

# **GREAT AND LITTLE CHESTERFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**Report to Uttlesford District Council of the Independent  
Examination**

**By Independent Examiner, Tony Burton CBE BA MPhil (Town Planning) HonFRIBA FRSA**

**Tony Burton**

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# 1. Executive Summary

1. I was appointed by Uttlesford District Council with the support of Great and Little Chesterford Parish Councils to carry out the independent examination of the Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan.

2. I undertook the examination by reviewing the Plan documents and written representations, and by making an unaccompanied visit to the Neighbourhood Area.

3. I consider the Plan to be an adequate expression of the community's views and ambitions for Great and Little Chesterford. It is based on an effective programme of public consultation which has informed a Vision to 2033 supported by a Plan objective and eight contributing objectives. This is to be achieved through 13 planning policies and 12 Community Projects. The Plan is supported by a Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statement and has been screened to determine whether full Strategic Environmental and Habitats Regulations Assessments are required. There is supporting evidence provided and there is evidence of community support and the involvement of the local planning authority.

4. I have considered the 11 separate representations made on the submitted Plan. These are addressed in this report as appropriate.

5. Subject to the recommended modifications set out in this report I conclude that the Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements, including satisfying the Basic Conditions. I make a number of additional optional recommendations.

6. I recommend that the modified Plan should proceed to Referendum and that this should be held within the Neighbourhood Area of Great and Little Chesterford parishes.

## 2. Introduction

7. This report sets out the findings of my independent examination of the Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan was submitted to Uttlesford District Council for the combined area of Great and Little Chesterford parishes. Great Chesterford Parish Council is designated as the Qualifying Body with the consent of Little Chesterford Parish Council.

8. I was appointed as the independent examiner of the Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan by Uttlesford District Council with the agreement of Great and Little Chesterford Parish Councils.

9. I am independent of both Great and Little Chesterford Parish Councils and Uttlesford District Council. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan. I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role.

10. My role is to examine the Neighbourhood Plan and recommend whether it should proceed to referendum. A recommendation to proceed is predicated on the Plan meeting all legal requirements as submitted or in a modified form, and on the Plan addressing the required modifications recommended in this report.

11. As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). To comply with the Basic Conditions, the Plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area; and

- be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations, including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

12. An additional Basic Condition was introduced by Regulations 32 and 33 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) in 2018 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. I am also required to make a number of other checks under paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

13. In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents as the most significant in arriving at my recommendations:

- the submitted Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan
- the Basic Conditions Statement
- the Consultation Statement
- Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment screening statements
- the relevant parts of the development plan comprising the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 as saved by a Direction from the Secretary of State in 2007
- representations made on the submitted neighbourhood plan
- relevant material held on the neighbourhood plan and Uttlesford District Council websites
- National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
- Planning Practice Guidance
- relevant Ministerial Statements

14. I have also given due consideration to the preparation of a new Local Plan for Uttlesford following withdrawal of a previous draft Local Plan in 2019. The new Local Plan is at an early stage of development and has not yet been published for public consultation.

15. Much of the Plan was prepared under an earlier version of the National Planning Policy Framework than that used for my examination but the consultation on the submitted Plan took place after the most recent NPPF's publication in July 2021.

16. Strutt and Parker on behalf of The Hill Group requested the Examination included a public hearing "*given the complexity of the issues*". I have reviewed the request and having considered the documents provided and the representations on the submitted Plan I was satisfied that the examination could be undertaken by written representations without the need for a hearing.

17. I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the Neighbourhood Area on a weekday during July. I visited the main locations addressed in the Plan, including the development limits and settlement boundary, the separation zones and the main Character Areas, a selection of the identified views, the development sites, the key heritage and landscape features and the Local Green Spaces.

18. Throughout this report my recommended modifications are bulleted. Where modifications to policies are recommended they are highlighted in **bold** print with new wording in "*speech marks*". Existing wording is in *italics*. Modifications are also recommended to some parts of the supporting text. These recommended modifications are numbered from M1 and are necessary for the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions. A number of modifications are not essential for the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and these are indicated by [square brackets]. These optional modifications are numbered from OM1.

19. Producing the Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan has clearly involved significant effort over many years by both the Steering Group and Working Group. The process began in 2015 and is informed by significant community involvement. There is evidence of collaboration with Uttlesford District Council and continuing this will be important in ensuring implementation of the Plan. The commitment of all those who have worked so hard over such a long period of time to prepare the Plan is to be commended and I would like to thank all those at Uttlesford District Council and Great and Little Chesterford Parish Councils who have supported this examination process.

### **3. Compliance with matters other than the Basic Conditions**

20. I am required to check compliance of the Plan with a number of matters.

#### Qualifying body

21. The neighbourhood plan has been prepared by a suitable Qualifying Body – Great Chesterford Parish Council – with the express agreement of Little Chesterford Parish Council as confirmed in a joint statement dated 31 March 2022. As a parish council it is the only organisation that can prepare a neighbourhood plan for the area.

#### Neighbourhood Area

22. I am satisfied that the Plan relates to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area which comprises the parish areas of both Great and Little Chesterford. The neighbourhood area was agreed by Uttlesford District Council on 18 June 2015.

23. The boundary of the neighbourhood area can be discerned from Figure 1.1. This is not at a scale or clarity that allows the detailed boundary to be determined and no link is provided to where the boundary is available online.

- OM1 –[Provide a link to where the neighbourhood area boundary can be viewed at a larger scale]

#### Land use issues

24. I am satisfied that the Plan's policies relate to relevant land use planning issues.

#### Plan period

25. The period of the neighbourhood plan runs from 2019 to 2033. This is stated on the cover, a repeating header and throughout the body of the document. It aligns with the Plan's Vision. 2033 was the end of the Plan period for the Local Plan review withdrawn in 2019. It is anticipated that the forthcoming Local Plan review will run to 2040 and beyond.

Contrary to representations made by Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates it is up to the Qualifying Body to choose the plan period they consider most appropriate. The risk of a neighbourhood plan being superseded by a Local Plan review early in its period is a matter for the Qualifying Body and not this examination.

Excluded development

26. I am satisfied that the neighbourhood plan makes no provisions for excluded development (such as national infrastructure, minerals extraction or waste).



## 4. Consultation

27. I have reviewed the Consultation Statement, its 17 Appendices and relevant information provided on the Neighbourhood Plan website. This provides a clear record of the consultation process that has been undertaken since the Plan's inception in 2013 as overseen by the Steering Group comprising both parish councillors and other local residents and with contributions from a number of working parties. The public consultation process has been adequately open and transparent.

