

**Land between Haverhill Road  
and Hinton Way, Stapleford**

**PLANNING STATEMENT**

March 2020  
On behalf of Axis Land Partnerships

**Carter Jonas**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Carter Jonas LLP on behalf of Axis Land Partnerships Ltd (“ALP”) to support an application for outline planning permission (with all matters reserved apart from access) for the development of land for a retirement care village in Use Class C2 comprising housing with care, communal health, wellbeing and leisure facilities, public open space, landscaping, car parking, access and associated development and the provision of land for use as a countryside park for public access.
- 1.2 The 24.37ha site is currently in use as arable land. It is located to the north of the village of Stapleford in South Cambridgeshire District. The site adjoins Stapleford’s settlement boundary to the north-west and south-east and lies within the Cambridge Green Belt.
- 1.3 The Greater Cambridge Partnership is progressing plans for a south east Cambridge arm of the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM), the route for the first phase of which would run from Cambridge Biomedical Campus to Granta Park. The preferred route (as approved by the Joint Assembly and Executive Board of the Greater Cambridge Partnership), would bisect the site, with stops proposed at both ends (adjacent to Haverhill Road and Hinton Way).
- 1.4 The proposed route provides a logical edge to the retirement village scheme and separates it from the part of the site which is most sensitive from a landscape and visual point of view. This has, in part, inspired proposals for a new public access countryside park enabling the landowner to create a lasting, positive and significant legacy for the village.
- 1.5 Notwithstanding the progress of the proposals for the south east Cambridge arm of the CAM it should be noted that the development proposals, including the countryside park, are not dependent on the delivery of the route and remain of strong planning merit irrespective.
- 1.6 The outline application comprises the following documents:
- Application forms
  - Site Location Plan
  - Parameter Plans (Land Use and Heights Plan, Landscape Plan, and Access and Movement Plan)
  - Illustrative Masterplan
  - Planning Statement
  - Design and Access Statement
  - Statement of Community Involvement
  - Planning Need Assessment
  - Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan
  - Air Quality Assessment
  - Landscape and Visual Appraisal
  - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
  - Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment
  - Heritage Statement
  - Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy
  - Phase 1 Geo-environmental Assessment
  - Services Report
- 1.7 Section 2 of this report describes the application site. Section 3 provides details of the pre-application engagement process that has been undertaken prior to the submission of this application. Section 4

summarises the proposals and the technical and environmental assessment work undertaken. Sections 5 and 6 assess the proposals against planning policy and section 7 concludes.

## 2 THE SITE

### Location

- 2.1 The site is located on the northern side of Stapleford, a village 9km south east of central Cambridge. Stapleford is immediately south east of Great Shelford, a larger village with a range of local services and facilities, including a railway station.
- 2.2 The site lies to the north west of Haverhill Road and south east of Hinton Way (see J0027450\_011 Site Location Plan). Haverhill Road and Hinton Way run roughly parallel to one another, linking Babraham Road (A1307) to the north with Great Shelford, Stapleford and the A1301.

### Description and Planning Designations

- 2.3 The main body of the 'mirrored' L-shaped 24.37ha site forms a long rectangular piece of land extending southeast from Hinton Way to Haverhill Road.
- 2.4 The southernmost part of the site (the base of the 'L') is more enclosed than the main body of the site. It is bordered by hedges on its south-east and north-west facing boundaries. Haverhill Road runs adjacent to the south-east facing boundary and residential development on Gog Magog Way and Chalk Hill lies immediately to the south-west of the site.
- 2.5 The site is presently used for arable agricultural uses, consequently there is little vegetation within the site save for a small block of tree planting towards the northern end. Most of the site's boundaries are formed by mature hedgerows.
- 2.6 The site is private land in arable agricultural use with no public access.
- 2.7 The site is located between c 20-25m AOD on the lower slopes of the Gog Magog Chalk Hills which rises to the east to c 74m AOD near Magog Down. The village of Stapleford is located within the Granta Valley. The site is open in character forming a part of a larger single arable field unit which extends up the chalk slopes to a well vegetated horizon. The site is bounded by mature hedges and rear gardens in Stapleford to the south-west.
- 2.8 The site lies adjacent to, but outside of, the Stapleford Development Framework Boundary and is therefore within the defined countryside for planning purposes and also within the Cambridge Green Belt. The site falls within flood zone 1 and is therefore at a low risk of flooding.
- 2.9 The Stapleford Conservation Area lies to the south west of the site, but this designation does not extend to cover any part of the site. There are no listed buildings within the site although there are a number of listed buildings in the area that surrounds the site. These are identified in detail within the supporting Heritage Statement that accompanies the application. In addition, there are a number of Scheduled Ancient Monument designations within the surrounding area, again none of these designations fall within the site area and are identified in more detail within the supporting Heritage Statement.

### Surroundings

- 2.10 The site is bordered by:

- Dwellings fronting Hinton Way, large arable agricultural fields, and dwellings fronting Chalk Hill and Gog Magog Way to the west and south-west;
- Haverhill Road to the south-east, with agricultural land beyond;
- A farm track and mix of paddocks, garden land, dwellings and agricultural land to the north east; and
- Hinton Way and agricultural land beyond it to the north-west.

2.11 The site occupies a village edge location. It is approximately 900m north east of the village centre but is linked to the village by a continuous footway on Gog Magog Way and Church Street.

## Planning History

2.12 Relevant planning history for the site and land immediately adjacent is set out within table 1 below.

Reference	Description	Decision / Date
S/0211/91/F	Public golf driving range (part of site adjacent to Haverhill Road)	Refused – Mar 1992
S/1672/91/F	Public golf driving range (part of site adjacent to Haverhill Road)	Refused – Jan 1992
S/0442/06/F	17 Houses, 8 Flats and Change of Use of Agricultural Land for New Football Pitch (part of site including Chalk Hill and land to the rear of dwellings at Gog Magog Way)	Withdrawn – May 2006
S/0520/07/F	Erection of 18 Affordable Dwellings (relates to present day Chalk Hill),	Approved Aug 2007

**Table 1 – relevant planning history**

2.13 The erection of 18 of affordable dwellings at Chalk Hill is the only development which has taken place on the parcel of land of which the site used to form part. The rest of the land, which now comprises the site, has remained in arable agricultural use.

2.14 In July 2019 the site was submitted to the Greater Cambridge Partnership in response to its Joint Local Plan 'Call for Sites'.

2.15 A formal screening request under regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 was made to South Cambridgeshire District Council on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2020. At the time of writing the Council had not returned a screening opinion. ALP's assessment is that the development proposals are not EIA development.

## Administrative matters

2.16 The site lies within the administrative areas of South Cambridgeshire District Council ('the Council') and Stapleford Parish Council.

### 3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework explains that early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.
- 3.2 ALP has sought to engage with the local community, voluntary bodies and the Local Planning Authority regarding the development proposals. The pre-application engagement process is set out in detail in the supporting Statement of Community Involvement which accompanies this application. In summary, the engagement undertaken includes:
- Extensive consultation with Stapleford Parish Council since July 2018;
  - Two rounds of public consultation in November 2019 and February 2020;
  - Meetings with local bodies, including the Greater Cambridge Partnership, Cambridge Past Present and Future, the Magog Trust and Cambridge Wildlife Trust.
- 3.3 The evolution of the scheme design as a result of this consultation is set out in detail in the Statement of Community Involvement and also within the Design and Access Statement. In summary:
- The initial development proposals were open-ended, with a number of uses considered including affordable housing and retirement living
  - This was refined to retirement living as a result of engagement with Stapleford Parish Council and analysis of local need
  - Following engagement with the Parish Council and CAM delivery body, the site was extended to include an extensive countryside park along the northern part of the site, bound to the south by the proposed CAM route
  - These proposals were presented to the community and the local planning authority in late 2019. Following feedback, the proposals were further refined and developed, with extensive framework landscaping and additional parameter plans. These plans were presented once more to the local community in February 2020 and form the basis of the present application.

#### Pre-application submission

- 3.4 A request for pre-application advice was submitted to South Cambridgeshire District Council on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (ref. PRE/0449/19).
- 3.5 Following submission, a meeting was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 between ALP, Carter Jonas and representatives from the Council. At the time of submission of the outline application, no detailed pre-application advice has been provided by the local planning authority.

## 4 THE PROPOSAL

- 6.1 This application seeks outline planning permission (with all matters reserved apart from access) for the development of land for a retirement care village in Use Class C2 comprising housing with care, communal health, wellbeing and leisure facilities, public open space, landscaping, car parking, access and associated development and the provision of land for use as a countryside park for public access.
- 6.2 A retirement village provides a range of homes to rent and to buy, with additional care facilities to support those who need it with a particular focus upon older people<sup>1</sup>. The level of support can be adapted to fit the changing needs of people over time, ranging all the way up to full care as one would expect to receive in a residential care home. Retirement villages are designed to integrate with local communities: on-site facilities are available for public use and carefully chosen locations mean that residents can access existing local facilities and services via sustainable transport and maintain their existing social networks.
- 6.3 More particularly, the proposals comprise:
- Creation of a retirement village, with:
    - A central care building (use class C2) comprising a mixture of bedrooms/suites and self-contained units, with associated facilities;
    - Retirement housing units with linked care arrangements (use class C2);
    - Ancillary facilities for use by residents (indicatively: dining, leisure, wellness, gym, sauna, swimming pool, hairdressers, activity rooms, lounges and gardens with outdoor recreation);
    - Vehicular access from Haverhill Road;
    - Foot and cycle connectivity from Chalk Hill; and
    - A comprehensive landscaping scheme, including amenity space.
  - Creation of new circa 19ha countryside park for public access, providing foot and cycle paths, landscape planting, new chalk grassland, habitat creation and other ecological enhancements.

### Parameter Plans

- 6.4 The development proposals are supported by a number of parameter plans which define the parameters of the development proposals and will provide a framework for subsequent reserved matters applications to follow. The plans are as follows:
- Land Use and Height Parameter plan (plan ref J0027450\_008), showing:
    - 2 storey development to the south element of the retirement village site, with ridge heights up to 12m (though mostly 8m)
    - Single storey development to the north with ridge heights of up to 7m
    - 19.1ha of countryside park, 1.8ha of amenity open space within the retirement village and built development of 3.12ha
  - Landscape Parameter plan (plan ref J0027450\_009), showing:
    - Areas of structural planting around the built development area
    - Countryside park to the north of the site
    - Areas of amenity open space
    - Trees and hedgerow features to be retained

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<sup>1</sup> As defined within Appendix 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)



- Access Movement Parameter plan (plan ref J0027450\_010), showing
  - Main vehicular access from Haverhill Road
  - Pedestrian access from Gog Magog Way, and the north east and north west corners of the site

6.5 The Illustrative Masterplan (J0027450\_005) submitted with this application illustrates how a development of this nature could be appropriately delivered within the site in line with the parameters set out within the Parameter Plans.

6.6 Further detail is contained in the supporting Design and Access statement.

## Amount

6.7 The indicative scheme presented as part of the application suggests that the scheme could provide:

- A central care home of up to 110 bed spaces/rooms/units (both assisted care suites and care bedrooms), with associated facilities;
- Up to 110 retirement dwellings with care link packages
- Up to 17,825sq.m proposed floorspace overall

6.8 The area of built development proposed is 3.12ha, whilst the open space and landscaping to be provided is 21.25ha (19.1ha of which is the countryside park).

## Use

6.9 After the development, the site would form two distinct areas in separate uses: the developed area would be in C2 use as a retirement village, and the north-eastern part of the site would be in D2/sui generis use as a countryside park.

## Landscaping and countryside park

6.10 This application is made in outline with all matters reserved apart from access. However, a Landscape Parameter Plan is provided, which shows extensive areas of landscaping and open space. The proposed landscaping will include new structural landscaping around the southern part of the site, screening the proposed built form; 1.8ha of amenity space within the retirement village itself; and a 19.1ha countryside park.

6.11 The Illustrative Masterplan and Design and Access Statement set out the following principles for the design and planting of the countryside park:

- New multi-use paths with links to the shared-use paths proposed as part of the CAM route (offering extensive public access to an area of currently private land);
- Road-free connectivity between Haverhill Road and Hinton Way, making a large circular walking route around the village possible;
- New landscape planting to include native species reflective of the local landscape, including large areas of chalk grassland (an important local habitat type);
- Augmentation of the existing hedgerows to improve vigour, appearance and ecological value, and protect existing residential amenity of surrounding properties;
- New block planting to mitigate the development's impact on long views from the north east at Magog Down

6.12 The countryside park would form a significant piece of green infrastructure, to add to the collection of existing green infrastructure in the area (including a direct link to Ninewells Nature Reserve via the potential CAM route, and potential links to other areas including Magog Down, Wandlebury Countryside park and Hobson's Park).

## Access

- 6.13 The principal vehicular access to the retirement village site is proposed from Haverhill Road. The access comprises:
- A ghost-island right turn facility onto Haverhill Road
  - Carriageway width of 5.5m
  - Footways on both sides of the access with a width of 2m, joining with existing footpath infrastructure in Stapleford
  - 6m kerb radii
- 6.14 Vehicle visibility splays of 2.4m x 59m are available in both directions, which accord both with the existing speed limit on Haverhill Road and the observed speeds revealed by a speed survey. This is set out further in Section 5 of the accompanying Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan.
- 6.15 The internal layout of the development will be subject to reserved matters approval. However the Access Movement Parameter plan illustrates the location of key pedestrian and cycles links into the site including from Gog Magog Way, which will also comprise an emergency access point into the site.

## Environmental and Technical Assessment

### Traffic and highways impact

- 6.16 A Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan have been undertaken and support the application. The likely highways impact of the development is examined in greater detail in section 6 below.
- 6.17 The primary aims and objectives of the Framework Travel Plan are as follows:
- to introduce a package of physical and management measures that will promote and assist travel by sustainable transport modes to and from the site by staff and visitors;
  - to increase staff and visitor awareness of the potential for travel by more environmentally friendly modes; and
  - to reduce and minimise the number of single occupancy cars arriving at the site.
- 6.18 A Travel Plan co-ordinator will be appointed to promote and produce incentives for staff to use various sustainable modes of transport. On-going scheme-monitoring and review process, in consultation with the County Council, will enable car-reduction targets to be set.

### Flood risk and drainage

- 6.19 A Flood Risk assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy has been undertaken and accompanies this application. It finds as follows:
- The site is in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore not at risk of flooding from tidal or fluvial sources.

- There is a small bund with a swale in the south western part of the site adjacent to dwellings on Chalk Hill. There are no significant surface water features in the vicinity of the site.
- The site is underlain by zig zag chalk formation. Infiltration testing has been undertaken at five locations in the southern area of the site (as this is the only area where impermeable surfaces will be created).
- Testing indicates that infiltration rates across the site tend to be very high and that infiltration will therefore provide a suitable means of drainage for the proposed development.
- There are no significant surface water issues at the site. A very small area of ponding may potentially occur in the southern part of the site adjacent to Chalk Hill in an exceptional flood event, which should remain free of development.
- Detailed drainage design issues will be considered further as the detailed site layout is developed. However, the entire development can be drained by infiltration during a 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change rainfall event.

## Landscape and visual impact

6.20 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been prepared and accompanies this application. The conclusions of this appraisal are examined in greater depth in section 6 of this planning statement.

## Ecology

6.21 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site has been undertaken and supports this planning application. A number of biodiversity compensation and enhancement measures are proposed, as follows:

- Retention (and in-fill planting as necessary) of all existing boundary features;
- The provision of at least one wide boundary corridor running between Haverhill Road and Hinton Way, with ecotone habitat (a tall, wide hedge transitioning through scrub to tall herb layer and then chalk grassland). This feature will maximise habitat heterogeneity and provide a movement corridor connecting to the wider landscape;
- Establishment and management of chalk grassland will be based on local soil chemistry, with advice taken from other local schemes e.g. the Magog Trust;
- Consideration will be given to site management including localised fencing to provide areas of minimal disturbance/maximum biodiversity benefit e.g. for ground nesting birds within the site;
- An Ecological Design Strategy and/or Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) or equivalent document(s) will be used to provide and secure detailed prescriptions for habitat establishment and ongoing management, monitoring and remediation if required; and
- Funding for the creation and ongoing management of the site, as well as identifying and agreeing the relevant parties and their roles and responsibilities, will be agreed ahead of scheme commencement, to secure biodiversity gains for the longer term.
- Site landscaping across both the retirement village and Countryside Park should use specie-rich, mixed native species planting to maximise biodiversity benefits. Individual species are recommended. Any woody material generated will be used to create a habitat pile within the countryside park.
- The brief for the SuDS design for the site will include instruction to maximise biodiversity features and benefit where possible. Features to consider include the establishment of permanent pond features<sup>13</sup> with suitable bank profiles and native planting along margins, as well as suitably planted (e.g. damp, wildflower meadow mix) and managed swales. Details of planting and habitat management will be provided in the LEMP for the site.
- Bat and bird boxes are recommended.

