

Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan Clarifying answers to the Examiner July 2022

What is the evidence base for the neighbourhood plan and where is this publicly available?

The evidence base is available on both the Great Chesterford Parish Council website and the Uttlesford District Council webpage for the Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan:

<https://www.lovegreatchesterford.com/evidence>

<https://www.lovegreatchesterford.com/consultation>

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/chesterfordsnp>

Policy GLCNP/1- the Plan includes both "*Development Limits*" for Great Chesterford and a "*Settlement boundary*" for Little Chesterford - what is the rationale for these different descriptions?

In the Local Plan 2005, Great Chesterford is a larger village and therefore has its own identified development limits; Little Chesterford as a significantly smaller village with no services (it is considered part of the countryside). For the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, we felt Little Chesterford should have an equivalent to define the edge of the settlement compared to what is "open" countryside, and to avoid confusion used "settlement boundary".

Policy GLCNP/1 - what is the evidence for determining the boundaries of the Cam Valley Area and the Chalk Uplands and do they relate to the Landscape Character Areas as defined by the Landscape Character Assessment?

The Chalk Uplands area is comprised wholly of the following Landscape Character areas as defined in the Landscape Character Assessment and shown in Figure 2.1:

1. Chesterford Ridge: High Chalk Plateau
2. Chalk Upper Slopes: Steep upper dry valleys of chalky boulder clay (above 65m contour)
3. Chalk Lower Slopes: Shallow slopes of dry valleys to the east of the B184 (below 65 m contour)
4. Chesterford Research Park: 150 acres of historic parkland on chalk ridge

Area 1 has Negligible/Low capacity for development; areas 2,3,and 4 have Low capacity for development.

The boundaries of the Chalk Uplands area correspond to the totality of this combined area.

The Landscape Character area 5 - River Cam Flood Plain: Flat Alluvial Flood Plain of the River CAM (low capacity for development) is fully included in the Cam Valley Area.

Additional evidence was examined to further define the Cam Valley Area as follows: fluvial flood zone (Figure 2.10); Topography (Landscape Character Assessment Plan HDA3), Local and Historically Important Views (Figures 5.11-5.14); the current and historical land use; relationship of the land with the settlements; and wildlife habitats (paragraphs 2.48-2.55).

Within and to the north of Great Chesterford village, the area is characterised by the built environment and the Roman Scheduled Monuments. The areas corresponding to the fluvial flood zone were additionally included in the Cam Valley Area.

Between the villages of Great and Little Chesterford, the Cam Valley Area is characterised by open views and popular recreational use centred around the river, footpaths and permissive paths. The area bounded by the 40m contour line and to the west of the footpath was additionally included in the Cam Valley Area, with the exception of land adjacent to the built environment of Granta Close (which did not also part of the flood zone).

To the south of the High Street in Little Chesterford, the Cam Valley Area is characterised by the open farmland surrounding the Cam, which flows in some parts adjacent to the B1383. The farmland to the west of the B1383 to the parish boundary was included, with the exception of the area around the built form of Bordeaux Farms and the Bordeaux Pit fishing lakes (which are screened from view from the river).

Policy GLCNP/1 - what is the evidence for determining the boundary of the Roman Scheduled Monuments Setting Zone?

As stated in section 5.1.10, the following evidence was considered: the lines of sight from the Roman town and fort to and from the Roman temple along the east/west axis; the lines of sight from the Roman temple eastwards; the historic watercourse; historic, current and consented land use.

See Figure 2.4 Interrelationships between the Roman Scheduled Monuments and the River Cam and tributaries (which was produced using sight-line analysis), Historic Environment Assessment 2016, The Roman Town of Great Chesterford, Medlycott (2011) [EAA 137], Topography (Landscape Character Assessment Plan HDA3).

The Roman Scheduled Monuments themselves do not form part of the Setting Zone and their boundaries are included in the setting zone boundary determination.

The western boundary of the Setting Zone follows the sightlines from the Roman Temple to the modern embankment of the M11, which forms a hard boundary to the setting of the sites. The southern boundary of the setting zone follows the northern boundary of the Roman Town, and the current built environment of the village of Great Chesterford to the B184. West of the B184, it follows the crest of the chalk ridge forming the river valley containing the east/west watercourse that joins the Roman sites, and has both ritual and topographical importance, not only between the sites, but eastward from the altar of the Roman temple along the watercourse towards the valley head. At the eastern boundary, it follows the sight lines and topography around the head of the valley and the short tributaries of the

watercourse. To the north, the boundary is formed by the topography of the chalk ridge, following its lower extent and excluding the north/south river tributaries. On the lower flood plain to the west of Stump's Cross roundabout, the boundary again follows the extent of the sightline from the Roman temple, joining the western boundary of the M11 embankment to the west.

Policy GLCNP/2 - what is the evidence for determining the boundaries of the Separation Zones and how do they relate to the Landscape Character Assessment?

The boundaries of the Separation Zones are largely determined by the current and consented land use (see Figures 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6) and the topography (see Plan HDA3 from Landscape Character Assessment). They therefore partly correspond to the areas defined by the Landscape Character Assessment, but vary from them where necessary to fulfil the purposes of a separation zone.