28. A number of different engagement methods have been used, including a website, public meetings, online surveys, a local "Google group", Facebook, noticeboards, Village Walks, use of the local Broadsheet and materials hand delivered to all addresses.

29. Consultation was undertaken on the overall Vision and Objectives, housing land and site selection, local green spaces and the Plan as a whole.

30. Some specific consultations with young people, via Great Chesterford Primary Academy, and local businesses and landowners have been undertaken. Landowners were all approached regarding potential site allocations and this resulted in a number of meetings and refinements of the approach. This included a meeting with Historic England to address the heritage impact when assessing potential sites. Landowners were also consulted on the proposed Local Green Spaces and this resulted in amendments to the approach. Uttlesford District Council has provided input through the process and support through an independent consultant. Other independent consultancy support has been provided.

31. Participation levels have been good with half of all households responding to the Village Questionnaire. 79% of the questionnaires were responded to at Great Chesterford Primary Academy.

32. The Plan was consulted on in November 2020 and subject to Regulation 14 consultation between 29 March 2021 and 10 May 2021. This included documents being

placed online and hard copies being made available on request. A leaflet was hand delivered to all addresses and key stakeholders were contacted directly by email. There is evidence of the consultation including the required statutory and other consultees who received details of the consultation the day before the consultation period began. While relatively few responses were received I consider an adequate process has been followed. An independent Health Check has also been undertaken.

33. Details of the consultation responses and the changes made to the Plan have been recorded and there is a clear description of the way representations have been handled and responses made.

34. 11 separate representations have been made on the submitted Plan including from individuals, statutory bodies, the local Academy and development interests. All the representations have been considered and are addressed as appropriate in this report.

35. I am satisfied with the evidence of the public consultation undertaken in preparing the Plan since its inception. The Plan has been subject to wide public consultation at different stages in its development. While the number of responses to the Regulation 14 consultation is low, the participation rates have generally been good. The process has allowed community input to shape the Plan as it has developed and as proposals have been firmed up. Local businesses, landowners and the local planning authority have been engaged throughout and shaped the outcomes.

## 5. General comments on the Plan's presentation

### Vision and Objectives

36. The Plan includes a Vision for 2033 which reflects the feedback received through consultation and is consistent with the objective and policies in the Plan. The overall approach combines a desire for organic change proportionate to the character of the area with support for sustainable development. Representations from development interests and Uttlesford District Council questioned whether this approach could be sustained given future demands for development. Nevertheless, as Uttlesford District Council notes, "*no decisions have been made*" on this strategic context. I conclude that the Plan's Vision is consistent with overarching need for sustainable development in the current context. The Vision may be revisited as part of a future Plan review if the strategic context changes.

37. The Plan has a single Objective and identifies eight ways in which this can be achieved. These contributing objectives are used variously as the basis for some but not all of the Plan's policies. The wording of each "*policy objective*" differs to varying degrees from that used in the overall objective and some policy objectives do not appear in the overall Plan objective (e.g. 5.5 to 5.9). Similarly, some parts of the overall objective do not appear as policy objectives and are not being achieved in other ways (e.g. (A) and (B)). Some parts of the plan reference the eight ways in which the objective can be achieved as separate objectives in their own right. There is also inconsistent use of numbering and lettering when referencing them. This is a source of potential confusion. There is also potential confusion in the description and use of the objective. My recommendation is to integrate and align the contributing objectives with the policy objectives in a manner which avoids duplicate text and provides a consistent approach. There is no single form of words which can best achieve this and I suggest this redrafting is agreed between the parish councils and Uttlesford District Council.

- M1- Clarify and be consistent in the drafting and use of the Plan's objective, including by:
  - Recognising the Plan has a single objective supported by contributing objectives and not multiple objectives

- Integrating the text used for the contributing objectives (currently A-H) with that used for each policy objective so it is aligned as follows:
  - 5.2 and (D)
  - 5.3 and (C)
  - 5.4 and (F)
- Add new contributing objectives to paragraph 4.2 aligned with the policy objectives for 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7
- Integrate contributing objectives (A) and (B) with policy objectives for 5.8 and 5.9 to provide separate contributing objectives for housing and employment
- Align the policy objectives for the overall spatial strategy with the Plan's overall objective
- It is an option to retain contributing objectives (E), (G) and (H) recognising they are not addressed directly by either the policies or the community projects in the Plan

#### Other issues

38. The Plan includes references to a number of documents which comprise the evidence base. These include the Landscape Character Assessment and the Historic Environment Assessment. It does not provide details or links to many of these documents and there is no indication of where the Plan's evidence base is provided online. The majority of the evidence base documents are made available on the Plan's website. The Plan uses base maps which are in some cases significantly out of date and do not show completed development.

- OM2 – [List all the evidence base documents used in the Plan in an Appendix and include a link to the Plan's website where they can be uploaded or links provided]
- OM3 – [Use updated base maps throughout the Plan]

## 6. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

### National planning policy

39. The Plan is required to “*have regard*” to national planning policies and advice.

40. The Basic Conditions Statement provides a table that explains the conformity of each of the Plan’s policies with relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework. It concludes that “*The Neighbourhood Plan has appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State*”.

41. The assessment provided is relatively limited and uses a standard text to explain conformity with each policy. No conflicts are identified. Overall the analysis does serve to demonstrate that consideration has been given to national planning policy.

42. I address some conflicts with national planning policy in my consideration of individual policies and recommend some modifications. There are also some areas where the drafting of the Plan’s policies needs to be amended in order to meet the National Planning Policy Framework’s requirement for plans to provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made. The policies should give a clear indication of “*how a decision maker should react to development proposals*” (paragraph 16). It is also important for the Plan to address the requirement expressed in national planning policy and Planning Practice Guidance that “*A policy in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and unambiguous. It should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared.*” (NPPG Paragraph: 041 Reference ID: 41-041-20140306). The Plan’s policies do not always meet these requirements and a number of recommended modifications are made as a result to ensure some policies are more clearly expressed and/or evidenced or to avoid duplication with other planning policies.

43. I am satisfied that the Plan meets this Basic Condition other than where identified in my detailed comments and recommended modifications to the Plan policies.

