



Stapleford and Great Shelford

Neighbourhood Plan 2024 – 2041

Made version October 2025



Prepared by Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan steering group on behalf of
Stapleford Parish Council and Great Shelford Parish Council

Foreword

Neighbourhood planning gives communities a role in the development and future of their local area. The Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan does this for the whole of our combined parish area over the period to 2041. Its vision statement and 20 planning policies have been created on behalf of Stapleford and Great Shelford Parish Councils by a steering group of residents and parish councillors and shaped by community and stakeholder engagement from 2022 to 2024.

This is the made (adopted) Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan. Our planning policies carry the same weight as those in South Cambridgeshire District Council's 2018 Local Plan and will be used when reviewing all planning applications, big and small, coming forward in our area.

It is important to emphasise that neighbourhood planning is about creating sustainable communities, not about preventing development or reinventing the wheel. Consequently, the policies you will find in our Plan fill gaps in, and add local knowledge to, existing national and regional policies to ensure that Stapleford and Great Shelford's specific needs are not overlooked in planning decisions. Section 1 of this report categorises these needs; Section 2 seeks to address them in policy terms.

Acknowledgements

Producing a Neighbourhood Plan is an enormous community effort. The main body of work in this Plan has been created since early 2022 but I am indebted to all those involved in formative work from 2016-19. Time and energy are precious commodities, so for the residents and parish councillors in the steering group to give them – free of charge – to the Neighbourhood Plan over several years is an extraordinarily generous act: thank you so very much.

Logistical support from our Parish Council Clerks underpins all we have been able to achieve. We would also not be where we are now without professional advice from Rachel Hogger MRTPI, formerly of Cambridgeshire ACRE, who has guided us through the complexities of planning policy with expertise and enthusiasm. She is inspirational in her commitment to community-led planning.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has shared with the steering group their wishes, worries and wants for the future of Stapleford and Great Shelford, who has taken part in our surveys and consultations, and who has encouraged us to keep going. Together, we are shaping the place where we live – for the better.

Jenny Flynn

Chair, Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan steering group

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Section I

1. Introduction

What is this document?

- 1.1 This is the made version of the Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan (S&GS NP). The NP covers the period 2024 to 2041 and applies to the area of land falling in the two parishes of Stapleford and Great Shelford, referred to in this report as the 'neighbourhood area' (see Map 1). The planning policies in the S&GS NP will be used by the local planning authority in the determination of planning applications that come forward in the neighbourhood area.
- 1.2 As the 'qualifying body' (see glossary), Stapleford Parish Council was responsible for the production of the S&GS NP, but work was undertaken collaboratively with Great Shelford Parish Council. The two Parish Councils assigned day to day work on the production of the NP to a steering group, comprising residents and parish councillors from both parishes.

What is a neighbourhood plan?

- 1.3 A neighbourhood plan is a document containing planning policies which will be used by the local planning authority when planning applications coming forward in the neighbourhood area are being considered. Our local planning authority is the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSP), which is made up of South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) and Cambridge City Council.
- 1.4 Neighbourhood planning is a legal right granted in the Localism Act 2011 which allows communities to shape their development by creating their own planning policies. It cannot stop development. Instead, it is about communities saying what they want and need from growth in their immediate area, protecting what is good, fixing what needs improving, and filling gaps in what is missing.
- 1.5 The planning policies in Section II of this report become relevant when a planning application concerning land in the neighbourhood area is submitted to the local planning authority. The scope of influence of a planning policy is therefore restricted to development that requires a planning application.
- 1.6 The planning policies are important to all stakeholders in a community (e.g. residents, businesses, local landowners and community organisations) since they influence what development can come forward, how it comes forward and what (e.g. open spaces) should be protected from development. Planning policies can also influence how the impacts of development on a community and the natural environment are managed and mitigated.
- 1.7 However, outside the scope of planning applications, the planning policies do not affect landowner rights and responsibilities. For example, land designated as a Protected Village Amenity Area or a Local Green Space remains private property (with no public access) if it was in private ownership prior to the designation, and

landowner responsibilities in terms of its management do not change. The only change is that the development potential of the designated land is constrained.

What are the requirements of a neighbourhood plan?

- 1.8 There are certain requirements, referred to as basic conditions, that all neighbourhood plans are tested against as part of an independent examination. The planning policies need to:
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan (currently South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan)
 - contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development
 - be appropriate having regard to national policy and guidance (such as the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 – see glossary)
 - be in accordance with environmental and human rights legislation.

Why did we prepare a neighbourhood plan for the two parishes of Stapleford and Great Shelford?

- 1.9 The neighbourhood plan-making process is entirely optional. We could have, for example, let our existing and emerging Local Plans and GCSP Officers direct our future. But at a time of enormous change across our region – which, in the overall scheme of things, has barely begun – this would have been a missed opportunity to add a level of granularity and local knowledge that can really make a difference to planning decisions.
- 1.10 The S&GS NP sought to enable the people who know and love our area to set out a positive, shared vision for how we want it to develop and to ensure that identified local needs are not overlooked in the rapid economic growth which our wider region has been targeted to deliver. This objective has been achieved: policies in our made NP now have equal weight when assessing all planning decisions in our area to those in the Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.11 The made version of our NP reflects learnings from multiple periods of community and stakeholder engagement and is informed by a suite of technical evidence. See Chapter 3 for further details. Additional highlights from the development of our neighbourhood plan are available at www.greatshelfordparishcouncil.gov.uk/SGSNPlan.

Formal consultation, examination, referendum and the adoption of our neighbourhood plan

- 1.12 The formal pre-submission public consultation on the NP was carried out in March–April 2024. The NP was submitted to SCDC in November 2024, which conducted further formal public consultation in December 2024–February 2025.
- 1.13 An independent examiner was appointed to examine the S&GS NP, and the Examiner's Report was received in May 2025. A referendum version of the NP was then prepared, taking on board modifications recommended by the examiner in his report and some minor updates.
- 1.14 The referendum was held on 4 September 2025 and residents were asked to vote on whether the S&GS NP should be used by SCDC to determine planning applications in

the parishes of Stapleford and Great Shelford. 95.04 % of those who voted were in favour of its use, and 4.96% of those who voted were against its use. The NP was successful at its referendum as more than half of those who voted were in favour of it being used to determine planning applications. SCDC made (adopted) the Stapleford and Great Shelford NP at its meeting of full Council on 2 October 2025.

- 1.15 This means that when a planning application is submitted in our neighbourhood area, the planning decision must be taken in accordance with the development plan (the S&GS NP, together with the adopted Local Plan and the adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan), unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.

2. About Stapleford and Great Shelford

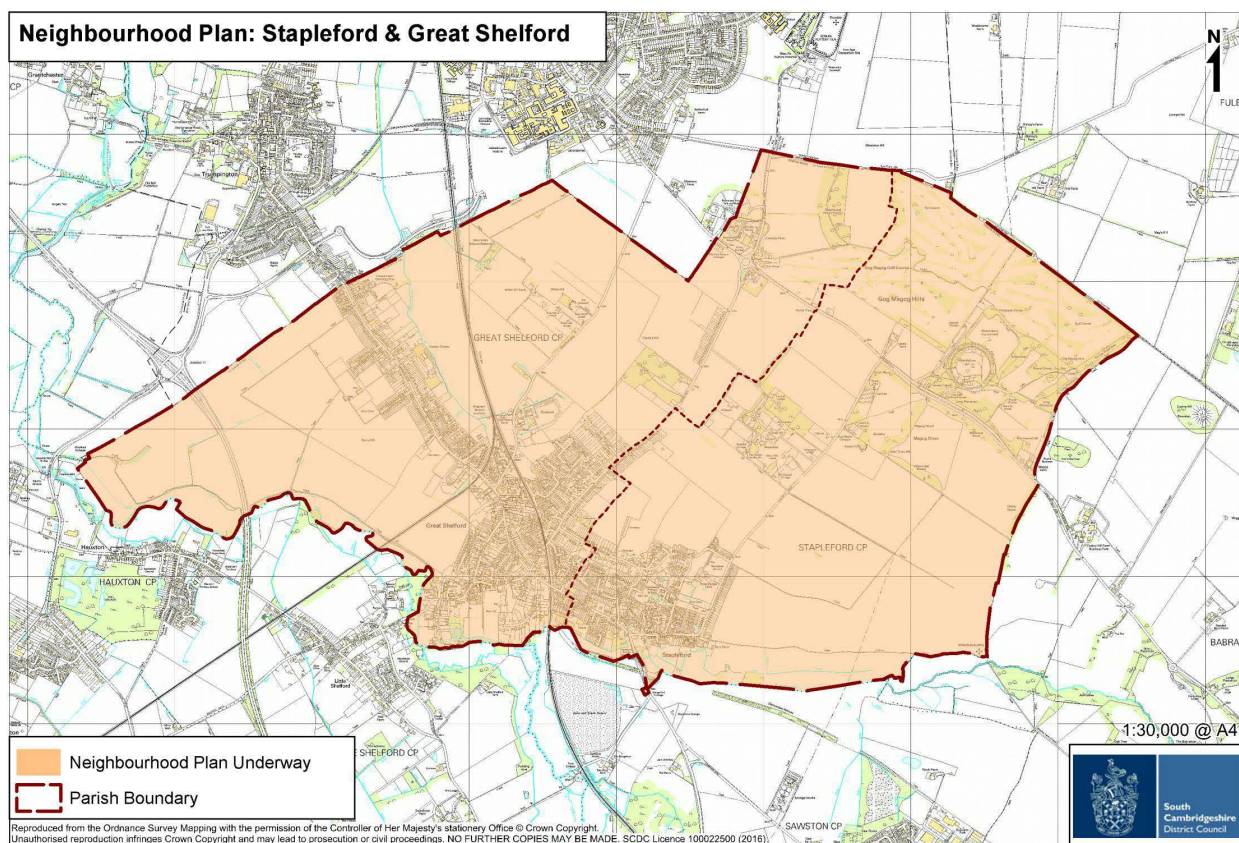
- 2.1 This chapter provides an overview of Stapleford and Great Shelford parishes as context for the more detailed data and planning policies in subsequent chapters of the report.

The neighbourhood area

- 2.2 The adjoining villages of Stapleford and Great Shelford lie in the district of South Cambridgeshire and are approximately 6.5km (4 miles) as the crow flies from Great St Mary's Church in Cambridge's city centre.
- 2.3 Map 1 depicts the designated neighbourhood area within its immediate surroundings. The neighbourhood area equates precisely with Stapleford parish (roughly to the east) and Great Shelford parish (roughly to the west). Most of it comprises rural, green belt agricultural land.
- 2.4 Wandlebury Country Park and the Gog Magog Hills form the northeastern and eastern boundaries, with those to the north and northwest defined by Cambridge's City limits. Settlement is concentrated to the south, where it is contained by the Rivers Granta and Cam and their meadow and pasture. A number of villages surround Great Shelford and Stapleford, including Sawston, Little Shelford and Whittlesford.
- 2.5 Stapleford has its own primary school and affiliated nursery, a Spar shop, two pubs, Stapleford Granary (an arts centre with its own café), a builder's merchant, and a small number of other businesses. The Gog Farm Shop is to the east of the main settled area. Great Shelford has a wider range of amenities, including a primary school, small business centre, public library, pharmacy, healthcare centre, post office, several pubs, cafes and restaurants, a large garden centre (Scotsdales), and a number of independent and national chain grocers. Although agriculture and farming no longer predominate, they are still present in the villages' economy and make a substantial contribution to the sense of living in a rural area. For access to employment and a wider range of activities and services, Stapleford and Great Shelford residents generally have to go elsewhere.
- 2.6 The neighbourhood area is connected to Cambridge via road and rail links, public buses and, just outside its borders, park-and-ride sites. In addition, there is a choice of active travel options. This includes the national cycle network route 11 that runs through the neighbourhood area, where it connects Great Shelford to Cambridge (including Addenbrooke's Hospital) via an off-road route adjacent to the railway line. Shelford Station is one stop and around 5 minutes south of Cambridge on the West Anglia Main Line to London Liverpool St Station; trains typically stop at Shelford hourly in each direction off peak, half hourly at peak times. Two main bus services provide a regular link during the working day from the neighbourhood area to Addenbrooke's Hospital and Cambridge. Driving at off-peak times, Cambridge can be reached by car in around 16 minutes via the A1301 or A1307; rush hour travel times are considerably longer. The M11 cuts through the far west of the neighbourhood

area and connects the villages to the north and south of the UK via junctions 10 and 11.

- 2.7 Of particular note, immediately to the north of the neighbourhood area is Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC), the City's largest employment site with around 20,000 workers. This single site combines biomedical research, patient care and education, and includes Addenbrooke's Hospital, Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, and pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca's global headquarters. The Campus is projected to expand significantly over the period to 2050 and drive demand for residential accommodation and associated infrastructure
- 2.8 South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan includes Policy E/2 'Cambridge Biomedical Campus Extension' which allocates land to extend the site (see Chapter 3 for more detail). The S&GS NP recognises this existing planning policy context, but its scope of influence does not extend to directing the growth of strategic employment sites.



Map 1: Stapleford and Great Shelford neighbourhood area

Land area and landscape

- 2.9 The neighbourhood area sits within 'East Anglian Chalk National Character Area 87'. Chalk grassland and wooded hilltops contrast with a river corridor and its bordering meadows and pastures, expanses of rolling arable hills, and flat, lowland arable areas with extensive views over open countryside. Notable local characteristics include settled hilltop estates, enclosed farmland pastures, water meadows and riverside pastures, and historic country parks. See Map 5 in Section II of this report.

- 2.10 The countryside surrounding the settled areas of Stapleford and Great Shelford provides a setting for the villages, separates them from the City of Cambridge and is a resource for public recreation and enjoyment. The neighbourhood area also includes some sites of great value to wider communities. For example: Wandlebury Country Park is of historic significance and a recreational resource for the population of Cambridge and beyond; Gog Magog Golf Course is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest to protect its relatively rare chalk grassland habitat; and Local Nature Reserves (e.g. Stapleford Pit) and Magog Down champion and conserve species-rich chalk grasslands.
- 2.11 The neighbourhood area also has attractive expanses of countryside which are not accessible to the public, particularly alongside watercourses. Off-road routes from the villages into their surrounding countryside are limited.

Flood risk

- 2.12 Flood risk arises from the River Cam, the River Granta, the Hobson's Brook corridor, and from surface water and groundwater:
- fluvial flooding: areas at risk follow the paths of the River Cam/Granta, which align with the southern boundaries of the two parishes. Flood risk also arises from the corridor of Hobson's Brook
 - surface water: risk tends to follow the flow paths of the River Cam/Granta and Hobson's Brook. However, pockets of land at risk of surface water flooding are located throughout Great Shelford parish and throughout Stapleford village
 - groundwater: most parts of the neighbourhood area have only limited potential for groundwater flooding to occur, although there are areas of land in Great Shelford parish which have higher potential for groundwater flooding to occur to properties situated below ground level.
- 2.13 The Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) prepared in 2021 to inform strategic planning at the Greater Cambridge level, specifically the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, provides information and guidance on managing flood risk across the area. The Level 1 SFRA can be found at <https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/strategic-flood-risk-assessment/>
- 2.14 Flood mapping is contained in the appendices of SFRA. For example: appendix D1 shows areas of land at risk of flooding from the rivers; appendix D8 shows areas of land at risk of surface water flooding; and appendix D10 shows areas of land at risk of groundwater flooding. Areas of land at risk from flooding can also be looked up using the Environment Agency's mapping at <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/postcode>. Extracts from this are provided below.

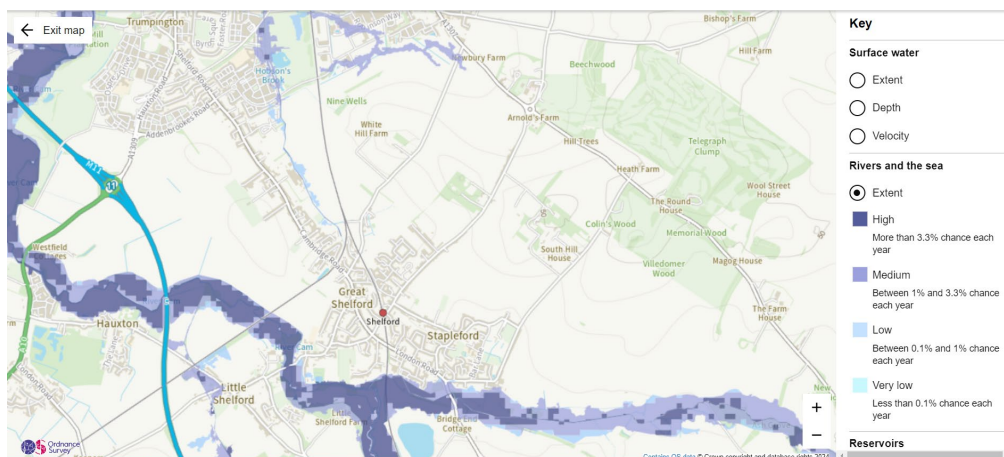


Figure 1: Fluvial flood risk in the S&GS NP area as per www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk

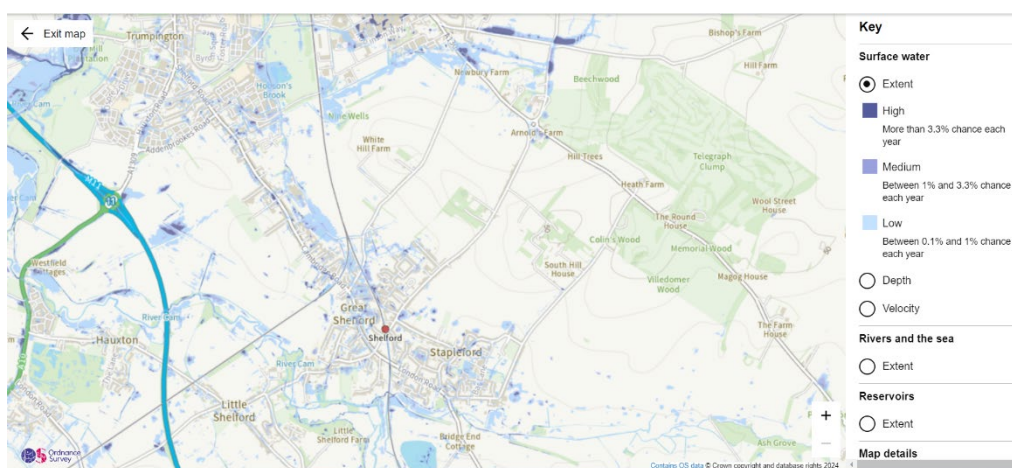


Figure 2: Surface water flood risk in S&GS areas as per www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk

- 2.15 Additional information about the land area and landscape of the neighbourhood area is available in Stapleford and Great Shelford Landscape Character Assessment 2019.

A brief history of the villages

- 2.16 The boundary between the two parishes meanders through part of the settled area such that, in some places, Stapleford and Great Shelford effectively coalesce. However, despite their co-location and shared amenities, each village retains an identity and history distinct from the other. An overview of their respective histories is provided below.

Stapleford

- 2.17 Stapleford was first mentioned in 956 when it was given the Latinised name of Stapelforda, although what is now the parish was inhabited long before this. Wandlebury Ring, for example, is an Iron Age hill fort, originally built in the 3rd century BC and rebuilt with a double bank and deepened inner ditch in the first century AD as a stronghold for the Iceni against the Belgae. Around 1,800 years ago, Wandlebury was occupied by Romans. On its northern edge is the Roman Road, which once stretched all the way to the main Roman settlement of Colchester. There

is no archaeological evidence to suggest that the Romans added much to the Iron Age fort that was already in existence.

- 2.18 By 1200 a legend about a ghostly warrior had become linked to the site, with the surrounding hills being named by the 1570s after the legendary giant, Gogmagog. A figure of this giant was cut into turf at Wandlebury ramparts in the 1620s and was still evident 100 years later. Today, parts of Wandlebury Country Park are designated a Scheduled Monument to protect important archaeological and historic features.
- 2.19 The village grew up around a small patch of gravel in the southwest corner of the parish, near a ford across the River Granta marked by a post (a staple) which gave the village its name. There were 20 peasants in 1086, increasing slowly to 235 in 1801. On the northwest side of the parish were some 60 acres of common land shared with Great Shelford and known as the Minglands. The Enclosure award of 1814 drew a boundary between the two parishes and split this common land between them. At the same time, a separate village green of around 30 acres in Stapleford, which included the village pond (part of which still exists) and land now occupied by Stapleford Community Primary School, was allotted to separate owners. Lower ground to the south of the parish continued to be used as arable land; higher ground, which had been open heathland since the Middle Ages, was laid out later in the 19th century as extensive timber plantations.
- 2.20 The opening of Shelford railway station in 1845 had a less significant impact on Stapleford than it did on Great Shelford. Stapleford was formerly crossed by the railway to Haverhill, which branched from the Liverpool St line south of the village. The line was opened in 1865 but closed in 1967 and is now dismantled, although the humped bridge where it passed under the road to Sawston still remains.
- 2.21 Growth of the village in the early 20th century was mainly driven by infilling along old streets. Several large houses were built in Mingle Lane and elsewhere in the village. Four substantial mansions were built on Foxhill soon after 1900, including Middlefield, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Until then, little building other than farmsteads had occurred away from the village.
- 2.22 The rate of development increased from 1950-70 and, by 1980, closely set new council housing, cul-de-sacs and crescents had covered almost all of the ancient closes of the village. Today, open land remains in the northeast quadrant of the village around Greenhedge Farm. In parts, notably along London Road and Mingle Lane, Stapleford and Great Shelford have become a single built-up area edged by extensive arable fields. Several buildings of historic significance endure, however, including: the grade II* listed St Andrew's Church, parts of which date from the early 12th century; Stapleford Hall (c. 1630); two mid-18th century cottages on Church Street; and the 19th century thatched former Slaughterhouse.
- 2.23 The history of Stapleford is more fully described in the *Victoria County History of Cambridgeshire*, Volume 8, 1982 pp. 227-238. More recent history, assembled from reports in the *Cambridge Chronicle*, appears in the *Stapleford Chronicle, 1770-1899*, by Mary Miller (1982). The history of the village as described in the minutes of the Parish Council is summarised in *Stapleford Matters, 1894-1994*, by Tony Doggett (1994).

Great Shelford

- 2.24 Early settlement occurred on water meadows linked to springs such as Nine Wells, on the lower slopes of White Hill, and around a crossing place over the River Cam where the river cuts through a narrow gap between the gravel terraces. Here lay the 'shallow ford' which gave the village its name ('Scelford'). This ford may have been the route by which travellers along the ancient Mare Way, southwest of Cambridge, crossed the Cam, moving eastwards to join the great Icknield Way.
- 2.25 The meadows were the origin of Great Shelford's modern 'Greens', such as High Green and Ashen Green. These wet lands limited expansion of the village, so Saxon and later mediaeval settlers retained them for grazing and looked towards higher chalky ground for arable fields. This helps to explain why, by 1000 AD, Great Shelford appears to have comprised two distinct settlements sharing the same name. One was built above the ford to the north of the church of St Mary the Virgin; the other was where land rises across the meadows to the northeast around Granham's Farm. This pattern of settlement and cultivation persisted until the early 19th century, while the two Great Shelfords slowly grew together as houses and farms were built along the edge of the meadow which separated them.
- 2.26 Over time, the shallow ford was replaced by two bridges, agricultural practices changed and roads were paved. Commonly held and worked land within the village was gradually enclosed, a process completed by the Enclosure Act of 1834. With land now owned by specific people, house building increased and was boosted again after 1845 with the coming of the railways. This signalled the beginning of the end of many of the open Greens, as new homes were built along Tunwells Lane, High Street and Woollards Lane, and between pre-existing roads and houses. At the turn of the century, more substantial homes were built within easy reach of the station for the growing middle classes of commercial and academic Cambridge, marking a considerable change in the social and employment profile of Great Shelford.
- 2.27 After the First World War, ribbon development spread along Cambridge Road and Hinton Way in particular, with long gardens but few garages as motor cars were not yet widely affordable. Cul-de-sacs and council housing were also features of the times. Little building occurred for a decade after the Second World War and, in a new era of greater planning control, more spur roads and a larger council estate (Macaulay Square and Avenue) were built. Infill building accelerated along ribbon roads and in the gardens of large houses.
- 2.28 Since the 1970s there has been considerable back land development, notably along Cambridge Road and the sheltered housing at Peacocks. Alongside this have been extensions, renovations and replacements of existing properties. Electrification of the Liverpool St line, opening of the M11 and the proximity of Stansted Airport have all increased the attractiveness of South Cambridgeshire in general, and Great Shelford in particular, as places to live. More recently, substantial growth of the life sciences sector northwest of the parish boundary has contributed to more through-traffic and is a growing external force for change.
- 2.29 Despite these pressures the village retains many vestiges of its past. For example: the church of St Mary the Virgin has changed little since it was rebuilt in 1307; several 16th century houses remain, notably De Freville Farm, Oak Cottage and Maris Farmhouse; and Shelford Festival, whose origins date back to mediaeval times, is

today a popular annual event raising money for local causes, having returned after a pause from 1939-93.

Population and household characteristics

- 2.30 Office for National Statistics' *Census 2021* estimated the population of Stapleford and Great Shelford as 6,541 individuals, 31% of whom lived in Stapleford and 69% in Great Shelford. This represented a population increase of 7.2% relative to 2011.
- 2.31 Table 1 summarises the most recent estimated age structure of the neighbourhood area's population, alongside 2011 Census figures. In 2011 the greatest proportion of this population was aged 45-64, accounting for 27.7% of the population. This remained the largest category in 2021 at 26.7% of the population and was followed in both years by those aged 25-44.
- 2.32 Between 2011 and 2021 the size of the older population rose noticeably, with increases of 11.7% and 33.5% in the 65-84 and 85+ age categories, respectively. There was also an increase in the younger working age population (25-44) and children, potentially indicating growth in families alongside the older population.