6.22 The supporting Parameter Plans and Illustrative Masterplan demonstrate how such measures might be provided across the site and in particular within the proposed countryside park.

**Trees**

6.23 A Tree Survey and Preliminary Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been undertaken and accompanies this application. The development proposals retain the vast majority of trees and hedgerows within the area, with a section of hedgerow to be removed to create the access and visibility splays. A replacement length of hedgerow will be planted along the splays to mitigate this loss, with extensive new landscape buffers and planting. This is reflected within the supporting parameter plans and illustrative masterplan.

**Air Quality**

6.24 An Air Quality Assessment has been undertaken and accompanies this application. The conclusions of this assessment are examined in greater depth in section 6 of this planning statement.

## 5 RELEVANT POLICY

- 5.1 This section identifies the main elements of national and local planning policy and guidance which are relevant to the proposed development and assesses the proposals against them (or refers to such assessments elsewhere in this statement). It is not intended to be an exhaustive study for the reasons of brevity and proportionality.
- 5.2 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the provisions of the development plan (so far as material to the application) and to any other material considerations in the determination of planning applications.
- 5.3 S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that 'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.
- 5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) represents up-to-date Government planning policy and must be taken into account where it is relevant to a planning application. Thus the NPPF is a material consideration in this instance.
- 5.5 The proposals have been prepared to address the requirements of relevant policies and to follow relevant guidance.

### The Development Plan

- 5.6 The development plan for South Cambridgeshire District Council comprises:
- (i) South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018
  - (ii) Adopted Policies Map 2018
  - (iii) Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan 2008

### South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018

- 5.7 According to the Policies Map the site is outside Stapleford's Development Framework but adjoins it to the north-west.
- 5.8 The site lies within the Cambridge Green Belt.
- 5.9 In the Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan, the site is part of an area for which a Countryside Enhancement Strategy is proposed. The strategy includes the creation of new footpaths, cyclepaths and bridleways through the area.
- 5.10 Relevant policies are as follows.
- 5.11 **Policy S/4: Cambridge Green Belt.** This policy states that a Green Belt will be maintained around Cambridge that will define the extent of the urban area. The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt in South Cambridgeshire are defined on the Policies Map, which includes some minor revisions to the inner boundary of the Green Belt around Cambridge and to the boundaries around some inset villages. New development in the Green Belt will only be approved in accordance with Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5.12 **Policy S/7: Development Frameworks.** This policy states that development and redevelopment of unallocated land and buildings within development frameworks will be permitted. Outside development frameworks, only allocations within Neighbourhood Plans that have come into force and development for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be located in the countryside or where supported by other policies in this plan will be permitted.
- 5.13 **Policy S/8: Rural Centres.** This policy defines Great Shelford and Stapleford as a Rural Centre, where development and redevelopment without any limit on individual scheme size will be permitted within the development frameworks of Rural Centres, as defined on the Policies Map, provided that adequate services, facilities and infrastructure are available or can be made available as a result of the development.
- 5.14 **Policy CC/3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments.** This policy states that:
1. Proposals for new dwellings and new non-residential buildings of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more will be required to reduce carbon emissions by a minimum of 10% (to be calculated by reference to a baseline for the anticipated carbon emissions for the property as defined by Building Regulations) through the use of on-site renewable energy and low carbon technologies.
  2. This could be provided through the installation of an integrated system or site wide solutions involving the installation of a system that is not integrated within the new building. For a site wide solution, evidence must be submitted demonstrating that the installation is technically feasible and is capable of being installed.
  3. For growth areas and new settlements, site wide renewable and low carbon energy solutions that maximise on-site generation from these sources will be sought, such as renewable and low carbon district heating systems.
- 5.15 **Policy CC/4: Water Efficiency.** This policy states that all new residential developments must achieve as a minimum water efficiency equivalent to 110 litres per person per day. Proposals for non-residential development must be accompanied by a water conservation strategy, which demonstrates a minimum water efficiency standard equivalent to the BREEAM standard for 2 credits for water use levels unless demonstrated not practicable.
- 5.16 **Policy CC/8: Sustainable Drainage Systems.** This policy states that development proposals must incorporate appropriate sustainable surface water drainage systems (SuDS) appropriate to the nature of the site. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that:
- a. Surface water drainage schemes comply with the Sustainable Drainage Systems: Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems and the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document or successor documents;
  - b. Opportunities have been taken to integrate sustainable drainage with the development, create amenity, enhance biodiversity, and contribute to a network of green (and blue) open space;
  - c. Surface water is managed close to its source and on the surface where it practicable to do so;
  - d. Maximum use has been made of low land take drainage measures, such as rain water recycling, green roofs, permeable surfaces and water butts;
  - e. Appropriate pollution control measures have been incorporated, including multiple component treatment trains; and
  - f. Arrangements have been established for the whole life management and maintenance of surface water drainage systems.
- 5.17 **Policy HQ/1: Design Quality.** This policy requires that all new development must be of high-quality design, with a clear vision as to the positive contribution the development will make to its local and wider context. Criteria a and b require respectively that new development 'preserve or enhance the character of the local

urban and rural area and respond to its context in the wider landscape', and 'conserve or enhance important natural and historic assets and their setting'.

5.18 **Policy H/9: Housing Mix.** This policy states that a wide choice, type and mix of housing will be provided to meet the needs of different groups in the community including families with children, older people, those seeking starter homes, people wishing to build their own homes, people seeking private rented sector housing, and people with disabilities. Criterion 5 of the policy states that developments including specialist accommodation for the elderly (with or without care) will not be subject to the prescriptive housing mix set out in criterion 1 of the policy.

5.19 Explanatory paragraphs 7.38 to 7.39 of the Local Plan are of key relevance to the proposals and state as follows:

*“The population of the district is ageing and often older people need or prefer smaller properties that are easier to manage than their original home, with people often looking to ‘downsize’ to a smaller property. We also know that as people age the incidence of disability and frailty also increase, and in the age band 64-74 up to 7% of residents will be classified as frail. The Cambridgeshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Older People (2010) recorded that 5% of older people received a disability living allowance and that by 2020 the prevalence of people with diabetes is expected to be 7.4%, 6% with cardiovascular disease and 2.7% with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.*

*There are a range of models that can play a part in providing specialist accommodation for older people. These include sheltered and enhanced sheltered housing, Extra Care housing, retirement villages, continuing care retirement communities and registered care homes both with and without nursing care. Where appropriate, specialist accommodation for the elderly should be provided on a mixed-tenure basis, and such accommodation should be located on sites in new settlements or within larger villages. Where any scheme providing specialist accommodation for the elderly (with or without care) includes an affordable housing component, this can count towards the overall 40% affordable housing requirement if part of a wider development.”*

5.20 **Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character.** This policy states that development will only be permitted where it respects and retains, or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and of the individual National Character Area in which is it located.

5.21 **Policy NH/3: Protecting Agricultural Land.** This policy states that:

1. Planning permission will not be granted for development which would lead to the irreversible loss of Grades 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land unless:
  - a. Land is allocated for development in the Local Plan;
  - b. Sustainability considerations and the need for the development are sufficient to override the need to protect the agricultural value of the land.
2. Uses not involving substantial built development but which take agricultural land will be regarded as permanent unless restricted specifically by condition.
3. When considering proposals for the change of use or diversification of farmland, particular consideration shall be given to the potential for impact upon Priority Species and Habitats.

5.22 **Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure.** This policy states that:

1. The Council will aim to conserve and enhance green infrastructure within the district. Proposals that cause loss or harm to this network will not be permitted unless the need for and benefits of the



development demonstrably and substantially outweigh any adverse impacts on the district's green infrastructure network.

2. The Council will encourage proposals which:
  - a. Reinforce, link, buffer and create new green infrastructure; and
  - b. Promote, manage and interpret green infrastructure and enhance public enjoyment of it.
3. The Council will support proposals which deliver the strategic green infrastructure network and priorities set out in the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, and which deliver local green infrastructure.
4. All new developments will be required to contribute towards the enhancement of the green infrastructure network within the district. These contributions will include the establishment, enhancement and the on-going management costs.

5.23 **Policy NH/8: Mitigating the impact of development in and adjoining the Green Belt.** This policy states that any development proposals within the Green Belt must be located and designed so that they do not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt. Where development is permitted, landscaping conditions, together with a requirement that any planting is adequately maintained, will be attached to any planning permission in order to ensure that the impact on the Green Belt is mitigated. Development on the edges of settlements which are surrounded by the Green Belt must include careful landscaping and design measures of a high quality.

5.24 **Policy NH/10: Facilities for Recreation in the Green Belt.** This policy states that proposals for new buildings to provide appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation will be permitted where they will not (either individually or cumulatively) harm the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it.

5.25 **Policy NH/14: Heritage Assets.** This policy states that development proposals will be supported when:
 

- a. They sustain and enhance the special character and distinctiveness of the district's historic environment including its villages and countryside and its building traditions and details;
- b. They create new high quality environments with a strong sense of place by responding to local heritage character including in innovative ways.

Development proposals will be supported when they sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including their settings, as appropriate to their significance and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly:

- c. Designated heritage assets, i.e. listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens;
- d. Non-designated heritage assets including those identified in conservation area appraisals, through the development process and through further supplementary planning documents;
- e. The wider historic landscape of South Cambridgeshire including landscape and settlement patterns;
- f. Designed and other landscapes including historic parks and gardens, churchyards, village greens and public parks;
- g. Historic places;
- h. Archaeological remains of all periods from the earliest human habitation to modern times.

5.26 **Policy SC/5: Community Healthcare Provision.** This policy states that proposals for community healthcare facilities will be supported within development frameworks. Paragraph 9.21, which supports the policy, states as follows:

*“Community healthcare facilities provide a range of care services designed to support patients in the community and who might previously have been treated as inpatients or day patients in hospital. The Council would be supportive of appropriately located and scaled proposals which will be assessed*



*using relevant Local Plan policies. Proposals within the Green Belt would have to demonstrate very special circumstances, in particular why they were unable to locate outside the Green Belt.”*

- 5.27 **Policy TI/2: Planning for Sustainable Travel.** The key objective of this policy is to ensure that new development is sustainably located where access to sustainable modes of travel are a realistic opportunity.
- 5.28 **Policy TI/3: Parking Provision.** This policy states that car parking should be provided in accordance with the relevant standards set out elsewhere within the Local Plan. This states that for residential institutions, 1 car parking space per residential staff plus one car parking space per three bed spaces should be provided, as well as 1 cycle parking space per two staff working at the same time.

### **Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan**

- 5.29 **Policy CSF/1: The Vision for the Cambridge Southern Fringe.** This policy states that Cambridge Southern Fringe will be a modern, high quality, vibrant, innovative and distinctive urban extension of Trumpington, which will complement and enhance the character of the city. Development will secure a Countryside Enhancement Strategy comprising landscape, biodiversity and public access enhancements in the surrounding countryside, which will complement the existing landscape character of the area and protect and enhance the setting of Cambridge.
- 5.30 **Policy CSF/5: Countryside Enhancement Strategy.** This policy states at part 2 that a Countryside Enhancement Strategy will be prepared for the area bounded by the Cambridge City boundary, Babraham Road, Haverhill Road, and the edge of the built-up area of Great Shelford and Stapleford. The Strategy will comprise:
- f) New copses on suitable knolls, hilltops and scarp tops.
  - g) Management and creation of chalk grassland.
  - h) Management of existing shelter belts.
  - i) New mixed woodland and shelter belts.
  - j) Creation of a landscape corridor along Hobson's Brook.
  - k) Reinforcement and planting of new hedgerows.
  - l) Roadside planting.
  - m) New footpaths, cyclepaths and bridleways creating routes through the area and linking to Wandlebury Countryside park / The Magog Down.

The Countryside Strategies will include integrated proposals for landscape, biodiversity, recreation and public access improvements, which will be compatible with long-term agricultural production to create enhanced gateways into the City. Provision will be made for maintenance of landscaping and replacement of diseased, dying and dead stock for a period of 10 years, and details of long-term management thereafter.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 5.31 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and was updated in 2018 and 2019. It is the paragon of government planning policy and is judged to be a significant material consideration in the determination of the application. The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 was examined under the provisions of the NPPF 2012. The overall objective of the NPPF is the delivery of sustainable development.
- 5.32 The following provisions of the NPPF are judged to be relevant to the development proposals.
- 5.33 **Paragraph 7** states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- 5.34 **Paragraph 8** states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - c) **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 5.35 **Paragraph 11** states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For **decision-taking** this means:
- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
  - d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
    - I. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
    - II. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 5.36 **Paragraph 38** states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 5.37 **Paragraph 59** states that to support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 5.38 **Paragraph 61** states that Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).
- 5.39 Older people is a term that is expressly defined within appendix 2 of the NPPF, as follows *“People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.”*
- 5.40 **Paragraph 77** states that in rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs.
- 5.41 **Paragraph 78** states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify

opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

- 5.42 **Paragraph 84** states that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.
- 5.43 **Paragraph 91** states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:
- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;
  - b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
  - c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- 5.44 **Paragraph 98** states that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.
- 5.45 **Paragraph 110** states that applications for development should:
- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
  - b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
  - c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
  - d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
  - e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.
- 5.46 **Paragraph 118** states that planning policies and decisions should:
- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;
  - b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production; ...
- 5.47 **Paragraph 122** states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- b) local market conditions and viability;
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

5.48 **Paragraph 127** states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

5.49 **Paragraph 133** states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

5.50 **Paragraph 134** states that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

5.51 **Paragraph 138** states that when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policymaking authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.

5.52 **Paragraph 141** states that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.

- 5.53 **Paragraph 144** states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 5.54 **Paragraph 145** states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:
- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
  - b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
  - c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
  - d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
  - e) limited infilling in villages;
  - f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
  - g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
    - (i) not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
    - (ii) not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.
- 5.55 **Paragraph 150** states that new development should be planned for in ways that:
- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and
  - b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.
- 5.56 **Paragraph 170** states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
  - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
  - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
  - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
  - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.



- Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

- 5.57 **Paragraph 175** states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply a number of principles, including; development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- 5.58 **Paragraph 189** states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 5.59 **Paragraph 200** states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

#### Planning Practice Guidance: Housing for Older and Disabled People

- 5.60 **Paragraph 1** states that the need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. In mid-2016 there were 1.6 million people aged 85 and over; by mid-2041 this is projected to double to 3.2 million. Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems. Therefore, an understanding of how the ageing population affects housing needs is something to be considered from the early stages of plan-making through to decision-taking. (Reference ID 63-001-20190626.)
- 5.61 **Paragraph 3** states that the health and lifestyles of older people will differ greatly, as will their housing needs, which can range from accessible and adaptable general needs housing to specialist housing with high levels of care and support. For plan-making purposes, strategic policy-making authorities will need to determine the needs of people who will be approaching or reaching retirement over the plan period, as well as the existing population of older people. (Reference ID 63-003-20190626.)
- 5.62 **Paragraph 10** defines the different types of specialist housing for older people:
- Age-restricted general market housing: This type of housing is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens, but does not include support or care services.
  - Retirement living or sheltered housing: This usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.
  - Extra care housing or housing-with-care: This usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24 hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these

developments are known as retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.

- Residential care homes and nursing homes: These have individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually include support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes. (Reference ID 63-010-20190626)

5.63 **Paragraph 16** states that decision makers should consider the location and viability of a development when assessing planning applications for specialist housing for older people. Local planning authorities can encourage the development of more affordable models and make use of products like shared ownership. Where there is an identified unmet need for specialist housing, local authorities should take a positive approach to schemes that propose to address this need. (Reference ID 63-016-20190626.)

## 6 ASSESSMENT

### Key issues for consideration

- 6.1 The key issues for consideration in this instance are judged to be as follows:
- C2 use Classification
  - Whether the development proposals amount to inappropriate development within the Green Belt
  - Other material considerations:
    - Heritage considerations
    - Landscape and Visual considerations
    - Biodiversity considerations
    - Transport and sustainable travel
    - Residential amenity considerations
    - The need for the development proposals
    - The benefits of the development proposals
  - Whether very special circumstances exist

### C2 Use Classification

- 6.2 Planning permission is expressly sought for use class C2 accommodation in the form of a retirement village. Notwithstanding this, the classification of a retirement village as a C2 land use warrants discussion. The retirement village model proposed within the application comprises the combination of a full care facility and retirement accommodation with care linkages, often referred to as 'assisted living' or 'extra-care'.
- 6.3 The housing needs of the elderly are not all the same and it is a fundamental principle of planning policy as it relates to housing that the planning system must enable the delivery of types and tenures of housing which serve the needs of different groups.
- 6.4 This includes the elderly as per paragraph 61 of the NPPF, some of whom may have more intensive care needs than others. This distinction is reflected in Annex 2 to the NPPF which defines 'older people' for planning purposes as; *"People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs."*
- 6.5 Active and newly-retired elderly people may wish to downsize from family housing but do not need the kind of intensive care arrangements that other elderly people may need. Assisted Living or Extra Care Accommodation can provide a spectrum of services to meet the individual care needs of each customer and cater to the level of independence/dependence desired or needed. As the needs of occupants change, so too can the levels of care and the ability of Extra Care Accommodation to adapt to these changes is its key strength. It thus meets the planning objective of providing wide variety of choice in the housing market.
- 6.6 The Extra Care model enables the elderly to buy in care packages to suit their needs rather than paying the fixed costs of a nursing home or residential care home. It is therefore accurate to view extra care developments as nursing homes which allow flexibility in choice in the levels of care and independence. This factor sets extra care schemes apart from standard residential schemes as extra care developments incorporate the staff and the facilities to provide varying levels of care. Extra care accommodation therefore has very different operational requirements and characteristics defined by the presence and much higher



interdependency of residents, staff and facilities than would otherwise be the case in a standard residential scheme in a C3 use.