#### Sustainable development

44. The Plan must “*contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*”. This is addressed in the Basic Conditions Statement by a brief assessment of how relevant Plan policies contribute to each of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. This assessment identifies the most relevant policies and describes the approach. It concludes that this demonstrates “*The Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development*”.

45. The assessment is broad brush and succinct and offers only limited insight. Nevertheless my own assessment of the Plan is that it is consistent with the Basic Conditions.

46. Strutt and Parker on behalf of Hill Group have questioned the Plan’s support for sustainable development on the basis that it does “*not make provisions for any further residential development for the entirety of the plan period*”. As identified in the review of the Plan’s policies for new housing its approach exceeds the indicative housing requirement provided by Uttlesford District Council, includes a site allocation for which no planning permission exists and supports further development on windfall, brownfield and infill sites.

47. Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates has also questioned the Plan’s support for sustainable development, stating that it “*fails to positively plan for development and does not provide any flexibility*” and that it focuses on “*keeping the areas beyond the built-up area open and free from development*”. I have considered these representations and conclude that the Plan is suitably positive in its approach to development overall given the known strategic context. It includes positive support for employment and housing related development and this extends to more than individual sites. The intention to protect rural land outside settlements free of inappropriate development is entirely consistent with national planning policy “*recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside*” (paragraph 174, NPPF).

48. I am satisfied that the overall contribution of the Plan to sustainable development is positive.

#### Development plan

49. The Plan must be *“in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan”*. The Basic Conditions Statement addresses this by relating the most relevant saved policies of the 2005 Local Plan and each of the neighbourhood plan policies to each other and providing a brief commentary. The Basic Conditions Statement recognises the Local Plan is being reviewed and references regular consultation with Uttlesford District Council. I address the relationship of the Plan to the emerging Local Plan in relation to the specific policies where this is a relevant consideration

50. The assessment concludes that the *“Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area”*. No conflicts or departures are identified.

51. Uttlesford District Council made representations on the consultation draft Plan. These did not raise general conformity issues and when requested for a view on the submitted Plan it said *“Uttlesford District Council considers that the submitted Gt & Lt Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the Local Plan 2005 Strategic Policies.”*

52. Additionally, I have considered general conformity in my own assessment of each of the Plan’s policies. I am satisfied the Plan meets this Basic Condition other than where identified in my detailed comments and recommended modifications to the Plan policies.

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment

53. The Plan must be informed by a Strategic Environmental Assessment if it is likely to have significant environmental effects. Great and Little Chesterford Town Council published a Screening Report prepared by Uttlesford District Council in May 2021. This concluded *“the draft Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in significant*

*environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment*". Historic England, Natural England and Environment Agency agreed with this conclusion and I am satisfied by the robustness of the approach taken by the Screening Report.

54. I conclude that the Plan meets this Basic Condition.

#### Habitats Regulations Assessment

55. The Plan must be informed by a Habitats Regulations Assessment if it is likely to lead to significant negative effects on protected European sites. Great and Little Chesterford Town Council published a Screening Report on the submitted plan prepared by Uttlesford District Council in May 2021. This concluded that the Plan *"is unlikely to result in significant effects on any European sites and consequently the plan does not require Habitat Regulation Assessment"*. Natural England agreed with this conclusion.

56. The Basic Conditions Statement states that *"There are no European sites within Uttlesford District. Therefore a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was not required."* (paragraph 3.4.2.1). This is incorrect as the potential impacts on sites beyond the neighbourhood area are also relevant. Nevertheless, I am satisfied by the robustness of the approach taken by the Screening Report which did look beyond the neighbourhood area.

#### Other European obligations

57. The Plan must be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations. The Basic Conditions Statement asserts that this is the case and evidences the open and consultative manner in which the Plan has been prepared. No contrary evidence has been presented and there is evidence of changes being made to the Plan during its preparation. I conclude that there has been adequate opportunity for those with an interest in the Plan to make their views known and representations have been handled in an appropriate manner with changes made to the Plan.

58. I conclude that the Plan meets this Basic Condition.



## 7. Detailed comments on the Plan policies

59. This section of the report reviews and makes recommendations on each of the Plan's policies to ensure that they meet the Basic Conditions. I make comments on all policies in order to provide clarity on whether each meets the Basic Conditions. Some of the supporting text, policy numbering, headings and the Contents will need to be amended to take account of the recommended modifications.

### Overall Spatial Strategy

60. **Policy GLCNP/1** – This focuses new development to locations within existing development limits and on allocated sites and establishes principles intended to protect the character of sensitive areas.

61. The Policy is supported by Figures showing both the "*Great Chesterford Development Limits*" and the "*Little Chesterford Settlement boundary*". The Plan extends the Great Chesterford Development limit established in the 2005 Local Plan to include areas subsequently developed and areas where planning permission has been granted for development. The Plan introduces a settlement boundary for Little Chesterford which does not have a development limit identified in the Local Plan.

62. I share concerns expressed by Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates that the first parts of Policies GLCNP/1 and GLCNP/2 overlap. The general approach to the location of development should be defined as part of the overall spatial strategy in Policy GLCNP/1, including allowing for exception sites.

63. The distinction between a "*settlement boundary*" and a "*development limit*" is not entirely clear and on request I was informed that it reflected the different status of Little Chesterford. The effect of the policy is to encourage new development to be within development limits but not a settlement boundary. Development at Little Chesterford should only be on an allocated site outside the settlement boundary. I am content with this distinction.

64. The Policy establishes principles for development impacting on the Chalk Uplands, Roman Scheduled Monuments and Setting Zone and the Cam River Valley Area. These are shown in Figure 5.1. There is evidence supporting much of the definition of these areas in the Landscape Character Assessment and Historic Environment Assessment. The Chalk Uplands comprise a number of landscape character areas east of the A11 and B184. The Cam River Valley Area comprises a relevant landscape character area and the fluvial flood zone. I share some of the concern expressed by Strutt and Parker on behalf of The Hill Group about the evidence for the Cam River Valley Area and requested further information. I was informed of additional considerations for including some other land, including open farmland west of the B1383. This rationale should be provided in the supporting text.