Table 1: Age structure of Stapleford and Great Shelford in 2011 and 2021

Age group	2011 (Census)		2021 (Census)		Change
0-14	1,042	17.1%	1,098	16.8%	+5.4%
14-24	540	8.8%	498	7.6%	-7.8%
25-44	1,413	23.1%	1,564	23.9%	+10.7%
45-64	1,690	27.7%	1,746	26.7%	+3.3%
65-84	1,192	19.5%	1,332	20.4%	+11.7%
85 and over	227	3.7%	303	4.6%	+33.5%
Total	6,104	-	6,541	-	7.2%

Source of data: Table 5-7 Stapleford and Great Shelford HNA (AECOM 2023)

- 2.33 Age structure varies between the two parishes. In 2021, Great Shelford had a greater proportion of the younger working age population (25-44) at 25.4%, compared to 20.4% in Stapleford. Great Shelford also had a greater proportion of the oldest individuals (aged 85+).
- 2.34 For context, it is useful to look at the neighbourhood area population structure alongside that of the district and the country as a whole. 2021 Census data show that Stapleford and Great Shelford had a smaller proportion of individuals aged 44 and under than either South Cambridgeshire or England. This was most evident in the 16-24 age category. The neighbourhood area also had a significantly higher proportion of its population aged 65+ than these comparator areas in 2021.
- 2.35 At the time of *Census 2021*, the combined villages' population lived across 2,945 dwellings, an increase of 6.9% from 2011. Just under 70% of households owned their own dwelling, 14.7% lived in socially rented properties and 15.2% in privately rented accommodation. Most people lived in large homes (3+ bedrooms) occupied by a single family unit and had at least one spare bedroom. That said, 31% of homes in 2021 were single person households, which suggests that a proportion of larger homes were significantly underoccupied.

- 2.36 Combining population, household and other socio-demographic data from *Census 2021* suggests that a 'typical' Stapleford and Great Shelford resident (based on modal data):
- is a white, UK national who speaks English as a first language
 - is aged 45-64
 - considers themselves to be in very good health
 - is well educated and employed in a professional occupation
 - owns their own home outright and lives as a single family unit in a semi-detached property with four or more bedrooms.
- 2.37 Population information clearly has a bearing on what housing might be needed in the neighbourhood area in future years. However, this stereotype masks a growing imbalance between availability and affordability in an area in which median house prices increased by 62.5% to £520,000 between 2012 and 2021. More detailed data are set out in *Stapleford and Great Shelford Housing Needs Assessment* (AECOM, March 2023), the ONS' *Census 2021* and in Chapter 6 of this report, where implications for planning policy are presented.

3. Context to our Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.1 This chapter provides:
- an overview of the wider planning policy context to the S&GS NP. This is important because our NP should add value to existing planning policies rather than address issues which are already covered elsewhere
 - an overview of key evidence that has informed the development of the NP.

Policy context

The South Cambridgeshire 2018 Local Plan

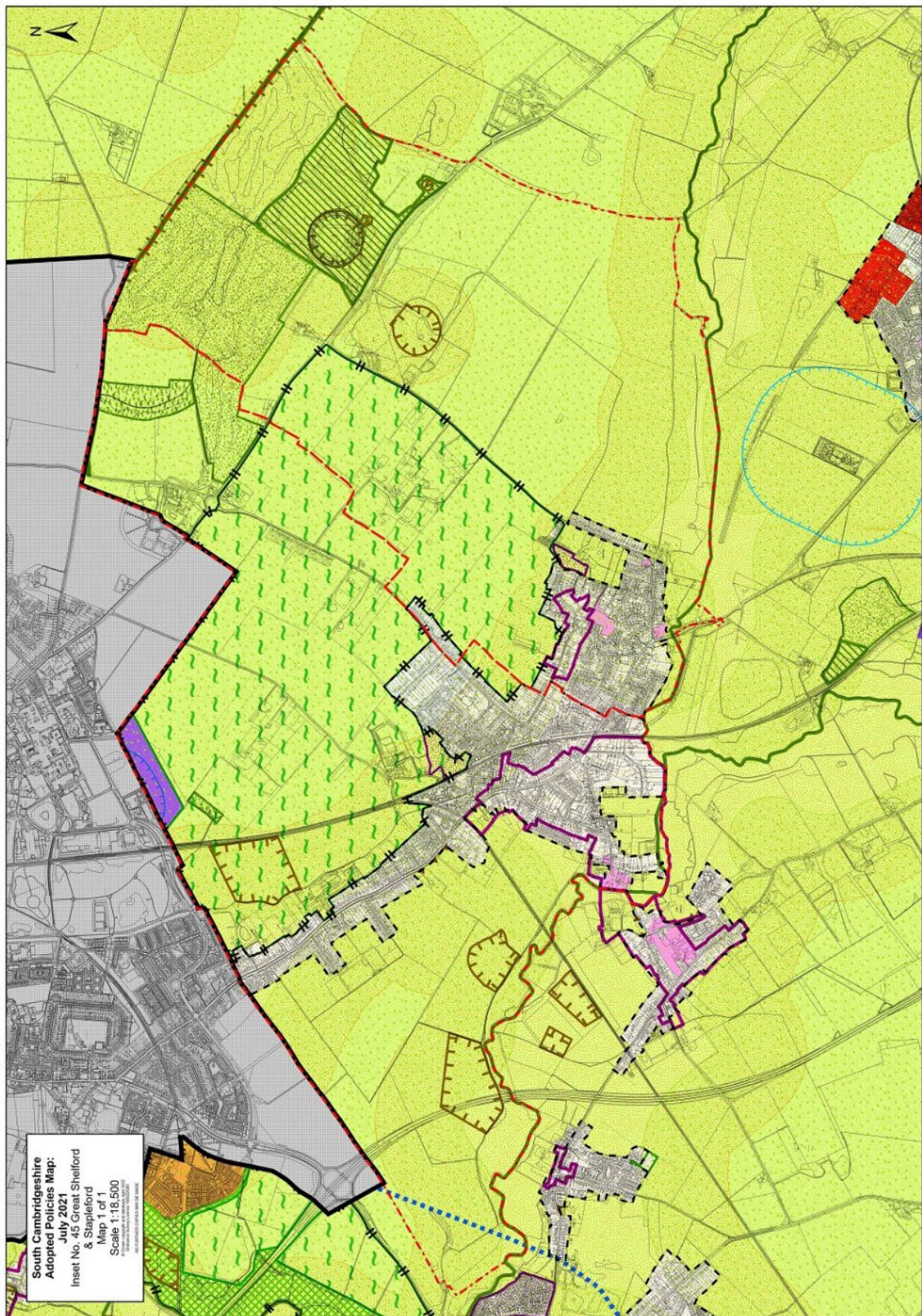
- 3.2 South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan includes a list of strategic policies for neighbourhood plans to consider. The spatial strategy set out across the two planning authority areas is for Cambridge to remain the focus of development (comprising 54% of the housing requirement of both Councils from 2011 to 2031). For South Cambridgeshire, the spatial strategy can be summarised as:
- maintaining a green belt around Cambridge with the intent of defining the urban edge
 - delivering development that will facilitate provision during 2011 to 2031 for 22,000 additional jobs to support the Cambridge cluster and 19,500 new homes, including affordable homes
 - focusing development in order of preference on (a) the edge of Cambridge (b) at new settlements, and (c) in the rural area at Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres.
- 3.3 South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan classifies Stapleford and Great Shelford as a Rural Centre (see below).
- 3.4 In preparing the S&GS NP, it was important to consider the full range of South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan policies applicable to our two parishes. The relevance of each planning policy to a planning application will depend on the nature and location of the development being proposed. A summary of the main policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan which have site-specific implications for the S&GS NP are set out below and shown on Map 2:
- Cambridge green belt. The S&GS neighbourhood area is dominated by the presence of the Cambridge green belt which abuts the built-up part of the villages and extends to the edge of the urban area of Cambridge. Broadly, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the green belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. However, Local Plan Policies NH/8, NH/9 and NH/10 set out the Council's approach to mitigating permitted development in the green belt, redevelopment of previously developed sites, infilling, and facilities for recreation.
 - Policy S/7: Development Frameworks. The 2018 Local Plan uses the term 'development frameworks' to define boundaries where policies for the built-up areas of settlements give way to policies for the countryside. There are two

development frameworks in the neighbourhood area: one enclosing Stapleford village and the other enclosing Great Shelford village.

- Policy S/8: Rural Centres. This identifies 'Great Shelford and Stapleford' as a Rural Centre where development will be permitted within the development frameworks. This is subject to adequate services, facilities and infrastructure being available or having the ability to be made available as a result of the development.
- Policy NH/5: Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance. This policy will apply to the following in the neighbourhood area: the two designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Gog Magog Golf Course and, along the neighbourhood area boundary, the Roman Road); three Local Nature Reserves (Nine Wells, Stapleford Pit and Beechwoods); three County Wildlife Sites (Wandlebury Country Park, the River Cam/Granta and Magog Down).
- Policy NH/11: Protected Village Amenity Areas (PVAAs). The 2018 Local Plan identifies six PVAAs in the neighbourhood area. These are: land surrounding the Church of St Mary the Virgin; land fronting south of Church Street (Great Shelford); land on the north of Church Street (Great Shelford) with Rectory Farm; playing fields at Stapleford Community Primary School; pond at Haverhill Road; Grove House, Bury Road.
- Policy NH/13: Important Countryside Frontages. The 2018 Local Plan identifies two Important Countryside Frontages along Cambridge Road looking west in two separate breaks in the building line. It is noted that these are difficult to decipher on Map 2.
- Policy NH/14: Heritage Assets. This policy applies to all heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens. As can be seen from Map 2, there are two conservation areas in the neighbourhood area: one in the historic core of Stapleford and the other in the historic core of Great Shelford. There are also six scheduled ancient monuments of archaeological interest in the neighbourhood area, three in Great Shelford parish ('Hill Farm', 'a causewayed enclosure to the west of Great Shelford' and a 'settlement complex north of Hauxton') and three in Stapleford parish ('Wandlebury Hillfort', 'Wormwood Hill tumulus' and 'a causewayed enclosure and bowl barrow at Little Trees Hill').
- Improved Landscaping Policies CSF/5. This is linked to Policy CSF/5 in the 2008 Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan, titled 'Enhancing landscape, biodiversity, recreation and public access in the Cambridge Southern Fringe – Policy CSF/5 Countryside Enhancement Strategy'. The policy applies to the area of land identified on the Proposals Map (in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan), referred to in the policy text as "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 policy commits SCDC to seek contributions toward the delivery of the strategy via development coming forward in the Cambridge Southern Fringe. The policy also specifies what should be included in the strategy, including requirements for landscape improvements and "new footpaths, cyclepaths and bridleways creating routes through the area and linking to Wandlebury Country Park/The Magog Down".
- Policy E/2: Cambridge Biomedical Campus Extension. This strategic policy specifically supports an extension to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) on land located at the northern edge of the S&GS neighbourhood area. This land is

identified on the Local Plan Policies Map and is marked in purple on Map 2 in this document. This land is adjacent to the existing campus (which currently all falls outside the S&GS neighbourhood area) and is allocated for employment (B1), higher education and sui-generis medical research uses). CBC is a key employment site in the district and is described as an international centre of excellence for patient care, biomedical research and healthcare education. It plays a local, regional and national role in providing medical facilities and medical research. Clause 2 in Policy E/2 includes a series (a to j) of criteria which development should meet, including:

- creating landscaped edges to the western, eastern and southern boundaries
- providing an appropriate setting for the Nine Wells Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- ensuring no adverse impact on the volume, pattern of flow or water quality of the chalk springs at Nine Wells and Hobson's Brook and Conduit
- not including pedestrian access from the site that would facilitate access to Nine Wells LNR
- having building heights which are no higher than those on the adjoining part of the CBC and which provide for a suitable transition with respect to the edge of settlement location.



Map 2: South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan site specific policy designations applicable to Stapleford and Great Shelford parishes (see key over page)

KEY

 South Cambridgeshire District Boundary	 Area Outside SCDC Boundary
 Neighbourhood Area Boundary for Neighbourhood Plan	 Area Action Plan Boundary (application to inset A,C,D,E,F)
Adopted Local Plan Policies	
 Conservation Area (Policy NG/14)	 Local Nature Reserve (Policy NH/5)
 Country Park (Policies CE/(1) & CSF/5(1a))	 Local Green Space (Policy NH/12)
 County Wildlife Site (Policy NH/5)	 Lordsbridge Consultation Area 1 (Policy TI/7)
 Development Frameworks (Policy S/7)	 Major Development Site (Policies CSF/3, NS/3, NW/4, SS/1, SS/2, SS/3 (1a), SS/3 (1b), SS/4, SS/5, SS/6, SS/7, SS/8)
 Employment Allocation (Policies E/2, E/3, E/4 & E/5)	 Protected Village Amenity Area (Policy NH/11)
 Green Belt (Policy S/4)	 Scheduled Ancient Monument (Policy NH/14)
 Housing Allocation (Policy H/1 (a-h))	 Site of Special Scientific Interest (Policy NH/5)
 Important Countryside Frontage (Policy H/1 (a-h))	 Special Policy Area (Policies E/1, E/6, E/7, E/8, H/2, H/3, H/4, H/5, H/6, H/7, NS/11, SC/1 (1a-c, 2d-e), TI/1, TI/6)
 Improved Landscaping (Policies CSF/5(1b-e) & CSF/5 (2f-m))	

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Site Specific Proposals Development Plan Document (Adopted July 2021) (Cambridgeshire County Council)

Allocations Areas

 Water Recycling Area
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Mineral Safeguarding Areas

 Mineral Safeguarding Area (Chalk)	 Mineral Safeguarding Area (Sand and Gravel)
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Consultation Area

 Mineral Allocation Area, Mineral Development Area, Waste Management Area and Transport Infrastructure Area	 Water Recycling Area
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Emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan

- 3.5 Cambridge City Council and SCDC are working together, via the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, to create a joint Local Plan for the two areas, collectively known as Greater Cambridge, for the period up to 2041. This Plan is at an early stage of development and there are no confirmed proposals for building anything anywhere yet. An initial evidence base, findings and development strategy options assessment was published in November 2020, followed by public consultation on 'First Proposals' in November and December 2021. The S&GS neighbourhood area is included in the First Proposals 'Rural Southern Cluster' designation. As part of the strategy for this designation, a proposal is included for the release of green belt land and the allocation of a housing site at land between Hinton Way and Mingle Lane. The site is 10 hectares with a maximum capacity limited to 100 homes.

Community engagement and technical evidence that has informed the Neighbourhood Plan

Community engagement

- 3.6 Work presented in this Plan has been informed by the findings of extensive community engagement work. This comprised:
- an initial survey of residents' broad planning-related priorities, undertaken by the NP steering group in April to June 2022. The results were used as a springboard for developing ideas and collating input from a larger sample
 - mid-term community consultation undertaken in April to May 2023. This sought residents' views on a NP vision, together with draft objectives setting out what this vision would mean for different planning-related topics. The consultation also included more specific questions for some topics where it would be helpful to inform NP content
 - a community and stakeholder exercise undertaken from 11 March through to 30 April 2024 under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations¹
 - a further period of public engagement on the submission version of the Plan, run by GCSP from 18 December 2024 to 12 February 2025 under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.
- 3.7 The detail of all community engagement work undertaken in the preparation of the S&GS NP is reported in the Consultation Statement, a publicly available document which was submitted to GCSP alongside the submission of the NP. Reports on earlier engagement work (the April-June 2022 consultation and the April-May 2023 consultation) are available to view here:
www.greatshelfordparishcouncil.gov.uk/sgsnplan/neighbourhood-plan-consultations/

Technical evidence

- 3.8 Landscape and settlement character:
- 'Stapleford and Great Shelford Landscape Character Assessment', completed in 2019 by Sophie Smith Ltd²
 - 'Stapleford and Great Shelford Design Codes and Guidelines', completed in 2023 by AECOM

¹ Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

² Note an addendum to this was prepared in 2024 to undertake a minor update to the landscape character area map

- NP-level views assessment – undertaken initially in 2019 as part of the 2019 Landscape Character Assessment and updated in 2023 and 2024 by the NP steering group and in light of community engagement work.

3.9 Open spaces:

- NP-level open spaces assessment.

3.10 Housing:

- 'Housing Needs Assessment', completed in 2023 by AECOM
- 'Great Shelford Housing Needs' report, Cambridgeshire ACRE 2017
- 'Stapleford Housing Needs report', Cambridgeshire ACRE 2017.

3.11 Transport:

- Great Shelford Parish Council Transport Infrastructure Policy and associated work.

4. Identifying key issues

An overview of the neighbourhood area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

- 4.1 The NP steering group used feedback from early engagement work alongside other evidence to build an initial consensus on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the neighbourhood area. This was updated in September 2024 in light of (a) comments received during Regulation 14 consultation (b) government plans for a substantial expansion of Cambridge's biomedical and housing sectors, and (c) continued evolution of major infrastructure projects affecting the neighbourhood area.
- 4.2 Strengths:
- the neighbourhood area is an attractive location within close proximity of Cambridge City
 - village character: both villages have a strong rural setting surrounded by open countryside with green infrastructure, like the River Granta in Great Shelford, also featuring within the built environment.
 - the Cambridge green belt: the designation serves as a cultural barrier between the neighbourhood area and Cambridge, and as a physical break between the two villages
 - new play facilities for younger children at Great Shelford and Stapleford recreation grounds
 - a choice of active travel options
 - rich with biodiversity assets
 - rich with heritage assets.
- 4.3 Weaknesses:
- limited access to the countryside and rivers for pedestrians and other non-motorised users
 - poor parking provision in central locations, leading to on-road – and often dangerous and illegal – parking
 - traffic congestion in central locations, partly due to a lack of parking provision and expansion of nearby villages generating more through-traffic
 - high cost of open market housing and consequently a high level of need for affordable housing relative to its limited supply
 - shortage of brownfield sites and infill development and a lack of non-green belt development opportunities put the green belt at risk
 - flood risk: some parts of the neighbourhood area are at risk of fluvial and surface water flooding
 - shops and services are limited in provision (e.g. no bank)
 - a lack of outdoor play space in the northern part of the neighbourhood area
 - proximity to M11 and major construction sites creates noise and congestion on smaller trunk roads used as rat runs
 - poor and deteriorating road surfaces and pavements discourage active travel
 - comparative lack of facilities and activities for older children and young adults

- 4.4 Opportunities:
- the NP presents an opportunity to influence the design and character of new development such that it complements the existing rural vernacular
 - the NP could influence new development such that opportunities are taken to both mitigate and adapt to climate change
 - better management of on-street parking and congestion, with the two Parish Councils taking the lead on existing local highway improvements and the NP including policy to guide new development.
 - landscape enhancements via the Countryside Enhancement Area Policy in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan
 - Stapleford and Great Shelford Landscape Character Assessment 2019 includes a range of recommendations to protect and enhance landscape character in the neighbourhood area
 - new countryside park in development between Haverhill Road and Hinton Way
 - growth in employment prospects as the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) and wider Cambridge economy expands.
- 4.5 Threats:
- unbalanced demographics if younger adults and those on lower incomes do not have options to live in the neighbourhood area
 - loss of bungalows through replacements and conversions
 - education and health facilities: currently inadequate to meet the needs of a growing and aging population
 - an increase in retirement/care communities (three completed construction in the neighbourhood area in 2024/25 and a fourth is planning to expand) puts pressure on village services without addressing plan-level need for older persons' housing
 - erosion of the boundary between Greater Cambridge and the villages by high-density residential development (e.g. at Trumpington) and expansion of CBC
 - release of further green belt land due to ongoing development pressures
 - loss or erosion of identity, urbanisation of the neighbourhood area and reduction in tranquillity due to large-scale development schemes, including transport infrastructure, close association with CBC, and coalescence of southern necklace villages with Cambridge
 - adverse impact on landscape character and landscape setting of villages if new developments are insensitively designed
 - new development failing to take its design cues from existing village architecture and instead drawing on urban schemes in nearby Cambridge
 - neighbourhood area is in an area of water stress
 - as yet undetailed government plans to significantly expand the Cambridge life sciences economy and residential housing in the region (initial plans cited 250,000 homes but have scaled back since then)
 - uncertainty around large-scale infrastructure projects, notably East-West Rail and a Cambridge South East Transport scheme to run a busway across green belt in the neighbourhood area.

How the SWOT analysis translates into everyday life in the neighbourhood area

- 4.6 The following reflects and builds upon community feedback from two main rounds of consultation in 2022 and 2023, and comments received during Regulation 14 Consultation in 2024.

- 4.7 Residents of Stapleford and Great Shelford parishes are fortunate to enjoy the best of both worlds: a green belt setting and village character combined with close proximity to Cambridge and its work and leisure amenities. Most consider themselves to be village residents, either of Stapleford or Great Shelford or of a group of South Cambridgeshire necklace villages.
- 4.8 There is a good sense of community, bolstered by a range of long-running organised activities, clubs, societies and interest groups, although there is scope for more outdoor facilities for teenagers and young adults and for more play spaces in the northern sector of the neighbourhood area. Many residents have lived here for over 20 years, some for their entire lives, and many friendships forged at primary school gates have sustained long after. There are also those whose experience of living here is quite different: perhaps a home in Stapleford or Great Shelford is a base for a life spent largely elsewhere – typically at Addenbrooke's or in Cambridge – and this has long been the case with the hospital and City so nearby.
- 4.9 Encouragingly, around a quarter of residents make their most common weekly journey by bike, but there is a lot more that needs to be done by individuals and at local government level to encourage wider and safer sustainable travel. Despite extensions and improvements to the Sawston and Linton Greenways, road and pavement surfaces remain potholed and poorly and infrequently repaired, and the Greenways prioritise the travel needs of commuters over those making short local journeys, such as to primary schools and shops. Improved commercial (e.g. banking) and leisure amenities within the neighbourhood area might facilitate more active travel, rather than residents feeling that they must travel elsewhere by car to meet their needs.
- 4.10 Our countryside is a treasured backdrop to our everyday lives and being surrounded by green spaces makes us feel better. Our hills may not be majestic, but they have great local significance and offer attractive long views over open arable fields, into settled areas and towards the City of Cambridge (see Image 1). In an area underserved by off-road access and green spaces, our high points, beech woods and rare chalk grasslands are greatly valued and residents are keen to protect them. This is apparent in, for example, support for Cambridge Past, Present & Future (which owns Wandlebury Country Park), The Magog Trust (which manages Magog Down), local environmental group 2G3S, Stapleford Tree Project, and the aims of Cambridge Nature Network.



Image 1: Panoramic view from Magog Down towards the City of Cambridge

- 4.11 However, there are growing reasons to be concerned about the villages and our landscape. They are indisputably at risk: development on former green belt outside the settlement framework in Stapleford has already eaten into long views from the high point of Magog Down, while a new phlebotomy laboratory at the eastern end of Hinton Way will foreshorten views from the southern approach to the City. Yet such examples would be overshadowed by: the enormous social, environmental and travel upheaval that would accompany the construction, subsequent operation and infill development associated with East-West Rail passing through the neighbourhood area; a 14m-wide concrete busway across green belt and chalk streams linking a new Park & Ride at the A11 with Addenbrooke's Hospital; and massive expansion of CBC and key worker housing led by the newly created Cambridge Delivery Group. All of these are as yet frustrating unknowns, in some cases despite years of discussion and consultation, and local authorities have little control over much of the process and the local community even less.
- 4.12 There is widespread concern about current and prospective development – such as that at the new Cambridge South Station, southwards expansion of CBC, and a large residential scheme on former arable land adjacent to Babraham Park & Ride – urbanising the arable land which serves as the landscape gap between Greater Cambridge and the neighbourhood area. Unobstructed, this will undermine village identity and feel. An increase in construction and commuter traffic in the neighbourhood area, notably through the centre of Great Shelford and along the A1301 and A1307 corridors towards CBC and the City, is a daily reminder of what is happening around our boundaries.
- 4.13 Any development within the neighbourhood area and expansion around its edges will require careful balancing of supply and demand. It is very difficult for younger generations and even middle to high income earners to put down roots in Stapleford and Great Shelford. Property prices are high and trending upwards and there is a limited supply of suitable housing, affordable or otherwise, relative to demand.

Without a better balance, Stapleford and Great Shelford could become ageing dormitory villages rather than the thriving multi-generational communities which they aspire to be. Catering for an ageing population, several residential care and retirement homes have recently gained planning permission, but they will not be financially accessible to many of our villages' own older residents so of no use to those looking to downsize within the neighbourhood area.

- 4.14 The aesthetics of new development worries residents. Large developments just beyond the neighbourhood area (e.g. Ninewells, Trumpington and around CBC) are within Cambridge City limits and have embraced contemporary urban architecture, but Stapleford and Great Shelford residents would prefer residential development which better blends with the rural vernacular of our existing housing stock. This is not necessarily a protectionist stance: whilst we are keen to incorporate progressive clean and green technologies, we remain conservative about the design of the buildings which utilise them. But how will this sit with for 'gentle density' housing as a core tenet of the City's growth?
- 4.15 Local growth is not just about meeting housing demand. More people in and around the area put additional stress on all amenities. For example, research for this NP shows that we already lack open spaces per head of existing population. As anyone who has visited Wandlebury Country Park or Magog Down at peak times can testify, overcrowding of people and cars at our most popular visitor locations is linked to growth of Cambridge itself and a far wider lack of open spaces, so future provision needs to reflect growth in far more than just local demand.
- 4.16 To summarise then: life here is, and has generally been, good for many but change – significant change – is in the air. A lack of clarity about the form this will take gives rise to frustration, an inability to plan for the future and, for some people, anxiety that the reasons they choose to live in the neighbourhood area will be swept away by decades of development, leaving a landscape and community which no longer feel like home. Most residents are not resistant to change in some form, and at the very least recognise a need for it, but they want to be a part of the process, to ensure that what we value locally is protected for current and future generations, and that existing unmet needs are addressed. As such, they are a powerful driving force behind the S&GS NP.