- 6.7 Given extra care accommodation is by its nature more intensive, it is appropriate to regard it as a distinct Use Class from a C3 development which would allow local planning authorities to exercise an appropriate degree of control of the locations in which such developments become established.
- 6.8 The Use Classes Order defines a C2 Use as “*use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care.*” Care is defined in the Order as “*personal care for people in need of such care by reason of old age, disablement, past or present dependence on alcohol or drugs, or past or present mental disorder and treatment.*” There are no definitive criteria through which to assess whether an extra care scheme is C2 or C3 but ultimately it is a matter of fact and degree assessed on the facts of each individual case.
- 6.9 The RTPI Good Practice Note 8 and Housing LIN provide some guidance about the means by which the distinction between C3 and C2 should be made. Key to the distinction is the extent to which communal services are provided and the extent to which the care is available to meet the needs of residents. Each document defines extra care as follows:

***“Purpose built accommodation in which varying amounts of care and support can be offered and where some services are shared.”***

- 6.10 The proposed use characteristic of the development proposals is aligned closely with the above and therefore it is reasonable to classify it as a C2 land use.
- 6.11 In order to ensure that the proposed development is used as a C2 scheme in perpetuity, the applicant is content to enter into an appropriately-worded legal agreement with the Council to ensure that occupants of the proposed development meet a certain profile. This is considered to be justifiable in planning terms as the fact that the proposal provides for senior living accommodation is a significant planning merit to the scheme which it would be appropriate to secure by way of legal agreement.

### **Whether the proposals amount to inappropriate development within the Green Belt**

- 6.12 Policy SC/4 within the Development Plan states that new development in the Green Belt will only be approved in accordance with Green Belt policy as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 6.13 Paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF define development that should not be regarded as inappropriate within the Green Belt. The development proposals do not align with any of these definitions. Unequivocally the development proposals comprise inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- 6.14 Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in ‘very special circumstances’. Paragraph 144 of the NPPF states that ‘very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 6.15 It is established that the development proposals constitute inappropriate development. It is thus relevant to consider the wider assessment of the development proposals in order to establish whether there is any other harm beyond that of the classification of inappropriateness; and then finally to assess whether there are further material considerations that would ‘clearly’ outweigh the combined harm of inappropriateness and

other harm (should other harm exist). If it is the case that there are such further material considerations then very special circumstances will exist and it follows that planning permission should be granted.

## Other Material Considerations

### Heritage considerations

- 6.16 Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72(1) requires that "...special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance..." of a Conservation Area.
- 6.17 The NPPF notes at Paragraph 192 that in considering applications, account should be taken of "...the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets..." and paragraph 193 confirms that "great weight" should be attached to the conservation of designated heritage assets, "the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be." Should harm or loss result from alteration, destruction or development within its setting, it requires "clear and convincing justification" (paragraph 194 of the NPPF).
- 6.18 The NPPF continues, requiring local planning authorities to refuse consent for development which leads to "...substantial harm...or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset..." unless it can be demonstrated that, amongst other things, the harm/loss is necessary for substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm/loss (Paragraph 195). For development proposals that lead to "less than substantial harm" to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. (Paragraph 196).
- 6.19 Paragraph 197 of the NPPF requires the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage to be taken into account. Where a non-designated heritage asset will be affected, a balanced judgement is required that considers the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 6.20 An assessment of the impact of the development proposals upon heritage assets has been undertaken and a Heritage Statement accompanies this application. The detailed conclusions of the Heritage Statement are not repeated within this Planning Statement, but are summarised as follows:
- There are no heritage assets within the application site
  - The site lies close to the northern edge of the Conservation Area (a designated heritage asset). To the north of the site lie listed dwellings (Middlefield Grade II\* and Fox Hill Grade II).
  - The listed Edwardian mansions set in the former Foxhill Plantation were built to be exclusive, away from the main settlement, with spacious grounds. Their setting is of very high significance.
  - Scheduled Ancient Monuments lie further to the north of the site. Although not directly affected by the proposed development, they form a part of a wider prehistoric landscape, with associated archaeological finds in the area.
  - Views of the application site from the Conservation Area will be towards the proposed countryside park. The development of the retirement village will not impinge on the Conservation Area.
  - The sylvan setting of the Edwardian mansions on Foxhill will be unaffected, and views to and from these buildings will be of the countryside park. The built element of the retirement village is on the edge of the settlement.
  - The site lies within an area of archaeological significance and below ground remains may be present. An appropriate condition requiring a scheme of archaeological investigation could form a condition of planning permission.

- 6.21 The conclusions of the Heritage Statement are that the development proposals will not give rise to ‘substantial harm’ to the setting of heritage assets, but does identify that ‘less than substantial harm’ may be caused to the setting of Little Trees Hill (a scheduled ancient monument). The Heritage Statement concludes that the level of ‘less than substantial harm’ is low to medium and therefore sits at the lowest end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm. The archaeological significance of the monument can still be appreciated and understood within its wider chalk downland context.
- 6.22 Thus, the proposals would result in an element of harm to heritage assets, albeit the harm would be very limited. In accordance with the NPPF it is suggested that any such harm would be ‘less than substantial’ and at the very lowest end of the spectrum of such harm. Whilst considerable weight must be given to any such harm to designated heritage assets, it would need be weighed against the public benefits from the scheme. The wider benefits are substantial and are set out in subsequent sub-sections below. In short it is clear that the very substantial public benefits of the scheme outweigh the less than substantial harm identified.

**Landscape and visual considerations**

- 6.23 The application is supported by a detailed Landscape Visual Appraisal (LVA) which makes a detailed assessment of the potential impact upon the landscape character and visual quality of the surrounding area arising from the development proposals.
- 6.24 The site is located within National Character Area Character Area ‘87 East Anglian Chalk’. At a district scale, as set out within the Cambridge Inner Green Belt Study 2015, the Site is shown to fall within the Chalk Hills Landscape Type and 3B Gog Magog Hills Landscape Character Area.
- 6.25 The LVA contains an assessment of the value of the site at a local level. It concludes that the Site overall has a ‘Medium/Low’ landscape value, with the proposed countryside park area being of relatively higher value at ‘Medium’ on account of the undulating and higher landform and the retirement village area being ‘Low value’. The Site is not considered to be ‘valued landscape’ in accord with Paragraph 170 of the NPPF.
- 6.26 An assessment of the visibility of the site concludes that despite the open character of the site and similar adjacent areas to the east of Haverhill Road there are few public views into the site due to the undulating character of the land, presence of roadside hedges, surrounding woodland in the locality and the relatively limited number of public rights of way.
- 6.27 The LVA conclusions with regard to impacts are summarised in table 2 below:

Landscape Character				
Level	National	District	Local	Site
<b>Impact/effects</b>	Negligible	Minor Adverse at Year 15 for the proposed retirement village and Moderate Beneficial for the countryside park by Year 15	Moderate Neutral for the proposed retirement village by Year 15 and Moderate Beneficial for the countryside park by Year 15	Moderate Neutral for the proposed retirement village
Site Features				
<b>Impact/effects</b>	Development of the site would result in limited change to topography There would be minimal loss of existing vegetation as this is largely comprises hedges and occasional trees to the site perimeter. There would be a complete change from the arable land-use.			

<b>Effects on Views</b>
A number of viewpoints have been assessed, which have been agreed with the Council's Landscape Officer.
A range of visual effects are identified across these viewpoints ranging from negligible impacts to moderate adverse impacts.
Such visual impacts need also to be considered in the context of the likely delivery of the Cambridge Autonomous Metro, which is independent of the retirement village proposals and is currently proposed to run through the application site area.

**Table 2 – Summary of landscape and visual impacts identified**

- 6.28 The development proposals will respect and retain the local character of the landscape within which the site sits and as such there is no conflict with policies NH/2 or HQ/1 of the Development Plan. There are some localised adverse visual impacts identified and these must be weighed in the balance of matters in the determination of the planning application.
- 6.29 It follows that, in addition to the visual impacts identified within the supporting LVA, there will also be a localised reduction in the openness of the green belt, although this will be very limited in scale and will not lead to any settlement coalescence. This should be treated as an additional adverse impact of development, again to be weighed in the balance of matters in the determination of the planning application.

**Biodiversity considerations**

- 6.30 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site has been undertaken and supports this planning application. The Appraisal finds that most of the site is arable field with a grassy field edge, hedgerows, scattered trees and scrub, and a dry ditch. Generally the site is unsuitable for amphibians, reptiles or bats. There is some potential for the site to support nesting birds, and evidence of badgers was found. Two ponds close to the site may be suitable for great crested newts. Accordingly, further surveys of breeding birds, arable weeds, great crested newts and badgers are recommended to be carried out at an appropriate point in the planning process.
- 6.31 An assessment of potential biodiversity enhancements that may be provided by the development proposals is included within the appraisal. One of the primary objectives of the development proposals is the provision of a countryside park.
- 6.32 The proposed countryside park would create an extensive area of chalk grassland, a significant and rare type of habitat, which is believed to be appropriate due to the site's south facing topography and underlying chalk geology. Nationally, 80 per cent of the UK's chalk grassland has been lost since the Second World War due to changing land uses and farming practises; however, up to 40 species of flowering plant can be found in one square metre of such grassland, making it one of the UK's most biodiverse habitat types. Grasslands can provide a habitat for rare insects, and birds such as skylark and stone curlew.
- 6.33 The countryside park will provide a mosaic of habitats in which chalk grassland will be an important element. A mixture of habitats will provide a balance between managed and semi-managed landscape features, will maximise the park's biodiversity value and will naturally discourage use of parts of the site by people in order to provide informal wildlife sanctuaries.
- 6.34 The provision of the circa 19 hectare countryside park, and its planting and management, which will both have a clear biodiversity focus, provide a significant ecological benefit. The scheme proposed will result in a significant Biodiversity Net Gain as a result of landscape proposals; habitat losses are restricted in the main to arable land of low biodiversity value. The proposed Countryside Park will be designed to maximise the

biodiversity value of the Public Open Space and will result in an increase in the extent of chalk grassland within the area connecting wider landscape features, whilst designs for the residential development will incorporate enhancements through SuDS design as well as integration of native landscape planting and provision of bird and bat boxes.

- 6.35 Policy NH/4 of the Council's development plan makes clear, amongst other things, that development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity will be permitted. The development proposals accord with this element of policy NH/4 and do not conflict with the wider provisions of the policy.
- 6.36 In addition, the development proposals accord with Policy NH/6 which makes clear that the Council will support proposals which deliver the strategic green infrastructure network and priorities set out in the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy as well as policies CSF/1 on the vision for Cambridge Southern Fringe and CSF/5 which sets out a Countryside Enhancement Strategy.
- 6.37 The proposals are therefore considered to be consistent with biodiversity related national and local planning policies and guidance including the NPPF, Local Plan (in particular item 2 of policy NH/4), SPD and the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision; if required, net gains could be formally quantified through the application of the Biodiversity Metric 2.0.
- 6.38 The biodiversity enhancements proposed are a significant benefit of the development proposals that weigh in favour of the granting of permission. These are addressed in more depth in subsequent sections below.

#### **Transport and sustainable travel**

- 6.39 The planning application is supported by a comprehensive Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan. The document provides a detailed access appraisal for the proposed development, an assessment of the suitable travel options available to the future occupants of the development, an assessment of the development impacts upon the surrounding highway network and a draft travel plan.
- 6.40 TRICS data has been used to establish the likely trip generation from the site. In terms of traffic generation, it finds as follows:
- Based on an assumed 110 assisted care suites/bedrooms within a main care home facility, 8 vehicular movements are predicted in the AM peak hour and 20 vehicular movements in the PM peak hour. 246 movements are predicted over a 24hr period (around 10 per hour).
  - Based on 110 retirement apartments and bungalows (i.e. extra care/assisted living), 31 vehicular movements are predicted in the AM peak hour and 38 vehicular movements in the PM peak hour. 575 movements are predicted over a 24hr period.
  - The majority of proposed traffic would route to and from the north via Babraham Road. With the forecast additional trips, Haverhill Road would still operate well within its theoretical capacity.
- 6.41 The Council's Development Plan and national planning policy seek to encourage sustainable travel. Policy TI/2 of the Development Plan expressly requires that new development must be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, and promote sustainable travel appropriate to its location.
- 6.42 The site is accessible on foot by a large residential catchment and the village centre. In addition, nearby bus stops on Gog Magog Way are comfortably within a 5 minute walk of the site, while additional stops on London Road are an on-road distance of 1.2km from the centre of the development site. Shelford Railway Station lies within a walking distance of 1.5km from the development site, and is also served by the Number 31 bus service.

- 6.43 The Cambridge Autonomous Metro is, according to its most recently approved preferred routing option, proposed to run through the site providing a stop on Haverhill Road and on Hinton Way. While there can be no absolute certainty that this infrastructure will be delivered, clearly if it is then it will be to the benefit of the development proposals from a sustainable travel perspective.
- 6.44 Staff and visitors will have the opportunity to cycle to and from the site with a good standard of cycle infrastructure identified in the local area.
- 6.45 On the whole, the development site is located where there are credible opportunities for sustainable travel via both public transport, walking and cycling for both staff and residents. The development proposals will accord with the development plan in this regard. A Framework Travel Plan supports the application, the primary aims and objectives of which are; to introduce a package of physical and management measures that will promote and assist travel by sustainable transport modes to and from the site by staff and visitors; to increase staff and visitors awareness of the potential for travel by more environmentally-friendly modes; and to reduce and minimise the number of single occupancy cars arriving at the site.
- 6.46 It is proposed that a Travel Plan co-ordinator will be appointed to promote and produce incentives for staff and residents to use various sustainable modes of transport. Owing to the specialist nature of the accommodation proposed there is significant potential for a travel plan co-ordinator to be highly effective.
- 6.47 Principal vehicular access into the site is proposed to be by way of a ghost-island right-turn facility onto Haverhill Road, the proposed layout of which is shown on Drawing H010. The Transport Assessment demonstrates that such access can be achieved without adverse impact upon highway safety. An additional means of access is proposed from Gog Magog Way which will provide a pedestrian and cycle link into the site including the countryside park and will also serve as a form of emergency access.
- 6.48 The potential impact of the traffic movements generated by the development proposals is considered in detail within the Transport Assessment. There is not identified to be any adverse impact upon the existing highway network generated by the development proposals. Notably, due to the specialist nature of the accommodation providing living space and care for older people, the numbers of trips generated within peak hours on the local highway network are predicted to be very low.
- 6.49 The development proposals lie within a location that is sustainably accessible and will not generate any adverse impacts upon the function or safety of the highway.

### **Residential amenity considerations**

- 6.50 The application site lies adjacent to existing residential development on its south western boundary. The supporting parameter plans demonstrate that the level of development proposed can be achieved on site whilst ensuring a sufficient distance of separation between existing and proposed properties and a substantial depth of new planting between the two. Accordingly, the development proposals will not give rise to significant adverse impacts upon the residential amenity of existing properties by way of physical overbearing or overshadowing. Whilst a detailed design is not proposed at this stage, the maximum height of development and distance of separation proposed will also ensure that the development proposals will not give rise to any significant loss of privacy to existing dwellinghouses.
- 6.51 It is not anticipated that the development proposals will give rise to any significant noise or disturbance impacts by virtue of the nature of the land uses proposed. An Air Quality Assessment has been undertaken and accompanies this application, which finds as follows:



- The nearest Air Quality Management Areas are the A14 corridor (10km to the north west) and Cambridge city centre (4.5km north). Prevailing wind patterns means that the site is unlikely to be affected by the atmospheric dispersion of any pollution.
- Data from local monitoring stations indicates that air quality at the site is within acceptable limits.
- The likely impacts of construction dust on nearby human receptors has been assessed. Whilst the risks to human health are considered medium-low, mitigation measures are recommended to control construction dust, construction vehicle emissions, and construction plant emissions, which would result in “not significant” impacts.
- The proposed development is not forecast to result in significant traffic increases and this will not have a significant impact on local air quality.

