure 7 – Barn Conversion at Cleat Hill Farm

5.18 Technical evidence: NPPF para 70 states that neighbourhood planning groups should give particular consideration to the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites suitable for housing in their area. Para 120(d) states that planning policies should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings. The desirability of putting heritage assets to viable uses consistent with their conservation is brought out in NPPF para 190. The proposal is also consistent with Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 Policies 7S and 65 (the re-use of rural buildings in the countryside). Policy 41S of the Local Plan 2030 requires the setting of listed buildings to be protected.

6. THE DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 The Residents Survey confirmed a significant body of local opinion that new development should be sensitively designed to respect the local landscape and the character of local settlements and should facilitate the retention of and/or add new tree, hedgerow, and other planting. Equally important was the view that new developments should be sustainable and respond positively to climate change issues.
- 6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework¹⁹ states that *“Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers.”*
- 6.3 With these objectives in mind, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group secured technical support from AECOM (under a Locality-administered Neighbourhood Plan support package) to provide design support to the Plan. This support has enabled Design Codes to be produced for the Parish (**Appendix 3**).
- 6.4 There are two main purposes for the Design Codes. One is to add depth and illustration to the Plan’s policies for design and sustainability and offer practical guidance on the implementation of its policies for the design and sustainability of new development. The Design Codes are appropriate for all forms and scales of development – particularly but not limited to proposals for which planning permission is required.
- 6.5 The second purpose of the Design Codes is to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of each of the settlements and localities in the parish, including the new Ravensden Park locality, and also to suggest measures which could improve the overall cohesiveness and sustainability of the Parish as a whole, alongside those measures set out as aspirations in the Ravensden Green Infrastructure Survey. Initiatives which go beyond the scope of the statutory Neighbourhood Plan are included in Section 11: Other Actions and Aspirations.
- 6.6 In this way the neighbourhood Plan’s objectives for Design and Sustainability can be met.

DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY

OBJECTIVE 2: To protect and enhance the character and identity of existing settlements within the Parish and improve sustainable connectivity between them

¹⁹ NPPF 2021 para 127

OBJECTIVE 3: To promote and include good design and sustainability principles in all new development

OBJECTIVE 4: To ensure new development is well integrated into the local environment and landscape setting

6.7 The following policy RNP5 seeks to ensure that all development is provided to a high standard, contributing to the creation of a sustainable community.

Policy RNP5: Development Design and Sustainability Principles

All development proposals should demonstrate good design and sustainability principles, wherever possible. In particular, development should:

- be designed to take account of site characteristics, respecting the street scene, the nature, scale and height of neighbouring development, and the locally distinctive built, historic and natural environment;
- seek to protect local residential amenity from noise, visual intrusion, and intrusive forms of external lighting;
- incorporate high quality landscaping and boundary treatment including the use of native species and, where possible, the retention of mature trees and hedgerows. When retention is not possible, replacement native species which are beneficial to wildlife should be planted;
- ensure existing local habitats and wildlife corridors are protected and enhanced;
- aim to meet a high standard of sustainable design and construction and be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting net zero carbon emissions e.g., through siting, building orientation, the use of thermally efficient building materials, and the installation of energy efficiency measures such as renewable and low carbon sources;
- include measures to encourage active travel (e.g., secure bicycle storage) and connectivity to other community assets and facilities; and
- demonstrate, as appropriate, how the Ravensden Design Codes have been respected.

6.8 *Local Evidence: The desirability of producing Design Codes to guide new development in Ravensden was endorsed by residents in the 2021 Consultation and survey. As a consultee on planning applications submitted to Bedford Borough Council, the Parish Council's concerns have often related to the design of new development, including matters of siting, scale, boundary treatment, means of enclosure, landscaping, parking provision and choice of materials.*

6.9 *Technical Evidence: NPPF 2021 paras 126-136 emphasise the importance of good design and its contribution to sustainability; the need for a clear design vision and expectations in plans; and*

for policies which reflect local aspirations, based on effective community engagement. Design guidance and codes can maximise clarity about design expectations.

7. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, LOCAL GREEN SPACE AND HERITAGE

- 7.1 The 2020 Residents' survey confirmed that Ravensden's environment is much valued for features such as its rolling open countryside and wide-ranging views, the village open spaces, the tranquillity of the local area, the extensive local rights of way network, the natural environment, heritage features and pockets of woodland. One of the key findings was that residents wished to retain the rural and semi-rural character of the parish. Preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan has provided an opportunity for the key features of the local environment to be identified and prioritised for potential protection and enhancement, and for new features/facilities potentially to be introduced. To that end, a Green Infrastructure Survey and Local Green Space Assessment was undertaken for the Parish Council by the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) in 2020/21 and its findings and recommendations provide part of the evidence base and shape some of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.²⁰
- 7.2 The Ravensden Green Infrastructure Plan explains the aims and methodology of the process and how community engagement was central to identifying objectives, aspirations and potential initiatives. The objectives for green infrastructure, local greenspace and heritage are:

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, LOCAL GREEN SPACE AND HERITAGE

OBJECTIVE 5: To protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape, biodiversity and the historic environment

OBJECTIVE 6: To provide a multi-functional Green Infrastructure network

OBJECTIVE 7: To designate and protect important green sites as Local Green Spaces

- 7.3 Community engagement led to the prioritisation of potential initiatives, defined important views/vistas integral to the character of the Parish, and identified favourite green spaces. Some of the identified priorities (e.g., footpath maintenance) fall outside the scope of the formal Neighbourhood Plan but nevertheless are important to local people. To that end, some priorities are identified as Other Aspirations and Actions (Section 11) and the Green Infrastructure Plan should also be consulted for more details of these aspirations and priorities.

²⁰ https://ravensdenplan.info/application/files/4116/2935/8178/Ravensden_GI_Plan_8.7.21_1_final_plan.pdf. Some of the initiatives from the Green Infrastructure Survey are not directly land-use planning matters but have been included in Section 11: Other Actions and Aspirations.

- 7.4 Based on the priorities identified in the Green Infrastructure Plan, BRCC were subsequently commissioned to undertake a Local Green Space Assessment, which shortlisted a number of green spaces which met defined criteria. These could be allocated as such in the draft Neighbourhood Plan which was submitted to Bedford BC and were then considered by an independent Examiner (**Appendix 4**).
- 7.5 The protection of local green areas of particular importance to local communities through specific designation has its origins in the NPPF²¹. The Local Green Space designation allows communities to identify and protect areas that are of value to the community through Local and Neighbourhood Plans. The designation should only be used:
- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 7.6 Through the local assessment process, six out of eight sites put forward through the Green Infrastructure Survey were identified as being suitable for potential Local Green Space designation in the Neighbourhood Plan (see Appendix 4). Two of these six sites – Charity Field (Church End), and Northfields (Church End) - are already covered by Village Open Space policies in the Bedford Borough Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 (Policy AD40), which provides an appropriate level of protection for sites of this character. Another site (the Primary School Playing Field, Church End) is already designated as a Local Green Space in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (Policy 45). A further suggested Local Green Space, Green Lane (Church End), is a Public Right of Way already protected under other legislation and by countryside policies. However, land at Mowsbury Hillfort, Orchard and Meadow, and at All Saints Churchyard are considered appropriate for designation as Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan. Once the proposed country park extension at Ravensden Park has been established, consideration could be given in a future Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan review as to whether it would meet criteria for designation as a Local Green Space.

²¹ See paras 101-103

Policy RNP6: Local Greenspace

The following sites are designated as Local Green Space as shown on the Policies Map:

- Churchyard of All Saints Church, Church End
- Mowsbury Hillfort, Orchard and Meadow, Cleat Hill

7.7 *Local Evidence: The residents' surveys demonstrated that the green spaces in the Parish are of great importance to the community. This was taken forward with the production of the Green Infrastructure Plan which facilitated residents to identify Important Green Spaces, together with aspirational improvements to the environment. The Green Infrastructure Plan and related Local Green Space Assessment is a technical background document to the Neighbourhood Plan.*²²

7.8 *Technical Evidence: NPPF para 101: Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. NPPF para 103: Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.*

7.9 Although there is no Conservation Area in the Parish, there are some key heritage assets including the site of Mowsbury Hill Fort which is a Scheduled Monument, and All Saints Church which is a Grade I Listed Building, both of which because of their status are of national as well as local importance. Reflecting their prominent hilltop locations, their individual historical significance also includes extensive settings over surrounding countryside. **Appendix 5** identifies all listed buildings, and unlisted sites and buildings of conservation interest throughout the parish. The latter includes locations where there are significant archaeological records including evidence of medieval settlement, possible Roman roads, ridge and furrow, crop marks, and former brickfields. All these historic sites, remains and buildings should be conserved and enhanced, where appropriate, in line with national and local planning policy. Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments in the Parish are already protected under other legislation.

Policy RNP7: Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Where a development proposal may affect any non-designated heritage asset identified in the table at Appendix 5 entitled 'Unlisted Buildings and Sites of Conservation Interest', the effect of the proposal on the significance of the non-designated heritage asset must be taken into account.

²² https://ravensdenplan.info/application/files/4116/2935/8178/Ravensden__GI_Plan_8.7.21_1_final_plan.pdf.

In considering the significance of the asset, regard must be paid to its contribution to local history, character and distinctiveness.

Any proposal which would cause unacceptable harm to or loss of a non-designated heritage asset of local significance will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the loss or harm is justified by the public benefits associated with the development.

- 7.10 *Local Evidence: Local residents agreed that the Parish should retain and enhance its existing environmental and heritage features that give the Parish its special and highly valued character. The continued protection of important built heritage assets was supported because of their contribution to the historic and natural environment. One of the purposes of the Ravensden Design Codes is to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the communities and localities in the Parish, which will include local heritage assets.*
- 7.11 *Technical Evidence: Paragraph 199 of NPPF 2021 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset and irrespective of the degree of harm, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). Both designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings contribute much to the character of the parish and will be conserved and enhanced in recognition of their individual and cumulative significance. This is further supported within the requirements of Policy 41S of the Local Plan 2030.*
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8. COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYMENT FACILITIES

- 8.1 Ravensden has a reasonably diverse range of community facilities including the Primary School and its playing field; All Saints Church; and the public house/restaurant (Horse and Jockey) (all at Church End); the Village Hall and grounds (at Church Hill); and the convenience shop at the Crossroads. The proposed country park extension at Graze Hill will add a further facility in the south of the parish.
- 8.2 However, there have been some losses of community facilities such as the former Curry Mansion restaurant at the Crossroads (redeveloped for residential use), and somewhat earlier, the Baptist Chapel on Oldways Road, and the Grade II listed Case is Altered public house on Church Hill, both of which were also converted to residential use.
- 8.3 In the Residents Survey of 2020, respondents were generally less satisfied with the provision of community services and facilities (such as medical facilities and social services) than other aspects of parish life such as the quality, safety, and quietness of the localities where they lived.
- 8.4 There was also some support for the enhancement of existing community facilities, as well as for modest employment related development such as the conversion of surplus farm buildings, which could to some extent be achieved through the use of permitted development rights outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan. Improvements to public transport were considered the most important way of supporting economic activity. The protection and enhancement of local community and employment facilities can also have a sustainability benefit in reducing the need to travel further to access available facilities.
- 8.5 The following objective received significant support from residents who responded to the 2021 Consultation:

COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYMENT FACILITIES

OBJECTIVE 8: To ensure existing community and employment facilities are protected and new facilities are promoted where possible

- 8.6 Policies RNP8 (the protection of existing community facilities) and RNP9 (the provision of new community facilities) respond to the above Objective:

Policy RNP8: Protection of Existing Community Facilities

Development which would involve the direct loss of identified community facilities will not be supported unless the following can be demonstrated:

- The proposal includes equivalent replacement provision on a site within or immediately adjacent to an existing settlement in the Parish. Such facilities should be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and have adequate on site car parking; or

The identified Parish community facilities are:

- Ravensden Primary School and playing field, Church End
- The Village Hall, Church Hill
- All Saints Church, Church End
- Mowsbury Golf Course and facilities, Cleat Hill/Mowsbury

8.7 *Local evidence – This Policy provides locally-specific requirements to amplify the provisions of Bedford Local Plan 2030 Policy 99. Bedford Local Plan 2030 Policy 83 already relates to the protection and retention of local shops and public houses.*

8.8 *Technical evidence: NPPF 2021 para 93(c): Policies should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs.*

Policy RNP9: Provision of New Community Facilities

Proposals which enhance the range of community facilities in the Parish will be encouraged provided that the development

- is located on a site within or immediately adjacent to an existing settlement in the Parish, or involves the conversion of suitable alternative premises;
- does not give rise to unacceptable traffic movements, hours of operation, noise, light pollution or fumes;
- provides adequate on-site parking, including on-site charging points for electric vehicles;
- is accessible by public transport, walking or cycling; and
- is of appropriate design in accordance with Policy RNP5.

8.9 *Local evidence: Responses to the 2020 Consultation survey gave support to the provision of new community and employment facilities, albeit small scale. The conversion of surplus agricultural buildings was put forward as one way of meeting local employment needs. Policy 75 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 sets out how proposals for new employment premises in the countryside will be considered, so a separate policy is not required in the Neighbourhood Plan.*

Permitted development rights would enable the conversion of some premises to employment use without the need for planning permission.

- 8.10 Technical evidence: NPPF 2021 para 93(d): *policies should ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community.*
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9. TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

- 9.1 Major transport issues for the parish, as confirmed by the Residents Survey 2020 and the Green Infrastructure Survey 2020/21, include the volume and speed of traffic, especially through-traffic not originating in the Parish (“rat-running”); heavy goods vehicle movements; the absence of roadside footways along principal routes such as Bedford Road and Oldways Road; road safety concerns; the paucity of public transport; the lack of sustainable connections between different parts of the Parish; and the use of private vehicles for even relatively short journeys.
- 9.2 The following objective received significant support in the 2021 Consultation:

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

OBJECTIVE 9: To encourage safe and sustainable movement across the whole Parish

- 9.3 As a land use plan, the Neighbourhood Plan is unable to address many of these concerns directly, although when planning applications are submitted, the traffic and travel and other effects (such as noise and pollution) can be considered, and measures potentially required to mitigate any unacceptable impacts (or refused if those impacts cannot be resolved satisfactorily). However, the Neighbourhood Plan can set out its proposals for the use of developer contributions from new development which potentially could address some of the concerns which are of most importance to local residents and communities. These are contained in Section 10 relating to Implementation.
- 9.4 Other issues identified during consultation, and which are important to residents of the Parish, but which cannot be addressed directly by the Neighbourhood Plan because they are non-land-use matters, are set out in Section 11 Other Actions and Aspirations.
- 9.5 The most fundamental of any of these issues could be the construction of East-West Rail across the Parish if it is given the go-ahead by Government. Because East-West Rail is defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (“NSIP”), legislation precludes provision for NSIP’s in statutory Neighbourhood Plans, so no policy is included in this chapter. A formal decision on East-West Rail will be made under different legislation and procedures than those which regulate the normal land-use planning system²³.

²³ The Planning Act 2008

- 9.6 If built, the railway will have profound impacts on the Parish, both during construction and subsequent operation. The Parish Council, reflecting the opinions of many local residents, has joined with other north Bedfordshire parishes in opposing the construction of the railway through affected parishes, because it considers there are better alternative routes. In the event that the scheme goes ahead, then the non-statutory part of the Neighbourhood Plan (Section 11 – Other Actions and Aspirations) sets out the measures which the Parish Council would want to be taken into account during the decision-making process.
- 9.7 *Local Evidence Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 Policy 90S(iv) calls for the early provision of the East West Rail scheme (Oxford-Bedford-Cambridge) but the policy is not specific as to its route and contains no measures to be taken into account in respect of mitigation.*
- 9.8 *Technical Evidence NPPF paragraph 104 states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making so that the environmental impacts of transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating adverse effects, and for net environmental gains.*
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10. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Implementation

- 10.1 The decisions and actions of everyone involved in proposals and initiatives which could affect the character of the Parish will determine how successful the Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan will be in realising its Vision and Objectives. The decisions about what to conserve and enhance, what to build and where, ranging from small house extensions, through new housing developments, to the conversion of old buildings to new uses, or relating to new employment or community facilities - and even East West railway (if it is implemented) - will all contribute to the bigger picture. Implementation depends on how landowners, residents, statutory bodies, infrastructure providers, the Parish Council and Bedford Borough Council interpret and support the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies during the Plan period.
- 10.2 In taking part in the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and the Green Infrastructure Survey, residents have identified a range of aspirations and initiatives they wish to see progressed in the Parish. The Green Infrastructure Survey identified seven priority aspirations and an action plan for implementing these and other initiatives. Work on Design Codes has revealed many actions which can be taken to improve design quality and enhance the character of each of the settlements in Ravensden.
- 10.3 A number of the identified initiatives are non-land-use planning matters which cannot be an integral element of the formal part of the Neighbourhood Plan but nevertheless remain important to local people. Section 11 of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out these non-land use aspirations and actions. This section of the Neighbourhood Plan identifies the Parish Council's priorities for using its share of receipts from the Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL").
- 10.4 Under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations, the Parish Council qualifies to receive a proportion of the receipts payable from developments to which the Regulations apply. It can use the funds it receives to address demands that development places on its area. In the absence of a "made" Neighbourhood Plan, that proportion is currently 15% of CIL collected in Ravensden Parish, but this will increase to 25% once the Plan is "made". The development of up to 165 dwellings at Graze Hill/Ravensden Park is liable to the Community Infrastructure Levy, from which the Parish Council will derive significant funds which it would be able to spend on, or contribute to, local infrastructure projects. Smaller scale planning proposals will also be subject to the Community Infrastructure Levy. CIL income can be spent on a potentially wide range of infrastructure projects such as transport, flood defences, health and social facilities,

open spaces and community safety facilities. Funds can be used to increase the capacity of infrastructure or repair failing infrastructure.

- 10.5 Work on the Neighbourhood Plan, the Green Infrastructure Survey and the Design Codes has identified a number of suitable infrastructure projects to which CIL income could be applied. These are transport related projects and which relate to land-use, as set out in the following policy:

Policy RNP10: Developer Contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy

The following projects are identified as land-use related priorities for investment in local community infrastructure:

- Create a continuous footpath/cycleway alongside B660 (on roadside verge or field edge as appropriate) between Ravensden Crossroads and the top of Cleat Hill;
- Create a continuous footpath/cycleway alongside Oldways Road (on roadside verge or field edge as appropriate) between Ravensden Crossroads and the Parish boundary at Ravensden Road, Renhold.

Receipts from the Parish element of the Community Infrastructure Levy will be applied to these projects.

- 10.6 *Local Evidence: Initiatives to improve local highway safety received considerable support in the Residents Survey 2020 and the Green Infrastructure Survey 2020/1. The benefits would include improvements to road safety for walkers, cyclists, the mobility impaired, and horse-riders; and improved, more sustainable connectivity between different parts of the parish. The Design Codes contain several initiatives which could be applied to improve local transport conditions.*
- 10.7 *Technical evidence: NPPF 2021 para 34 refers, inter alia, to the need for Plans to set out how contributions expected from development could go towards local infrastructure (e.g., education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure). Bedford Local Plan 2030 Policy 86S 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 normally be secured through the use of site-specific planning obligations and/or Community Infrastructure payments.*

Monitoring and Review

- 10.8 The Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan has been drawn up in the context of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030. The local planning authority is currently preparing a review of the Local Plan (to

be the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040), scheduled to be adopted at the end of 2023. Although current indications are that the main elements of the existing Local Plan strategy, such as the settlement hierarchy, will remain unchanged, the Parish Council will review the Neighbourhood Plan following the adoption of the Local Plan 2040 to ensure it continues to relate to the Borough-wide Local Plan.

- 10.9 The Neighbourhood Plan has also been drawn up during a period in which the East-West Rail scheme has been evolving. To date, a preferred alignment has yet to be announced. As and when a route alignment is chosen, the scheme will have considerable land-use and environmental repercussions for the Parish. As the scheme evolves, it may raise unforeseen issues relating to local land-use and environment. In those circumstances it would be appropriate for the Parish Council to decide whether to start a formal review of the Neighbourhood Plan.
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11. OTHER ACTIONS AND ASPIRATIONS

11.1 Several issues have been raised during the preparation of the Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan which are not directly related to the use or development land (although they might relate indirectly in some form). As such they cannot be addressed directly by planning policies in the Plan. However, they are important to residents of the Parish. These issues and aspirations together with actions for dealing with them are detailed below. If implemented, they will help to achieve the Vision and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. The issues and aspirations are grouped under three headings:

Green Infrastructure Improvements

11.2 The complete list of Green Infrastructure Improvements identified in the Ravensden Green Infrastructure Plan 2020/21 is set out below²⁴. The main aspirations from the Green Infrastructure Plan are listed first (but not in any priority order) and are shown in bold italics. As noted, two of the improvements are intended to be funded through the use of receipts from the Community Infrastructure Levy (“CIL”) – see Policy RNP10.

- ***Create a new footpath / cycleway alongside B660 (on roadside verge or field edge as appropriate) from Ravensden Crossroads to the top of Cleat Hill – (See Policy RNP 10)***
- ***Improve surface of BOAT61 (Green Lane) for walkers and cyclists, and downgrade status to Public Bridleway to prevent damage and disturbance caused by vehicles***
- ***Protect Mowsbury Hill Fort and surroundings***
- ***Create a new footpath / cycleway alongside Oldways Road (on roadside verge or field edge as appropriate) from Ravensden Crossroads to Church Hill (southern end of Church End)***²⁵
- ***Improve accessibility of FP32 (from opposite Horse and Jockey) north-west to Sunderland Hill, including replacement of stiles with kissing gates and improved surfacing at west end of route***
- ***Create a community orchard, possibly near village hall***
- Improve surface of FP4 and FP28, alongside Ravensden Brook
- Enhance wildlife habitats alongside Ravensden Brook
- Enhance BOAT61 (Green Lane) through the provision of benches, information boards and dog bins
- Improve accessibility in the area of Mowsbury Hill Fort, including improving signage to/ from the local Rights of Way network
- Remove scrub encroachment along FP25 (alongside Equine Centre paddocks) off Oldways Road

²⁴ For more details including an action plan for implementation, see

https://ravensdenplan.info/application/files/4116/2935/8178/Ravensden__GI_Plan_8.7.21_1_final_plan.pdf

²⁵ Extended following Regulation 14 consultation – see Policy RNP10 for details

- Upgrade FP14 (and Renhold FP8) (south of the Plantation) to a surfaced bridleway
- Create accessible green space for community recreation at Charity Field
- Create accessible open space, possibly including allotments, near Ravensden Crossroads (location to be determined)
- Preserve Northfields woodland (northern end of Church End)
- Create public footpath alongside stream from Oldways Road to link with FP28 via a new footbridge (and on to FP32)
- Allow natural regeneration of meadow / woodland between Great Wood and Little Wood
- Protect and enhance Tilwick Woods and Meadows

General aspirations – not site specific (thus not shown on the map in the Green Infrastructure Survey))

- Increase woodland coverage and connectivity in the parish through tree and hedge planting
- Plant wildflowers in grasslands and on road verges Important views
- Preserve views from Cleat Hill northwards to Church End, Thurleigh, Great Wood and the water tower
- Preserve southern views from Cleat Hill towards Bedford and Marston Vale
- Preserve views from Mowsbury Hill towards Ravensden Grange and Church End
- Preserve south-west views from Church / Church End towards Cleat Hill
- Preserve views from Sunderland Hill - south towards Church End and Cardington
- Preserve views from Graze Hill south-west towards Clapham
- Preserve open landscape views from BW42 (between Tilwick and Great Wood)

Initiatives identified in the Ravensden Design Codes 2021

11.3 The Ravensden Design Codes (**Appendix 3**) contain detailed suggestions for the layout and design of new buildings, and the extension of existing ones, as well as proposals for improvements to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of each of the settlements in the Parish. Policy RNP5 sets out Design and Sustainability Principles that all new development should follow.

11.4 The Design Codes also contain several initiatives which are non-land use aspirations, but which remain important to achieving the Vision and Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan. They relate to the following:

- Traffic calming (MV01).
- Promoting active travel (where not directly related to proposed development (MV02).

- Improving and coordinating the style and design of entry signage to each settlement (MV04).

