

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

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

The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer 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

- To make modifications to the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan in line with the recommendations set out in the examiner's report (Appendix A) and that, as modified (Appendix B), the Plan meets the basic conditions.
- That the formal Decision Statement (Appendix C) be published by 7 June 2023 in order to comply with the statutory deadline, and to inform those interested about the Council's decision.
- That arrangements to progress the Plan to the referendum stage of plan preparation are made.
- That the designated Great Denham Neighbourhood Area represents the appropriate geographical area to be covered by the referendum.

2. Date of decision

1 June 2023

3. Reasons for decision

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

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

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

5. How decision is to be funded

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

6. Conflicts of interest

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

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

Not Applicable

Signed Tom Wootten Date 1 June 2023 Name of Decision Taker TOM WOOTTEN

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:1June2023.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in:13June2023.....

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

Bedford Borough Council – Report to the Mayor

1 June 2023

Report by: The Chief Officer Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Growth

Subject: GREAT DENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Neighbourhood plans are statutory development plans produced by parish/town councils or neighbourhood forums. Great Denham Parish Council has produced a neighbourhood plan for the Great Denham parish area.
- 1.2 The Plan was submitted to Bedford Borough Council on 19 December 2022 and, in line with regulatory requirements, was subject to a six-week consultation (10 January – 22 February 2023). It has since been formally examined by an independent examiner.
- 1.3 The examiner has produced a report (Appendix A) which recommends that the Plan is modified in order to meet legal requirements and is then progressed to a referendum of people who live within the designated neighbourhood area.
- 1.4 Bedford Borough Council must decide:
 - Whether to progress the Plan to a referendum and
 - Whether to modify it (in the ways recommended by the examiner or otherwise) or
 - Whether to refuse the Plan.
- 1.5 Bedford Borough Council must consider each of the examiner's recommendations on the content of the Plan and decide what action to take. If the Plan is to progress to referendum, the Bedford Borough Council must also decide whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area, which in this case is Great Denham Parish.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- **To make modifications to the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan in line with the recommendations set out in the examiner's report (Appendix A) and that as modified (Appendix B), the Plan meets the basic conditions**
- **That the formal Decision Statement (Appendix C) be published by 7 June 2023 in order to comply with the statutory deadline, and to inform those interested about Bedford Borough Council's decision**
- **That arrangements to progress the Plan to the referendum stage of preparation are made**
- **That the designated Great Denham Neighbourhood Area represents the appropriate geographical area to be covered by the referendum**

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

4. IMPLICATIONS

Legal issues

- 4.1 The scope of a neighbourhood plan examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The examiner must consider:
- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions;
 - Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
 - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
 - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development';
 - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area;
 - whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum; and
 - Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

- 4.2 The examiner must also consider if the neighbourhood plan is compatible with the Convention on Human Rights.
- 4.3 On receipt of the examiner's report, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 require that a Local Planning Authority must publish a decision statement setting out what actions will be taken in response to each of the examiner's recommendations.
- 4.4 If the authority proposes to accept the examiner's recommendations, a decision statement must be published within 5 weeks of receiving the examiner's report. Arrangements for the referendum must then commence.
- 4.5 If the authority proposes to make a decision which differs from that recommended by the examiner, it must notify relevant people and invite representations for a period of 6 weeks. The local planning authority may, if it considers it appropriate to do so (for example if Bedford Borough Council's proposed changes are significant or controversial), refer the issue to further independent examination and receive a further report. Once any period for further representations is over, the local planning authority must issue its final decision within 5 weeks and proceed to referendum.
- 4.6 In this case it is recommended that the examiner's proposed amendments are accepted. If this is agreed, the decision statement relating to the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan must be published by 7 June 2023.
- 4.7 The neighbourhood plan passes the referendum of local voters if it achieves a simple majority (i.e. 50% +1 or over). No minimum turn-out is required. If a plan passes referendum, Bedford Borough Council must 'make' (adopt) it as soon as reasonably practicable unless Bedford Borough Council considers that the plan breaches EU obligations or human rights legislation. If there is a majority 'No' vote or a tied vote then the neighbourhood plan will not come into legal force.
- 4.8 Bedford Borough Council must hold a referendum within 56 working days from the date that the decision to take the plan forward to a referendum is published and publish notice that the referendum will take place, not fewer than 28 days before the referendum date.
- 4.9 The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended) cover all aspects of organising and conducting polls.
- 4.10 The Referendum question is 'Do you want Bedford Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Great Denham Parish to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area'.
- 4.11 Decisions to proceed to referendum and to 'make' the neighbourhood plan are taken by Bedford Borough Council's Executive rather than Full Council.
- 4.12 Bedford Borough Council can be challenged on the making of the plan by way of judicial review. Challenges must normally be made within six weeks of the making of the plan.

Policy Issues

- 4.13 Neighbourhood plans are examined to ensure that they meet the 'Basic Conditions' which are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The 'Basic Conditions' ensure, amongst other things, that appropriate regard has been had for local and national policies. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:
- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area (in this case saved policies in the Local Plan 2002, continuing policies in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 and the Local Plan 2030);
 - Be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations; and
 - Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.
- 4.14 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

- 4.15 The Government provides funding to assist councils to fulfil their neighbourhood planning duties. Once the date for the referendum is published, a claim for £20,000 can be made in the next available claim window. This represents a contribution towards Bedford Borough Council's costs associated with fulfilling its duty to assist the Parish Council in the preparation of its plan, and the costs associated with the examination process (including the examiner) and the referendum. Any costs in excess of £20,000 will need to be borne by Bedford Borough Council, though it is not anticipated that the examination process and the referendum combined will be more than this amount. Costs associated with assisting the neighbourhood plan group to prepare their Plan are funded from the Plans and Strategies Reserve.
- 4.16 When the neighbourhood plan is formally 'made', the percentage of community infrastructure levy (CIL) receipts payable to the Parish Council arising from development within the parish will increase from 15% to 25% resulting in Bedford Borough Council's percentage decreasing to 75%. National Planning Practice Guidance explains that parish councils must use the CIL receipts passed to them to support the development of the parish council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area.

Risk Implications

- 4.17 The recommendations in the examination report are not binding, but if Bedford Borough Council chooses not to agree with the examiner's recommendations without a sound reason, there is a risk of legal challenge which could lead to reputational damage and financial costs. Whilst there is also a risk of legal challenge if Bedford Borough Council does follow the examiner's recommendations, it must be considered that the risk is lower.
- 4.18 Any modifications made to the content of the plan should be done so only in order to make the plan meet the basic conditions and other legislative requirements. Making modifications for any other reasons (other than formatting or spelling corrections) could lead to a legal challenge.

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

- 4.19 The Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan was screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) by Great Denham Parish Council with assistance from Bedford Borough Council. The SEA screening concluded that it was unnecessary to undertake SEA. The examiner supported this conclusion.
- 4.20 The Plan was further screened to determine if Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was necessary. The HRA was carried out by consultancy BRCC. It concluded that the Plan would not have a significant effect on European sites either alone or in combination. Natural England, which was consulted on the Plan, did not dispute this conclusion. The examiner found no reason to disagree.
- 4.21 Both the SEA screening and the HRA have been reviewed in light of the proposed modifications to the Plan. The conclusions of both remain unchanged.

Equalities Impact

- 4.22 In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to Bedford 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.
- 4.23 A relevance test for equality has been completed. The equality test determined that consideration as to whether the Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan should progress to referendum has no relevance to Bedford Borough Council's duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. An equality analysis for this decision is not needed.
- 4.24 However, the development of the Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan is relevant to Great Denham 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 is included 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 adopted, neighbourhood plans become part of Bedford Borough Council's statutory development plan and must be taken into account alongside Bedford Borough Council's local plans and national policy when planning applications are determined.
- 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 | Progress |
| Neighbourhood Area Designation | Application by parish council, publicity & decision by BBC | Complete |
| Prepare draft neighbourhood plan | NP group/parish council with assistance from others | Complete |
| Pre submission consultation (Regulation 14) | NP group/parish council (6 weeks minimum) | Complete |
| Finalise plan in light of comments made | NP group/parish council | Complete |
| Submit plan to the local planning authority | NP group/parish council | Complete |
| Pre-examination consultation(Regulation 16) | BBC (6 weeks minimum) | Complete |
| Examination | Examiner appointed by BBC (agreed by NP group / parish council) | Complete |
| Consider examiner's recommendations | BBC and NP group / parish council | We are here |
| Referendum | Organised by BBC | |
| Plan 'made' (part of the development plan) | BBC | |

The examination

- 5.4 Neighbourhood plans must be examined by a suitably qualified independent person, appointed by Bedford Borough Council and agreed by the qualifying body.
- 5.5 The neighbourhood plan examiner's role is limited to considering whether the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other relevant legal requirements. The examiner does not consider whether the plan is sound. The examiner also considers whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area.
- 5.6 Most neighbourhood plan examinations will not require a hearing session to be held though this is an option if the examiner considers it necessary.
- 5.7 Legislation requires that Bedford Borough Council considers each of the recommendations made by the examiner in his/her report and decides what action to take in response. This decision must be published within five weeks of the receipt of the examiner's report.
- 5.8 However, if the authority proposes to make a decision which differs from that recommended by the examiner, it must notify relevant people and invite representations. This is further explained in the 'Legal Issues' section above.
- 5.9 If the plan proceeds to referendum and passes by a simple majority, legislation does not allow any further amendments to be made to the plan. Therefore, the stage between examination and referendum (this stage) is the only point at which further amendments can be made.

The referendum

- 5.10 Anyone who can usually vote in a local election and who is resident in the referendum area can vote in a neighbourhood plan referendum. The referendum area is usually the neighbourhood area, but the examiner may recommend that it be extended if there are matters that are of interest to nearby communities. The plan must pass by a simple majority and there is no minimum turnout. If a simple majority is achieved Bedford Borough Council will be required to 'make' (adopt) the plan unless it breaches EU or human rights legislation.
- 5.11 The decision on when to hold the referendum falls to Bedford Borough Council's returning officer. Bedford Borough Council must hold a referendum within 56 working days from the date that the decision to take the plan forward to a referendum is published. Bedford Borough Council must also publish notice that the referendum will take place not fewer than 28 days before the referendum date.
- 5.12 The qualifying body (the parish council or neighbourhood forum) can withdraw a plan at any time up until the point that the decision on the modifications is publicised.

The Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan

| Progress of Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Neighbourhood area designated | 7 January 2014 |
| Draft plan consultation (Regulation 14) | 15 August – 14 October 2022 |
| Post submission consultation (Regulation 16) | 10 January – 22 February 2023 |
| Submitted for examination by BBC | 9 March 2023 |
| Examiner's report received | 2 May 2023 |

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

Main Findings - Executive Summary

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

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body: Great Denham Parish Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the designated area as identified on Figure 1 on page 4 of the Plan;
- The Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect – 2022 to 2030; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

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

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

5.14 The examiner proposes recommendations as follows:

| Proposed modification number (PM) | Submitted Neighbourhood Plan Para no/ other reference | Examiner's Recommended Modification | Reason for recommendation |
|--|--|---|---|
| PM1 | Page 5 Paragraph 1.2 | Replace 2035 with 2030 . | In the interests of accuracy. |
| PM2 | Page 9 Paragraph 4.1 | Add a new sentence to paragraph 4.1 to read: Further information can be found in the accompanying Consultation Statement, which is available on the Parish Council website. | In the interest of completeness. |
| PM3 | Page 17 Policy D1 | Add a new clause (j) of the policy to read: Where relevant, result in a safe environment with appropriate levels of lighting and natural surveillance. | In order to ensure the scope of the policy is effective it is necessary to add an additional clause with regard to creating a safe environment. |
| PM4 | Page 17 Paragraph 7.13 | Delete the following text: Over time, the wildlife value will increase as the land regenerates from the golf course use and an increase in both plant and animal species will result. | In the interests of accuracy as the land is currently in agricultural use. |
| PM5 | Page 21 Policy D4 | Modify the last sentence of the policy to read: All new development will, where appropriate , be expected to minimise the use of water and provide water storage. and Hard surfaces such as driveways | To clarify that all development should be subject to the test of 'appropriateness'. |

| Proposed modification number (PM) | Submitted Neighbourhood Plan Para no/ other reference | Examiner's Recommended Modification | Reason for recommendation |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | | and car parks should where appropriate use permeable paving. | |
| PM6 | Page 24 Policy F1 | Identify the listed community facilities on the Policies Map. | To ensure that a decision maker is aware of the location of these facilities. |
| PM7 | Page 25 Policy F2 | In the first line replace frontages with area . | So that the policy applies to the entirety of the premises and not just the frontage, as it is clear that this is the intention. |
| PM8 | Page 28 Paragraph 12.15 and Policy G2 | Delete <u>all</u> of paragraph 12.15 and replace it with: Six sites have been assessed against these criteria (see Green Infrastructure Plan). Of these, four do not meet the criteria – the golf Course, the Country Park, the kick about area and land behind the Park and Ride. The remaining two sites, namely the Village Green and the Anglia Way Meeting Place do meet the criteria and are therefore designated as Local Green Spaces and are shown on the Policies Map. Modify policy G2 by the deletion of the second site: Land behind the Park and Ride | LGS1 does not have sufficient regard to national policy in so far as it is not clear that the site is capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. |
| PM9 | Page 31 Policy G5 | Add a new sentence to policy G5 to read: | In the interests of clarity to add additional wording to encourage safe cycleways and footpaths. |

| Proposed modification number (PM) | Submitted Neighbourhood Plan Para no/ other reference | Examiner's Recommended Modification | Reason for recommendation |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | | Proposals for new safe cycleways and footpaths will be encouraged, to promote healthy living and reduce environmental impact. | |
| PM10 | Page 33 Policy T2 | Add a new clause to the end of the policy to read: Design of on-street parking provision must ensure that clear visibility will be achieved for drivers and pedestrians, to reduce risk and danger to both. | In the interests of clarity to add in reference to the design of on-street parking provision. |
| PM11 | Page 36 Policies Map | Up-date the Policies Map to accord with the revised content of the GDNP, including the recommended modifications set out above. | To take account of the modifications proposed above and those proposed by the parish council. |

- 5.15 These recommendations serve to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions. Officers therefore recommend that they are agreed and the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan be amended accordingly. Great Denham Parish Council has confirmed that it agrees with the proposed modifications.
- 5.16 The examiner explains that it is open to the Parish Council to make minor modifications to the Plan such as attending to typographical errors (para 4.36 of the examiner's report). A small number of these have been identified. Officers recommend however that no further changes are required in order for the Plan to meet the basic conditions and therefore if agreed, no further consultation is necessary before proceeding to referendum.
- 5.17 The Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan incorporating the examiner's proposed modifications and other minor modifications can be found at Appendix B.

Examination area

- 5.18 The examiner considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. He concluded that the Plan as modified would have no policies or proposals which he considered significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary. As a result he recommends that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area. Officers agree with this conclusion and recommend that the neighbourhood area as designated should be agreed as the referendum area.

Next steps

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

6. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

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

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 Bedford Borough Council undertook post-submission consultation; the Regulation 16 stage. Details of the Regulation 14 responses are posted on the neighbourhood plan web site. The Regulation 16 responses were provided to the examiner of the Plan who considered them during the examination. They can be found on Bedford Borough Council's web-site on the neighbourhood planning pages.
- 7.2 The following people have been consulted in preparing this report:
- Chief Officer for Legal
 - Chief Officer for Finance
 - Energy Team
- 7.3 No adverse comments have been received.

8. WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS

Not applicable for this report.

Report Contact Officer: Kim Wilson
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File Reference: Neighbourhood Plans

Previous Relevant Minutes: None

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix A – Examiner’s Report
Appendix B – Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan showing modifications
Appendix C – Decision Statement



Intelligent Plans
and examinations

Report on Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2030

An Examination undertaken for Bedford Borough Council with the support of Great Denham Parish Council on the December 2022 submission version of the Plan.