Issues not addressed through this Plan

- 4.17 In so far as is within the scope of a land use planning document at the very local level, this NP is focused on protecting our strengths, addressing our weaknesses, making the most of our opportunities and managing the threats which face us.
- 4.18 However, there are some issues that we recognise are of great importance to our community but which we are unable to address through this Plan specifically or even through neighbourhood planning more generally. They are as follows:
- **Cambridge green belt:** it is outside the scope of the NP to define or amend the Cambridge green belt boundary, or to allocate land in the Cambridge green belt or to prevent the release of green belt land. This is because green belt designation is a matter for our higher-level plan. Currently, this is South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan and, in the future, it will be a matter for the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The latter currently includes a proposal

to release one parcel of green belt land adjacent to our existing villages. This is referred to as 'Land between Hinton Way and Mingle Lane, Great Shelford' in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals

(<https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/greater-cambridge-local-plan-first-proposals>)

- **through-traffic related traffic volumes and village congestion:** the planning policies in this NP can only influence planning applications that come forward for development within the neighbourhood area. As traffic congestion and traffic volumes along our village roads are generated largely from development outside the neighbourhood area, the NP is limited in the extent to which it can address these issues. Policy S&GS 19 does, however, look at the transport impacts of schemes that come forward within the neighbourhood area
- **strategic planning issues, such as East-West Rail and CSET:** details of the former are available at <https://eastwestrail.co.uk> and counterarguments at www.cambridgeapproaches.org, whilst a summary of CSET is provided in Appendix 7 and counterproposals at www.bw4b.org.

5. A Vision for Stapleford and Great Shelford

5.1 The vision underpinning the S&GS NP is:

“In 2041, Stapleford and Great Shelford will be thriving villages distinct from Cambridge, where people want to live, work, shop and play. We value and want to protect our landscape setting, improve its biodiversity and reduce our contribution to climate change. Modest new development, which is sensitively and sustainably designed, will focus on addressing identified housing needs, in particular affordable housing needs, within our community. Where appropriate, it will also support the creation of new amenities and infrastructure to meet the needs of our population. Part of this infrastructure will be a safe and sustainable travel network supporting everyday journeys and healthy recreation.”

5.2 The vision is supported by 10 theme-based objectives:

Housing
Objective 1: New residential development proposals will contribute to addressing existing and future housing needs in Stapleford and Great Shelford in terms of affordability, accessibility, tenure and suitability for all stages of life.
The built environment
Objective 2: New development will be designed to a high standard and in its built form will reinforce the distinctive rural look, feel and quality of the two villages.
Climate change
Objective 3: New development will be designed to be (a) compatible with, and belong in, a net zero emissions future, and (b) resilient to the effects of climate change. The water supply must be protected alongside the need for new homes and other buildings.
Biodiversity
Objective 4: Biodiversity enhancements will be delivered at all development sites within the neighbourhood area. We will also protect and enhance specific features and sites of ecological value identified in the <i>Landscape Character Assessment</i> .
Our rural setting and landscape
Objective 5: New development will actively minimise its impact on the landscape character of the neighbourhood area, recognising the value of long views and vistas into and out of the rural setting of the villages, the open spaces within it and, critically, the separation of the villages from the expanding urbanised Greater Cambridge area.
Community amenities and infrastructure
Objective 6: We will ensure that development addresses its associated demands on, and existing shortfalls in, our community's amenity and infrastructure needs, specifically in healthcare, primary school education, transport, open spaces and play spaces.
Active travel
Objective 7: Residents travelling in and out of the neighbourhood area, and people travelling through the neighbourhood area, will find it increasingly easy to choose active travel modes to reach their destinations, whether for work or leisure

purposes. The safety of active travellers will be both a priority of new development and upgraded throughout the neighbourhood area.
Managing the impacts of traffic
Objective 8: The adverse effects of increased road traffic movements from new development on our community's quality of life (and apparent in, for example, air pollution, noise, vibration, road safety, accessibility and street scene environment) will be identified and appropriately mitigated.
Countryside access
Objective 9: Existing routes for non-motorised users into the much-valued countryside in our neighbourhood area will be protected and maintained. New routes for non-motorised users from our villages into our countryside will be opened up.
Countryside enhancements
Objective 10: The Countryside Enhancement Strategy set out in the <i>Landscape Character Assessment</i> for the neighbourhood area will be implemented. These landscape, biodiversity and public access improvements will complement the existing landscape character of the area and protect and enhance the setting of Cambridge.

Section II: the planning policies

6. Housing & the built environment

HOUSING

Objective 1: New residential development proposals will contribute to addressing existing and future housing needs in Stapleford and Great Shelford in terms of affordability, accessibility, tenure and its suitability for all stages of life.

- 6.1 There are five planning policies sitting under this theme and objective:
- Policy S&GS 1: Housing mix
 - Policy S&GS 2: Prioritising local needs in the allocation of affordable housing
 - Policy S&GS 3: Rural exception housing
 - Policy S&GS 4: Meeting the needs of the older population
 - Policy S&GS 5: Residential annexes.
- 6.2 The policies in this chapter have been informed by available information on our population and housing stock, in particular information set out in the following documents:
- Stapleford and Great Shelford Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM 2023)
 - 2021 Census results
 - Stapleford Housing Needs Survey 2017
 - Great Shelford Housing Needs Survey 2017.
- 6.3 A range of demographic and housing data are set out below in support of the planning policies. In addition, an overview of our neighbourhood area is provided in Chapter 2.

Community perspective on housing

- 6.4 Community consultation in 2022 and 2023 for the S&GS NP identified consistent support for new homes in or around the villages, notably to tackle a lack of genuinely affordable accommodation and a dearth of options for older people.
- 6.5 In 2022, nearly 60% of residents surveyed were worried about the affordability of, or access to, suitable housing in our community over the ensuing 15-20 years. The majority felt that more than 100 new homes would be needed in the neighbourhood area in this time period, predominantly small/medium-sized family homes (2-4 beds), starter homes (1-2 beds) and affordable/low cost accommodation to buy or rent. Less than 2% of responses favoured building on green belt or greenfield land to fulfil this demand.
- 6.6 As part of community consultation in 2023, 78% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the draft overriding housing objective for this NP, and there was acknowledgement in free-text comments that so called 'affordable' housing options in the neighbourhood area are still out of reach for many people. Opinions

were also sought on key messages arising from the HNA 2023 commissioned to support this NP:

- 79% strongly agreed or agreed that ‘new homes should be adaptable to changing household needs, e.g. home-working, disability, multi-generational living, independent living in older age’
- 73% strongly agreed or agreed that ‘a proportion of affordable housing coming forward on new schemes should be preferentially allocated to households with a strong local connection’. This is consistent with the 2017 findings of the ‘Stapleford Housing Needs Survey’ and the ‘Great Shelford Housing Needs Survey’, and is neatly illustrated by a comment from one respondent in 2023: “...only two out of nine employees [at the Great Shelford business where they work] live in the village, due in part to extremely high rental and purchase prices, meaning transport costs take up a chunk of their income”
- 65% strongly agreed or agreed that ‘there should be greater choice of affordable housing options for older people looking to move in later life’. Free-text comments suggest that this older population wants to remain part of the community, not apart from it, and hence there were calls for new development to supply adaptable homes, ‘granny annexes’ and a mix of affordable housing types in any one location such that different generations can live alongside each other
- 52% strongly agreed or agreed that ‘developers should deliver more mid-sized 3-bed homes than smaller and larger dwellings’
- 40% strongly agreed or agreed that ‘new development should reflect the greater need for homes for social/affordable rent than social/affordable ownership’ (a further 40% were neutral or did not know).

- 6.7 Only one key message garnered less support: 48% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that ‘if developers do not provide sufficient affordable housing, the community could consider alternatives’. Here, it is reflected that the question presented in the engagement exercise prompted negative reaction because of a specific reference to green belt land being used to deliver rural exception sites. The response contradicts support for community-led solutions to affordable housing articulated in the 2017 Housing Needs Surveys of both parishes, and the positive reception of the recently completed community-led housing initiative at More’s Meadow in Great Shelford. In 2023, only 21% strongly agreed or agreed with this kind of strategy but there is a good reason for including it in this Plan: the exceptionally high level of local need for affordable housing is very unlikely to be met through developer-led affordable housing.

Policy S&GS 1: Housing mix

- 6.8 An over-supply of large properties and lack of affordable, smaller properties mean that market housing in Stapleford and Great Shelford is out of reach to most. For development to have local support, it should meet the existing and future needs of our community in terms of home size and affordability, and be adaptable and accessible to residents as they age. Background information and the policy rationale supporting this are outlined below.

Background context and policy rationale

Housing mix

- 6.9 The HNA 2023 includes an analysis of dwelling sizes (number of bedrooms) in the neighbourhood area, looking at how this has changed during the period 2011 to

2023, as well as an analysis of household characteristics and occupancy ratings of dwellings. It tells us that whilst Stapleford Parish has larger dwellings (36.4% of dwellings are 3-bedroom properties and 45.4% have 4+ bedrooms), the neighbourhood area as a whole has a smaller proportion of 3-bedroom properties compared to South Cambridgeshire District and to England as a whole.

Table 2: Dwelling size (bedrooms) in neighbourhood area, compared to district and England

Number of bedrooms	Stapleford and Great Shelford	South Cambridgeshire	England
1	9.2%	6.7%	11.6%
2	23.5%	22.5%	27.3%
3	30.9%	35.2%	40.0%
4+	36.4%	35.6%	21.1%

Source: Table 5-6 Stapleford and Great Shelford HNA (AECOM 2023)

- 6.10 Relative to data presented in the table above, the report observes that since 2011 the proportion of 4+ bedroom properties has risen from 34.3%, whilst the proportion of 3-bedroom and 2-bedroom properties has decreased from 32.1% and 25.2%, respectively.
- 6.11 The occupancy rates of dwellings indicate that existing housing stock is large in terms of number of bedrooms compared to household requirements (Table 3). In 2021, 49.4% of households lived in a dwelling with at least two extra bedrooms. Under-occupancy rates were especially high in single-family households, in particular single-family households where all occupants were aged 66+.

Table 3: Occupancy rating (bedrooms) by household composition

Household Type	+2 rating	+1 rating	0 rating	-1 rating
All households (2,848)	49.4% (1,407)	32.3% (919)	17.3% (493)	0.9% (27)
Single family households (1,884)	55% (1,030)	30% (569)	14% (264)	1% (21)
Single family 66 and over (390)	84% (328)	14% (56)	2% (6)	0
One person household (870)	40% (349)	36% (315)	24% (206)	0
One person 66 and over (462)	53% (247)	34% (155)	13% (60)	0
One person 65 and under (408)	25% (102)	39% (160)	36% (146)	0

Source: Census 2021

- 6.12 The HNA 2023 projects the future age profile of the population of the neighbourhood area by applying local authority level household projections to the age profile of Stapleford and Great Shelford households in 2011 (Table 4).

Table 4: Projected age of households, 2011 to 2043

Year	24 and under	25-34	35-54	55-64	65 and over
2011	44	266	945	477	941
2043	39	229	887	541	1680
% change 2011 – 2043	-10%	-14%	-6%	13%	79%

Source: Table 5-12 HNA AECOM (2023)

- 6.13 The HNA 2023 estimates that to meet these future needs there should be a greater proportion of 2-bedroom, 3-bedroom and 4-bedroom properties in the neighbourhood area by 2043 but a reduction in the proportion of the smallest and largest dwellings. In order to reach this mix, the report sets out the following recommendations for new housing:

Table 5: Suggested dwelling size mix to 2043

Number of bedrooms	Current mix (2011)	Suggested mix (2043)	Balance of new housing to reach suggested mix
1	8.3%	7.0%	2.1%
2	25.2%	23.9%	18.2%
3	32.1%	37.5%	54.8%
4	23.1%	23.8%	24.9%
5+	11.3%	7.8%	0.0%

Source: Table 5-13 Stapleford and Great Shelford HNA (AECOM 2023)

- 6.14 Within affordable housing tenures, whilst needs fluctuates from month to month, there still tends to be an especially high need for smaller homes in the neighbourhood area. In December 2023, SCDC's housing register recorded 51% (out of 91) of need in Great Shelford being for 1-bedroom properties and 25% for 2-bedroom properties. Similarly, it recorded 50% (out of 28) of need in Stapleford being for 1-bedroom properties and 32% for 2-bedroom properties.

Affordability

- 6.15 As set out in the HNA 2023, house prices are high in the neighbourhood area and have increased significantly since 2011. By 2021, the median house price was £542,000, compared to £394,998 in South Cambridgeshire, and the lower quartile house price was 360,000. The cost of a flat in the neighbourhood area increased by 123% during the period 2011 to 2021.
- 6.16 Local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry level homes, unless they have access to a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of higher than average incomes, is likely to remain out of reach to most. The HNA 2023 finds that private renting is generally only affordable to higher earners and that average earners are only able to afford entry-level market rents. It also finds that there is a relatively large group of households which may be able to afford to rent but cannot afford to buy. These households are earning between £48,250 and £92,571.
- 6.17 A summary of different affordability thresholds in the neighbourhood area is provided at Appendix 1.

Affordable housing

- 6.18 Affordable housing refers to housing products outside the main housing market (see glossary for further information). It is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 as housing for sale or rent, for those households whose needs are not met by the market.
- 6.19 Existing dwelling stock in the neighbourhood area comprises market housing to buy, market housing to rent, affordable housing to rent and affordable housing to buy. As at the 2021 Census, just under 68.9% of households owned their own dwelling, 14.7% lived in socially rented properties, 15.2% lived in privately rented accommodation, and 1.2% lived in shared ownership properties.
- 6.20 The 21 alms houses completed in Great Shelford in 2023 would not have been captured by the 2021 Census. Nonetheless, the need for affordable housing in the neighbourhood area is much greater than the supply. In January 2023, there were, for instance, 115 households registered on the district's Housing Register in need of social/affordable rented housing and with a local connection to the neighbourhood area.

Affordable ownership: First Homes

- 6.21 In 2021, the government introduced First Homes, a type of affordable housing to buy. First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing which:
- a) must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value
 - b) are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria
 - c) on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure the discount (as a percentage of the current market value) and other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer
 - d) after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London).
- 6.22 First Homes are the government's preferred discounted market tenure and it states that they should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations.
- 6.23 Currently, SCDC has not adopted First Homes into the district. However, developers may still wish to bring First Homes forward as part of their affordable housing requirements. For such scenarios, GCSP has prepared a First Homes Interim Position Statement, last updated in March 2022 and available to view at the link below. This includes a position statement that First Homes across Greater Cambridge should be discounted by no more than 30%:
www.scambs.gov.uk/media/20079/first-homes-interim-position-statement-march-2022.pdf
- 6.24 The HNA 2023, however, finds that for First Homes to be affordable to households in Stapleford and Great Shelford, the market value must be discounted by a minimum of 40%. It also finds that shared ownership appears to be slightly more affordable than First Homes, where they have a 10% equity (see Appendix 1). Wherever affordable home ownership products are being provided to meet local needs, it is important the products are tailored (i.e. the level of discount on First Homes and level of equity required for shared ownership products) so that eligible local households can afford them.

New affordable housing supply

- 6.25 The HNA 2023 recommends an indicative housing mix of 70% of all affordable housing to be delivered as social/affordable rent, with the remaining delivered as 30% affordable home ownership products. The delivery of affordable housing is expected to be lower than the evidenced needs. The HNA 2023 advises affordable rented tenures should be prioritised because this represents a more urgent and acute need. This position is consistent with the GCSP First Homes Interim Position, updated in March 2022.

Accessible and adaptable homes

- 6.26 The 2021 Census shows that there are currently 867 individuals (13.3% of the population) aged 75 or over in the neighbourhood area. The HNA 2023 projects that by 2043 this will increase to 1,380 (20.7% of the population). The provision of specialist housing will play a role in meeting the future needs of the older population, but the majority will be accommodated in mainstream housing. Indeed, the HNA 2023 estimates (paragraph 217) that around 77% of people aged 75 and over in the neighbourhood area are likely to be living in mainstream housing. To maximise the potential for mainstream housing to meet the needs of the growing older population, it is important that new housing meets Category M4(2) standards. In time, it is expected that government will mandate this in response to demographic shifts being observed nationwide but, for the time being, Policy S&GS 1 includes this as a requirement. This requirement is consistent with recommendations set out GL Hearn's 2021 report 'Housing Needs of Specific Groups' covering Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk and a key document informing the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The costs for achieving M4(2) standards are set out in the GL Hearn report and are such that this requirement should not affect the deliverability and viability of development.
- 6.27 Policy S&GS 1 seeks to ensure that the housing mix of new residential development schemes is appropriate to meeting local needs and that affordable housing products are tailored to reflect existing affordability issues in the neighbourhood area.
- 6.28 This policy departs from part of Policy H/9: Housing Mix in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan by setting out different housing mix requirements for market homes. This departure is justified by neighbourhood area evidence set out in the HNA 2023. The policy is nevertheless in broad conformity with Policy H/9 as it requires a wide choice, type and mix of housing to meet the needs of different groups in the community.

Policy S&GS 1: Housing mix (type, size, affordability and design)

- 1. Wherever it is commercially viable to do so, development proposals that create two or more new dwellings should prioritise the delivery of smaller homes (three bedrooms or less) over larger homes.**
- 2. For development proposals which would deliver 10 or more homes, the following provides a starting point for the determination of an appropriate housing mix:**
 - a) In terms of size:**
 - at least 50% of new dwellings to be 3-bedroom units and remaining units to be a mixture of other sizes
 - where affordable homes are being provided, the housing mix should address Plan-level need in these tenures (typically high for 1-and 2-bedroom properties) evidenced in housing needs surveys and the district's Housing Register.
 - b) Where affordable homes are being provided, they should meet the following tenure mix:**
 - 70% social/affordable rent
 - 30% affordable home ownership.
 - c) Where affordable homes to own are being provided as First Homes they must be discounted at a rate that makes them accessible to people in the neighbourhood area. This means discounting them at 40% rather than 30%, unless evidence is provided that a lower discount is needed for the purpose of delivering a viable product and it is evidenced that the products would be affordable to eligible local households.**
- 3. Development proposals which would provide an alternative mix to that set out above should be justified by reference to up-to-date evidence of existing and future needs in the neighbourhood area, to evidence on its viability, and/or to local site-specific circumstances.**
- 4. Wherever appropriate and commercially viable, new housing should be built to the accessible and adaptable Building Regulations M4(2) standard.**

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy H/9: Housing Mix

Clarification of terms

- Housing tenure: refers to whether a household rents or owns accommodation that it occupies and, if rented, to whether this is privately rented or a form of affordable rent.
- Affordable rented housing: rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households which are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges where these are applicable). See also Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019 to 2023 – Annex 11, Affordable Rents

www.scambs.gov.uk/media/17698/greater-cambridge-housing-strategy-2019-to-2023-annex-11-affordable-rents-policy.pdf

- Affordability: a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households.
- Affordable housing: refers to products outside the main housing market. See glossary for further information.

Key notes on differences between policy in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan level policy:

- Policy H/9: Housing Mix requires market homes in developments of 10 or more homes to consist of at least 30% 3-bedroom homes. See 2018 Local Plan for more detail.

Policy S&GS 2: Prioritising local needs in the allocation of affordable housing

- 6.29 There is a high level of affordable housing need in the neighbourhood area which even significant new development will struggle to meet. Therefore, a proportion of new affordable housing in the neighbourhood area should initially be made available to households with an existing local connection, be that family or work. Background information and the policy rationale supporting this are outlined below.

Background context and policy rationale

- 6.30 Given the findings of the HNA 2023, it is unsurprising that there is a high number of households registered with SCDC as eligible for affordable housing with a local connection to the neighbourhood area (115 in January 2023). Furthermore, two Housing Needs Surveys undertaken for Great Shelford Parish and Stapleford Parish in 2017 also provide a clear-cut position with respect to levels of affordable housing needs. The Stapleford HNS identified 30 households in need of affordable housing and the Great Shelford HNS identified 97 households in need.
- 6.31 The HNA 2023 finds that when the South Cambridgeshire affordable housing need figures from GL Hearn's 'Housing Needs of Specific Groups' study for Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk are pro-rated to the neighbourhood area, there is an estimated need for 17.4 homes for social/affordable rent each year (348 homes over the period 2023 to 2043). In addition, the HNA 2023 estimates that there is a need for 15 affordable homes to buy per annum in the neighbourhood area (300 over the period 2023 to 2043).
- 6.32 Even though the need for affordable housing in the neighbourhood area is well evidenced, it is highly unlikely this need will ever be met. This is because the villages are not identified as suitable locations for the corresponding level of growth required to deliver that level of affordable housing.
- 6.33 Due to the evidenced level of affordable housing needs in the local area and the barriers to delivering this, Policy S&GS 2 requires that a proportion of affordable housing delivered in the neighbourhood area in the types of locations outside the development framework which are set out below, be prioritised to households with an existing local connection (as defined in paragraphs 6.35-6.37). This includes market housing schemes required in the 2018 Local Plan to deliver a proportion (40%) as affordable housing via a section 106 agreement.

- Locations outside the current (2024) development framework, whether this is through:
 - site allocations being brought forward through the emerging or updated Local Plan, or
 - other residential development which secures consent.
- 6.34 Further justification to support the position taken above and in Policy S&GS 2 is that the housing requirement provided by SCDC (45 dwellings to be delivered 2017-31) is more than comfortably met through existing planning permissions and completions. As at March 2023, the development pipeline for Great Shelford stands at 133 (82 completed plus 51 permitted) and for Stapleford stands at 152 (5 completed and 147 permitted). Given this level of growth, good placemaking requires that policy initiatives are in place to ensure that a mechanism exists to address the neighbourhood area's specific affordable housing needs.

Local connection criteria

- 6.35 Policy S&GS 2 refers to a 'local connection'. An applicant will be considered to have a local connection to the neighbourhood area if they meet one of the following criteria:
- the applicant has paid employment in the neighbourhood area for 16 hours or more per week; or
 - the applicant has been working (paid employment) in the neighbourhood area or in settlements which abut the neighbourhood area for the last 12 months for 16 hours or more per week; or
 - the applicant has lived in the neighbourhood area for at least 5 years out of the last 8 years; or
 - the applicant has family members who are resident in the neighbourhood area (this type of local connection is important for the purpose of supporting existing communities). Family members are defined as parents, children or siblings who have been resident in the village for a period of 5 years or longer. Other close family ties will be considered in agreement with the local authority (SCDC) on a case by case basis; or
 - there are special circumstances which SCDC considers give rise to a local connection to the neighbourhood area, for example where the applicant's substantive role is as a carer to a person resident in one of the villages.
- 6.36 The local connection criteria set out above are different to those applied to rural exception sites as per Policy S&GS 3. The former are broader because they include people with employment in neighbouring settlements.
- 6.37 To ensure that priority for affordable housing (on up to 50% of the dwellings proposed on these sites) is given to households with a local connection to either of the two parishes, SCDC will require an affordable housing provider to enter into a legal agreement, under which applicants who meet one of the local connection criteria listed above are given first priority once a dwelling has been built. To ensure affordable homes do not remain empty, the legal agreement will include cascade provisions that will be triggered in the event of a completed affordable dwelling not being taken up within a reasonable time period (i.e. 3 months) by someone with a local connection. This will allow second priority to be given to households with a connection to neighbouring parishes, and then those in the rest of the district.

Policy S&GS 2: Prioritising local people in the allocation of affordable housing

1. Households with a strong local connection to either of the two parishes, as defined in the supporting text to this policy, whose needs are not met by the open market should be given priority of allocation (i.e. will be first to be offered tenancy or shared ownership of the home) for 50% of affordable homes (including First Homes) being delivered on the following sites outside the current (2024) village development frameworks, including where these are being delivered via a S106 agreement as part of an open market scheme:
 - sites that are brought forward via a Local Plan site allocation
 - other residential development that secures consent.
2. If a completed affordable dwelling has not been taken up within a reasonable time period (i.e. 3 months) by someone with a local connection (see supporting text) to the neighbourhood area, the home will be made available, via a cascade mechanism (see supporting text) to other households in the district whose needs are not met by the open market.
3. This policy applies only to the initial letting or sale of an affordable unit on sites listed in clause 1.

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy H/10: Affordable Housing

Policy S&GS 3: Rural exception housing

- 6.38 To help meet local affordable housing needs, small-scale affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites adjoining our existing settled area will be supported. Background information and the policy rationale supporting this are outlined below.

Background context and policy rationale

- 6.39 A rural exception housing scheme is a site which provides affordable housing located outside a development framework boundary (the settlement boundary) as an exception to normal planning policy. Policy H/11 in the 2018 Local Plan allows these to come forward where there is evidence of unmet affordable housing need within the rural area and where a scheme is planned to address some or all of that need.
- 6.40 A recent example of a rural exception housing site is More's Meadow, a scheme of 21 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom homes delivered by Great Shelford Village Charity (formerly Great Shelford Parochial Charities) to provide affordable housing for residents in Great Shelford.
- 6.41 Within South Cambridgeshire and in line with national policy, affordable housing is only required on development sites of 11 or more dwellings (see Policy H/10 in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan). In Stapleford and Great Shelford where there are few opportunities for sites of this size to come forward, the supply of more affordable housing is severely constrained. Rural exception sites have the potential to expand this supply.