East-West Rail

11.5 In section 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is explained that the formal, statutory part of the Plan cannot, by law, contain policies relating to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects such as East-West Rail. Nevertheless, because this is potentially the biggest issue to confront the Parish during the lifetime of the Plan, the Parish Council considers it vital that measures to mitigate some of the worst impacts of the project in Ravensden should be clearly set out here as follows:

If East West Rail is constructed through Ravensden Parish in the Plan period, maximum possible mitigation should be provided to offset harm to local landscape character, visual and recreational amenity, and nature conservation interests; for access and severance impacts; for harm to residential amenity; and for construction impacts. In particular, the decision-maker should aim to:

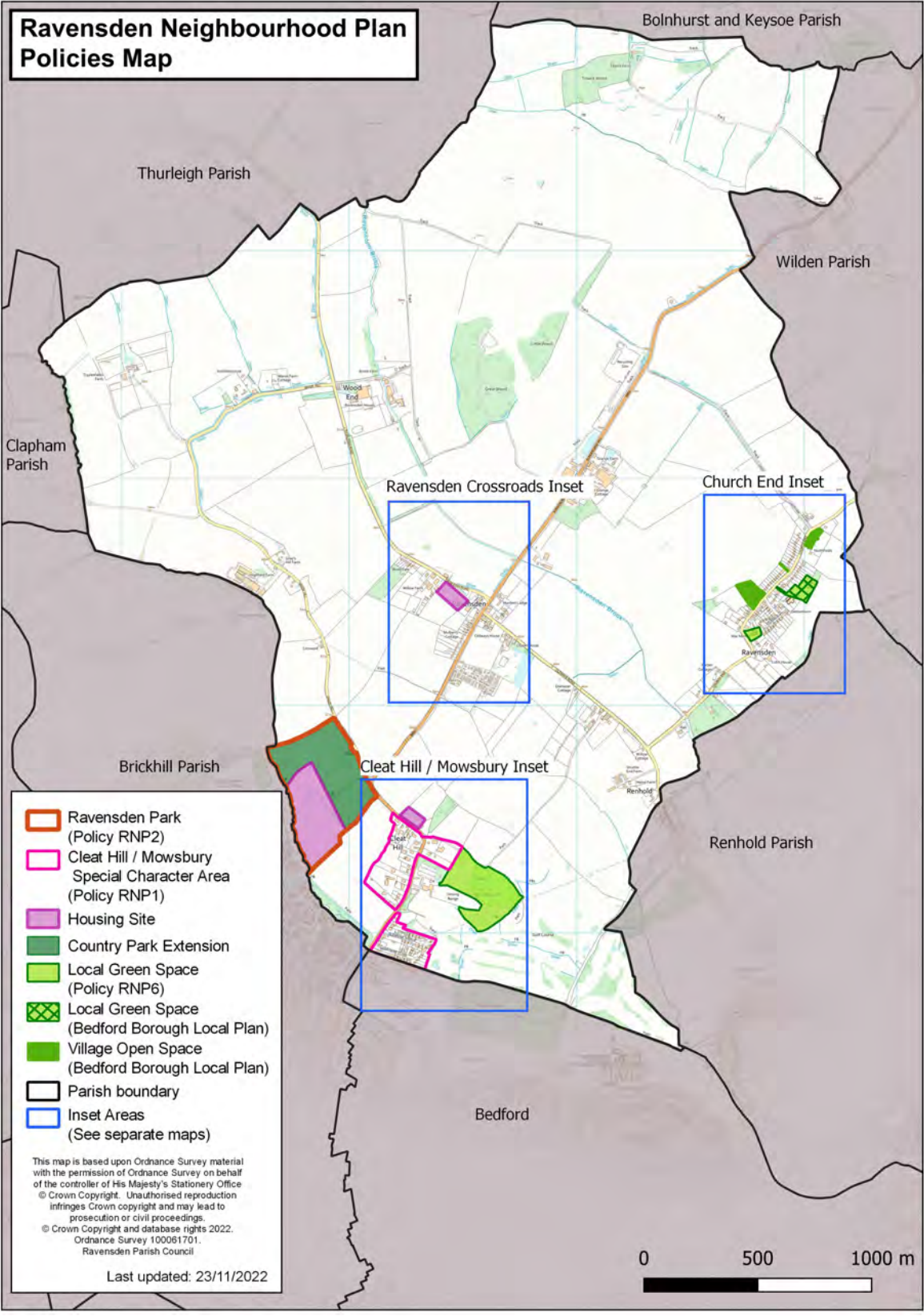
- Achieve biodiversity net gain in the Parish. All existing areas of ecological interest and wildlife corridors should be safeguarded;
- Minimise the loss of woodland, trees, and hedgerows, and secure more replanting than is lost through construction. Native species beneficial to local wildlife should be included;
- Achieve a high degree of visual screening and noise attenuation to protect local visual and acoustic amenity;
- Retain all public highways;
- Protect and, where possible and appropriate, improve existing public rights of way, minimise diversions and provide convenient, safe and suitably designed replacement bridges/underpasses for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders;
- Require a satisfactory Construction and Traffic Management Plan to include: publication of an up to date programme of work and locations relating thereto; hours of working (to exclude evenings, night-time, weekends and Bank Holidays); siting of and access to construction compounds; siting and height of stored materials, contractors' cabins and plant and equipment; HGV and operatives' vehicles routeing and parking; lighting, fencing and all other security measures; temporary road closures and diversions; noise mitigation; dust suppression; wheel washing; temporary and permanent drainage of construction works; location, routeing and method of construction of haul roads; storage and means of disposal of surplus materials and waste; publicity arrangements and a complaints procedure including a single contact point manned 24/7; proposals for plant decommissioning, site restoration and the after-use of all surplus and non-operational land;

- Secure a financial bond from the developer to enable the planning authority, Parish Council and/or its representatives/contractors to complete previously agreed remediation measures in the Plan area if EWRCo or its contractors fail to do so.



**RAVENS DEN
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2030**

**APPENDIX 1
Policies Maps & Insets**



Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map



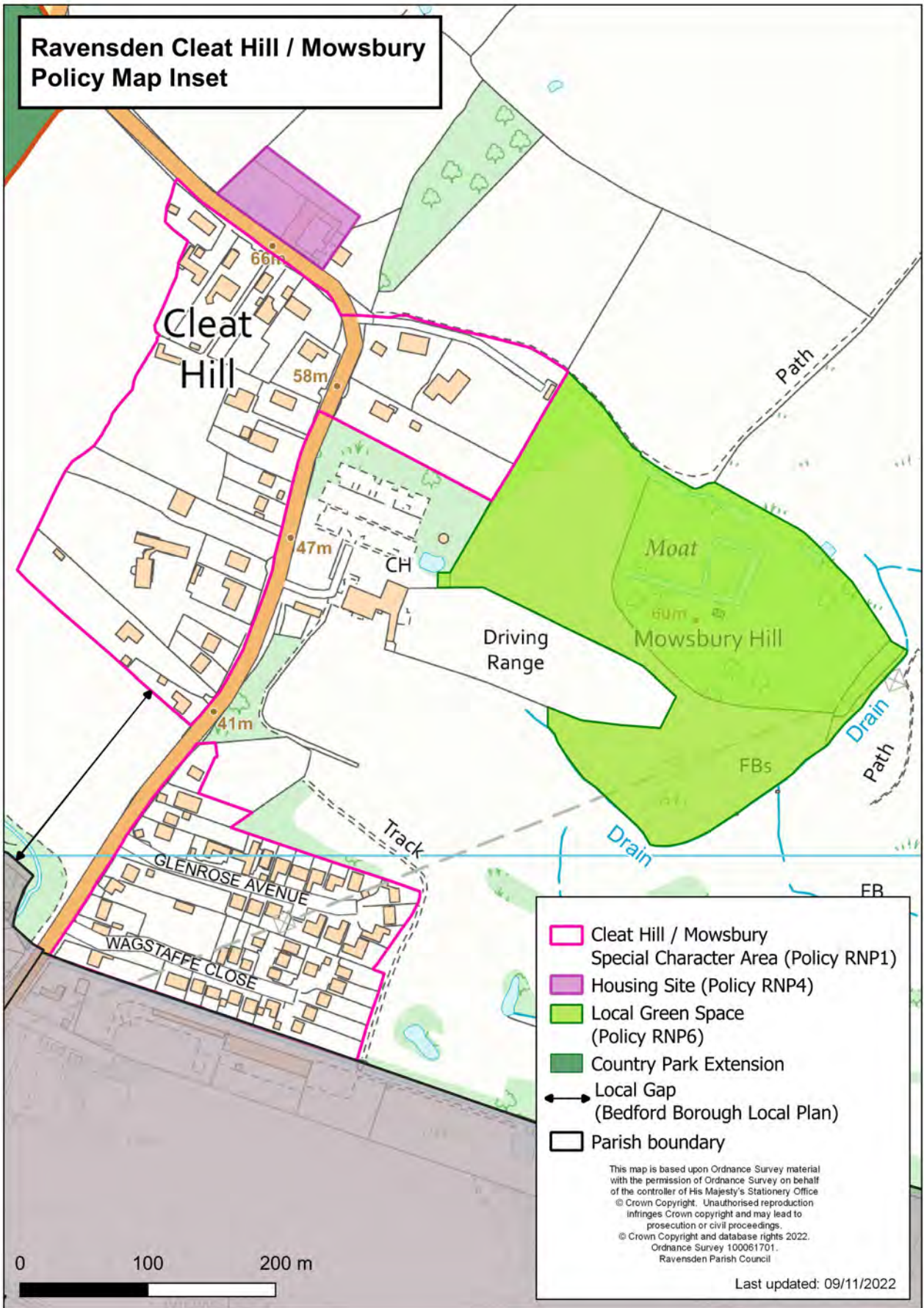
Ravensden Church End Policy Map insert

Ravensden Crossroads Policy Map Inset



Ravensden Crossroads Policy Map Inset

**Ravensden Cleat Hill / Mowsbury
Policy Map Inset**



Ravensden Cleat Hill / Mowsbury Policy Map Inset



APPENDIX 2

List of Neighbourhood Plan Policies and Objectives

Policy	Paragraph /page	Detail	Objectives
RNP1	5.4 / 26	Cleat Hill/Mowsbury Area – guidelines to protect and enhance local character.	2,3,4,5,7
RNP2	5.7 / 27	Ravensden Park - guidelines for any future planning applications for this new housing area and country park extension.	3,4,9
RNP3	5.14 / 29	Land adjoining Willow Farm, Butler Street – a proposal for 10-15 new dwellings, and criteria to be followed.	1,2,3,4,8,9
RNP4	5.16 / 31	Barns next to Cleat Hill Farm – a proposal for sensitive conversion to residential, with detailed requirements to be followed.	1,3,4,5,9
RNP5	6.7 / 33	Design and Sustainability – detailed measures to encourage all planning applications to follow best practice in design and sustainability and respect the new Design Codes.	2,3,4,5,9
RNP6	7.6 / 37	Local Green Space – allocating another 2 sites across the Parish as Local Green Space to give extra protection from development (<i>this came out of the work on Green Infrastructure in 2020/21</i>). The Primary School Playing Field is allocated as Local Green Space on the Policies Map of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.	3,4,5,7
RNP7	7.9 / 37	Heritage Assets – A policy to protect non-listed buildings and their settings and other features of conservation interest.	2,3,4,5
RNP8	8.6 / 40	Protecting Community Facilities – A policy which seeks to protect a number of local community assets which are important to life in the Parish or ensure suitable replacement facilities are built if there is still a need for them.	8
RNP9	8.8 / 40	New Community Facilities – criteria to be applied when new facilities are proposed.	8
RNP10	10.5 / 45	Developer Contributions: The main local infrastructure spending priorities from income the Parish Council receives under the Community Infrastructure Levy. These major on new footpaths and cycleways along Bedford Road and Oldways Road to improve local connectivity-	9

OBJECTIVES

SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING

OBJECTIVE 1: To meet future local housing needs of the parish where appropriate

DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY

OBJECTIVE 2: To protect and enhance the character and identity of existing settlements within the parish and improve sustainable connectivity between them

OBJECTIVE 3: To promote and include good design and sustainability principles in all new development

OBJECTIVE 4: To ensure new development is well integrated into the local environment and landscape setting

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, LOCAL GREENSPACE AND HERITAGE

OBJECTIVE 5: To protect and where possible enhance local landscape, biodiversity and the historic environment

OBJECTIVE 6: To provide a multi-functional Green Infrastructure network

OBJECTIVE 7: To designate and protect important green sites as Local Greenspaces

COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYMENT FACILITIES

OBJECTIVE 8: To ensure existing community and employment facilities are protected and new facilities are promoted where possible

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

OBJECTIVE 9: To encourage safe and sustainable movement across the whole parish



**RAVENS DEN
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2030**

APPENDIX 3

Ravensden Design Codes

(Bound Separately)

Regulation 15

May 2022

AECOM



DESIGN GUIDANCE AND CODES
RAVENS DEN

FINAL REPORT | NOVEMBER 2021



Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by
Nicholas Tobias	Ben Castell
Graduate Urban Designer	Director, UK & I Town Planning Team Lead
Angus McNeil Peel	
Urban Planner	

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
1	17.09.21	Draft	Nicholas Tobias Angus McNeil Peel	Graduate Urban Designer Urban Planner
2	05.11.21	Draft following Steve Arnold, Chair of Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, review	Nicholas Tobias Angus McNeil Peel	Graduate Urban Designer Urban Planner
3	25.11.21	Final Report	John Wilkinson	Neighbourhood Planning Officer, Locality

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Introduction

01



01. INTRODUCTION

Through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to the Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The support is intended to provide design guidance and codes based on the character and local qualities of the area.

01.1 Purpose of this document

This document is an annex to the Neighbourhood Plan. Its purpose is to add depth and illustration to the Plan's policies on design and growth, offering guidance on the community's expectations.

Ravensden is about to undergo a period of change to meet the needs of the community and fulfil climate change objectives. It is important to existing and future residents that the quality of development is high.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; 2021, paragraph 127) states that "Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers." This document supports the Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan.

01.2 Vision

The vision for this document ties in closely with that of the Neighbourhood Plan and is expressed as follows:

By 2030, Ravensden parish will be:

- A sustainable, safe and well-integrated place in which to live, work and spend leisure time, and which is resilient to climate change.
- A rural/semi-rural area containing compact settlements which meet local needs; whose character and integrity are safeguarded through high quality design; and which are set in attractive and accessible countryside which also provides a buffer to large scale expansion of Bedford.
- Part of a thriving, cared-for natural and historic environment.

01.3 Outcomes

This document is designed to meet the aims of the vision set out in section 01.2. As design support to the Neighbourhood Plan, the document is intended to shed light on Ravensden's key characteristics, from the design of the built environment to its relationship with its natural surroundings.

The Design Code will reinforce the character of the different localities establishing clear requirements for any new development in the area. The codes within this report will apply to all localities though where localities are listed within each code, particular consideration of that code by future developers will be needed in those areas.

Following this Design Code, Residents will be able to refer to this document to see how a proposed development conforms to the character of the parish. The character is analysed in detail in this report and the design guidance is tailored to ensure the preservation of this character.

01.4 Process

This document has been produced with the support of the Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan steering group. The following steps have been taken to produce the final report and these include the following:

- 1** Initial meeting with the group and site visit;
- 2** Urban design and local character analysis;
- 3** Preparation of the design principles, guidelines and codes to be used to inform the design of the Parish and future developments;
- 4** Draft report with design guidelines; and
- 5** Submission of a final report.

01.5 Area of study

Ravensden has a rich and unique character formed around multiple settlements known locally as 'Ends'. Like many traditionally agricultural villages, settlements formed in a dispersed pattern during the medieval period. There is no reference to Ravensden in the Domesday Survey but the parish was later held by the barony of Bedford. The parish later became an estate of Newnham Priory, which after the dissolution, was thereafter named Ravensden Manor.

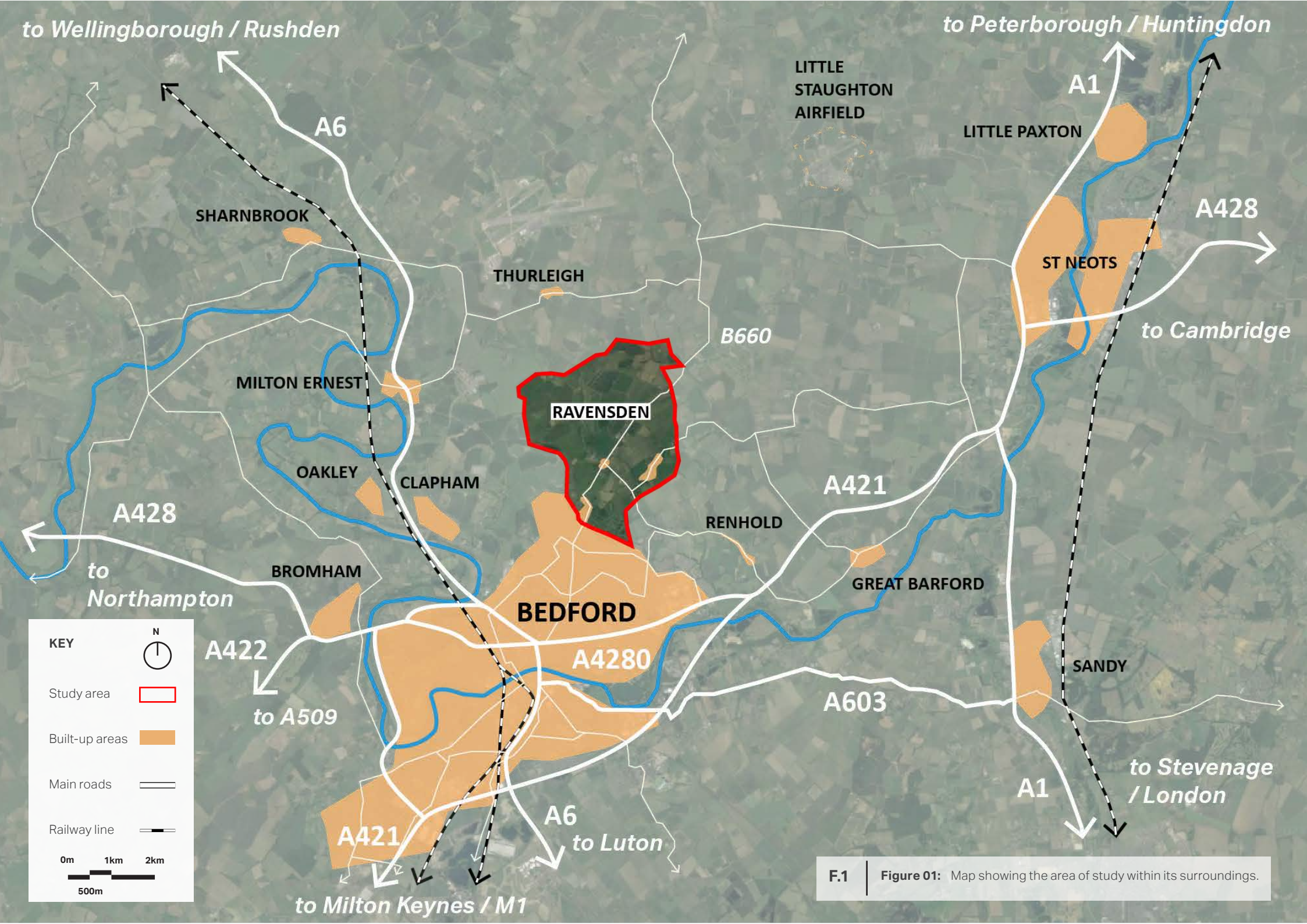
During this time it is likely that various small settlements formed so that farmworkers could live on the private estate. The Church of All Saints dates to the 12th century, suggesting that the agricultural wealth and population of the area had grown significantly in the years after the Norman Conquest. The nave and chancel were later widened in the 13th and 14th centuries, demonstrating a prospering agricultural community.

Today, Ravensden has evolved into an established set of different settlements or ends which share some common characteristics, but also diverge quite widely in terms of their character. All of them share a similar sense of rural tranquility and isolation within the countryside, though Cleat Hill in the south, experiences a closer connection to Bedford's urban fabric.

Ravensden's particular rural character can partly be explained by its undulating hilly landscape, which differs quite starkly from the flatlands of the Great Ouse plain to the east and south. It is likely that this area remained wooded later and that settlements formed around isolated closes. Ravensden falls within the Renhold Clay Farmland character area in the Landscape Character Assessment for the borough. This area is described as having an intact rural character, with broad views into the wider landscape, and a small scale of settlement and intimate rural lane network.

Changes to the area comprise the loss of hedgerows and smaller scale landscape features and smallholding field patterns to mid-20th century agricultural modernisation and mechanisation. Woodlands are more likely to have been left relatively undisturbed, whereas they would have previously been more regularly managed as coppice or for timber in the past.

The 'Ends' have gradually expanded, in some cases, more significantly, attenuating to a more linear form. Otherwise, Ravensden and its environs have retained a remarkable sense of traditional rural separation from the urban, and maintained its historic ends with their own respective characters. Cleat Hill is the only exception and acts as a suburban transition from the urban area of Bedford. Ravensden has avoided too much intrusion from modern infrastructure such as arterial roads, electricity pylons or large agricultural barns, though the new East West rail link is likely to greatly affect the parish.



F.1 | **Figure 01:** Map showing the area of study within its surroundings.

Policy review

02



02. POLICY REVIEW

This section of the report looks at the policy that influences Ravensden from national to local policy. These documents have informed the design codes set out in section 4 and should be considered by developers when designing developments within Ravensden.

Nation-wide policy & design guidance:

2021



National Planning Policy Framework - DLUHC

Development needs to consider national level planning policy guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). In particular, NPPF Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places stresses the creation of high-quality buildings and places as being fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It sets out a number of principles that planning policies and decisions should consider ensuring that new developments are well-designed and focus on quality.

2021



National Model Design Code - DLUHC

This report provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide. This guide should be used as reference for new development.

2020



Building for a Healthy Life- Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the new (2020) name for Building for Life, the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The new name reflects the crucial role that the built environment has in promoting wellbeing. The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed (and completed) developments, but can also provide useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

2007



Manual for Streets - Department for Transport

Development is expected to respond positively to the Manual for Streets, the Government's guidance on how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets. It promotes streets and wider development that avoid car dominated layouts but that do place the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first.

Policy review continued

Borough-wide guidance:

2020



Bedford Borough Local Plan - Bedford Borough Council

The Bedford Borough Local Plan is the strategic plan for Bedford Borough and sets out policy and guidance which tackles key issues facing the borough up until 2030. Some of these include planning for future housing needs, organising resources, enacting climate change mitigation and preserving the natural and historic environment. Policies within this Local Plan directly affect future development in Ravensden and developers should consider this document before proposing new development. A summary of particularly relevant requirements set out in this Local Plan can be found in the Appendix on page 98.

Context
analysis

03



03. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

This section outlines the existing context of Ravensden and its physical features. This analysis has informed the design codes developed in chapter 4.

03.1 Introduction

Ravensden has a mostly linear form based along key roads that weave through the countryside. The historic centre is located at Church End with smaller settlements scattered throughout the parish. Two other settlements with significant portions of the population lie within 1km of Church End. These settlements include development around the crossroads along Bedford Road to the west and a centre along Cleat Hill to the south-west. Other parts of the parish contain clusters of development, though these are smaller in scale and population.

Between these settlements lies mainly arable land and a few wooded areas which connect to the network of fields and hedgerows in the surrounding area. This forms a rural backdrop within which Ravensden lies.

Following our analysis and input from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, localities have been defined with

identifiable characteristics and are made up of these clusters of development and surrounding countryside. They form the basis of our analysis of the built and natural environment in Ravensden and are outlined in section 3.5.

03.2 Landscape and green infrastructure

The area around Ravensden is characterised by a rolling topography in the form of hilly terrain, with ancient woodland and small settlements interspersed throughout. Ravensden itself has a distinctive topography with elevated land to the South at Graze Hill and Mowsbury Hill separated from high ground to the north at Sunderland Hill by the Ravensden Brook, lying in a relatively steep valley. The countryside around the collection of settlements and villages in Ravensden consists of connected arable land and rough grazing pastures which are organised by a network of hedgerows and the occasional woodland.

Notable green infrastructure includes Mowsbury Hill to the south which is both a habitat of principal importance and local nature reserve. It is home to the site of Mowsbury Hillfort, an ancient monument. It borders Mowsbury golf course and

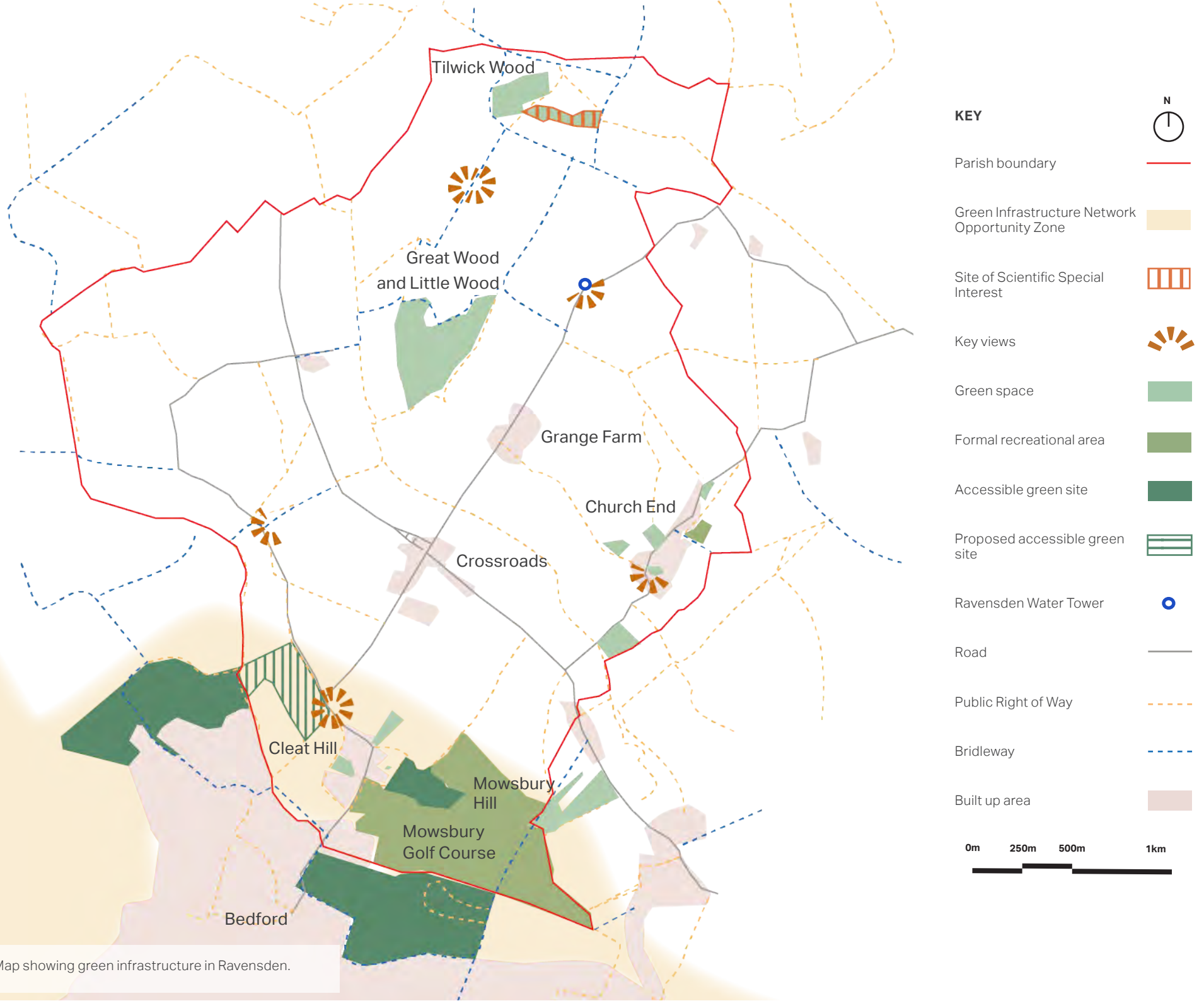
Mowsbury Park, though the latter lies outside the Parish boundary. To the north of the main settlements lie Great Wood and Little Wood along with a Site of Special Scientific Interest towards the northern tip of the parish at Tilwick. These are accessible on foot through a set of public footpaths and bridleways which form a network through the parish.

Though small, the open space around All Saints Church in Church End offers intimate views of the church's architecture and surroundings and is one of the few examples of green spaces within Ravensden's built-up areas. Other examples include Ravensden School Playing Fields in Church End which provides an accessible open space for recreational activities (though restricted during term time) and Charity Field, also in Church End, which has potential to become an accessible green space for community recreation, which is currently used for horse grazing.

Figure 02: Surrounding fields near Cleat Hill.



F.2



03.3 Key views

Several key views have been identified by residents through the Ravensden Green Infrastructure Survey organised by the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity. These are outlined in figure 3 on the previous page and mainly include long distance views which arise from the area's hilly topography.

It is important to preserve and enhance, where possible, these viewpoints and vistas to continue to provide pleasant views along the main entrance points and clear views to heritage assets that act as landmarks in the area. These include the All Saints Church in Church End and the Ravensden Water Tower on Sunderland Hill which was constructed in 1951 and to this day can be seen as far away as the Sand Hills in Sandy, the Greenland Ridge and even the M1.



Figure 04: Examples of key views in Ravensden.