Independent Examiner: David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT

Date of Report: 2 May 2023

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Main Findings - Executive Summary

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

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body: Great Denham Parish Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the designated area as identified on Figure 1 on page 4 of the Plan;
- The Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect – 2022 to 2030¹; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

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

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

1. Introduction and Background

Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2030²

- 1.1 The Parish of Great Denham lies to the west of Bedford. The boundary of the Parish follows the River Great Ouse to the east, south and west, while to the north lies Biddenham village. The Parish was created in 2007 and there has been significant housing development since that time. It is estimated that a total of about 1,750 dwellings have been constructed since 2007 and that the population totals about 4,000. There is local access to a range of facilities, including a primary school, a small retail centre, a community hall, a medical centre and a number of recreational areas, including the Great Denham Country Park.
- 1.2 The Consultation Statement confirms that the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan commenced in 2020, with the first significant event being in September of that year, when Great Denham Parish Council (GDPC) distributed a survey to all residents. Subsequently, newsletters were distributed to residents, surveys were undertaken, and Steering Group members attended the Great Denham Great Comeback Festival in September 2021.

¹ See below: paragraph 4.5 and **PM1**.

² See footnote 1 above.

The Independent Examiner

- 1.3 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan by Bedford Borough Council (BBC), with the agreement of the GDPC.
- 1.4 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector, with extensive experience in the preparation, examination and implementation of development plans and other planning policy documents. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the draft Plan.

The Scope of the Examination

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

- Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ('the 2012 Regulations').
- 1.7 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

1.8 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:

- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
- Be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations (under retained EU law)³; and
- Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

1.9 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.⁴

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

2.1 The Development Plan for Bedford, not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development, includes the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.⁵ Work is underway on a revised Local Plan, with the hearing sessions programmed to start in June 2023.⁶ As noted in paragraph 1.8 above, the Basic Conditions require the draft

³ The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.

⁴ This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

⁵ View the full list at: [Development Plan documents and our Spatial Strategy | Bedford Borough Council](#)

⁶ Local Plan 2040 Examination | Bedford Borough Council.

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neighbourhood plan to be assessed against the extant adopted development plan for the area. Notwithstanding this, the PPG advises that the local planning authority should work with the qualifying body so that complementary neighbourhood and local plan policies are produced, and any conflicts between policies in the neighbourhood plan and those in the emerging local plan should be minimised.⁷ In this regard, BBC has not highlighted any specific concerns.⁸

2.2 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The PPG offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented. A revised NPPF was published on 20 July 2021. All references in this report are to the 2021 NPPF and its accompanying PPG.

Submitted Documents

2.3 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, including those submitted which comprise:

- the submission draft of the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan (December 2022);
- the Map on page 4 of the Plan which identifies the area to which the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan relates;
- the Consultation Statement (undated);
- the Basic Conditions Statement (December 2022);
- the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report dated June 2022 and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report dated December 2022;
- Great Denham Design guidance and codes (AECOM, February 2022);
- Great Denham Green Infrastructure Plan (December 2022);
- all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation;
- the responses to my questions dated 9 March 2023 from both Bedford Borough Council and Great Denham Parish Council dated 31 March 2023; and
- the response from the Parish Council dated 4 April 2023 to my supplementary question dated 23 March 2023.⁹

Site Visit

2.4 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 22 March 2023 to familiarise myself with the locality, and visit relevant sites and areas referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

⁷ PPG Reference ID: 41-009-20190509.

⁸ See question 1 of my letter dated 9 March 2023 and the responses of BBC and GDPC dated 31 March 2023.

⁹ View at: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/great-denham-neighbourhood>

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Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

- 2.5 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the Plan and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum.

Modifications

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

3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 3.1 The GDNP has been prepared and submitted for examination by GDPC as the qualifying body for an area that was originally designated by BBC in January 2014.
- 3.2 It is the only Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish and does not relate to land outside the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Plan Period

- 3.3 Subject to **PM1** (see paragraph 4.5 below), the Plan specifies (on the front cover and in paragraph 1.1) the period to which it is to take effect, which is from 2022 to 2030.

Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.4 The Consultation Statement summarises the approach to consultation undertaken by the Parish Council. Following the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in October 2020 local residents were invited to provide feedback on the contents of the Plan – both written and on-line. All Parish Council meetings included an agenda item for an update to be given on the preparation of the GDNP; newsletters were distributed to all residents and significant use was made of Facebook to disseminate information.
- 3.5 I am able to conclude that opportunities to contribute towards the preparation of the GDNP have been available to all interested parties at the relevant stages, including at both the Regulation 14 stage (15 August 2022 – 14 October 2022) and the Regulation 16 stage (10 January 2023 – 22 February 2023). I also consider that, overall, the approach towards the

preparation of the GDNP has been conducted in a fair and inclusive manner, especially bearing in mind the limitations imposed by the Covid pandemic.

Development and Use of Land

3.6 The Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

Excluded Development

3.7 The Plan does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'.¹⁰

Human Rights

3.8 No issues have been raised in relation to any potential for a breach of Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). Based on my independent assessment of the GDNP and accompanying evidence, I see no reason to find otherwise.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

EU Obligations

4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan was screened for SEA (June 2022) and HRA (December 2022). The conclusion reached was that the GDNP does not require a full SEA or HRA to be undertaken. None of the statutory bodies, when consulted, disagreed with this conclusion. Having read the documentation, I support this finding.

Main Issues

4.2 I have approached the assessment of compliance with the Basic Conditions of the GDNP as two main matters:

- General issues of compliance of the Plan, as a whole; and
- Specific issues of compliance of the Plan policies.

General Issues of Compliance of the Plan

National Policy, Sustainable Development and the Development Plan

4.3 There are fourteen chapters in the GDNP, which are Introduction; the Strategic Policy Context; Parish Description; Consultation; Vision, Aims and Objectives; Sustainable Development; High Quality Design; Historic

¹⁰ See section 61K of the 1990 Act.

Environment; Sustainable Buildings and Construction; New Housing; Facilities and Businesses; Green and Blue Infrastructure; Traffic and Transport and Aspirations; and Implementation and Monitoring. There are also three Annexes – Policies Map; Glossary; and Table of aims and policies.

- 4.4 It is clear to me that BBC and GDPC have co-operated in the preparation of the GDNP and subject to the detailed comments that I set out below, I conclude that the GDNP has had proper regard to national policy and guidance. I also conclude that subject to the recommendations that I make:
- the GDNP is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Development Plan for the area, and that overall, the document provides an appropriate framework that will enable Great Denham to continue to grow as a community whilst ensuring that the quality of life, particularly for residents, will be retained and enhanced; and
 - that the policies, as modified, are supported by appropriate evidence, are sufficiently clear and unambiguous and that they can be applied with confidence.¹¹

Specific Issues of Compliance of the Plan’s Policies

[Introduction \(page 4\)](#)

- 4.5 The Introduction succinctly explains the purpose of the GDNP; the way in which the Plan has been produced and summarises the national planning context. In the interests of accuracy, the time period referred to in paragraph 1.2 should be up to 2030 (not 2035) and this is recommended in **PM1**.

[The Strategic Policy Context \(page 6\)](#)

- 4.6 Chapter 2 explains the relevant national policy context; explains the importance of sustainable development; and introduces the reader to relevant local planning documents.

[Parish Description \(page 7\)](#)

- 4.7 The evolution and history of Great Denham are appropriately described in chapter 3 – giving the reader a flavour of how development in the Parish has reached its current form. The chapter includes a summary of the green and blue infrastructure which is to be found in the area, together with information about education services, recreation facilities, local businesses and population data.

¹¹ PPG Reference ID: 41-041020140306.

[Consultation \(page 9\)](#)

- 4.8 Chapter 4 summarises the consultation that has been undertaken but there is no reference to the Consultation Statement that accompanies the GDNP. In the interests of completeness, I recommend that paragraph 4.1 be modified to include such a reference (**PM2**).

[Vision, Aims and Objectives \(page 11\)](#)

- 4.9 The Vision for the Parish is set out in paragraph 5.1. The stated Aims and Objectives are clearly articulated and, if met, there is no reason to conclude that the Vision cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

[Sustainable Development \(page 12\)](#)

- 4.10 Chapter 6 establishes the Sustainable Development Principles that are to be followed and I am satisfied that by taking into account these principles national advice on sustainable development, for example in the PPG on Neighbourhood Planning¹², will be appropriately followed.

[High Quality Design \(page 13\)](#)

- 4.11 Chapter 7 describes the three different phases of development at Great Denham and the design features that they each display. The achievement of a high quality of design is an important national objective¹³ and, to that end, the Great Denham Design guidance and codes (published in February 2022) have been produced.
- 4.12 Policy D1: The Design of New Development (page 17) clearly establishes the expectations of the Parish Council with regard to the design of new development. Policy D2: Maintaining Separation (page 18) ensures that the gap between Great Denham and Biddenham remains largely open in character.
- 4.13 In terms of design, I am generally satisfied that all the components of policy D1 are justified and, if implemented, will ensure that the character of the Parish will be retained. However, in order to ensure the scope of the policy is effective, I agree with the Parish Council¹⁴ that it is necessary to add an additional clause to policy D1 with regard to creating a safe environment and this is recommended in **PM3**.
- 4.14 Similarly, I agree that the identification of a gap between the two settlements is necessary in order to ensure that their individual identities are retained (policy D2). I have been advised that the principle of identifying gaps between settlements is supported by BBC elsewhere in

¹² PPG Reference ID: 41-072-20190509.

¹³ See National Design Code October 2019.

¹⁴ See response to my question 8 to the Parish Council.

the Borough.¹⁵ The two policies (D1 and D2) are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan and meet the other Basic Conditions.

- 4.15 In my supplementary question to the Parish Council dated 23 March 2023 (see paragraph 2.3), I inquire about the planning policy framework as it applies to the former golf clubhouse and adjacent parking area. The Parish Council (in its reply) summarises the policy context for the site and concludes that policies D1, D2 and F1 'provide sufficient guidance against which to assess any development proposals on this site'. I agree that, as it stands, the Basic Conditions have been met with regard to the Parish Council's approach to this site and that no further modifications to the GDNP, in this regard, are necessary.
- 4.16 In paragraph 7.13 of the supporting text there is a reference to the wildlife value of the regeneration of the former golf course. In the interests of accuracy, the Parish Council propose to delete this sentence and I agree that such a deletion would be appropriate because I am told that the land is currently in agricultural use.¹⁶ **PM4** is therefore recommended.

[Historic Environment \(page 18\)](#)

- 4.17 It is clear that evidence exists to confirm that the area is of archaeological interest and therefore the inclusion of [Policy D3: Archaeology](#) (page 20) is justified and meets the Basic Conditions.

[Sustainable Buildings and Construction \(page 20\)](#)

- 4.18 Energy efficiency and the provision of sustainable development are core national objectives and [Policy D4: Provision of sustainable buildings](#) (page 21) clearly sets out the expectations of the Parish Council in this regard. In the interests of clarity I recommend, in **PM5**, that the last sentence of the policy should be modified to clarify that all development should be subject to the test of 'appropriateness' and not just car parks.

[New Housing \(page 21\)](#)

- 4.19 There are currently no proposed housing allocations in the GDNP. Nevertheless, should housing development be proposed it is important, in order to comply with the strategic policies of the Development Plan, that affordable housing provision and the mix and tenure of dwellings are taken into account. Therefore, I am satisfied that [Policy D5: New Housing](#) meets the Basic Conditions.

¹⁵ See the responses to my question 2 to the Councils.

¹⁶ See Regulation 16 response from CODE Developer Planners Ltd.

Facilities and Businesses (page 22)

- 4.20 I saw on my visit a number of community facilities and local businesses and, particularly in a relatively 'new' settlement, I consider that such provision is essential for the 'well-being' of the community and in the interests of sustainability. Policy F1: Community facilities (page 24) seeks to resist the loss of any such viable facility and encourages new or improved provision. Such an approach meets the Basic Conditions. However, a decision maker may not be aware of the location of these facilities and therefore it is important that they are identified on the Policies Map (or an inset thereto). I therefore recommend **PM6** accordingly.
- 4.21 Policy F2: Supporting Local Businesses (page 25) seeks to retain and if possible, extend the range of small businesses. It also supports, where appropriate, planning applications for measures that would enable home working to take place. Such an approach will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and meet the other Basic Conditions.
- 4.22 In my letter of 9 March 2023 to the Parish Council, I raised the issue of identifying the shopping frontages, as referred to in policy F2, and an amended plan was submitted.¹⁷ However, I consider that the Plan identifies the shopping area (my underlining) and not the specific frontages. It is clear to me that the policy is intended to apply to the entirety of the premises and not just the frontage and therefore I recommend, in **PM7**, that the word 'frontages' be replaced by the word 'area'.

Green and Blue Infrastructure (page 26)

- 4.23 There is a comparatively large amount of open space to the north and south of Great Denham which adds significantly to the character of the Parish. Part of the open space to the north is protected by policy D2 (Maintaining separation), while to the south lies the Great Denham Country Park.
- 4.24 Policy G1: Open space provision as part of new development (page 27) seeks to ensure that certain requirements should be met. I have read the Great Denham Green Infrastructure Plan (December 2022). This is a clear and relatively comprehensive document which identifies green infrastructure areas and sets out 8 aspirations in terms of their protection and enhancement. This background information leads me to conclude that policy G1 (which relates to new open space provision) is justified, contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and meets the other Basic Conditions.

¹⁷ See the revised plan on the final page of the BBC and GDPC response of 31 March 2023.
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- 4.25 Policy G2: Local Green Spaces (page 28) seeks to protect three areas of Local Green Space (LGS), namely Village Green; Land behind the Park and Ride; and Anglia Way Meeting Place. As explained in paragraph 102 of the NPPF, LGS designation should only be used where the green space is: (a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; (b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity, or richness of its wildlife; and (c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land. Paragraph 101 of the NPPF also states that LGS designation should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and that the sites should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.
- 4.26 Having visited the 3 sites I am satisfied that the Village Green and the Anglia Way Meeting Place are justified and meet the relevant requirements. However, although land behind the Park and Ride is close to the community and local in character, it does not currently appear to serve the community in any meaningful way. I am also aware that the owners of the land (Bedford Borough Council) object to the designation.
- 4.27 The Great Denham Green Infrastructure Plan identifies the land as Location 1 (page 7). In Appendix B to that document is the assessment of the various LGS sites and I note that in Table B2 (page 34) the land behind the Park and Ride is ticked as being demonstrably special/locally significant but there is no further evidence that supports that conclusion. It is also stated that 'permission' has been granted by the Borough Council to use the land for community use¹⁸ but I have not been given any details of that 'permission'.
- 4.28 The Borough Council confirms that the future of the site is being considered¹⁹ but I have not been told what conclusions (if any) have currently been reached. On that basis, I conclude that the designation of LGS location 1 does not have sufficient regard to national policy, in so far as it is not clear that the site is capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period. Therefore, I recommend the deletion of this site from policy G2 and the consequential modification of the supporting text in paragraph 12.15 (**PM8**). In that way proper regard will be given to national policies and advice and all the Basic Conditions will be met.
- 4.29 Policy G3: Great Denham Country Park (page 29) confirms that relevant proposals will have to ensure that the important characteristics of the Park (in terms of biodiversity, recreation, flood alleviation and landscape) will be preserved and enhanced. This approach accords with national advice²⁰ and meets the Basic Conditions.

¹⁸ In the text adjacent to Plan 5.1 on page 7 of the Green Infrastructure Plan.

¹⁹ In response to my question 9 (last paragraph).

²⁰ See PPG on Open Space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space.