6.52 On this basis it is concluded that the effects of the proposed development on air quality are “not significant”.

6.53 The development proposals will not therefore give rise to any adverse residential amenity impacts.

### **Alternate Site Search Assessment**

6.54 Policy SC/5 of the Development Plan is clear that proposals for new healthcare facilities, such as that proposed, will be supported in locations within Development Framework boundaries. The supporting text at paragraph 9.21 states that proposals within the Green Belt would have to demonstrate very special circumstances, in particular why they were unable to locate outside the Green Belt.

6.55 The development proposals are supported by an Alternate Site Search Assessment which considers whether there are any non-green belt sites that might be available, suitable and achievable for the proposed development. A total of 109 separate sites across both South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City are assessed. It is concluded that there are no potential alternate sites available, suitable and achievable for the development in question.

### **The need for the development proposals**

6.56 Across the country there is a rapidly expanding older population. The Cambridge sub-region, including South Cambridgeshire is no exception to this trend.

6.57 The Cambridgeshire Older People Strategy, a strategy developed by local councils including South Cambridgeshire District Council, explains on page 4 that *“in Cambridgeshire, we expect to see the number of people over 65 grow by around a third over the next ten years”*. Similarly a November 2017 study by Sheffield Hallam University Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research carried out for Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council<sup>2</sup> identified that in 2010 there were an estimated 92,768 people aged 65 or over living in Cambridgeshire. Of this number more than 42,000 were aged over 75, and 11,130 are aged over 85. These numbers are projected to increase significantly: by 2021 there will be a 54% increase in the 75 to 84 age group and a 57% increase in the over 85 age group. Within the Greater Cambridge area, South Cambridgeshire is expecting the largest increase in its over 75s population – an increase of 80%.

6.58 The above information is provided in greater depth within the supporting Planning Needs Assessment report.

6.59 A Housing Need Survey Results Report for Stapleford (March 2017) states that in 2011, nearly 12% of Stapleford’s residents were over 75 – the largest age group in the Parish. At the same time over 23% of Stapleford’s residents were over the age of 65. A copy of the report is contained at Appendix 1.

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<sup>2</sup> Older people’s housing, care and support needs in Greater Cambridge 2017–2036 (Nov 2017)

6.60 An ageing population means that there are more people at risk of becoming frail or developing conditions such as dementia – this increases the strain upon local health services and social services. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adult Social Care Market Position Statement 2018/19 identifies that *“Due to an ageing population and significant financial constraint, we are facing unprecedented challenges across the system. As a result of this, we are in a position where we need to work differently with providers and build capacity in our communities using a neighbourhood-based approach to meet the needs of our citizens”*. The Market Position Statement identifies the following key challenges:

- An underfunded system which means we need to continue to meet increased demand within a reducing budget
- Care workforce shortage due to the impact of recruitment and retention challenges experienced across the sector
- Challenges in managing increased admissions and associated delayed hospital discharges
- Lack of capacity to deliver care in rural areas and Cambridge City
- Lack of capacity to deliver nursing and nursing dementia care for older people in some areas of Cambridgeshire

6.61 For South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City specifically, the following key pressures are identified:

- Homecare capacity
- Shortage of Residential Dementia, Nursing and Nursing Dementia provision.
- Care workforce recruitment - high cost of living
- Shortage of Personal Assistants

6.62 The supporting Planning Needs Assessment Report provides a quantitative needs assessment of specialist care home bed spaces and extra care retirement accommodation in both the market catchment area relative to the site location and within South Cambridgeshire as a whole. It concludes that within the market catchment area by 2032 there will be a need for 687 market standard care home bed spaces and 1039 private extra care retirement homes. Within South Cambridgeshire as a whole the figures are slightly lower but remain significant at 417 market standard care home bed spaces and 537 private extra care units.

6.63 Unequivocally there is an acute and substantial need for older people’s accommodation both within the District and also in this particular market catchment location within the District.

6.64 It is highly relevant to note that, despite overwhelming evidence of need, this need is not strategically addressed by the Council’s Development Plan.

## **The benefits of the development proposals**

6.65 The preceding paragraphs have explored the key benefits of the development proposals. The key benefits of the proposals that are identified fall within the following broad areas:

- The provision of specialist accommodation for older people to meet specific identified need within the District and market area
- The associated release of general housing stock
- Biodiversity benefits
- Public amenity space provision; Social and health and wellbeing benefits
- Economic benefits



6.66 A detailed summary of the scheme benefits and their associated weighting in planning terms is set out in table 3 below.

Consideration	Details	Weight to be attached
<p><b>Need for specialist older people’s housing in the area</b></p>	<p>There is identified to be a rapidly ageing population within the both the Country and the District. There is significant identified need for new care and extra care provision for older people within the District and the market catchment area in the vicinity of the site.</p> <p>Government guidance on the provision of housing for older and disabled people is very clear; <i>“The need to provide housing for older people is critical”</i> (NPPG: 63-001-20190626)</p> <p>Very significant weight should be given to the provision of such housing in this instance.</p>	<p>Very Significant</p>
<p><b>Release of general housing stock into the market</b></p>	<p>The provision of specialist accommodation for older people as proposed will means that existing general housing stock is released into the market as older people sell or relinquish their houses and move into the specialist older people’s accommodation.</p> <p>It is likely that the proposed retirement village will attract older people from outside of South Cambridgeshire or even the sub-regional housing market area. Similarly not all new residents would necessarily relinquish an existing house. As such it should not be assumed that there will be a one for one release of housing stock. However, even if the ratio of release were to be a conservative 1 in 3, this would yield a significant release of general housing stock into the area.</p> <p>In an area of substantial housing need and critical affordability issues such as South Cambridgeshire, this should be judged as a significant benefit of development,</p>	<p>Significant</p>
<p><b>Creation of 19 hectare countryside park</b></p>	<p>The Countryside Park will provide a significant public recreational amenity space and will be free for the public to use and will be of substantial benefit to existing residents in the area and beyond.</p> <p>Due to its location, the countryside park will be accessible to the public by both foot and cycle from its opening. Should the Cambridge Autonomous Metro be delivered as predicted then it will be accessible via these sustainable means and will provide links other similar assets manifestly increasing the amenity benefits of the provision.</p> <p>Paragraph 91c of the NPPF is clear that planning decisions should enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure.</p> <p>Significant weight should be given to the provision of a circa 19 hectare countryside parking in this instance.</p>	<p>Significant</p>

<p><b>Biodiversity Benefits</b></p>	<p>The scheme will result in a significant Biodiversity Net Gain at the site. Habitat losses are restricted in the main to arable land of low biodiversity value. The new habitats proposed include chalk grassland, retention and infilling of existing boundary features, establishment of permanent and suitably planted pond features, species-rich mixed native species planting, bat and bird boxes, and creation of habitat piles.</p> <p>The NPPF makes clear at paragraph 175d that development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. The significant biodiversity net gain should be afforded significant weight.</p>	<p>Significant</p>
<p><b>Economic Benefits</b></p>	<p>The development will provide significant investment in the local area during its construction, estimated at this early stage to be something in the order of £15 million.</p> <p>During the construction phase the project is estimated to generate in the order of 190 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs.</p> <p>Once operational the retirement village facility is estimated to generate in the order 70 FTE jobs. This estimate is drawn from data provided by retirement village operators of a size commensurate to that proposed.</p> <p>The proposals would naturally generate increased spend in local area, benefiting local services and facilities</p> <p>The scheme would potentially include a number of on-site services and facilities including; dining facilities, communal gardens, hairdresser, swimming pool and wellness facilities. A number of these facilities would be available for use by the wider community – this would boost the self-sufficiency and sustainability of the village.</p> <p>Paragraph 80 of the NPPF makes clear that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. In this context the economic benefits of the proposals are not the principal objectives of the scheme and should be given moderate weight in the balance.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>
<p><b>Social Cohesion and wellbeing benefits</b></p>	<p>The proposed retirement village will increase local housing choice and allow more older people to stay close to existing friends and family in the community</p> <p>Communal facilities proposed will draw the wider community into retirement villages thereby increasing integration. The proposed countryside park will similarly be free for use by the community as a whole and will provide access to the countryside and nature.</p>	<p>Significant</p>

	<p>Paragraph 91a of the NPPF states that new development should promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other.</p> <p>Paragraph 96 of the NPPF states that Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.</p>	
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**Table 3 – benefits of the development proposals**

6.67 The benefits of the development proposals are individually significant and substantial weight should be attached to these benefits in the decision-making process.

### Whether Very Special Circumstances Exist

6.68 The preceding paragraphs have identified areas of harm that may be caused by the development proposals, as well as those public and environmental benefits that would be delivered. These are summarised in table 4 below.

Adverse Impacts		Benefits	
Impact	Weight	Benefit	Weight
Inappropriate Development within the Green Belt	Significant	Provision of specialist older people’s housing in the area	Significant
Localised loss of openness within the Green Belt	Minor weight	Creation of 19 hectare countryside park	Significant
Visual impacts in select views ranging from negligible to moderate adverse	Moderate weight	Biodiversity Benefits	Significant
Heritage Impacts (less than substantial harm, at the lowest end of the spectrum)	Significant	Economic Benefits	Moderate
		Social Cohesion and Wellbeing Benefits	Significant
		Release of general housing stock into the local housing market area (where there exists a significant need and affordability issue)	Significant

**Table 4 – Balance of adverse impacts versus benefits**

6.69 On any objective analysis it is clear that the benefits of the development proposals outweigh the negative impacts identified.

6.70 In addition, an Alternate Site Search Assessment has been carried out. The supporting text to policy SC/5 of the development plan makes clear that the Council considers such assessment to be particularly relevant to

the consideration of very special circumstances for new health care facilities within the Green Belt. The Assessment submitted concludes that there are no alternate sites that are available, suitable and achievable for the proposed development. This is a further material consideration that weighs in favour of the granting of planning permission in this instance.

- 6.71 With reference to the considerations set out above it should be noted that case law and planning policy relating to very special circumstances state that there can be several factors taken together and that none of these factors need to be exceptional individually. Further, the considerations do not need to be rarely occurring but can be commonplace in the context of a particular type of development proposal.<sup>3</sup>
- 6.72 As such, it is the case that very special circumstances exist and it follows that planning permission should be granted in this instance.
- 6.73 As a form of sensitivity test, a review of appeal and planning decisions/resolutions for similar development proposals within the Green Belt elsewhere within the country is set out in table 5 below. The review provides an indication of what can amount to very special circumstances in relation to schemes of this nature, it is clear that other decision makers have taken a similar view to very special circumstances in such circumstances.

Application/ appeal ref.	Location	Summary description of development	Decision	Factors contributing to VSCs	Weight attached to respective VSCs
18/04602	Caddington  (Central Bedfordshire)	[outline] Integrated care village of up to 200 residential units, including affordable units, with ancillary community and service space	Resolution to grant	Significant on site facilities would be open to age complying residents	Not specified
				Application complied with Council's own aspirations to provide a significant numbers of new units care/older people	Not specified
				Significant benefits to the rural community	Not specified
2017/2258	Chalfont St Peter  (Chiltern)	Redevelopment to provide an extension to the existing Audley Care Community providing 58 units of accommodation	Approved	Need for specialist elderly accommodation in the area	Not specified
				Contribution to the supply of housing in the District (accepted that C2 units do contribute to housing need)	Not specified
				Release of family sized market housing within the District	Not specified
				20% on site renewable energy generation (10% policy requirement)	Not specified
				Community engagement and access (open days, public events & access to communal facilities)	Not specified
				Landscape and biodiversity enhancement	Not specified
				Replacement of dilapidated buildings and retention/restoration of non-designated heritage asset	Not specified
				Economic impact (£0.5 million income generation)	Not specified

<sup>3</sup> R (Wildie) v Wakefield Metropolitan BC [2013] EWHC 2769 (Admin)

				Links with local schools (facilitated through the provision of an area of publicly accessible parkland and a new village hall)	Not specified
				Overall	When considered as a whole, in combination, the factors weigh significantly in favour of development
15/0272	Windlesham (Surrey Heath)	65 bedroom care home, a doctors surgery and a detached bungalow with landscaping	Approved	A pressing need for specialist residential accommodation in SHBC for older persons	Not stated
				No alternative non-Green Belt sites are available or suitable in Windlesham or Chobham parishes so if a scheme is to come forward it would have to be in a Green Belt location	Not stated
				The scheme would provide approximately 70 full time equivalent employment opportunities in a variety of low skilled and high skilled professions	Not stated
18/0359	West Byfleet (Woking)	179 dwellings (some by part demolition, restoration and/or conversion), 75 bed assisted living accommodation (C2), 80 bed care home (C2), 900 sq m office building	Approved	Extant permission	Limited / no weight
				Sympathetic restoration and re-use of deteriorating Heritage Assets	Not considered to be of significant enough weight to outweigh harm to the Green Belt
				Emerging policy proposal to remove the site from the Green Belt	Very limited weight
				The need for specialist (elderly) accommodation	Substantial weight
				Environmental improvements	Limited weight
				Highway network improvements	The enhancements put forward are considered to be a benefit but not to in themselves constitute very special circumstances
				Previously approved schemes are not viable	No weight
3202040 (appeal decision)	West Malling (Tonbridge and Malling)	[outline] 79 extra care units (apartments and cottages) and associated	Allowed	Housing need	Significant weight
				Housing needs of older people	Substantial weight
				Freeing up general housing	Scheme is likely to encourage older people “to

		communal facilities			move and would make a valuable contribution to overall housing needs which should be weighed in the balance”
				Health and wellbeing benefits	Significant weight
				Emerging local plan proposed Green Belt release/ allocation	Limited weight
				Overall	“these other considerations cumulatively clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and as such qualify as very special circumstances”

**Table 5 – Review of appeal & planning decisions where very special circumstances were found to exist**

- 6.74 It is contended that, by virtue of the countryside park aspect of the scheme, not only is the proposed development likely to be less harmful than any of the example schemes above (and certainly no more harmful), the considerations weighing in its favour are also likely to be more significant.
- 6.75 Further, it is worth noting that nowhere else in the Cambridge Green Belt is the opportunity likely to exist in the foreseeable future to provide such significant landscape and ecological enhancements on this scale, and with such broad ranging public access.

**Other Matters**

**The Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) route**

- 6.76 As noted above, the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) is aiming to improve public transport, walking and cycling options for those who travel along the A1307 and A1301 to the south east of Cambridge. Work on phase 1 of this objective - the GCP’s planned improvements to the A1307 between Haverhill and Cambridge (which runs to the north of the site) – is already underway. Phase 2 involves the provision of a new public transport route from the A11 to the south east, via Sawston and Great Shelford, to the Cambridge biomedical campus. It is at the early stages of planning, with consultation on proposed stops and a travel hub next to the A11 having recently taken place.
- 6.77 The proposed CAM route would benefit the proposed development significantly by providing a new rapid transport link from the retirement village and countryside park to the A11 and Cambridge train station. It would also provide a logical edge to both the proposed retirement village and proposed countryside park.
- 6.78 However, the proposed development is not dependent on the CAM and remains viable, deliverable and necessary even if the CAM proposals do not move forward. As outlined above, there is a significant need for older people’s accommodation in the District, and there is also evidence which indicates a need within the Parish. This need is best met in the communities where older people live, on sites that can integrate with existing social and physical infrastructure of the area in order to allow existing social networks to be maintained. Stapleford is surrounded by Green Belt and has insufficient brownfield land to meet this need. The

only way the need can be met therefore is through development adjacent to the settlement boundary which, inevitably, lies in Green Belt.

- 6.79 The countryside park is situated on the highest and most exposed part of the site (meaning that it would provide a strong landscape setting to the villages of Stapleford and Great Shelford). Locating it on this part of the site reinforces links with woodland and garden land to the north and, due to its location on rising land, means that it will be visible from both villages. Further, providing public access to this part of the site will allow new views across the local landscape and Green Belt. The main body of the site (aligned north-west to south east) is therefore the right location for the countryside park regardless of whether the CAM proposals progress.
- 6.80 Should the CAM route not come forward the retirement village development would remain strongly linked to Stapleford through pedestrian and cycle connections to Chalk Hill and Gog Magog Way, with further pedestrian and cycle access to both Haverhill Road and Hinton Way. As noted elsewhere in this statement, a clear objective of retirement villages is for them to be linked to existing communities so that residents who have moved to them from the 'host' settlement (typically 40% of retirement village residents) can continue to use village amenities and services and maintain their social networks. This objective also means that the opposite scenario works – that local residents are able to make easy use of the facilities provided within the retirement village, to which public access is provided.
- 6.81 The planning merits of the scheme are significant and determinative with or without the delivery of the CAM. Delivery of the CAM would simply cement the case by augmenting its already strong sustainable transport credentials and delineating and demarcating the two distinct areas of the proposed scheme.
- 6.82 Having regard to the foregoing the scheme would accord with Policy TI/2 on planning for sustainable travel.

## **Sustainability as a whole**

- 6.83 The NPPF identifies that sustainability has three overarching objectives; economic, social and environmental. The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan broadly aligns with this interpretation of sustainability.