F.4

03.4 Heritage

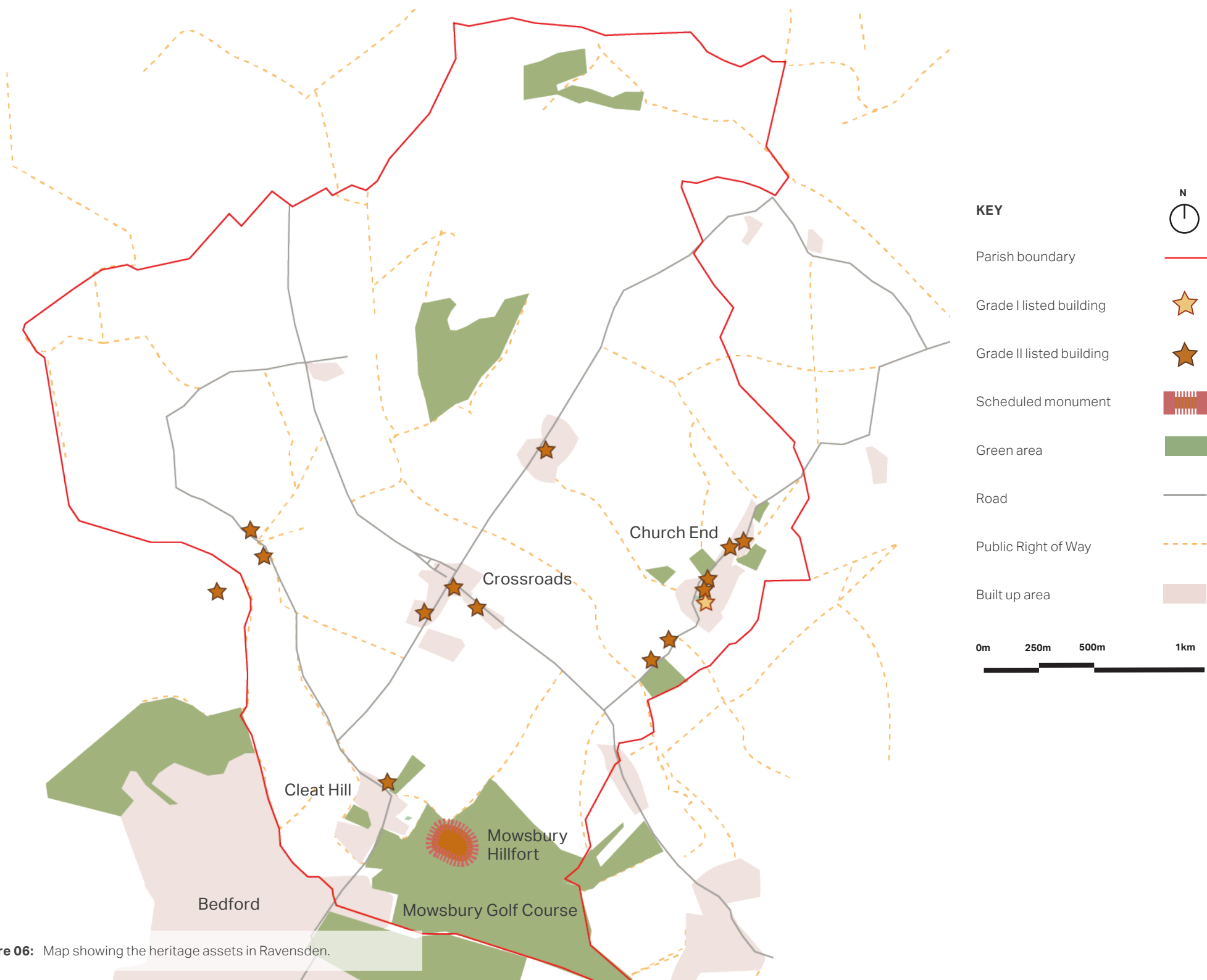
The historic centre of Ravensden is based around the Church of All Saints constructed in the 12th Century with the oldest buildings in the parish dating from the late 16th Century onwards. Next to the church lies the Horse and Jockey public house and across the road is the location of the old church school, now a private dwelling, which opened in 1867. The school moved to the end of Vicarage Close in the 1960s. Most buildings in the parish have been constructed or restored in the 20th Century though the historic buildings in the area remain prominent features often gracing corners of the streets and acting as significant landmarks.

Figure 6 shows the location of a number of listed buildings within Ravensden. There are clusters of listed buildings in Church End and the Crossroads with a few others scattered throughout the parish.









Figure 05: Examples of listed buildings in Ravensden.



F.5



KEY

- Parish boundary 
- Grade I listed building 
- Grade II listed building 
- Scheduled monument 
- Green area 
- Road 
- Public Right of Way 
- Built up area 

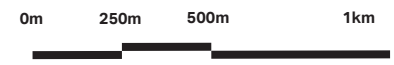


Figure 06: Map showing the heritage assets in Ravensden.

This section categorises different parts of the parish into distinct localities.

03.5 Localities

The steering group has identified eight areas within the parish of Ravensden with clear identities. The following pages provide a summary of the characteristics of these areas to better understand the similarities and differences between different parts of the parish. Design codes in the following chapter will then address issues and opportunities outlined here.

1
— **Locality 1: Cleat Hill / Mowsbury**

2
— **Locality 2: Ravensden Park**

3
— **Locality 3: Graze Hill / Wood End**

4
— **Locality 4: Sunderland Hill**

5
— **Locality 5: Crossroads**

6
— **Locality 6: Oldways Road / Struttle End**

7
— **Locality 7: Church Hill**

8
— **Locality 8: Church End**

Ravensden Localities



1 Locality 1: Cleat Hill / Mowsbury



Residential Area:

- Lower density area with less of a mix of uses.
- Large individual residences and two recent housing developments, Glenrose and Wagstaffe, with 50+ homes.

2 Locality 2: Ravensden Park



Residential Area and Greenspace:

- Approved build of 163 mixed housing, commenced in 2021.
- Consists mainly of lower density family houses with some bungalows, with a more dense central area.

3 Locality 3: Graze Hill / Wood End



Rural Settlement:

- A collection of rural buildings consisting of isolated farms and businesses.
- Formed along a secluded country lane which links two busy routes; the B660 and Thurleigh Road.

4 Locality 4: Sunderland Hill



Rural Settlement:

- A collection of rural buildings mostly comprising rural farms and businesses. This includes the Grade II listed Ravensden Grange and a green waste site.
- Dispersed 19th Century residences along the B660.

5 Locality 5: Crossroads



Village:

- Village at the geographical centre of the parish with two storey buildings in an informal layout.
- A mix of land uses that provides significant amenities.

6 Locality 6: Oldways Road / Struttle End



Rural Settlement:

- A collection of rural buildings and settlement types that includes residential homes and rural businesses.

7 Locality 7: Church Hill



Rural Settlement:

- A collection of rural buildings that consists of residential homes and the village hall.
- Character is formed by a number of historic, listed properties including a former public house.

8 Locality 8: Church End



Village:

- The historic centre of the village with a mix of land uses, largely residential homes.
- The village contains two storey buildings in a linear format with a cul-de-sac on the east side.

1 Locality 1: Cleat Hill / Mowsbury



Residential Area:

- Lower density area with less of a mix of uses.
- Large individual residences and two modern housing developments with 50+ homes.

Opportunities to be used as an inspiration in Design Codes:

- Borders Bedford and Mowsbury Park
- Home to Mowsbury Hill Heritage site and some listed properties
- Home to Mowsbury Golf / Squash Facility
- Outstanding rural views north and over Bedford to the south
- Importance of green frontages. Hedges and trees provide character and enclosure.

Issues to be addressed in Design Codes:

- Sensitive transition between Bedford and the surrounding countryside required
- Signage needs updating and a clear identity established
- Few Instances of surface water flooding
- Fast moving traffic
- Pedestrian safety issues
- Retention of green frontages. The scale of front gardens and how far buildings are set back from the road need to be in keeping with the existing character.

2 Locality 2: Ravensden Park



Residential Area and Greenspace:

- Approved build of 163 mixed housing, commenced in 2021.
- Consists mainly of lower density family houses with some bungalows, with a more dense central area.
- New Country Park to be established on rising ground, creating a transition to the countryside.

Opportunities to be used as an inspiration in Design Codes:

- Rural edge to three boundaries, including historic Graze Hill Lane.
- Western boundary adjacent to the brook provides visual and physical separation from Woodlands and the edge of Bedford.
- Site includes extension of neighbouring Brickhill Country Park.
- Provision of c11.5 ha of green infrastructure, to include sustainable drainage features.
- Construction of new highway infrastructure, including a roundabout on the B660.
- Traffic calming and enhanced connectivity within the parish.

Issues to be addressed in Design Codes:

- Creation of a distinctive identity for the new Ravensden settlement.
- Sensitivity to rural setting required.
- New roadways, lighting and roundabout need to be considered in context of the over-riding rural character.
- Comprehensive design of drainage features to enhance the sense of place and ecology of the brook corridor.
- Landscape design, including surfacing, to reflect local landscape character.
- Design of Country Park as a local destination. Natural parkland character to be created through grouped tree planting, meadowland and active, ecologically led management.
- Road safety issues, including pedestrian and cycle connectivity, and measures to reduce traffic conflict on Graze Hill Lane.

3 Locality 3: Graze Hill / Wood End



Rural Settlement:

- A collection of rural buildings consisting of isolated residential homes and businesses.
- Formed along a secluded country lane which links two busy routes; the B660 and Thurleigh Road.

Opportunities to be used as an inspiration in Design Codes:

- Characterful property renovations and extensions along with several listed properties
- Protected roadsides and ancient hedgerows
- Idyllic rural vistas
- Arable farming with well-designated public rights of way

Issues to be addressed in Design Codes:

- Isolated residences and rural businesses are not easily integrated within the parish
- At the same time, isolation forms a key characteristic of the localities and they should be protected from coalescence
- Road safety a concern
- Parking

4 Locality 4: Sunderland Hill



Rural Settlement:

- A collection of rural buildings mostly consisting of rural farms and businesses.
- Dispersed 19th Century residences along the B660.

Opportunities to be used as an inspiration in Design Codes:

- Important mixed farming area across rolling hillsides
- Significant farms and rural businesses
- Integral woodland and wildlife refuges which are mainly accessible by public rights of way
- Home to Ravensden Grange, a heritage property
- Valued rural vistas across the southern valley which includes Ravensden Brook

Issues to be addressed in Design Codes:

- Fast moving traffic
- Improved connections with the rest of the parish to utilise the area's natural beauty
- Pedestrian safety

5 **Locality 5: Crossroads**



Village:

- Village at the geographical centre of the parish with two and three storey buildings in an informal layout.
- A mix of land uses that provide local amenities.

Opportunities to be used as an inspiration in Design Codes:

- Varied commercial enterprises in farm outbuildings
- Surrounded by pasture land with signs of old brickwork excavations
- Two listed buildings with characterful thatch
- Significant retirement community with 50+ single-storey residential park homes
- New developments include 8 linked residences
- Possible site for 10-15 dwellings to be allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan

Issues to be addressed in Design Codes:

- Parking
- Crossroads is a critical junction in the area for traffic flow
- Congestion is an issue with queues experienced at peak hours
- Safety issues regarding the quantity of traffic flowing through the area
- Air and noise pollution concerns
- Currently no local, open space for residents
- Instances of surface water flooding
- Sensitive design of new development

6 Locality 6: Oldways Road / Struttle End



Rural Settlement:

- A collection of rural buildings and settlement types that includes residential homes and rural businesses.

Opportunities to be used as an inspiration in Design Codes:

- Includes a former chapel and former local police house which are now residential properties
- Includes a listed thatched cottage
- Home to several businesses including the Equestrian Centre, a cattery, building contractors office and yard.
- North side is open providing views of Church End across arable farmland

Issues to be addressed in Design Codes:

- Need to retain dispersed character as spaces between clusters of properties are an important feature
- Busy road at peak hours
- No pedestrian/cycle lanes making the area heavily reliant on private vehicles
- Fast moving traffic
- Parking

7 Locality 7: Church Hill



Rural Settlement:

- A collection of rural buildings that mostly consists of residential homes with some community buildings and local amenities.

Opportunities to be used as an inspiration in Design Codes:

- Listed ancient cottages set behind deep front gardens, including a repurposed historic public-house
- Established touring caravan/ camping site with proposals for enhancement
- Includes village hall as a focal point for Ravensden
- Outstanding rural vistas over Ravensden Brook and the southern valley
- Public rights of way pass through this area and connect to the surrounding landscape

Issues to be addressed in Design Codes:

- Sensitivity of surroundings to new development
- Fast moving traffic
- Pedestrian safety
- Parking issues
- Need to consider sustainable drainage solutions

8 Locality 8: Church End



Village:

- The historic centre of the village with a mix of land uses, greatest share being residential homes.
- The village contains two storey buildings in an informal layout.

Opportunities to be used as an inspiration in Design Codes:

- The historic centre of the village
- The All Saints Church originating in the 12th Century
- A primary school
- Mid-century housing developments along the main street with several secluded well-established properties bordering green spaces and woodland
- Well-established public-house/ restaurant in a prime location
- Community access to School Playing Field (though restricted during term time)
- Many public rights of way and access to ancient bridleway

Issues to be addressed in Design Codes:

- Defined Village Open Spaces (in the Bedford Local Plan 2030) are not publicly accessible (apart from the restricted access to the School Playing Fields mentioned previously)
- Pedestrian safety
- Parking
- Sensitive design of new housing developments within the village context
- The increase of urbanising form which includes loss of trees and garden hedges linked to extensions and parking solutions

03.6 Movement networks

Movement through the parish is predominantly made via private vehicles which utilise a network of key roads that undulate over rolling hills and provide connections between the localities and the wider area. These key roads service smaller streets and cul-de-sacs throughout the parish providing access to residential homes, farms and businesses.

A principal road that crosses the parish from north to south is the B660 and passes through Sunderland Hill, the Crossroads, veers right at the border of Ravensden Park locality and then through Cleat Hill and Mowsbury, ending up in Bedford.

This route experiences a lot of traffic, a large part of it being commuter traffic passing directly through the parish. As a result, areas of the parish experience congestion and road safety issues such as the Crossroads which is known to have large traffic queues at peak hours.

Buses are the main public transportation in Ravensden with the 27, 28 and 28A servicing villages in the parish, all connecting to Bedford Bus Station either as a starting or end point, and in the case of the 27 bus, both.

As mentioned previously, a set of Public Rights of Way and bridleways weave their way through the landscape and generally offer good connections by foot into the surrounding countryside. The road network does not offer pedestrian footpaths between the localities and therefore access by foot between localities is restricted to the public footpaths and bridleways with some areas, such as the Crossroads, not currently well connected to the Public Rights of Way network.



Figure 08: Examples of roads within Ravensden.

F.8

03.7 Street types and features

There is a variety of street typologies in Ravensden that contribute to the local character and provide visual interest on the street scene. Three main types of streets can be derived from the street scene and are analysed in this section.

- Entrances to villages and settlements.

This category includes all streets that act as entrance points. Some examples of these streets include parts of Cleat Hill, Bedford Road, Oldways Road, Thurleigh Road, Church Hill and Church End.

Figure 10, on the next page, illustrates the main street typology that is included in this category. In Ravensden, entrances to built up areas consist of a carriageway with no footpaths on either side. Usually, this entrance is surrounded by arable land, rough grazing pastures or, in the case of Church End; wooded areas. This contributes to the parish's rural character.

- Edge lanes acting as a transition between the countryside and built-up areas.

These are found on the edges of villages and settlements in Ravensden and act as a transition from rural to suburban. They consist of a normal carriageway with dwellings sat behind front gardens on one side with countryside on the other. Green verges, a distinctive feature in Ravensden, and small footpaths can be found along the carriageway in the centre. These streets have a rural character and often contain long views out into the countryside.

Some edge lanes, such as the one illustrated in figure 12, have a large green verge before the front garden of the dwellings on one side. This sets the dwelling further back from the carriageway.

Green verges strongly contribute to the character of the parish yet there exists the issue of illegal on-verge parking which can negatively impact the aesthetic of

the street scene whilst also creating road safety issues for both vehicles and pedestrians. This issue will be addressed in the design codes later in the report.

- Main streets within village and settlement cores.

This category includes streets that go through the main village core areas as well as other secondary residential streets. Some examples of these streets are found on parts of Bedford Road, Cleat Hill, Sunderland Hill and Church End.

Figure 14, on page 35, illustrates a typical village core street which involves dwellings on either side set back behind large front gardens. The carriageway in the middle is bordered by footpaths on either side sometimes accompanied by green verges of varying widths. This street scene offers the most space for pedestrian movement and has a suburban feel.

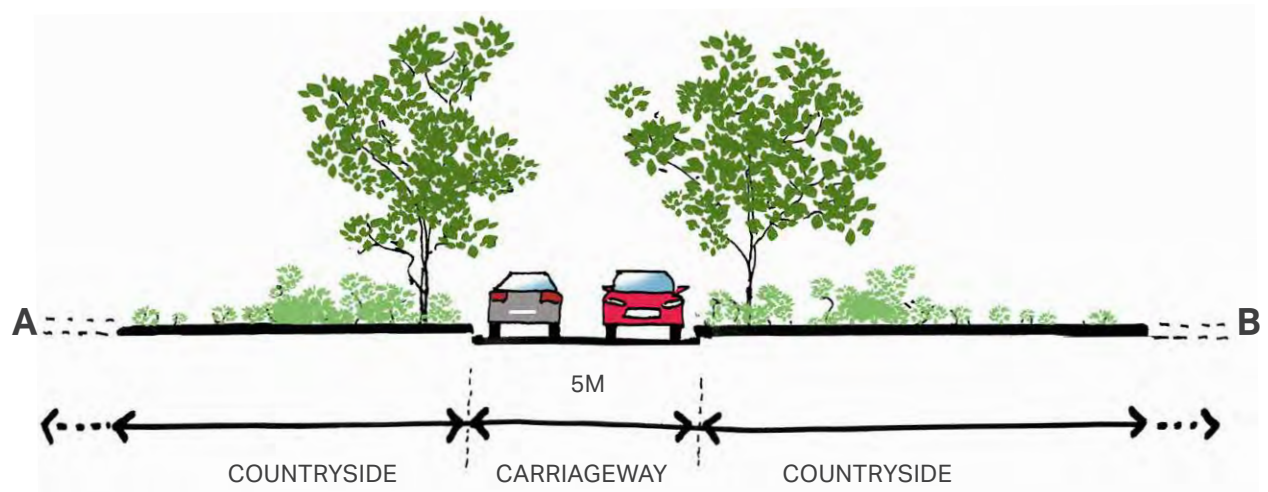
Entrances to settlements and villages



1



F.9 | Figure 09: Location of street section in figure 11.

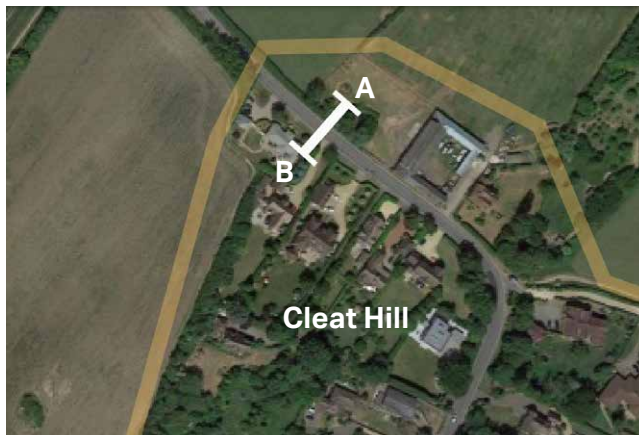


F.10 | Figure 10: Cross section of a typical entrance road into Ravensden.

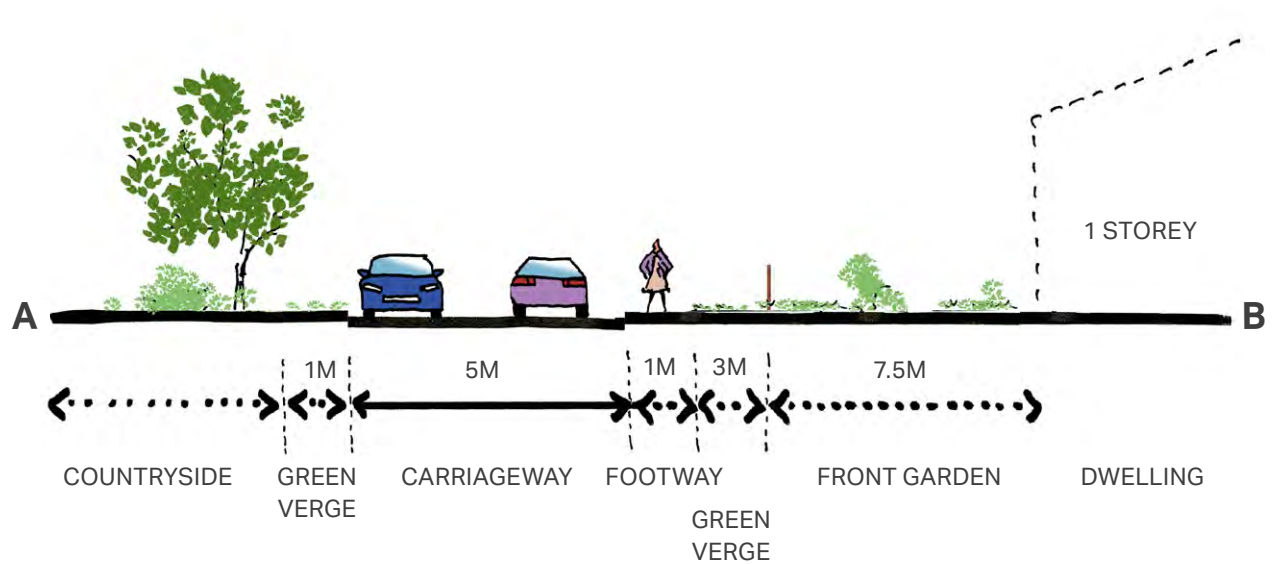
Edge lanes acting as a transition between countryside and built-up areas



2



F.11 | **Figure 11:** Map of street typology locations within built up areas.



F.12 | **Figure 12:** Cross section of an edge lane that acts as a transition between the countryside and the built up areas. Green verges, shown here, form a vital part of Ravensden's character.

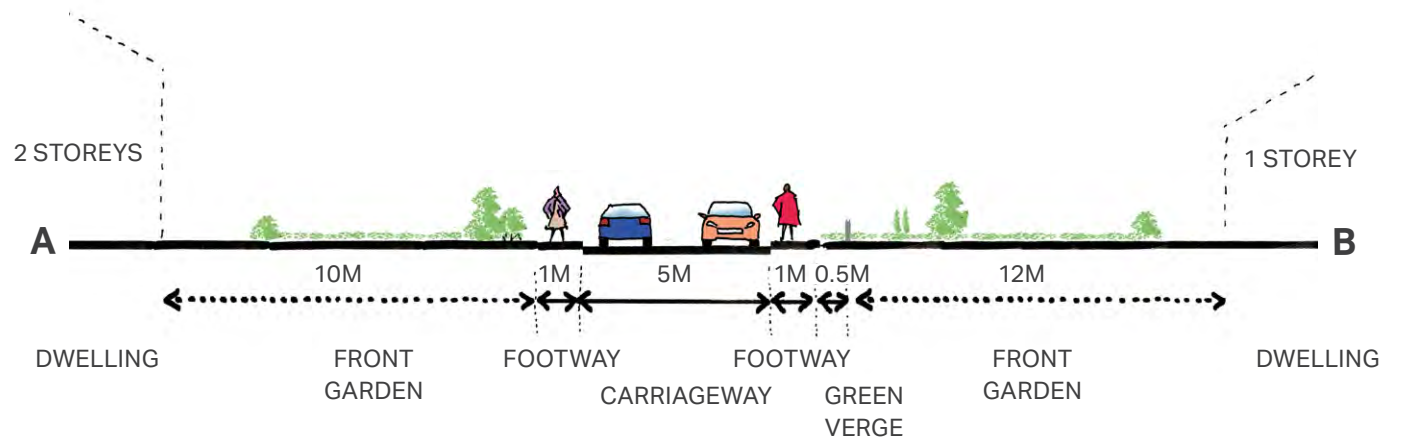
Main streets within village and settlement cores



3



F.13 | **Figure 13:** Location of cross section in figure 15



F.14 | **Figure 14:** Cross section of a typical street with dwellings on the either side of large front gardens, with small verges and footpaths.

03.8 Blocks and layouts

Ravensden has a dispersed format with clusters of development forming along a few key roads. These roads are rural in nature and meander through the region’s rolling hills. Whilst most buildings are formed along these roads, cul-de-sacs are also found in the built environment.

Clustered development

Built up areas within Ravensden tend to be clustered and small in scale. Collections of these clusters form the localities previously outlined with gaps between clusters sometimes significantly large. Figure 15 shows a relatively compact cluster of development comprising some dwellings, rural farms and businesses

Figure 15: Example of a cluster of development on Sunderland Hill including residential dwellings, rural farms and businesses.

Figure 16: Example of area with large gaps between built up areas at Church Hill.

Figure 17: Example of terraces of older cottages lying perpendicular to the street on Oldways Road.

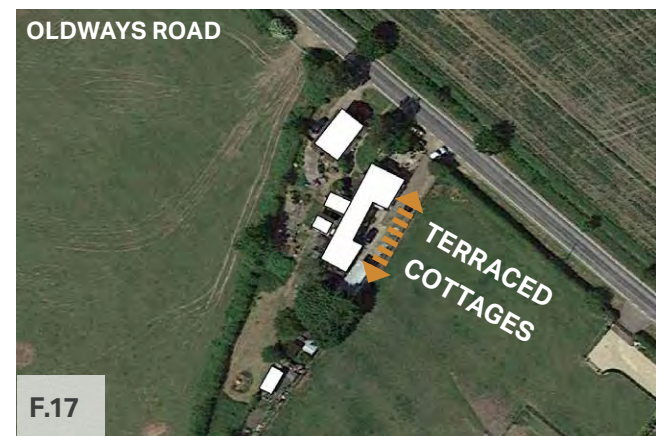
in Sunderland Hill. It is formed along the B660 and either side of the development is countryside. This is common for clusters of development in Ravensden.

Gaps within built-up areas

Another feature found within built-up areas includes significant gaps between buildings which allows the countryside to permeate through the urban form. In figure 16, a large part of the Church Hill locality is displayed and gaps are highlighted to show their significance within this area. They contribute to the rural character and should be considered in future development.

Terraced cottages

Older parts of Ravensden contain terraced cottages which lie perpendicular to the main street. These form a continuous frontage along the street and are an alternative layout future development should consider. An example of terraced cottages is highlighted in figure 17.



03.9 Fronts and backs

The rural setting and character of the settlements within the parish allow for a variation in plot sizes and widths of front and back gardens.

This variation in the front gardens creates interesting visual outcomes along the street scene. In particular, there are buildings that face directly onto the street whilst others sit well back behind large front gardens and green verges.

Owing to the linear format of Ravensden, the backs of many properties tend to face directly onto the surrounding countryside. The backs end in unison giving a defined linear boundary in large parts of the parish. This helps to distinguish the backs of the properties from the surrounding fields.