- 6.42 Policy S&GS 3 is included in the Plan to clarify support in principle for rural exception housing schemes in the neighbourhood area, subject to the criteria set out in the policy. The policy refers to small site affordable housing schemes. This is consistent with the NPPF 2023 which defines rural exception sites as “small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing.” In practice (and consistent with Clause 1b of Policy H/11 in South Cambridgeshire’s 2018 Local Plan), the size of a rural exception site will be informed by the size, facilities and character of the nearby village and of a scale appropriate to the site-specific context. Schemes can be as small as 5 to 10 dwellings but could be larger, particularly if located on the edge of Great Shelford.
- 6.43 Policy S&GS 3 refers to a ‘strong local connection’. An applicant will be considered as having a strong local connection to the neighbourhood area as far as rural exception sites are concerned, if they meet one of the following criteria:
- the applicant has been working (paid employment) in the neighbourhood area for the last 12 months for 16 hours or more per week; or
 - the applicant has lived in the neighbourhood area for at least 5 years out of the last 8 years; or
 - the applicant has family members who are resident in the neighbourhood area (this type of local connection is important for purpose of supporting existing communities). Family members are defined as parents, children or siblings who have been resident in the village for a period of 5 years or longer. Other close family ties will be considered in agreement with the local authority (SCDC) on a case by case basis; or
 - there are special circumstances which SCDC considers give rise to a local connection to the neighbourhood area, for example where the applicant’s substantive role is as a carer to a person resident in one of the villages.
- 6.44 The local connection criteria set out above are different to those generally applied by the district. This is to ensure that where the community proactively supports the delivery of a rural exception site under this policy, there is greater certainty in place about whose needs the housing will help to address.
- 6.45 To ensure that priority for affordable housing on a rural exception site is given to households with a strong local connection to either of the two parishes, SCDC will require the affordable housing provider to enter into a legal agreement, under which applicants who meet one of the criteria listed above are given first priority once the dwelling has been created or once it is vacated by previous occupiers. To ensure that affordable homes do not remain empty, the legal agreement will include cascade provisions which will be triggered in the event of a completed or vacant affordable dwelling not being taken up within a reasonable time period (i.e. 3 months) by someone with a strong local connection. This will allow second priority to be given to households with a connection to neighbouring parishes, and then to those in the rest of the district.

Policy S&GS 3: Rural exception housing

1. Proposals for the development of affordable housing schemes on rural exception small sites adjoining either of the two village development framework boundaries will be supported provided that:
 - a) the affordable homes are provided as affordable in perpetuity
 - b) the number, size, design, mix and tenure of affordable homes are confined to, and appropriate to, meeting identified needs in the Stapleford and Great Shelford neighbourhood area
 - c) all other criteria in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan Policy H/11 are met (or its equivalent replacement)
 - d) the proposed development contributes positively to the existing character of the villages and their setting in terms of design, layout, materials, landscaping and biodiversity
 - e) wherever practicable, proposals provide or link up with existing sustainable (e.g. active travel) routes into either of the villages and the City of Cambridge.
2. A local neighbourhood-level connection criteria will be applied to affordable housing coming forward under this policy. This means that people with a strong local connection to either of the two parishes, as defined in the supporting text to this policy, and whose needs are not met by the open market will be given priority of allocation (i.e. will be first to be offered the tenancy or shared ownership of the home).
3. If a completed or vacant affordable dwelling has not been taken up within a reasonable time period (i.e. 3 months) by someone with a strong local connection (see supporting text to this policy) to either of the two parishes, the home will be made available, via the application of a cascade mechanism (see supporting text) to other households in the district whose needs are not met by the open market.

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy H/11: Rural Exception Site Affordable Housing

Policy S&GS 4: Meeting the needs of the older population

- 6.46 The proportion of people aged 75+ in Stapleford and Great Shelford is projected to grow from 13.3% in 2021 to 20.7% in 2043 (AECOM 2023). We require development proposals for specialist housing for older people to be located within the settled area of our villages and in locations easily accessible to shops, services and other community facilities. Background information and the policy rationale supporting this are outlined below.

Background context and policy rationale

- 6.47 For the purpose of the S&GS NP, older people are defined as individuals over retirement age, ranging from the active newly retired to the very frail elderly. Their housing needs tend to encompass accessible and adaptable general needs housing, as well as the full spectrum of retirement and specialist housing offering additional care.

- 6.48 Specialist housing refers to a wide range of housing types specifically aimed at older people and is often restricted to those in certain older groups. This can include residential institutions, sheltered housing, extra care housing, retirement housing and a range of other types of housing designed and built to serve the needs of older people, and often provide care or other additional services³.
- 6.49 There are currently 199 units of specialist accommodation in the neighbourhood area. These are listed in Appendix E to the S&GS HNA 2023. About three-quarters of the existing provision is affordable housing available for either social rent or shared ownership.
- 6.50 A retirement village is currently being constructed to supply 147 units for over 60s only, located just outside Stapleford's development framework (see www.rangefordvillages.co.uk/villages/stapleford-village). Despite its location, the scheme is marketed at the luxury end of the market and there is uncertainty as to whether these units will address existing need for specialist housing in the neighbourhood area.
- 6.51 In addition, 39 retirement living apartments in Great Shelford are being built (www.churchillretirement.co.uk/retirement-apartments-for-sale/cambridgeshire/great-shelford/) and, immediately adjacent to this, a new care home is also under construction.
- 6.52 There is capacity for further specialist housing units to come forward within the development framework. An example would be through expansion of existing facilities such as the Cambridgeshire Care Home on Cambridge Road.
- 6.53 The S&GS HNA 2023 reports that in 2021 there were 867 people aged 75+ in Stapleford and Great Shelford, accounting for 13.3% of the population. This is expected to increase to 1,380 people (20.7% of the population) in 2043.
- 6.54 Not all people aged 75+ need specialist housing and the HNA 2023 has used population projections, rates of disability and existing housing tenure in the current 55-75 cohort to estimate that by 2043 between 130 and 175 specialist accommodation units will be required to meet the needs of the older population. The majority of the need (77%) is for specialist market housing, compared to 23% for specialist affordable housing. Within both categories most need is predicted to be for sheltered housing (adaptations, sheltered or retirement living), with less need for housing with care.
- 6.55 The identified need set out in the S&GS HNA 2023 to meet the requirements of the older population is proportionally high in relation to the overall housing expectation in the neighbourhood area. However, it should be recognised that the existing stock of housing suitable for the older population will play a part in meeting new needs, as will mainstream housing as long as it is suitable. Policy S&GS 1 includes a requirement for all schemes to meet adaptable and accessible homes standards. This will help to ensure that new mainstream housing will be suitable for meeting the needs of people as they age.

³ As defined in the S&GS HNA 2023.

- 6.56 As explained above, there is a good number of specialist housing units in the neighbourhood area targeted at meeting the needs of older people. Furthermore, the existing supply will more than double through schemes in the pipeline. Whilst specialist housing is accepted as important, it is crucial that the neighbourhood area does not become overly saturated by one type of housing and that the housing stock is appropriately balanced to meet the full range of demands, including those of younger people. The intention of Policy S&GS 4 is to ensure that, if further specialist housing schemes come forward, they contribute positively to the neighbourhood area and that future occupiers can integrate easily into the Stapleford and Great Shelford community.
- 6.57 Policy S&GS 4 therefore requires specialist housing schemes to be located within the development framework and in locations that are easily accessible to shops, services and community facilities. This is to help ensure that residents in specialist housing schemes can, if they wish and are able to, integrate into the wider community. Regard should also be had to typical walking distances. In its 2015 publication 'Planning for Walking', the Chartered Institution for Highways and Transportation states that "land use patterns most conducive to walking are thus mixed in use and resemble patchworks of 'walkable neighbourhoods', with a typical catchment of around 800m or a 10-minute walk..."

Policy S&GS 4: Meeting the needs of the older population

- 1. Development proposals providing specialist housing for the older generation (including retirement housing, sheltered housing and extra care housing) will only be supported where:**
 - a) they are located within the development framework and easily accessible to shops, services and community facilities without the need to rely on private transport
 - b) they do not exacerbate existing problems associated with on-street car parking and vehicular clutter on through roads, and provide adequate off-street parking, in line with Local Plan requirements
 - c) they are integrated well with surrounding development and land uses
 - d) they incorporate a mix of tenure, including affordable homes to meet the identified need in the area, and
 - e) they achieve a high standard of amenity for occupiers and do not have unacceptable impacts on residential amenity in neighbouring developments (see Policy S&GS 6).
- 2. All proposals should relate well to surrounding development and result in a welcoming and attractive street scene. Gated developments will not be supported unless the additional security is necessary to protect the intended occupiers.**
- 3. Where necessary to meet the healthcare needs of the future occupants and to mitigate the additional demand placed on healthcare provision in the neighbourhood area, financial contributions towards the provision of healthcare infrastructure will be sought from the proposed development which directly, fairly, and reasonably relate in scale and kind to the development.**

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy S/7: Development Frameworks
- Policy HQ/1: Design Principles
- Policy TI/3: Parking Provision

Policy S&GS 5: Residential annexes to facilitate multi-generational living

- 6.58 Homes which are suitable for multi-generational living are encouraged in the neighbourhood area and can play a part in meeting a specific housing need, growth of which may be driven by particularly high housing costs and an overall rise of the population aged 75+. Multi-generational living allows older people to continue to live at home whilst being close to family members who can support them as and when their needs change.
- 6.59 A residential annexe built within the curtilage of an existing dwelling could provide an opportunity for an older person to downsize and yet stay close to their existing community and benefit from being close to family members.
- 6.60 If designed to required standards, the annexe could be a type of specialist or supported housing suitable for people with disabilities. This would also provide an opportunity for a person's specialised needs to be met, whilst remaining within their community and being close to family members.
- 6.61 Under permitted development rights, and depending on site location and circumstances, owners of residential plots are able to undertake certain types of development without planning permission. This includes outbuildings to the rear of a property and residential extensions within certain limits. Such development could lead to inappropriate over-development if it done in addition to the building of a residential annexe. It is therefore important that permitted development rights on a primary dwelling are surrendered if the land has the benefit of consent for the building of a supplemental dwelling.
- 6.62 Implementation of the policy will be by means of a condition forming part of any planning consent for a residential annexe which will exist to restrict the possibility of the annexe being occupied as a dwelling which is functionally separate to the primary dwelling.
- 6.63 The occupation of the residential annexe shall be restricted to either:
a) a qualifying person, defined as the person who prior to the grant of the consent owned and occupied the property within which the dwelling is to be built, or the spouse or dependent of such a person, or the widow or widower of such a person;
or
b) a carer employed by or on behalf of the qualifying person.
- 6.64 In the event of new occupiers moving into the home who choose not to integrate the annexe back into the primary dwelling, occupation of the residential annexe will continue to be restricted to either:
a) a qualifying person, defined as the person who owns or rents the primary property, or the spouse or dependent of such a person, or the widow or widower of such a person; or
b) a carer employed by or on the behalf of the qualifying person.

Policy S&GS 5: Residential annexes to facilitate multi-generational living

- 1. The development of a single residential annexe wholly within the curtilage of an existing residential dwelling within the development frameworks of the two parishes will be supported where the annexe:**
 - a) is essential to maintaining a familial or community link to an older person (or older people) or to a person with a disability, meeting a demonstrable personal circumstance**
 - b) shares a functional relationship to the primary dwellinghouse, e.g. shared access, garden and parking area**
 - c) is smaller in height and size (including number of bedrooms) than the primary dwelling and its size is consistent with its function as an annexe having regard to the size of plot and location of the primary dwelling on the plot**
 - d) is complementary to the primary dwelling and sensitively designed in terms of style and setting**
 - e) when taken together with the primary dwelling does not result in over-development or excessive density of the whole site by comparison with its surroundings, and**
 - f) is able to demonstrate safe and suitable access to the local highway network.**
- 2. To demonstrate that requirements a) and b) in Clause 1 are met, the applicant will be required to submit a statement detailing:**
 - who will be residing in the annexe and how they are connected to the person/s occupying the primary dwelling and**
 - how the functional link between the annexe and the dwelling will remain.**
- 3. Where necessary to avoid inappropriate over-development of a site, development proposals permitted under this policy will be conditioned to remove permitted development rights for the primary dwelling.**
- 4. Annexes approved under this policy will be subject to a planning condition which prevents them from being severed from their primary dwellings. Furthermore, where the residential annexe is proposed to meet the needs of a person with a disability, evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the design specifications will result in a suitable dwelling to meet those specialist needs.**

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy H/16: Development of Residential Gardens**

Key notes on differences between policy in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan level policy:

- Local Plan Policy H/16: Development of Residential Gardens would apply to proposals for development on land used or last used as residential gardens. It allows proposals subject to criteria. Policy S&GS 5 would only apply to proposals for development within the curtilage of an existing dwelling. Applicants meeting the criteria set out in S&GS 5 would also need to satisfy the requirements set out in H/16 subject to the criteria being applicable to the proposal in question.**

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Objective 2: New development will be designed to a high quality and in its built form will reinforce the distinctive rural look, feel and quality of the two villages.

- 6.65 There is one planning policy sitting under this theme and objective:
- Policy S&GS 6: Development and design in Stapleford and Great Shelford.

Community perspective on the built environment

- 6.66 Local community consultation indicates that residents of the neighbourhood area are conservative when it comes to the design of new buildings. An initial public opinion survey for the NP in 2022 did not pose specific questions about the aesthetics of development, but still received several unprompted concerns that new builds should be sympathetic to the perceived rural vernacular of the villages.
- 6.67 A desire to retain the villages' distinct identities and rural characteristics appears to be the driver of this. 88% of survey respondents described where they live as either a village in its own right or part of a group of South Cambridgeshire villages. Furthermore, 'rural setting and views' and 'village character' were the second and third most common reasons cited by residents for what they value most about living in either Stapleford or Great Shelford.

Policy S&GS 6: Development and design in Stapleford and Great Shelford

- 6.68 Without stifling creativity, this policy seeks to ensure that new development is in keeping with the variety of buildings and street scenes in our villages. Development proposals should be guided by the 2023 'Stapleford and Great Shelford Design Guidance and Codes'. Background information and the policy rationale supporting this are outlined below.

Background context and policy rationale

"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve."

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

Stapleford and Great Shelford Design Guidance and Codes 2023

- 6.69 In 2023, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to the parish councils through the government's neighbourhood planning support programme, led by Locality. The outcome of this work was the production of the 'Stapleford and Great Shelford Design Guidance and Codes', abbreviated here as S&GS DG&C 2023. The document divides the neighbourhood area into four distinct character areas (see Map 3):
- i. Historic Streets area – applies to the Great Shelford conservation area and the Stapleford conservation area
 - ii. Post-war Development area – this is the largest area and applies to the settled areas to the east and northwest of the railway line
 - iii. Civic Core area – this overlays both the Historic Streets and Post-war Development areas and forms the heart of the settlement, providing a range of civic, retail, leisure and residential uses
 - iv. Rural Hinterland – applies to the open countryside surrounding the two villages.

- 6.70 S&GS DG&C 2023 provides an analysis of the character of each of these areas in terms of land use, pattern and layout of development, built form and public realm. Chapter 4 of the document sets out 13 design codes which it states should be applied to oversee the design of new development proposals. These are:

CD.01	Context driven design
CN.02	Connected streets
LS.03	South Cambridgeshire landscape
PL.04	Building and plot layouts
HR.05	Height and roofline
EM.06	Extensions and modifications
GF.07	Green features
CP.08	Car and bicycle parking
MD.09	Materials and details
BT.10	Boundary treatments
RH.11	Rural Hinterland design principles
SU.12	Sustainable features
SS.13	Services and storage

- 6.71 Policy S&GS 6 addresses the design codes highlighted in bold above. Descriptions as to how a development scheme complies with the policy should be provided in the Design and Access statement or Planning Statement, as applicable. The submission of a completed design checklist (Appendix 2) is encouraged.
- 6.72 The element of the policy which applies to principle RH11 (1i) will not apply to any edge of settlement proposals such as those which become allocated through the emerging Local Plan or future rural exception sites. Such schemes would need to be informed by the characteristics in the neighbouring character area.

[The Stapleford Conservation Area Character Appraisal, adopted by SCDC 2021](#)

- 6.73 This applies to the Stapleford conservation area only. The document sets out key characteristics specific to the conservation area, architectural characteristics (see below), key views and landmark buildings, landscape and open spaces and archaeology. The document also provides guidance for new development in the Stapleford conservation area. It states:

“Beyond domestic extensions, proposals for new development in the conservation area are likely to be either for the subdivision of existing large plots, or for the replacement of existing houses by new ones. Any such new development should:

- be set well back from the street,
- adhere to the scale of existing development, which is generally only two storeys,
- contribute to the strongly sylvan quality of the conservation area, by retaining existing trees and hedgerows and planting new large trees and hedgerows,
- replicate the characteristic street frontages of the conservation area, using walls and especially hedges,
- avoid designs and layouts which erode the visual character created by single houses in large, secluded plots,
- avoid unsympathetic addition of micro-generation technologies such as solar panels.”

Great Shelford Conservation Area Character Appraisal, 2007

6.74 This document applies to the Great Shelford conservation area only. It identifies several key characteristics:

- scale of the gardens
- amount of open space in the heart of the village
- mature trees in gardens and along the roads
- seen from a distance, Great Shelford is largely hidden by trees
- large number of timber framed buildings
- many good boundary walls (identified on a map in the document) consist of panels of flint or cobbles, framed with brick and topped with triangular stone or brick copings.

6.75 Design Guidelines (see [here](#)⁴) include:

- scale – buildings should not exceed 2 or 2½ storeys and be modestly pitched (30 to 35 degrees) in slate or clay pantile, or more steeply pitched in plain-tile or thatch. Rooflights and solar panels should only be located on less visible slopes, and hipped or pitch-roofed dormers are preferred in mansard or steeply pitched roofs (eyebrow in thatch)
- location on the plot – new buildings should respect established building lines and extensions should adhere to the principles of subordination so they do not undermine the architectural interest of the main building, whilst also seeking to preserve existing trees and hedgerows
- materials and colour – use the palette of materials set out in section 8 (see [here](#)⁵). Rendered walls should be painted either white or in pale pastel shades, while brickwork should generally be gault clay, although some limited use of red brick may be appropriate. Modern artificial materials (including concrete roof tiles and uPVC windows) should not be used
- boundaries – these are very important to the character of the proposed conservation area. Positive boundaries (identified on the map in the appraisal) should be retained. Where new boundaries are proposed, care should be taken to ensure they use appropriate materials (such as timber picket fences). Overly formal or ornate gates and walls are not considered appropriate. Planted boundaries, including those to the sides and rear where they abut lanes or the wider countryside, will need to be appropriately treated so that existing vegetation of merit is retained and augmented as necessary with new native trees and hedges. Sufficient space must be allowed within site layouts to enable this planting to be implemented in the short term and maintained over the longer term. Close-boarded fences to open countryside will be resisted unless they can be adequately screened with appropriate planting.

A note on the Great Shelford Village Design Statement 2004

6.76 The 'Great Shelford Village Design Statement 2004' was adopted by South Cambridgeshire District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), although it was not brought forward as a Supplementary Planning Document⁶ by the District Council when the 2018 Local Plan was adopted.

⁴ <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/design-heritage-and-environment/historic-environment/conservation-areas/conservation-area-appraisals/#a57>

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ Whilst they perform the same function, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) replaced Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) when a new planning system was introduced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 6.77 The 'Great Shelford Village Design Statement' is an informative document that has been used in the development of the S&GS DG&C 2023, but as guidance it has been superseded by the latter.
- 6.78 The purpose of Policy S&GS 6 is to add local context to Policy HQ/1: Design Principles in the 2018 Local Plan, as well as to national policy and guidance. Applicants will be expected to refer to the S&GS DG&C 2023 and, depending on the location of a proposed development, the 'Stapleford Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2021' and the 'Great Shelford Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2008'.
- 6.79 Appendix 2 to this NP provides a comprehensive checklist, based on the S&GS DG&C 2023. The two parish councils will use this checklist as part of the ongoing monitoring of planning applications. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use this tool as a self-assessment exercise in the process of preparing design-led schemes.
- 6.80 Land covered by South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan Policy E/2: Cambridge Biomedical Campus Extension (see Map 2) is not included in any of the Character Areas shown on Map 3. Policy E/2 includes specific requirements for this site.

Policy S&GS 6: Development and design in Stapleford and Great Shelford

- 1. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should be guided by the 2023 'Stapleford and Great Shelford Design Guidance and Codes', and where applicable the 2021 'Stapleford Conservation Area Character Appraisal' or the 2007 'Great Shelford Conservation Area Character Appraisal', and accord with the design principles set out below:**
 - a) Context driven design: development proposals must contribute to local distinctiveness by reflecting, respecting and complementing existing positive built and natural (e.g. trees, hedgerows and ponds) attributes in Stapleford and Great Shelford. Contemporary design solutions to achieving this are supported where the materials and details are of a high quality. In all cases, reference should be made to the Stapleford and Great Shelford vernacular, rather than the more urban context in nearby Cambridge. See CD.01 Context driven design in the S&GS DG&C 2023 for more detail.**
 - b) Building and plot layouts: development proposals should respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing. The ratio of the height of the building to the street (enclosure ratio) shall fit comfortably with that found in the character area (generally 1:6 in Post-war Development Character area, 1:4 Historic Streets Character Area and 1:2 in Civic Core Character Area). See PL.04 Building and plot layouts in the S&GS DG&C 2023 for more detail.**

Policy continues overleaf...

Policy continued:

- c) **Building height and roofline:** new development must reflect the heights of neighbouring buildings or buildings in the wider character area as applicable. New rooflines should respond appropriately to existing roofscapes in neighbouring buildings. See HR.05 Height and roofline in the S&GS DG&C 2023 for more detail.
- d) **Materials and details:** choice of building materials should be informed by the existing materials in the vicinity of the development site. See MD.09 Material and details in the S&GS DG&C 2023 and, where applicable, the 'Stapleford Conservation Area Character Appraisal' or section 11.5 in the 'Great Shelford Conservation Area Character Appraisal' for further detail.
- e) **Extensions and modifications:** residential extensions should be designed to an appropriate scale and to be secondary to the original building. They should consider the materials, architectural features, pitch and form of roofs and proportions of the original buildings and be designed to complement these features. See EM.06 Extensions and modifications in the S&GS DG&C 2023 for further guidance.
- f) **Boundary treatment:** the choice of materials and height of boundaries should respond sensitively and positively to the surroundings (see BT.10 Boundary treatments in the S&GS DG&C 2023 and where applicable the 'Stapleford Conservation Area Character Appraisal' or 11.6 (Boundaries) in the 'Great Shelford Conservation Area Character Appraisal').
- g) **Car and cycle parking:** provision should be designed to conform with Design Code CP.08 in the S&GS DG&C 2023.
 - Public cycle parking should meet high security standards (see Cambridgeshire County Council's 'Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Toolkit for new developments' and Cambridge City Council's 'Cycle Parking Guide for New Residential Developments') so as to minimise the risk of theft.
 - In-curtilage and off-street parking should be provided to meet the needs of the development, including visitor parking, wherever possible. The indicative guidelines set out in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan (Policy TI/3: Parking Provision and Figure 11) (or its equivalent replacement) should inform overall required provision. Where a proposal, such as a business/shop, residential home or community use, is likely to generate on-street parking demand or lead to on-street vehicular clutter, this must be planned-in and designed to avoid impeding the flow of pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users, and not compromise the safety of any road users.

Policy continues overleaf...

Policy continued:

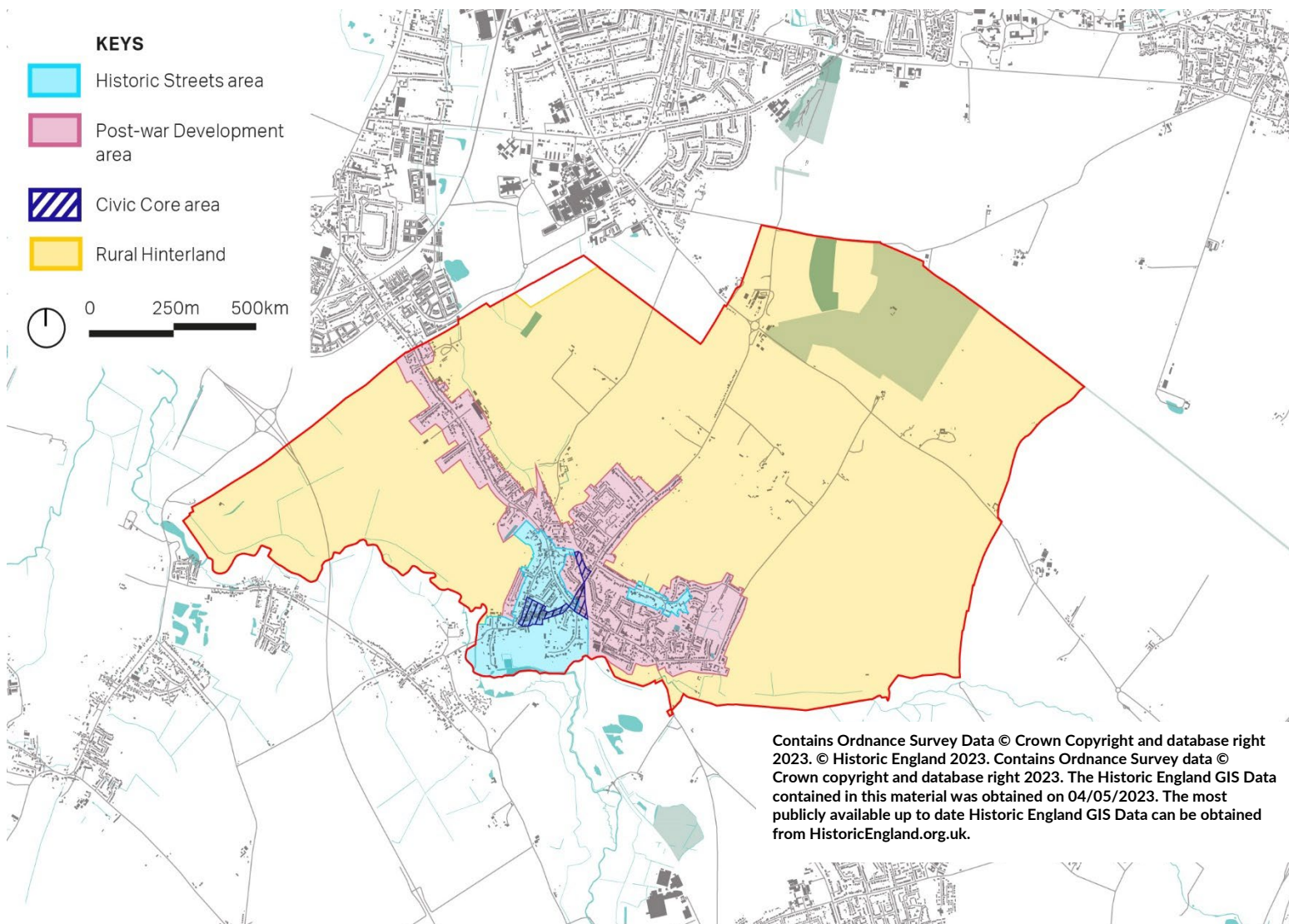
- h) **Settlement edge proposals:** when new development occurs on the settlement edge (and is otherwise allowed), the built form shall fit comfortably with the surrounding landscape and provide a soft and natural edge to the settlement. New developments should improve visual and physical connections to the landscape. See S&GS DG&C 2023 for more detail.
 - i) **Rural Hinterland design principles:** where otherwise acceptable, proposals coming forward in the Rural Hinterland Character Area (see Map 3) should comply with the design principles set out in RH.11 in the S&GS DG&C 2023.
- 2. Development proposals should ensure a good standard of amenity for people. This means:**
- a) **Avoiding overlooking or loss of private residential amenity space, loss of daylight, or overshadowing.**
 - b) **Ensuring existing occupants of neighbouring properties and future occupiers of the proposals are not exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution that may arise from the development. This can include noise, smoke, fumes, dust and lighting during construction and occupation. It can also include unacceptable levels of general disturbance arising from the development through activities such as traffic movements during construction and occupation.**

Other applicable NP policies:

- Policy S&GS 12: Trees and Development

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy HQ/1: Design Principles
- Policy TI/3: Parking Provision



Map 3: Character areas. Map reproduced with permission from S&GS Design Guidance and Codes 2023 (AECOM)

7. Climate change and biodiversity

CLIMATE CHANGE

Objective 3: New development will be designed to be (a) compatible with, and belong in, a net zero emissions future, and (b) resilient to the effects of climate change. The water supply must be protected alongside the need for new homes and other buildings.