65. Similarly I was provided with additional evidence as to the definition of the Roman Scheduled Monuments and Setting Zone, drawing on the Historic Environment Assessment and other information, which should be included in the supporting text. I note the support of Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates for the Setting Zone while expressing concern about the need to avoid identifying the setting itself as a heritage asset and considering the approach to be a *“simplified assessment of the setting of the monuments”*. While recommending modifications to clarify the Policy’s approach I am content it addresses appropriately the significance of the designated heritage asset and not the setting per se. I am also content that the Policy is consistent with the requirement in national planning policy that *“great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation”* (paragraph 199, NPPF). The level of detail provided in defining the area is appropriate and that more detailed consideration of variations within the Setting Zone can be most appropriately address through the development management process. The Policy also provides an additional level of detail appropriate to a neighbourhood plan related to the inter-visibility of the Scheduled Monuments.

66. I have considered representations that the overall approach to the three sensitive areas is overly restrictive as part of wider constraints on development outside the settlements. I share the view that as drafted the Policy takes a restrictive approach in stating what will *“only”* be supported and recommend modifications to address this. It

remains clear that support is dependent on the principles identified being met. Section 1 of the Policy is also unduly restrictive in stating where development “will” take place.

67. On the detail of the Policy drafting it relates to “development” requiring express planning permission rather than “growth” which can be more general in nature. Only one site is allocated in Little Chesterford and it is unnecessary to reference either the Plan or Area in Section 1. The Policy should also be clear as to what constitutes being “outside” the villages. The Plan is inconsistent in reference to both “Cam Valley Area” and “Cam River Valley Area”.

68. It will be helpful to provide a larger scale map online enabling the detailed boundaries of the areas defined in Figure 5.1 to be identified.

69. Policy GLCNP/1 does not meet the Basic Conditions.

- **M2 – Amend Policy GLCNP/1 to:**
  - In Section 1 replace “*Growth in the Neighbourhood Plan Area*” with “**New development proposals should**”
  - In Section 1 replace “*and in the housing site(s) allocated in Little Chesterford as part of this Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan*” with “**or land allocated in Policy GLCNP/9.1**”
  - In Section 2 replace “*Outside of the villages*” with “**Outside of the Great Chesterford development limits or Little Chesterford settlement boundary**”
  - After “*enhanced*” in Section 2 insert “**and development proposals should relate to uses that:**
    - **need to be located in the countryside;**
    - **are appropriate to exception sites; or**
    - **are employment uses at sites identified in Figure 5.24 or Figure 5.25.**”
  - In Section 2 delete “*our*” in the second paragraph
  - In Section 2 delete “*only*” in subsections a)-c)
  - In Section 2c) delete “*River*”

- M3 – Provide further detail in the supporting text on the rationale and evidence base used to define the Chalk Uplands, Roman Scheduled Monuments and Setting Zone and the Cam River Valley Area
- OM4 – [Provide access to a larger scale map enabling the detailed boundaries of the areas described by Figure 5.1 to be identified]

### Settlement Pattern and Separation

70. **Policy GLCNP/2** – This identifies the most appropriate locations for development, defines separation zones to be kept free from development and supports different kinds of development in different locations.

71. There is significant overlap between Policy GLCNP/1 and the first part of Policy GLCNP/2 in determining the most appropriate location for new development and the role of the Great Chesterford development limits and Little Chesterton settlement boundary. Policy GLCNP/2 additionally identifies the appropriateness of particular types of development that need to be located in the countryside (amplifying Local Plan Policy S7) and of employment development in Chesterford Research Park and elsewhere. My recommendation is that this aspect of the Policy is located in the overall spatial strategy as part of Policy GLCNP/1. On request the parish councils confirmed the reference to *“other places of employment in the rural area”* referred only to those sites identified in Figures 5.24 and 5.25 and I recommend this is clarified.

72. The second part of the Policy defines four *“Separation Zones”* to be *“kept open and free from development”*. The location is provided in Figures 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 although confusingly the Figures and the Policy describe them differently as *“Separation Zones”* and *“Areas of Separation”*. It will be helpful to provide a larger scale map online enabling the detailed boundaries of the areas defined in Figure 5.4 to be identified.

73. The rationale for and boundaries of the Separation Zones are explained in the supporting text although this does not provide sufficient detail for each of the boundaries.

On request I was provided with additional information regarding their definition corresponding to relevant landscape character areas varied according to them fulfilling the purpose of a separation zone. I recommend this additional explanation is provided in the supporting text.

74. I share some of the concerns expressed by Uttlesford District Council that the approach *“should not seek to frustrate potential development”* and by Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates that *“there seems to be little justification for such a sweeping and restrictive policy basis”* to keeping a majority of the neighbourhood area *“open and free from development”*. The supporting text recognised that the purpose of a separation zone is to *“serve as a rural buffer or visual break”* and *“protect the character and rural setting of settlements”* and I recommend that the Policy is clarified to address this more focused role.

75. The location of the Separation Zones is also not consistent with the Landscape Character Assessments conclusions on the capacity of different areas to accommodate development. Significant parts of the Northern Gateway Separation Zone are identified as having medium or low/medium capacity for development. To address this I recommend the Policy relates more clearly to the specific purpose of Separation Zones.

76. This modification also addresses the third part of the Policy which considers any development proposals in respect of their impact on the *“functions and purposes of a separation zone, or its open character”*. The Policy is contradictory in seeking to keep Separation Zones *“free from development”* whilst also supporting types of development that need to be located in the countryside.

77. The statement in the fourth part of the Policy that new housing development in Springwell will not be supported is unduly restrictive. Any proposals will already be subject to stringent policies covering development in rural areas. It is also unduly restrictive in the final part of the Policy not to support any backland development in Little Chesterford even if it has no significant detrimental impact. I observed that a small amount of backland development already exists in Little Chesterford without damaging its linear character.

78. The fifth part of the Policy limits development within Great and Little Chesterford to infill despite the Great Chesterford development limits having been redrawn to include a non-infill site.

79. Policy GLCNP/2 does not meet the Basic Conditions.

- **M4 – Amend Policy GLCNP/2 to:**
  - **Delete Section 1**
  - **Replace the first two lines of Section 2 with “Development proposals in the following Separation Zones (Figure 5.4) should either be appropriate to a location outside a settlement or otherwise avoid significant harm to the purpose of the Separation Zone in providing a rural buffer or visual break between settlements and/or protecting the character and rural setting of settlements:”**
  - **In Section 2 replace all references to “Area of Separation” with “Separation Zone”**
  - **Delete Section 3**
  - **Delete Section 4**
  - **In Section 5 delete “infill development”**
  - **In Section 6 replace “will not be supported as it would change the” with “should not result in significant detrimental harm to the linear”**
- **M5 - Provide further detail in the supporting text on the rationale and evidence base used to define the Separation Zones**
- **OM5 – [Provide access to a larger scale map enabling the detailed boundaries of the areas described by Figure 5.4 to be identified]**

## Getting Around

80. **Policy GLCNP/3** – This supports development contributing to sustainable transport infrastructure, including walking routes, electric vehicle charging points and use of off-site contributions for identified purposes.