In some cases such as in Cleat Hill, the larger properties sit at different distances from the road and therefore have backs which do not form a linear boundary. This creates a staggered appearance.

Back gardens tend to be spacious in the parish often taking up the largest proportion of the total plot size.



Figure 18:
Example of frontages in Ravensden with varying distances from the road.

F.18

03.10 Property boundaries

Ravensden has a strong rural character with natural beauty surrounding it. The local examples of property boundary treatments reinforce this character and create a good green buffer with the surrounding countryside. These physical boundary treatments range from flowerbeds and green verges to hedges, hedgerows, bushes, and trees. These are well maintained and improve the aesthetics of the built-up areas. The following are good examples from both within Ravensden and the surrounding area:

Figure 19: Parkland style railings (traditionally painted black) with common laurel as a hedge shrub in support.

Figure 20: Copper beech at Grindle House in Church End.

Figure 21: Low beech hedge on Church Hill.

Figure 22: Box hedge at Charity House. The formality of the evergreen hedge responds well to the historic character of the building.

Figure 23: A mixed hedge based on field maple provides a non-thorny, effective roadside screen.

Figure 24: Field gate on Renhold Road. Wooden gates have a more traditional village character rather than their metal counterparts.



F.19 Park railings with laurel hedge



F.22 Box evergreen hedge



F.20 Copper beech hedge



F.23 Native mixed hedge



F.21 Low Beech hedge



F.24 Wooden field gate

03.11 Corners and Landmarks

The formation of the built-up areas along the main roads offers opportunities for the buildings to stand out along the curves and corners and act as landmarks, whilst open spaces can also help create focal points and attract interest towards the buildings.

In addition, heritage assets can also be identified as landmarks as well as other elements of historic or social significance.

The photos presented on this page show some local examples of corner buildings and landmarks within Ravensden.

Figure 25: All Saints Church - a key landmark in Ravensden.

Figure 26: Example of key corner building in Ravensden.



F.25



F.26

03.12 Car parking solutions

There are three car parking typologies in the village. These are:

- **On-plot side and front parking.** There are a few houses with this typology scattered throughout.

- **On-plot garage parking.** This is the prevailing car parking typology seen in Ravensden with very few of the other typologies seen throughout.

- **On-street parking.** There are very few instances of formal on-street parking areas around Ravensden and are they not clearly defined. On-street parking is a growing issue in parts of the parish such as in Church End.

Figure 27: Example of on-plot front parking.

Figure 28: Example of on-plot garage parking.

Figure 29: Example of informal on-street parking.



03.13 Roofscapes

Rooflines are interrupted by vegetation, the rich vegetation and this creates more enclosure between buildings.

However, along parts of the village core such as along Church End and the Crossroads, where density is higher and there are cases of terraced housing, the roofline becomes more continuous. At the same time, chimneys and subtle variations in the eaves add some inconsistency creating a positive visual outcome.

The prevailing roof type is gabled roof whilst there are also examples of hipped roofs and a few thatched roofs.

Figure 30: Example of a thatched roof in Ravensden.

Figure 31: Example of a gabled roof.



03.14 Fenestration and façades

There is a variety of window types decorating the façades of the buildings; casement windows, awning windows, bow windows and cottage windows and dormer windows. The scale and proportions differ from house to house though the prevailing colour throughout Ravensden is generally white. When buildings are in white, it tends to unify the façade design.

Figure 32: Examples of fenestration within Ravensden.



F.32

03.15 Architectural details and materials

Ravensden is characterised by different building styles mostly dating from the 20th century as well as some modern interventions, in-fills and development schemes within and outside the historic core.

The area is not characterised by one architectural style or single character, but rather a mix of different responses to the street layout, front gardens and landscape, as shown in the previous section.

There is a mix of building materials used for the building façades with the most common amongst the older buildings being timber frame, some with a colour washed cast, weatherboard, clay lump construction with colour washed brick exterior, red brick, colour washed rough cast and brick with colour washed plaster render. Among the more recent additions to Ravensden are a variety of bricks and render.

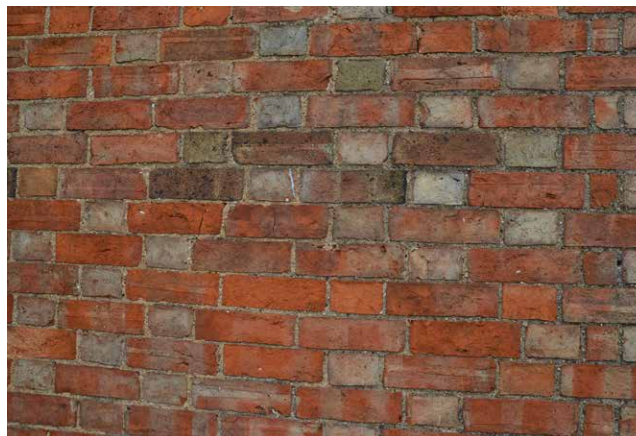
The scale of the buildings tends to be of two storeys with some cases of single-storey buildings as well. There are also a variety of roof materials used, namely, asbestos roof, sometimes corrugated, thatched roof, old clay tiled roof, slate roof and red tiled roof.

All the above architectural details and materials further contribute to the local distinctiveness of the localities.



F.33

Figure 33: Example of a partially weatherboarded façade in Ravensden.



F.34 | **Figure 34:** A collection of architectural features in Ravensden.

Design Guidance and Codes

04



04. DESIGN GUIDANCE AND CODES

This section outlines key design principles to consider when assessing a design proposal

04.1 The importance of good design

As the NPPF (paragraph 124) notes, “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”.

Research, such as for the Government’s Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (now part of the Design Council; see, for example, The Value of Good Design¹) has shown that good design of buildings and places can:

- Improve health and well-being;
- Increase civic pride and cultural activity;
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour; and
- Reduce pollution.

¹ The Value of Good Design <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/the-value-of-good-design.pdf>

Local people understand what good design means in the context of Ravensden. Consultation work carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan shows that they appreciate the qualities of the ends and the rural character of the area.

This document seeks to harness an understanding of how good design can make future development as endearingly popular as the best of what has gone before.

04.2 Placemaking and design codes

These design codes are underpinned by a set of placemaking principles that should influence the design of future development areas' public realms, homes and green spaces, and the interfaces between them.

What designers and planners call 'placemaking' is about creating the physical conditions that residents and users find attractive and safe, with good levels of social interaction and layouts that are easily understood.

The placemaking principles set out in the following pages should be used to assess

the design quality of future development or regeneration proposals. These key principles should be considered in all cases of future development as they reflect positive placemaking and draw on the principles set out in many national urban design best practice documents including the National Design Guide, Building for a Healthy Life and the Urban Design Compendium.

The guidelines developed in this part focus on residential environments. However, new housing development should not be viewed in isolation, but considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context.

The local pattern of lanes and spaces, building traditions, materials and the natural

environment should all help to determine the character and identity of a development.

It is important with any proposal that full account is taken of the local context and that the new design embodies the 'sense of place'.

Reference to context means using what is around, shown in chapter 3, as inspiration and influence and it could be a contemporary solution that is in harmony with the surroundings.

The set of design principles shown on the next pages are specific to Ravensden and are based on the analysis of the parish's character and discussions with members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The list of localities outlined below will be used to identify the geographical relevance of each design code. Each code will have the localities listed where the code should be considered for future development

Localities

- 1** Cleat Hill / Mowsbury

2 Ravensden Park

3 Graze Hill / Wood End

4 Sunderland Hill
- 5** Crossroads

6 Oldways Road

7 Church Hill

8 Church End
- R** Rural Hinterland

04.3 Structure of design codes

These design codes are structured by five key topic areas which include Movement (MV), Layout (LA), Placemaking (PL), Buildings (BU), and Sustainability (SU). This structure generally follows a process of zooming in from the broad scale down to the finer scale, for example from lanes and footpaths down to solar panels and tree planting.

1 MV. Movement

2 LA. Layout

3 PL. Placemaking

4 BU. Buildings

5 SU. Sustainability

1 MV. Movement

Movement looks at how to create safe, attractive and convenient connections around Ravensden and to the wider area utilising sustainable modes of transport where possible.

Walking and cycling should be promoted to support growth, limit the negative impacts of traffic congestion on the roads and create direct and memorable routes.

In addition, public transport should be used to support active travel and provide improved links between places.

Safety must be a key priority when providing connections around Ravensden and traffic calming, legibility and wayfinding.



MV.01. Traffic calming



MV.02. Promoting active travel



MV.03. Providing meaningful connections



MV.04. Legibility and wayfinding



MV.05. Parking

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill /
Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden
Park | 6
— | Oldways
Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill /
Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland
Hill | 8
— | Church End |

MV.01. Traffic calming

Traffic often travels through the parish too quickly to be safe for pedestrians and cyclists. The design of the lanes needs to be rebalanced in their favour. Through traffic that does not need to pass through the parish should also be discouraged. Imaginative solutions to the traffic problems – ones that do not detract from Ravensden’s rural character and also allow agricultural vehicles to pass – need to be explored.

- 20mph speed limits should be considered in all village core areas with edge lanes changing to 30mph to act as a transition to the larger speed limits in the roads between villages and settlements.
- This requires the highway to be redesigned to ensure that drivers are prompted to reduce their speeds.

- Common techniques for slowing traffic that do not require vertical measures such as speed humps include narrowing street widths, changes in texture (such as pavers and cobblestones) and introducing friction.
- An approach seen in the Netherlands is the reallocation of road space to pedestrians and cyclists by removing the centre line where they exist and using painted lines to indicate walking/cycle space. It is a low cost, lightly engineered solution which raises the profile of those users and slows traffic down because there is always the possibility of another vehicle coming towards the driver in the same lane. Vehicles can pull into the pedestrian/cycle zone to let others pass.
- The approach is included in UK government guidance (see Department for Transport’s LTN 1/20 on cycling infrastructure) but not yet widely adopted.

- Another approach involves the use of chicanes which are a series of mid-block pavement extensions that narrow the carriageway and require vehicles to follow a curving ‘S’-shaped path which discourages speeding. These can be painted or raised. A painted example is shown in figure 35 below.
- These can be coupled with additional landscaping features to be better incorporated into Ravensden’s rural setting.

Figure 35: Example a painted chicane as a simple traffic calming measure.



MV.02. Promoting active travel

Streets should be connected with each other and different travel options and routes should be considered. Good practice favours a generally connected street layout that makes it easier to travel by foot, cycle, and public transport.

A more connected pattern creates a 'walkable neighbourhood', a place where routes link meaningful places together. The street network in Ravensden parish is mainly permeable with some examples of cul-de-sac layout found as well.

New development should improve the existing street network by:

- Proposing routes laid out in a permeable pattern, allowing for multiple connections and choice of routes, particularly on foot. Any cul-de-sacs should be relatively short and provide onward pedestrian links.

- Proposing short and walkable distances which are usually defined to be within a 10 minute walk or a five mile trip by bike. If the design proposal calls for a new street or cycle/pedestrian link, it must connect destinations and origins.
- Avoid designing features such as barriers to vehicle movement, gates to new developments, or footpaths between high fences that must be kept at a minimum, and the latter must be avoided.

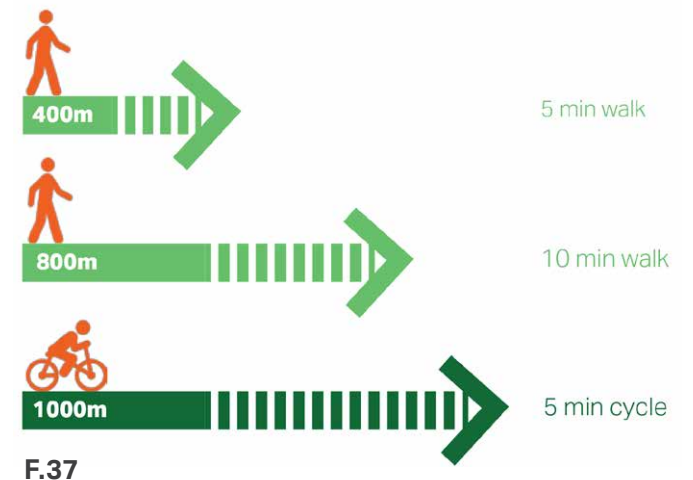
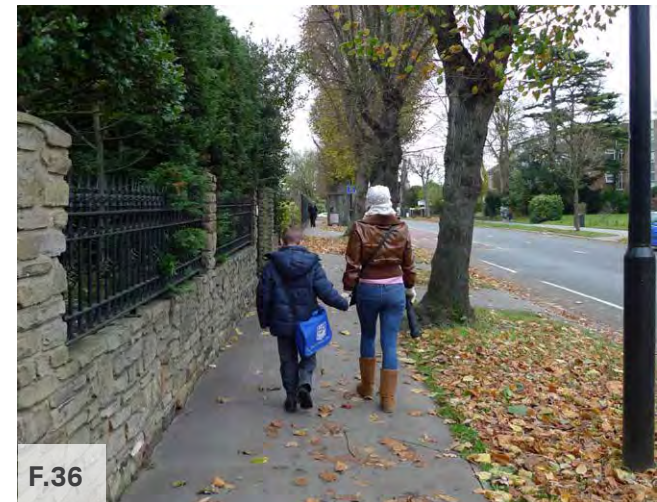


Figure 36: A walkable neighbourhood means being able to walk to school.

Figure 37: Distances on foot and by bicycle and their respective journey times.

- 1 Cleat Hill / Mowsbury
- 5 Crossroads
- 2 Ravensden Park
- 8 Church End

MV.03. Providing meaningful connections

Streets and different parts of the parish should be connected with each other. This is a key feature of successful built and natural environments as well as best practice. Some of the features sought are:

Make connections meaningful and provide a clear origin and destination with routes incorporating built elements as well as natural assets that are important locally;

Encourage walking and cycling by establishing routes on well connected street layouts, lanes and public right of ways;

Make it easier to travel by foot, cycle, and public transport before car travel options;

Promote walking and cycling as an attractive option by making routes short, straightforward and well connected;

Connect new walking routes to existing open spaces and community facilities as

well as the countryside to create a well connected place.

Increase connectivity to high-quality natural areas such as the surrounding countryside, local green spaces as well as to valuable listed and non-listed assets and buildings should be maximised;

Use linkages and connections to emphasize buildings and routes whilst making them memorable;

Encourage the use of permeable layouts instead of cul-de-sac environments in new developments.



Figure 38: Streets in Ravensden with a pavement for pedestrian movement.

F.38

- 1 Cleat Hill / Mowsbury
- 5 Crossroads
- 2 Ravensden Park
- 8 Church End

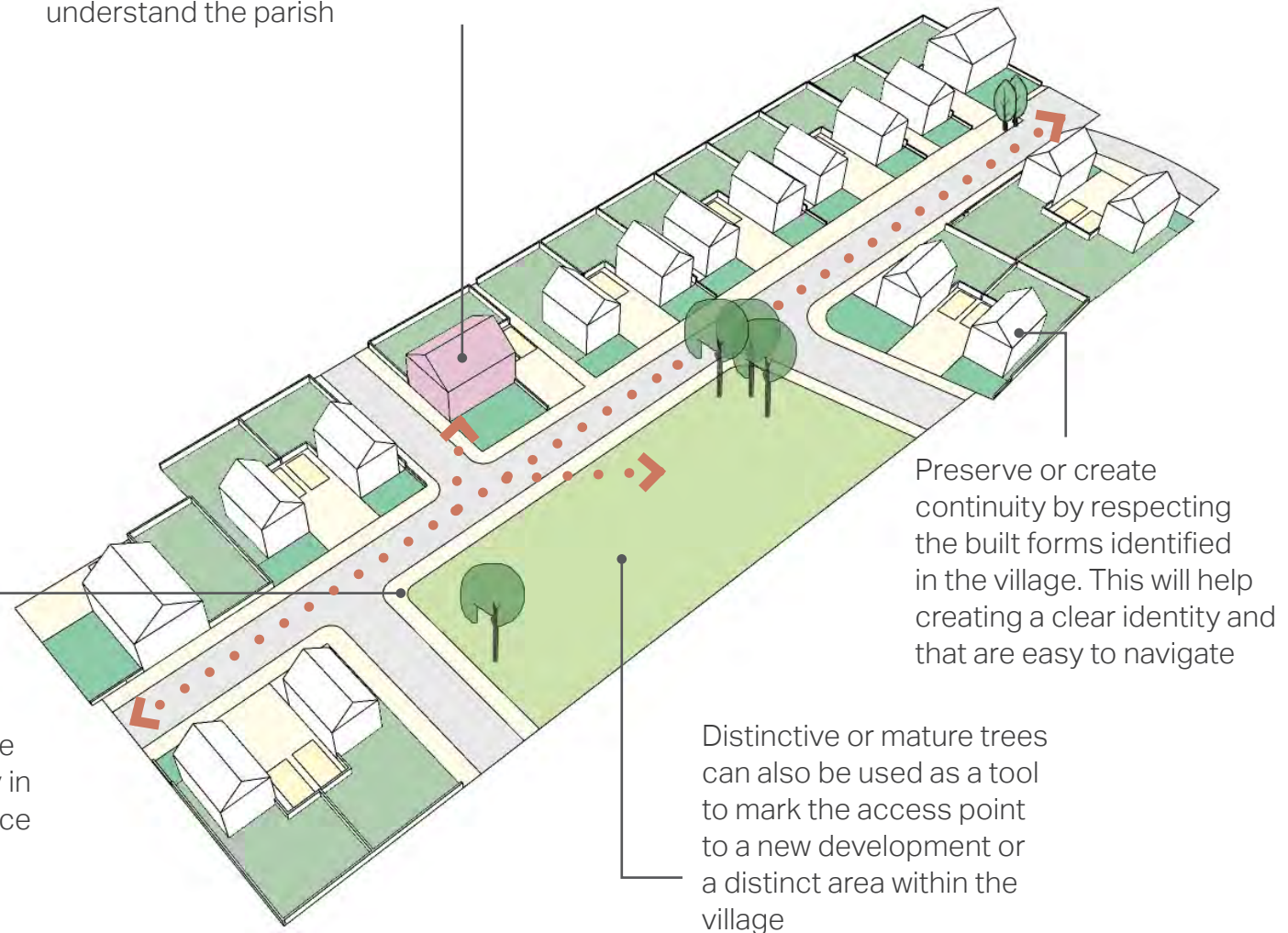
Use local landmarks to make the parish legible. Landmarks can take many forms as long as they are memorable and distinctive. They can include buildings, mature trees, landscaping, open spaces and even small plaques. Enhance and highlight these as memorable features helping people to understand the parish

MV.04. Legibility and wayfinding

Wayfinding aims to make walking and cycling easier by ensuring that routes are direct and memorable. When places are well signposted, they are easier for the public to comprehend.

People feel safer when they can easily memorise places and navigate around them. It is easier to orientate when the routes are direct, particularly for people with dementia and related cognitive and sensory challenges. Thus, some guidelines for new development and transformations of the parish are:

Clear signage should be placed at key nodes and arrival points to aid orientation. Where there are signs at entry points to localities, the signage should show the name of the locality in question rather than simply a general reference to Ravensden. This will help to respect the individual character of the localities.



F.39 | **Figure 39:** Diagram illustrating the location of ideal wayfinding measures.

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill /
Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden
Park | 6
— | Oldways
Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill /
Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland
Hill | 8
— | Church End |

MV.05. Car and cycle parking

According to Bedford Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on parking standards, car parking areas should make a positive contribution to the design and setting of a development and the area in general, taking account of its townscape character.

A good mix of parking typologies should be deployed, depending on, and influenced by; location, topography and market demand.

The main types to be considered are shown on this page and the next one.

- For family homes, cars should be placed at the front or side of the property. For small pockets of housing a front or rear court is acceptable if off road. Multiple garage parking is encouraged.
- Car parking design should be combined with landscaping to minimise the presence of vehicles.

- Parking areas and driveways should be designed to minimise impervious surfaces, for example through the use of permeable paving.
- When placing parking at the front, the area should be designed to minimise visual impact and to blend in with the existing streetscape and materials. The aim is to keep a sense of enclosure and to break the potential of a continuous area of car parking in front of the dwellings by means of walls, hedging, planting, and use of differentiated quality paving materials.
- According to the SPD, there should be a minimum of 0.4 space per dwelling except where over 60% of the total parking provision for a street or block is unallocated.
- Cycle parking should be integrated into all new housing.

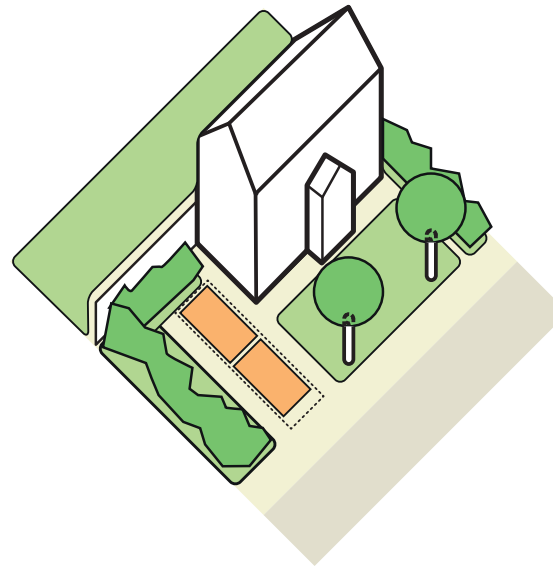


Figure 40: Examples of on-plot front and garage parking in Ravensden.

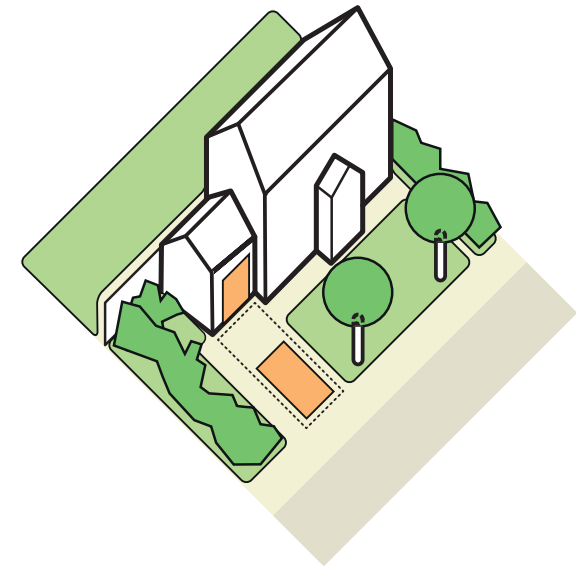
F.40

On plot side or on front parking

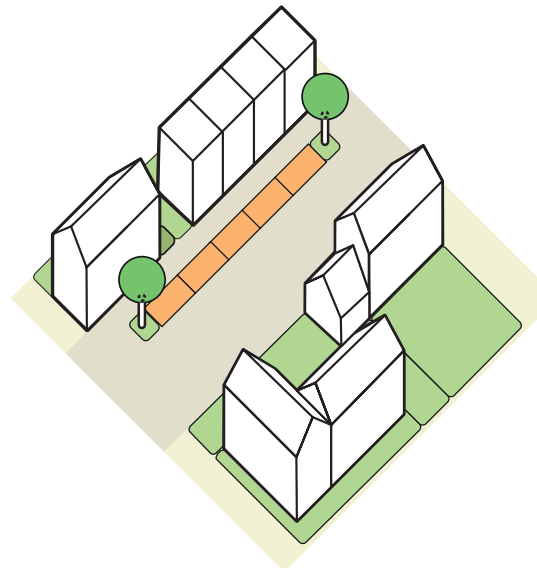
- On-plot parking can be visually attractive when it is combined with high quality and well designed soft landscaping. Front garden depth from the pavement back should be sufficient for a large family car.
- Boundary treatment is the key element to help avoid a car-dominated character. This can be achieved by using elements such as hedges, trees, flower beds, low walls, and high quality paving materials between the private and public space.
- Driveways should be constructed from porous materials to minimise surface water run-off.
- Any rear parking courtyards should be small, overlooked and not be at the expense of rear gardens.
- Electric car charging points should be considered to meet the growing need to switch to sustainable transport modes.



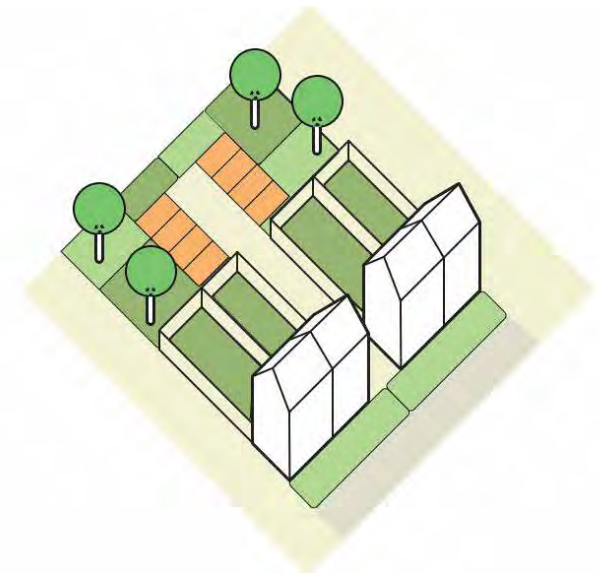
On plot side parking



On plot garage and side parking



On street parking



Rear courtyard parking

Cycle parking

Bedford Borough Council's SPD on parking standards recommends the allocation of both short stay and long stay cycle parking in a mixture of buildings types including residential dwellings.

A straightforward way to encourage cycling is to provide secured cycle parking in all new residential developments that is convenient and easy to take bikes out. In addition, cycle racks should be placed in public spaces and destination hubs such as supermarkets or high streets. From a residential perspective desirable features are:

Houses without garages

- Cycle storage must be provided at a convenient location with easy access to get the bikes in and out.
- The parking should be secure, covered, preferably constructed from the same materials as the main structure.
- As a minimum requirement, doors should be secured by mortice locks.

Where more than two bicycle spaces are required some form of stand should be provided. Cycle parking should be secure, covered and it should be well integrated into the streetscape if it is allocated at the front of the house.

- The use of planting alongside cycle parking can be used to mitigate any visual impact on adjacent spaces or buildings.

Houses with garages

- Where possible cycle parking should be accessed from the front of the building either in a specially constructed enclosure or easily accessible garage.
- The design of any enclosure should integrate well with the surroundings.
- The bike must be removed easily without having to move the vehicle.
- These features also apply for small blocks of apartments.

Figure 42: A cyclist utilising the road network in Ravensden.

Figure 43: Example of cycle storage in the front garden.



F.42



F.43

2 LA. Layout

A place's character can be made up of many different elements which come together to create a unique sense of place. Any proposal will need to respect the existing context as well as create attractive and resilient places that contribute positively to the townscape, public realm and landscape setting of Ravensden.

These design principles describe the elements that contribute to Ravensden's character and new development should pay particular attention to the layout, form, scale, materials and detailing.