- 7.1 There are two planning policies sitting under this theme and objective:
- Policy S&GS 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change through building design
 - Policy S&GS 8: Renewable energy infrastructure.

Community perspective

- 7.2 During community consultation in 2023 residents were asked to prioritise this NP's then draft objectives in the event that a trade-off in coverage needed to be made. Responses were clear: climate change issues should not be disregarded. In fact, they were rated the second most important of all 10 draft objectives. This corroborates findings of an initial public opinion survey in 2022, in which respondents expressed particular concerns about the impact of economic growth on carbon emissions, water and air pollution in the neighbourhood area. At that time, 71% also felt that it was 'extremely important' (and a further 26% 'somewhat important') that new developments should be designed to be as carbon neutral as possible.
- 7.3 In 2023, consultation participants were asked to describe their attitudes towards the principle of community-led energy schemes within the neighbourhood area. Three-quarters of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with this principle. Free-text comments added further colour to the overall picture, expressing support for a range of renewable energy schemes, solar panels on homes and community buildings, and noting the appeal of reduced residential utility bills. Solar arrays on farm land did not find favour and concerns were expressed that wind turbines should be sited to minimise their impact on wildlife and important views.

Policy S&GS 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change through building design

- 7.4 This NP aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure that new developments address problems, such as flooding, which are likely to occur in the neighbourhood area due to climate change. Innovative ways to achieve low or net-zero carbon buildings are encouraged. Further details and justification for this are provided below.

Background context and policy rationale

- 7.5 The UK has a legally binding requirement to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. Part of the challenge in achieving net zero carbon status is to address how homes and buildings are designed and constructed.

- 7.6 A key function of the land use planning system is to provide a regulatory gateway through which new development must pass. It is important that the S&GS NP does its bit, alongside national policy and the district-level Local Plan, in ensuring that new development is:
- compatible with, and belongs in, a net zero emissions future
 - resilient to the effects of climate change.
- 7.7 In 2019, the government announced the Future Homes Standard. This will be a set of standards which will complement Building Regulations to ensure an uplift in the energy performance of new homes. In January 2021, the government issued its response to a consultation which ran from October 2019 to February 2020, in which it confirmed that all new homes will be required to be equipped with low carbon heating and be net zero carbon-ready by 2025.

The energy hierarchy

- 7.8 The 2021 National Design Guide asserts, under one of its 10 characteristics, that well designed places and buildings follow the energy hierarchy of:
- “reducing the need for energy through passive design measures including form, orientation and fabric;
 - using energy efficient mechanical and electrical systems, including heat pumps, heat recovery and LED lights; and
 - maximising renewable energy especially through decentralised sources, including on-site generation and community-led initiatives.”
- National Design Guide 2021 (Characteristics 9 Resources)

Net zero carbon toolkit

- 7.9 Developers are signposted to tools to assist with the planning, design and delivery of low carbon developments that can belong (once the national grid system has been decarbonised) in a net zero emissions future.
- 7.10 The Net Zero carbon toolkit, prepared by Levitt Bernstein, Elementa, Passivhaus Trust and Etude, and commissioned by West Oxfordshire District Council in collaboration with Cotswold District Council and Forest of Dean District Council, is aimed at small and medium sized house builders, architects, self-builders and consultants. It is available to view at www.westoxon.gov.uk/netzerocarbontoolkit.
- 7.11 The document explains that a net zero carbon home in operation is “very energy efficient and has an ultra low level of space heating demand. It does not use any fossil fuels on site and therefore improves air quality. It also generates renewable energy on site and is cheap to run.”
- 7.12 The approach taken in the toolkit is that net zero carbon buildings are supported by three core principles:
1. energy efficiency. Applicable to energy used for heating, hot water, ventilation, lighting, cooking and appliances
 2. low carbon heating. Low carbon sources of heat are an essential feature. The toolkit states that new buildings should be built with a low carbon heating system and must not connect to the gas network
 3. renewable energy generation. The toolkit states that renewable energy generation (e.g. through solar photovoltaic panels) should be at least equal to the energy use of the building.

- 7.13 In addition, the toolkit looks at the embodied carbon in materials used in each development.
- 7.14 People considering new development proposals in the neighbourhood area are encouraged to use the toolkit. The toolkit also provides guidance and advice to homeowners looking to retrofit or extend their existing property. It includes information on how they can implement energy efficiency measures and begin the process of decarbonising their homes in a more affordable, phased approach.
- 7.15 The toolkit includes a set of energy targets (expressed as metrics in terms of kilowatt hours per square metre per year) for space heating demand, energy use intensity, electricity generation intensity and embodied energy. These energy targets are set at levels required to achieve a net zero carbon home. The toolkit provides guidance applicable to new build housing as well as to retrofit proposals. Energy targets are set out below:

New housing	Retrofit
Limit space heating demand to: 15kWh/m ² /yr	Reduce space heating demand to: 50kWh/m ² /yr
Limit energy use intensity to: 35kWh/m ² /yr	Reduce energy use intensity to: 50kWh/m ² /yr
Electricity generation intensity at least at: 120kWh/m ² _{tp} /yr	Electricity generation intensity at least at: 120kWh/m ² _{tp} /yr

- 7.16 The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan proposes a policy which establishes similar energy performance targets. It proposes that all new dwellings should achieve a space heating demand of 15-20kWh/m²/yr and that all dwellings should achieve an energy use intensity of no more than 35kWh/m²/yr. Furthermore, the Committee on Climate Change recommended in its 2019 'Housing Fit for the Future' report that a space heating demand of 15-20kWh/m²/yr is required if the UK is to meet its net zero carbon commitment.

Retrofit proposals – additional guidance

- 7.17 Further toolkits which could be helpful to applicants and homeowners wishing to improve the energy performance of their homes are:
- the 'Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide', prepared by the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) and available to access at www.leti.uk/. Its approach aligns with that in the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit referenced above
 - the 'Retrofitting your home' guide, published by Cambridge City Council in 2023. The guide provides bespoke guidance for seven different house types (e.g. pre-1914 properties, small semi-detached 1920-50 properties). The guide is relevant to house types in the S&GS neighbourhood area. See www.cambridge.gov.uk
- 7.18 The retrofit guides emphasise the importance of taking a 'fabric first' and a 'whole house approach'. 'Fabric first' refers to improving the performance of a building's materials and construction before installing low carbon or energy efficient technologies. A 'whole house approach' means taking into consideration the specific characteristics of a building, including the way it is used by its occupants, before

selecting the best retrofit steps and the order in which to implement them. This recognises that retrofit measures when taken forward in isolation can have unintended consequences (e.g. draught proofing without improving ventilation could lead to poor indoor air quality, damp and increase the risk of summer overheating).

Traditional buildings and the historic environment

- 7.19 For owners of traditional buildings (usually built before 1919 and likely to have solid rather than cavity walls or be constructed from solid timber) who wish to improve the energy efficiency and environmental performance of their buildings, a bespoke approach or 'whole building approach' will be needed to enable the best possible balance to be struck between saving energy, reducing carbon emissions, sustaining heritage significance (in the case of heritage assets) and maintaining a healthy building. Historic England has published guidance on this topic, available to view at <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/#ImproveEE>.
- 7.20 In addition, the Sustainable Traditional Building Alliance provides a range of advice and resources suitable for people wishing to retrofit older properties to improve environmental performance in a responsible way and without unintended consequences: <https://stbauk.org/whole-house-approach/>

Installing photovoltaic systems in conservation areas, on or within the setting of listed buildings

- 7.21 The significance of heritage assets (including conservation areas, listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets) can be harmed or lost through their alteration or through development taking place within their settings. This is recognised in the Conservation Area Character Appraisals for both Great Shelford and Stapleford.
- 7.22 Importantly, however, the installation of photovoltaic systems on listed buildings or buildings within the two conservation areas can, depending on detail such as location, visual prominence, colour, reflectance, size and symmetry of panels, take place without harming the historic environment. This is recognised by Historic England in its 2018 publication 'Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings: Solar Electric.'

Water stress in South Cambridgeshire

- 7.23 South Cambridgeshire district is in a designated area of water stress. South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan (see Policy CC/4: Water Efficiency) therefore requires all residential development to achieve a minimum water efficiency equivalent to 110 litres per person per day. The emerging Greater Cambridge Plan is likely to introduce higher standards. The Climate Change Topic Paper prepared in 2021 to support the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan presents evidence which suggests that existing abstraction is causing environmental problems and, as a result, future development cannot be supplied with water by increased abstraction from chalk aquifers and must instead be met in other ways, such as reduced usage. The 'Integrated Water Management Study – Outline Water Cycle Study, 2021' which supports the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan has shown that 80 litres per person per dwelling per day is achievable when making full use of water re-use measures, including rainwater and grey water harvesting.
- 7.24 In terms of water usage, applicants are encouraged to use the Fittings Approach set out in Table 2.2 of Part G of the Building Regulations.

Adapting to climate change through building design

- 7.25 Development proposals should also deliver future-proofed buildings and associated green infrastructure with respect to extreme weather events (heatwaves, drought and flood events). Examples include:
- providing designed-in overhangs on south- and west-facing elevations of buildings to offer external shading during hotter summers
 - ensuring that all buildings are well-ventilated, paying particular attention to building types known to be at high risk from summer overheating, such as top floor flats
 - positioning trees and vegetation to off-set overheating in south-facing homes, help insulate buildings from winter elements and filter pollution
 - using tree planting and green infrastructure as a way of storing carbon (note that some habitats (such as species-rich grassland, heathland and wetland) function as a carbon store and are therefore not suited for additional tree planting). Species should be selected where they will enhance local biodiversity, such as native planting, and/or are capable of adapting to the changing climate.
- 7.26 Adapting to climate change also means not building on the flood plain and ensuring that surface water flood risk is fully taken into account. The requirement for undertaking flood risk assessments as part of new planning applications in areas susceptible to flood risk is set out in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan, the NPPF 2023 and national planning practice guidance. It is not considered to add value as a NP-level additional requirement. However, regardless of where a development comes forward, surface water run-off needs to be appropriately managed, especially as weather patterns continue to change and the number and extremity of heavy rainfall events increase. Policy S&GS 7 therefore requires this to be addressed as part of any proposal which introduces new buildings or otherwise increases areas of impermeable surfaces.

Sustainability Best Practice Guide

- 7.27 Policy S&GS 7 offers support for development proposals which adopt innovative approaches to the construction of low and net zero carbon homes, extensions, and buildings, and which demonstrate sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency levels (such as Passivhaus or similar standards). The approach supplements Local Plan Policy CC/1 'Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change', which requires applicants to submit a sustainability statement. The Local Plan is supported by the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, in which Appendix 1b provides a comprehensive checklist for the contents of such a sustainability statement.
- 7.28 This part of the Plan sets out a best practice guide for developers on ways in which a positive response to these policies can be applied.
- 7.29 The following are matters where development proposals can deliver future-proofed (climate change adapted) buildings and associated green infrastructure with respect to extreme weather events (heatwaves, drought, and flood events):
- providing external shading, where needed to avoid overheating during the lifetime of the building and taking account of rising temperatures
 - ensuring that all new buildings are well ventilated, paying special attention to building types or parts of buildings at higher risk, such as flat-roofed buildings and top floor flats
 - using or planting trees and vegetation in and around built structures

- designing-in systems for rainwater capture/harvesting and greywater recycling, and
 - minimising the area of impermeable surfaces and incorporating green or biodiverse roofs where practical.
- 7.30 The preparation of a sustainability statement to support planning applications can assist in delivering best practice. They describe how a scheme:
- applies the energy hierarchy
 - adopts a 'whole building approach', or in the case of a refurbishment project a 'fabric first' approach, to optimising energy efficiency, and
 - minimises water use.
- 7.31 In the case of smaller applications, such as residential extensions, rather than preparing a separate document the 'sustainability statement' could be included as a section in the Planning Statement which is prepared alongside the application.
- 7.32 Where appropriate, major development proposals can include a whole-life cycle carbon emissions assessment to demonstrate actions taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its lifetime. The Royal Institute for Chartered Surveyors (RICS) has a useful methodology in place.
- 7.33 Sustainability statements typically include details about:
- how the energy hierarchy has been applied in the approach to minimising the overall energy demand of a proposed building
 - the calculated space heating demand expressed in kWh/m²/yr
 - the calculated energy use intensity expressed in kWh/m²/yr
 - where renewables are being installed, the electricity generation intensity in terms of kWh/m²_{fp}/yr
 - the estimated water consumption wherever applicable, noting that for some applications water usage may not be affected by the proposal. For residential development proposals, water consumption should be set at no more than 110 litres per person per day and ideally at 80 litres per person per day. For non-residential development proposals, the building's water efficiency performance should be provided using the BREEAM Wat 01 calculator.
- 7.34 Sustainability statements can also usefully include information on any climate change adaptation measures which have been incorporated, such as the use of external shading to prevent overheating of buildings.
- 7.35 Applicants preparing sustainability statements are signposted to the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit and Retrofit Guides referenced in the Plan.

Policy S&GS 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change through building design

- 1. Development proposals which adopt innovative approaches to the construction of low and net zero carbon homes, extensions, and buildings, and which demonstrate sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency levels (such as Passivhaus or similar standards) will be supported.**
- 2. Proposals for major development should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) and infiltration SuDs should be used wherever practicable, subject to infiltration SuDs being suitable to the location.**
- 3. All other development proposals involving new buildings or which increase areas of impermeable surfaces should demonstrate that all surface water run-off is accommodated within the site using appropriate surface water drainage arrangements in general, and SuDs wherever practicable.**

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy CC/1: Mitigation and adaptation to climate change
- Policy CC/2: Renewable and low carbon energy generation
- Policy CC/4: Water efficiency
- Policy CC/7: Water quality
- Policy CC/8: Sustainable drainage systems
- Policy CC/9: Managing flood risk

Also relevant:

- 'Greater Cambridge Integrated Water Management Study, Outline Water Cycle Study 2021'
- Climate Change Topic Paper, published alongside the First Proposals (Regulation 18: The Preferred Options) Consultation 2021, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
- Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, 2020
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD)
- Cambridgeshire County Council Surface Water Planning Guidance

Key notes on differences between policy in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan-level policy:

- Policy CC/1: Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals which demonstrate and embed the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation, and requires the submission of a Sustainability Statement to demonstrate this. The supporting text to the policy provides more context and, in terms of energy efficiency, refers generally to 'Building Regulations', rather than linking performance with specific energy targets, measured in kWh/m²/yr
- the supporting text to Policy S&GS 7 sets out the information relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation that could be included in the Sustainability Statement so as to demonstrate the achievement of an energy efficient and water efficient development. The suggested standards are linked to energy targets, measured in kWh/m²/yr (rather than to Building Regulations) and water efficiency targets

- Policy CC/3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments includes carbon emission targets for proposals for new dwellings and new non-residential buildings of 1,000m² or more in size. However, these targets are based on carbon reduction linked to building regulations and are not specifically aligned with achieving net zero carbon homes.

Policy S&GS 8: Renewable energy schemes in Stapleford and Great Shelford

- 7.36 Proposals for small-scale community-led renewable or low carbon energy projects will be supported as long as they respect or enhance the local landscape. The background context and policy rationale for this are outlined below.

Background context and policy rationale

- 7.37 This NP recognises that low carbon and renewable energy infrastructure is an important part of the pathway to achieving net zero.
- 7.38 National planning practice guidance⁷ is clear that planning has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in locations where the environmental impact is acceptable. It also recognises⁸ that community initiatives are likely to play an increasingly important role in this and should be encouraged as a way of providing positive local benefits from renewable energy development.
- 7.39 Policy S&GS 8 supports small-scale community-led low carbon and renewable energy infrastructure in line with Local Plan policy, subject to the landscape and settlement character being respected or enhanced in the neighbourhood area. For Stapleford and Great Shelford, this means that proposals must be compatible with Policy S&GS 12 'Protecting Stapleford and Great Shelford's landscape character'.
- 7.40 Small-scale means delivering infrastructure aimed at contributing towards reducing the carbon footprint of Plan-area residents and does not include commercial scale projects designed primarily to export to the national grid. Suitable projects could be a single community wind turbine, the installation of a solar array on a community building, or a community heat network.
- 7.41 For the avoidance of doubt, no work has been undertaken to indicate that the neighbourhood area is suitable for wind energy development and the inclusion of this policy should not be interpreted to mean that it has.
- 7.42 Local examples of small community-led schemes include:
- Gamlingay wind turbine: a 33m diameter wind turbine has been installed by the community just outside the village. It is significantly offsetting the village's carbon footprint and a portion of the profits from the turbine's operation is spent on local charities and community projects. The project was funded entirely by local residents and businesses. See [Gamlingay Community Turbine \(g-c-t.uk\)](http://g-c-t.uk) for further information
 - Granchester community heat network project: in 2022, a feasibility study was conducted by Grantchester Parish Council with technical support from Scene and

⁷ See paragraph 001 Reference ID: 5-001-20140306 (06032014)
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy>

⁸ See paragraph 004 Reference ID:5-004-20140306

Townrock Energy, and funding from the Rural Community Energy Fund. The project sought to define how a low carbon heating system could benefit Grantchester residents and businesses through reduced energy bills and carbon emissions. It found that a heat network for Grantchester would be financially viable with grant support, having the potential to provide carbon emission reductions and being cost competitive with current forms of energy (i.e. oil, LPG, and direct electric heating). The primary heat source recommended was a water-source heat pump, utilising heat from the River Cam to supply local homes and businesses. See Grantchester Heat Network – Scene (<https://scene.community/case-studies/grantchester-heat-network>) for further information.

Policy S&GS 8: Renewable energy schemes in Stapleford and Great Shelford

Proposals for small-scale community-led renewable or low carbon energy projects will be supported provided that:

- a) they protect or enhance landscape character in line with Policy S&GS 12, and
- b) they demonstrate local community involvement and leadership (such as being led by a community land trust).

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy CC/2: Renewable and low carbon energy generation

Key notes on differences between policy in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan-level policy

- Policy CC/2: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation supports in principle (and subject to criteria) proposals which generate energy from renewable and low carbon energy sources (with the exception of wind turbines). The policy also provides a decision-making framework for proposals for wind energy development involving one or more wind turbines. Renewable and low carbon energy sources could include photovoltaic panels, wind turbines, solar thermal panels, air or ground source heat pumps, anaerobic digestion, combined heat and power plants, and biomass boilers where heat is generated. Policy S&GS 8 provides a local level of detail by also requiring proposals to protect or enhance landscape character in line with Policy S&GS 12.
- Clause 2 in Policy CC/2 rules out any wind turbine proposal unless the development site is in an area identified via a neighbourhood plan as suitable for wind energy development. The supporting text to Policy S&GS 8 refers to a single community wind turbine which could, in principle, be supported under the policy. The intention of Policy S&GS 8 is to allow such a proposal to come forward, if the area has first been identified as being suitable for wind energy. This is in line with footnote 58 in the NPPF 2023. The inclusion of the policy does not in any way indicate that the S&GS neighbourhood area has already been identified as being suitable for wind energy. Without Policy S&GS 8, any wind turbine proposals (even a small scale community wind turbine) would be ruled out through Policy CC/2 of the Local Plan.

BIODIVERSITY

Objective 4: Biodiversity enhancements will be delivered at all development sites within the neighbourhood area. We will also protect and enhance specific features and sites of ecological value identified in the *Landscape Character Assessment*.

- 7.43 There are three planning policies under this theme and objective:
- Policy S&GS 9: Protecting and enhancing nature networks and sites of biodiversity value in Stapleford and Great Shelford
 - Policy S&GS 10: Mitigation hierarchy and biodiversity net gain in Stapleford and Great Shelford
 - Policy S&GS 11: Trees and development.

Community perspective

- 7.44 Community engagement in 2022 and 2023 brought residents' biodiversity concerns to the fore. The issue was first addressed in 2022, with 'loss of biodiversity' emerging as residents' primary environmental concern within the neighbourhood area. This was generally associated with a prospective loss of green sites to development. 93% of survey participants agreed with the statement that 'conditions to protect and enhance wildlife must be included with new development proposals before they are granted full planning permission'. Respondents noted opportunities to improve biodiversity through sensitive landscaping, gardening and tree planting. 84% agreed that new wildlife corridors should be created to link up habitats within and around the villages.
- 7.45 When dealt with more explicitly in 2023, the NP's draft biodiversity objective garnered more outright support than any other draft objective, with 94% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with it. Some survey participants wanted measurable biodiversity improvements to be introduced; others noted the value of linking the S&GS NP to the aims of the Cambridge Nature Network.

Policy S&GS 9: Protecting and enhancing nature networks and sites of biodiversity value in Stapleford and Great Shelford

- 7.46 Our area is rich in biodiversity assets which we want to protect and improve. When new development takes place, the value of our biodiversity assets should be taken into account and opportunities should be taken to enhance them. The background context and rationale behind this policy is outlined below.

Background context and policy rationale

- 7.47 Policy S&GS 9 has particular regard for Paragraph 185 in the NPPF 2023 that states that plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks.
- 7.48 MAGIC⁹ mapping data managed by Natural England shows the broad range of priority habitats. This includes areas of deciduous woodland (e.g. Nine Wells), traditional orchards, lowland meadows, lowland calcareous grassland (including land to the north of Babraham Road at Gog Magog Golf course and at Wandlebury

⁹ Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside

Country Park), good quality semi-improved grassland (Wandlebury Country Park), floodplain grazing marsh (applies to parts of the River Cam's banks southwest of Great Shelford), and the River Cam/Granta and Hobson's Brook chalk rivers. Magog Down, excluding the woods, is also lowland calcareous grassland, although MAGIC mapping data shown on Figure 4 does not currently accurately depict this.

- 7.49 Wildlife corridors and nature networks are a key feature of the neighbourhood area and there are plenty of opportunities to strengthen these. This is evidenced through a range of studies:

Natural England's MAGIC mapping work identifies four broad networks prioritised for protection, enhancement or extension. Further detail is provided in Appendix 4 to this Plan. Broadly, the corridors are:

- a) the Hobson's Brook corridor reaching into the northeastern part of Great Shelford parish
- b) a corridor to the east of this, appearing to link up to areas of deciduous woodland
- c) a corridor identified for expansion in the southern part of Stapleford parish, presumably linking with Dernford Fen SSSI in Sawston parish
- d) the large area and corridor focused around Gog Magog Golf Course SSSI and Wandlebury Country Park. Here, all land to the northeast of both settlements is identified as part of a network expansion zone.

Cambridge Nature Network (2021), prepared by Cambridge Past, Present and Future in partnership with the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, identifies five priority landscape areas and highlights the best opportunities for creating new habitats and large-scale natural greenspaces. It is a nature recovery network for the Cambridge area, prepared in response to Cambridgeshire's commitment to double the number of nature-rich habitats by 2050. The network identifies opportunities to do this and to increase access to natural greenspace. Two of the priority landscapes fall within the neighbourhood area:

- Gog Magog Hills, summarised as chalk grassland and woodlands including Wandlebury Country Park, Cherry Hinton Chalk Pit¹⁰, Roman Road, Beechwoods and Magog Down
- River Cam Corridor, summarised as the river and its tributaries, and the meadows, wetlands, parkland and woodlands which they connect.

Four out of five nature network components – namely the core area, stepping stone, core extension and corridors – are located in the neighbourhood area. In a similar fashion to the MAGIC mapping work, land to the northeast of both settlements is identified as part of a corridor linking the Gog Magog Hills with the River Cam Corridor in the City of Cambridge. See Appendix 5.