81. The Policy is supported by evidence from public consultation of support for improved cycling and walking routes.

82. The Policy references specific measures to be supported by development but there is a lack of evidence as to their feasibility or priority. The measures also include road safety investment not covered by the Policy. I recommend that the measures are identified as examples rather than presented as a prescribed list.

83. The detailed Policy drafting can be improved, including to avoid including the purpose of the Policy and to ensure it is not unduly restrictive and the requirements relate only to appropriate development.

84. Policy GLCNP/3 does not meet the Basic Conditions.

- **M6 – Amend Policy GLCNP/3 to:**
  - In Section 1 replace *“In order to deliver sustainable development, all development proposals must”* with *“Development proposals should”*
  - In Section 2 insert *“where appropriate”* before *“be capable”*
  - In Section 3 insert *“as appropriate”* after *“development”*
  - In Section 2 and 3 replace *“must”* with *“should”*
  - In Section 4 replace *“to achieve the identified required”* with *“for”*
  - In Section 4 insert *“and road safety measures, including”* after *“improvements”*

## Landscape Character

85. **Policy GLCNP/4a** – This addresses the need for development to address a range of landscape considerations, including identified *“Green Screening”* and *“Special Verges”*.

86. The significance, variety and nature of the landscape in the neighbourhood area is partly evidenced through a detailed Landscape Character Assessment which informs the policy. Additional consideration has been given to the landscape setting of the three main settlements, including village walks and work on local wildlife sites undertaken by Uttlesford District Council in 2007 (which is not cited in the supporting text). These identified the importance and location of Green Screening and Special Verges which are identified in Figures 5.8 and 5.9. I went to these locations during my visit and concur with the assessment of their importance. The Policy is also supported by evidence showing the distribution of woodland in the neighbourhood area.

87. I have considered representations from Strutt and Parker on behalf of The Hill Group that the Policy is not consistent with those identifying the Cam River Valley Area or Separation Zones. I do not consider there to be a conflict between the different policies relating to each of these areas. Each policy provides a distinct approach.

88. The Policy drafting is unduly restrictive in stating that development will “only” be supported if it meets the criteria. Its deletion still means support is conditional on the criteria being satisfied. It is national planning policy to “conserve and enhance” rather than “*preserve or enhance*” nature (Chapter 15, NPPF). The intention for all the criteria to apply is unclear.

89. Policy GLCNP/4a does not meet the Basic Conditions.

- **M7 – Amend Policy GLCNP/4a to:**
  - **Delete “only”**
  - **Replace all instances of “*preserves*” with “*conserves*”**
  - **Insert “and” at the end of subsection d)**
  
- OM6 – [Include Uttlesford District Council’s Local Wildlife Site Review (2007) in the Evidence Base]



## Views

90. **Policy GLCNP/4b** – This identifies 44 “*Important Views*” and “*Locally Important Views*” to be protected and seeks to maintain panoramic views from the area’s plateaus.

91. The Plan draws on the Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Environment Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisal plus community surveys and village walks to evidence the significance and location of the views. These are summarised in Table 5.1 and detailed in the Important Views Designation Report accompanying the Plan and Figures 5.11 to 5.14.

92. The evidence base is sound and I do not agree with representations from Strutt and Parker on behalf of The Hill Group that the benchmark is the approach used in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments. Further detail on the significance of views and potential impacts can be considered at the planning application stage.

93. I note the representations from Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates but do not consider the effect of the Policy when combined with Policy GLCNP/2 is to create “*an almost total constraint on any further expansion of Great Chesterford*”. The matter of whether a development will adversely impact on a view will be one for planning judgement when a planning application is submitted. I recommend that any such impact needs to be significant for this judgment to be required.

94. There is a lack of detail in the Plan about what distinguishes an “*Important View*” from a “*Locally Important View*”. This extends to the Policy title and the Plan sub-heading which both reference only “*Locally Important Views*”. As noted by representations from Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates there is a need also to explain how the three categories of view described in paragraph 5.4.9 – Significant, Important and Community Designated – are differently categorised into Important and Locally Important for the purposes of the Policy. Table 5.1 also fails to distinguish between Important and Locally Important views and the supporting text incorrectly identifies Table 5.1 as only including “*Locally Important Views*”. I recommend text from the Important Views

Designation Report is included in the supporting text to explain the categorisation and that this is shown in Table 5.1.

95. Additionally, the Policy addresses the importance of *“panoramic views”* from *“plateaus and uplands”*. The location of the *“plateaus and uplands”* is not provided which means the Policy lacks necessary clarity. The Landscape Character Assessment identifies the importance of the panoramic views from Chesterford Ridge and Chalk Upper Slopes and I recommend this is identified in a modified Policy.

96. I experienced a majority of the views during my visit to the neighbourhood area and agree with them being identified as having value to the area. While noting representations from Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates regarding the match between the view descriptions and the views shown in Figures 5.1 to 5.14 I am content that the significance of the view is as described and this will be what is pertinent to the decision maker. The approach is also consistent with the evidence base.

97. The Policy drafting is unduly restrictive in stating that development will *“only”* be supported which addresses the considerations. Its deletion still means the criteria need to be satisfied for support to be forthcoming. A word is missing from subsection a) and the introduction of a hierarchy of importance in the panoramic views in subsection b) is not informed by evidence in the supporting text.

- **M8 - Retitle Policy GLCNP/4b as “Views” and make the following amendments:**
  - **Delete “only”**
  - **Insert “does” after “and” and “significantly” after “not” in subsection a)**
  - **Replace “especially” with “including” in subsection b)**
  - **Replace “plateaus and uplands” with “Chesterford Ridge and Chalk Upper Slopes (Figure 3.1)”**
  
- **M9 - Make other clarifications to the supporting text:**
  - **Delete “Locally Important” in the sub-heading on page 58 and the Contents on page 1**

- Move paragraph 5.4.9 to before paragraph 5.4.8
- Distinguish “*Important Views*” from “*Locally Important Views*” in Table 5.1
- Replace “*set out*” with “*included*” in the last sentence of paragraph 5.4.8
- Insert “*and Locally Important*” before “*Views*” in the titles of Figures 5.13 and 5.14
- Insert “*Important Views are those identified by reports in the evidence base, including the Conservation Area Appraisal and Historic Environment Assessment. Locally Important Views are those identified by the community through surveys and village walks*” before Table 5.1 and explain the categorisation of Significant, Important and Community Designated views into Important and Locally Important.
- Include additional supporting text explaining the evidence for the significance of the panoramic views

### Historic Environment

98. **Policy GLCNP/5** – This Policy establishes a range of considerations related to the historic environment to be addressed by all planning applications, including identifying stretches of flint wall and sunken banks which are characteristic of the area.