- 4.30 NPPF chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, emphasises the importance of protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity. Policy G4: Nature conservation (page 30), appropriately reflects this national advice. The policy meets the Basic Conditions.
- 4.31 In the interests of sustainability it is important that adequate provision is made for the movement of both pedestrians and cyclists and Policy G5: Provision for pedestrians and cyclists (page 31) supports such provision. In the interests of clarity, the Parish Council has suggested some additional wording with regard to encouraging safe cycleways and footpaths.²¹ I agree that this would provide the necessary clarity in regard to the Parish Council's approach and recommend accordingly in **PM9**. In this way, all the Basic Conditions will be met.

Traffic and Transport (page 31)

- 4.32 Policy T1: Traffic impact and sustainable travel (page 32) seeks to reduce car movements and supports sustainable methods of travel. The approach taken is compatible with the advice in chapter 9 of the NPPF entitled 'Promoting sustainable transport'. In terms of car parking provision, which I acknowledge is a concern to some residents, Policy T2: Car Parking (page 33) seeks to discourage the removal of off-road parking and requires new development to meet the Borough Council's parking standards. The policy also appropriately addresses the provision of electric charging points. The Parish Council suggests²² the inclusion of additional text in the policy making reference to the design of on-street parking provision. I consider such an amendment would provide the necessary clarity and recommend accordingly in **PM10**. I am satisfied that, as modified, both policies meet the Basic Conditions.

Aspirations, Implementation and Monitoring (page 33)

- 4.33 Chapter 14 focuses on the implementation of the GDNP. It explains the Parish Council's approach to working in partnership and summarises the roles that can be played by a number of interested parties. Reference is made to funding and implementation mechanisms, and it is confirmed that a review of the Plan will be undertaken every five years in order to ascertain whether or not the policies in the GDNP are successfully achieving the objectives of the local community.

The Annexes

- 4.34 The Policies Map is included as Annex A. A modified Policies Map was attached to the answers to the questions that I posed (dated 31 March 2023) and I recommend that the existing Map is updated²³ as proposed

²¹ In answer to my question 7.

²² In response to my question 6.

²³ See also **PM7** above.

by the Parish Council, but also taking into account the recommendations of this report where applicable (**PM11**).

- 4.35 The Annexes also include a Glossary and a Table of Aims and Policies. Both of these are of assistance to the decision maker.

Other Matters

Minor Amendments

- 4.36 Amendments to the text can be made consequential to the recommended modifications, alongside any other minor non-material changes, up-dates, or corrections in agreement between the Parish and Borough Councils.²⁴

5. Conclusions

Summary

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

The Referendum and its Area

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. I conclude that the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan (as modified) has no policy or proposals which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond that boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Overview

- 5.4 Although Great Denham lacks a historic core (indeed it could be described as a relatively new settlement), I found that the architecture, layout, use of materials, provision of services and facilities and the proximity of open space, all contributed to making the village an attractive place to live and

²⁴ PPG Reference ID:41-106-20190509.

work. It is clear that local residents value the character of the locality and the facilities that the village provides.

- 5.5 The GDNP is a very well presented document, which is written in a clear style. It is evident that significant effort has been invested in the preparation of the GDNP and there is no reason to doubt that the community's Vision for the Parish, of retaining the modern identity of the village within a rural environment, whilst securing a sustainable community, will be achieved.

David Hogger

Examiner

Appendix: Modifications (11)

Note: Additions are shown in **bold** and deletions denoted with ~~strikethrough~~.

Page references are those in the submitted draft Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan.

In the interests of brevity, where whole paragraphs have been deleted, the modification refers to the deletion of all the text.

| Proposed modification number (PM) | Page no: / other reference | Modification |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| PM1 | Page 5 Paragraph 1.2 | Replace 2035 with 2030 . |
| PM2 | Page 9 Paragraph 4.1 | Add a new sentence to paragraph 4.1 to read: Further information can be found in the accompanying Consultation Statement, which is available on the Parish Council website. |
| PM3 | Page 17 Policy D1 | Add a new clause (j) of the policy to read: Where relevant, result in a safe environment with appropriate levels of lighting and natural surveillance. |
| PM4 | Page 17 Paragraph 7.13 | Delete the following text: Over time, the wildlife value will increase as the land regenerates from the golf course use and an increase in both plant and animal species will result. |
| PM5 | Page 21 Policy D4 | Modify the last sentence of the policy to read: All new development will, where appropriate , be expected to minimise the use of water and provide water storage. and Hard surfaces such as |

| | | |
|------|---|--|
| | | driveways and car parks should where appropriate use permeable paving. |
| PM6 | Page 24 Policy F1 | Identify the listed community facilities on the Policies Map. |
| PM7 | Page 25 Policy F2 | In the first line replace frontages with area . |
| PM8 | Page 28 Paragraph 12.15 and Policy G2 | Delete <u>all</u> of paragraph 12.15 and replace it with: Six sites have been assessed against these criteria (see Green Infrastructure Plan). Of these, four do not meet the criteria – the golf Course, the Country Park, the kick about area and land behind the Park and Ride. The remaining two sites, namely the Village Green and the Anglia Way Meeting Place do meet the criteria and are therefore designated as Local Green Spaces and are shown on the Policies Map. Modify policy G2 by the deletion of the second site: ● Land behind the Park and Ride |
| PM9 | Page 31 Policy G5 | Add a new sentence to policy G5 to read: Proposals for new safe cycleways and footpaths will be encouraged, to promote healthy living and reduce environmental impact. |
| PM10 | Page 33 Policy T2 | Add a new clause to the end of the policy to read: Design of on-street parking provision must ensure that clear visibility will be achieved for drivers and pedestrians, to reduce risk and danger to both. |

| | | |
|------|-------------------------|---|
| PM11 | Page 36 Policies Map | Up-date the Policies Map to accord with the revised content of the GDNP, including the recommended modifications set out above. |
|------|-------------------------|---|



Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan

2022-2030

Submission Draft December 2022

Examiners modifications marked with additions highlighted
yellow and deletions strikethrough

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Foreword

The 2011 Localism Act introduced Neighbourhood Planning to provide communities the opportunity to shape the way they developed in the future at a local level. This opportunity gave power directly to communities in order for them to develop a shared vision for the future, which in turn would allow them to ensure any development was sustainable into the future.

In January 2014, Great Denham Parish Council was successful with its application to become designated by Bedford Borough Council as an approved Neighbourhood Area. Over time, Great Denham grew as a village and in September 2020 Great Denham Parish Council agreed that a Steering Group should be formed in order to create its own Neighbourhood Development Plan.

In October 2020 the Great Denham Neighbourhood Steering Group was formed in order to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. This plan has been produced following community-wide consultation, observations and concerns raised by residents with the Parish Council about its future. It brings together census information, along with other strategic and statistical evidence in order to evidence the community's wishes to develop and grow in a sustainable manner into the future.

The Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group included Parish Council members and volunteers from the local community, on behalf of the Parish Council. The value and commitment of these few people has been immense. Additional support has been provided by professional planning experts, including Chapman Planning and Aecom. Further support and guidance has been provided by planning officers from Bedford Borough Council. Once the Plan has been finalised, and following a favourable local referendum, the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the development plan and become, with the Borough Council's Local Plan, the starting point for deciding where development should take place and the type and quality of that development.

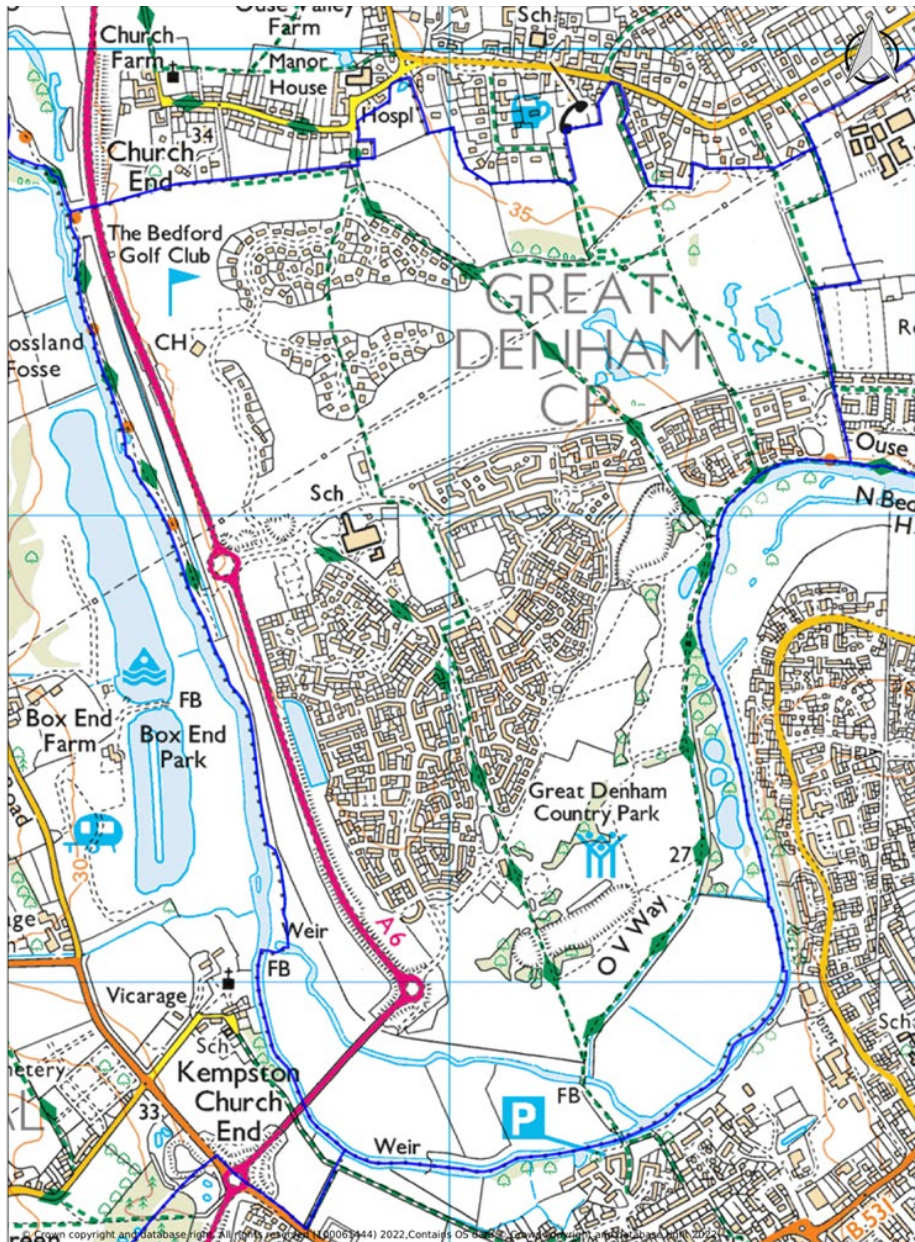
The Neighbourhood Plan Team included:

Members of the Steering Group: Louise Evans (Chair), Will Sinclair (Vice-Chair) until March 2022, Jim Weir (Vice-Chair) from April 2022, Anna O'Meara (Secretary), Chris Staite, Craig Lymm, Donna Parsons, Helen Allen, Jo Ruskin, Kevin Cawood, Sean Ghulam-Qadir, Vince Arthur, Lin Norton, Glynda Easterbrook
Consultants: Sally Chapman of Chapman Planning, Ben Castell and Stela Kontogianni of Aecom (Design Code)

1. Introduction

A new plan for Great Denham Parish

- 1.1. This document is the Neighbourhood Plan for Great Denham and covers the entire Great Denham Parish as shown in Figure 1. It sets out the community's wishes for Great Denham over the period to 2030 and establishes policies relating to several key policy areas. These policies will influence future planning applications and decisions within the parish.



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Figure 1: Neighbourhood Plan Area contiguous with the Parish Boundary (blue line)

- 1.2. This Neighbourhood Plan also gives the local community a say in how the places they live and work should change and develop over time, and is designed to provide the real voice of how the residents of Great Denham wish the area to develop over this time period up to ~~2035~~ **2030**.
- 1.3. Great Denham was formally designated as an area for neighbourhood planning purposes in January 2014. The Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has surveyed, spoken to and listened to residents about the issues and opportunities they believe Great Denham has. These views have helped to inform and develop this neighbourhood plan including the production of the policies and projects presented in this Neighbourhood Plan.

Producing a Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.4. There are several stages involved in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. This plan is currently in draft format and will be consulted upon with residents to ensure their views are encapsulated within it. This amended version will then be submitted to Bedford Borough Council for further publication and then independent examination before it subsequently goes to referendum where the residents of Great Denham will be able to cast their vote on whether they believe this Neighbourhood Plan should be brought into force. If at this point more than 50% of those people who turnout vote “yes”, the Neighbourhood Plan will be used to help shape planning decisions and applications within Great Denham.

National Planning Context

- 1.5. In 2011, the Localism Act introduced a new opportunity for local communities to shape their future formally as part of the planning system. Neighbourhood Plans can be produced by Parish Councils and when they have gone through all the required steps and processes, they become part of the development plan for the area. This means that any planning applications will have to take account of policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan. It also provides local people with a say on how land use and buildings can develop over time, such as protecting open spaces and improving local character.
- 1.6. Producing a Neighbourhood Plan is a formal process involving several stages, governed by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, but critically important is that the Plan is developed with continuing community involvement. In order to rigorously test the policies of a neighbourhood Plan, an independent Examination is carried out. The Neighbourhood Plan must conform to the following ‘basic conditions’:
 - consistency with local planning policy
 - demonstrates how the plan will contribute towards sustainable development
 - regard to national policy;
 - general conformity with strategic local policy;
 - contributing to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - compatibility with EU obligations (now absorbed into UK obligations); and
 - meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

2. The Strategic Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021 and sets out the Government's approach to sustainable development. At the heart of the NPPF is the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. Essentially, it is about positive growth with economic, social and environmental gains being sought simultaneously through the planning system. Neighbourhood planning forms part of the NPPF approach to planning, to allow local communities to shape sustainable development within their area and to enable local communities to address their strategic needs and priorities. The NPPF states that Neighbourhood Plans should set out a positive vision for the future of the local area with planning policies to determine decisions on planning applications, including policies which set out the quality of development that should be expected for the area, based on stated objectives for the area's future and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. However, a Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and plan positively to support these policies.

Sustainable development

- 2.2 The Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF states that pursuing sustainable development includes making it easier to create jobs in villages, to promote gains in biodiversity, to achieve better quality design, to improve people's quality of life, and to provide a wider choice of high-quality homes.
- 2.3 Therefore, the aims objectives, policies and proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan should be assessed against their ability to achieve sustainable development. Wherever possible the Neighbourhood Plan should actively promote the achievement of sustainable development.

Local Planning Documents

- 2.4 The current Local Plan currently consists of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 which was adopted on the 15th January 2020. There are also some remaining relevant policies in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 and these are referenced in the Local Plan 2030. At the time of writing, Bedford Borough Council are preparing their Local Plan 2040 for submission. The Borough also has a suite of Supplementary Planning Documents which provide more detailed information and application of policies. The current list is available on the Borough Councils website.
- 2.5 Great Denham is described within the Local Plan 2030 as an urban development area which has developed vastly over the last ten years. It is however noted that capacity for development in this urban area is becoming increasingly constrained due to the large amount of development that has already taken place.
- 2.6 It is therefore acknowledged within the Local Plan 2030 that allocation of further sites in the urban area will have to have necessary infrastructure upgrades in order to support any growth. There are currently no new allocations for growth for Great Denham listed within the Local Plan 2030,

however, two sites were identified during the production of the Local Plan and one of those has a current planning application for 95 houses (Mercia Road).