### **Sustainability: the economic dimension**

- 6.84 Paragraphs 80 and 81 of the NPPF are very clear that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, and to ensuring the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth of the country as a whole.
- 6.85 The development proposals will generate employment in the property, construction and sectors during the planning, design and construction phases. Retirement villages are designed to be integrated into the local community and accordingly, in the longer term (i.e. the operational phase of the development), new residents will contribute additional local spending and will utilise and support local services and facilities (helping to ensure their viability and their continued existence).
- 6.86 The retirement village will generate the equivalent of more than 70 full time jobs across in roles such as medical care, social care, management and maintenance. These will be permanent roles which will increase the number and type of employment opportunities available in Stapleford. The creation of additional employment and choice in the local job market increases the opportunities for members of the local community to find high quality employment close to where they live.



6.87 Having regard to the foregoing the scheme would undoubtedly support the local economy and make a significant contribution to the economic growth of the area. It would therefore fulfil the economic objective of sustainability.

**Sustainability: the social dimension**

6.88 The development proposals will provide significant social benefits for the local area.

6.89 The provision of specialist housing for older people will help address the acute and rapidly increasing need for such housing in the local area and the wider district.

6.90 In providing older people's housing the scheme will free up family housing in Stapleford and the local area, offering opportunities for younger people and families to move in or 'upsize', and will therefore help maintain a diverse and thriving community with a mix of ages.

6.91 The NPPF seeks to promote healthy communities and indicates that one way in which this might be achieved is through fostering opportunities for members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other to meet. The scheme will create a retirement village with publicly accessible facilities (which may include for example; a gym and wellness centre and swimming pool – facilities which the community doesn't have at present) and a new countryside park on the edge of the village. It will therefore greatly increase recreation, health and wellbeing opportunities for the local community and opportunities for all parts of the community to meet and interact.

6.92 The retirement village would be integrated with Stapleford via foot and cycle connections to the village centre, allowing future residents to continue to use Stapleford's facilities and amenities and maintain their existing social networks.

6.93 The provision of the proposed countryside park with open public access and multi-use paths will open up a large parcel of land for public use. It will provide opportunities for interaction with nature, enjoyment of the landscape, enhancement of the setting of Stapleford and Great Shelford – all of which will confer social benefits for local residents and visitors.

6.94 In addition to the economic benefits of the employment provision that the retirement village will create there will be social benefits associated with increased choice in the local job market, including choice in type of jobs working patterns.

6.95 Having regard to the foregoing the scheme would offer a clear and compelling social benefit to the village and the local area. It would therefore fulfil the social objective of sustainability.

**Sustainability: the environmental dimension**

6.96 The proposed countryside park will provide extensive areas of valuable mixed habitats (including chalk grassland). These will provide large scale ecological enhancement, noting the current arable agricultural use of the site, and a significant net gain for local wildlife.

6.97 Further, the countryside park will enhance the local landscape by replicating the positive characteristics of the local landscape character within the site. This will greatly improve the landscape character of the site, the surrounding area and this part of the Cambridge Green Belt. These landscape benefits will not only be lasting, they will become more significant with time as the landscaping matures.



- 6.98 Tree, hedgerow and shrub planting in an around the retirement village, coupled with ecological enhancement measures like bat and bird boxes will, ensure that this element of the scheme alone delivers a biodiversity net gain (to which the biodiversity net gain associated with the countryside park would add significantly).
- 6.99 The proposed retirement village will be within walking and cycling distance of the wide range of services and facilities across Stapleford and Great Shelford (including the train station, bus services and 'DNA path'). Walking and cycling connections through the retirement village and countryside park would be provided and would link with the proposed CAM stops and shared-use path if these are delivered. This would maximise the sustainable transport opportunities for residents of the retirement village, retirement village staff and visitors, and the local community more generally. The optimisation of local bus services mooted as part of the CAM proposals and the provision of a shuttle bus service for retirement village residents would only boost these opportunities. The result would be a minimisation of private car use and the associated environmental benefits this would bring.
- 6.100 A further significant environmental benefit would be generated by changing the use of 19 hectares of arable land to a mixture of permanent vegetated habitats (carbon capture, soil health, air quality etc).
- 6.101 Having regard to the foregoing the scheme would offer a significant and permanent environmental benefit (and one whose value would increase with time) and would therefore fulfil sustainability's environmental objective.
- 6.102 It can therefore be seen that the scheme unquestionably fulfils all three objectives of sustainable development as set out in Policy S/3, and in the NPPF. The fulfilment of all three objectives confirms that the scheme would be sustainable development.
- 6.103 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF states that the three objectives of sustainable development should be delivered through the application of policies in the Framework. It has been demonstrated above that the proposal would accord with the relevant parts of the NPPF. The proposed development has therefore been shown to be sustainable both intrinsically and when considered through the lens of NPPF policy.

## 7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Outline planning permission with all matters reserved apart from access is proposed for the development of land for a retirement care village in Use Class C2 comprising housing with care, communal health, wellbeing and leisure facilities, public open space, landscaping, car parking, access and associated development and the provision of land for use as a countryside park for public access.
- 7.2 Prior to the submission of the application the applicants, ALP, have engaged in meaningful discussions with the local community, relevant stakeholder voluntary bodies and the Local Planning Authority regarding the development proposals.
- 7.3 A retirement village provides a range of homes to rent and to buy, with additional care facilities to support those who need it with a particular focus upon older people as defined within the NPPF. The level of support can be adapted to fit the changing needs of people over time, ranging all way up to full care as one would expect to receive in a residential care home. Retirement villages are designed to integrate with local communities: on-site facilities are available for public use and carefully chosen locations mean that residents can access existing local facilities and services via sustainable transport and maintain their existing social networks.
- 7.4 Across the country there is a rapidly expanding older population. The Cambridge sub-region, including South Cambridgeshire is no exception to this trend. Local Housing Need data for Stapleford itself indicates that the village has a particularly high proportion of people aged over 75. Government guidance on the provision of housing for older and disabled people is very clear that the need to provide such housing is *critical*.
- 7.5 A bespoke Needs Assessment accompanies the planning application. The Assessment demonstrates that there is a substantial unmet need for older people's accommodation within South Cambridgeshire as a whole. This need is not proposed to be met by any strategic policies within the Council's Development Plan.
- 7.6 The site lies within the defined countryside and also with the Cambridge Green Belt. Despite this, the site lies within a highly sustainable location where there is excellent access to public transport links and dedicated walking and cycling routes. The route of the proposed Cambridge South East section of the Cambridge Autonomous Metro line is proposed to run through the site. Vehicular access in the site is proposed by way a new ghost island turning from Haverhill Road.
- 7.7 The development proposals are defined as inappropriate development within the Green Belt, having regard to the NPPF. Limited areas of additional planning harm are identified within the detailed assessment of the development proposals, these are; a low level of less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, some localised visual impacts arising from the development and some limited impacts upon the openness of the green belt.
- 7.8 It is identified that, due to the finding of inappropriateness, 'very special circumstances' in the form of further material planning considerations will need to exist to enable the Council to grant planning permission in this instance. It is further established that case law and planning policy relating to very special circumstances state that such material considerations can be several factors taken together and that none of these considerations need to be exceptional individually. Further, the considerations do not need to be rarely occurring but can be commonplace in the context of a particular type of development proposal.
- 7.9 The development proposals deliver a number of significant planning benefits including the dedicated provision of older people's accommodation in a context where there is a shortfall of such accommodation in the area

that is not addressed in strategic terms by the development plan. In addition, the development proposals include infrastructure provision that goes considerably beyond standard material requirements (i.e. the recreational and ecological benefits of the proposed countryside park). Further still, the application is supported by an Alternate Site Search Assessment which demonstrates that there are no non-green belt sites available or suitable to deliver the proposals.

- 7.10 It is judged that there are material benefits to the development proposals that cumulatively clearly outweigh the harm by inappropriateness and other harm identified.
- 7.11 On this basis the development proposals should be judged to be acceptable and, having regard to paragraph 11 of the NPPF, it is the case that planning permission should be granted without delay.

**APPENDIX 1 – HOUSING NEED SURVEY RESULTS REPORT FOR STAPLEFORD**

Cambridgeshire ACRE

# Housing Need Survey Results Report for Stapleford

Survey undertaken in March 2017



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## CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

### Background to Affordable Rural Housing

Affordable housing is housing made available for either rent or shared ownership, based on the evidence of need, to those unable to afford market prices. One approach to delivering affordable homes in rural areas is through rural exception site policy. A rural exception site is a site used specifically for affordable housing in a small rural community that would not normally be used for housing because it is subject to policies of restraint.

Within Designated Rural Areas, affordable housing must remain as affordable housing in perpetuity. Furthermore, planning conditions and legal agreements are used on rural exception sites to prioritise the occupation of property to people falling within categories of need and who can prove a local connection through family, residence or work. However, Stapleford is not a Designated Rural Area. (There is no apparent reason for this as its population is well below the generally recognised threshold of 3,000 for Designated Rural Areas) This means that although properties will be prioritised for households with a strong connection to the parish, they cannot be guaranteed to remain as affordable properties in perpetuity. In practice, most do. The Housing & Planning Act 2016 is likely to change some of the rules for rural affordable housing. However, until the regulations are published which will set out the details of implementation these are not clear.

To be eligible for rental properties, applicants must complete an application form to join the local Housing Register and they would then be able to bid for properties through the choice based lettings scheme. To be eligible for low cost shared ownership properties, applicants must apply to the local Housing Register and then apply directly through the local Homebuy Agent. You can read more about choice based lettings and low cost home ownership in Appendix 1.

### Context

Cambridgeshire ACRE was commissioned to carry out a Housing Needs Survey in Stapleford in November 2016 by Stapleford Parish Council. The survey was carried out to support the emerging Great Shelford and Stapleford Neighbourhood Plan. (A parallel survey has been undertaken in Stapleford)

The specific aims of the survey were to gauge opinion on the value of developing affordable homes for local people in the parish and to determine the scale and nature of affordable housing need. However, the nature of the survey means that it also identifies wider market need such as, for example, downsizing. Therefore, the survey can be used to both consider the benefits of a specific rural exception site and to inform more general planning and housing policies for the parish.

This survey was carried out with the support of Hastoe Housing Association and South Cambridgeshire District Council. The survey costs have been met by Hastoe Housing Association.



## Methodology

Survey packs were posted to all 823 residential addresses in the parish on 7 March 2017. The survey packs included covering letters from Cambridgeshire ACRE and Stapleford Parish Council, a questionnaire, a FAQ sheet on rural affordable housing and a postage paid envelope for returned forms.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections:

- Part One of the survey form contained questions to identify those who believe they have a housing need. Respondents were also asked if they supported the idea of building a small affordable housing development in the village. All households were asked to complete this section.
- Part Two of the survey form contained questions on household circumstances and housing requirements. This part was only completed by those households who are currently, or expecting to be, in need of housing.

The closing date for the survey was Friday 31 March 2017. In total, 216 completed forms were returned giving the survey a 26 per cent response rate. Most of our Housing Needs Surveys achieve a response rate of between 20 and 25 per cent. (Great Shelford achieved a response rate of 21 per cent)

## Stapleford Parish

Stapleford is a mid-sized parish in South Cambridgeshire. Its population of almost 1,900 resides in about 800 dwellings.<sup>1</sup> Stapleford forms the eastern part of a cluster of villages a couple of miles south of Addenbrookes hospital and the southern fringe of Cambridge.

The village coalesces with Great Shelford along its western boundary. Little Shelford lies further to the west on the opposite side of Great Shelford. Sawston lies to the south. The parish of Stapleford actually extends well beyond the village eastwards, crossing the A1307, to encompass Wandlebury Country Park. However, in housing terms virtually all parish residents live in the village.

Although Stapleford benefits from access to a range of services in nearby Great Shelford the village does still retain range of even more local services. For example, Stapleford has its own primary school and recreation ground with modern pavilion. It even has its own arts centre, the Stapleford Granary. There are two remaining pubs (and a community campaign to re-open a third pub currently closed) and a convenience store. There are also a significant number of local businesses operating within the parish.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Cambridgeshire Population and Dwelling Stock Estimates: mid-2013', Cambridgeshire County Council, December 2014

*The village retains a range of services*



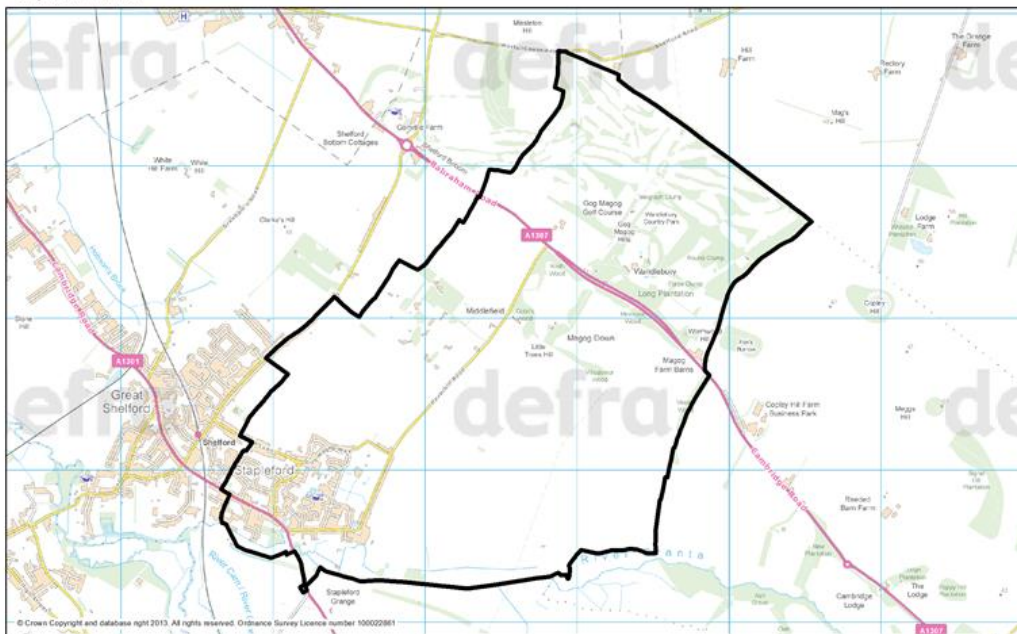
The Rose © Copyright Kim Fyson and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence



The Spar village shop © Copyright N Chadwick and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence

Stapleford also benefits from strong strategic transport connections. The village is close to Great Shelford railway station on the Cambridge to London line and has relatively good access to the M11, A505 and A1307.

Stapleford Parish



Source: 2011 Census Output Area boundaries. Crown Copyright. Crown Copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the controller of HMSO. Produced by Oxford Consultants for Social Indicators, www.oxsi.co.uk, April 2013



The tightness of the Green Belt boundary around Stapleford means that residential development within the parish has been relatively muted in recent years. Records show that the parish almost doubled its population in the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> However, since then growth has been more muted with less than 100 dwellings built between 1991 and 2013.<sup>3</sup> More recently, 18 dwellings were completed in 2015/16. A further 33 dwellings were identified as

<sup>2</sup> <https://sites.google.com/site/staplefordonline/history>

<sup>3</sup> 'Cambridgeshire Population and Dwelling Stock Estimates: mid-2013', Cambridgeshire County Council, December 2014, 'Cambridgeshire Population and Dwelling Stock Estimates: 1991-2010', Cambridgeshire County Council, July 2011

under constructions at the end of March 2016 with another two with planning permission but not yet started.<sup>4</sup>



Recent development activity in Stapleford, completed in 2016 © Copyright David Beresford and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence

Policy S/8 of the emerging Local Plan identifies Great Shelford and Stapleford as a 'Rural Centre'. This policy states that:

*"Development and redevelopment without any limit on individual scheme size will be permitted within the development frameworks of Rural Centres, as defined on the Policies Map, provided that adequate services, facilities and infrastructure are available or can be made available as a result of the development."*<sup>5</sup>

Extensions to some of the Rural Centres have been agreed and the village frameworks redrawn accordingly. However, no extension to Great Shelford & Stapleford has been agreed. The intention is that any future development will be within the existing village framework.

Stapleford is a wealthy parish. Household earnings are well above Cambridgeshire and national averages, even after allowing for the higher housing costs in the parish. The number of people dependent on income related benefits is low and this is reflected in the Index of Deprivation. The Index of Deprivation measures deprivation at a small geographical scale using 'Lower Super Output Areas' (LSOAs). LSOA E01018295 is almost contiguous with the Stapleford parish boundary and is good proxy for the parish. It ranks 31,900 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England in terms of deprivation with 1 being the most deprived LSOA. It also scores well across the different domains (eg. income, employment, health) that are used to provide an overall measure of deprivation.<sup>6</sup>

Economic activity rates are high in the parish. There are particularly high levels of self-employment and employment in public services. The largest sectors are Education, Professional services and Health & social work. More than six in ten of Stapleford employed residents are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations.