LA.01. Scale, form and massing



LA.02. Enclosure



LA.03. Boundary treatments



LA.04. Landscaping and trees



LA.05. Views



LA.06. Open and green spaces

- 1**
—

2
—

3
—

4
—
- Cleat Hill /
Mowsbury

Ravensden
Park

Graze Hill /
Wood End

Sunderland
Hill
- 5**
—

6
—

7
—

8
—
- Crossroads

Oldways
Road

Church Hill

Church End

LA.01. Scale, form and massing

The majority of buildings in Ravensden do not exceed two storeys in height. Therefore, new buildings in Ravensden should be sympathetic in mass, height, and scale to the existing context.

New development in the existing localities should not exceed two storeys. Three storeys may be acceptable in future development in Ravensden Park as long as Ravensden’s character is considered.

Subtle variation in height is encouraged to add visual interest, such as altering eaves and ridge heights. The bulk and pitch of roofs, however, must remain sympathetic to the tree canopy, the local vernacular, and the similar roof types typically experienced in the parish. Another way to achieve visual interest could be by varying frontage widths and plan forms. The application of a uniform building type throughout a development must be avoided.

The massing of new buildings should ensure a sufficient level of privacy and access

to natural light and avoid overshadowing existing buildings. This is particularly important in areas of historic character.



Figure 44:
Examples of different form and massing in Ravensden.

F.44

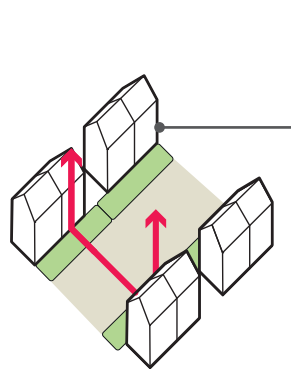
- 1 Cleat Hill / Mowsbury
- 2 Ravensden Park
- 5 Crossroads
- 8 Church End

LA.02. Enclosure

The level of enclosure of a road or square is determined by its relationship with the vertical elements on its edges such as buildings, walls, and trees. Developments can achieve a good sense of enclosure by creating clearly defined spaces that produce a cohesive and attractive built form, for example by determining focal points, appropriate building heights, and continuous edges.

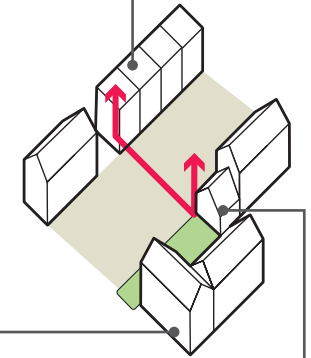
The following principles serve as general guidelines that should be considered when seeking to achieve a satisfactory sense of enclosure:

In case of building set-back, façades should have an appropriate ratio between the width of the street and the building height



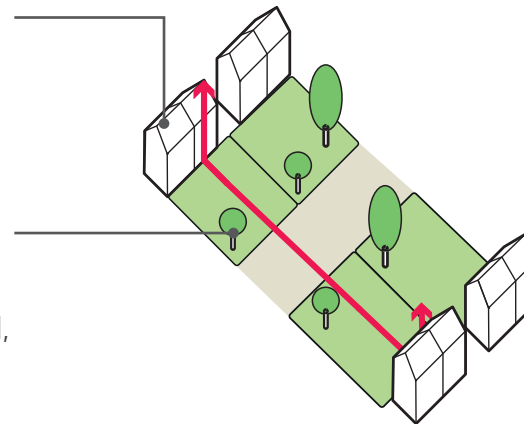
Generally, building façades should front onto streets, and variation to the building line can be introduced to create an informal character

In most new developments, a variety of plot widths and façade depth should be considered during the design process to create an attractive rural character



Buildings should be designed to turn corners and terminate views.

Trees, hedges, and other landscaping features can help create a more enclosed streetscape and provide shading and protection from heat, wind, and rain



Infill development and extensions along a row of established terraced or semi-detached buildings, however, should respect the existing regularity of the building frontage

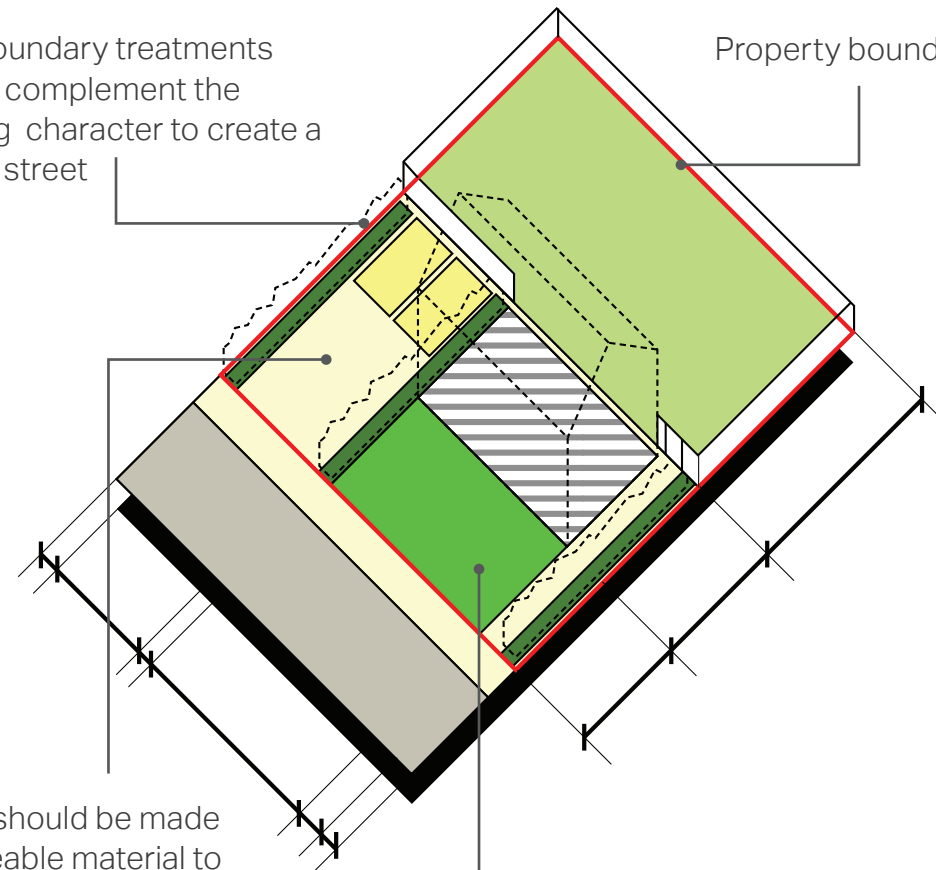
F.45 | **Figure 45:** Illustrative examples of enclosure types.

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill / Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden Park | 6
— | Oldways Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill / Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland Hill | 8
— | Church End |

LA.03. Boundary treatments

- Boundary treatments should be used at the plot edge to provide a sense of continuity and cohesion along the street as well as providing separation between the public and private domains.
- Using a range of high-quality materials such as brick, hedgerows, ironmongery, planting or a combination of these along the boundary edge, can bring cohesion to the street and the village, whilst still providing visual interest.
- Not having a form of boundary should be avoided to preserve the existing character of the parish.
- The boundary type should relate to the scale and character of the property
- Properties should also have a front garden or privacy strip ranging from 1 to 6m in depth in new developments to create the desired amount of enclosure along the street.

New boundary treatments should complement the existing character to create a unified street



The driveway should be made out of a permeable material to enable water filtration

The front garden should utilise natural elements such as grass, planting and hedgerows

F.46

Figure 46: Illustrative diagram of the boundary treatments of a typical plot.

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill / Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden Park | 6
— | Oldways Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill / Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland Hill | 8
— | Church End |

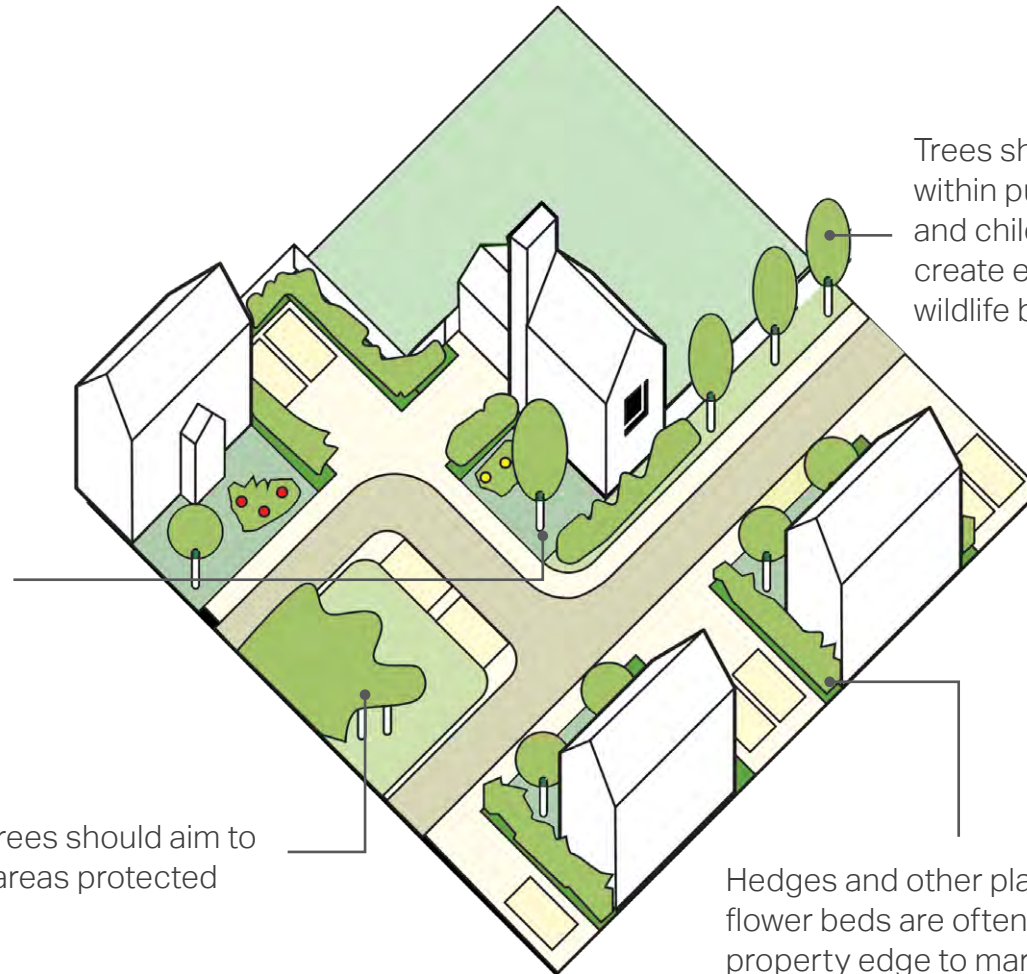
LA.04. Landscaping and trees

Providing street trees and landscaping within the built environment creates an interesting and varied streetscape and brings physical and mental health benefits.

Trees can be used to line important streets or as feature elements that can be used as a reference point for wayfinding. The species of trees used should be native to the area or have a similar habit and wildlife value

Any existing mature trees should aim to be retained and root areas protected

Trees should also be present within public open spaces and children's play areas to create environmental and wildlife benefits



Hedges and other planting such as flower beds are often used at the property edge to mark the private and public domain

F.47

Figure 47: Illustrative diagram of landscaping in a residential area.

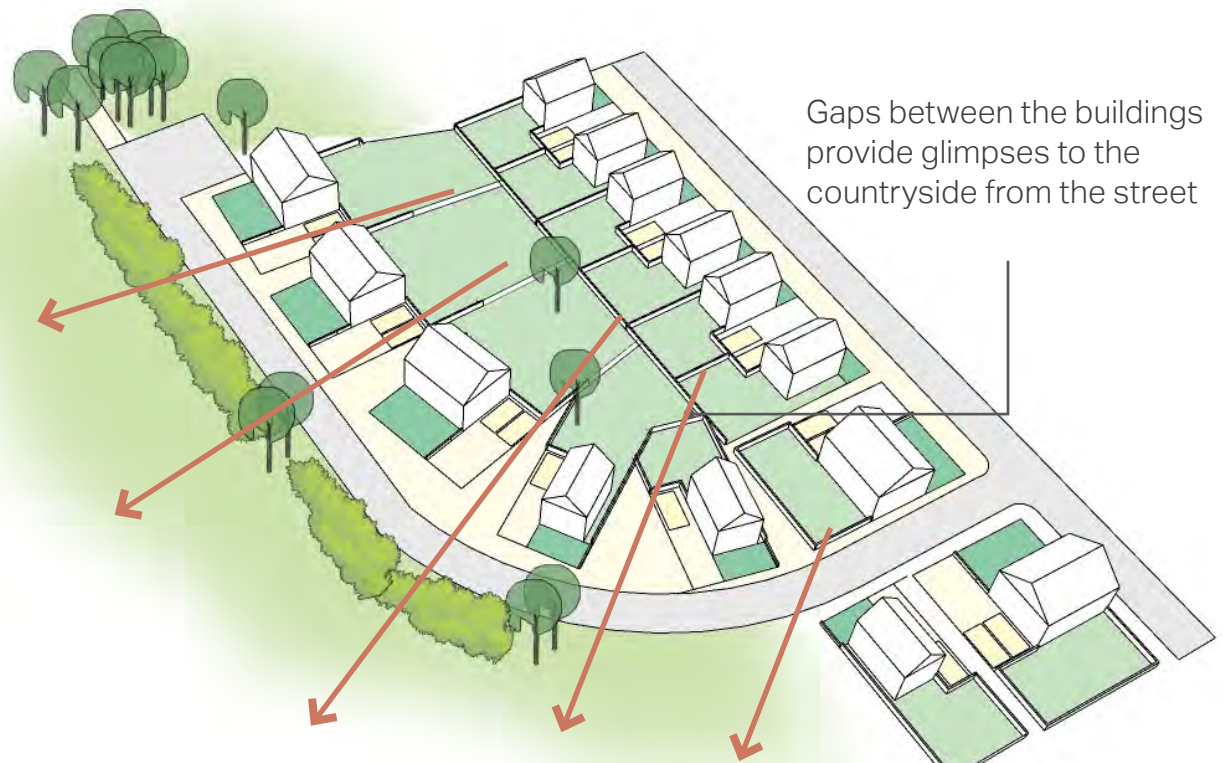
- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill /
Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden
Park | 6
— | Oldways
Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill /
Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland
Hill | 8
— | Church End |

LA.05. Views

Views are important as they provide framed moments within the built environment of either landmarks or the open countryside.

Generous gaps between buildings should be created to provide glimpses and filtered views to the countryside beyond. This will connect people with nature and contribute to the general feel of openness.

Street should be perpendicular to the open countryside in order to create long views from the street. This allows everyone to enjoy the countryside views and enhances legibility by allowing people to orientate themselves in relation to the open space.



F.48

Figure 48: Illustrative diagram of the gaps and views in a residential area.

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill /
Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden
Park | 6
— | Oldways
Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill /
Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland
Hill | 8
— | Church End
Hill |

LA.06. Open and green spaces

Ravensden has several Local Green Spaces and a good connection of footpaths linking the villages and settlements within the parish together.

Bedford Borough Council's Open Space Supplementary Planning Document sets out requirements for existing and new open spaces. Some of the key guidance is as follows:

- Existing open spaces should be protected and future open spaces are encouraged.
- Development should protect and enhance the Neighbourhood Plan's designated Local Green Spaces.
- Development on Local Green Spaces will only be supported in very exceptional circumstances in line with the NPPF. Development should not negatively impact on the community use or special

qualities of a Local Green Space.

- New open spaces should not be designed as an afterthought but should incorporate opportunities for nature, play and recreation.
- New open spaces should retain all woodland, hedgerows and trees within their layout with new planting to supplement existing vegetation.
- Proposals for allotments, community gardens and flexible space for events will be encouraged.



Figure 49:
Examples of open spaces in Ravensden.

F.49

3 PL. Placemaking

Development proposals will need to take a proactive approach to considering the context of Ravensden and providing places that reflect the built environment that has been established in Ravensden.

Aspect and orientation, proportions, the arrangement of public and private spaces need to be considered to ensure Ravensden's sense of place is felt throughout the parish.



PL.01. Consider the context



PL.02. Aspect and orientation



PL.03. Proportions



PL.04. Public and private spaces



PL.05. Active frontages



PL.06. Turning the corner



PL.01. Consider the context

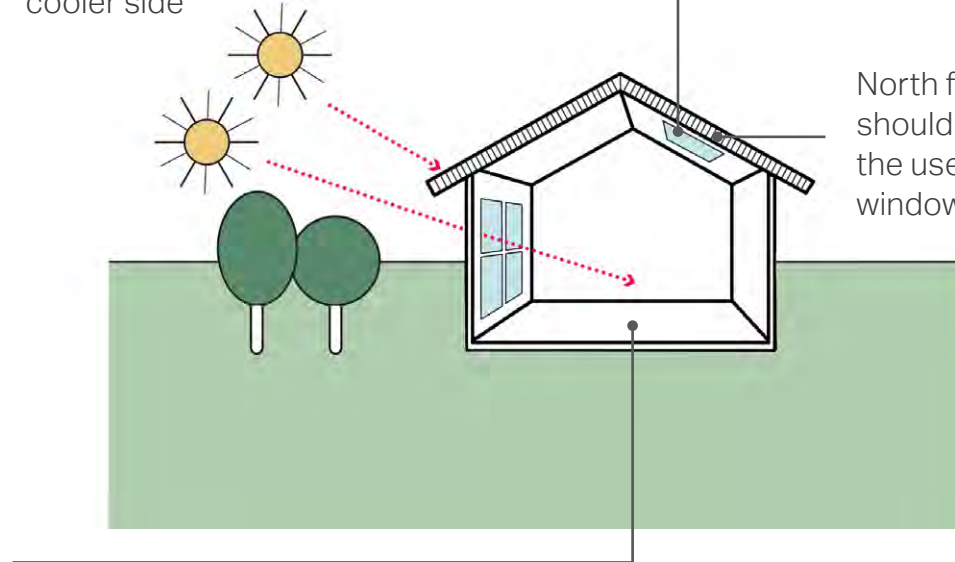
- New development must demonstrate an understanding of the landscape sensitivities and designations of the area and make sure any design proposal is a good fit in the surrounding context and respects the existing character.
- New development must respect the existing street patterns and evaluate any traffic issues in the area in order to better address them. New design should enhance the existing street patterns, improve connectivity and avoid causing traffic pressure on the existing street networks.
- New development should prioritise creating a well-connected green system. New design should propose new links to the surrounding countryside and integrate the existing ones as well as improving connectivity and promoting alternative ways of transportation.
- New development should respect the character of each area within the village in terms of scale, building orientation, enclosure, façade rhythm, architectural details.
- Development which is high density and does not reflect the current grain of the village shall be avoided. Proposals need to consider existing density and the relationship between buildings and plot sizes.
- The use of a repeating type of dwelling along the entirety of the street should be avoided to create variety and interest in the streetscape.
- Boundaries such as walls or hedgerows, whichever is appropriate to the street, should enclose and define each street along the back edge of the pavement, adhering to a clear building line that can allow minor variations for each development group. In areas where properties are set back from the edge of the road with small gardens, consideration should be given to the most appropriate site boundaries.
- Where appropriate, new properties should aim to provide rear and front gardens. Where the provision of a front garden is not possible, small buffers to the public realm such as planting strips are beneficial.
- Interfaces between the existing settlement edges and any village extension must be carefully designed to integrate new and existing communities.
- Edges must be designed to link rather than segregate existing and new neighbourhoods. A belt of hedges that defines the existing settlement edge can be integrated into a the new neighbourhood by providing a shared back hedge.

PL.02. Aspect and Orientation

Buildings should be designed to maximise solar gain, daylight and sun penetration, while avoiding overheating. Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, they should be orientated to incorporate passive solar design principles.

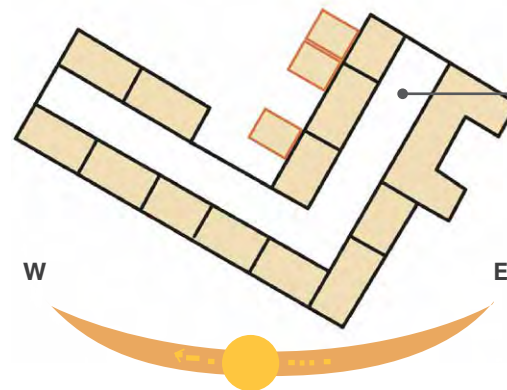
Homes should be designed to avoid overheating through optimisation of glazed areas, natural ventilation strategies including high- and low- level openings, longer roof overhangs, deep window reveals and external louvres/shutters to provide shading in hotter summer months

One of the main glazed elevations should be within 30° due south to benefit from solar heat gain. Any north-facing façades might have a similar proportion of window to wall area to minimise heat loss on this cooler side



- | | | | |
|----------|-----------------------|----------|--------------|
| 1 | Cleat Hill / Mowsbury | 5 | Crossroads |
| 2 | Ravensden Park | 6 | Oldways Road |
| 3 | Graze Hill / Wood End | 7 | Church Hill |
| 4 | Sunderland Hill | 8 | Church End |

North facing single aspect units should be avoided or mitigated with the use of reflective light or roof windows



If houses are not aligned east-west, rear wings could be included so that some of the property benefits from solar passive gain

F.50

Figure 50: Illustrative diagrams showing ideal aspect and orientation for housing.

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill / Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden Park | 6
— | Oldways Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill / Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland Hill | 8
— | Church End |

PL.03. Proportions

The relationships between the building and its elements can provide visual interest and enhance local character. Many buildings in Ravensden demonstrate a visually pleasing approach to proportion and simplicity, with clear façade lines and vertical and horizontal rhythms.

A building's elements should all be proportional and related to the scale of the building itself

The proportion should consider the surrounding context and local character

The front elevation should avoid large areas of blank wall but also avoid unnecessary cluttering and the awkwardly close adjacent windows and doors seen in some modern developments should be avoided



Features such as windows and doors should provide a clear vertical and horizontal rhythm and sense of design cohesion

F.51

Figure 51: Illustration of a typical façade.

Setbacks from the street and front garden landscaping, together with more detailed architectural design should seek to balance privacy for front living rooms with natural surveillance of the streets, and the need for street enclosure

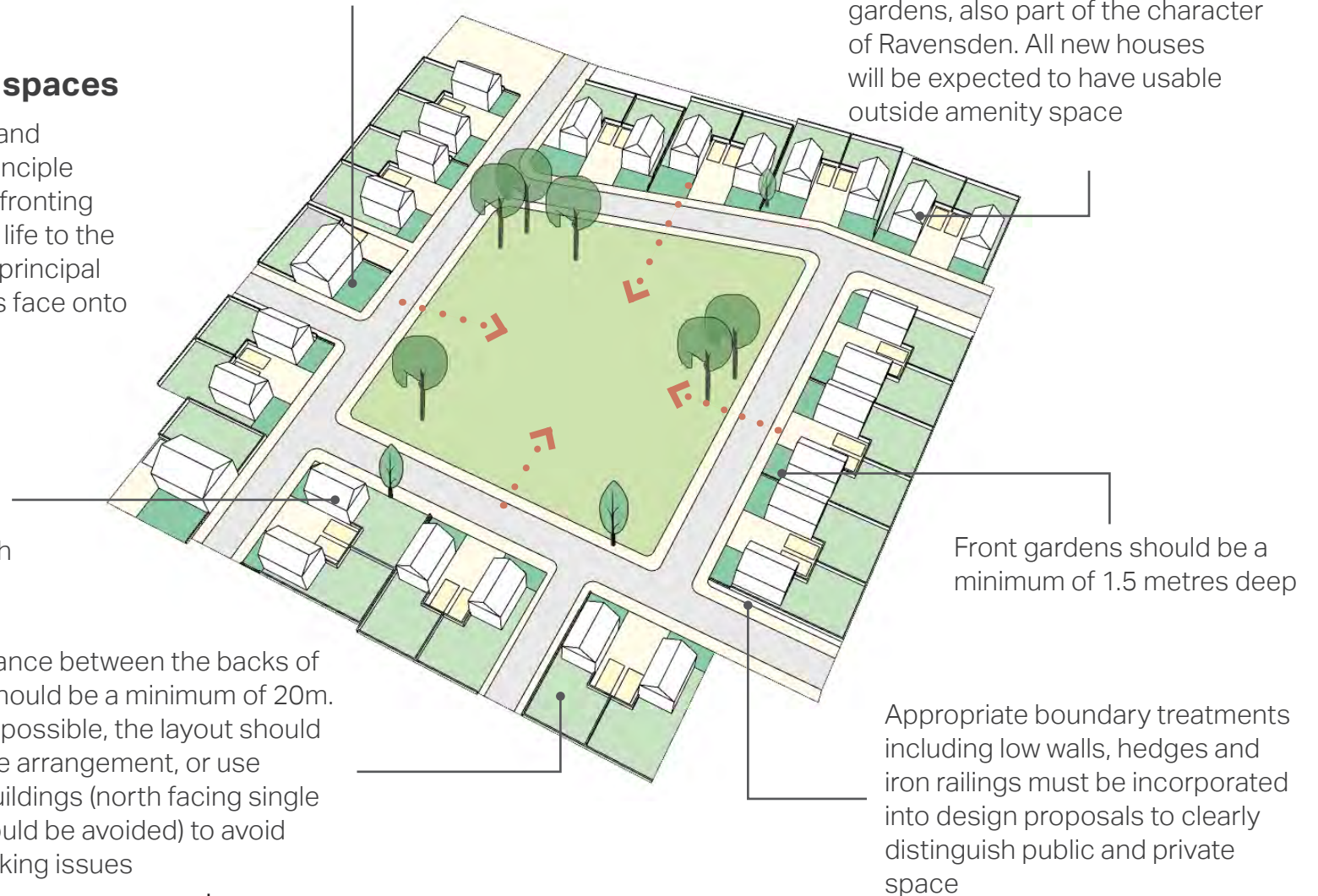
Private open amenity space is important to wellbeing and is, in the form of front and back gardens, also part of the character of Ravensden. All new houses will be expected to have usable outside amenity space

PL.04. Public and private spaces

A clear definition between public and private space is a fundamental principle for good place-making. Buildings fronting the streets and open spaces give life to the public realm, primary access and principal frontages should therefore always face onto public spaces.

In residential areas, the distances between the backs of the properties need to be proportioned in consideration with privacy

The privacy distance between the backs of the properties should be a minimum of 20m. When this is not possible, the layout should be a back to-side arrangement, or use single-aspect buildings (north facing single aspect units should be avoided) to avoid creating overlooking issues



F.52 | **Figure 52:** Illustrative diagram showing public and private spaces.