The Stapleford and Great Shelford Landscape Character Assessment (S&GS LCA 2019) identifies:

- a) tree-lined natural margins along Hobson's Brook (identified as a wildlife corridor) for retention and enhancement
- b) woodland corridor along the River Granta
- c) water meadows and riverside pastures along the banks of the River Cam and Granta.

¹⁰ The Cherry Hinton Chalk Pit is not in the S&GS neighbourhood area.

The Greater Cambridge Chalk Streams Project report (2020) provides an audit of chalk streams in the upper Cam catchment. This includes an assessment of the River Granta and Hobson's Brook, both of which run through the neighbourhood area. The report identifies issues as well as key opportunities for improvement.

Designated sites

7.50 The neighbourhood area has a large number of sites with specific designations due to their importance to biodiversity:

Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

- Gog Magog Golf Course. This supports grassland communities of the calcareous chalk grassland type. The S&GS LCA 2019 notes that the newer golf course area has a high conservation value, although it is not designated as part of the SSSI
- Roman Road. Also a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Roman Road runs along the northeastern boundary of the golf course and supports species-rich calcareous grassland communities (S&GS LCA 2019). The current status of the SSSI is unfavourable – recovering¹¹.

Local Nature Reserves:

- Beechwoods
- Nine Wells

County wildlife sites:

- Wandlebury Country Park
- River Cam/Granta
- Magog Down
- Stapleford Pit

Clay Pit, off Granhams Road

7.51 In addition to the above sites, there is a one acre informal nature reserve off Granhams Road with a variety of native flowers in a central grassland area, surrounded by trees (see Image 2 below). The site is a disused clay pit. The now exposed soil type is chalk and therefore the site is a suitable habitat for many chalk grassland plants and associated invertebrates. With support from Great Shelford Parish Council, a small team of volunteers manages the reserve by cutting the meadow areas, keeping the scrub under control and the access path clear. The Cambridge Green Belt Project prepared a Management Plan for the site in 2007. Available surveys for the site include a 2000 Tree Survey and a 2006 General Species survey. In addition, volunteers maintain a list of plant species.

New Countryside Park to be managed by the Magog Trust at Stapleford

7.52 A new countryside park in Stapleford ('Chalk Hill Down') has come forward via S106 funds attached to approval of Rangeford's 'retirement care village' on Haverhill Road. Management of the park has been transferred to The Magog Trust, with initial grass seeding taking place in 2024.

7.53 The S&GS LCA 2019, which divides the neighbourhood area into 27 distinct landscape character areas, provides further detail on ecological features and designations at the very local level.

¹¹ See <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>

Policy S&GS 9: Protecting and enhancing nature networks and sites of biodiversity value in Stapleford and Great Shelford

- 1. Development proposals which either directly or indirectly impact a site of biodiversity value in the neighbourhood area should take account of its biodiversity value and follow the mitigation hierarchy as detailed in Policy S&GS 10. Existing sites of biodiversity value are shown in Figures 3 and 4 and Map 4 and listed below:**

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- Gog Magog Golf Course
- Roman Road

Local Nature Reserves

- Beechwoods
- Nine Wells

County Wildlife Sites

- Wandlebury Country Park
- River Cam/Granta
- Stapleford Pit
- Magog Down

Hobson's Brook chalk river

Other sites of local biodiversity value

- Clay Pit, off Granhams Road
- New countryside park (approved but not yet publicly open at the time of writing) between Hinton Way and Haverhill Road

- 2. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should take reasonable and available opportunities to create or strengthen links between existing and/or new habitats through the development site. Existing nature networks in the neighbourhood area which could be relevant in this regard are:**
 - a) River Cam and River Granta corridors, including adjacent woodland and water meadows (Shelford Meadows, Hermitage Meadows, Stapleford Bridge Meadows, Bury Farm meadows)**
 - b) Hobson's Brook wildlife corridor**
 - c) Gog Magog Hills corridor, as identified in the Cambridge Nature Network (see Appendix 5).**

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy H/16: Development of Residential Gardens
- Policy NH/4: Biodiversity
- Policy NH/5: Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance
- Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure
- Policy NH/7: Ancient Woodlands and Veteran Trees

Also relevant:

- Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, 2022

- Emerging Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy



Image 2: Clay Pit, off Granhams Road

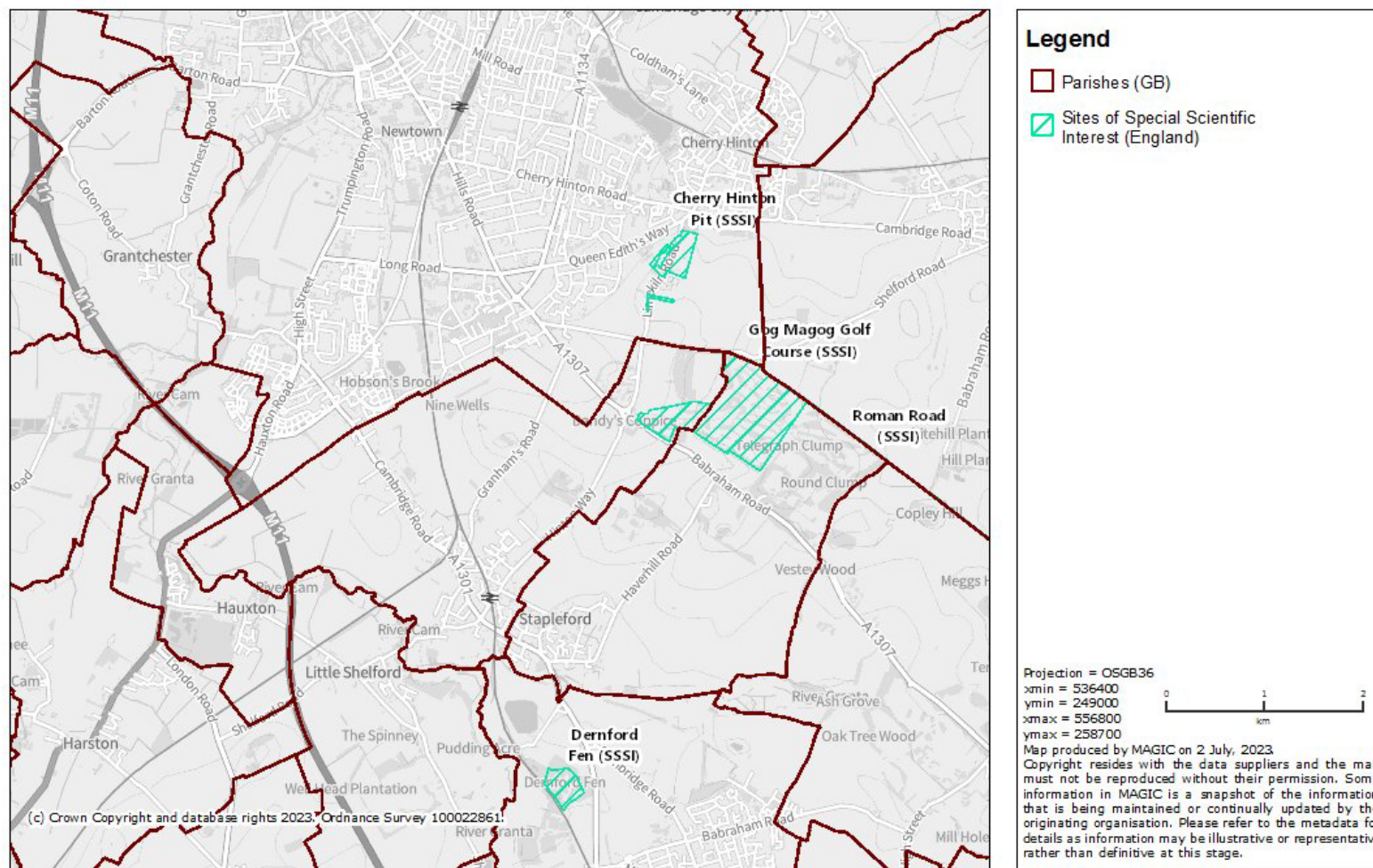


Figure 3: Gog Magog SSSI and Roman Road SSSI

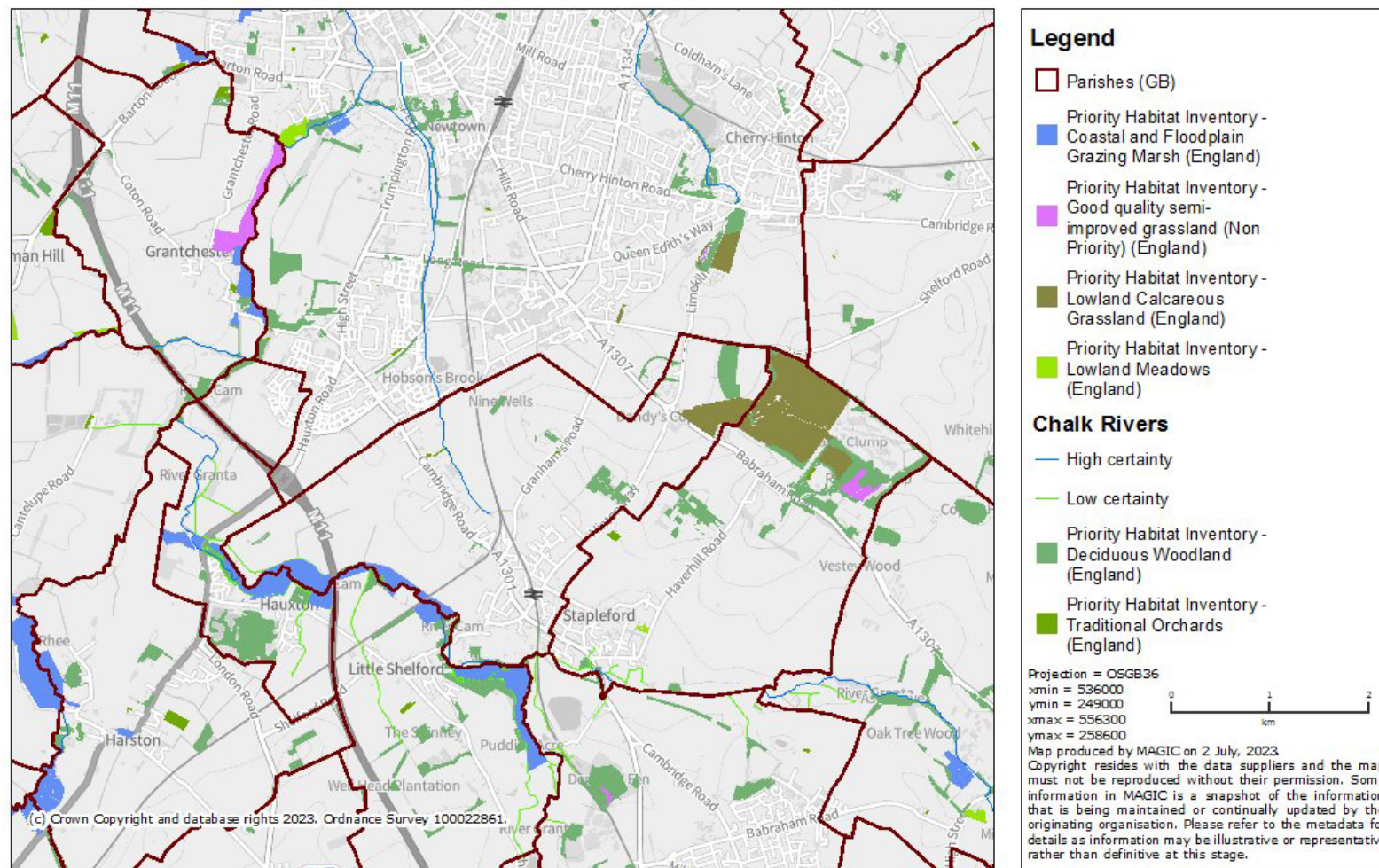
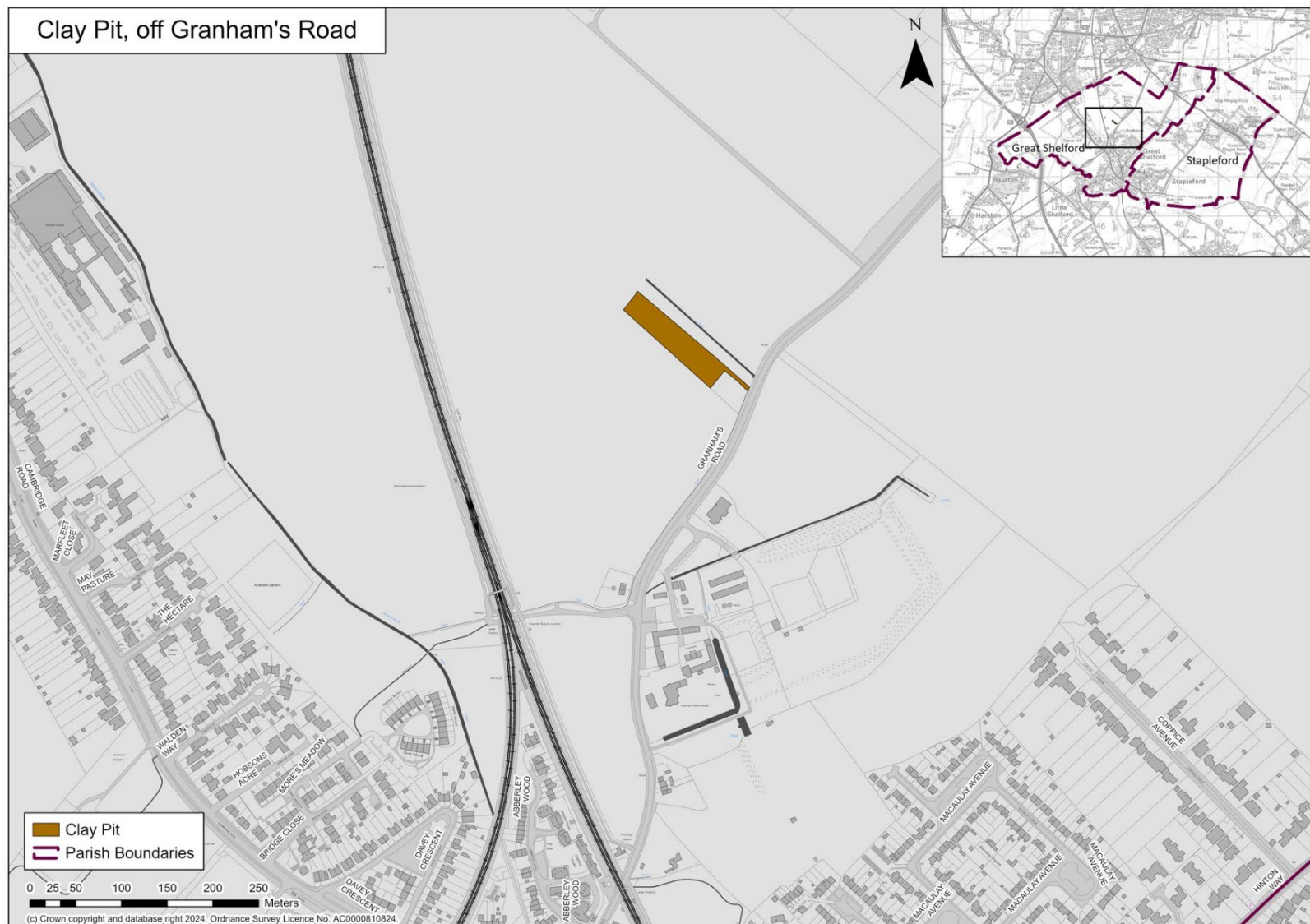


Figure 4: Priority habitats, as indicated through MAGIC mapping, extracted 2023

Note on Figure 4: Magog Down is also lowland calcareous grassland although this is not shown on the map.



Map 4: Clay Pit, off Granham's Road

Policy S&GS 10: Mitigation hierarchy and delivering biodiversity net gain and enhancements

- 7.54 Most forms of development will have some impact on biodiversity. Policy S&GS 10 applies a hierarchical approach to mitigation. This means looking first at measures which avoid harm before considering measures which mitigate harm. It also means refusing permission for proposals which are likely to result in significant harm, post-mitigation. Additionally, Policy S&GS 10 focuses on ensuring that biodiversity enhancements are achieved through new development, whether this is via the now mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirement or through smaller interventions implemented as part of small-scale proposals, such as householder extensions. In the case of BNG, Policy S&GS 10 prioritises on-site BNG over off-site and, where off-site is necessary, opportunities should in the first instance be sought at sites elsewhere in the neighbourhood area.

Mitigation hierarchy

- 7.55 The term 'mitigation hierarchy' refers to the requirement set out in paragraph 186 of the NPPF 2023, whereby if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. The mitigation hierarchy is explained in more detail in planning practice guidance¹².

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 7.56 The Environment Act 2021 has mandated a minimum measurable BNG for most types of development. This requires that the biodiversity value of the development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the site. Biodiversity value is measured using the statutory biodiversity metric. Applicants must use the statutory biodiversity metric tool when preparing applications:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

- 7.57 Certain types of development are exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain: permitted development rights; householder applications; development which only has 'de minimis' impact on habitats; development undertaken for the purpose of fulfilling the BNG planning condition for another type of development; high-speed railway networks; and certain self-build and custom build developments.
- 7.58 Where it is not possible to meet all BNG requirements on-site, applicants will be required to fulfil them through a combination of on-site gains, off-site gains (registered and allocated to the development) and, as a last resort, through the purchase of biodiversity credits. When seeking delivery of biodiversity gain off-site, the local authority will prioritise gains within the vicinity of the development site. In this regard, the opportunities identified in Policy S&GS 9 and Appendices 4 and 5 are relevant.

Other biodiversity enhancement measures

Biodiversity enhancement opportunities exist for development types otherwise exempt from BNG. This includes the installation of swift bricks (a universal nest brick

¹² See planning practice guidance paragraph 019 Reference ID: 8-019-20240214

suitable for a wider range of small bird species), bat boxes, hedgehog highways, green roofs and walls. Clause 5 in S&GS Policy 10 requires such opportunities to be taken. Where swift bricks are being installed, this should be in accordance with best practice guidance BS 42021 or CIEEM. Where advised by an ecologist, artificial nest cups for house martins may be suitable instead of swift bricks. Guidance is available here: <https://cieem.net/resource/the-swift-a-bird-you-need-to-help/>

Policy S&GS 10: Mitigation hierarchy and biodiversity net gain in Stapleford and Great Shelford

Mitigation hierarchy

- 1. For all development proposals, the hierarchy of mitigation should be embedded into the design of the development with the following steps implemented in order:**
 - a) firstly, avoid impacts. This means retaining habitats of value for enhancement and management and retaining species in situ**
 - b) secondly, mitigate impacts where these have been found to be unavoidable, through replacement of lost protected and priority habitats and accommodating displaced species within the site boundary**
 - c) thirdly, compensate if mitigation measures are insufficient.**
- 2. Where significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development proposal cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, the proposal will not be supported.**

Biodiversity net gain

- 3. Development proposals should demonstrate measurable net biodiversity gain, equivalent to a minimum 10% increase, and this should be achieved on site wherever possible and in accordance with BS8683:2021-Process for designing and implementing biodiversity net gain (BNG).**
- 4. Where off-site BNG is necessary, opportunities for delivery within the neighbourhood area should be considered before looking at opportunities elsewhere. Appropriate measures for delivering BNG in the neighbourhood area include:**
 - a) enhancing the network of species and habitats currently present in the neighbourhood area, as identified in Policy S&GS 9**
 - b) creating new natural habitats, or strengthening or restoring existing natural habitats within locally identified opportunity areas (see initiatives identified in Policy S&GS 9 and Appendices 4 and 5)**
 - c) planting additional trees and hedgerows, prioritising species which will enhance local biodiversity, such as native species and/or species capable of adapting to the changing climate.**
- 5. Development proposals, including those which are exempt from BNG requirements (such as householder extensions), which take opportunities to integrate biodiversity measures within a building through the provision of integrated bird boxes (such as swift bricks), bat boxes and hedgehog highways will be supported.**

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy H/16: Development of Residential Gardens
- Policy NH/4: Biodiversity
- Policy NH/5: Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance
- Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure
- Policy NH/7: Ancient Woodlands and Veteran Trees

Also relevant:

- Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, 2022
- Emerging Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Policy S&GS 11: Trees and development

- 7.59 Trees and hedges of value should be retained. Any planning application which may impact trees and hedges should show how they will be protected during construction. More trees should be replaced than are lost, and all new trees and hedges should prioritise species which enhance biodiversity. Developers are expected to provide for future maintenance. The background context and rationale behind Policy S&GS 11 are presented below.

Background context and policy rationale

- 7.60 Trees are important to both the natural environment and the character of the built environment in the villages. Policy S&GS 6 'Development and Design in Stapleford and Great Shelford' is therefore also important when considering trees.
- 7.61 The Trees & Development Sites Supplementary Planning Document, adopted by SCDC in 2009, notes a number of benefits to trees which are all highly relevant today:
- **providing visual buffers and softening hard landscaping** – blending the harsh edges of the built environment, providing scale and a sense of perspective
 - **providing 'shelter' against weather, sun, wind and rain** – shading buildings in the summer reduces the requirement for air conditioning and insulates buildings from the winter elements, and has the potential to reduce heating and cooling costs
 - **reducing and buffering sound** – tree canopies can help absorb and dissipate noise, creating a more peaceful and tranquil environment in which to live and work
 - **filtering pollution** – trees can reduce the amount of dust particles in the air we breathe by collecting them on their leaves. Dust is then either washed from the leaves by rain or falls to the ground in the autumn
 - **fresh air for all** – trees provide clean air as they take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen, thereby acting as carbon sinks
 - **providing habitats** – trees provide a habitat for mammals, birds and invertebrates, offering food and shelter
 - **providing a 'feel good factor'** – trees contribute beneficially to human life in ways that are often overlooked
 - **enhancing a new development** – existing trees on a new development can add a sense of maturity to a new building and can enhance property value if incorporated at the design stage. New trees will mature with a development, enhancing the built environment.

- 7.62 The S&GS DG&C 2023 notes that within the Historic Streets Character Area (covering the Great Shelford conservation area and the Stapleford conservation area), “prominent mature trees provide a dramatic backdrop, creating depth and a lush natural atmosphere”. The ‘Stapleford Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2021’ identifies individual trees and groups of trees which are important to character. The map showing this is in Appendix 3 to the NP.
- 7.63 The importance of trees in the setting and wider landscape of the villages is undoubted. Both settlements are largely hidden by trees when seen from higher ground (e.g. as at the crest of Granhams Road or Magog Down).
- 7.64 The S&GS LCA 2019 notes that mature trees on the edges of the villages within smaller fields, along hedgerows and in gardens help to create a wooded setting for the villages. This includes mature forest-scale trees such as oak, beech, lime or ash. These trees are not always replaced when lost and the S&GS LCA 2019 notes that generally this will lead to opening up of views to development and loss of rural character.
- 7.65 As appropriate to their scale and nature, planning applications for a development site where trees are present and at risk of being impacted by the proposed development, should be accompanied by:
- a tree survey as outlined in BS 5837 2012 (or its equivalent replacement). This also includes any hedges on site and any adjacent trees to the site which may be affected by the proposed development, and
 - an arboricultural impact assessment and a tree protection plan showing how trees and hedges are to be protected and sustained during the construction process.
- 7.66 The S&GS DG&C 2023 includes design codes for the retention and provision of trees as part of new development. For ease of reference this is provided below.

Retain	Replace	Improve
Tree surveys and impact assessments should be provided which highlight the trees on a site which are to be retained and those which are to be removed. It is preferable to retain a good quality tree than to replace it. • Where significant trees are located on site, independent surveys to assess the development impact must be completed. This should inform the local community and could lead to objections where significant trees are impacted.	Ensuring trees removed from development land are proportionately replaced is important to maintaining current levels of canopy cover and green infrastructure. A common misconception is that replacing on a 1-for-1 basis is proportional. This is not the case. 1-for-1 replacement can reduce canopy cover, green infrastructure habitat and public amenity. • Where trees are to be replaced, consider using a proportionate scale to determine numbers of replacement trees required (replaced to at least 2:1 ratio). Replacement trees should be mature saplings (3-15 years).	The NPPF requires ‘improvement’, ‘enhancement’ and ‘net gain’. These are not words that aim to maintain a status quo on trees. • For major development sites, an area of development land could be dedicated for tree planting in the form of a multifunctional community woodland. Relative population density and designated land use types put pressure on a greater density of development and often result in side-lining tree planting and biodiverse green infrastructure design.

Table 6: Tree strategy. Source: Stapleford and Great Shelford Design Guidance and Codes

Policy S&GS 11: Trees and development

1. Proposals which would affect existing trees and hedgerows, or which include the introduction of new trees and hedgerows, should respond positively to the following principles:
 - trees and hedgerows of good arboricultural value (category A or B in value using BS 5837) should be retained as an integral part of the design of any development, except where their long-term survival would be compromised by their age or physical condition or there are exceptional and overriding benefits in accepting their loss
 - where trees are to be replaced, replacement trees within the site will be required, taking into account the size, species and condition of the lost items but at a minimum 2:1 ratio (meaning that for every tree lost at least 2 should be provided)
 - replacement trees should be planted at a suitable size to compensate for the removed trees, and
 - new tree and hedgerow planting should prioritise species which enhance biodiversity (native planting and/or species capable of adapting to the changing climate).
2. Where new trees or hedgerows are being planted as part of a new scheme, developers will be expected to provide robust arrangements for their future maintenance so that:
 - the trees have a strong chance of establishing and thriving in the first place
 - any trees or hedgerows not surviving within 5 years of having been planted are replaced, together with an updated maintenance regime.