<sup>4</sup> 'Housing Completions in Cambridgeshire 2002-2016', (Tables H1.2 and H2.2), Cambridgeshire County Council, undated

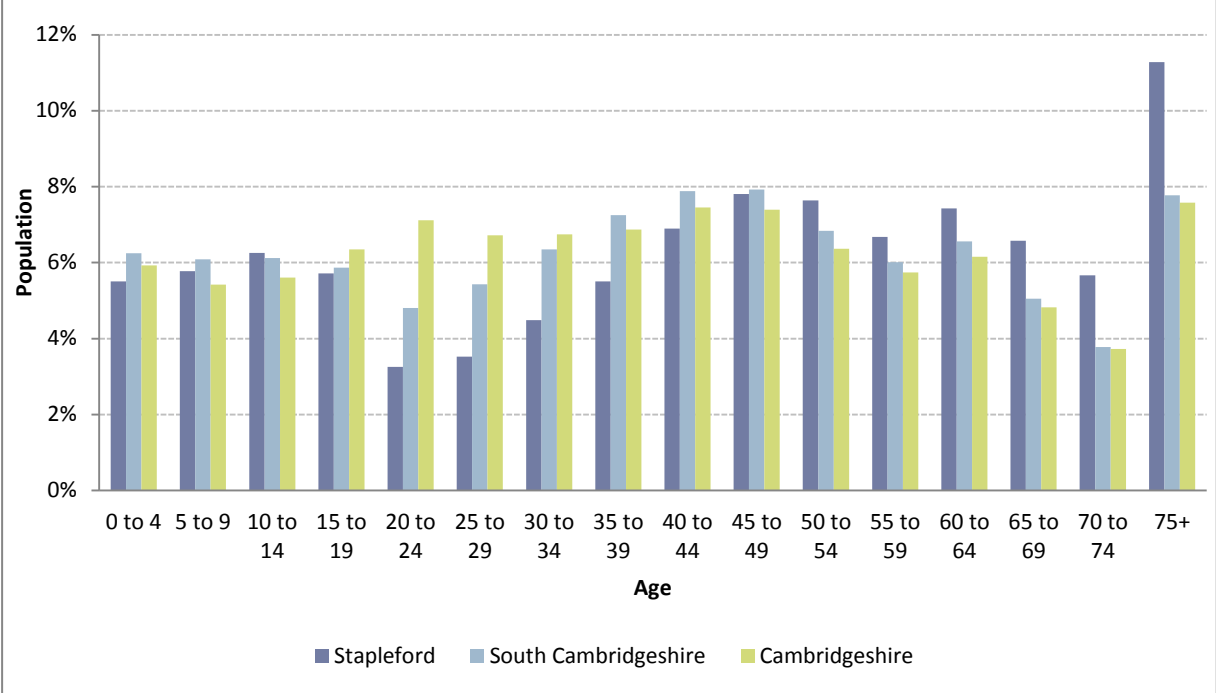
<sup>5</sup> 'Proposed Submission South Cambridgeshire Local Plan', South Cambridgeshire District Council, July 2013

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

And over half of adults in Stapleford are qualified to Higher Education level (54 per cent) compared with 33 per cent in Cambridgeshire and 27 per cent in England.<sup>7</sup>

The age profile of Stapleford’s population is typical of a rural Cambridgeshire community. The proportion of school age children is in line with the county average. However, there is a marked reduction in terms of those aged 20-39 which is counter-balanced by a higher proportion of older people. Stapleford has a particularly high proportion of people aged over 75 (11 per cent compared to eight per cent in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire).

Figure 1: Population age profile, 2011



‘Parish Profile Data: Stapleford’, Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group, 2014. Data taken from 2011 Census, QS103EW

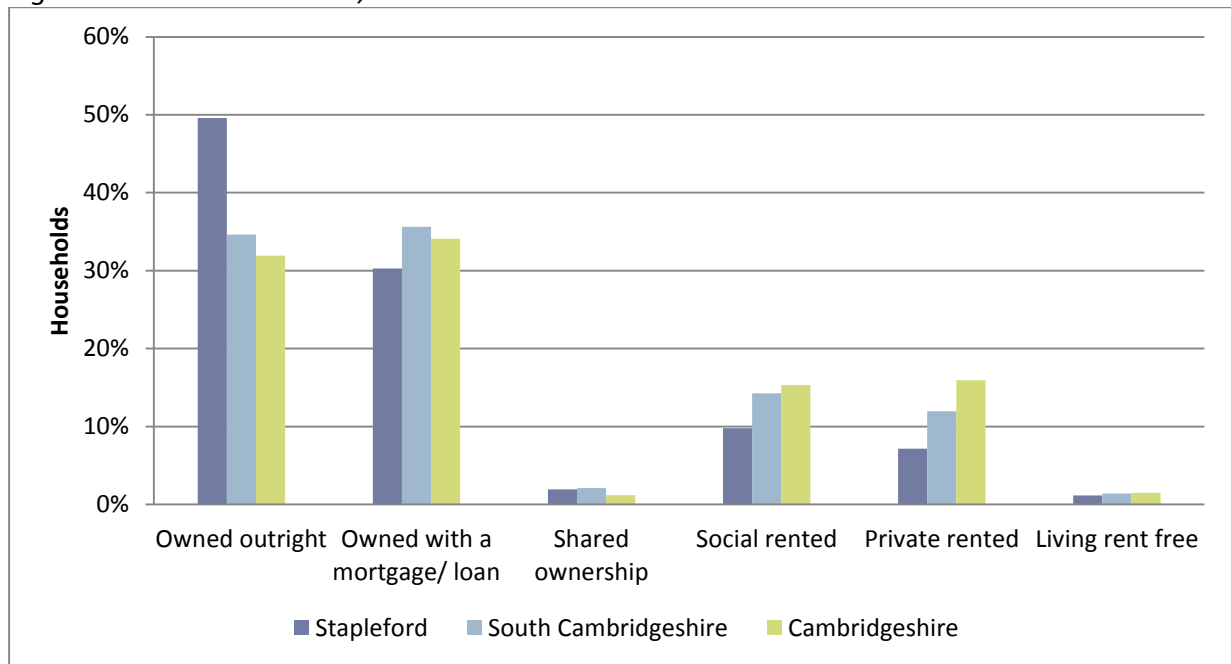
The housing tenure profile is also pretty typical of a rural Cambridgeshire parish. Owner occupation accounts for eight in ten of all households. There is a particularly high level of owner occupation where the household owns the property outright without a mortgage (50 per cent of all households). This is presumably related to the high levels of older people in the parish. In contrast, levels of both private and social rented accommodation are below the district and county averages.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> ‘Rural Community Profile for Stapleford (Parish)’, Cambridgeshire ACRE/ OCSI, October 2013

<sup>8</sup> ‘Parish Profile Data: Stapleford’, Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group, 2014



Figure 2: Household tenure, 2011



'Parish Profile Data: Stapleford', Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group, 2014. Data taken from 2011 Census, QS405EW

A more recent profile of affordable housing in Stapleford suggests there has been no significant growth in stock over the last five years. At the time of the 2011 Census there were 90 dwellings described (by self-reporting) as social rented or shared ownership. An analysis by South Cambridgeshire District Council at 1 April 2016 estimated the level to be at 91 dwellings. The majority are owned by South Cambridgeshire District Council who manage a combination of rented, sheltered and equity share properties. Housing associations or other local providers own 19 rented properties and eight shared ownership properties.

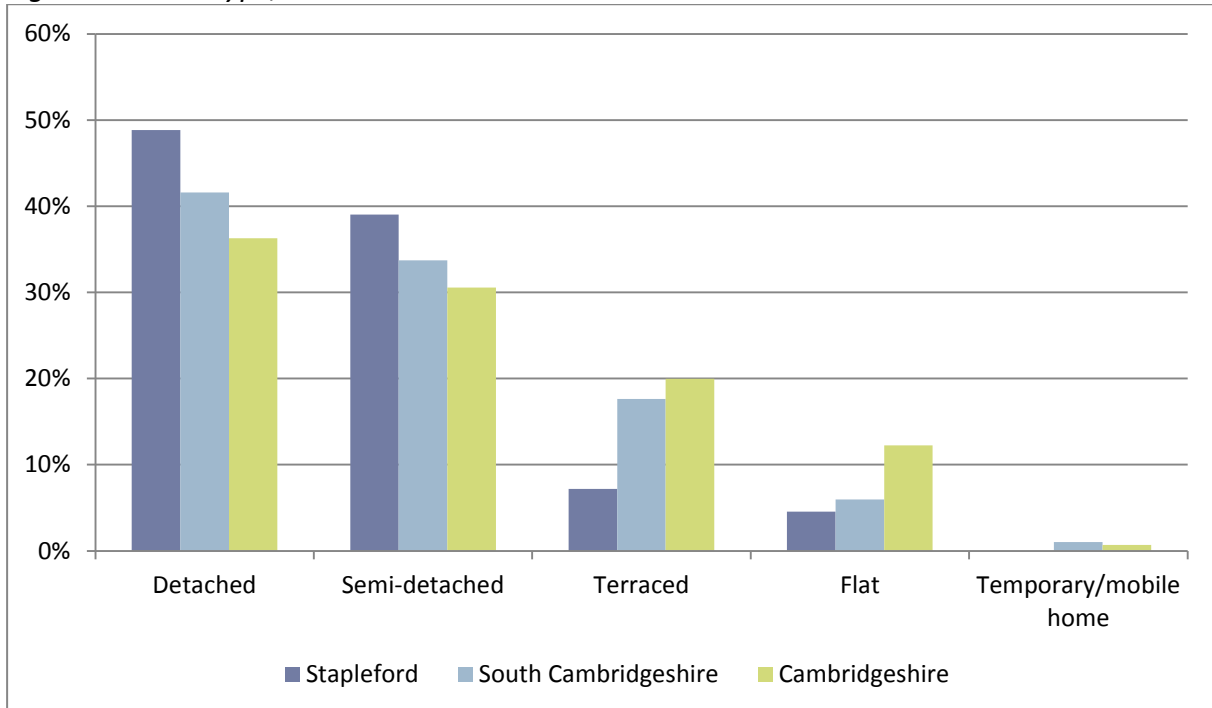
Turnover of the rented properties, owned by the local authority or other parties, has been very low in recent years.<sup>9</sup> It is worth noting that the majority of affordable housing in Stapleford will have no local connection policy in place. This means that it will be allocated according to households with a connection to anywhere in South Cambridgeshire.

Almost half (49 per cent) of all dwellings in Stapleford are detached and a further 39 per cent are semi-detached. This is not unusual for a rural community. In contrast, there are relatively few terraced houses or flats. The profile does differ from Great Shelford which could be considered to have a more 'urban' profile.

Stapleford's propensity towards detached houses also means that it has a high proportion of larger houses. Only 21 per cent have two bedrooms or less in contrast to 30 per cent in South Cambridgeshire. The corollary is that 43 per cent have four or more bedrooms compared with only 34 per cent in South Cambridgeshire.

<sup>9</sup> 'Housing Statistical Information Leaflet', South Cambridgeshire District Council, October 2016

Figure 3: House type, 2011



'Parish Profile Data: Stapleford', Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group, 2014. Data taken from 2011 Census, QS402EW

## Local Income Levels and Affordability

### Buying on the Open Market

A review of property agent websites identified a number of properties currently on the market.<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to determine whether some properties actually fall into the Stapleford or Great Shelford parish. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to build a picture of local house prices.

#### Properties on the market in Stapleford



2 bed bungalow, Bar Lane for sale @ £500,000  
[www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk).



1 bed house, River View for sale @ £72,500 for 25% share, [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk).

<sup>10</sup> Source: [www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk), [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk) and [www.nestoria.co.uk](http://www.nestoria.co.uk) as at 15 May 2017

In total, seven properties were identified. The lowest priced property available is a 3 bed house on the market at £440,000. The next lowest priced property is a 2 bed bungalow for sale at £500,000. The remaining properties are for sale at £665,000 or higher. There was, however, a 25per cent share in a shared ownership 1 bed property available at £72,500.

A review of sales over the last year was undertaken to draw a larger sample. Over 20 properties were identified. However, few could be considered suitable for new entrants to the housing market. Only one property sold for less than £400,000. A further eight sold for less than £500,000. Six sold for over £1 million.

*The lowest priced properties sold in Stapleford in the last year*



3 bed terrace, Bury Road sold @ £327,000, December 2016, [www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk).

2 bed semi-detached, London Road sold @ £423,000, December 2016, [www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk)

These current and recent prices can be cross-referenced with published house price data by Hometrack (see Table 1) to provide an indication of entry level prices in the Stapleford housing market. Hometrack data covers the larger area of The Shelfords and Stapleford ward. This includes the parishes of Great Shelford, Little Shelford, Newton and Stapleford.

*Table 1: Lower Quartile Property Prices by ward, September 2016 – February 2017<sup>11</sup>*

	2-bed flat	2-bed house	3-bed house	4-bed house
The Shelfords & Stapleford	£256,250	£327,000	£362,500	£553,000
Sawston	£164,500	£273,750	£280,000	£312,750
Whittlesford	n/a	£200,000	£381,625	£334,500
Harston & Hauxton	n/a	£294,500	£431,838	£482,975
Trumpington	£355,250	£371,500	£430,000	£605,000
South Cambridgeshire	£185,000	£230,000	£282,500	£400,000

Note: Data are an average of house price sales over a six month period. Prices can fluctuate from one period to another due to the low level of sales involved. Nevertheless, the prices do reflect actual sales and valuations.

<sup>11</sup> Hometrack Intelligence Service (The Shelfords and Stapleford ward includes the parishes of Great Shelford, Little Shelford, Newton and Stapleford)



It suggests that lower quartile house prices in the ward are significantly higher than in South Cambridgeshire. Prices are generally similar or a little higher than in neighbouring rural parishes such as Swaston or Whittlesford. However, they are significantly lower than in Trumpington. Also, the data does suggest that prices in Stapleford parish may be a little higher than in The Shelfords & Stapleford ward as a whole.

These prices do need to be treated with some caution. They are based on a small number of actual sales and valuations. For example, the prices cited for The Shelfords and Stapleford are based on seven 2 bed properties, twenty two 3 bed properties and twenty five 4 bed properties. Nevertheless these prices are based on the actual prices that households have had to pay in the local housing market.

Table 2 has been constructed from the discussion above. Affordability is assessed in the context of three price levels. Some standard assumptions about deposits and mortgages are applied to calculate the minimum salary needed to purchase these properties. These price levels have been derived by rounding down the lower quartile property prices for a 2-bed flat, 2-bed house and 3-bed house. The prices cited are consistent with those used in the parallel Great Shelford Housing Needs Survey. Recent housing market activity suggests that these prices may actually be a little low for Stapleford. However, they do provide a starting point for assessing affordability in the local housing market.

*Table 2: Annual Income requirements for open market properties*

House Price	Deposit required (assume 15% required)	Annual income required (based on mortgage lending principle of 3.5 x income)	Monthly mortgage payment <sup>12</sup>
£250,000	£37,500	£60,714	£1,008
£300,000	£45,000	£72,857	£1,209
£350,000	£52,500	£85,000	£1,411

Even at an entry level price of £250,000 an annual income of about £60,000 would be required on the assumptions used. To put this in context, a household with two people working full-time and earning the ‘national living wage’ will earn about £30,000 per annum.<sup>13</sup>

It should be remembered that a household’s ability to buy is also dependent on them having saved an appropriate deposit. The calculations presented here assume a mortgage to house value of 85 per cent. In other words, the purchaser can raise a deposit of 15 per cent. It may be possible to secure a mortgage with a lower deposit but this will require even higher

<sup>12</sup> Source: [www.moneyadvice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadvice.org.uk) – mortgage calculator based on 3% repayment mortgage repaid over 25 years

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/>. The national living wage currently pays £7.50 per hour but only applies to those aged 25 and older

income levels. Clearly, many existing owner occupiers in Stapleford will have significant housing equity. However, young people seeking to leave the parental home or those in the rented sector may not.

Every household has its own set of unique circumstances. Therefore, the assumptions set out above are just that; working assumptions. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to conclude that many low income households with a connection to Stapleford have little chance of being able to set up home in their own community without some kind of support.

### **Buying in Shared Ownership**

Shared ownership gives the opportunity to 'part buy' and 'part rent' a home. This means if a household can't afford to buy a property outright they may be able to afford to buy a share in a property. The initial share purchased can be as low as 25 or 30 per cent. At a point when the household can afford to, they can choose to buy a further share of the property.

Where a property has been built on a rural exception site, the maximum percentage that can be owned is 80 per cent so that the property always remains available as affordable housing and can never be sold on the open market.

Shared ownership housing schemes are tailored for people who cannot afford to buy a suitable home by outright purchase, and who are in housing need. When someone moves out of a shared ownership property, their property will either be offered to the housing association to find a buyer or it may be advertised in the local estate agents. On rural exception sites, people with a local connection to the parish will always have priority.