For the *Northern Gateway Separation Zone*, the purpose of this area is to provide and serve as a rural buffer or visual break between Great Chesterford and the very large consented development to the north at Hinxton. It is to prevent coalescence between settlements and to provide a transition between the village of Great Chesterford and the national road infrastructure and open plain to the north to the river valley. The boundaries are therefore defined by the embankment of the M11, the B184 and the built environment/development limits of Great Chesterford. The zone includes Landscape Character areas: 6. Transport Corridor Farmland (excepting) the area to the north of the M11, 3. Mill House Farmland, (plus the adjacent open community orchard and allotments) and 9. Great Chesterford Archaeological Farmland.

For the *Great and Little Chesterford Separation Zone*, the purpose of this area is to provide a rural buffer or visual break between Great Chesterford and Little Chesterford and is to prevent coalescence between settlements. The southern boundaries of this zone are therefore formed by the settlement boundaries of Little Chesterford north of the High Street, the western boundary by the parish boundary to the west, the northern boundary by the built limits of Great Chesterford, additionally excluding both the consented site at Chest 9 and the area between the site and the southern built limits of the Great Chesterford village at Manor Farm. To the east, the boundary is the B184. With the stated exceptions, this corresponds to Landscape Character areas 5. River Cam Floodplain, 15. The Chesterfords Hinterland 16. Little Chesterford Backlands and 18. Bordeaux Pit Farmland where they lie between Great and Little Chesterford.

For the *Little Chesterford and Springwell Separation Zone*, the purpose of this area is to provide such a buffer between Little Chesterford and Springwell and to prevent coalescence between settlements. The northern boundaries of this zone are therefore the southern limits of the built environment at Little Chesterford, and extend aligned to the southern edge of the settlement at Springwell, and extend southwards to preserve the area between the two settlements, the southern boundary being aligned with the extent of the built environment at Springwell, extending across to the B1383. Due to the rising topography of the land, an area to the west of the road is excluded, and the separation zone boundary rejoins the parish boundary to leave the area to the south of Bordeaux Farms open. With the stated

exceptions, this corresponds to Landscape Character areas 5. River Cam Floodplain, and 18. Bordeaux Pit Farmland where they lie between Little Chesterford and Springwell.

For the *Little Chesterford and Chesterford Research Park Separation zone*, the purpose of this area is to provide such a buffer between Little Chesterford and Chesterford Research Park, and the limits are largely determined by the topography and green features of the area. The western boundary of this area is the green screening to the west of the village; the eastern boundary is formed by Emanuel Wood, and its continuing field boundary hedgerows. The southern boundary is formed by the green screening that forms the visual boundary to the north of Springwell, and its visual continuation along field boundaries to Emanuel Wood. The northern boundary is formed by the chalk ridge just to the north of the northern built limits running to the western boundary of the Chesterford Research Park. The area lies wholly within Landscape Character Areas 2. Chalk Upper Slopes, 3. Chalk Lower Slopes as they separate Little Chesterford and area 4. Chesterford Research Park Historic Parkland.

Policy GLCNP/2 - how do the "other places of employment in the rural area" relate to the locations identified in Figures 5.24 and 5.25? Are there further locations and have these been identified?

Yes, this reference from Policy GLCNP/2 relates to the employment sites identified in Figures 5.24 and 5.25 and there are no further identified locations.

Policy GLCNP/4a - what is the evidence from the Village Walks and other sources additional to the Landscape Character Assessment for the identification of the "Green screening" and "Special verges"?

Special verges are listed in table 2.1 (paragraph 2.51) and were identified by UDC as part of the Local Wildlife Site Review 2007. Green screening areas were identified as part of the village walks (see paragraph 5.4.4) and have been consulted upon by both communities as part of the various iterations of the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 5.17 - what is the evidence for identifying and defining the boundaries of "Little Chesterford historic core" and "Bordeaux Farm rural context area" and how does the latter relate to any of the Plan's policies?

The evidence for the boundaries of *Little Chesterford historic core* is contained in the Historic Environment Assessment (2016). The significance of the site is described in section 4.7 (p26,27). Recommendation 7 of this report (p.40), and referenced in the Neighbourhood plan (paragraph 3.49, bullet point 7), is that the space surrounding the hall and church should be preserved as open and free from development. The boundaries of this space are defined in Figure 9 (p.53) of the Historic Environment Assessment.

The evidence for the *Bordeaux farm rural context area* is contained in the Historic Environment Assessment (2016). The significance of the site is described in section 4.8 (p 27,8). Recommendation 8 of this report (p.40), and referenced in the Neighbourhood plan

(paragraph 3.49, bullet point 9), is to preserve the setting of the Bordeaux Farm Scheduled site by avoiding any development that does not relate directly to the agricultural role of the farm.

The boundaries of the *Bordeaux Farm rural context area* are determined by the topography, the sight lines from the Scheduled Monument and historic, current and consented land use, (see Figure 5.17). The western boundary of the area is the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary. To the north, the boundary is defined by the consented development at site Chest 9 and to the west by the River Cam. To the south it is defined by the green screening that forms the boundary of Bordeaux Pit fishing lake. The area encompassed by these boundaries is both visible from the Scheduled Monument and is currently and historically in agricultural land use.