Other relevant documents

- 2.7 Bedford Borough Local Transport Plan is known as LTP3 and covers the period up to 2021. It is currently under review.
- 2.8 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)
- 2009 - Great Denham Design Guide and Code SPD
 - 2013 - Open Space SPD
 - 2014 - Adopted parking standards for sustainable communities SPD
 - 2018 - Sustainable drainage systems SPD

3. Parish Description

- 3.1 Great Denham is relatively new village and parish in Bedfordshire separated from the western outskirts of Bedford. The parish borders Biddenham village to the north, Queens Park in Bedford to the east, the River Great Ouse to the south and the A428 to the west. The village originally started with the construction of houses in the original “Golf Village” area including Carnoustie Drive and the roads off this. A further estate of houses was started and completed in the 1990’s with the Great Portway/Muirfield development. The remaining part of the village then started to be built in the Greenkeepers Road area in 2010 and Phase 3 of the village is now nearing completion in 2022. In total there are expected to be 1750 residences. A further planning application for 95 houses has been submitted in Mercia Road.
- 3.2 The Census showed that Great Denham had a population of 1553 in 2011, however it is expected that this number will have significantly increased when the 2021 Census figures are released.
- 3.3 The main vehicle access to and from Great Denham is via the A428/The Branston Way which joins both King Alfred Way and Kingswood Way to the main transport network. There is also access for buses and bicycles via a bus gate to Old Ford End Road in Queens Park through Greenkeepers Road. The A428 connects Great Denham to the A428/A4280 Bromham Road to the north and the A5134 (Cemetery Road, Kempston) and B560 (Box End Road, Kempston) to the south-west. The nearest train station to Great Denham is Bedford which is approximately 1.6 miles (2.56km) away.
- 3.4 The village benefits from a number of local services including a primary school, local supermarket, a community hall and a medical centre. There is a range of shops and eateries located in the centre of the village.

Development of the settlement

- 3.5 Despite being a relatively young village, Great Denham has a rich history. There was evidence found when Great Denham was being developed to show the land was used from the Bronze Age over 5000 years ago with a Bronze Age Archer found during one archaeological dig. By the 7th century AD the area was in the Saxon kingdom of Mercia and during this period the Vikings were making

incursions into Saxon territory. During the build of Great Denham Primary School the remains of a Roman Chapel were discovered and the site sits under the school staff car park.

- 3.6 More recently the land has been mostly agricultural with land in the early 1990s belonging to the Wingfield family. The land became known as “The Biddenham Loop” due to being bordered on the western, southern and eastern borders by the Great Ouse as well as at that point sitting in the parish of Biddenham.
- 3.7 During the 1990s plans were drawn up to develop two phases of the Biddenham Loop and a section 106 agreement was created between Bedford Borough Council, Bovis Homes and two trustees of the “Old Ford End Trust” (OFET) which had been set up by the Wingfield family. Phase one including building 250 houses split across Carnoustie Drive, St Mellion Drive, Prestwick Road, Great Portway, Little Portway, The Whitings, Stone Close, Lytham Close, Mentmore Close and Muirfield. The first houses were moved into in 1998 and the community was born.
- 3.8 In 1999 the Bedford Golf Course opened and was developed to provide an Urban Gap and Open Green Space between the settlements of Biddenham and Great Denham. Whilst the golf club has now closed, the land remains identified as a Urban Gap (Policy AD41 of the Local Plan 2030).
- 3.9 In 2004 planning permission was granted for a medical facility (now known as The Village Medical Centre). It was deemed by the Local Authority soon after this that Great Denham which was still part of Biddenham Parish at the time would by the end of the overall build programme need to become its own parish and therefore in 2006 a residents group formed to start the handover from Biddenham so that Great Denham could become its own parish.
- 3.10 Great Denham Parish Council originally started off with most of the members of the Residents Association becoming its first Parish Councillors. In 2007 David Wilson Homes started the second phase of development and commenced weekly meetings with the parish council. Due to the financial crisis in August 2008 much of the original Section 106 commitment in the Great Denham Design Brief was abandoned meaning community facilities such as a Library, Ecumenical building, Public House, Office Units and Youth Facility were never built. The original plan was to build 1500 houses within the parish however it is estimated that when building finalises in 2022 the total dwellings in the parish will be around 1750.
- 3.11 A large section of Great Denham sits within a floodplain and this was turned into a Country Park, pavilion and sports pitches. In the floods of December 2020 large sections of the Country Park were under water, however no houses were flooded.

History

- 3.12 For nearly half a century, archaeologists were aware that the parcel of land known locally, and in archaeological literature as the Biddenham Loop (now Great Denham) contained evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity. The extensive developments identified the full archaeological potential of the area. Evidence from the investigations indicates that there was continuous human occupation of the area for a period of 5000 years.

- 3.13 There is one Scheduled Monument, the oval barrow 60m west of Ranworth Walk, 650m south west of Westfield School.

Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI)

- 3.14 Green and blue Infrastructure (GBI) is a descriptive term which describes the network of open spaces, countryside, footpaths, the heritage landscape, rivers/stream etc. A good GBI network can significantly improve people's quality of life and health as well as providing habitats for plants and wildlife. The Parish is rich in both, with the Country Park and golf course to the south and north and much of the Parish Boundary being marked by the River Ouse. Much of these areas are either open for people to walk as they wish and/or crossed by footpaths and cycle paths. There are also green areas and planting/hedgerows within the built up area although the quantity and quality of these vary across the village.
- 3.15 A Green Infrastructure Plan has been prepared for the Parish.

Education

- 3.16 In 2012 Great Denham Primary School opened with 100 children and in 2021 had 560 on its nominal roll. The school is a modern and innovative school that sits at the heart of the Great Denham community and has children from pre-school (age 3) to year 6 (age 11). The school is innovative in its approach to learning within the local area and aims to inspire and empower children to learn; it is highly regarded by parents and the wider community.

Recreation facilities

- 3.17 Recreation facilities in Great Denham include the Country Park (venue for a weekly Parkrun), a MUGA (marked as basketball and netball courts with hoops), a network of footpaths/cycle paths, children's play areas, football pitches (hired via Bedford Borough Council), plus available green space for families to enjoy.

Local business, services and employment

- 3.18 Local businesses include a small Retail centre in the middle of Great Denham, containing a small supermarket, local stores, coffee shop, charity shops, fish and chip shop, estate agents, a Nursery and physiotherapist. There are also a number of small, home-based businesses throughout Great Denham.

Population & Household Data

- 3.19 Although 2022 Census data is not yet available, the population of Great Denham can currently be estimated at 4000 – this is based on the electoral register (December 2021) of 3079, the school roll of 567 (of which 92% are Great Denham children) plus children of secondary school age.

4. Consultation

What residents told us

4.1 In Summer 2020, a 'Have your say' survey was carried out via SurveyMonkey due to Covid-19 restrictions. At that time 43 responses were received. A resident survey on the golf course closure, run at the same time, received 115 responses and also provided valuable feedback on use of the green space and recreation for the Neighbourhood Plan. **Further information can be found in the accompanying Consultation Statement, which is available on the Parish Council website.** The key areas of interest or concern are shown in the table below.

| What do you like about living in Great Denham? | What are the issues faced by residents that should be included/addressed through the Neighbourhood Planning process? |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good green areas and open spaces • Good road connections • Quiet village living and village feeling • Sense of community • Country park, community hall and the events that take place there • Closeness to the river • Play areas for the children • The facilities and services we have, e.g., shops at Retail centre • Footpaths for walking and cycling • All the qualities of living in the countryside without being in the middle of nowhere | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling littering, parking and speeding around Great Denham • Better public transport to Milton Keynes and stations • Improved facilities, e.g., pub, better medical centre • Threat of further development and loss of green space • Insufficient parking and narrow roads • Lack of facilities for teenagers/young adults • Protection of habitats from more building • Tackling crime • Adoption of remaining development |
| Facilities that people would like to see | Things that might be included as policies in the Neighbourhood Plan |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better public transport into Bedford and Milton Keynes, including to the rail station • Food and drink facilities such as a pub • Better car parking facilities • Sports facilities, including pitches for football, tennis, golf, and the Sports Pavilion, a gym • Improved access to GPs and health facilities • More recreational facilities, including in the green spaces • Facilities for young people • Current facilities, e.g., school, surgeries shops, to keep step with any growth in housing • Litter and Dog Bins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of green spaces from further development • Parking provision • Traffic and speed management and speed limits • Restrictions on height of buildings and overall housing aspect • Provision of open spaces amongst housing • Restrictions on numbers of Houses of Multiple Occupancy • Provision of facilities linked to development that addresses any gaps, e.g., school expansion, other buildings • Better signage and policies to encourage use of Country Park and community |

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved recycling facilities • Variety of food outlets, e.g., takeaways • More traffic calming/speed restrictions • Community-based events and activities | <p>activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkways and Cycleways |
|---|--|

4.2 In Spring 2021, a newsletter was produced and a more detailed survey (March 2021 Survey) was carried out again via SurveyMonkey due to Covid-19 restrictions. This newsletter was delivered to all flats and houses within the village and a total of 80 responses were returned.

4.3 This questionnaire sought views on a number of key areas including:

- Shaping future development
- Design of future development
- Infrastructure
- Community facilities
- Green spaces
- Environment, ecology, geology and biodiversity

Events held

4.4 In September 2021, the Great Denham ‘Great Comeback’ event at the Community Hall also provided the first opportunity to engage with residents face to face, and gain valuable feedback on the questions for the Design Code; over 1000 residents were at this event, and had the opportunity to see the draft policies, Neighbourhood Plan Vision and proposed green spaces illustrated on posters.

5. Vision, Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 The Vision and Aims of this Neighbourhood Plan have been carefully developed following consultation and analysis of the area. and refined by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to reflect the priorities of the community and help set the future of the village. The Vision is the overall objective of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Vision

Our vision is that Great Denham will retain its modern identity set within a rural environment. Developing as a sustainable, diverse community, the health and wellbeing of its residents will be enhanced through easy access to great amenities and open green space.

- 5.2 The four Aims are more detailed, each with a primary statement and several objectives allowing the development of policies which in turn will be used to comment on and determine planning applications.

Aim 1: To ensure any future developments within Great Denham are sustainable, have suitable infrastructure and are in keeping with existing development.

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Built Environment | 1i | <i>New development will be of high quality, visually attractive and in harmony with its immediate setting and character. It will provide a pleasant and safe place for all residents to live.</i> |
| | 1ii | <i>The gap between settlements will be maintained to retain the separate identity of Great Denham and the balance between built form and open green space.</i> |
| Sustainable development | 1iii | <i>New development will protect or enhance the historic environment, incorporate sustainable building features and measures to provide high speed broadband.</i> |
| Housing | 1iv | <i>New housing developments should include a mix of housing types, sizes and affordability to create a framework in which a diverse community can grow and become established. Smaller units to provide for young people and the elderly will be encouraged.</i> |

Aim 2: To develop existing and create further facilities and services to support the residents and businesses of Great Denham.

| | | |
|---|-------------|---|
| Community facilities and services | 2i | <i>New development will ensure that new residents have at least the same access to community facilities as existing residents and new developments will contribute to the facilities and services of the parish.</i> |
| Local Business | 2ii | <i>Existing commercial buildings will be retained for business or community use. New small scale businesses and live work units will be encouraged.</i> |
| Aim 3: To protect and enhance existing and future open spaces. | | |
| Green Infrastructure and Recreation | 3i | <i>Existing green and blue infrastructure will be protected, enhanced where appropriate and new green spaces will be provided. Wildlife and habitats will be protected and enhanced.</i> |
| | 3ii | <i>The riverside, Country Park and ponds will be enhanced and promoted for enjoyment of residents and visitors.</i> |
| | 3iii | <i>Safe and attractive walking, riding and cycling will be provided through the provision of a complete and connected network of Public Rights of Way.</i> |
| Aim 4: To manage both existing and future traffic and transport provision and encourage safe and sustainable movement. | | |
| Traffic and Transport | 4i | <i>New development shall be planned and constructed to ensure that all residents have ready access to local facilities, services and transport networks by bicycle, public transport or private car and that pathways are provided for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility vehicles.</i> |
| | 4ii | <i>New developments should not exacerbate existing parking problems and shall ensure adequate and appropriate parking for new residents.</i> |

6. Sustainable Development

Introduction

- 6.1 Reflecting the NPPF and the consideration of locations for new housing development by Bedford Borough through the Local Plan 2030, there are three over-arching (Development Principles) principles to ensure that new development is sustainable, achieves high design & environmental standards, reflects local preferences in terms of location and delivers new community infrastructure.
- 6.2 The Parish has a distinctive character and new development should protect, reflect and enhance that character. There is a need for development to contribute to the quality of life for residents, including healthy lifestyles, access to local services, green open spaces, safe places for active play, and to be accessible by walking and cycling and public transport.
- 6.3 It is generally accepted that new development is necessary but there is a strong feeling that this should meet the needs of local people - existing and future generations, applying the principles of sustainable development to reflect environmental, economic and social needs.
- 6.4 For Great Denham, the meaning of sustainable development is set out below.

Sustainable Development Principles

Sustainable development for Great Denham means that development should be:

- *At an appropriate scale and in locations where it would support the community,*
- *Of a high standard of design, reflecting the character of the surroundings,*
- *Contributing towards community infrastructure,*
- *Ensuring that there is no increase in the risk of flooding to Great Denham and the surrounding area,*
- *Meeting contemporary construction, energy efficiency and water management standards,*
- *Located and designed to enable safe walking and cycling to local services and facilities, preferably within a 500m radius of those locations.*

The following adverse impacts must be avoided:

- *The loss or inappropriate diversion of public rights of way,*
- *Avoidable reduction of gaps between the Parish and neighbouring settlements.*
- *The loss of or damage to wildlife habitats and hedgerows and trees,*
- *A loss of amenity for existing residential properties and reduced efficiency for nearby businesses,*
- *Overloading existing utilities and services (including water, draining, sewage, waste, telecommunications, gas and electric).*

7. High Quality Design

- 7.1 The NPPF and the Local Plan 2030 recognise that well-designed buildings and places improve the quality of life and that it is a core planning principle to secure good design. The Neighbourhood Plan wishes to reflect community opinion and aspirations and add a local dimension to the assessment of proposals for new housing by requiring high quality design. Good design is not just about appearance, but also functionality and the relationship to surroundings. The aim is to create site-specific creative design, which is contextual by referencing form and materials to the surroundings.
- 7.2 Feedback from residents (survey September 2020) reflects what the community values about the development and its surroundings: the green areas and open spaces, the facilities and services, footpaths, play areas and closeness to the river, and the quiet village living and village feel, coupled with a sense of community – *“all the qualities of living in the countryside without being in the middle of nowhere”*.
- 7.3 Great Denham is a relatively recent Parish made up largely of three different phases of development:
- **Phase 1 (built in the 1990s) comprises 2 distinct neighbourhoods.**

The residential area to the north of the Parish, along Carnoustie Drive and St Mellion Drive where the properties were built around the former Golf Course is the first phase which is informally known as the ‘Golf Village’. The properties, all detached large houses, are set back from the meandering road and the buildings are set at irregular angles to the roads. This creates interesting views along the streetscene. The gaps between buildings are generous, the building plots are large and the well sized front and back gardens are equipped with rich vegetation, trees and flowers. The parking provision is on-plot and garages.