99. The Policy is supported by an evidence base largely comprising the Historic Environment Assessment and the outputs from Village Walks. There is evidence of support for protection of the historic environment from the public consultation.

100. The purpose of neighbourhood planning policies is to address local considerations not already included in national planning policy or a Local Plan. National planning policy is that “*Plans should.....f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant)*” (paragraph 16, NPPF). Parts of Policy GLCNP/5 conflict with this approach, including Section 1 related to designated heritage assets, Section 5 related to Conservation Areas and Section 9 related to non-designated heritage assets. Section 7 is also inconsistent with national planning policy relating to undesignated heritage assets on a Local List.

101. The Policy comprises a mix of specific and generic (Sections 9 and 11) requirements which could be more clearly presented. I share some of the reservations expressed in representations by Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates in respect of the clarity of the policy and its consistency with national planning policy, including in relation to the setting of Scheduled Monuments.

102. The approach is unduly restrictive in stating what “*must*” be addressed or happens and what “*will not be supported*”. It also applies to all development proposals regardless of whether they have any relationship to the historic environment. It should be clear that all considerations are relevant where they are appropriate to a development proposal.

103. The Policy identifies “*Flint and Brick Walls and Sunken Banks*” in Little Chesterford as “*Local Historic Features*” to be conserved or enhanced. Their location is provided in Figure 5.17 and my visit confirmed this. Figure 5.17 references only “*Old flint walls*” and the Historic Environment Assessment largely references these features as “*flint walls*”. I recommend use of this term to avoid any potential confusion. Figure 5.17 is not at a sufficiently large scale to identify the precise location of these Local Historic Features. I recommend a larger map is provided at a scale whereby each feature can be accurately identified.

104. The Policy addresses the setting of Bordeaux Farm Scheduled Monument and this is supported by evidence from the Historic Environment Assessment. The setting is shown in Figure 5.17 although it is identified here as the “*Bordeaux Farm rural context area*”. The different terminology is a potential cause of confusion. I share concerns expressed by Strutt and Parker on behalf of The Hill Group concerning the evidence supporting the boundary shown in Figure 5.17. This is not provided by the Historic Environment Assessment. On request I was provided with a brief description of the boundaries but the basis for this remains too unclear. I recommend that it is not defined by a Figure in the Plan and it is addressed through a description of the setting in the supporting text.

105. The Policy identifies the “*Historic Core*” of Little Chesterford and its location is shown in Figure 5.17. Evidence in support of this is provided by the Historic Environment

Assessment. This emphasises the importance of the setting and I recommend a modification to the Policy to provide further clarity.

106. Policy GLCNP/5 does not meet the Basic Conditions:

- **M10 – Amend Policy GLCNP/5 as follows:**
  - **Replace opening two lines with “Development proposals should conserve and enhance the historic environment and take account of the following as appropriate:”**
  - **Delete Sections 1, 5, 7 and 9**
  - **Insert a new Section “The significance of any undesignated heritage asset, including any structure on the Local Heritage List”**
  - **In Sections 2, 4, 8 and 10 replace “*must*” with “should”**
  - **Replace Section 2 with “Open visibility between the Scheduled Monuments comprising the Roman Town and Fort and the Romano-Celtic Temple and the open aspect of the Romano-Celtic Temple area should both be conserved.”**
  - **Replace Section 3 with “Development along Newmarket Road should avoid any significant detrimental impact on views into the designated Scheduled Monuments “**
  - **In Section 4 insert “(Figure 5.17)” after “*Monument*”**
  - **Replace Section 6 with “In Little Chesterford, the Historic Core (Figure 5.17) comprising the open space and setting of the church and hall should be conserved.”**
  - **In Section 8 delete “*and Brick*”**
  - **Replace Section 10 with “The publication and dissemination of the results of archaeological investigations is encouraged where these are required to be undertaken”**
  - **Replace Section 11 with “The contribution of a high quality of design and materials”**
  - **Insert “; and” at the end of the penultimate Section**

The revised Policy will read as follows:

“Development proposals should conserve and enhance the historic environment and take account of the following as appropriate:

1. The significance of any undesignated heritage asset, including any structure on the Local Heritage List;
  2. Open visibility between the Scheduled Monuments comprising the Roman Town and Fort and the Romano-Celtic Temple and the open aspect of the Romano-Celtic Temple area should both be conserved;
  3. Development along Newmarket Road should avoid any significant detrimental impact on views into the designated Scheduled Monuments;
  4. The setting of the Bordeaux Farm scheduled Monument (Figure 5.17) should be conserved;
  5. In Little Chesterford, the Historic Core (Figure 5.17) comprising the open space and setting of the Church and Hall should be conserved;
  6. The Local Historic Features (Flint Walls and Sunken Banks) in Little Chesterford should be conserved or enhanced by any development proposals;
  7. The publication and dissemination of the results of archaeological investigations is encouraged where these are required to be undertaken; and
  8. The contribution of a high quality of design and materials.”
- M11 – Provide a revised version or a link to a scale of map for Figure 5.17 which enables each of the Local Historic Features to be accurately located
  - M12 – In Figures 5.15 and 5.17 delete “*Bordeaux Farm rural context area*” and provide a description of the setting of Bordeaux Farm Scheduled Monument in the supporting text

#### Valued Community Spaces and Facilities

107. **Policy GLCNP/6** – This protects a range of identified community spaces and facilities.

108. The Policy is supported by the identification of 22 “*Valued Community Spaces and Facilities*” and these are presented under five headings in Table 5.2 and identified in Figures 5.19 – 5.21. This draws on a range of evidence, including a 2016 Village Survey and 2015

Village Plan. There is support for protecting community facilities from the public consultation.