Shared ownership affordability will be heavily influenced by the share of the property purchased. The purchaser must provide an appropriate package of deposit and mortgage to cover the cost of the share purchased. Rent would be paid on the unsold equity at a rate of 2.75 per cent. It is also likely that a small service charge would also be applicable. However, these charges represent a significant subsidy in comparison with comparable market rents which makes shared ownership an attractive option for some households.

Housing Associations currently manage eight shared ownership properties in Stapleford. These are all two bed houses. In addition, one recently completed new build one bed house is still available for purchase. South Cambridgeshire District Council also has eight shared equity properties. These operate on a slightly different basis and are mainly bungalows. They may have an age restriction to limit availability to older people. Any new 'low cost home ownership' properties built today are likely to be similar to the shared ownership model described above.<sup>14</sup>

### **Renting**

Table 3 shows the typical cost for renting privately and compares this with the typical rental cost of a new Housing Association property. The Government has taken steps to bring social housing rents closer to private sector ones, with rents for new tenants set at up to 80 per cent of the amount you would have to pay in the private sector.

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<sup>14</sup> 'Housing Statistical Information Leaflet', South Cambridgeshire District Council (October 2016)

The Local Housing Allowance would not be sufficient to cover the cost of any sized property at an 'affordable rent'. Our review found no properties currently for rent in Stapleford.<sup>15</sup> We did find a relatively active private rental market in Great Shelford. However, all properties were seeking rents above the LHA rate.

*Table 3: Comparison of property rental costs in The Shelfords & Stapleford ward, March 2016 – February 2017<sup>16</sup>*

No. of Beds	Typical market rent per week (median rent)	Entry level rent per week (30 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	Housing Association Maximum affordable rent per week (80% of median market rent)	Local Housing Allowance 2017-18 (applicable from 1 April 2017)
1	£202	£199	£161	£126.05
2	£229	£227	£183	£144.96
3	£253	£239	£202	£168.45
4	£378	£306	£302	£224.70

Social rented properties are also in scarce supply. Between March 2008 and December 2013 19 properties became available in Stapleford. They attracted an average of 43 bids each (compared with 54 per property across South Cambridgeshire as a whole and 71 in Great Shelford).<sup>17</sup> More recent evidence from South Cambridgeshire District Council suggests that this rate of turnover has remained fairly constant. The highest turnover is for sheltered housing stock.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Source: [www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk), [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk) and [www.nestoria.co.uk](http://www.nestoria.co.uk) as at 15 May 2017

<sup>16</sup> Hometrack Intelligence Service (The Shelfords & Stapleford ward includes the parishes of Great Shelford, Little Shelford, Newton and Stapleford)

<sup>17</sup> 'Parish Profiles', Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group, October 2014

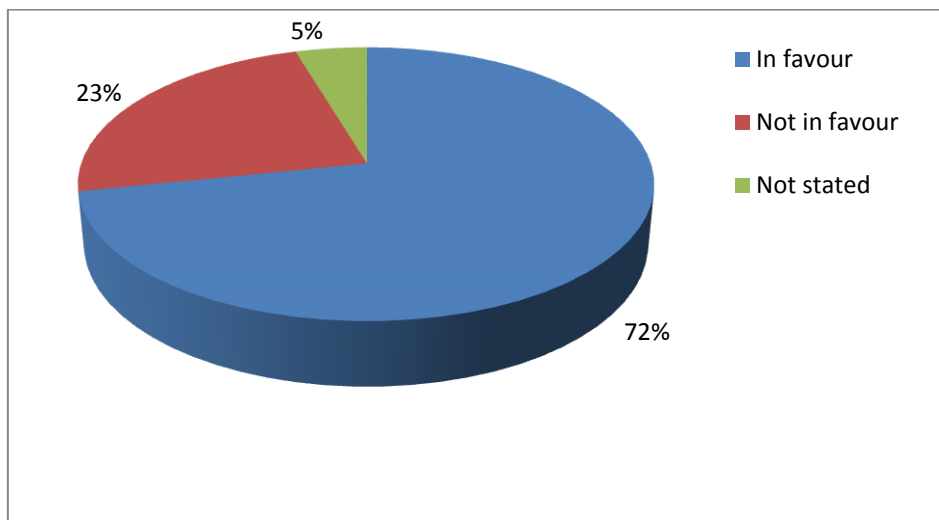
<sup>18</sup> 'Housing Statistical Information Leaflet', South Cambridgeshire District Council, October 2016

## RESULTS FROM PART ONE – VIEWS ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTIFYING THOSE IN HOUSING NEED

### Views on Affordable Housing Development in Stapleford

All respondents to the survey were asked if they would be in favour of a small development of affordable homes for local people within the parish. Seventy two per cent of respondents supported the principle of such a development and 23 per cent were opposed. Five per cent did not state an opinion. The results are illustrated in Figure 4. The level of support for affordable homes is a little higher than survey findings in other parishes in Cambridgeshire. Support is typically in the range of 55-75 per cent. (It is however a little lower than the parallel survey in Great Shelford which recorded 78 per cent of households in support)

Figure 4: Attitude towards affordable housing development



Many respondents chose to include additional comments to qualify their answers. A selection is presented here, grouped by theme. They highlight some of the key issues that concern local people.

There was recognition from those in favour that local house prices were a major barrier for many. There were a number of references to the specific needs of young families

- *With existing house prices, affordable homes are a must!*
- *Properties for young families are especially needed in Stapleford*
- *Average age in village is rising and needs younger families who at present unable to rent locally*
- *It is important for communities to be resilient which means families continuing to have strong local connections*
- *Cambridge is dreadfully expensive. If affordable homes could be provided for those who are local and who wish to stay in their parish, this would help them enormously and could only be a good thing*

- *This survey seems to be mainly aimed at families living in Stapleford at the moment. Due to the severe housing shortage families have now split up living in different areas. It would be nice if this situation could be taken into consideration for families that have been forced to move away due to the lack of housing could be offered housing in the area as well as residents*

In fact, some respondents were able to relate the issue to their own family circumstances:

- *I have three grown up sons - two have had to move away from the area as cannot afford rent or to buy. My youngest son is still living at home but will also have to think about moving on soon. Very sad as all three have grown up in the village attending Sunnyside Playgroup, Stapleford Primary School and SVC, as well as contributing and playing for local sports clubs*
- *Although our house is adequate for our needs - my son is now 28 and would like to leave home at some point in the near future. As he would like to stay in the area, a development of affordable homes would give him a chance to get his foot on the property ladder and gain independence*
- *One of my sons is in private rented accommodation in Cambridge and cannot save a deposit. He works in Waterbeach and his wife is a child minder and qualified nanny*
- *Our daughter also lives in Stapleford and needs a bigger house ie. 3 bed house for her family. Unable to afford or consider buying property in this village and would therefore welcome more affordable homes to residents who have lived and grown up in this village all their lives. Children are at Stapleford school*

There were some concerns about the allocation process with some arguing that the needs of the wider local economy should be considered:

- *The difficulty of recruiting nurses to Cambridge University Hospitals is exacerbated by lack of affordable housing, so I think it is important not just for those with a connection to the parish*
- *We are in favour of affordable homes but are not comfortable with the 'local connection' aspect. This smacks of a 'Little Britain' 'local homes for local people'. These homes should be for public service key workers and also for carers working for commercial agencies for example. The offspring of middle class Stapleford do not need affordable housing in our experience (since 1976). The 'local connection' does not reflect today's society and career patterns*

There was also a strong view from many that any new affordable housing should remain so and not be sold after a period of time:

- *I would only like to agree to such a development for truly affordable homes and not for private homes*
- *It will be important to ensure that such affordable homes remain affordable and do not enter the wider market. This should be done by specifying the size of any price increase on re-sale*
- *I would suggest that this is instead of the £1m plus houses that are being developed, not as well as*
- *I would have supported affordable homes but can no longer do so, since the government announced that they would force Housing Associations to sell properties to their tenants - a ridiculous policy!*

However, there was less consensus on the precise tenure any affordable housing should take:

- *Only shared ownership please and a mixture of 2, 3, 4 bedroom properties*
- *Council properties only. More bungalows needed. Shared ownership still too expensive - when wishing to increase share - costs involved to buyer are too complicated and expensive therefore buyer becomes trapped*

There were a number of comments about location with specifically ruling out any schemes in the Green Belt:

- *But not on green belt*
- *Under no circumstances should it be in the green belt*
- *Would not want to see green belt eroded or made a rural exception site*

Some also chose to stress the importance of any scheme being relatively small:

- *Small development only for people with local connection to this parish - but depends where*
- *'Small' defined as no more than 20 units*
- *As long as it wasn't too large, that it would take away the village feel or put an extra burden on services. Brown field sites would be much preferred*

A number of respondents were critical of the current practice of bungalows being demolished and replaced by much larger properties:

- *We believe that affordable homes should be made available as needed in the village. However, so long as a policy continues of allowing bungalows and other small houses to be demolished and replaced with large properties that accommodate few people, we see no justification for specific affordable developments. Furthermore, the practice of 'defending' the large properties with walls and electric gates is generating a sense of separation between haves and have nots, which in the long run will be highly detrimental to our community. Therefore, we think that separate affordable developments should be avoided; instead, the planners should aim to scatter affordable housing throughout the village so that we recover and maintain a healthy population mix.*
- *Not directly related - but the practice of builders knocking down small bungalows and building enormous houses on the plot is going to mean more people like me (age 63) will have nowhere local to move to if/ when stairs become too much. This is happening in Stapleford*
- *The government does not like single people living in large houses, but unfortunately nearly every bungalow in Stapleford that comes up for sale is knocked down and a large house replaces it. Therefore, the bungalow stock for older people to move to is depleted and apparently nothing can be done about it. Look at Mangle Lane!*

Those opposed to the principle of a small affordable housing development for local people tended to focus on three issues: the negative impact on the character and scale of Stapleford; infrastructure constraints; and, a lack of need for such housing.

Some respondents argued that there had already been enough development:

- *Enough development already in Stapleford*

- *From my own purely selfish point of view I like things the way they are*
- *Stapleford is already densely populated and all green boundaries and spaces are very precious to quality of life here*
- *There is very little land between Stapleford and surrounding villages. Any building on the boundaries would erode the feel of being a village*

There were several comments about the inability of the existing infrastructure to cope with more development:

- *Village over developed as it is. Parking, especially in Bar Lane is bad due to the Beauty Shop - residents not able to park near their houses. People from Haverhill Road leaving cars/ lorries and vans often for long periods of time. Any further development of the village would cause more problems - Stapleford is rapidly becoming over-developed*
- *The roads in Stapleford are already extremely busy; any further development can only make the traffic situation worse. I would only support a small number of rented properties since home ownership is unrealistic for many people. Any new houses should not be in a cluster*
- *The infrastructure can't support current community. If more housing was introduced then medical services - primary and secondary care - and schools would need to mirror the increase in demand*
- *Existing infrastructure does not support additional housing*

Finally, some respondents did not accept that there was a need for further housing:

- *We do not see the need for more local affordable housing. Furthermore, it is a strongly held view that no exceptions should be made for rural sites to allow building affordable housing*
- *There is already a lot of developments. There should be a % of the new developments to be given or sold as affordable homes. It should be as a standalone affordable development*
- *Already plenty in the vicinity. Character of the parish will be destroyed with over crowding*
- *There have been several opportunities to build affordable housing over recent years, but, apart from Chalk Hill, every other local development (old police houses in Woollards Lane, every vacated bungalow on Cambridge Road, every development off London Road) has been to build expensive houses with little or no social housing included. Clearly there isn't a need*

The survey has revealed a wide range of opinions. There is strong support for the idea of affordable homes for local people in principle. However, respondents have flagged a number of valid concerns that will have to be taken into account if a scheme is to be progressed. These concerns can often be ameliorated with a well-designed scheme in a suitable location and of an appropriate scale. However, for some, no scheme is likely to be acceptable. The Parish Council will need to balance these views when deciding how to proceed.

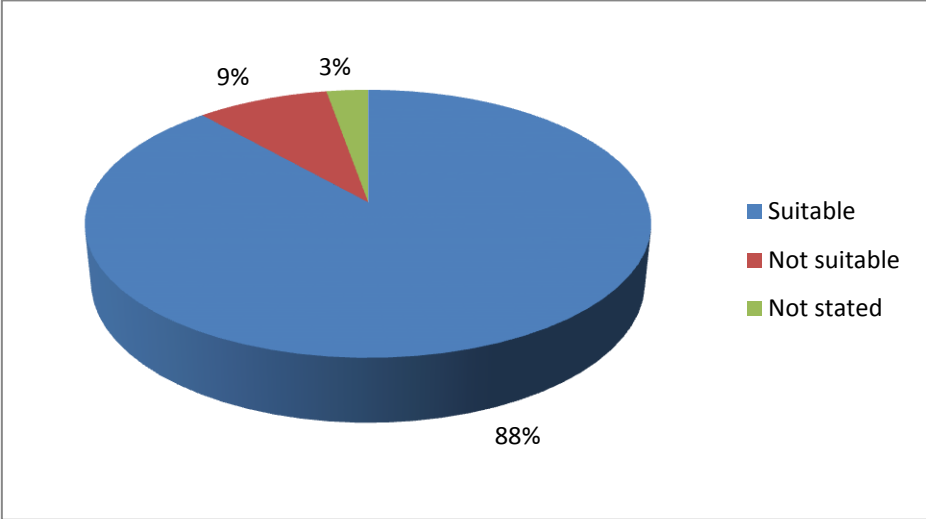
## **Suitability of Current Home**

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not their current home was suitable for their household's needs. Figure 5 shows that 88 per cent of respondents felt their current



home is suitable for their household needs, with nine per cent indicating that their current home is unsuitable for their needs. (Three per cent did not answer the question) The nine per cent of respondents who indicated that their current home is unsuitable for their needs equates to 19 households.

Figure 5: Suitability of current home



Those stating their current home is unsuitable were asked to indicate the reasons why. Respondents were allowed to give more than one reason for unsuitability, so all responses are recorded. In total 33 reasons were reported.

Figure 6: Reasons why current home is unsuitable

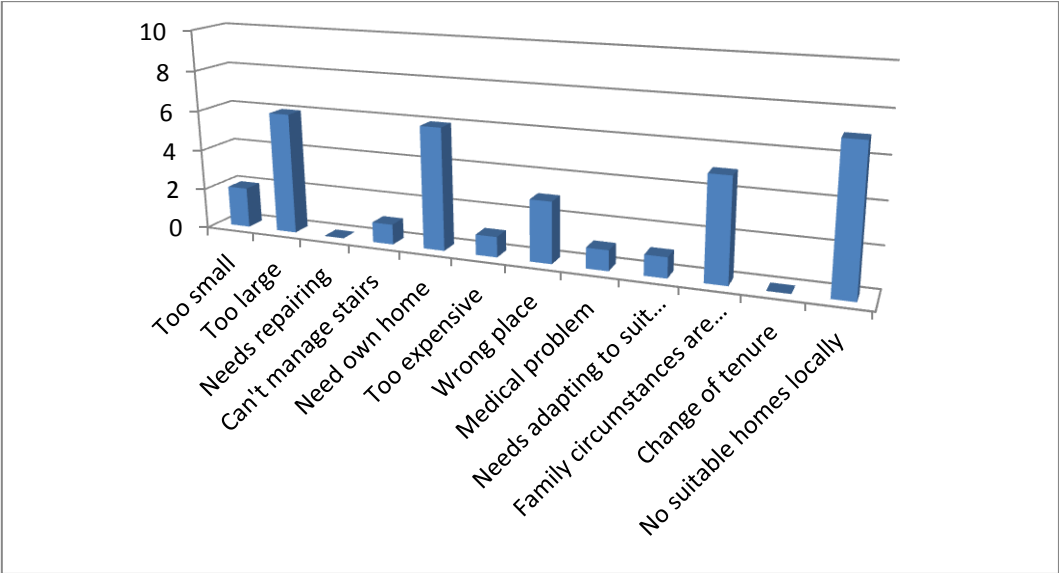


Figure 6 illustrates the reasons respondents gave for their current home being unsuitable. The most commonly cited reason was 'No suitable homes available locally'. The other reasons cited most frequently were: 'Need own home'. 'Too large' and 'Family circumstances are changing'. The relatively high number of people reporting that there

home was too big contrasts with a higher proportion reporting that their home was too small in Great Shelford. This highlights differing potential priorities between the parishes with an emphasis on older people looking to downsize in Stapleford contrasting with younger families looking for room to grow in Great Shelford. However, this is based on all households reporting that their current accommodation is unsuitable. The following section considers only those assessed as being eligible for affordable housing.

## **RESULTS FROM PART TWO – IDENTIFYING CIRCUMSTANCES AND REQUIREMENTS**

Part Two of the Survey was only completed by those respondents who had indicated that their current home is unsuitable for their household's needs and who are therefore potentially in housing need. Responses to Part Two were made on behalf of 19 households.