The area to the west of Kingswood Way where the properties are laid out along cul-de-sac streets which look like private drives with no pavement. Along those private lanes there is a sense of a shared space and enclosure with limited front gardens. However, the properties along the main road, Great Portway, are set back with rich vegetation and green verges in between to create a buffer. Building lines are slightly irregular, whilst building rotations vary creating a visual interest. There are gaps between buildings and well-sized back gardens bordered with physical boundary treatments. The parking provision is on-plot and garages.
 - **Phase 2 (Built in the 2010s)**

The second phase along Greenkeepers Road, Saxon Way (and roads off), comprises a comprehensive development including housing, employment, schools, community facilities and open space provision. This phase also includes the sites adjacent to Mercia Road, for which planning permission has not been granted yet. The growth pattern is substantially different to phase 1 area in terms of density, plot sizes and layout of buildings. The high density in this area is translated into minimal or no gaps between buildings, continuous building frontages, as well as a great number of rear parking courtyards; the latter creates large areas of hard landscaping. However, along the green edges, where density reduces, the gaps between buildings become bigger and the relationship with the adjacent nature and open green spaces is more apparent.
 - **Phase 3 (Built in the 2020s)**

The third phase, King Alfred Way/ Anglia Way (and roads off), includes the southern part of Great Denham. Again, density is higher than phase 1 area, which is translated into limited gaps

between buildings and smaller plots. However, in contrast to phase 2 area, courtyard parking has been reduced in this area and it has been replaced by on-street parking and carports.

- 7.4 In general, there is substantially less vegetation in both phase 2 and 3 areas, compared to phase 1, with little or no front gardens and small rear gardens. The building lines are more regular, with small variations in building setbacks, creating a consistent frontage.

Design Code

- 7.5 A Design Codes document for the Parish was commissioned by the Parish Council and carried out by Aecom and funded through the Government's neighbourhood planning support grant. It is a separate technical background document to the Neighbourhood Plan. It includes numerous examples of features of Great Denham and includes guidance on how to design new buildings to compliment the surrounding street scene or landscape in an appropriate and sympathetic manner. Once adopted this new Design Code will replace the previous versions.
- 7.6 The Design Code sets out general principles that should be present in any design proposal, explaining that considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, considering not only the immediate neighbouring buildings, but also the landscape and character of the wider locality. The local pattern of streets and spaces, gardens and access to open space, building sizes, heights, architectural details and materials all help to determine the character and identity of a development.
- 7.7 It is important that full account is taken of the local context and that the new design embodies the 'sense of place' and also meets the aspirations of people already living in that area. The public spaces, also known as the public realm, also add to the sense of place, including paving materials, verges, planting areas and street furniture, whilst boundary treatments such as railings and fences enclose the public realm.
- 7.8 In addition, account needs to be made of the way that people live, including good quality living spaces, the provision of social and community infrastructure and leisure opportunities, how they travel to those facilities and enabling easy access by walking and cycling. Security and the perception of being safe is an important feature of design for example ensuring that pathways are well lit at night and are overlooked by houses which provide natural surveillance.
- 7.9 Concern over climate change also has an impact on design. Simple measures like designing houses to be heated by the sun, depending on the way they are orientated to the sun's trajectory and green technology can reduce the impact of climate change, making development more eco-friendly. Rainwater can be harvested and electric charging points for vehicles provided for new buildings.
- 7.10 The Design Codes for Great Denham can be summarised as follows

Placemaking and local identity (DC.01):

- 1. Patterns of growth: new developments should respect the building and open space patterns and settlement edges of the existing settlement to contribute positively to its character and create a consistent scene.

- 2. Legibility and wayfinding: when places are well signposted both by road names or distinctive buildings and features, it is easier for people to orientate themselves.
- 3. Boundary lines and treatments: to respect the existing context, both the building and the boundary features should be consistent with neighbouring properties while enabling enough variations for visual interest.
- 4. Social and community infrastructure: more local amenities are needed to make the area a place to stop and stay offering a high level of engagement.
- 5. Materials and architectural details for buildings and the public spaces: the building materials and architectural detailing used throughout Great Denham can be a positive reference point for new development and contribute to its character.
- 6. Housing size and storage space. Ensure that the minimum space standards of bedrooms are met by design and innovative design can propose ideas for maximising the storage space.

Access and Movement (DC.02):

- 7. Prioritising walking and cycling: new developments should introduce well connected and attractive pedestrian and cycling routes to encourage residents to use walking and cycling as their preferred way of travelling.
- 8. People-friendly streets: The design of new streets and junctions must incorporate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
- 9. Parking and servicing: Parking is a sensitive matter for Great Denham, issues include poor parking resulting from limited and therefore, cases of unofficial, on-street parking spaces and abundance of parking courts with minimum vegetation. New development should avoid these problems. Waste storage needs to be provided.
- 10. Cycle parking: Appropriate cycle storage and parking will encourage cycle use.

Landscape, nature and open space (DC.03):

- 11. Creating a green network: Green networks, corridors and linkages are a key mechanism for reversing the effects of fragmentations on biodiversity as well as having a positive social impact on communities.
- 12. Biodiversity: Biodiversity should be a priority in new development.
- 13. Trees and open spaces: Trees are important contributors in addressing the climate change resilience.

Sustainability and energy efficiency (DC.04):

- 14. Sustainable buildings: energy efficient technologies should be incorporated in buildings. The use of such principles and design tools is strongly encouraged to futureproof buildings and avoid the necessity of retrofitting.
- 15. Minimising construction waste: As part of environmental management the waste generated during construction is minimised, reused within the site or recycled.
- 16. Recycling materials and buildings: To meet the government's target of being carbon neutral by 2050, it is important to recycle and reuse materials and buildings.
- 17. Water management (SuDs): Sustainable Drainage Systems cover a range of approaches to manage surface water in a sustainable way to reduce flood risk and improve water quality.

- 7.11 Development proposals should include a Design and Access Statement, or other written statement related to the scale and complexity of the scheme, which shows that the development has been designed to specifically relate to its setting and complies with Great Denham’s Design Code.

Policy D1: The Design of New Development

Proposals for good quality new development (including new buildings and extensions to existing buildings) will be supported, where they are in accordance with the guidelines and design principles set out in the Great Denham Design Code.

All new development within the existing built up area must:

- a. *Relate to the existing development pattern in terms of enclosure and definition of streets/spaces,*
- b. *Be of an appropriate scale and density in relation to its setting,*
- c. *Use materials appropriate to the development’s context,*
- d. *Integrate car parking within landscaping so that it does not dominate the street,*
- e. *Be well integrated with the community and facilities by reinforcing pedestrian connections and taking opportunities to provide new ones.*
- f. *Be of a design with a locally inspired or distinctive character,*
- g. *Provide a variety of house types to create interest in the streetscape,*
- h. *Provide sufficient garden space or easy access to open space or balconies as appropriate to the type of dwelling,*
- i. *Ensure parking is designed to avoid a car-dominant streetscape whilst avoiding the use of communal parking courts,*
- j. ***Where relevant, result in a safe environment with appropriate levels of lighting and natural surveillance.***

Gap between Settlements

- 7.12 The village environment, particularly the open spaces and natural habitats, and its identity is well supported and highly regarded by village residents. The Parish is densely populated within the built-up areas and the extent of the greenspace which surrounds the built-up area is one of the most important characteristics of the parish and provides a distinct sense of place. To the south of Great Denham, the country park provides the landscape setting for the built-up area whilst to the north lies the golf course, which is now disused.
- 7.13 The first phase of development of Great Denham was in the northernmost part of the parish and marketed at the time as a development which was an integral part of the golfing facilities and open space. The golf course has now closed as a formal recreation facility, but the former golf course land remains an important area for exercise, as it is crisscrossed by both footpaths and cycleways used by residents of Great Denham and Biddenham alike. ~~Over time, the wildlife value will increase as the land regenerates from the golf course use and an increase in both plant and animal species will result.~~

- 7.14 The 2020/21 Covid-19 restrictions and lockdowns raised the importance of Great Denham’s open spaces as essential to the mental and general health of village residents, both young and old; an appreciation that will remain and increase as the habitat establishes and becomes richer in flora and fauna. In the ‘Have Your Say’ survey (March 2021) 60% of the respondents said they wished to see the golf course protected as a green space. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the village open space environment is also enjoyed by those walking and cycling in from the surrounding areas.

Separation from Biddenham

- 7.15 In 2011, Bedford Borough Council reviewed their policies relating to gaps between settlements and gaps between villages and the urban edge of Bedford. One of the outcomes was the designation of an Urban Open Space and Gap between Biddenham and Great Denham in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan Policy AD43 which is recognized in Local Plan Policy 37. The study described the gap as *‘the open land to the south of Biddenham is about 120m wide. The land is used as a golf course. It is important in providing a physical and visual gap between Biddenham and the recent development at Great Denham’*. The designation is shown on the Local Plan Policies Map by green shading (for the Urban Open Space) and arrows (for the Urban Open Space Gap) in three locations. However, the central arrow does not bridge the full width of the gap. In addition, the arrows do not reflect the importance of the smaller gaps between the components of the housing development as a contribution to the whole. Accordingly, the arrows as amended are shown on the Policies Map which extend to the full width of the Urban Gap and are also shown between the different elements of the existing golf course housing development.
- 7.16 It is recognised that coalescence does not occur with one single development. It is not the final infill development that joins two settlements that can be attributed with their coalescence, but rather the creep of settlement expansion that occurs over time. It is therefore very important that both the separation from Biddenham and the open gap which provides the setting in the northern part of the parish is not ‘nibbled away’ through piecemeal development.

Policy D2: Maintaining separation

The undeveloped gap between Great Denham and Biddenham as shown by arrows on the Policies Map will be retained. New development which would functionally, visually or fundamentally merge the two settlements will be refused.

Any development proposals will be required to ensure that the biodiversity, recreation, and landscape values of the gap are preserved and enhanced.

8. Historic Environment

- 8.1 The NPPF identifies the historic environment as a Core Planning Principle. As part of the investigations prior to the development of Great Denham, archaeological surveys were undertaken. Evidence from the investigations indicates that there was continuous human occupation of the area for a period of 5000 years.

Early Prehistory

- 8.2 The oldest artefact found in the investigations was a flint handaxe dating to the Palaeolithic period, some 50,000 years ago. The first extensive evidence for a human presence dates to c.8000 years ago (the Mesolithic). It comprises mainly flint artefact concentrations within the modern ploughsoil and suggests that small groups of mobile “hunter gatherers” operated in this area and created encampments on the edge of woodland overlooking the river.
- 8.3 The earliest firm evidence for humans leaving a mark on the landscape was dated by radiocarbon determinations to 6,000 years ago, during the early Neolithic when a number of small ditched monuments were constructed.
- 8.4 By c.4,000 years ago during the Bronze Age the area had become a major focus of ceremonial and funerary events. The earliest monuments continued to have significance as indicated by the clustering around them of new monuments, known as barrows or ring ditches. One of these contained the burial of an archer, as indicated by the presence in his grave of a stone wrist guard and flint arrowheads.

Later Prehistory

- 8.5 A major transformation of the area started around 3,500 years ago, during the middle Bronze Age, when the open, monument-dominated landscape started to be replaced by one of enclosed fields, hedgerows and trackways (not unlike one that we would recognise today). The emergence of land divisions is clearly, in part, a reflection of changes in society itself, perhaps a response to increasing population and consequent pressure on land.
- 8.6 By c.2,500 years ago during the middle Iron Age, the area was densely settled by several different farming communities utilising the pre-existing fields. Their settlements typically comprised a roundhouse, which was the normal building type prior to the Roman Conquest, and storage pits which stored seed grain.

Romans and Saxons

- 8.7 There is no evidence for a major change in the existing community around the time of the Roman Conquest in c.AD43. The pre-existing farms continued in use and people were buried in the same way. A shrine complex was discovered which comprised square buildings, two within a rectangular enclosure, originated in the late Iron Age but continued in use after the Roman Conquest. No similar complex has been found in Britain and the closest known parallel is from Northern France.
- 8.8 A number of pottery kilns were found suggesting that the inhabitants diversified from being solely farmers.

- 8.9 One particularly unusual grave, known as a bustum burial, was found in the later Roman period. It comprised a large rectangular pit within which cremated remains were placed in a large pottery vessel. It was exceptional because the individual had been cremated on a wooden couch (as indicated by the type of charred wood and nails present) with a dog, at a time when cremation was not standard rite.
- 8.10 For perhaps the last 50 years of the Roman period there appears to have been a steep decline in population and this continued into the early Saxon period. Of the five farmsteads in the area during the Roman period only one was definitely still occupied at the start of the 5th century.
- 8.11 Great Denham parish has one scheduled monument, an oval Barrow near Ranworth Walk which would have been a burial place. Although no earthworks can now be observed on the ground, the buried ditches surrounding the barrow are clearly visible as cropmarks on a sequence of aerial photographs and were recorded by a geophysical survey in 1994.
- 8.12 All development proposals which could potentially harm or destroy any archaeological asset will be considered in the context of the importance of the discovered asset. Potential mitigation measures will need to be put in place or if the significance is high, the asset should be retained in situ. All findings will need to be made public in line with the requirements set out in the NPPF.

Policy D3: Archaeology

Applications for any new development with the potential to impact archaeological remains must be accompanied by a professional assessment setting out an understanding of:

- ***the significance and current state of preservation of archaeological material which may be affected by the proposal,***
- ***the potential impacts of the scheme upon that significance, and***
- ***the requirements to conserve or further investigate and provide public interpretation of heritage assets of archaeological interest proportionate to their identified significance.***

Where archaeology of demonstrably equivalent national importance to Scheduled Monuments is found, the development should be designed to ensure this, as far as possible, is preserved in situ. Any harm to the significance of the heritage asset should be justified by demonstrable public benefits.

9. Sustainable Buildings and Construction

- 9.1 The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) encourages neighbourhood plans to include policies on mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The UK government needs help to meet its commitments under the Climate Change Act, to reduce global warming. One of the commitments made by the Government is to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- 9.2 The reality is that the homes built today will still be in use in 2050. Therefore, to achieve the UK carbon reduction targets cost effectively, new housing built today must be built to zero carbon standards as soon as possible.
- 9.3 However, even if all new housing were to be carbon neutral from tomorrow, this would still not be enough to achieve the carbon emission reductions, as around 70% of buildings that will be in use in the 2050s already exist. If carbon reduction targets are to be met, and if fuel poverty is to be tackled, it is essential that the energy efficiency of existing buildings is also improved.
- 9.4 Technology and innovation in relation to energy efficiency is continuously evolving as are sustainable building techniques and standards. The current requirements are set out in Building [Regulations Approved Document L, Conservation of fuel and power](#). In places like Great Denham, modern design incorporating innovative solutions to produce carbon zero housing would be absolutely appropriate and will be supported. Given the average cost of housing in Great Denham and the associated profit margin that developers are therefore making, it is considered that more ambitious energy efficient design should be incorporated into new buildings.
- 9.5 There are two main elements in achieving net zero carbon buildings: achieving net zero ‘whole life’ carbon emissions, which takes into account the building, operation and disposal of the building; and achieving net zero operational carbon – where a building uses no fossil fuels; all energy use has been minimised; it meets local energy use targets and all energy use is generated on- and/or off-site using renewables. Further information and definitions are available from several sources including the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) and the UK Green Building Council.
- 9.6 Water resources are precious, the Anglian Water supply region is classified as an area of serious water stress. Accordingly, care needs to be taken to reduce water consumption, minimize the possibility of water contamination as well as addressing concerns such as flooding. The latter is an important issue to Great Denham, given its extensive flood plain and experiences of flooding in the recent past. New development will therefore be required to design in measures to address these issues.
- 9.7 Further detail and suggestions can be found in the Design Code DC.04

Policy D4: Provision of sustainable buildings

The design, construction and standard of any new building should meet a high level of sustainable design to be measured against the most up to date standards and technology. The design should be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting zero operational carbon emissions.

This includes:

- *Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain,*
- *The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials,*
- *Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and triple glazing.*
- *Where appropriate, new development should incorporate on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as energy generating solar panels.*

The retrofit of existing buildings is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate, providing it safeguards historic characteristics.

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

All new development will, where appropriate, be expected to minimise the use of water, provide water storage, and hard surfaces such as driveways and carparks should where appropriate use permeable paving.