109. The Policy restricts support of development proposals resulting in the *“Loss, change of use or alteration”* of any of the 22 spaces and facilities to instances where their amenity value is not reduced and it is improved or enhanced. The drafting is unclear in requiring the value to be simultaneously *“improved or enhanced”* and *“not materially reduced”*. It is also unclear how the Policy relates to instances where the space or facility is otherwise provided in the area or instances where the space or facility is no longer needed.

110. I have considered representations from Cheffins on behalf of local landowner Robert Fairhead expressing reservations about the appropriateness of referencing the riverside walk given public access is currently only on an informal basis. It is apparent that the *“community routes”* have high levels of public support even if they are only accessed on an informal basis. The effect of the Policy is to protect them against negative impacts arising from new development. It does not fetter the right of the landowner to extend or reduce access to the land and, as such, I am content with the Plan’s approach.

111. Other drafting is unclear, including superfluous numbering of a single Section and a caveat relating to circumstances where *“planning permission is required”*. Planning policy is only relevant to development requiring express planning permission. The Contents does not reference *“facilities”*.

112. The locations of Chesterford Fisheries (4) and the route of the Riverside walk between Great and Little Chesterford (22) are not clear from Figure 5.21.

113. Policy GLCNP/6 does not meet the Basic Conditions.

- **M13 - Replace Policy GLCNP/6 with “Development proposals which result in the loss or significant reduction in the value of Valued Community Spaces and Facilities (Table 5.2) should demonstrate that either the space or facility is no longer required or that alternative appropriate provision of at least equivalent value**

**exists or will be provided elsewhere in an appropriate location in the neighbourhood area.”**

- M14 – Clarify the locations of Chesterford Fisheries (4) and the route of the Riverside walk between Great and Little Chesterford (22) in the appropriate Figure(s)
- OM7 – [Add “and Facilities” after both instances of “*Valued Community spaces*” in the Contents]

### Local Green Spaces

114. **Policy GLCNP/7** – This designates 17 Local Green Spaces and provides policy consideration for planning applications which affect them.

115. The Policy is supported by a *Local Green Spaces Designation Report* (March 2021) which reviews each proposal in relation to the considerations in paragraph 100 (now 102) of the National Planning Policy Framework. There is evidence of very strong support for protecting local spaces from the community consultation. There is also evidence of landowners being effectively consulted and some having given explicit support.

116. I visited each of the proposed Local Green Spaces and concur with the conclusions of the Local Green Space Assessment with one exception:

- LGS-13 – Land East of Manor Farm – This is an area of farmland which was under crop during my visit. While playing an important role on the edge of Great Chesterford it is indistinguishable from a large area of farmland to the south east. There is insufficient evidence that it is demonstrably special to the local community. The land is protected from development under other development plan policies

117. While supporting designation Great Oak Multi Academy Trust expressed concern over the impact of designating LGS-5 on future development for educational purposes. I am content with the assessment of the site’s value and any future development proposals will



need to meet the requirements for Local Green Spaces contained in national planning policy.

118. The Policy includes an incorrect reference to “*Figure 5.35*”.

119. To be afforded a level of protection consistent with them being Green Belt Local Green Spaces need only by designated by the Plan. This follows a Court of Appeal case with relating to a Local Green Space policy in a neighbourhood plan (Lochailort Investments Limited v. Mendip District Council and Norton St Philip Parish Council, [2020] EWCA Civ 1259) which means it is inappropriate to include any wording that sets out how development proposals should be managed.

120. Policy GLCNP/7 does not meet the Basic Conditions.

- **M15 - Amend Policy GLCNP/7 to:**
  - **Delete Sections 2 and 3**
  - **Delete “1” in Section 1 and replace “*Figure 5.35*” with “Table 5.3 and Figure 5.22”**
- M16 – Delete LGS-13 from Table 5.3 and Figure 5.22
- M17 – Provide a revised version or a link to a scale of map for Figure 5.22 which enables the exact boundaries of each of the Local Green Spaces to be determined.

### Employment

121. **Policy GLCNP/8** – This provides considerations for supporting new employment development related to identified sites, including measures to minimise traffic through the villages, and affords protection to employment sites.

122. The Policy is supported by the identification of six employment sites shown in Figures 5.24 and 5.25. Section 3 of the Policy is not explicit in identifying these sites.

123. Additionally, Chesterford Research Park has a defined "*Development limit*" shown in Figure 5.23. This is not addressed in any of the Plan's policies and performs no planning function. To avoid potential confusion I recommend deletion of this Figure. The parish councils informed me of the intention to reference the Chesterford Research Park Development Limit in Section 1 of the Policy but it has not done so and so this has not been subject to public consultation. The land around Chesterford Research Park still benefits from protection under other policies in the Local Plan and this Plan and it is an option to address the issue in a future review of the neighbourhood plan.

124. I also recommend inclusion of a Table identifying the employment sites shown in the Figures in a similar way to the identification of Local Green Spaces and Valued Community Facilities and Spaces.

125. The Policy expects all development at Chesterford Research Park to be accompanied by a workplace travel plan. This may not be the case in all circumstances, such as where a planning application is for development with limited or no traffic implications.

126. The protection of existing employment sites is negatively worded in stating what "*will not be supported*" and I recommend that proposals should instead demonstrate that they meet relevant considerations.

127. Policy GLCNP/8 does not meet the Basic Conditions.

- **M18 – Amend Policy GLCNP/8 to:**
  - **At the end of Section 2 insert "where appropriate"**
  - **In Section 3 insert "significant" before "detrimental"**
  - **In Section 3 insert "identified in Figures 5.24 and 5.25" after "employment"**
  - **In Section 3 replace "*will not be supported other than where evidence can be produced*" with "*should demonstrate*"**
  
- M19 – Delete Figure 5.23 and rename "*Chesterford Research Park Development limit*" as "*Chesterford Research Park*" in Figure 5.4

## Housing

128. **Policy GLCNP/9** – This supports development on three allocated sites, windfall and infill sites and provides consideration for all development seeking to ensure it is sustainable.

129. Three sites are allocated in the Plan and these have been identified through a two-step process which assessed known sites for their availability and suitability followed by a site selection process on which landowners and others were consulted. I am content with the process that has identified three sites to be allocated for development.