Other applicable NP policies:

- Policy S&GS 9: Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and nature networks in Stapleford and Great Shelford
- Policy S&GS 10: Mitigation hierarchy and Biodiversity Net Gain in Stapleford and Great Shelford

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy H/16: Development of Residential Gardens
- Policy NH/4: Biodiversity
- Policy NH/5: Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance
- Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure
- Policy NH/7: Ancient Woodlands and Veteran Trees

Also relevant:

- Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, 2022

8. Our rural setting and landscape

Objective 5: New development will actively minimise its impact on the landscape character of the neighbourhood area, recognising the value of long views and vistas into and out of the rural setting of the villages, the open spaces within it and, critically, the separation of the villages from the expanding urbanised Greater Cambridge area.

- 8.1 There are four planning policies under this theme and objective:
- Policy S&GS 12: Protecting and enhancing Stapleford's and Great Shelford's landscape character
 - Policy S&GS 13: Important Countryside Frontage
 - Policy S&GS 14: Local Green Spaces and Protected Village Amenity Area
 - Policy S&GS 15: Preserving our dark landscape.

Community perspective

- 8.2 'Landscape character' is an umbrella term which was discussed in various ways with respect to the neighbourhood area during two main periods of community engagement. Thus emerged a general picture of two village populations which place high value on their rural setting and views, and whose identity separate from the City of Cambridge is reinforced, culturally and physically, by the surrounding green belt and green fields. There is, then, a discernible tension between local housing needs and the availability of land for development in an area with extremely limited sites within the existing development framework.
- 8.3 In consultation in 2022:
- 90% of respondents agreed that visual links with the landscape from within and outside the villages are important and should be protected
 - 86% were worried about the erosion of surrounding green belt over the next 15-20 years
 - 61% felt that green belt land around the villages should not be built on, with 31% agreeing that it should only be built on in very special circumstances (such as meeting a specific housing need in the villages).
- 8.4 Such priorities were tested and dissected in more detail in 2023 and revealed that:
- 89% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the 'rural setting and landscape' draft objective
 - the same draft objective was residents' number one priority to pursue in the event of a trade-off in NP content needing to be made
 - all polled areas of visually important open land were valued, led by each village's Recreation Ground and contiguous green spaces
 - all 26 views presented at consultation were considered to be either very important or important to the neighbourhood area
 - the most valued views from outside the settled zones of the neighbourhood area are from high ground, multi-directional, and regionally and locally significant, such as those from Magog Down and Wandlebury Country Park
 - the most valued views from within the settled area of the parishes are multi-directional, taking in river/meadows or long views across open arable fields

- proposals for Local Green Space designations for Collier Field in Stapleford and Grange Field in Great Shelford attracted significant support
- all proposed countryside frontages gained considerably more support than opposition, with that between housing on the north side of Gog Magog Way and Chalk Hill, Stapleford, attracting most support.

8.5 It should be noted that all landscape character designations presented at consultation (e.g. 'Local Green Space', 'countryside frontage' and 'visually important open land') were reviewed in the process of writing this report and some subjects were subsequently allocated a different designation or even, following either landowner engagement or independent examination, removed from this version of the NP. This does not in any way undermine residents' expressed preferences; it merely permits the most appropriate planning protection(s) to be assigned and acknowledges some landowner concerns.

Policy S&GS 12: Protecting and enhancing Stapleford and Great Shelford's landscape character

8.6 The 'Stapleford and Great Shelford Landscape Character Assessment 2019' supports the S&GS NP with detailed planning and land management guidance for 27 unbuilt zones across our parishes. All development proposals must be sensitive to this guidance, minimising their impact on the landscape, protecting or enhancing valued features, and retaining the existing area of separation between Stapleford and Great Shelford and the City of Cambridge. Further background context to justify Policy S&GS 12 is provided below.

Background context and policy rationale

"The complex texture and conservation value of the chalk grassland and woodland on the hills and the river corridor with its bordering meadows and pastures contrasts with wide expanses of the rolling arable hills and flat open lowland arable areas with their extensive views over the countryside.

Notable local character elements are the settled hilltop estates, enclosed farmland pastures, the water meadows and riverside pastures, and the historic country parks.

The countryside surrounding the village centres of Great Shelford and Stapleford provides both a setting for the villages, separates the villages from the city of Cambridge and provides a resource for public recreation and enjoyment."

A summary of landscape character area in the S&GS LCA 2019

8.7 The neighbourhood area lies in the East Anglian Chalk National Character Area 87.

Stapleford and Great Shelford Landscape Character Assessment (S&GS LCA 2019)

8.8 The S&GS LCA 2019 covers the unbuilt areas in the neighbourhood area. The study breaks the neighbourhood area down into 10 landscape character area types, which are then further segmented into different landscape character areas, of which there are 27 in total (Map 5). For each of these, the document provides (in section 3) advice and guidance on:

- key characteristics
- overall character
- visual characteristics

- historic land use
 - key planning and land management issues and planning constraints
 - sensitivities to change
 - proposed landscape strategy objectives
 - suggested landscape planning guidelines
 - suggested land management guidelines.
- 8.9 Policy S&GS 12 (clause 1d) states that proposals should not adversely affect the contribution that areas of Visually Important Open Land make to the character, amenity, tranquillity and function of the two villages. These areas are shown on Map 6 and were initially identified as part of the S&GS LCA 2019. To assist with the implementation of Policy S&GS 12, Appendix 6 sets out how each of these areas of land currently contribute to the character, amenity, tranquillity and function of the two villages.
- 8.10 Policy S&GS 12 is a self-contained policy. Proposals within or otherwise affecting the Stapleford and Great Shelford Improved Landscape Area should also comply with Policy S&GS 20 of the Plan.

Heritage assets in Stapleford and Great Shelford's landscape

- 8.11 As detailed in Chapter 3 of S&GS LCA 2019 (where the 'historic land use' is described for each of the 27 character areas of the neighbourhood area) and Chapter 4 of this NP, the neighbourhood area is rich in heritage assets. Many of these are key features in the landscape, such as the six scheduled monuments (described in Chapter 2 and shown in Map 2) as well as other below ground archaeological assets. The latter includes extensive cropmarks outlining areas of prehistoric to Roman settlement, notably to the west of Great Shelford (see Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) ref. 04503), ring ditches (e.g. CHER ref. 08337), as well as medieval earthworks (e.g. CHER 08903), tumuli (e.g. CHER 08358) and cropmark enclosures (CHER ref. 08344) to the east of Stapleford.
- 8.12 As these heritage assets are a feature of Stapleford and Great Shelford's landscape and settlement character, they are relevant to proposals which impact landscape and settlement character. Notwithstanding this, development proposals which affect heritage assets will be assessed against existing strategic and national planning policies. This includes Policy NH/14 'Heritage Assets' in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan which supports development proposals where the significance of heritage assets (including non-designated heritage assets and archaeological remains) are sustained and enhanced as appropriate to their significance.

The Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment 2021

- 8.13 This study was commissioned by GCSP and is a strategic-level character assessment which covers the whole of the Greater Cambridge planning area. Chapter 4 of the document provides detailed descriptions of 34 character areas falling under nine different character types. The character areas applicable to Stapleford and Great Shelford are 'character area 3D: Cam & Granta Tributaries Lowland Farmlands', which falls under character area type '3: Lowland Farmlands', together with '7B: Gog Magog Chalk Hills', which falls under character area type '7: Chalk Hills'.
- 8.14 Chapter 6 of the document confirms the diversity of landscapes within the setting of the City of Cambridge as one of the City's defining characteristics. The variety of landscapes is reflected by (a) the diversity of landscape character areas within the

three broad landscapes surrounding the City (the fens, the claylands and the chalklands) (b) the extensive river valley landscapes, particularly to the south and southwest of the City where watercourses have eroded the higher claylands and chalklands, and (c) the extensive areas of 'fen edge' landscape north and east of the City.

- 8.15 Chapter 6 outlines the elements which make up the 'Defining Character of Cambridge'. This includes elements which are applicable to the Stapleford and Great Shelford neighbourhood area:
- a) Green Corridors into the City, two of which fall in the Stapleford and Great Shelford neighbourhood area (2: Vicars Brook-Hobson's Brook Corridor, and 3: Coldman's Brook-Cherry Hinton Brook Green Corridor)
 - b) Watercourses. This includes features in Stapleford and Great Shelford: "Waterbodies and their associated riverside trees, wetland habitat and floodplain are regarded as Defining Character of Cambridge"
 - c) Approaches to the City, including "from the chalk hills to the southeast where there are expansive views towards the City seen in the context of the Addenbrooke's Hospital complex"
 - d) Views of the City Skyline. 15 strategic viewpoints are identified, including View 7 (Little Trees Hill, Magog Down), which is located in the Stapleford and Great Shelford neighbourhood area
 - e) Rural Setting and Separation. The report identifies the areas separating the City and a number of its villages as Defining Character of Cambridge. This includes open countryside gaps between the City and Great Shelford, one of nine 'necklace villages'
 - f) Habitats in the Landscape. Several designated sites of nature conservation value contribute to the landscape and Supporting Character of Cambridge. This includes four sites in Stapleford and Great Shelford: the Beechwoods LNR, the Gog Magog SSSI, and the County Wildlife Sites at and Wandlebury and Magog Down. See also information provided in support of Policy S&GS 9 and Figure 4 on all priority habitats in the neighbourhood area, including the River Cam/River Granta and Hobson's Brook chalk rivers.

Policy S&GS 12: Protecting and enhancing Stapleford and Great Shelford's landscape character

- 1. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should be sensitive to the distinctive landscape and settlement character of the neighbourhood area. To be supported, development proposals should:**
 - a) retain or enhance existing features of value (including trees, hedgerows, water features) within the site and work within the context of existing features of value in the wider surroundings**
 - b) respect the identity of Stapleford and Great Shelford as two villages distinct and separate from the City of Cambridge**
 - c) be in accordance with the characteristics (including sensitivities to change) found in each landscape character area, as described in Chapter 3 of the S&GS LCA 2019**
 - d) not adversely affect the contribution the areas of Visually Important Open Land (see Map 6) make to the character, amenity, tranquillity and function of the two parishes.**
- 2. Where potential adverse impacts on Stapleford and Great Shelford's landscape and settlement character are identified, proposals should first demonstrate that they have been informed by an assessment of landscape and visual impacts (proportionate to the scheme proposed), and secondly demonstrate, with reference to the S&GS LCA 2019, the following:**
 - a) the proposal has particular regard to the landscape planning guidelines and land management guidelines applicable to the character area in which it is located (see Map 5)**
 - b) landscape mitigation measures will be incorporated to ensure the development is sensitively screened and assimilated into its surroundings. Robust planted buffers to site edges and edge of settlement locations are required. Mitigation measures must be clearly illustrated in planning submissions. Proposals which are found, post-mitigation, to significantly harm landscape character will be refused.**

Other applicable NP policies:

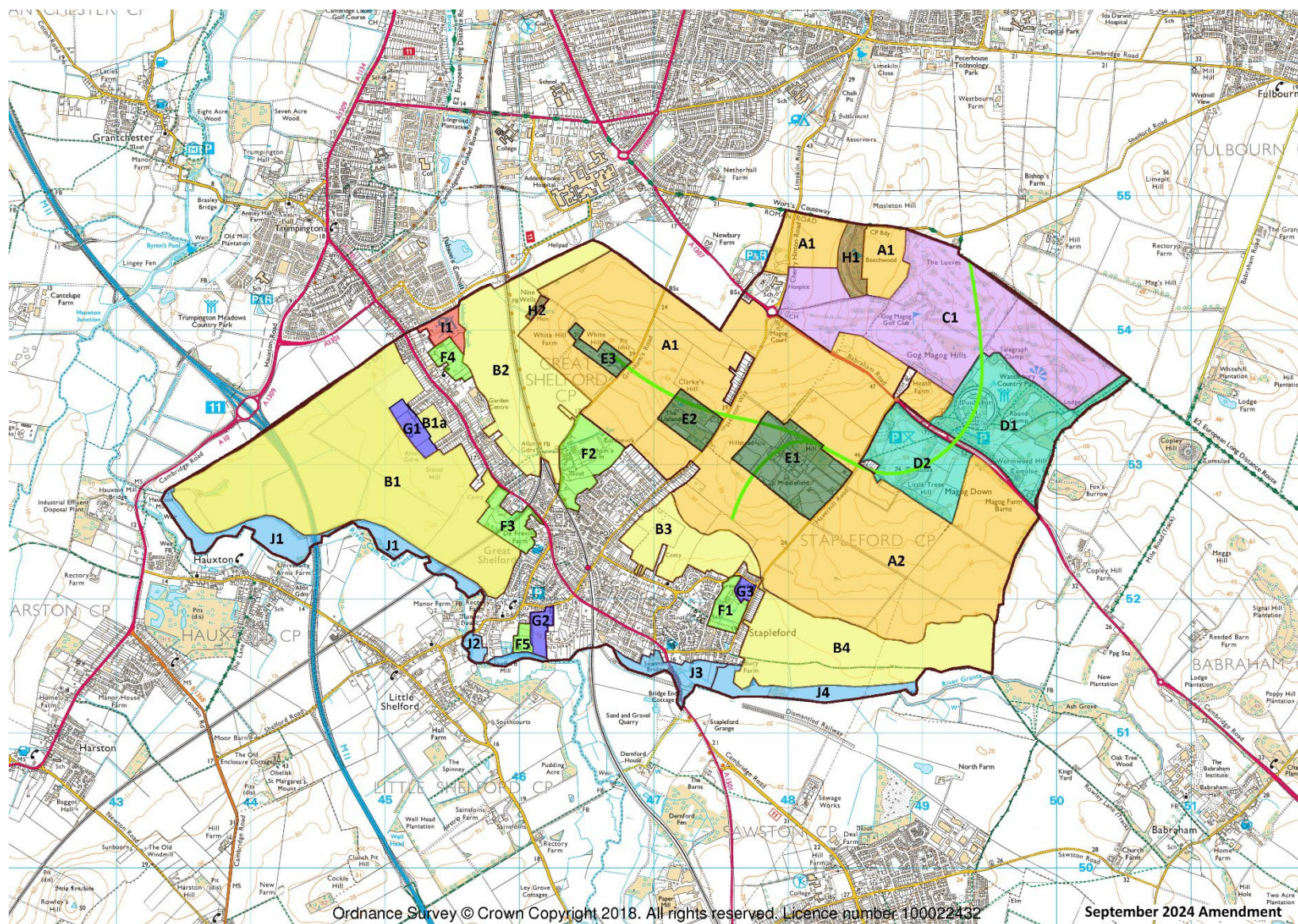
- Policy S&GS 20: Stapleford and Great Shelford's Improved Landscape Area

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

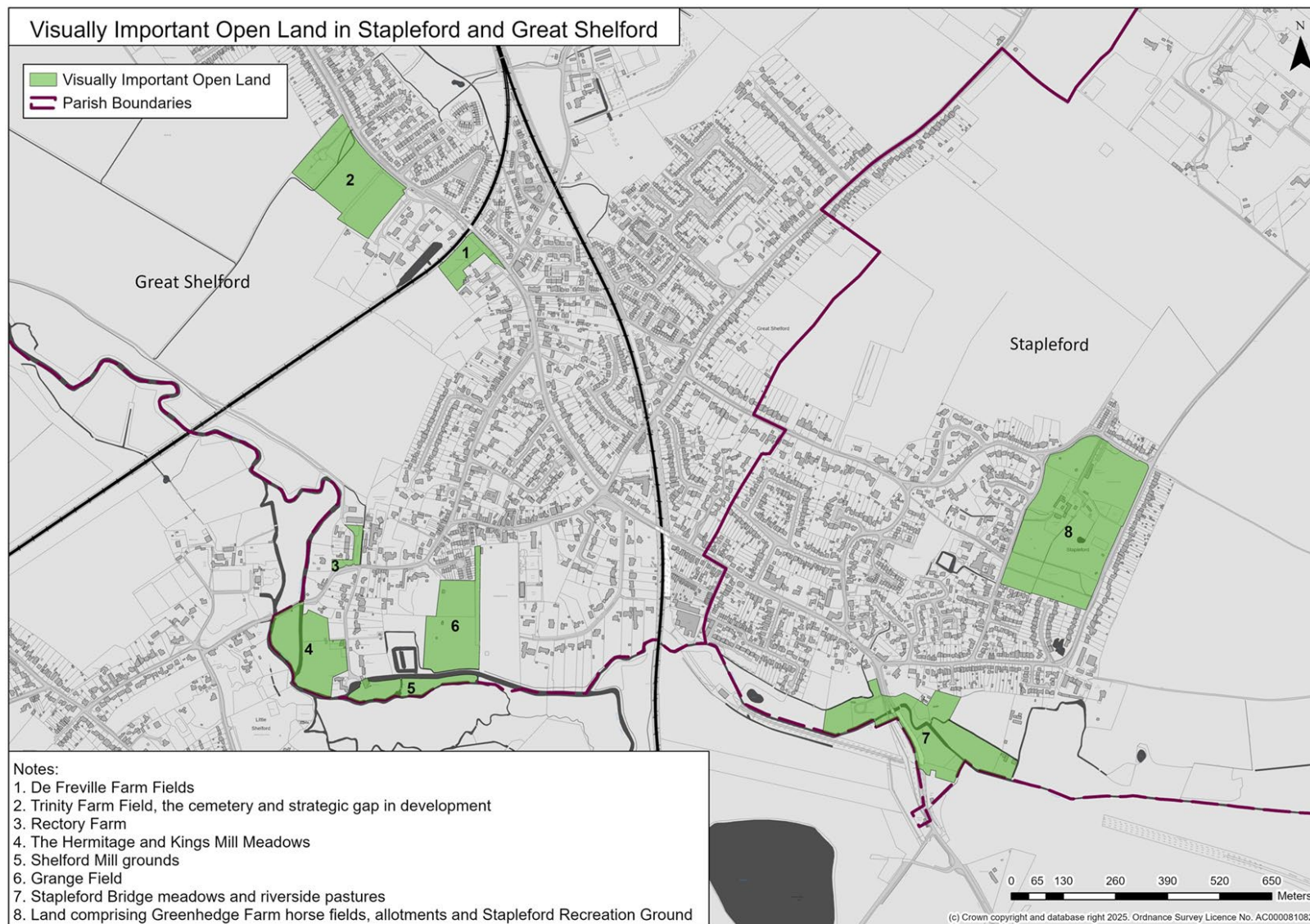
- Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
- Policy NH/4: Biodiversity
- Policy NH/5: Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance
- Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure
- Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development in and Adjoining the Green Belt
- Policy NH/9: Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites and Infilling in the Green Belt
- Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan 2008

Key to Map 5:

	A - Arable hills A1 Great Shelford arable hills A2 Stapleford arable hills
	B - Arable lowland B1/B1a West Shelford arable lowland B2 Hobsons Brook and Ninewells arable lowland B3 Mingle Lane and Hinton Way arable lowland B4 Bury Farm arable lowland
	C Golf courses C1 Gog Magog Golf Course
	D Historic country parks D1 Wandlebury Historic country park D2 Gog Magog Down Historic country park
	E Settled hilltop estates E1 Fox Hill settled hilltop estate E2 Clarke's Hill settled hilltop estate E3 White Hill settled hilltop estate
	F Enclosed farmland pastures F1 Greenhedge Farm F2 Granham's Farm F3 De Freville Farm and Trinity House F4 Cambridge Road F5 The Grange Fields
	G Sports fields G1 Shelford Rugby Club G2 Great Shelford Recreation Ground G3 Stapleford Recreation Ground
	H Woodlands H1 The Beechwoods H2 Nine Wells
	I Campsites I1 Great Shelford Campsite
	J The Granta, Water meadows and riverside pastures J1 Shelford meadows and riverside pastures J2 Kings Mill and the Hermitage meadows and riverside J3 Stapleford Bridge meadows and riverside pastures J4 Bury Farm meadows and riverside pastures



Map 5: Landscape character areas and type as per Stapleford and Great Shelford LCA 2019 with Sept 2024 addendum



Map 6: Visually Important Open Land in Stapleford and Great Shelford

Policy S&GS 13: Important Countryside Frontage

- 8.16 Important Countryside Frontages (ICFs) enhance our setting, character and appearance by retaining a sense of connection between the villages and their rural origins and surroundings. Frontages and countryside beyond should be kept open and free from development. Two already exist in Great Shelford and we have proposed a new one in Stapleford. The rationale behind this is set out below.

Background context and policy rationale

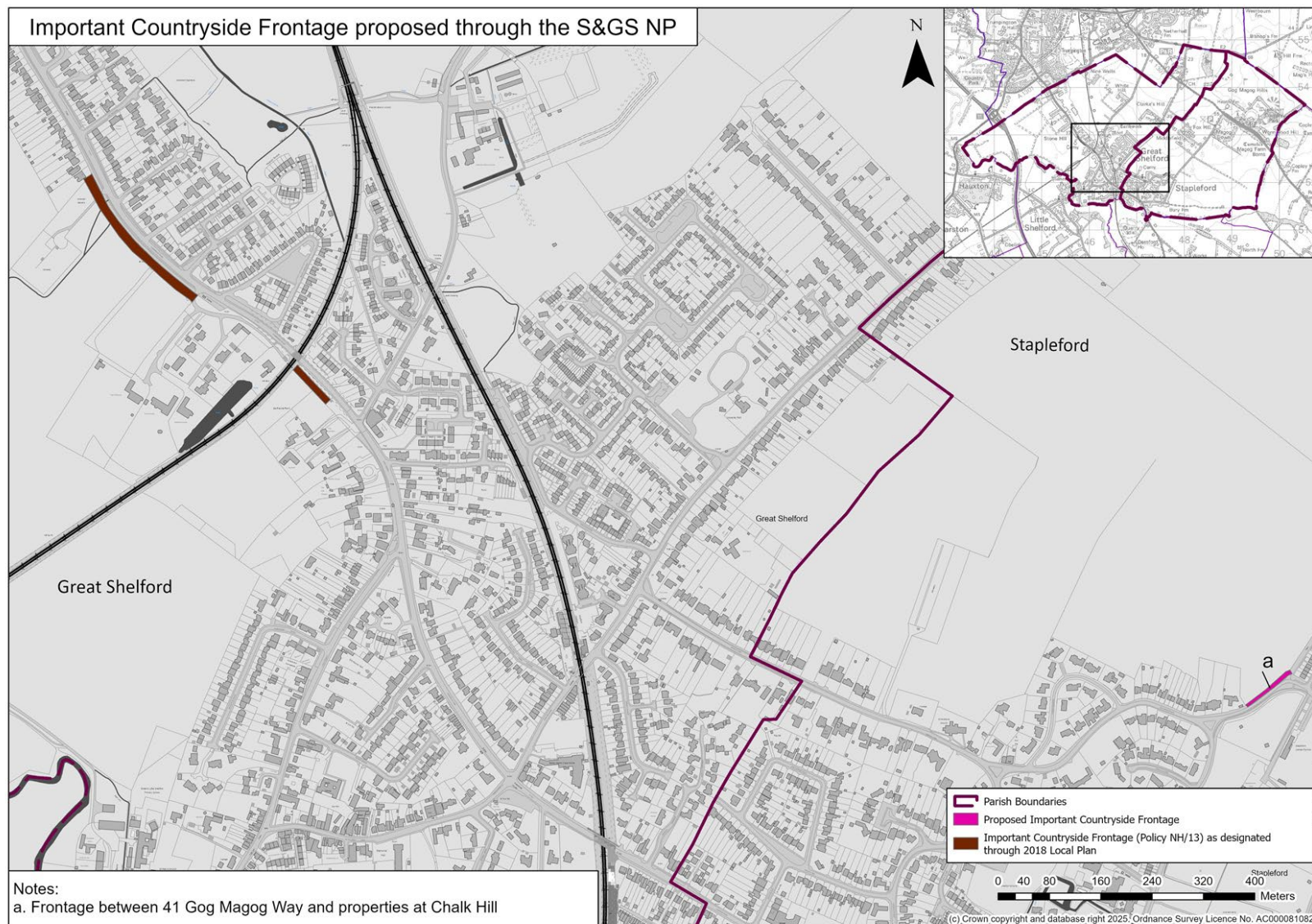
- 8.17 South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan (Policy NH/13) recognises the importance of undeveloped land of strong countryside character where it either penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area, providing a significant connection to the rural area beyond or an important break between two nearby detached parts of the development framework.
- 8.18 Paragraph 6.42 of South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan states that "such land enhances the setting, character and appearance of the village by retaining the sense of connection between the village and its rural origins and surroundings. The frontage where this interface particularly occurs is identified to indicate that the frontage and the open countryside beyond should be kept open and free from development."
- 8.19 The 2018 Local Plan identifies two ICFs in the neighbourhood area. These are both in Great Shelford parish, along Cambridge Road, in two breaks in the built-up frontage on the west side of the road.
- 8.20 Policy S&GS 13 proposes an additional ICF:
- a) Stapleford – a broad expanse of arable land penetrating the built-up area between no. 41 Gog Magog Way and properties at Chalk Hill. This meets the definition of an ICF because there is undeveloped land with strong countryside character which sweeps from a northwesterly direction into the built-up area of Stapleford. The ICF is located at a key arrival point to the village when approaching or departing the village at Gog Magog Way, further increasing the local significance of this gap.

Policy S&GS 13: Important Countryside Frontage

The area shown on Map 7 is identified as an Important Countryside Frontage where land has a strong countryside character because it either penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area and provides a significant connection between the street scene and the surrounding rural area, or provides an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of the development framework. Where a development proposal compromises these purposes, planning permission will be refused.

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
- Policy NH/13: Important Countryside Frontage



Map 7: Important Countryside Frontage proposed by S&GS Policy 13

Policy S&GS 14: Local Green Spaces and Protected Village Amenity Area

- 8.21 We have designated seven new sites in the neighbourhood area as Local Green Spaces (LGS) and one new site as a Protected Village Amenity Area (PVAA). An explanation of these planning designations and their purpose is provided below, together with a justification of each site's inclusion as such in the S&GS NP.