10. New Housing

- 10.1 Great Denham is a community that has been planned via large scale developments built out since the 1990's. The Local Plan does not allocate new sites for development in the Parish and the Neighbourhood Plan does not make allocations for new housing development. If new development were to be considered for the Local Plan Review, the mix and tenure of housing and the proportion of affordable housing would be subject to Local Plan policy requirements.
- 10.2 In October 2017 there were 3 licensed HMOs in Great Denham (i.e had 5 or more tenants). However, the number of privately rented properties is larger, and issues occur where these private rentals require parking for more vehicles than is provided for. In these cases, overspill parking moves to on-street, and increases the existing parking congestion. Any larger dwellings that are proposed must take this into account and provide appropriate facilities.
- 10.3 No Housing Needs Survey has been carried out for Great Denham whilst preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. However, if this is carried out in the future, it would be expected that the results would be taken into account when determining planning applications for new housing development.
- 10.4 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 BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed developments, but can also provide useful prompts and questions for planning applicants. It also includes some guidelines on building homes in an adaptable way so that they are suitable for mobility impaired people and young children.

Policy D5: New Housing

All new housing development will provide affordable housing and a mix and tenure of dwellings as set out in the Local Plan. Any future parish specific Housing Needs Survey will be taken into account in the determination of housing mix.

New development should embrace the principles of Building for a Healthy Life including ensuring that new homes are suitable for all stages of life.

11. Facilities and Businesses

Community Facilities

- 11.1 The Parish has a number of facilities which have provided residents with opportunities to mix and connect with each other to build a new community. The original masterplan S106 agreement was modified by the developers and Bedford Borough Council, and a number of items de-scoped from it, including a place of worship and a library. Some of the existing buildings are subject to planning conditions, which will limit their future use whilst these conditions remain in place. For example, the former golf clubhouse is subject to conditions relating to its class of use, noise volumes and boundary fencing. This can mean they cannot always be utilised for other purposes despite being empty.
- 11.2 Some facilities have not grown with Great Denham and are currently oversubscribed or not sufficient for the community's needs. It is therefore very important that none of the existing facilities/buildings are lost to other uses. In the March 2021 survey, providing amenities such as shops, schools and leisure facilities was the top priority for residents.
- 11.3 Great Denham Community Hall, which opened at the end of 2016, is the venue for a number of clubs and groups, including children's activities (Brownies, Babyballet) and fitness (Zumba, Pilates, Tai-Kwando). Rooms are available for hire, and it also hosts a range of Community activities, including Easter craft workshops, Halloween children's' disco, Summer and Winter Festivals. It is also the venue for the monthly Parish Council meetings.
- 11.4 At the Village Medical Centre on Kingswood Way, there is a GP Practice, as well as other therapy services including Chiropractor Clinic. Next to the Medical Centre is The Village Pharmacy, Medivet and Harley Street Consulting Clinics.
- 11.5 There are no built facilities in the Parish for worship. Residents attend St James Church in Biddenham and Woodside Church which meets at the Community Hall.
- 11.6 There is a range of school & childcare provision in Great Denham including a primary school, Busy Bees Nursery and a number of private childminders. Great Denham is also in the catchment area for Biddenham International School and Sports College.
- 11.7 Sport, leisure and play facilities within Great Denham include the Pavilion, a café, MUGA, football pitches, the country park, a large playground and other smaller play areas e.g. Little Portway
- 11.8 For those facilities listed in the policy, it is considered essential that they remain in use as facilities and accordingly, any planning application for a change of use or demolition would need to be evidenced to show that the use was not viable and that no other community use could be supported or viable. This would include required evidence of marketing the property at an appropriate price for a 12 month period.
- 11.9 New facilities and improvements to existing facilities will be encouraged and supported, including a dedicated place of worship, new community facilities and services.

- 11.10 Whilst the former golf course and buildings (former clubhouse and former compound) remain in private ownership, the Parish Council has registered both land and buildings as Assets of Community Value (Localism Act 2011) and they are included in the register maintained by Bedford Borough Council (registered September 2021 for 5 years).

Policy F1: Community facilities

The following community facilities will be retained and planning applications which result in either the loss of or significant harm to, will be resisted

- a. *The Community Hall*
- b. *The Village Medical Centre*
- c. *The Pavilion and Cafe*
- d. *Great Denham Primary School*
- e. *The Play parks (Great and Little Porway, Play Hub (Country Park), Silver play area (N end of Country Park), Terrington Place, and smaller parks at West Hill Close, Ryder Close, top of Greenkeepers Road (Busgate)*

If it can be clearly demonstrated that the continued use of each of the facilities a to c above is no longer viable, and evidence that the property has been actively marketed, commensurate with its use at an open market value for a period of at least 12 months, other uses may be supported.

The provision of new community, health, sports, leisure and education facilities will be encouraged. New facilities will be provided where the scale of development proposed would require additional facilities/services and should be located within the Parish to reduce journeys by car and avoid increasing pressure on the capacity of existing facilities outside the Parish.

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

Local Businesses and the Village Centre

- 11.11** Great Denham has limited employment opportunities within the parish with many people working elsewhere. The Business Questionnaire revealed that 66% of the respondents had run their business for between 3 and 10 years. The 15 businesses that responded between them employed 9 local residents.
- 11.12** Local businesses include the Supermarket, local stores, charity shops, physiotherapist, estate agents, fish and chip shop and the coffee shop. There are also a number of home-based businesses throughout Great Denham, although these may not be recorded as businesses because they are small scale.

11.13 At the junction of Anglia Way and Saxon Way there is a retail centre comprising of 5 retail units with flats above (Roman Gate), and 4 further retail units with adjacent car parking in front of them. These retail units are managed through a management company. The Roman Gate units have an Estate Agents, Daily Needs Convenience Store (in two units), Keech Hospice Charity Shop, The Back and Body Clinic and The Eatery Café. The units with adjacent car parking have a Sainsbury's Local, Barnardo's Charity Shop, Saramanda Hair & Beauty Salon and MO's Fish & Grill.

11.14 Changes to the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) have meant that a new Use Class E was introduced on 1st September 2020 and covers the former use classes of A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional), A3 (restaurants and cafes) as well as parts of D1 (non-residential institutions) and D2 (assembly and leisure) and puts them all into one new use class. Planning permission is not needed for changes to differing uses within Class E, so a shop could change into a café or estate agent without the need for planning permission. In addition, there are relaxations on the need for planning permission to change commercial units into dwellings.

11.15 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to retain as many Class E uses as possible by requiring planning applications of change of use from Class E to be supported by evidence of marketing to ensure that a local centre use is not needlessly lost and by maintaining as far as possible, a balance of uses within the shopping frontages. Accordingly, unless there have been attempts to realistically market the business over a 12 month period such applications will not be supported.

Other employment uses

11.16 The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate employment sites, but it supports the viability of local businesses and their expansion, where this is proportionate and appropriate in the individual circumstances. Home working is also seen as a means of encouraging business and creating a sustainable community with less commuting and a more sustainable lifestyle, saving individuals the cost of travel and increasing their leisure time.

11.17 However, development must be of a scale and intensity appropriate to its context, must not impact detrimentally on residential amenity, and must have an acceptable impact on the character and scale of the village.

11.18 The provision of good telecommunications is particularly important in rural areas and in supporting the viability and sustainability of rural enterprise and home-working.

Policy F2: Supporting Local Businesses

*Within the shopping frontages **area** of the village centre (as defined on the Policies Map), the loss of Class E premises will not be accepted, unless it can be demonstrated that reasonable efforts have been made to secure their continued use for these purposes. If it can be clearly demonstrated that the continued use is no longer viable and there is evidence that the property has been actively marketed, commensurate with its use at an open market value for a period of at least 12 months, other uses may be supported.*

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

- *it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impact from increased traffic, lighting, noise or other emissions or activities arising from the proposed development;*
- *it would have an acceptable impact on the character and scale of the village,*

Applications for minor extensions or part change of use of dwellings to enable flexible or home working may be supported, subject to there being appropriate parking and that the residential amenity (noise, disturbance, overlooking etc) of neighbouring properties is maintained.

12. Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 12.1 The NPPF recognizes that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. (paragraph 98). Local Plan policy 35S requires that existing green infrastructure shall be protected and enhanced and new development should provide a net gain in green infrastructure.
- 12.2 Great Denham is relatively well off for open space to the north and south which is important as the village is densely populated and the space is needed to provide residents with easily accessible undeveloped areas which can be used for a variety of reasons.
- 12.3 Residents in their responses to both questionnaires (September 2020 and March 2021) emphasized the importance of the green open spaces and the opportunities to walk or cycle in the Parish. Living near open space was the top answer (70% of respondents) to the question ‘What do you like about living in Great Denham?’.
- 12.4 A Green Infrastructure Plan has been prepared by the Parish Council and is a separate technical background document to the Neighbourhood Plan, as well as being a stand-alone document. It describes all the GBI in the Parish and takes into account views expressed by residents, with the aims of identifying the key existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets, accessible greenspace and rights of way and planning new features that will provide a connected network of green infrastructure for the benefit of present and future generations.

Recreation and Green Space

- 12.5 In terms of open spaces, the Parish is benefited by a large amount of green space to the south, which lies within a flood plain, and to the north, the location of the former Golf Course. In addition to this, there are also other examples of open spaces throughout the area providing opportunities for resting, socialising and play.
- 12.6 **Great Denham Country Park** – this is owned and managed by Bedford Borough Council. It includes paths and cycle ways, sports pitches, a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), car parking, a children’s play area, an amphitheatre and a Sports Pavilion and café.
- 12.7 **Area of land behind the Park and Ride** – This land is owned by Bedford Borough Council and managed by Highways. Permission in principle has been given for the Parish Council to use this land for community purposes. The Parish Council is investigating setting up a community orchard.
- 12.8 **The Village Green/Community Garden** - This is an area of land owned by Bedford Borough Council but which has permission to provide a space for residents. A pathway has been installed to enable parents and children to cross to school from the Park and Ride providing a more accessible drop off and pick up area, and the Parish Council has organised bulb planting on the grassed areas.
- 12.9 **The Meeting Place (Anglia Way)** - This was recently completed as part of the development of housing behind Sainsburys. It will eventually have benches installed. This is the location of the Tommy memorial, provided by the children of Great Denham Primary School and the Parish Council
- 12.10 The following green spaces are currently included in the Local Plan Call for Sites as areas for development:
- Kickabout on Mercia Road/Saxon Way and land behind it – This has been made available to the community by the developer but is identified for future building. A planning application for 95 houses on this land has recently been submitted.
 - Land behind the Medical Centre to Mercia Road – this land includes an area behind the school which should be made available for use by the school as sports field but is subject of ongoing negotiations with the developer and landowner. The planning application for 95 houses on this land that has recently been submitted includes the provision of the additional space for the school.
- 12.11 The Borough Council provides a maintenance service under contract to the developers for the newer play areas and some green spaces via an annual charge to residents.
- 12.12 Any new housing development will be required to contribute towards the Parish open space provision as required by Local Plan (Allocations and Designation) policy AD28 and these standards will continue to apply as explained in the Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (2013) and the Local Plan 2030. The GI Plan gives more detail and it would be appropriate for new housing developments to contribute towards such improvements, where possible. Financial contributions for future maintenance of new open spaces will need to be incorporated into any planning permission by way of legal agreement and this will need to be in a form that is acceptable to the Parish Council.

- 12.13 Improvements to existing local open space and recreation facilities will be encouraged and provided as and when opportunities emerge.

Policy G1: Open space provision as part of new development

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

- ***Contributions/improvements to open space should be targeted towards those set out in the Great Denham Green Infrastructure Plan where appropriate;***
- ***Green corridors linking the new development and the existing open spaces, and/or reinforcing existing green corridors will be required;***
- ***Developments should incorporate appropriate native tree and shrub planting;***
- ***Suitable arrangements must be incorporated for the costs of future maintenance of these spaces.***

Local Green Spaces

12.14 Consultation showed that people place a high value on the relationship between the village, the countryside and on the open spaces that help to define the landscape and character of the area. Designation of Local Green Spaces (LGS) give a very high level of protection to such open spaces. In the NPPF it is stated that in Neighbourhood Plans, local communities can identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection and to rule out new development, other than in “very special circumstances”. The proposed designations are in accordance with the requirement in Paragraph 100 of the NPPF:

- The green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- The area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife;
- The area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

12.15 ~~Six sites have been assessed against these criteria (see Green Infrastructure Plan). Of these, three did not meet the criteria. The Golf Course and the Country Park are extensive tracts of land and the kick about area has planning permission for development, so neither of these can be designated as LGS. The remaining three, the Village Green, the Land behind the Park and Ride and the Anglia Way Meeting Place meet the criteria and are therefore designated as Local Green Spaces and shown on the Policies Map.~~

Six sites have been assessed against these criteria (see Green Infrastructure Plan). Of these, four do not meet the criteria – the golf Course, the Country Park, the kick about area and land behind the Park and Ride. The remaining two sites, namely the Village Green and the Anglia Way Meeting Place do meet the criteria and are therefore designated as Local Green Spaces and are shown on the Policies Map.

Policy G2: Local Green Spaces

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

- *Village Green*
- ~~*Land behind the Park and Ride*~~
- *Anglia Way Meeting Place*

The areas listed above are protected from new development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

Great Denham Country Park

12.16 The Country Park is a very valuable resource for the Parish, with a large number of different functions:

- providing a landscape setting for the village,
- providing opportunities for informal recreation for all ages, including wild swimming and canoeing
- providing space for formal sport,
- providing a focal point for residents to meet up,
- providing diverse habitats, both grassland and tree belts as well as the River Great Ouse,
- providing routes for walking and cycling,
- providing the flood plain for the River.

12.17 The Country Park has a number of habitat features (wetlands, wooded areas, hedgerows, grasslands) and is a nesting site for swans, ducks (balancing ponds) and other birds (hedgerows, wooded areas, grasslands). Residents are very proud of the Country Park and consistently referred to it as a very valuable resource for residents in the surveys. In the March 2021 Survey nearly 60% listed it as the top resource for Great Denham that should be protected.

12.18 The Allocations and Designation Local Plan 2013 designates Green Infrastructure Opportunity Zones and Great Denham Country Park forms part of Zone 2, the Upper Great Ouse River Valley. The opportunity zones reflect those areas in the borough where there is the greatest potential to maintain and enhance the multi-functional nature of green infrastructure across the five themes of landscape, historic environment, biodiversity, accessible green space and access routes. Where appropriate, development will deliver or contribute to the protection, enhancement and/or creation of green infrastructure in accordance with the priorities set out for each opportunity zone.

12.19 The relevant priorities for Great Denham Country Park are

- Access improvements through the north west section of the Bedford Green Wheel project, including new river crossings and links with parks, nature reserves, countryside attractions and housing developments, to create a green access corridor around Bedford and into the town centre. The Green Wheel project as a whole will create a network of traffic free paths and quiet

routes for cyclists, walkers and riders (where feasible) around Bedford. This network will run around Bedford, and include 'spokes' linking into the town centre. The network will link parks, nature reserves, countryside and homes.

- Extending the current green wheel proposals to link Bedford to surrounding villages through a network of green corridors.
- Improving walking, cycling and horse riding opportunities upstream from Bedford.
- Recreating river valley flood meadows and wet woodland, restoring wetlands and grassland for biodiversity benefit and flood alleviation.

12.20 Policy 28S of the Local Plan 2030 recognises the importance of the River Great Ouse and its setting and development proposals will be required to respond to its unique character.

Policy G3: Great Denham Country Park

All development proposals which could affect the function and appearance of Great Denham Country Park will be required to ensure that the biodiversity, recreational, flood alleviation and landscape values of the Park are preserved and enhanced.

Nature Conservation

12.21 Protection of the nature conservation interest in the Parish, which is valued by local people, is critical. Planning applications are required to assess the impact of the proposal on the biodiversity of the site and its surroundings with a view to enhancing biodiversity (Policies 42S and 43 of the Local Plan 2030).