An assessment of each response has been undertaken by Cambridgeshire ACRE and a decision made regarding whether the household can be considered a potential candidate for affordable housing in Stapleford based upon, for example:

- evidence of local connection,
- eligibility for affordable housing,
- particular medical and welfare needs,
- housing tenure and location preference.

Following this assessment, only six households were considered to be potential candidates for affordable housing in Stapleford. The remainder were excluded for a variety of reasons. Some were seeking to leave the parish, usually in search of better facilities, and some did not provide sufficient information to enable a reasonable assessment to be made. One household was not eligible for a larger affordable home than they already occupied. The remainder were seeking to address their housing needs through the open market. This particularly applied to older people looking to downsize.

The remainder of this section sets out the overall findings regarding those found to be in need of affordable housing in Stapleford. It should be noted that the results are based on those households completing the Housing Needs Survey. In practice, the total level of housing need (set out in the Summary and Recommendation section) is usually greater due to the addition of Housing Register data. The composition of the households from the two sources may, and often does, vary.

### **Local Connection to Stapleford**

#### **Residence and family connections**

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they currently live in Great Shelford or whether they had family connections to the parish. Table 4 reveals that all but one of the responding households live in the parish. This is not surprising as the survey was only distributed to parish addresses. Those living outside of the parish were dependent on 'word of mouth' about the survey from family, friends or work colleagues. The Housing Register,

considered later, is a better source of need from non-residents. Of the remaining five households, three had lived in the parish for over 15 years.

Table 4: Length of time living in the village

	Frequency
Less than 1 year	0
1-5 years	1
5-10 years	0
10-15 years	1
More than 15 years	3
Don't live in parish	1
Total	6

Five out of the six households also have family living in the parish. In all cases this includes parents. This is because most of the households are relatively young, have been brought up in the village, and, are still living with their parents.

### Household Composition

The survey sought to understand the gender, age and status of those who might potentially live in any affordable housing built as a result of this survey.

#### Number of people who will make up the household

Table 5 sets out the number of people making up each household. Most would be small – one or two person households. These are generally young households looking to leave the parental home and gain some independence. There is one young family with three children seeking a larger home.

Table 5: Number of people in the household

	Frequency	No of people
1 person	3	3
2 people	2	4
3 people	0	0
4 people	0	0
5 people	1	5
6 people	0	0
7 people	0	0
Not stated	0	0
Total	6 households	12 people

**Gender and Age**

*Table 6: Age profile of residents*

	Frequency
Under 16	3
16 - 24 years	2
25 - 29 years	5
30 - 39 years	1
40 - 49 years	1
50 - 54 years	0
55 - 59 years	0
60 - 64 years	0
Over 65 years	0
Not stated	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12 people</b>

The new households would be split equally between males and females. The age profile, as already noted, would be fairly young as most households comprise young adults seeking to leave the parental home. There is one family with three children.

**Status**

Table 7 shows the economic status of potential householders. All bar one of the adults are in employment.

*Table 7: Status of people in the household*

	Frequency
Employed	8
Unemployed	1
Economically inactive	0
Student	0
Child	3
Retired	0
Not stated	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12 people</b>

The survey results highlight the difference between those seeking affordable housing and those seeking market solutions to their housing issues. Those seeking affordable housing are young and in employment. However, they do not have an income/ housing equity combination that would allow them to buy outright. In contrast, many of those seeking to solve their housing issues through the market are retired and seeking to downsize. They have sufficient housing equity but may struggle to find suitable accommodation in the parish due to the predominance of larger homes.

## Property Type, Size and Tenure

The survey allowed respondents to indicate the type (e.g. house, bungalow, flat, etc.), size (in terms of number of bedrooms) and tenure they would prefer. However, in concluding what type, size and tenure of properties should actually be built, this report's recommendations are based on actual need rather than respondent aspirations. This analysis has been done by reference to South Cambridgeshire District Council's Lettings Policy Document.<sup>19</sup> The results are presented in the next section.

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

This report has been informed by primary data (the Housing Needs Survey) and secondary data (local house prices, Census, Housing Register). The report has identified a significant affordable housing need in Great Shelford parish.

### Pre-Existing Evidence from the Housing Register

The local Housing Register was searched for households in need of affordable housing who either live in Stapleford or have a local connection to the Parish. There are 25 households on the Register that meet these criteria.<sup>20</sup> Only six of these households actually live in Stapleford. The remainder will qualify for a local connection to the parish through family, employment or previous residence.

This data has been combined with the results of this survey in order to calculate overall need.

The properties that would need to be built and then let out through a Housing Association to accommodate those households on the Housing Register are as follows<sup>21</sup>:

1 bed		2 bed		3 bed		4 bed		5+ bed		Total
F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	
9	5	8	1	2						25

### Findings from the Housing Needs Survey

The Housing Needs Survey conducted in Stapleford identified six households in need of affordable housing. Only one of these households stated that they were already on the Housing Register and has therefore been excluded from the table below.

<sup>19</sup> 'Lettings Policy Document', South Cambridgeshire District Council, 2015

<sup>20</sup> Housing Register data provided by South Cambridgeshire DC, May 2016. IT issues mean SCDC are not currently able to provide more up to date data. This does create a significant time gap between the two data sources.

<sup>21</sup> Codes used are F (Flat), H (House) and B (Bungalow)

The only household that would require a rented property from a Housing Association is already on the Housing Register. The survey has therefore found no additional need for affordable rented accommodation:

1 bed		2 bed		3 bed		4 bed		5+ bed		Total
F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	
										0

A further five households were considered suitable candidates for shared ownership as follows:

1 bed		2 bed		3 bed		4 bed		5+ bed		Total
F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	
2		2		1						5

**Open market housing**

The primary purpose of a Housing Needs Survey is to identify need for affordable housing. However, the survey does provide an opportunity to collect broader housing needs within the community. In practice, the identification of market housing need is probably less comprehensive as some households will not see the relevance of the survey. Nevertheless, the survey does give an insight into market demands and, usefully, illustrates the differences between affordable and market housing demand.

The survey identified five households with a clear interest in seeking an owner occupied property in the parish. In one case this was a family in private rented accommodation seeking their own home. In the other four cases the households were all retired and seeking to downsize to a bungalow. Affordability is not likely to be an issue but availability may be.

**Conclusion**

In aggregate, there 30 households identified as being in need of affordable housing who either live in, or have a local connection to, Stapleford:

1 bed		2 bed		3 bed		4 bed		5+ bed		Total
F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	F/H	B	
11	5	10	1	3						30

**Recommendation**

To fulfil all current and immediate housing need in Stapleford, 30 new affordable homes would have to be built. This is larger than a typical rural exception site in Cambridgeshire. However, schemes are usually designed to be smaller than the estimated need to improve the chances of all homes being allocation to a household with a local connection.

Furthermore, the scale, design and location of any scheme will need to adhere to the planning policy contained within the Local Development Framework and draft Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire District Council on rural exception sites. Further discussions between the parish council, Hastoe Housing Association and South Cambridgeshire District Council should help inform the proposals for any potential scheme and to ensure that local lettings are maximised.



## APPENDIX 1: CHOICE BASED LETTINGS AND LOW COST HOME OWNERSHIP

Most people access affordable housing through either the Choice Based Lettings or Low Cost Home Ownership schemes. These prioritise people with the greatest level of need. Rural exception sites differ in that they prioritise local connections to a parish over level of need.

### Choice Based Lettings



Home-Link is the Choice Based Lettings scheme for the Cambridge sub-region. Choice Based Lettings aims to make the application process for affordable rented housing easier and to give people more choice about where they live. Housing is allocated on a 'needs basis'. In other words, those people that have the greatest level of need and have been in need for the longest time are given priority. Everybody on the Housing Register is assessed and placed into a band of need. Band A is the greatest level of need. Band D is the lowest.

The scheme means there is just one Housing Register for the Cambridge sub region with only one form to complete. When applicants are accepted onto the Register they are told what Band they have been assigned to, what size and types of property they can apply for and which areas they can apply in. Generally people can apply for properties within the Local Authority in which they reside. If the person has a local connection to other areas (through, for example, work) they may be able to apply in these areas as well. A small proportion of properties in every Local Authority are set aside for applicants living anywhere in the Cambridge sub region.

A distinctive feature of rural exception sites is that they have a 'local connection' condition attached to all affordable dwellings in perpetuity. This means that priority will always be given to people with a local connection to the parish even when their level of need is assessed to be lesser than other potential applicants.

### Low Cost Home Ownership



Ownership'.

**bpha**, the government-appointed Help to Buy Agent, responsible for marketing all low cost home ownership schemes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, offers a Shared Ownership scheme called 'Help to Buy Shared

People buy a share in a property built by a housing association and pay a subsidised rent on the part that they do not own. They can buy an initial share of between 25% and 75% of the property and pay rent on the remaining share.

In some shared ownership schemes, the householder can buy additional shares until they own the property outright. This is known as 'staircasing'. However, on rural exception sites ownership is limited to 80% to ensure the dwellings remain 'affordable' in perpetuity. Again, priority is given to people with a local connection to the parish.

**APPENDIX 2 – PRE-APPLICATION ARCHAEOLOGICAL PLANNING ADVICE  
FOR LAND BETWEEN HAVERHILL ROAD AND HINTON WAY**

**PRE-APPLICATION ARCHAEOLOGICAL PLANNING ADVICE FOR:  
Land between Haverhill Road and Hinton Way, Stapleford**

NGR TL 4770 5272

**Description and setting of the Proposal Area**

This 33.7 hectare development proposal area lies approximately 5.5km to the southeast of the historic core of Cambridge on undulating chalk downland (Zig Zag formation) at an elevation of between 40m and 30m AOD. Visible on some aerial photographs, a small chalk knoll lies in the centre of the area. The River Granta (not shown) lies approximately 930m to the south of the southern leg of the proposal area roughly 900m east of its confluence with the River Cam or Granta to the west of the railway.



Location of the Proposed Development Area

## Archaeological Character

Currently in use as arable land, the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record indicates that the proposal area is surrounded by a wealth of historic environment evidence comprising designated heritage assets of Listed Buildings (LBs) and nationally important archaeological evidence designated as Scheduled Monuments (SMs). Also, a rich array of non-designated archaeological sites are known from the area. While no designated heritage assets occur within the proposal area, its southern leg lies just under 400m north of Stapleford Conservation Area.

### *Scheduled Monuments*

A relatively high proportion of sites designated as scheduled monuments occur in the area. Clockwise from the north:

Worsted Street, the NW-SE Cambridge to Haverhill section of the long distance Roman Road *Via Devana* between Colchester and Chester (Margary Road number 24) lies 2.2km to the north (National Heritage List England, NHLE, reference 1003263).

Little Trees Hill Neolithic Causewayed Enclosure and Bowl Barrow (NHLE 1011717) and the Iron Age Wandlebury Multivallate Hillfort, Iron Age cemetery and 17<sup>th</sup> Century formal garden remains (NHLE 1009395) 700m and 1.3km to the northeast respectively.

Wormwood Hill (Bronze Age) tumulus (NHLE 1006904 ) and Neolithic Longbarrow and later enclosures (NHLE 1020845) lie 1.6 and 2.8km roughly eastwards of the proposal area.

Neolithic Causewayed Enclosure, Great Shelford (NHLE 1452825) lies 2km to the southwest at the edge of the floodplain of the River Cam or Granta. The setting of this asset is dislocated from the proposal area as it occurs west of the built-up village area of Great Shelford.

An extensive area of cropmarked site evidence (18ha) that morphologically denotes Iron Age and Roman settlement and is partly scheduled (NHLE 1006891) lies 1.5km to the northwest.

### *Listed Buildings*

Two grand houses were built in Foxhill Plantation to the immediate north of the proposal area in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

Galewood and Pinewood and the Towers (NHLE 1127822) Grade II House, 1908, by William Flockhart (c.1850-1913) in Arts and Crafts style. 300m north of the area.

Middlefield and Garden Wall (NHLE 1317370) Grade II House, 1908 by Lutyens for the legal scholar Henry Bond. 150m north of the proposal area

Other Listed Buildings also occur at the edge of Stapleford including the Medieval Church of St Andrew (Grade II\* NHLE 1165349) roughly 600m south west of the southern leg of the proposal area.

These designated assets alone indicate the rich texture of prehistoric to medieval archaeology occurring within the vicinity of the site, attesting to the use of higher chalk hills as the location for prehistoric burial monuments, communal monuments and defensive ringworks, while the lower ground towards the river became a focus of long term rural settlement from before the Roman occupation of Britain to the Medieval period. The formation of nucleated villages in the late Saxon period in favourable locations persist as expanding villages in the modern landscape.

### *Non-designated heritage assets*

This is not a desk-based assessment showing all heritage assets but presents a selection of data from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). Individual reference are not shown for all the remains as they are too numerous for present needs. Their character and significance is duly described:

A record of an Anglo-Saxon burial (CHER ref MCB9838) placed in Foxhill Plantation between Middlefield and Galewood (see LBs above) requires correction as its published description indicates that it was found by the road (not named) at the Golf Links. Presumably this is a reference to Gog Magog Golf Links, the pavilion of which is present on the 1926 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition OS map in the present club house location and the links showing on the 1913 OS map series. A second reference to a cemetery is also wrongly located but indicates the road name: Group of skeletons found on the Gog Magog Hills, beside the Worsted Street in the C18. (MCB 9859) Salzman L.F. (ed), 1938, *The Victoria County History of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*. Volume 1, 310. This evidence can therefore be discounted for the purposes of this advice note, but may show on future heritage appraisals if it remains uncorrected.

Between the proposal area and north of Babraham Road evidence of earlier prehistoric lithic axe, flint tool finds and scatters and burial sites is consistent with the known use of the Gog Magog Hills by prehistoric communities who developed communal and funerary monuments some of which have designated status. Similar evidence is also known from excavations at the Babraham Park and Ride site and more recently off Worts' Causeway.

Evaluation fieldwork and non-intrusive prospection to the west of the proposal area, on land between Granhams Road and Hinton Way, revealed extensive areas of field systems, burials and settlement areas of Bronze Age to Roman date. These sites extend areas of occupation eastwards from numerous excavated sites further west in the Addenbrookes landscape where developments for the Biomedical Campus and Great Kneighton enabled significant archaeological excavations to reveal complicated patterns of occupation between the early Bronze Age until the end of the Roman period in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. The evidence from these excavations is currently being prepared for publication.

Granham's Farm, 850m to the west of the proposal area, is located on a former late Saxon/early Medieval Manor with a large double moated enclosure.

Pillboxes are known from the edges of the development area and north of Stapleford. They form part of the WWII GHQ Defence Line, now infilled, extending southeastwards from Cherry Hinton. This deep anti-tank ditch and bank is known from Luftwaffe air photo and RAF 1940 air photos and can also be seen on the earliest Google Earth images (1945) for the area. A 320m long section of the line of the GHQ ditch crosses the western end of the proposal area and corners eastwards for 200m against the southern field boundary before heading southwards out of the area. Where excavated at Worts' Causeway, the ditch was 5.5m wide and over 2m deep.

## **Policy**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, revised 2018) sets out Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied through the planning system to achieve sustainable development. Government advice is that the NPPF should be read as a whole, including its footnotes and annexes.

Chapter 16 *Conserving and Enhancing the historic environment* sets out policies to achieve the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, indicating that heritage assets, whether protected by statutory designation (e.g. scheduled monuments, listed buildings, parks and gardens or conservation areas) or non-designated, are "an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations" (paragraph 184).

Paragraph 189 sets out the need for applicants to "describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting". It also indicates that a field evaluation may be necessary for sites that have, or have potential to include, heritage assets, and for applicants to provide a proportionate level of detail on these assets that is sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on their significance. Footnote 63 states "Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets."

## **CHET Recommendation**

Owing to an absence of investigation within the proposal area, we know little of its archaeological character except that it sits in an archaeologically rich area of downland chalk – a favourable local for prehistoric occupation.

Given the proximity of the proposal area to numerous designated heritage assets, any planning submission should include assessments of the setting of these assets and Stapleford Conservation area, giving consideration to how these may be harmed and/or ameliorated by proposals put forward in any development scheme within the area.

Historic England should be directly consulted for an opinion on the scoping of an assessment of the setting of designated sites and monuments. We recommend that the guidance presented here is followed: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/>

Evidence of the archaeological content and character of the proposal area should be obtained from non-intrusive and physical works (evaluation trenching and fieldwalking) and be presented in any planning application submitted to the planning authority. Consideration of the nature, extent, date, condition and significance of new archaeological evidence will be needed so that an informed decision can be made regarding proposed changes to the historic environment and to enable their suitable future management.

A brief for the pre-determination evaluation of the site can be obtained from this office upon request as can the CHET service charge for that phase of work.

Kasia Gdaniec  
Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET)

20<sup>th</sup> September 2019