PL.05. Active frontages

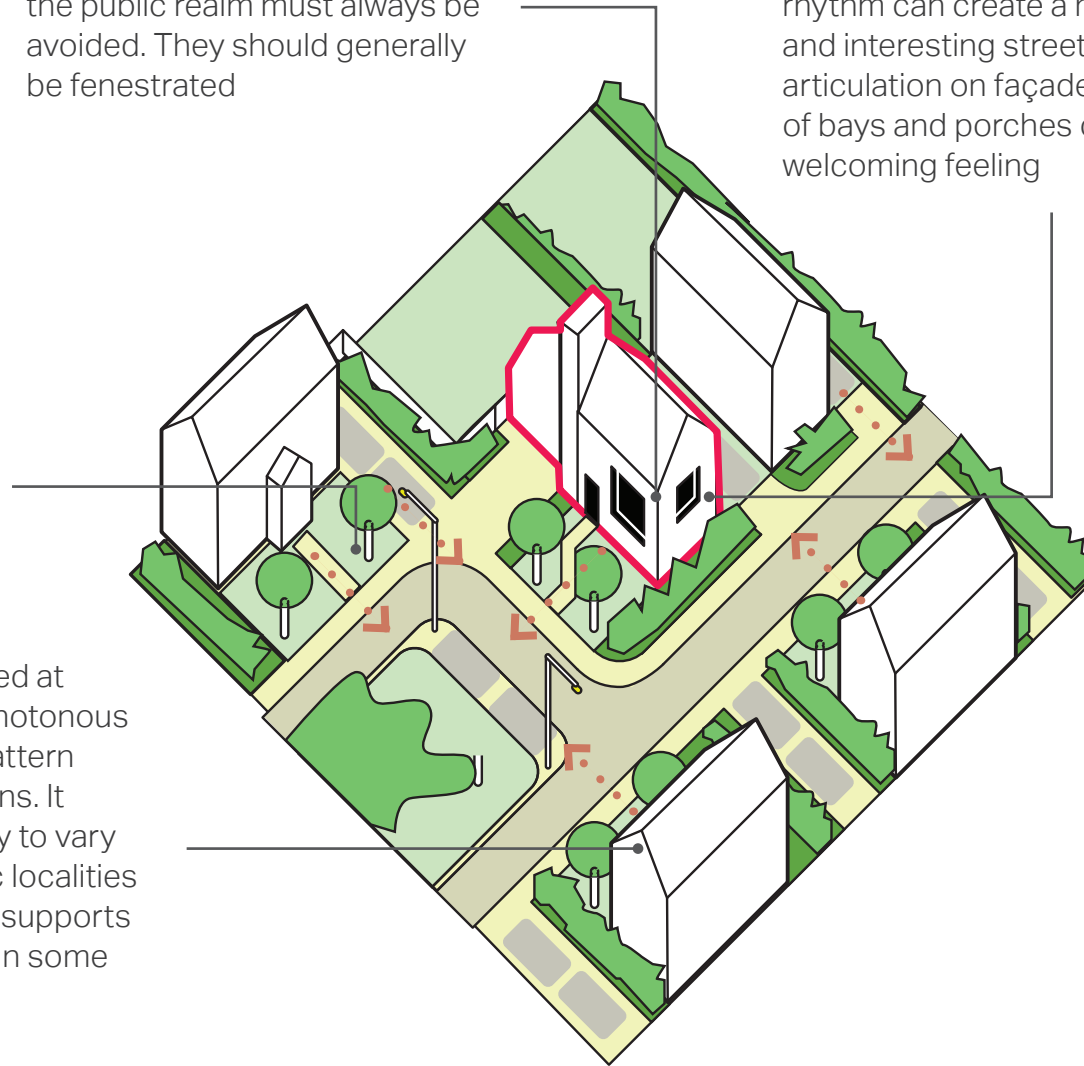
Active frontages bring life and vitality to villages and public gathering spaces.

Introducing regular doors, windows, front gardens and front and side parking, providing it does not dominate, can stimulate activity and social interactions

Buildings should be positioned at varied setbacks to avoid monotonous frontages where there is a pattern of having deeper front gardens. It may not always be necessary to vary setbacks in the more historic localities where the existing built form supports building up to the pavement in some specific cases

Exposed blank façades facing the public realm must always be avoided. They should generally be fenestrated

Narrow frontages with a vertical rhythm can create a more attractive and interesting streetscape, while articulation on façades and use of bays and porches can create a welcoming feeling



F.53

Figure 53: Illustrative example of active frontages in a residential area.

PL.06. Turning the corner

Together with the creation of potential local landmarks, one of the crucial aspects of a successful visual setting and built form is the issue of corners. Because these buildings have at least two public facing façades, they have double the potential to influence the street's appearance. Therefore, the following guidelines apply to corner buildings.

Corner buildings enhance the natural surveillance of the street by providing two primary street facing façades that have openings that look out over the street

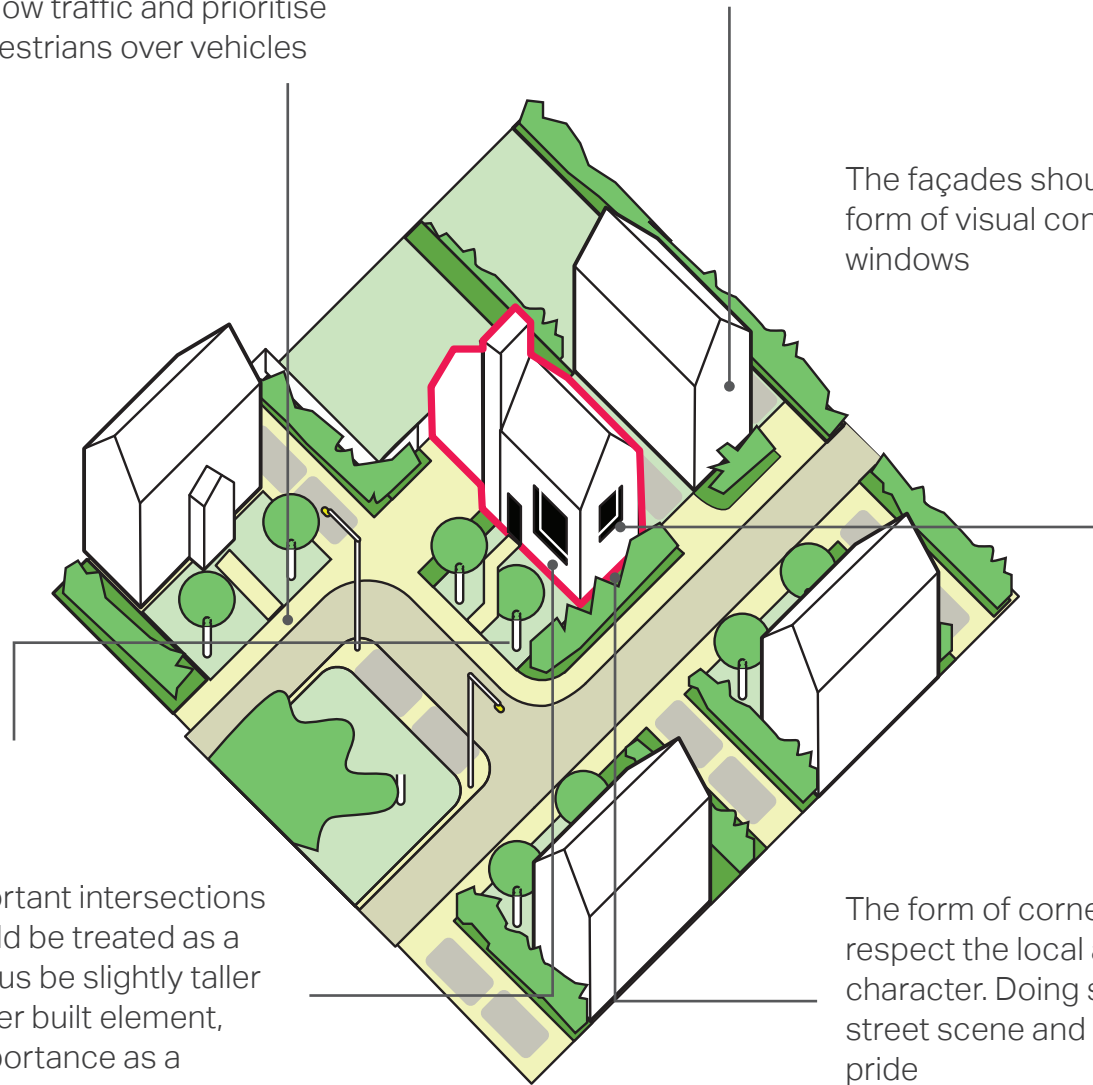
If placed at important intersections the building could be treated as a landmark and thus be slightly taller or display another built element, signalling its importance as a wayfinding cue

Road layouts should be designed to slow traffic and prioritise pedestrians over vehicles

All the façades overlooking the street or public space should be treated as primary façades

The façades should have some form of visual contact in the form of windows

The form of corner buildings should respect the local architectural character. Doing so improves the street scene and generates local pride



F.54

Figure 54: Illustrative diagram of a corner building in a residential area.

4 BU. Buildings

Buildings in Ravensden provide some of the historic, visual aesthetic that defines Ravensden's character. This should be protected ensuring a homogenous character throughout the parish.

New buildings should contribute to the local character considering details such as materials, colour palette, façades and fenestration. This also applies to extensions which should be designed with an appropriate scale.



BU.01. Architectural details



BU.02. Materials and colour palette



BU.03. Rooflines



BU.04. Façades and fenestration



BU.05. Household extensions



BU.06. Servicing

- 1** Cleat Hill / Mowsbury
- 2** Ravensden Park
- 3** Graze Hill / Wood End
- 4** Sunderland Hill
- 5** Crossroads
- 6** Oldways Road
- 7** Church Hill
- 8** Church End Hill

BU.01 Architectural details

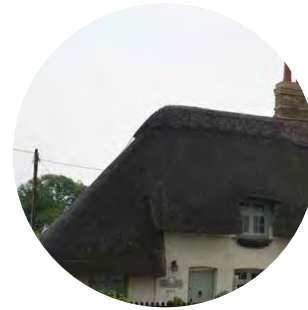
The materials and architectural detailing used throughout Ravensden can be a reference point for new development and contribute to its rural character.

– The materials that will be used in the new developments should be of a high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness.

– Development proposals should demonstrate that the palette of materials has been selected based on an understanding of the surrounding built and natural environment.

– In new developments, locally sourced bricks or bricks that match the buildings in the surrounding area would be the most appropriate. Particular attention should be given to the bonding pattern, size, colour, and texture of bricks.

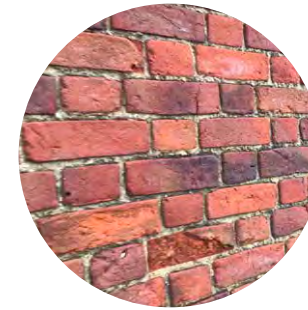
– This section includes examples of architectural details and building materials that contribute to the local vernacular of Ravensden and which could be used to inform future development.



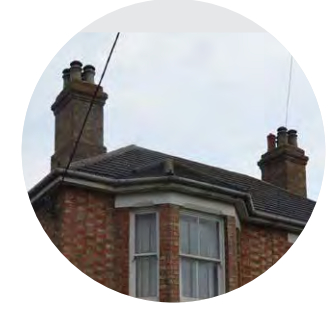
Thatched roof



White weatherboarding



Red brick



Chimney



Green foliage on façade



Gable roof



Clay roof



White render



Slate roof



Gabled dormers



Wood weatherboarding



Sashed windows

F.55

Figure 55: Further street typologies within built up areas.

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|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill /
Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden
Park | 6
— | Oldways
Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill /
Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland
Hill | 8
— | Church End |

BU.02 Materials and colour palette

Ravensden has a distinctive material and colour palette. The main traditional building materials are brick, white render, timber frame, and thatched roofs. Brick is common in later properties, as is rendering and weatherboarding. Where walls are painted, the main colours are white or off white, alongside other calm pastel shades.

- New buildings and extensions should harmonise with nearby buildings by incorporating complementary materials and colours.
- Developments should seek to reflect the variety of Ravensden’s material and colour palette, avoiding monotony and the overuse of a single style.
- It is recommended that rendering is finished in white, cream or pale pastel hues. Bright or gaudy colours are not suitable.

- Surface materials should be permeable and attractive, incorporating the use of pavements, flagstones or gravel - impermeable tarmac pavements and driveways and artificial grass should be avoided wherever possible because this increases the risk of surface water run-off and surface flooding, and also has a negative visual impact.



Figure 56: Red brick in Ravensden.

Figure 57: White rendered façade in Ravensden.

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill /
Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden
Park | 6
— | Oldways
Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill /
Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland
Hill | 8
— | Church End
Hill |

BU.03. Rooflines

- Creating a good variety in the roof line is a significant element of designing attractive places. Ravensden has a variety of roof profiles that can be referenced to influence new designs.
- The scale of the roof should always be in proportion with the dimensions of the building.
- Monotonous building elevations should be avoided, with subtle changes in the roof line being promoted during the design process.
- Within Ravensden the majority of the buildings have a pitched or gable pitched roof, therefore these types of roof are the most appropriate.
- Local traditional roof detailing elements should be considered and implemented where possible.
- Roofs should also be designed with photovoltaic taken into consideration,

either as part of the initial design or for future retrofit. The orientation and available roof space should also be considered.



Figure 58:
Examples of varied rooflines in Ravensden.

F.58

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill /
Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden
Park | 6
— | Oldways
Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill /
Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland
Hill | 8
— | Church End
Hill |

BU.04. Façades and fenestration

Fenestration on public/private spaces increase the natural surveillance and enhance the attractiveness of the place. Considerations for natural surveillance, interaction, and privacy must be carefully balanced. This section shows examples of fenestration in Ravensden and guidelines for design.

- Corner buildings should incorporate windows on both primary and secondary façades.
- Long stretches of blank (windowless) walls must be avoided.
- Windows should be of sufficient size and number for abundant natural light. At the same time, minimising the number of openings will help to retain heat.
- Site layout and building massing should ensure access to sunshine and avoid overshadowing neighbouring buildings. New developments should also maximise opportunities for

long-distance views through careful placement of windows.

- Consistent window styles and shapes should be used across a given façade to avoid visual clutter and dissonance. Varieties in window types, shapes, and details should however be encouraged across the same development.
- The street facing façades of a building should have openings such as doors and windows that are arranged in an orderly way to create a sense of rhythm along the street.
- Bay windows and dormers can be used to articulate the building elevation but must be appropriately sized and well-integrated through their materiality and positioning.



Figure 59:
Examples of fenestration in Ravensden.

F.59

1 —	Cleat Hill / Mowsbury	5 —	Crossroads
2 —	Ravensden Park	6 —	Oldways Road
3 —	Graze Hill / Wood End	7 —	Church Hill
4 —	Sunderland Hill	8 —	Church End

BU.05. Household extensions

There are multiple ways to create extra space within a building using different types of extensions. Extensions must be designed to an appropriate scale and be secondary to the original building. The pitch and form of a building's roof forms part of its character; therefore, extensions should respond by enhancing the existing character. Extensions should consider the materials, architectural features and proportions of the original building and be designed to complement these existing elements.

Many household extensions are covered by permitted development rights, meaning that they do not need planning permission though there are exceptions.

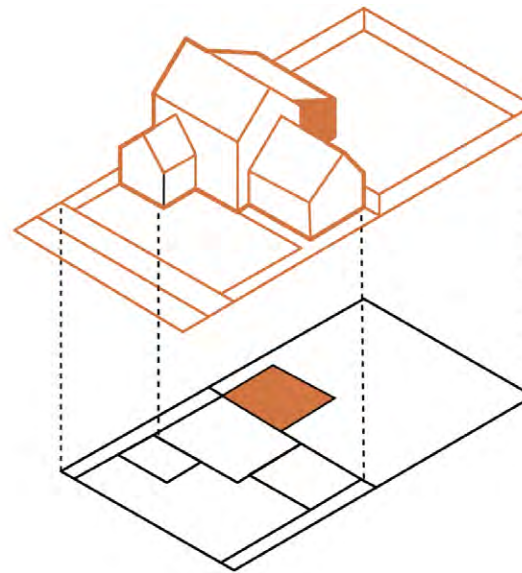
- The character of the existing building, along with its scale, form, materials and details should be taken into consideration when preparing proposals for alterations and/or extensions.
- External extensions should respect or

enhance the visual appearance of the original buildings and the character of the wider street scene.

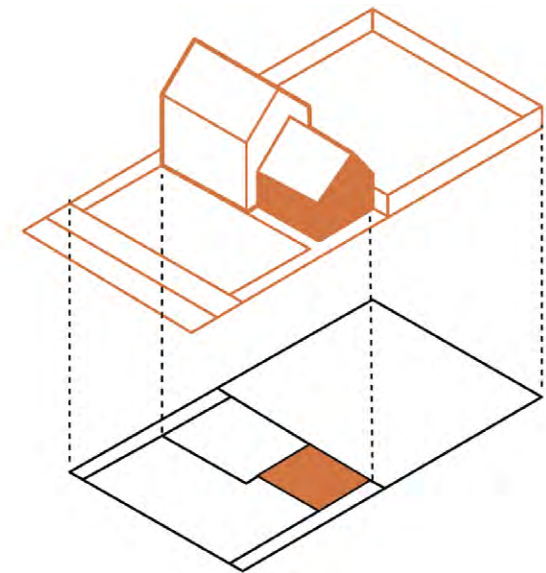
- Extensions should be subordinate in term of scale and form and shall not be visually dominant or taller than the existing building.
- Extensions should be recessed or in line with the existing building façade and shall use lower ridge and eaves levels to ensure that the length and width of the extension are less than the dimensions of the original building.
- Extensions should be designed using materials and details to match the existing building or alternatively, use contrasting materials and details with a contemporary design approach. However, in either case, extensions should create an overall harmonious composition and a strong degree of unity with the original building amenity of neighbouring properties.

- Extensions should safeguard the privacy and daylight amenity of neighbouring properties along with intervening vegetation to aid integration.
- Extensions should retain on-site parking capacity and a viable garden area to meet the needs of future occupiers.
- Extensions of existing buildings should help to reduce carbon emission by complying with high energy efficiency standards and utilising low energy design.
- Side extensions should be set back from the main building and complement the materials and detailing of the original building, particularly along the street elevation. The roof of the extension should harmonise with that of the original building; flat roofs should be avoided. Side windows should also be avoided unless it can be demonstrated that they would not overlook neighbouring properties.

- Single storey rear extensions should be set below any first-floor windows and designed to minimise any effects of neighbouring properties, such as blocking day light. A flat roof is generally acceptable for a single storey rear extension.
- Double storey rear extensions are not common as they usually affect neighbours' access to light and privacy, however, sometimes the size and style of the property allows for a two- storey extension. In these cases, the roof form and pitch should reflect the original building and sit slightly lower than the main ridge of the building.
- In most areas, many extensions are covered by permitted development. This is available at https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200244/project_advice/136/extensions



F.60



F.61

Figure 60: Diagram of double storey rear extension.

Figure 61: Diagram of single storey side extension.

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill /
Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden
Park | 6
— | Oldways
Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill /
Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland
Hill | 8
— | Church End |

BU.06. Servicing

- With modern requirements for waste separation and recycling, the number of household bins that need to be stored has increased. It is important that these are accommodated in ways that allow convenient access, and without increasing street clutter or harming the appearance of new buildings.
- Servicing arrangements should have a specific and attractive enclosure of sufficient size for all the necessary bins, this avoids the blocking of pavements with bins and makes the public realm more attractive.
- The illustrations below show some successful design solutions for accommodating bins within the plot.



Figure 62: Examples of bin storage at the front of dwellings.

F.62

5 **SU. Sustainability**

New developments should encourage and support innovative and proactive approaches to design and opportunities to deliver decentralised energy systems powered by a renewable or low carbon source and associated infrastructure, including community-led initiatives.

New developments should strive for good quality design that meets climatic targets for CO2 emissions and that can be constructed sustainably maximising opportunities for recycling.



SU.01. Sustainable drainage



SU.02. Energy efficiency and energy generation



SU.03. Biodiversity

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------------------|----------|--------------|
| 1 | Cleat Hill / Mowsbury | 5 | Crossroads |
| 2 | Ravensden Park | 6 | Oldways Road |
| 3 | Graze Hill / Wood End | 7 | Church Hill |
| 4 | Sunderland Hill | 8 | Church End |

SU.01. Sustainable drainage

Bedford Borough Council’s Supplementary Planning Document on sustainable drainage outline sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs) as key tools to manage both water quantity and quality within the borough whilst supporting biodiversity.

SuDs cover a range of approaches to managing surface water in a more sustainable way, reducing flood risk and improving water quality as well as providing additional amenity benefits.

Where reuse of water is not possible there are two alternative approaches using SuDS. The first is infiltration which allows water to percolate into the ground and eventually restore groundwater. The second is attenuation and controlled release. This holds back the water and slowly releases it into the sewer network. The overall volume entering the sewer system is the same, however the peak flow is reduced which reduces the risk of the sewers overflowing. Attenuation and controlled release options

are suitable when either infiltration is not possible or where infiltration could be polluting.

The most effective SuDS are site-specific and are integrated at the beginning of the design process. To keep SUDs effective, it is important to provide ongoing management and maintenance.

Permeable Surfaces

SuDS must be designed sensitively to augment the landscape and reduce the risk of surface water run-off. Permeable surfaces, which are also more attractive, should be incorporated wherever possible.

Impermeable tarmac should be avoided, particularly for pavements where it has a detrimental visual impact.

The following images are examples of permeable surfaces that exist within Ravensden and act as a model for future development to consider:

Figure 63: Shingled driveways on Oldways Road that relate well to their rural setting.



F.63



F.64



F.65

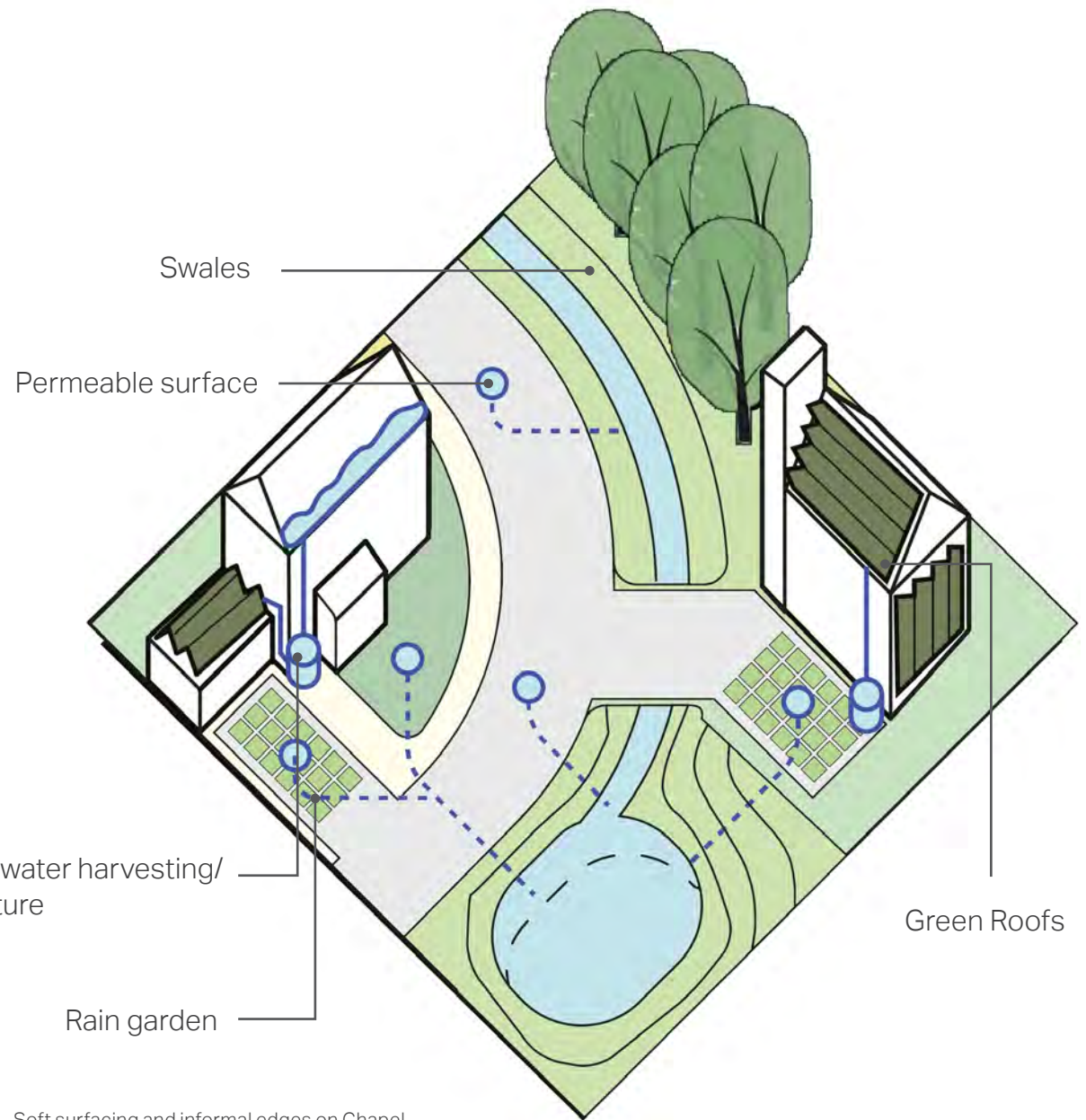


Figure 64: Soft surfacing and informal edges on Chapel Lane, off Oldways Road.

Figure 65: Shingle and grass combine to provide a rural pathway providing access to cottages to the side of Hill Crest.

F.66

Figure 66: Illustrative diagram of sustainable urban drainage systems in a residential neighbourhood.

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill /
Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden
Park | 6
— | Oldways
Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill /
Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland
Hill | 8
— | Church End |

SU.02 Energy efficiency and energy generation

The following section elaborates on energy efficient technologies that could be incorporated in buildings and at broader Parish design scale as principles, alongside maximising insulation.