12.22 The Country Park and the Golf Course provide large areas where wildlife can roam and have a number of different habitats and wildlife corridors. A wildlife corridor is an area of habitat connecting wildlife populations separated by human activities or structures (such as roads and built development). The most obvious example of such a corridor is the River Great Ouse and the tree lined banks.

12.23 The Environment Act 2021 is the UK Government's key piece of environmental legislation in recent years. The Act will require new development to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. Provisions for the act will be made through secondary legislation. This means that developers will be required to calculate how much their proposed development will degrade biodiversity (by removal of habitat, vegetation etc) and compensate for that loss and add features which provide increased biodiversity on the site. This can be achieved in a number of ways such as providing planting schemes, green roofs, protecting and enhancing existing hedgerows etc. Landscaping schemes will be required to use native species for planting schemes, particularly those found locally. More information can be found in the Great Denham Design Guide (DC.03.12).

12.24 In addition to providing Biodiversity Net Gain, all proposals for new development will be required to demonstrate how the design has taken into account its potential impact on existing local habitats

and species. Developers will be required to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to protect wildlife and take every available opportunity to join up with adjoining wildlife corridors and natural features to enhance biodiversity and important habitats.

- 12.25 Where Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDS) are required to serve new developments, every opportunity to link them into habitats should be taken.

Policy G4: Nature Conservation

New development will be required to protect and enhance existing natural features of sites and provide at least 10% net gain in biodiversity.

Where relevant, new development will be required to protect and enhance existing natural features of sites such as trees, hedgerows, ditches and ponds.

Provision of appropriate species-related measures will be required, including, for example, swift bricks, bat and owl boxes and the incorporation of native species into landscaping schemes.

Any new development using SuDS must ensure that the design of the system supports green infrastructure planning and the preservation and promotion of biodiverse habitats.

Walking and cycling

- 12.26 Public rights of way include footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic which allow access by foot, cycle and horse riders to access the countryside. The public rights of way are shown on the Borough Council's definitive map which is available on their website. The public rights of way network complements existing pedestrian and cycle ways in the village and includes river crossings. In addition to the public rights of way network, there are permissive paths, which can help to fill in gaps in the network. These can range from informal paths that have been locally agreed through to a permissive path legal agreement. In the case of a legal agreement, this is made between the landowner and the local authority and can include clauses such as the time limit of the specific path and who is responsible for the maintenance of the path. The legal agreement can then lead onto the formal dedication of a public right of way following the expiration of the initial legal permissive path agreement.
- 12.27 Residents top answer in the March 2021 Survey when asked about the priorities for new infrastructure was the provision of pedestrian routes and cycleways (27%). Currently, there is a reasonable network of footpaths and cycleways, including through the bus gate and river path.
- 12.28 The provision, enhancement and protection of existing pedestrian and cycle routes is addressed by Policies AD36 Pedestrian Routes and AD39 Cycling in the adopted Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013. The Bedford Borough Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018 – 2023 sets out the proposed aims, objectives and actions for the use of the Borough's public rights of way network.

New developments should provide opportunities for increased health benefits, community use and safety and enjoyment of the public rights of way network.

- 12.29 There is a network of footpaths running along the southeastern Parish boundary and across the former Golf Course. Those footpaths provide connections to Bedford town centre and to the neighbouring settlements of Biddenham, Bromham and Kempston, whilst also improving walkability within Great Denham.
- 12.30 Existing permissive paths are identified by signs on the former golf course land; a search of the archives is underway to confirm licensing arrangements and Bedford Borough Council have written to the landowner to consider re-licensing.
- 12.31 A partnership approach between the Parish Council, Bedford Borough Council and developers will be required to improve highway safety and minimise conflicts between road traffic, cyclists and pedestrians. It is intended to support new ways of managing the traffic throughout the parish by promoting pedestrian and cyclist safety and resident well-being through lower traffic speeds and traffic volumes.

Policy G5: Provision for pedestrians and cyclists

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

New development should include measures that that keep traffic speeds low and improve the provision of pavements and access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Proposals for new safe cycleways and footpaths will be encouraged, to promote healthy living and reduce environmental impact.

13. Traffic and transport

- 13.1 Designed in the style of an urban settlement (Design Code 2008), Great Denham was intended to minimize transport need. However, with no public transport and no direct vehicular link into Bedford Town Centre, car transport is essential for residents to move between locations either for work, education, leisure or business. Very few journeys are made for no purpose, and most people want to travel efficiently and safely to their destination.
- 13.2 It is important that any new development is located in the most sustainable locations and accessible by a choice of travel modes, including walking, cycling and public transport. This will help to reduce the need for people to travel by car, minimise congestion, improve road safety and meet climate change reduction targets. This also links with the need to improve people's health by creating more opportunities for people to walk or cycle rather than using a car. Great Denham is currently served by a bus routes (number 8 to the Bus Station via Queens Park; the Number 24 to the Bus Station via Kempston and Bedford Hospital will be withdrawn from September 2022, except for school runs); however what was once a frequent every 20 minute service has been reduced in recent months. Attempts have been made to obtain provision of a bus service to the Railway Station for commuters but this has proved unsatisfactory in terms of timing, reliability and frequency. As a result commuters are typically forced into using their cars. Bus operation and scheduling is not a matter that can be controlled by planning policies.
- 13.3 All developments which will increase traffic should be accompanied by a Transport Statement or Assessment and should include the following matters:
- Road Safety and Parking, including the avoidance of congestion;
 - A local focus on providing pedestrian and cycle links between new housing to local facilities
 - Developers should identify the realistic level of traffic their development will generate;
 - Development should not add to existing traffic congestion, but should strive to reduce it.
- 13.4 As part of the underlying approach to achieving sustainable development in the Neighbourhood Plan any development should encourage walking, cycling, and the use of public transport.

Policy T1: Traffic impact and sustainable travel

All new development must encourage sustainable methods of travel by

- ***providing footpath and cycle links that are integrated with the existing networks***
- ***encourage travel to local facilities by walking and cycling and***
- ***where appropriate, provide infrastructure and encouragement for public transport***

Proposed developments that would generate a significant amount of car movement or would potentially affect a known traffic hazard should be accompanied by infrastructure to maintain highway safety, reduce traffic speeds and avoid vehicular/pedestrian conflict.

Where appropriate, it may be necessary to provide off site measures to reduce the traffic impact of the scheme.

Parking

- 13.5 Car ownership levels in the parish are likely to be high although because of the recent date of much of the housing, after the 2011 census, there are no figures available. The assumption is based on the limited availability of public transport, rising car ownership nationally and the need for residents to travel out of the Parish to work. Adherence to Bedford Borough Council's parking standards (Adopted Parking Standards for Sustainable Community's Supplementary Planning Document 2014) will reflect these local factors and seek to ensure that new development does not add to current levels of parking congestion.
- 13.6 In both parish surveys residents expressed strong concerns about traffic and transport issues and the impact on their well-being. They highlighted the dangers caused by on-street parking and risks to pedestrian and cyclist safety. In the March 2021 Survey, 17% of responses listed parking provision as a priority for future development.
- 13.7 It is important that the design of new housing development is not dominated by car parking but a failure to make proper provision can result in problems in terms of appearance and safety. In terms of design, the provision of off-street car parking in sight of properties is primary concern. Some newer housing estates offer off-street parking in the form of communal areas. There is a feeling that this is disliked where residents cannot physically see their cars, and that this encourages parking on the street, adding to congestion and narrowing the usable highway. The use of parking courts is therefore not supported due to their impact on surface water drainage, antisocial or criminal activity due to reduced visibility and surrounding public realm infrastructure in terms of on-street parking.
- 13.8 Electric vehicles are a broadly sustainable mode of travel that is increasing market penetration and national guidelines require that new developments of more than 10 houses will be required to provide electric charging points. However, in a village like Great Denham, where residents rely on

cars to reach local services and shops, every new house should provide a charging point for electric cars in line with Building Regulations.. In addition, in public locations such as the village centre, charging stations will be encouraged.

13.9 Design Code DC.02 gives more information on current issues and design of future provision.

Policy T2: Car Parking

Proposals for new housing and commercial developments will provide parking to meet Bedford Borough Council's parking standards. All new parking will be designed appropriately for the use, in accordance with the Great Denham Design Codes, avoiding the use of parking courts for dwellings.

Electric charging points for cars should be incorporated in new housing development for each house and in any new public parking.

New development should not result in the loss of publicly accessible off-street car parking. Developments which propose to remove off-road parking spaces will only be supported where alternative provision is made which increases or maintains the number of parking spaces available on or within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Proposals to provide additional off-road car parking spaces, to alleviate parking congestion will be encouraged.

Design of on-street parking provision must ensure that clear visibility will be achieved for drivers and pedestrians, to reduce risk and danger to both.

14. Aspirations, Implementation and Monitoring

Aspirations

- 14.1 Great Denham Parish Council wishes to maintain a Parish where residents, businesses and visitors can lead healthy, active and enjoyable lives. Over recent years the Parish has grown in population and the Council believes this is a sensible time to take stock of feedback they have received. Using this feedback this Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to ensure that: appropriate facilities are available in the parish; green spaces are maintained; and that any future developments are in keeping with and improve the existing area.

Implementation: Working in partnership

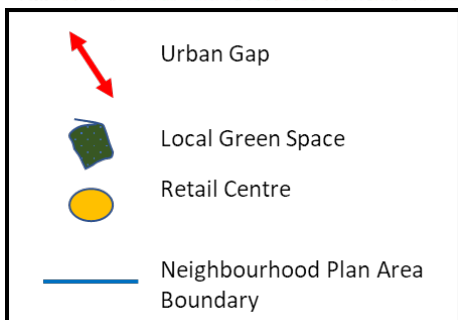
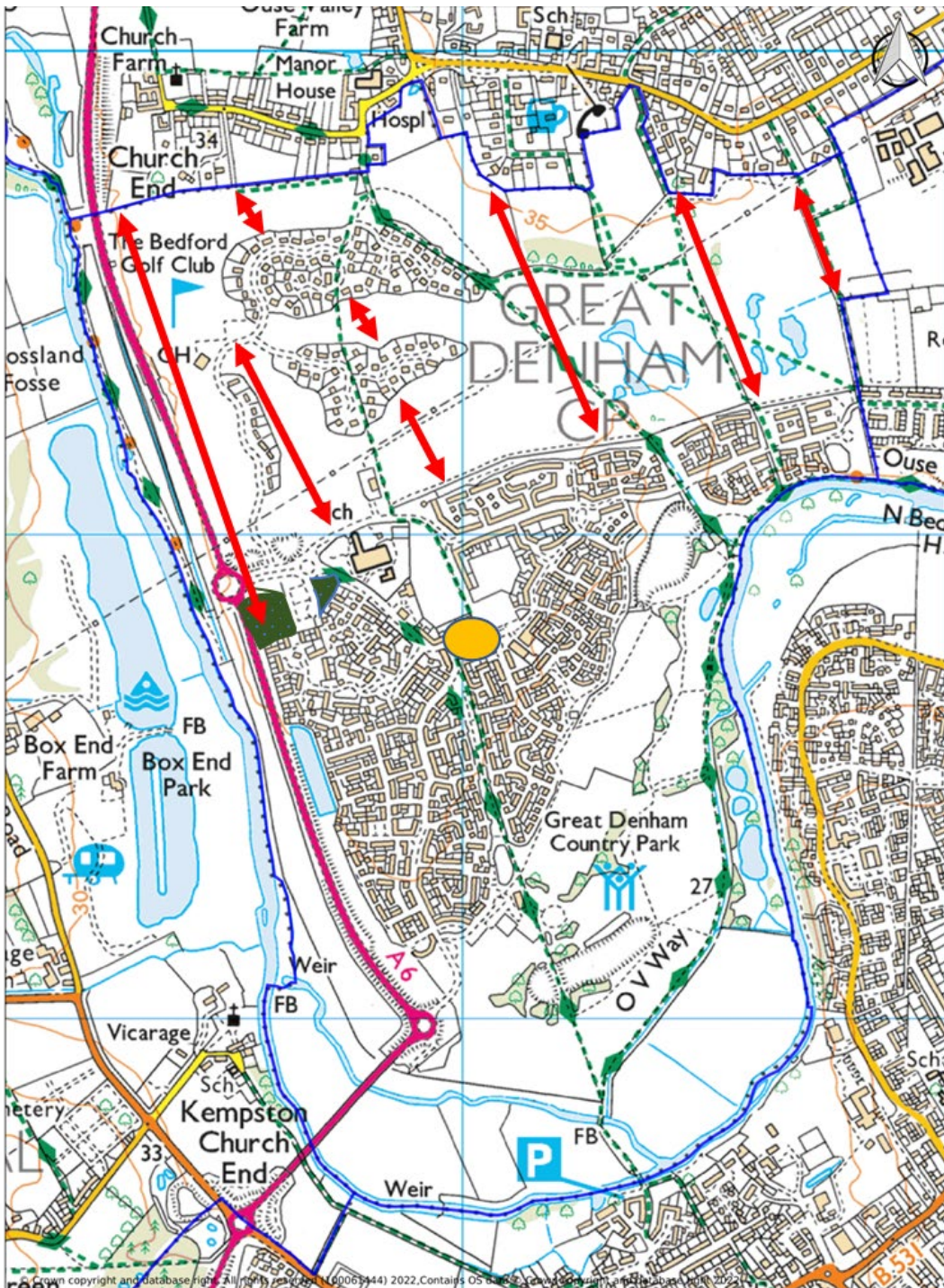
- 14.2 This section outlines the approach to the implementation of the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan, including: working in partnership, funding mechanisms and monitoring/review. The approach will be that new development should be supported by the timely delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to provide a balanced, self-sufficient community.
- 14.3 Great Denham Parish Council is committed to Localism and locally informed influence over planning decisions and it will be the key organisation in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will build upon its excellent track record in engaging in planning decisions (reactively through consultation and proactively through promoting the policies of this plan) and by delivering related projects for the local community. However, it is recognised that partnership working is needed for the potential of the plan to be realised. Partnership and joint working will be key elements in the successful implementation of the plan. The main organisations and the roles that they can play are summarised below.
- **Bedford Borough Council** - Planning Policy, Development Control, Housing Management and Improvement, Economic Development, Open Spaces, Recreation and Community Facilities and unitary authority functions, including: Drainage, Highways and Transport, Education, Landscape and Social Services.
 - **National Highways** – traffic and transport on the A428 trunk road.
 - **Adjoining Parish Councils** – Assessing impact of large scale planning applications.
 - **South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnerships (SEMLEP)** The LEP is a potential partner for joint working, funding and implementation and activity may be relevant to rural businesses.
 - **Environment Agency** The planning, design and delivery of development, taking account of: Flood risk management; Water quality and water resources, (3) Waste management,
 - (4) Land contamination & soil and (5) Environmental permits and other regulation.
 - **Site owners and developers** will need to liaise with the Parish Council as well as the other agencies involved in development.

Funding and Implementation Mechanisms

- 14.4 Financial contributions will be sought from developers through Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which provides a legal framework to raise funds to provide the infrastructure needed to cope with new developments. Bedford Borough Council adopted CIL on 1st April 2014 and as there will be a Neighbourhood Plan in place, 25% of CIL receipts will be given to the Parish. Contributions will be sought as appropriate under CIL Regulations and the NPPF.