130. Uttlesford District Council has provided an indicative housing requirement of 96 dwellings for the Plan period. Representations from Strutt and Parker on behalf of The Hill Group question the basis for this requirement given it *“relies on housing figures from the withdrawn Local Plan”* (Uttlesford District Council letter, 23/3/21) and this Local Plan *“has no status”*. I agree that the withdrawn Local Plan itself is not an appropriate basis for the indicative housing requirement but I am also satisfied that the indicative housing requirement has been provided on the basis of the underlying evidence available during the plan’s preparation. Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates expresses concerns that the Plan is not informed by the latest information.

131. In testing the indicative housing requirement I consider it to have been provided sufficiently recently given it was required before public consultation on the Plan which was then submitted less than a year after the consultation closed. The implications of any more recent evidence and information which will inform the forthcoming Local Plan review is most sensibly managed through a review of the neighbourhood plan. This could address the matters raised in representations. Given the emerging Local Plan has not yet been published for consultation it would be premature to anticipate its contents. As Uttlesford District Council has observed, the basis for any future housing requirement may change as further work on the emerging Local Plan is undertaken. This is a matter for a future Plan review. I am also satisfied that the indicative housing requirement provided by Uttlesford District Council is based on relevant evidence which looks beyond data to *“use the authority’s local housing need as a starting point, taking into consideration relevant policies*

*such as an existing or emerging spatial strategy, alongside the characteristics of the neighbourhood plan area*” (Paragraph: 102 Reference ID: 41-102-20190509, Planning Practice Guidance).

132. I am content the indicative housing figure needs no further testing and that the parish councils’ reliance on the indicative housing requirement provided by Uttlesford District Council is appropriate.

133. It is also apparent that the indicative housing requirement is likely to be exceeded by a large margin. It is already met by the Plan’s three site allocations. Additional residential development will also come forward on unidentified sites consistent with Policy GLCNP/9. Additionally, there are the emerging plans for development of Chest 8 where the local planning authority has resolved to grant permission for 124 dwellings. As a result there is considerable flexibility in the ability to meet future housing requirements in the neighbourhood area.

134. While it would be helpful to address this changing context in the supporting text I do not consider it either appropriate or necessary to introduce a new site allocation or to identify further reserve sites at this late stage in the process, as advocated in representations from Strutt and Parker on behalf of The Hill Group and Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates respectively. The implications of the development of Chest 8 and the suitability of the Chest 6 sites are also best managed through a future review of the Plan and will also be considered through the Local Plan review.

135. I share the view of Roebuck Land and Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates that the references to *“sustainable development”* are unnecessary and duplicate national planning policy.

136. The three allocated sites are each subject to their own Policy. Two of the three sites are at such an advanced stage of development (Chest 9 and Chest 13) that their inclusion as site allocations within the Plan serves no planning purpose. Uttlesford District Council confirmed that construction began in March 2022 and April 2021 respectively. I

recommend their deletion from the Plan and consequent amendments to the supporting text. The sites continue to contribute to the overall housing requirement for the Plan area.

137. The Policy also supports residential development on windfall sites of less than five units or development of any size on infill/brownfield sites consistent with other Plan policies. Given the nature of the neighbourhood area it is unlikely that an infill site of larger than five dwellings will come forward as a windfall site but this is recognised by the parish councils as being possible. This confirms the need to redraft the Policy to provide support for residential development on all three types of site.

138. The Policy relates to all "*sustainable development*" although its substance relates only to residential development and sites for housing development.

139. The Policy provides a number of considerations for all residential development. This includes an expectation that any site is "*proportionate to the size of the Settlement*" and this is identified as not exceeding 10% of the size of the settlement. There is insufficient evidence supporting the quantification of what can be considered proportionate and it could, for example, be seen as excluding the development of 11 and not 10 dwellings in Site Chest 12 before detailed site capacity considerations have been addressed. The Policy's reference to "*continued balance and vibrancy of the community*" through the provision of mixed sizes of homes lacks necessary precision and is a potential source of ambiguity.

140. The Policy also repeats national policy on Net Gain and First Homes.

141. The Policy references Policies GLCNP/9 (1) and GLCNP/9(2). Neither is included in the Plan. The Policy's requirement for development proposals to be "*in compliance with this Neighbourhood Plan and its policies*" is unnecessary and does not "*serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area*" (Paragraph 16f., NPPF) as all planning applications will be considered against all relevant development plan policies.

142. Policy GLCNP/9 does not meet the Basic Conditions.

- **M20 – Replace Policy GLCNP/9 with:**  
**“Residential development proposals will be supported which are located on:**
  - **site allocation Chest 12 and are in accordance with Policy GLCNP/9.1**
  - **windfall sites of fewer than five units; or**
  - **infill sites or previously developed land****and which address the following considerations:**
  - **a scale of development which is proportionate to the size of the settlement in which it is located;**
  - **provision of a mix of sizes and tenures of homes which reflects local needs;**
  - **provision of specialist housing for older people where appropriate;**
  - **provision of affordable homes which meet local housing needs as expressed in the local housing needs assessment; and**
  - **securing contributions for the Early Years and Child Care education facility to the east of the Bowls Club in Great Chesterford where this relates appropriately to the proposed development.”**
  
- **M21 – Delete Policy GLCNP/9.2 and Policy GLCNP/9.3** and make consequential changes to the supporting text to describe the recent history of planning consents and the contribution to meeting the indicative housing requirement.
  
- **OM8 – [Provide information in the supporting text on the intention to monitor and review the Plan in relation to the future Local Plan review]**

143. **Policy GLCNP/9.1** – This allocates land in Little Chesterford for residential development of up to 10 dwellings which incorporates a number of principles.

144. The Policy is supported by a location plan and high level plan showing the location of key access points and green screening. There is support for the site’s allocation in the public consultation and from Andrew Martin Planning on behalf of the site’s promoters Enterprise Residential Development Ltd.

145. The principles identified are generally high level and appropriate. The Policy is overly restrictive in stating what “*must*” or “*shall*” be addressed and examples should be provided in the supporting text.

146. Policy GLCNP/9.1 does not meet the Basic Conditions.

- **M22 – Amend Policy GLCNP/9.1 to:**
  - **Replace all instances of “*must*” and “*shall*” with should**
  - **Delete “(for example, a children’s playground) in principle 5 and include it as an example in paragraph 5.9.14 of the supporting text**

## **8. Recommendation and Referendum Area**

147. I am satisfied the Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements subject to the modifications recommended in this report and that it can proceed to a referendum. I have received no information to suggest other than that I recommend the referendum area matches that of the Neighbourhood Area.