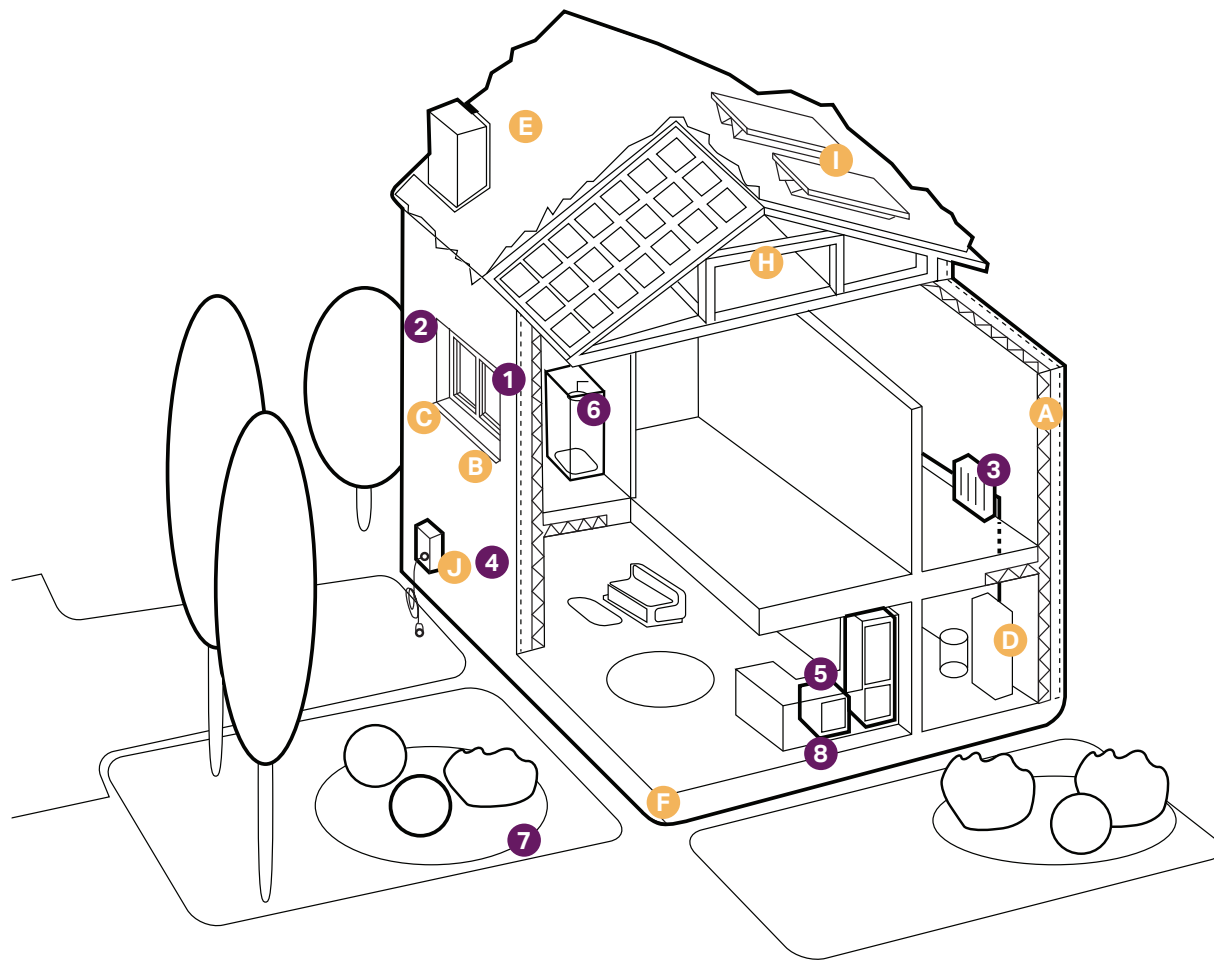
Use of such principles and design tools should be encouraged in order to contribute towards a more sustainable environment

Energy efficient or eco-design combines all around energy efficient appliances and lighting with commercially available renewable energy systems, such as solar electricity and/or solar/ water heating.









Starting from the design stage there are strategies that can be incorporated to include technologies such as passive solar heating, cooling and energy efficient landscaping which are determined by local climate and site conditions.

Figure 67: Examples of energy generation and low carbon features. **F.67**














Existing homes

- 1  **Insulation**
In lofts and walls (cavity and solid)
- 2  **Double or triple glazing with shading** (e.g. tinted window film, blinds, curtains and trees outside)
- 3  **Low-carbon heating** with heat pumps or connections to district heat network
- 4  **Drought proofing** of floors, walls, windows and doors
- 5  **Highly energy-efficient appliances** (e.g. A++ and A+++ rating)
- 6  **Highly waste-efficient devices** with low-flow showers and taps, insulated tanks and hot water thermostats
- 7  **Green space (e.g. gardens and trees)** to help reduce the risks and impacts of flooding and overheating
- 8  **Flood resilience and resistance** with removable air back covers, relocated appliances (e.g. installing washing machines upstairs), treated wooden floors

New build homes

- A  **High levels of airtightness**
- B  **More fresh air** with the mechanical ventilation and heat recovery, and passive cooling
- C  **Triple glazed windows and external shading** especially on south and west faces
- D  **Low-carbon heating** and no new homes on the gas grid by 2030 at the latest
- E  **Water management and cooling** more ambitious water efficiency standards, green roofs and reflective walls
- F  **Flood resilience and resistance** e.g. raised electrical, concrete floors and greening your garden
- H  **Construction and site planning** timber frames, sustainable transport options (such as cycling)
- I  **Solar panel**
- J  **Electric car charging point**

F.68 | **Figure 68:** Diagram showing low-carbon homes in both existing and new build conditions. (Adapted from Commission on Climate Change)

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1
— | Cleat Hill /
Mowsbury | 5
— | Crossroads |
| 2
— | Ravensden
Park | 6
— | Oldways
Road |
| 3
— | Graze Hill /
Wood End | 7
— | Church Hill |
| 4
— | Sunderland
Hill | 8
— | Church End
Hill |

SU.03. Biodiversity

- Ravensden has a rich and varied landscape character. In addition, there are many natural features and assets, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, verges, front and back gardens. They all contribute to provide habitats for biodiversity to flourish.
- Development must protect and enhance woodlands, hedges, trees and road verges, where possible. Natural tree buffers should also be protected when planning for new developments
- Development must avoid abrupt edges to development with little vegetation or landscape on the edge of the settlement and, instead, aim for a comprehensive landscape buffering
- Development should seek to achieve biodiversity net gain and provide new habitats and wildlife corridors
- It is important to ensure existing habitats

are buffered. Widths of buffer zones should be wide enough and based on specific ecological function

- Development should create wildlife corridors in the surrounding countryside by proposing new green links and improving the existing ones. This will enable wildlife to travel to and from foraging areas and their dwelling areas
- Development must protect mature and veteran trees, wide green verges and species-rich hedgerows as they are essential for biodiversity. Hedgerows are a particularly good habitat for fauna and also prevent soil erosion
- Development should show that it has considered opportunities to incorporate nature friendly ideas such as bird boxes, bee bricks, bughouses, swift bricks or ponds

- Sustainable drainage proposals should be seen as an opportunity to improve biodiversity and create wetland habitats (see SU.01)



F.69

Figure 69:
Example of a bird box in the garden.

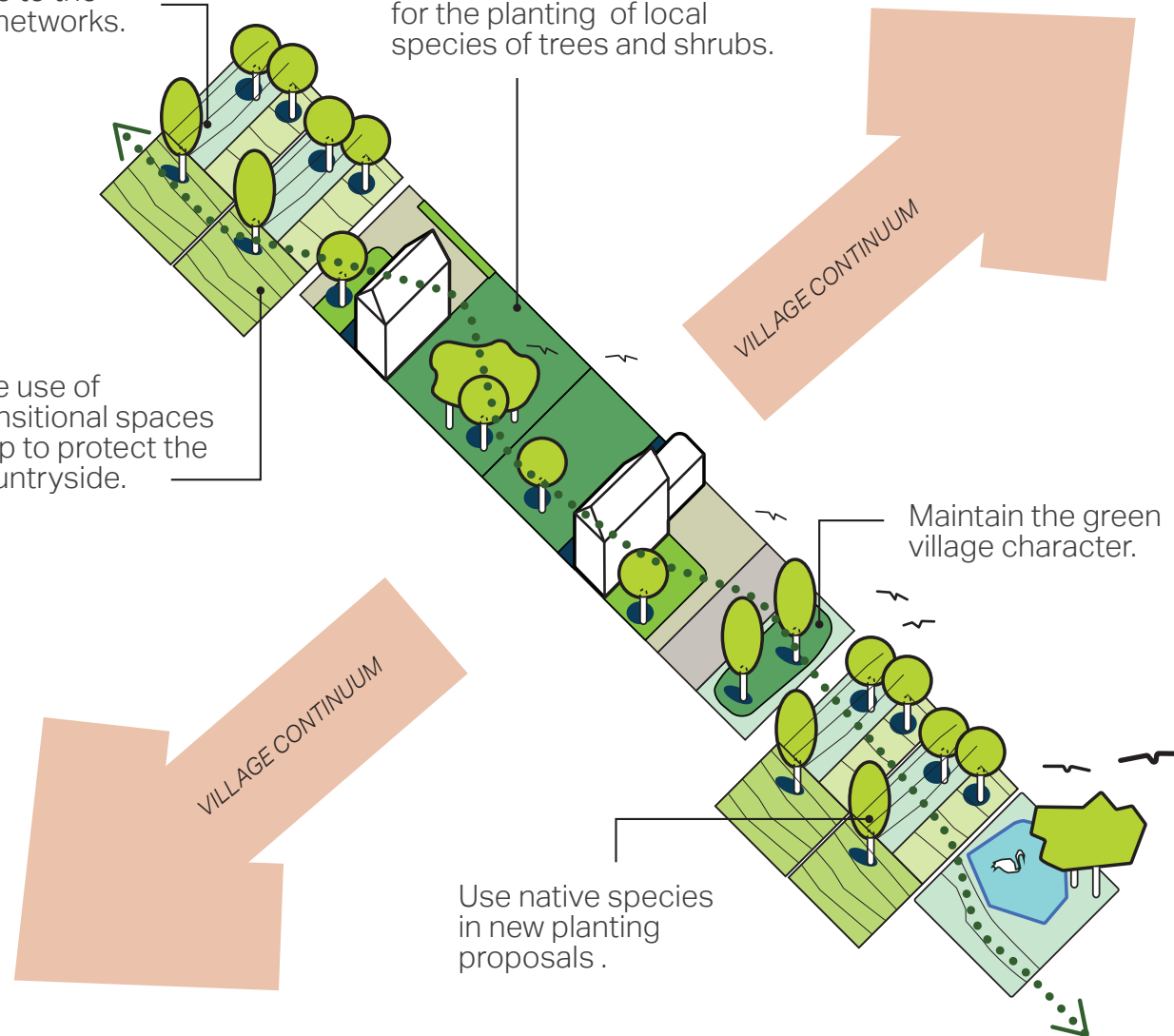
Agricultural fields can provide essential hedgerows and trees and contribute to the resilience of green networks.

Provide generous front and back gardens with sufficient permeable surfaces to allow for the planting of local species of trees and shrubs.

The use of transitional spaces help to protect the countryside.

Maintain the green village character.

Use native species in new planting proposals.



F.70

Figure 70: Example of a green network that enhances biodiversity.

1

04.10 General questions to ask and issues to consider when presented with a development proposal

Because the design guidelines and codes in this chapter cannot cover all design eventualities, this section provides a number of questions based on established good practice against which the design proposal should be evaluated. The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development.

The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment as to whether the design proposal has taken into account the context and provided an adequate design solution. As a first step, there are a number of ideas or principles that should be present in all proposals.

These are listed under 'General design guidelines for new development'. Following these ideas and principles, a number of questions are listed for more specific topics.

General design guidelines for new development:

- Does it integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity?
- Does it reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces?
- Does it harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use?
- Does it relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views?
- Does it reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness?
- Does it retain and incorporate important existing features into the development?
- Does it respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing?
- Does it adopt contextually appropriate materials and details?
- Does it provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality?
- Does it incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features?
- Does it ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other?
- Does it make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours?

1 (continued)

- Does it positively integrate energy efficient technologies?
- Does it ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind?
- Does it seek to implement passive environmental design principles by, firstly, considering how the site layout can optimise beneficial solar gain and reduce energy demands (e.g. insulation), before specification of energy efficient building services and finally incorporate renewable energy sources?

2

Street grid and layout:

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity? If not, why?
- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

3

Local green spaces, views and character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? i.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquility of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how will this be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?
- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention e.g. permeable landscaping, swales etc.?
- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?
- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

4

Gateway and access features:

- What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

5

Buildings layout and grouping

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?
- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles, with, for example, one of the main glazed elevations within 30° due south, whilst also minimising overheating risk?
- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night? This is to reduce peak loads. And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?

6

Building line and boundary treatment

- What are the characteristics of the building line?
- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?
- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

7

Building heights and roofline

- What are the characteristics of the roofline?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?
- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now, or in the future?
- Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so, can they be screened from view, being careful not to cause over shading?

8

Household extensions

- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?
- In case of side extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?

8 (continued)

- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?
- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?
- Does the extension offer the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures to the existing building?
- Can any materials be re-used in situ to reduce waste and embodied carbon?

9

Building materials and surface treatment

- What is the distinctive material in the area?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?
- Does the proposal use high-quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Do the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?
- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.

10

Car parking

- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?
- Can electric vehicle charging points be provided?
- Can secure cycle storage be provided at an individual building level or through a central/ communal facility where appropriate?
- If covered car ports or cycle storage is included, can it incorporate roof mounted photovoltaic panels or a biodiverse roof in its design?

11

Architectural details and design

- If the proposal is within a Conservation Area, how are the characteristics reflected in the design?
- Does the proposal harmonise with the adjacent properties?
- This means that it follows the height massing and general proportions of adjacent buildings and how it takes cues from materials and other physical characteristics.
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features?
- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?
- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials of a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?
- Is it possible to incorporate passive environmental design features such as larger roof overhangs, deeper window reveals and/or external louvres/shutters to provide shading in hotter months?
- Can the building designs utilise thermal mass to minimise heat transfer and provide free cooling?
- Can any external structures such as balconies be fixed to the outside of the building, as opposed to cantilevering through the building fabric to reduce thermal bridge?

Delivery

05



05. DELIVERY

The Design Guidelines will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development within the parish of Ravensden. They will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table.

Actors	How They Will Use the Design Guidelines
Applicants, developers, and landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The Design Guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are complied with.
Community organisations	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

Appendix 06



06. APPENDIX

POLICY REVIEW

The following policy review summarises the most relevant paragraphs in regards to the parish in question from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and the relevant policies in the local statutory development plan, the Bedford Borough Local Plan (2020).

06.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021)

Paragraph 8 requires that plans meet economic, social and environmental objectives in mutually supportive ways. This involves building a strong, responsive and competitive economy to encourage growth, innovation and improved productivity. To support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, plans should foster accessible services and open spaces. Plans should also contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Paragraph 11 sets out that plans should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Plans should seek opportunities to meet development needs and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change.

Paragraph 68 encourages the use of small and medium sized sites to meet the housing requirements of an area.

Paragraph 69 adds that neighbourhood planning groups should consider the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized suitable to accommodate housing in their area.

Paragraph 81 requires that plans create the conditions for businesses to invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, accounting for the needs of local businesses and opportunities for further development. This should support communities in building on their strengths, countering weaknesses and addressing future challenges.

Paragraph 82 requires plans to set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth. Policies should encourage economic development and regeneration. Plans should also identify strategic sites for local and inward investment. They should also seek to address any potential barriers to investment,

including inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment. Policies should be flexible in order to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices and enable a rapid response to any changes in economic circumstances.

Paragraph 92 stipulates that plans aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which foster social interaction through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections. Pedestrian routes should be clear and legible, and public space should encourage the active and continual use of public areas. Plans should support healthy lifestyles by providing safe and accessible green infrastructure, local shops and layouts which encourage walking and cycling.

Paragraph 93 adds that plans should encourage the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability

of communities. They should prevent the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, while ensuring that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise.

Paragraph 98 encourages plans to use opportunities for new provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities as these are important for the health and wellbeing of communities.

Paragraph 125 adds that the Government encourages the use of area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans which can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.

Paragraph 126 sets out that high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to the approach to planning and development.

Paragraph 127 sets out that plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as

much certainty as possible about what is required. Design policies should be developed with local communities, so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans play an important role in identifying the special qualities of an area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.

Paragraph 128 supports the preparation of design guides and design codes as visual tools to provide maximum clarity about design expectations. These should set out a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design. These design guides and codes should be consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Guide. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety.

Paragraph 129 adds that design guides and codes can be prepared at an area-wide, neighbourhood or site specific scale, and to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents. Whoever prepares them, all guides and codes should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area, taking into account the guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code.

Paragraph 130 adds that the design of developments should establish a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets and spaces to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit. Plans should optimise the potential of a site to accommodate an appropriate amount and mix of development, including green and other public space, and support local facilities.

06.2 Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (adopted in 2020)

The Bedford Local Plan was adopted in January 2020. A summary of particularly relevant requirements is structured below by specific policy. The Local Plan should also be consulted in full, including the supporting text as well as policies:

Policy 2S – Healthy Communities requires a Health Impact Assessment for all residential sites of 50 homes or more. Developments should promote health, safety and active living for all groups and encourage physically active lifestyles. Developments should recognise, safeguard and encourage the role of allotments and garden plots in providing access to healthy, affordable locally produced food options.

Policy 3S – Spatial Strategy encourages safeguarding the intrinsic character of the countryside and delivering the majority of rural growth through Neighbourhood Plans.

Policy 5S - Development in villages with a Settlement Policy Area - Ravensden Church End is designated a Settlement Policy Area. In this area, development or redevelopment will be acceptable in principle provided it is consistent with the other principles of the development plan.

Policy 6 - Development in Small Settlements - Ravensden crossroads is defined as a Small Settlement. Development will be supported where the proposal contributes positively to the character of the settlement and is commensurate with its structure, form, character and size.

Policy 7S – Development in the countryside – Development outside defined Settlement Policy Area and the built form of Small Settlements will be permitted if it is appropriate in the countryside. This includes reuse of rural buildings, replacement and extension of dwellings, affordable housing, accommodation for rural workers and any proposals made through Neighbourhood Development Plans. All development in the

countryside must recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Policy 24 – Land at Grazehill, Bedford

Key principles for development:

- i. A design code to be agreed with the local planning authority as part of the application process.
- ii. Provision of a range of housing types and sizes.
- iii. Provision of a footpath and pedestrian crossing on B660 Bedford Road to provide safe access to bus stops.
- iv. Provision of footpath and cycle links to integrate with neighbouring development at Woodlands Park.
- v. Transport assessment detailing impact on highways network and mitigation measures.
- vi. Consideration of impacts on historic environment to minimise harm and inclusion of mitigation measures where necessary.
- vii. Site specific flood risk assessment

to determine effects of development on adjacent flood plain and any mitigation measures required.

- viii. Provision of an extension to the north of Brickhill Country Park.
- ix. Buffer planting and landscaping to assimilate the development into the surrounding landscape.
- x. A site specific flood risk assessment will be required to determine the potential area of the site. New development will be steered towards areas at least risk of flooding.

Policy 28S – Place making requires that development contributes to good place-making, with high quality design, a positive relationship with the surrounding area, provision of green infrastructure, enhancement of landscape and avoidance of impacts on biodiversity.

Policy 29 – Design quality and principles adds that development should respect its context and enhance local distinctiveness,

have particular regard to the environment and biodiversity within it, promote accessibility and permeability, promote a sense of place by including streets, squares and public spaces with clearly defined private and public amenity spaces and integrate functional needs such as car and cycle parking.

Policy 30 – The impact of development – design impacts sets out that development should consider its relationship to its context, both the townscape and landscape qualities of the area, the quality of its scale, density, massing, height, materials and layout, and how buildings interact with public spaces.

Policy 31 – The impact of development – access impacts adds that development should not have any significant adverse impacts on access to the public highway, considering highway capacity and parking provision alongside the extent to which there is sufficient provision for public transport, cyclists and pedestrians.

Policy 32 – The impact of development – disturbance and pollution impacts requires that development takes account of any impacts on locally, nationally and internally important habitats and mitigates adverse impacts.

Policy 35S – Green Infrastructure requires that the Borough’s existing green infrastructure is protected, enhanced and managed. Development should provide a net gain in green infrastructure, while seeking to provide a high quality multi-functional green infrastructure network.

Policy 39 – Retention of trees sets out that development applications shall provide details as to how they will retain trees and record existing trees on or immediately adjacent to the development site. The supporting text in Para. 8.39 requires that where trees are proposed to be removed, it should be demonstrated in the planning application the reasons for the removal and any proposals for replacement trees.

Policy 40 – requires that hedgerows should be retained unless there are overriding benefits justifying their removal.

Policy 42S – Protecting biodiversity and geodiversity requires that developments take account of any adverse impacts on locally important sites, species and habitats.

Policy 43 – Enhancing biodiversity adds that development should provide a net gain in biodiversity through enhancing existing features on site, creating additional habitats on site and linking existing habitats to create ecological networks.

Policy 53 – Development layout and accessibility requires that development takes available opportunities to integrate the principles of sustainable design into its layout. There should be convenient access to local services by foot, cycle and public transport, use of design, layout and orientation to maximise ventilation, cooling and solar gain, and the incorporation of landscaping and open spaces, including tree planting.

Policy 58S – Affordable Housing requires provision of 30% affordable housing with 78% of those dwellings as social or affordable rented properties and the remaining 22% as other forms of affordable housing on sites of 10 or more residential units or 0.5 hectares or more.

Policy 59S – Housing mix sets out that developments will be expected to provide a mix of dwelling size and type. On sites of 3 or more dwellings 49% of all new residential development should meet Category 2 (Accessible and Adaptable dwellings) of approved Document M; Volume 1, and on sites of 20 or more dwellings a minimum of 5% of all market housing and 7% of affordable housing should meet Category 3 requirements.

Policy 87 – Public transport requires that new developments provide connections to the public transport network. Every dwelling should usually be within 400 metres walking distance of a bus stop.



**RAVENS DEN
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2030**

APPENDIX 4

Local Green Space Assessment

Regulation 15

May 2022

Proposed

Local Green Space

Designations for Ravensden



This report is an assessment of sites identified, by the local community, in the Ravensden Green Infrastructure Plan to be considered for Local Green Space Designation within the Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan



March 2021, as updated in April 2022

RAVENSDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – LGS ASSESSMENT

Stage 1 Assessment

The stage 1 assessment is designed to filter out which sites - proposed for LGS Designation by the 2021 Ravensden Green Infrastructure Plan - do not meet the basic NPPF LGS eligibility criteria. Sites which have current planning permission, or have been allocated for development, or have an existing designation giving the same level of protection as a LGS designation, do not meet the criteria and are not carried forward to the stage 2 assessment.

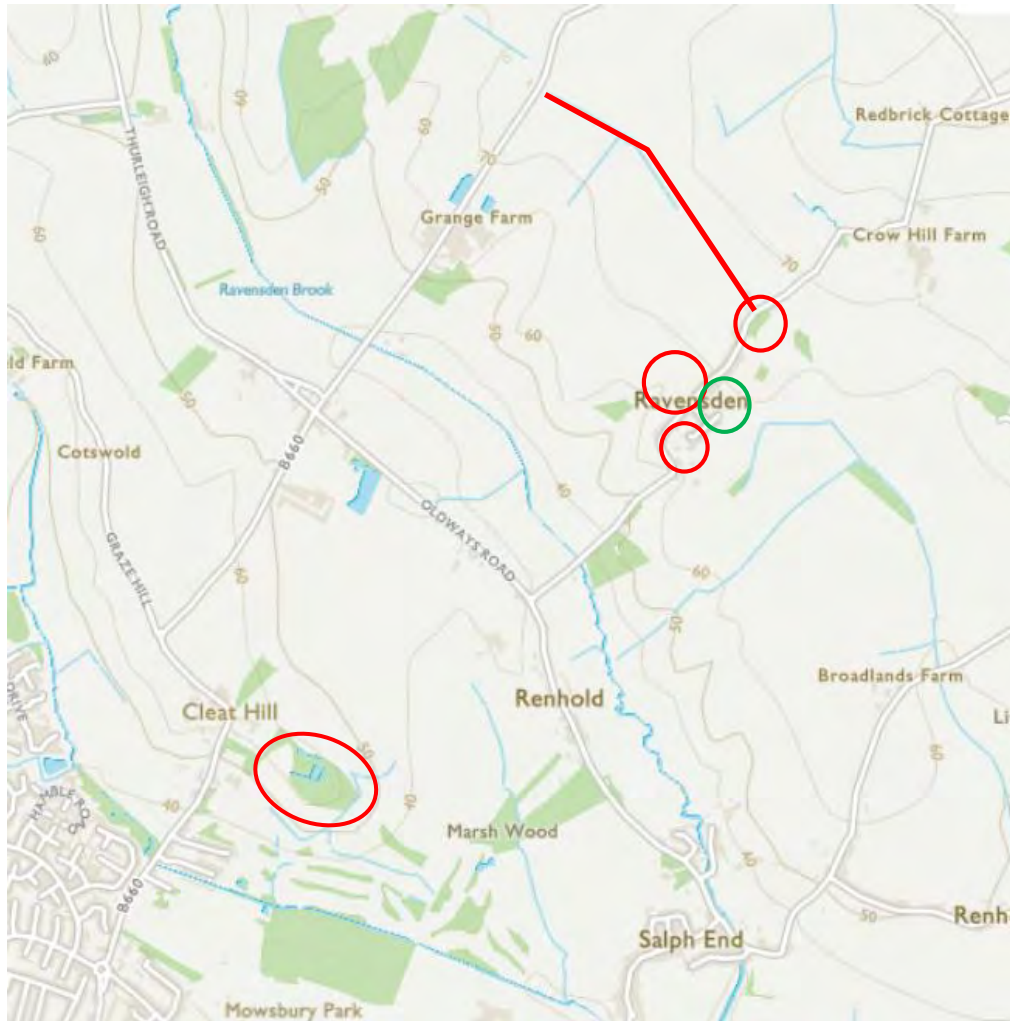
Site name and reference number	Current Planning Permission?	Allocated for Development?	Already Designated?	Pass to Stage 2?
Charity Field	N	N	Village Open Space	Y
Churchyard, Church of All Saints	N	N	Curtilage of Grade 1 Listed Building	Y
Great & Little Woods	N	N	CWS	N [1]
Green Lane	N	N	N	Y
Mowsbury Hillfort, Orchard & Meadow	N	N	Scheduled Monument, LNR, CWS	Y
Northfields	N	N	Village Open Space	Y
Ravensden Primary School Playing Field	N	N	Y Local Plan LGS	N[3]
Tilwick Wood & Meadow	N	N	SSSI	N [2]

[1] While this would normally pass to Stage 2, it is known that at over 1km distance from the community, it cannot be considered as 'local' and does therefore not meet the criteria. It was agreed to not spend time on the detailed stage 2 site assessment for a site that is known to not meet the criteria.

[2] With SSSI status (giving a greater level of protection than LGS designation) and at over 1km from the community, it was agreed to not spend time on the detailed stage 2 site assessment for a site that is known to not meet the criteria.

[3] Ravensden Primary School Playing Field is already designated as a LGS in the Local Plan 2030, and therefore does not require re-assessment. However, the site was re-evaluated by BRCC to review its LGS status. See individual site assessment for details.

Possible LGS's – to undergo stage 2 assessment



See individual site assessments for detailed locations/ boundaries.

NOTE:

The green circle on the map indicates that the site is already a designated LGS.