- 14.5 In addition, the Parish Council will seek to influence annual and other budget decisions by Bedford Borough Council on housing, open space and recreation, economic development, community facilities and transport, through the Local Transport Plan.
- 14.6 The Parish Council will also work with the appropriate agencies and organisations to develop funding bids to help to achieve Neighbourhood Plan policies and objectives. This might include: The Lottery; UK Government programmes; land fill tax credits, EU Funds and LEP funding.
- 14.7 The Plan will be used by the Parish Council to:
- guide comments on planning applications
 - negotiate with landowners and developers to achieve the best possible outcomes from new development
 - direct financial resources to the village in a structured way
 - bring together groups or working parties to improve the village environment
 - lobby local authorities to support the parishioners' wishes and aspirations
- 14.8 It is important to check that progress is made towards meeting the objectives and policies of the Plan. The Parish Council will report on the implementation of the Plan every 5 years and consider
- if progress is being made to achieve the vision and the objectives of the Plan
 - if progress is being made towards the implementation of the policies in the Plan
 - if financial contributions available to the community arising from development is being targeted towards the identified plans and projects
 - if the Plan remains based on the most up to date information
 - if the Plan is being taken into account by BBC when determining planning applications
- 14.9 It will then conclude whether a review is required. If so, it will secure opinions of residents and stakeholders to update the Plan.

Annex A: Policies map – Delete this map



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Updated map



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Annex B: Glossary

| Term | Abbreviation | Description |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Adoption | | The procedure by which a plan becomes formal council responsibility. The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations also call this stage 'made' for the purposes of a Neighbourhood Plan. |
| Affordable housing | | Housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision |
| Allocation | | A piece of land that has had a particular use earmarked via a Neighbourhood Plan or Local Plan. This might be for housing, employment or another use such as open space. |
| Amenity | | A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the interrelationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity. |
| Biodiversity | | The whole variety of life encompassing variations, including plants and animals. |
| Brownfield | | Land that has been previously developed on (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings and residential gardens) |
| Consultation Statement | | A document which details when, where and how the public and stakeholders have been consulted, issues that were raised and how they were addressed. |
| Countryside | | Land not within settlement boundaries |
| Community Infrastructure Levy | CIL | An amount of money payable to the Council on new housing and other development which is used for infrastructure and community facilities and services |

| Term | Abbreviation | Description |
|--|---------------------|---|
| Developer Contributions/Planning Obligations/Section 106 | | Developer contributions, also known as planning obligations, can be secured via a section 106 legal agreement or planning condition attached to a planning permission. They help mitigate any adverse impacts generated by new development on infrastructure and facilities. |
| Development Plan Document | DPD | Development Plan Documents are planning policy documents which make up the Local Plan. They guide development within a local planning authority area by setting out the detailed planning policies, which planning officers use to make their decisions on planning applications. |
| Employment Land | | Land that is used or is proposed to be used for offices, industry and/or storage and distribution – covered by the B Class in the Use Classes Order |
| Evidence Base | | The information and data gathered by local authorities and other plan makers to inform and support the policy approaches to be set out in a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan |
| Examination | | For neighbourhood planning, an independent assessment carried out by an examiner to determine whether your plan meets the Basic Conditions |
| Flood risk | | The combination of probability of a particular flood event and its corresponding hazard and is used to refer to the scale of flood effect, combining hazard and probability, upon a particular site. Flood Zones 1-3b describes land with a specific probability of flooding with 1 being the least affected. Development may be restricted by Flood Zones. |
| General Permitted Development Order | GPDO | A statutory document that allows development (such as small house extensions) to be undertaken without planning permission. |
| Greenfield | | Land where there has been no previous development. |

| Term | Abbreviation | Description |
|---|---------------------|---|
| Green Belt | GB | Designated areas around major built up areas which can only be developed under very special circumstances set out in the NPPF |
| Green and Blue Infrastructure | GI/GBI | A network of multi-functional green space, water features and other environmental features, urban and rural, including both established and new sites - which support natural and ecological processes, and are capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. |
| Habitats Regulation Assessment | HRA | Tests the impacts of a plan or project on nature conservation sites of European importance and is required under EU legislation. |
| Infrastructure | | Refers to the fundamental facilities and systems serving an area, including the services and facilities necessary for its residents and economy to function, including transport. |
| Internal Drainage Board | IDB | A local public authority established in areas of special drainage need in England and Wales. IDBs have permissive powers to manage water levels within their respective drainage districts, undertake works to reduce flood risk to people and property and manage water levels to meet local needs |
| Local Plan | | The main planning document in an area which sets out what type and how much development will occur across the area for the next 15 years. It also provides a suite of policies that help manage development including for design, access and amenity |
| Local Wildlife Site (some areas County Wildlife Site) | LWS/CWS | Non statutory sites of substantive nature conservation interest determined locally according to national, regional and local biodiversity needs. |
| National Planning Policy Framework | NPPF | Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. |

| Term | Abbreviation | Description |
|--|---------------------|--|
| National Planning Practice Guidance | NPPG | A web-based resource, provides more detailed guidance on the contents of the NPPF |
| Neighbourhood Area | | This is the area that the Neighbourhood Plan will focus on. For town or parish councils, the designated area is usually the boundary. Sometimes Parishes will combine to form one area. |
| Neighbourhood Development Plan or Neighbourhood plan | NDP/NP | Will set out the vision for a neighbourhood area and the planning policies for the use and development of land. Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 7: Glossary May 2017 These policies will be at a local level to support the strategic policies within the emerging Local Plan. Plans should guide development rather than stop it. If adopted, a Neighbourhood Plan will become a statutory plan carrying equal weight with adopted local plan policies |
| Policy | | A concise statement of the principles that a particular kind of development proposal should satisfy in order to obtain planning permission. |
| Parish Plan | | A Parish Plan or community led plan can include planning related issues but they can focus purely on areas other than development. Parish Plans will not have the same legal status in planning terms as a Neighbourhood Plan |
| Policies Map | | Illustrates the spatial extent of the planning policies and designated areas. |
| Qualifying Body | | Either a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum, which can initiate the process of neighbourhood planning. |
| Referendum | | A vote by the eligible population of an electoral area who may decide on a matter of public policy. Neighbourhood Plans are subject to a referendum of the eligible voters within a neighbourhood area. There is a specific question set in Regulations which has a yes or no answer. |

| Term | Abbreviation | Description |
|--|---------------------|--|
| Settlement Hierarchy | | Many Local Plans set out a hierarchy of settlements according to their population and facilities. Different levels of growth may be attributed to each tier. |
| Site of Special Scientific Interest | SSSI | Designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 by Natural England they are a protected area designated as being of special interest by virtue of its flora, fauna, geological or geomorphological features. |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment | SEA | European requirement assesses the significant environmental impacts of plans and programmes. |
| Strategic Flood Risk Assessment | SFRA | An assessment of the probability of flooding within a particular area. |
| Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment | SHLAA | Assesses the suitability, availability and deliverability of land that have been promoted as sites for housing development |
| Strategic Housing Market Assessment | SHMA | Assessment of the local housing market, which studies the supply and demand of housing, the need for affordable housing and the affordability of the local housing market |
| Supplementary Planning Document | SPD | A document which elaborates upon a policy (ies) of the Local Plan to provide additional guidance for a particular topic or type of development. |
| Sustainability Appraisal | SA | An assessment of the environmental, social, and economic impacts of a Local Plan to check that the plan accords with the principles of sustainable development. |
| Sustainable Development | | An approach to development that aims to allow economic growth without damaging the environment of natural resources thereby development which 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' |
| Sustainable Drainage System | SuDS | An artificial drainage solution which reduces and slows the quantity and rate of surface water run off from new development, dealing with it as close to the source as possible |

| Term | Abbreviation | Description |
|-------------------------|--------------|---|
| Tree Preservation Order | TPO | An order made by a local planning authority to protect a specific tree, a group of trees or woodland. TPOs prevent the felling, lopping, topping, uprooting or other deliberate damage of trees without the permission of the local planning authority. |
| Use Classes Order | UCO | The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) defines the categories of use of buildings or land for the purposes of planning legislation. In most cases, planning permission must be obtained to change the use of a building or land to another use class |
| Windfall Site | | Sites which have not been identified as available in the Local Plan. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available. |

Annex C: Table of aims and policies

| Aims | | | Policies |
|---|------|--|----------------|
| Aim 1: To ensure any future developments within Great Denham are sustainable, have suitable infrastructure and are in keeping with existing development. | | | |
| Built Environment | 1i | <i>New development will be of high quality, visually attractive and in harmony with its immediate setting and character. It will provide a pleasant and safe place for all residents to live.</i> | D1, D4 |
| | 1ii | <i>The gap between settlements will be maintained to retain the separate identity of Great Denham and the balance between built form and open green space.</i> | D2 |
| Sustainable development | 1iii | <i>New development will protect or enhance the historic environment, incorporate sustainable building features and measures to provide high speed broadband.</i> | D3 |
| Housing | 1iv | <i>New housing developments should include a mix of housing types, sizes and affordability to create a framework in which a diverse community can grow and become established. Smaller units to provide for young people and the elderly will be encouraged.</i> | D5 |
| Aim 2: To develop existing and create further facilities and services to support the residents and businesses of Great Denham. | | | |
| Community facilities and services | 2i | <i>New development will ensure that new residents have at least the same access to community facilities as existing residents and new developments will contribute to the facilities and services of the parish.</i> | F1 |
| Local Business | 2ii | <i>Existing commercial buildings will be retained for business or community use. New small scale businesses and live work units will be encouraged.</i> | F2 |
| Aim 3: To protect and enhance existing and future open spaces. | | | |
| Green Infrastructure and Recreation | 3i | <i>Existing green and blue infrastructure will be protected, enhanced where appropriate and new green spaces will be provided. Wildlife and habitats will be protected and enhanced.</i> | D2, G1, G2, G4 |
| | 3ii | <i>The riverside, Country Park and ponds will be enhanced and promoted for enjoyment of residents and visitors.</i> | G3 |
| | 3iii | <i>Safe and attractive walking, riding and cycling will be provided through the provision of a complete and connected network of Public Rights of Way.</i> | G3, G5 |
| Aim 4: To manage both existing and future traffic and transport provision and encourage safe and sustainable movement. | | | |
| Traffic and Transport | 4i | <i>New development shall be planned and constructed to ensure that all residents have ready access to local facilities, services</i> | G5, T1 |

| | | | |
|--|------------|---|----|
| | | <i>and transport networks by bicycle, public transport or private car and that pathways are provided for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility vehicles.</i> | |
| | 4ii | <i>New developments should not exacerbate existing parking problems and shall ensure adequate and appropriate parking for new residents.</i> | T2 |



Bedford Borough Council Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan POST- EXAMINATION DECISION STATEMENT

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

This document is the decision statement required to be prepared under Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). It sets out the response of Bedford Borough Council to each of the recommendations contained within the independent examination report of the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan (“the Plan”) by independent examiner David Hogger, which was received by the Bedford Borough Council on 2 May 2023.

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

The Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan relates to the area that was designated by Bedford Borough Council as a Neighbourhood Area on 7 January 2014. This area is coterminous with the boundary of the parish of Great Denham and is entirely within the Local Planning Authority's area.

Between 15 August – 14 October 2022, Great Denham Parish Council undertook consultation on the draft Plan in accordance with Regulation 14.

Following the submission of the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan to Bedford Borough Council on 19 December 2023, Bedford Borough Council publicised the draft Plan for a six-week period and representations were invited in accordance with Regulation 16. This consultation took place between 10 January - 22 February 2023.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION

Bedford Borough Council appointed David Hogger, with the agreement of Great Denham Parish Council, to undertake the independent examination of the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan and to prepare a report of the independent examination.

The examiner examined the Plan by way of written representations supported by an unaccompanied site visit of the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 22 March 2023.

The examiner's report was formally received by Bedford Borough Council on 2 May 2023. The report concludes that subject to making the modifications recommended by the examiner, the Plan meets the basic conditions set out in the legislation and should

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

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

DECISION AND REASONS

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

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

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

These decisions were made by the Mayor on behalf of the Bedford Borough Council's Executive on 1 June 2023.

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

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

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

| Proposed Modification Number | Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan Reference | Examiner’s Report Reference | Recommended Modification and Reason | Bedford Borough Council Decision/reasoning |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| PM1 | Page 5 Paragraph 1.2 | Page 8 Paragraph 3.3 and Page 10 Paragraph 4.5 | Replace 2035 with 2030 . In the interests of accuracy. | Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the examiner’s report. |
| PM2 | Page 9 Paragraph 4.1 | Page 11 paragraph 4.8 | Add a new sentence to paragraph 4.1 to read: Further information can be found in the accompanying Consultation Statement, which is available on the Parish Council website. In the interest of completeness. | Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the examiner’s report. |
| PM3 | Page 17 Policy D1 | Page 11 Paragraph 4.13 | Add a new clause (j) of the policy to read: Where relevant, result in a safe environment with appropriate levels of lighting and natural surveillance. In order to ensure the scope of the policy is effective it is necessary to add an additional clause with regard to creating a safe environment. | Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the examiner’s report. |
| PM4 | Page 17 Paragraph 7.13 | Page 12 Paragraph 4.16 | Delete the following text: | Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the examiner’s report. |

| | | | | |
|-----|----------------------|------------------------------|---|---|
| | | | <p>Over time, the wildlife value will increase as the land regenerates from the golf course use and an increase in both plant and animal species will result.</p> <p>In the interests of accuracy as the land is currently in agricultural use.</p> | |
| PM5 | Page 21 Policy D4 | Page 12 Paragraph 4.18 | <p>Modify the last sentence of the policy to read:</p> <p>All new development will, where appropriate, be expected to minimise the use of water and provide water storage. and Hard surfaces such as driveways and car parks should where appropriate use permeable paving.</p> <p>To clarify that all development should be subject to the test of 'appropriateness'.</p> | Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the examiner's report. |
| PM6 | Page 24 Policy F1 | Page 13 Paragraph 4.20 | <p>Identify the listed community facilities on the Policies Map.</p> <p>To ensure that a decision maker is aware of the location of these facilities.</p> | Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the examiner's report. |
| PM7 | Page 25 Policy F2 | Page 13 Paragraph 4.22 | <p>In the first line replace frontages with area.</p> <p>So that the policy applies to the entirety of the premises and not just the frontage, as it is clear that this is the intention.</p> | Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the examiner's report. |
| PM8 | Page 28 | Page 14 | Delete <u>all</u> of paragraph 12.15 and replace it with: | Agree with the modification for the |

| | | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---|
| | Paragraph 12.15 and Policy G2 | Paragraph 4.28 | <p>Six sites have been assessed against these criteria (see Green Infrastructure Plan). Of these, four do not meet the criteria – the golf Course, the Country Park, the kick about area and land behind the Park and Ride. The remaining two sites, namely the Village Green and the Anglia Way Meeting Place do meet the criteria and are therefore designated as Local Green Spaces and are shown on the Policies Map.</p> <p>Modify policy G2 by the deletion of the second site: Land behind the Park and Ride</p> <p>LGS1 does not have sufficient regard to national policy in so far as it is not clear that the site is capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.</p> | reasons set out in the examiner's report. |
| PM9 | Page 31 Policy G5 | Page 15 Paragraph 4.31 | <p>Add a new sentence to policy G5 to read:</p> <p>Proposals for new safe cycleways and footpaths will be encouraged, to promote healthy living and reduce environmental impact.</p> <p>In the interests of clarity to add additional wording to encourage safe cycleways and footpaths.</p> | Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the examiner's report. |
| PM10 | Page 33 Policy T2 | Page 15 Paragraph 4.32 | <p>Add a new clause to the end of the policy to read:</p> <p>Design of on-street parking provision must ensure that clear visibility will be achieved for drivers and pedestrians, to reduce risk and danger to both.</p> | Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the examiner's report. |

| | | | | |
|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| | | | In the interests of clarity to add in reference to the design of on-street parking provision. | |
| PM11 | Page 36 Policies Map | Page 15 Paragraph 4.34 | Up-date the Policies Map to accord with the revised content of the GDNP, including the recommended modifications set out above. To take account of the modifications proposed above and those proposed by the parish council. | Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the examiner's report. |

June 2023