The *Bordeaux Farm rural context area* is referenced by Policy GLCNP/5. Point 4 states that “The setting of the Bordeaux Farm Scheduled Monument must be conserved”.

Policy GLCNP/6 - is it the intention of this policy that where development proposals would result in the loss of a Valued Community Space or Facility that alternative provision should be made of at least equivalent value to the community?

Our policy objective is to “Maintain and enhance community spaces that are valued for recreation, education and/or services (including designated Local Green Spaces) which make a significant positive contribution to the well-being and quality of life of residents and the aesthetic quality of the Plan Area”.

Valued Community Spaces and Facilities have been identified and the Policy is clear that only in circumstances where the amenity value of that space is not materially reduced as a result of a proposal and where the space is improved or enhanced would such a proposal be acceptable. The nature of the spaces we identify and their location within the community makes their relocation (or loss and replacement elsewhere) unlikely to be compliant with this policy. It would not rule this out, but “value to the community” is not just about a particular service, it is also about the specific location of these Valued Community Spaces.

Figure 5.23 - what is the evidence for defining the Development Limit of Chesterford Research Park and how does it relate to any of the Plan's policies?

The Development Limit of Chesterford Research Park is defined in the Local Plan Policies (2005) - see Figure 5.23: Chesterford Research Park Development Limits. A change to these limits has not been agreed as part of the Local Plan process to date. The growth rate of the park is less than that projected when these limits were set and substantive areas are currently undeveloped. A strategic review of employment need is outside the scope of this Neighbourhood Plan and is expected to be addressed through the Local Plan. Policy GLCNP/8 – Employment, bullet point 1 does not, but should, refer to these development limits.

Do the parish councils consider the proposals for housing development in the Plan to be consistent with the Plan's objective for the settlements to "continue to grow at an organic and sustainable rate"? Do the parish councils have a view on what would constitute a housing requirement that conflicts with this objective?

Our view is that the housing development in the Plan is consistent with this objective, particularly as the Plan allows for the development of windfall sites, as long as they are consistent with the policies in the Plan. Our view is that a housing requirement in excess of this would conflict with this objective. The communities have seen unprecedented growth over the last few years and a continuation of such growth over and above the sites we have included as part of the site selection process in this Neighbourhood Plan is very much considered to be growth which is neither organic nor sustainable.

It should be noted that before the conclusion of this Neighbourhood Development Plan, and very much against the communities' wishes as borne out by the public consultation, UDC have resolved to grant planning permission for 124 houses to the east of London Road (east of Chest 9). Whilst that planning permission has not actually been dated/issued, we consider it is now likely to be. Any growth beyond this, with the exception of the sites we have identified or those which come forward under GLCNP/9 is considered to be much more than organic growth and unsustainable for the communities covered by this Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy GLCNP/9 - would all development on infill or brownfield sites consistent with 1c) also be windfall sites as defined in 1b) given the suitable larger sites over 5 dwellings have been identified in the Plan?

We are not aware of any sites that would fall within 1c and 1b of GLCNP/9 but, theoretically, a site could come forward which was larger than 5 dwellings and could be supportable pursuant to 1c, provided it complied with the rest of policy GLCNP/9. Please refer to the Great and Little Chesterford Housing Land Assessment which considered this point.

What is the rationale for allocating sites which already have planning permission for housing development in the Plan?

When the Great and Little Chesterford Housing Land Assessment commenced, those sites did not have planning permission and it is aligned with the dates of the plan period. Planning permission was subsequently granted and, in addition as set out above, a further 124 houses have a resolution to grant outline planning at UDC subject to the completion of the Section 106 agreement.

Given the expectation for at least one electric vehicle charging point per dwelling on the sites allocated for new homes is there an expectation for the number of parking spaces to be provided on each site?

The Essex Design Guide Parking Standards sets out the number of parking spaces provided on each site and we are not looking to vary this.

What further evidence is available from responses to the consultation letter sent to landowners relating to the proposed Local Green Spaces (reproduced on page 73 of the Consultation Statement) - are copies of substantive responses available?

Informal consultation was carried out in November 2020 (letter on page 73 of consultation statement) and respondents were not asked to provide consent, as the feedback was being used to shape the plan. We have consent to share the March 2021 responses gathered as part of Regulation 14 consultation and these are attached. We are aware of the response from the Chair of the Great Oak Academy Trust to the Regulation 16 consultation and felt that the policy wording of GLCNP/7 sufficiently addressed the concern, as we consider "delivering community facilities" could include educational and sporting facilities for the Academy.

The Plan has been subject to a Health Check during its preparation - please may I be sent a copy of this?

Yes - please find this attached. We are seeking confirmation from the author re his consent for the report to be made publicly available.

The Consultation Statement includes a summary of responses to representations made during consultation on the pre-submission Plan. Is there a record - such as a tracked changes document - of the precise changes made before submitting the Plan?

Yes - please find this attached.