Stage 2 Assessment – Overall Summary

Stage 2 Assessment

Site	Not Extensive	Close Proximity	Demonstrably Special/ Locally Significant	Recommend for Designation?
Charity Field	Y	Y	Y	Y
Churchyard, Church of All Saints	Y	Y	Y	Y
Green Lane	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mowsbury Hillfort, Orchard & Meadow	Y	Y	Y	Y
Northfields	Y	Y	Y	Y

Stage 2 Assessment – Individual Site Assessments


The Stage 2 assessment assesses whether the proposed LGS meets the following criteria as set out by the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 100:


1. The space is not an extensive tract of land and is local in character
2. The space is within close proximity of the community it serves
3. The space is demonstrably special to the local community and holds particular local significance.


The 3rd of these criteria is sub-divided into:

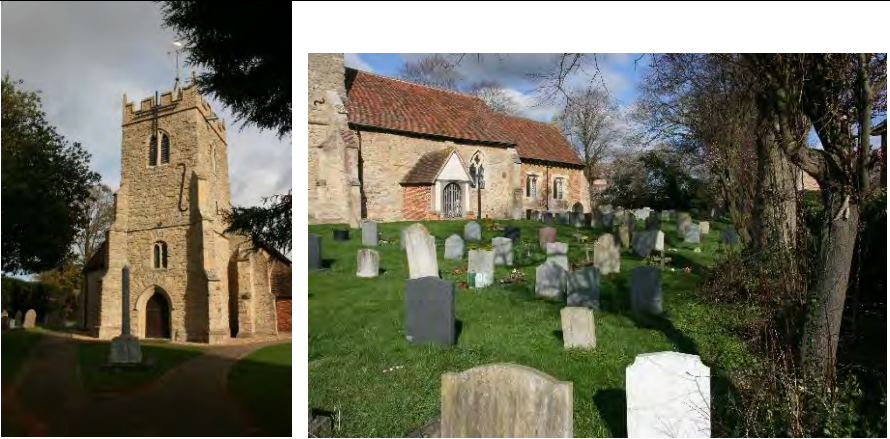
- a. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its beauty
- b. The proposed space is of particular local historic significance
- c. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its recreational value
- d. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its tranquillity
- e. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its wildlife
- f. The proposed space is of particular local significance for another reason


To meet the Stage 2 assessment criteria, a space has to fulfil criteria 1 and 2; and at least 1 a-f component of criteria 3.


Site Name	Charity Field
Site Map	 <p style="text-align: center;">Not to scale</p>
Site Area	0.87 ha
Site Location	This site is located immediately west of Church End, opposite Vicarage Close and 250m north of the Church of All Saints. It is at the centre of the largest End within the parish.
Site Description	<p>The site is an undulating field currently used for horse grazing. It is surrounded by mature hedges with some trees and areas of scrub.</p> <p>The site forms a pastoral foreground in views of cottages and the Church as seen from Footpath 2 to the west.</p> <p>Beauty</p> <p>With its undulating grassland and mature hedges, the field has a pastoral beauty. Views from the site of the rolling farmland to the west and north, with the locally valued landmark of the water tower, add to this sense of beauty.</p> <p>Historical Significance</p> <p>Fields making up the Charity Field are shown on the 1885 OS map and the site lies within an “Archaeological Notification Area”. The field is located within an area identified as the medieval village centre at Church End. There is evidence of Ridge and Furrow on some of the site.</p>


	<p>Tranquillity</p> <p>Although in the heart of the village, the site has a tranquil nature, with no major noise source nearby. The open views of countryside to the west and north enhance the sense of tranquillity.</p> <p>Recreational Value</p> <p>The site currently has no public access/ recreational activity as it is rented to individuals for horse grazing.</p> <p>Wildlife</p> <p>The permanent grassland and hedgerows are likely to support biodiversity including bats, invertebrates and birdlife. The area is known to support barn and tawny owls. There are hedgerow links to an area of woodland to the west.</p> <p>Significant for another reason</p> <p>The site is designated as Village Open Space in the Bedford Local Plan 2030.</p> <p>In the 2020/21 consultation activities for the Ravensden Green Infrastructure Plan, this site was identified by local residents in the top 3 most valued open spaces in the parish.</p>		
<p>Site Photos</p>			
<p>Not Extensive</p>	<p>Close Proximity</p>	<p>Demonstrably Special/ Locally Significant</p>	<p>Recommend for Designation?</p>
<p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Y Tranquillity, Wildlife, Beauty</p>	<p>Y</p>


Site Name	Churchyard, Church of All Saints
Site Map	 <p data-bbox="847 734 1007 770">Not to scale</p>
Site Area	0.27 ha
Site Location	<p data-bbox="459 860 1235 891">The churchyard is at the heart of the village at Church End.</p> <p data-bbox="459 913 1385 1016">The churchyard frontage is on Church Hill. It is bordered on two sides by residential properties and by the Horse and Jockey Public House to the north.</p>
Site Description	<p data-bbox="459 1106 1385 1276">The site is a typical churchyard, surrounding the church. Gravestones are present throughout the site, with the grass between them regularly mown. The site is enclosed by hedges with a number of mature trees. It borders residential properties on three sides and Church End on the fourth.</p> <p data-bbox="459 1361 564 1393">Beauty</p> <p data-bbox="459 1420 1385 1487">The church and churchyard, with the backdrop of mature trees present a beautiful and archetypal English village scene.</p> <p data-bbox="459 1572 783 1603">Historical Significance</p> <p data-bbox="459 1630 1337 1733">The first record of a church dates from 1166 although archaeology suggests this was pre-dated by a small Saxon church on the same site. The church became a Grade 1 listed building in 1964.</p> <p data-bbox="459 1760 1310 1827">The lime trees were planted to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977.</p>


	<p>Tranquillity</p> <p>Although in the heart of the village, the site has a tranquil nature, with no major noise source nearby. The historic grave stones and mature trees give a comforting sense of history and peace.</p> <p>Recreational Value</p> <p>The site is publicly accessible and used for quiet remembrance and reflection. It is highly valued and is well maintained and regularly visited by families who tend the graves of loved ones.</p> <p>Wildlife</p> <p>The site features mature trees, permanent grassland and a variety of grave stones of particular interest to lichens. The careful management of the site has perhaps somewhat reduced its wildlife value but it is still likely to provide opportunities for a wide range of wildlife.</p> <p>Significant for another reason</p> <p>In the 2020/21 consultation activities for the Ravensden Green Infrastructure Plan, this site was identified by local residents as the 2nd most valued open space in the parish.</p>		
<p>Site Photos</p>			
<p>Not Extensive</p>	<p>Close Proximity</p>	<p>Demonstrably Special/ Locally Significant</p>	<p>Recommend for Designation?</p>
<p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Y History, Beauty, Tranquillity</p>	<p>Y</p>


Site Name	Green Lane
Site Map	 <p data-bbox="842 792 1002 824">Not to scale</p>
Site Area	1.3 ha
Site Location	This site links the northern end of Church End to Sunderland Hill. Its eastern end is adjacent to residential properties in Church End.
Site Description	<p data-bbox="459 1010 1385 1115">The site is a grassland corridor, bordered by ditches and mature hedgerows with occasional trees. Although linear in nature, its width – up to 20m – make it more than a simple access route.</p> <p data-bbox="459 1196 564 1227">Beauty</p> <p data-bbox="459 1256 1310 1361">While the site itself is not especially beautiful, it provides access through, and views of, the beautiful undulating countryside of the parish.</p> <p data-bbox="459 1442 783 1473">Historical Significance</p> <p data-bbox="459 1503 1374 1608">An ancient trackway and Roman Road which continues as bridleways to the east and west. It passes through the site thought to be a deserted medieval village.</p> <p data-bbox="459 1637 1385 1742">The lane was used to drive cattle through Ravensden to the Kimbolton Road and hence to market and also formed the carriageway to the original location of Ravensden Grange.</p> <p data-bbox="459 1823 624 1854">Tranquillity</p> <p data-bbox="459 1883 1378 1989">While none of the site is noisy, the central portion of the site is in open countryside and hundreds of metres away from any roads/ regular sources of noise.</p>


	<p>Recreational Value</p> <p>The site is a Public Byway, and is closed to motor vehicles from October to March to avoid surface damage. It is a very popular route for walking and horse riding.</p> <p>Wildlife</p> <p>This represents a linear green corridor cutting a swath through agricultural land and linking other areas of hedgerow and grass margins. The twinned hedgerows, permanent grassland and occasional mature trees provide numerous opportunities for wildlife.</p> <p>The lane is most floristically rich at the western end, with flora including ladies bedstraw, St John's wort, knapweed and cowslips. The hedgerows support yellowhammers and the lane provides a notable foraging area for bats and badgers.</p> <p>Significant for another reason</p> <p>n/a</p>		
<p>Site Photo</p>			
<p>Not Extensive</p>	<p>Close Proximity</p>	<p>Demonstrably Special/ Locally Significant</p>	<p>Recommend for Designation?</p>
<p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Y Recreation, Tranquillity</p>	<p>Y</p>


Site Name	Mowsbury Hillfort. Orchard & Meadow
Site Map	
Site Area	4.92ha
Site Location	<p>This site is to the south of the parish, east of Cleat Hill and is surrounded on three sides by Mowsbury Golf Course.</p> <p>While this site is not especially close to the main Ends of the parish, it is within 300-500m of the residential properties on, and off, Cleat Hill.</p>
Site Description	<p>This hilltop site is dominated by woodland and grassland and features many ancient earthworks. The site offers great views of Bedford to the south and panoramic views of the open countryside to the north, across the valley of Ravensden Brook, to many landmarks such as the Church, Grange, woodland and the Water tower, underlying its strategic position.</p> <p>Beauty</p> <p>Many features of this site are attractive in their own right; and together they form a truly beautiful site.</p> <p>Historical Significance</p> <p>This site was first occupied in the early Iron Age. In the Middle Ages the hillfort was modified and a medieval moated house was constructed within the earlier earthworks. It is considered to be the best preserved hillfort of its type in Bedfordshire.</p> <p>Local varieties of Laxton apples have been planted to restore a traditional orchard which was planted in the 1920's.</p>

	<p>Tranquillity</p> <p>Set away from any roads or other sources of noise, this is a very tranquil site, where nature and history provide a highly peaceful atmosphere.</p> <p>Recreational Value</p> <p>The site is accessible to the public and is very popular for quiet recreation.</p> <p>A local group of volunteers – The Friends of Putnoe Woods and Mowsbury Hillfort – support Bedford Borough Council, the site owner, in managing the site.</p> <p>Public footpaths on the boundaries connect the Hillfort to Graze Hill and to the wider countryside to the north (e.g. Footpath 25 to Oldways Road being particularly important).</p> <p>Wildlife</p> <p>The hillfort is a County Wildlife Site and contains a range of habitats including grassland, woodland, orchard, scrub and ephemeral ponds. The grassland contains many wild herbs and flowers, including bee orchids; and many species of butterfly, birds and mammals are present.</p> <p>Significant for another reason</p> <p>In the 2020/21 consultation activities for the Ravensden Green Infrastructure Plan, this site was identified by local residents as the most valued open space in the parish.</p>		
<p>Site Photos</p>			
<p>Not Extensive</p>	<p>Close Proximity</p>	<p>Demonstrably Special/ Locally Significant</p>	<p>Recommend for Designation?</p>
<p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Y History, Beauty, Tranquillity, Wildlife</p>	<p>Y</p>

Site Name	Northfields
Site Map	 <p data-bbox="842 734 1002 768">Not to scale</p>
Site Area	0.33 ha
Site Location	The site is located adjacent to the road at the northern end of Church End.
Site Description	<p data-bbox="459 1003 1390 1144">This is a small area of woodland, predominantly ash, with some understorey species including elder and blackthorn. It forms part of the setting for Northfields, a historic property which was once the principle farmhouse in this part of Church End.</p> <p data-bbox="459 1167 1390 1240">The site is an important gateway feature at the northern end of Church End and is a focal point in views from the Green Lane.</p> <p data-bbox="459 1323 564 1357">Beauty</p> <p data-bbox="459 1379 1358 1453">This site has an inherent beauty due to its mature trees. This beauty changes through the seasons.</p> <p data-bbox="459 1536 783 1570">Historical Significance</p> <p data-bbox="459 1592 1358 1697">The majority of the site is shown wooded on the 1885 edition of the OS Map. It is within an Archaeological Notification Area. It was once part used for cottages, though these have since been removed.</p> <p data-bbox="459 1720 1126 1753">The site connects with as area of ridge and furrow.</p>

	<p>Tranquillity</p> <p>Although adjacent to the road which leads into and out of the village, the road is not heavily used and the site acts as a quiet and green gateway to the village. Birdsong is often the dominant sound.</p> <p>Recreational Value</p> <p>None</p> <p>Wildlife</p> <p>This is a valuable site for bats, a roosting site for tawny owls, and a feeding site for badgers – there is a sett nearby. There are also newts from a pond at Northfield, and hedgehogs. The varied ground flora including primroses and bluebells, and there are links to semi-natural grassland and the Green Lane.</p> <p>Significant for another reason</p> <p>The site is designated as a Village Open Space in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (Policies Map inset 25)</p>		
<p>Site Photo</p>			
<p>Not Extensive</p>	<p>Close Proximity</p>	<p>Demonstrably Special/ Locally Significant</p>	<p>Recommend for Designation?</p>
<p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p>

Site Name	Ravensden Primary School Playing Field Note: This site is already a LGS designated site (through the Local Plan 2030). The BRCC assessment of the site corroborates Bedford Borough Council’s decision to designate the site.
Site Map	 <p style="text-align: center;">Not to scale</p>
Site Area	0.78 ha
Site Location	This site is located east of Church End, north of Vicarage Close and 500m north of the Church of All Saints. It is central within the largest End within the parish.
Site Description	<p>The site is a typical school playing field, predominantly of mown grass, with a spinney bordering its northern end and an orchard near the entrance to the site, in the south west corner. The site is surrounded to the south and east by mature hedgerows.</p> <p>Beauty</p> <p>Surrounded by mature hedgerows and including areas of tree planting and wildflowers, the site is more attractive than most playing fields.</p> <p>Historical Significance</p> <p>The site displays relic ridge and furrow, and contains a small woodland planted to celebrate the Millennium.</p> <p>Tranquillity</p> <p>The site has no road frontage and is bordered by gardens and farmland, giving it a sense of tranquillity.</p>

	<p>Recreational Value</p> <p>This site is the only publicly accessible open space within the village. In addition to its use by the school, it is used for informal recreation by local families and for community events such as the fete.</p> <p>The Public Footpath which provides access through the site to the wider path network to the east is heavily used.</p> <p>Wildlife</p> <p>Environmental enhancement has increased biodiversity – with a small woodland, meadow and orchard. Hedges have been planted up. Enhancement has been undertaken by a succession of school children. The site is important for bats, owls, woodpeckers, and grass snakes have been seen. The meadow contains plants such as cuckoo flower and cowslip, surviving from former agricultural land use.</p> <p>Significant for another reason</p> <p>In the 2020/21 consultation activities for the Ravensden Green Infrastructure Plan, this site was identified by local residents as one of the most valued open spaces in the parish.</p> <p>Note: This site has already received LGS designation in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (LGS 45, Policies Map inset 25).</p>		
<p>Site Photo</p>			
<p>Not Extensive</p>	<p>Close Proximity</p>	<p>Demonstrably Special/ Locally Significant</p>	<p>Recommend for Designation?</p>
<p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Y Recreation, Wildlife</p>	<p>BRCC assessment corroborates Local Plan decision to have designated the site as LGS in Local Plan 2030</p>

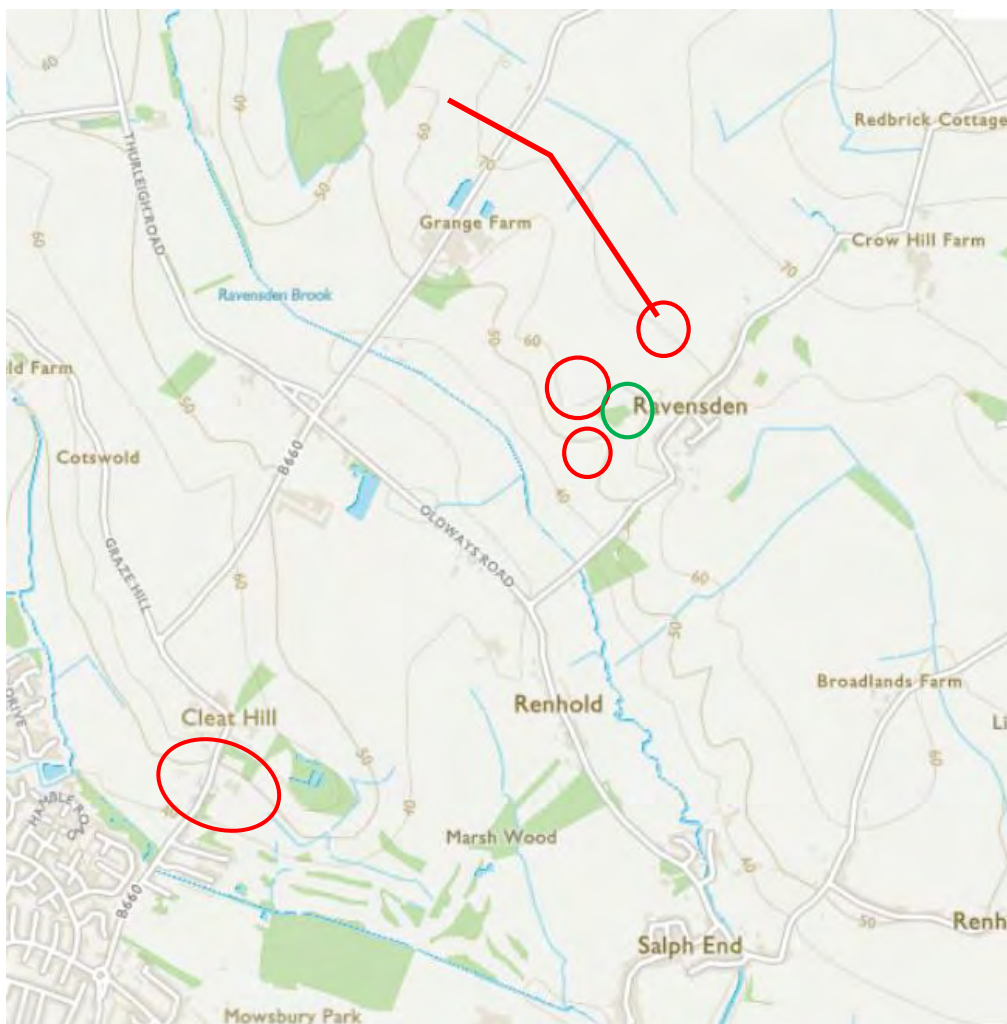
Final Proposed Local Green Space Designations

Sites assessed and proposed for LGS Designation within the Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan
Charity Field
Churchyard, Church of All Saints
Green Lane
Mowsbury Hillfort, Orchard & Meadow
Northfields
Sites assessed and considered to not meet LGS criteria
Great & Little Woods
Tilwick Wood & Meadow

The above proposed LGS sites are shown on the following map.

Note:

The green circle on the map represents a site which is an existing LGS, Local Plan designation.



This assessment has been undertaken by Cliff Andrews, BRCC's Deputy Chief Executive and Mike Fayers, BRCC's Community & Environment Officer; with support from Richard Lawrence, BRCC Ecologist.
Site visits were undertaken during March 2021.

Cliff Andrews
BedsRCC Deputy Chief Exec.

March 2021, as updated in April 2022



**RAVENS DEN
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2030**

APPENDIX 5

**Listed Buildings and Unlisted Buildings &
Sites of Conservation Interest in Ravensden Parish**

Regulation 15

May 2022

LISTED BUILDINGS IN RAVENSDEN PARISH

Name and Location	Grade
PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, Church End	I
OLD WHITE LION, Bedford Road	II
MULBERRY COTTAGE, Bedford Road	II
CLEAT HILL FARMHOUSE, Cleat Hill	II
HARPER COTTAGES; THE CASE IS ALTERED PUBLIC HOUSE, Church Hill	II
OAK COTTAGE, Church End	II
CHURCH COTTAGES, Vicarage Close, Church End	II
GRAYS HILL FARMHOUSE, Graze Hill	II
MANOR FARM COTTAGE, Wood End	II
HIGHFIELD HOUSE, Graze Hill	II
4 OLDWAYS ROAD	II
MANOR FARMHOUSE, Wood End	II
TRAYLESFIELD FARMHOUSE, Wood End	II
LOWER GRANGE, Sunderland Hill	II
COTTAGE ON CORNER OF THURLEIGH ROAD TO E OF MANOR FARM COTTAGE, Wood End	II
APRIL COTTAGE, HILLCREST & TWISDEN, Church End	II
THE OLD VICARAGE, Church End	II
GRAZE HILL HOUSE, Graze Hill	II



UNLISTED BUILDINGS AND SITES OF CONSERVATION

INTEREST IN RAVENSDEN PARISH

Number	Feature
11	GREEN LANE
93	MOAT, Grays Hill Farm
332	HILLFORT & MOAT, Mowsbury (Scheduled Monument)
485	POSSIBLE ROMAN ROAD (Viatores no 173)
580	CROPMARKS, SE of Brook Farm
583	MOAT, Manor Farm
715	RIDGE & FURROW, Ravensden historic parish
728	ROMAN ROAD (Viatores no 225)
1827	TILWICK DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGE, & Roman pottery
2521	BRICK FIELD, Cleat Hill
3010	BRICK FIELD & KILNS
3012	BRICK FIELD & KILNS, S of Oldways Road
3013	RIFLE RANGE
3014	BRICKWORKS, W of Grange Hill
3271	MOAT, Traylesfield Farm
4418	OCCUPATION SITE WITH BELGIC/ROMAN/MEDIEVAL/POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY
6713	GREEN LANE
8351	BRICKWORKS, Cleat Hill
8954	ALL SAINTS' PARISH CHURCHYARD
13195	GREAT WOOD, Ancient Woodland
13196	LITTLE WOOD, Ancient Woodland
13198	TILWICK WOOD, Ancient Woodland
14057	CROPMARK, N of Grange Farm
14060	POSSIBLE DESERTED MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT; Near Ravensden Grange
15041	POSSIBLE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT CROPMARKS, N of Church End

Number	Feature
15072	ENCLOSURE CROPMARKS; SW of Shrubbery Farm
16604	CROPMARKS, NW of Highfield Farm
16609	IRON AGE/ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT CROPMARK; E of Traylesfields Farm
16637	SETTLEMENT CROPMARKS; NE of Wood End
16638	CROPMARKS, E of Graze Hill
16664	POST MEDIEVAL CROPMARKS; S of Tilwick Wood
16665	IRON AGE/ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT CROPMARKS, NW of Shrubbery Farm
16666	CROPMARKS, SE of Tilwick
16667	IRON-AGE/ROMANO-BRITISH ENCLOSURE CROPMARKS; NW of Newhaven
17061	WOOD END MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT
17072	CHURCH END MEDIEVAL VILLAGE
18263	ROMANO-BRITISH OCCUPATION, SW of Grange Farm
MBB21896	IRON AGE/ROMANO-BRITISH RECTILINEAR ENCLOSURE; NW of Highfield Farm
MBB21897	POST-MEDIEVAL GARDEN FEATURE, N of Willow Farm, Ravensden
MBB21898	BRONZE AGE RING DITCH AND LINEAR FEATURES; SW of Grange Farm, Ravensden
MBB22253	IRON AGE SETTLEMENT CROPMARKS; S of Traylesfield Farm
MBB22254	SUB-SQUARE DITCHED ENCLOSURE; E of Traylesfield Farm
MBB22301	CURVILINEAR ENCLOSURES; NW of Traylesfields Farm
MBB22302	FAINT ENCLOSURE CROPMARK; N of Traylesfields Farm
MBB22303	IRON AGE SETTLEMENT CROPMARKS; N of Wood End
MBB22304	LATER PREHISTORIC/ROMANO-BRITISH CROPMARKS; N of Wood End
MBB22305	IRON AGE/ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT CROPMARKS; N of Manor Farm
MBB22306	ENCLOSURE CROPMARKS; SW of Shrubbery Farm



**RAVENS DEN
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2030**

APPENDIX 6

Glossary of Terms

Regulation 15

May 2022

Affordable Housing: Affordable housing for sale or rent, starter homes, discounted market sales housing and other affordable routes to home ownership, such as shared ownership and rent to buy, which is provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the current market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provision to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Allocations: Sites specifically identified on the Policies Map for development (e.g. housing sites).

Ancient Woodland: An area which has been wooded continuously since at least 1600AD.

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.

Basic Conditions: The basic conditions for neighbourhood plans are that they must: have regard to national policy; contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; and be compatible with EU obligations.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Land in grades 1,2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

Brownfield/Previously Developed Land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, but excluding land last occupied for agriculture or forestry buildings; land in built up areas such as gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land which was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): The charge required to be paid by developers to the local planning authority on new housing and commercial development to provide for infrastructure. The Parish Council is entitled to 15% of the proceeds where no Neighbourhood Plan is formally in place at the time the levy is calculated, or 25% if the Neighbourhood Plan has already been made.

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.

Design Codes: A set of specific rules or requirements to guide the physical development of a site or place. Their aim is to provide clarity as to what constitutes acceptable design quality and thereby provides a level of certainty for developers and the local community alike that can help deliver good quality new development.

Designated Area: The area in which the “qualifying body” (the Parish Council) is authorised by the planning authority to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.

Designations: Areas shown on the Policies Map to which specific policies apply (not allocations) e.g. Local Greenspace.

Development Plans: This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans as defined in Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

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.

Habitats Regulations Assessment: A process required by Regulations to determine if a plan may have significant effects on the protected features of certain types of habitats site as defined in the NPPF.

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). Non-designated assets are also important.

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.

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

Local Greenspace: Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

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 Planning 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. A local plan can consist of both strategic and non-strategic policies.

Localism Act: The Localism Act devolved greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and gave 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.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP): Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects are large scale developments (relating to energy, transport, water, or waste) which require a type of consent known as “development consent”. The Planning Act 2008 introduced a new development consent process for NSIPs, which was subsequently amended by the Localism Act 2011.

Neighbourhood Plan: A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a designated Neighbourhood Area (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.

Permitted Development: Permitted development rights are a national grant of planning permission which allows certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Permitted development rights are subject to conditions and limitations to control impacts and to protect local amenity.

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.

Policies Map: Illustrates policies and proposals in local plans and neighbourhood plans.

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 seek 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: Saved policies are planning policies from previous Local Plans that remain part of the statutory development plan.

Scheduled Monument: a building, structure or works (or remains thereof) above or below the surface of the land which is by definition considered to be of national importance. Any works to a scheduled monument require the consent of the Secretary of State.

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.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Environmental assessment of policies, plans and programmes required under European directives.

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.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): maximise the benefits whilst minimising the negative impacts of surface water run-off on developments. The approach involves the management of water quantity to reduce the risk of flooding downstream and in-situ, and the reduction of pollution levels within that run-off. This is achieved by harvesting, infiltrating, slowing, storing, conveying and treating run-off (preferably on the surface and not underground).

Wildlife Corridor: Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.