Background context and policy rationale

Local Green Spaces

- 8.22 The NPPF 2023 allows communities to designate areas as LGS. Once designated, a LGS is safeguarded as an open space and protected from development. A LGS must meet the criteria set out in paragraph 106 of the NPPF. This states:

"The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

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

NPPF 2023

- 8.23 An assessment has been undertaken of the open spaces in the neighbourhood area. This assessment is available to view alongside this Plan. The assessment has resulted in the following open spaces being put forward for LGS designation as part of this NP:

LGS 1. The Hermitage and Kings Mill meadows (Church Street), Great Shelford

This area of land, directly south of Great Shelford's 'water bridges', is at the parish boundary and provides a strategic gap between Great Shelford and Little Shelford. The S&GS LCA 2019 explains that the Hermitage field is part of an island created in 1610 when new river cuts were constructed by the miller to keep water flowing through King's Mill as Little Shelford Manor had blocked the river.

The S&GS LCA 2019 identifies this area of land as 'Visually Important Open Land' and describes it as comprising "semi-improved meadows traditionally used as paddocks for horses affording notable views from the road and two bridges across the fields. Picturesque scene with the noise of the river audible at the southern bridge." The S&GS LCA 2019 describes the visual characteristics as "Long public frontage between the bridges. Open grassland affording long views broken up by mature trees, a tranquil village scene of meadows and the river with some properties nestling in the wooded gardens along Kings Mill Lane in the background."

The key contributing features of LGS 1 (Image 3) to a sense of place are:

- water meadows, floodplain and seasonal rough grazing emphasise the rural and tranquil character of the location
- a sinuous river parish boundary with undisturbed banks and individual mature willows providing valuable habitat
- glimpses of properties nestling in wooded gardens along Kings Mill Lane in the background

- the river bridge is an important element of the historic core of both Great and Little Shelford.

South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan designates an area of land directly to the east of this land and along the Church Road frontage as a PVAA.



Image 3: Kings Mill Meadows, Great Shelford.

LGS 2. Great Shelford Recreation Ground

This is an area of publicly accessible land owned by Great Shelford Parish Council, located in the heart of the community and providing a range of opportunities for outdoor recreation, including cricket, riverside walks, football, tennis, bowls and a PlayScape play area with equipment. The S&GS LCA 2019 recognises this as 'Visually Important Open Land'. Views from LGS 2 take in the tree belt to the SSW with the River Cam beyond.

The key contributing features of LGS 2 (Image 4) to a sense of place are:

- a large, publicly accessible green area bringing rural character to the heart of the village
- its green setting with surrounding mature tree belts and a copse
- naturalistic riverbanks and the only public river access in the settled area of Great Shelford.



Image 4: Great Shelford recreation ground.

LGS 3. Clerk's Piece, Stapleford

This lies west of Sawston Greenway and London Road, alongside the River Granta on land owned by Stapleford Parish Council. It was exchanged for the land on which the Johnson Memorial Hall and house now stand in the village and on which the Vestry Clerk's house once stood. Today, it is the only publicly accessible stretch of river and meadow in Stapleford. Being next to Sawston Greenway and close to the village Spar, it is appreciated by scores of active travellers daily (Image 5).



Image 5: Clerk's Piece, Stapleford.

LGS 4. Collier Field, Stapleford

This land, sometimes referred to as 'the field behind Stapleford Community Primary School', lies immediately to the west of the school. Its principal use is as occasional recreational space for children attending the primary school. In addition, it is used by the wider community for Saturday morning children's football. The land is owned by Anglian Learning, the academy which runs the primary school, and has a covenant on it restricting its use as a space for children.

South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan identifies the land, albeit a slightly amended extent, as a Protected Village Amenity Area. Once the S&GS NP is adopted, this Local Green Space designation will supersede the PVAA designation (where it overlaps) set out in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan.

LGS 5. Horse pasture surrounding Greenhedge Farm, Stapleford

This is an area of small-scale pasture set around Greenhedge Farm with the farmhouse and barns at the centre. The land provides an attractive pastoral landscape with hedgerows and mature trees in a prominent location of the village (Image 6). It is highly visible from Gog Magog Way, Bar Lane and Haverhill Road, and is immediately adjacent to and partially visible from Stapleford Recreation Ground and Stapleford allotments. Part of the land (the northwest corner) is safeguarded in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan as future open space provision for the village.



Image 6: Horse pasture surrounding Greenhedge Farm, Stapleford.

LGS 6. Stapleford allotments

This well-used and locally valued land is owned by the Diocese of Ely and lies to the south of proposed LGS 6. It is a haven for wildlife. The water table here is very close to the surface, leading to seasonal flooding and improving fertility. A footpath across the allotments is regularly used to connect Haverhill Road and Bar Lane. This is particularly important for primary school children, reducing traffic congestion in the immediate vicinity of the school and encouraging safe, off-road active travel.

LGS 7. Stapleford Recreation Ground

This is an area of publicly accessible land owned by Stapleford Parish Council providing a range of opportunities for outdoor recreation, including football, a younger children's playground, older children's play equipment, adult outdoor gym equipment, and a multi-user games area for tennis, netball, 5-a-side football and basketball. The S&GS LCA 2019 recognises this land as part of a larger area of 'Visually Important Open Land' (Greenhedge Farm is also designated as a Local Green Space).

Proposed LGS 5, 6 and 7 are all identified in the S&GS LCA 2019 as part of a larger area of 'Visually Important Open Land'.

- 8.24 Policy LGS 14 applies the national Local Green Space designation to existing open spaces which are demonstrably special to the community they serve. These spaces are of special value in their current form. The LGS designation gives the areas of land protection in the same way that green belt land is protected.
- 8.25 The designated Local Green Spaces will be safeguarded as open spaces and protected from development. The designation results in no new obligations on landowners in terms of land maintenance and does not give rights of public access which are not already in place.

Protected Village Amenity Areas

- 8.26 South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan (Policy NH/11) recognises that village character is "made up of a blend of buildings and open spaces" and, as part of this, the Local Plan designates some areas of land as Protected Village Amenity Areas (PVAAs). These are sites designated to safeguard undeveloped land within villages which sustain village character, or which have an important function, such as allotments, playing fields and recreation areas. The 2018 Local Plan recognises that

some PVAAAs may be private gardens with no public access. It identifies six PVAAAs in the neighbourhood area. These are: land surrounding the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Great Shelford; land fronting south of Church Street, Great Shelford; land on the north of Church Street, Great Shelford, with Rectory Farm; playing fields at Stapleford Community Primary School; pond at Haverhill Road, Stapleford; Grove House, Bury Road, Stapleford. These are shown in Map 2 of this report.

- 8.27 As part of the work for this NP we have considered whether the PVAA designation should apply to additional areas of land in the neighbourhood area. The S&GS LCA 2019 included an assessment of 'Visual characteristics, key views and areas of visually important open land' in each of its 27 landscape character area profiles. As a follow on from this, Appendix 9 in the S&GS LCA 2019 mapped eight different areas of land as 'visually important open land' whose characteristics were found to contribute to the rural setting of the villages.
- 8.28 Our work has identified one additional area to be recognised as a PVAA through our NP. It is described below and shown on Map 9:

(a) Land owned by Stapleford Parish Council behind the Slaughterhouse, Church Street

This is an important amenity area for communal use and with historical value in the centre of Stapleford village (Image 7). The Slaughterhouse itself is a grade II listed building. Both the building and the land have been owned by Stapleford Parish Council since 1982. Part of the land is used as a footpath leading from Cox's Close to Church Street. A further part is devoted to the Villedômer garden, including a wayside direction stone from Stapleford's twin French village of Villedômer. A Millennium capsule is buried in the centre of the land. A seat commemorating the Barker family, former owners of the Slaughterhouse, has been reinstated and the whole area is landscaped to include additional benches and, at one time, children's play activities. Following a community poll to identify how Stapleford residents wished this area of land to be used, volunteers started work in February 2024 to transform part of it into a community orchard. This has been named the David Pepperell Community Orchard in memory of Stapleford's longest serving parish councillor.



Image 7: Slaughterhouse and land behind, Church Street, Stapleford.

Policy S&GS 14: Local Green Spaces & Protected Village Amenity Area

1. The following sites, as shown on Policy Map 8, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

LGS 1: The Hermitage and Kings Mill Meadows, Great Shelford

LGS 2: Great Shelford Recreation Ground

LGS 3: Clerk's Piece, Stapleford

LGS 4: Collier Field, Stapleford

LGS 5: Horse pasture surrounding Greenhedge Farm, Stapleford

LGS 6: Allotments, Stapleford

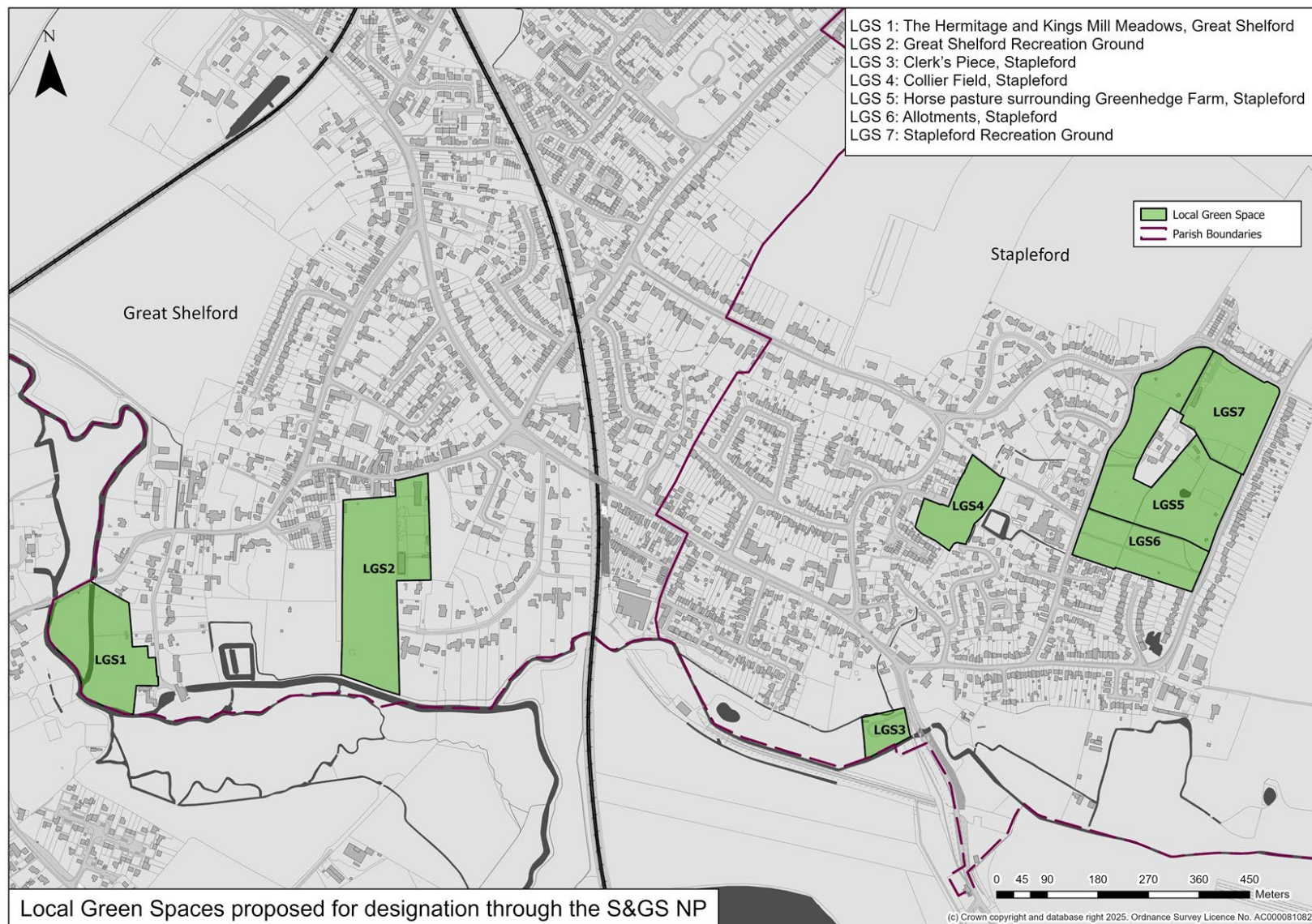
LGS 7: Stapleford Recreation Ground

Development proposals on these sites will only be supported in very special circumstances.

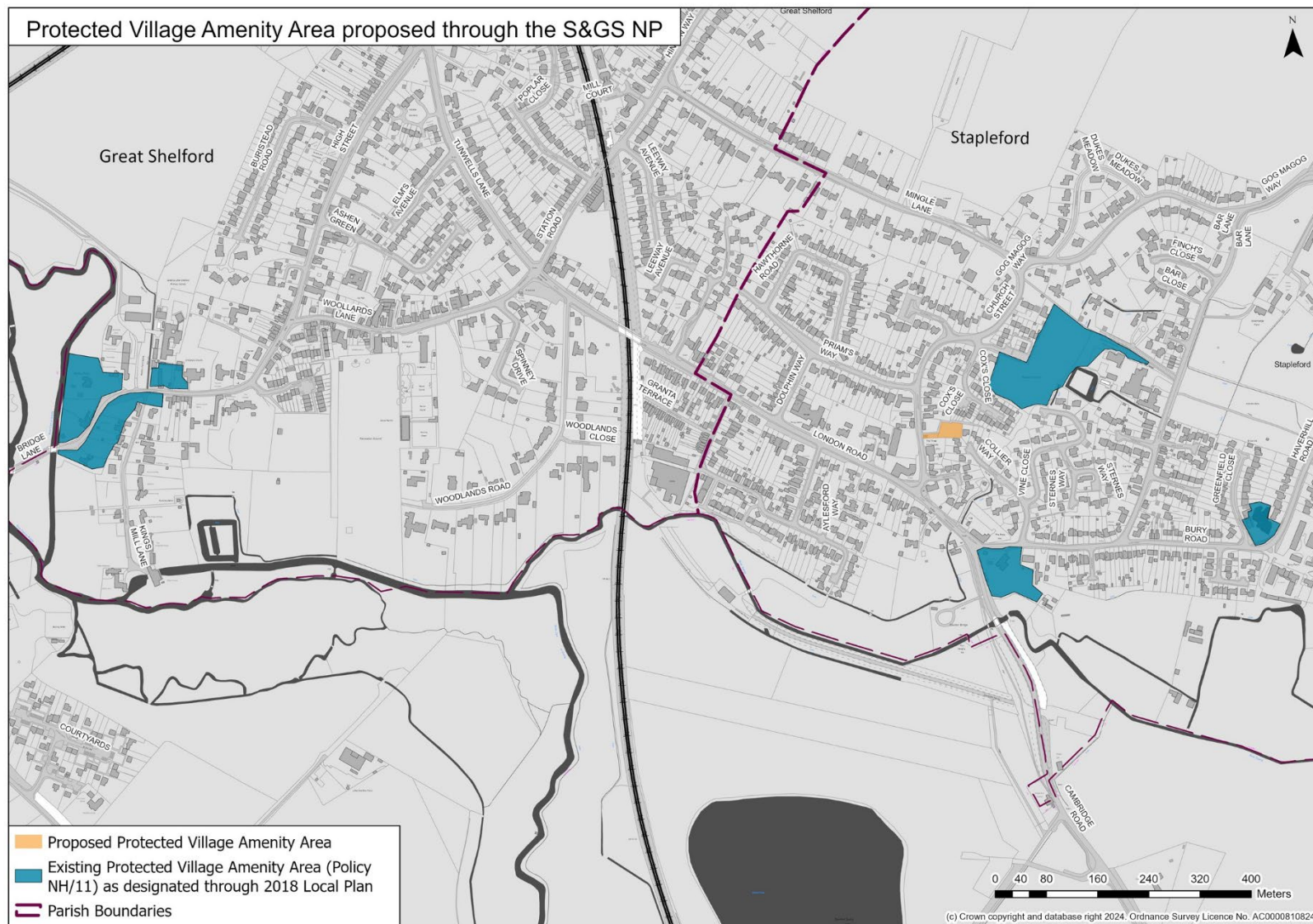
2. Land owned by Stapleford Parish Council behind the Slaughterhouse, Church Street (as shown on policy Map 9) is designated as a Protected Village Amenity Area in accordance with South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan NH/11 (or its equivalent replacement).

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
- Policy NH/4: Biodiversity
- Policy NH/5: Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance
- Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure
- Policy NH/12: Local Green Space
- Policy NH/11: Protected Village Amenity Areas



Map 8: Local Green Spaces proposed for designation through the S&GS Neighbourhood Plan.



Map 9: Protected Village Amenity Area proposed for designation through the S&GS Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy S&GS 15: Preserving our dark landscape

- 8.29 Light pollution obscures the night sky and is harmful to wildlife and natural rhythms. As outlined below, this policy aims to minimise light pollution from any new development in the neighbourhood area.

Background context and policy rationale

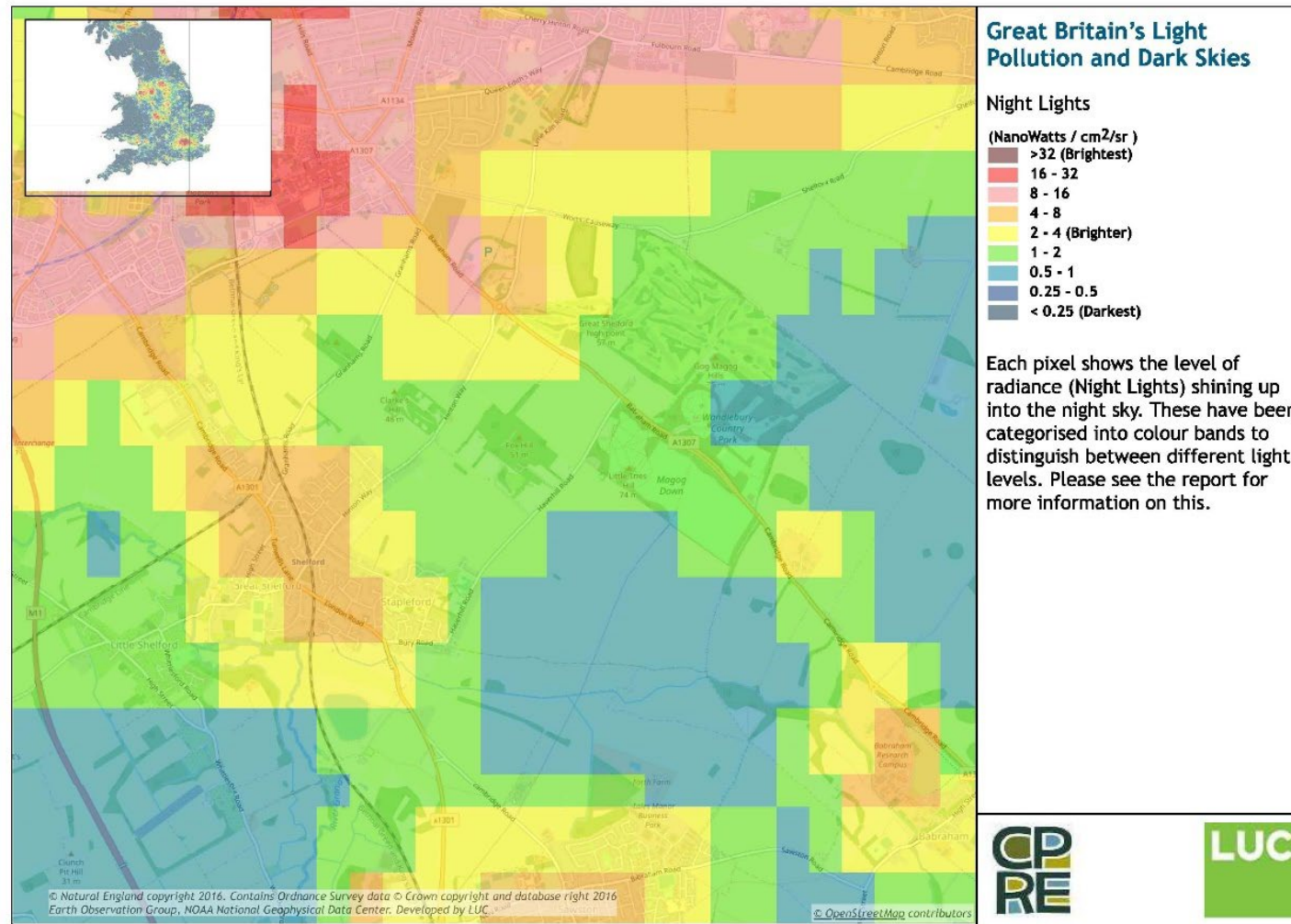
- 8.30 Darkness at night is a key characteristic of rural areas and also enables us to observe the stars on a clear night. Light pollution refers to artificial light which shines where it is neither wanted nor needed. It prevents us from observing stars and is harmful to wildlife, interrupting natural rhythms such as migration, reproduction and feeding patterns.
- 8.31 Figure 5 illustrates very well the contrast in the night sky between the un-built up and the built up parts of our neighbourhood area. It also illustrates the contrast between the neighbourhood area and Cambridge. Note, for example, the large tract of arable land immediately south of Mago Down and east of Haverhill Road, which enjoys amongst the darkest skies of the entire neighbourhood area.
- 8.32 Where artificial lighting is required for a new development proposal, a range of measures can be taken to minimise the level of light pollution. The International Dark Sky Association (IDA) identifies five principles to be followed:
- use light only if it is needed
 - use of shielding and careful aiming to ensure the light beam is directed downwards and does not spill beyond where it is needed
 - use of the lowest light level required
 - use of controls such as timers and motion detectors so light is only available when it is needed
 - limit the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light to the least amount needed. With regard to this principle, light from the blue end of the spectrum can have adverse effects on fauna and flora. Colour temperatures are measured in Kelvin and this is symbolised with the letter K. The higher the Kelvin rating, the whiter and then bluer the light appears. Low Kelvin ratings (2,700K or less) are considered 'warm' in appearance and generally emit less harmful blue light than higher Kelvin ratings.
- 8.33 Policy S&GS 15 requires the risk of light pollution to be considered when planning applications come forward. The policy has been worded to apply to development proposals which require planning permission. In most cases the installation of domestic lighting is permitted development.
- 8.34 The policy has been worded to apply to development proposals which require planning permission. In most cases the installation of domestic lighting is permitted development.

Policy S&GS 15: Preserving our dark landscape

1. Development proposals which include external lighting should ensure that the night sky is protected from light pollution and sensitive habitats are protected from harm.
2. To protect the night sky, this means that the proposed lighting:
 - a) is the minimum appropriate for its purpose (e.g. automatically turned off when not needed)
 - b) is designed such that the lighting is directed downwards to avoid spill up into the sky or out of the site (e.g. beam angle below 70 degrees)
 - c) avoids light spillage beyond the area intended to be lit
 - d) limits the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light to the least amount needed and to no more than 2,700 Kelvins.
3. To protect sensitive habitats, this means that any external lighting should not be installed on or spill into or otherwise impact sensitive sites such as the river, the SSSIs, the Local Nature Reserves, County Wildlife Sites, the Clay Pit or the chalk streams unless:
 - the lighting is necessary for safety purposes
 - a wildlife sensitive lighting scheme has been designed by a qualified ecologist and complies with up to date guidance (currently Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night Guidance Note 2023). As part of this, light sources should feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats
 - the proposed lighting scheme demonstrates that harm to priority species and habitats is avoided.

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
- Policy NH/4: Biodiversity



<https://www.nightlight.cpre.org.uk/maps/print.html?0|6660.243983630342.6727.90047955811.4282.84176086945.4316.236313346618.0|thBl=1,th0=0,th1=0,th2=0,th3=0,th4=0,th5=0,th6=1,th7=0,th8=1||thBl=Open>

Figure 5: Light pollution and dark skies in Stapleford and Great Shelford

9. Community amenities and infrastructure

Objective 6: We will ensure that development addresses its associated demands on, and existing shortfalls in, our community's amenity and infrastructure needs, specifically in healthcare, primary school education, transport, open spaces and play spaces.

- 9.1 There is one planning policy sitting under this theme and objective:
- Policy S&GS 16: Delivering community infrastructure priorities alongside new development.

Community perspective

- 9.2 An initial opinion survey in 2022 sought residents' views of local amenities and infrastructure. With respect to open/green spaces, respondents were found to value greatly the existing Recreation Grounds in both Stapleford and Great Shelford but noted more generally that access to green spaces and surrounding green belt is limited:
- 99% of respondents agreed with the statement 'access to nature is important to my wellbeing'
 - 80% acknowledged that 'we need easier and wider access to nature within and around our villages'
 - 68% agreed that 'we need more public green spaces within our villages for nature, leisure and wellbeing'.
- 9.3 The same survey found that increasing traffic congestion and pressure on local services were the second and fourth most common worries about living in the neighbourhood area over the next 15-20 years, attracting 87% and 76% of votes, respectively. Congestion at key pinch points (notably both primary schools and shops on Woollards Lane, Great Shelford), through-traffic volume, traffic speed and traffic noise were already seen as unwelcome side-effects of the growth of adjacent villages and the Cambridge economy, and this in turn is impacting decisions to shop locally: 36% said they would be more likely to use our villages' shops if there was less traffic congestion.
- 9.4 Community consultation in 2023 showed that the draft 'community amenities and infrastructure' objective was well-received by respondents:
- 94% either strongly agreed or agreed with it
 - it was ranked third highest in a list of 10 prioritised draft objectives.
- 9.5 Several free-text comments specifically highlighted a need within the neighbourhood area for more school spaces, public transport and primary care, and a better range of local shops, with some positing that current needs should be addressed before additional ones are added through new development. A general theme linked to transport infrastructure also emerged: improving existing highways (e.g. lighting, prioritisation, better paths and cycleways) in and around the villages could do a lot to

improve traffic problems and hence daily life without the requirement for more expensive interventions. Complex, costly solutions may not be the answer.

Policy S&GS 16: Delivering community infrastructure priorities alongside new development

- 9.6 New development should address the increased demands it will place on, and existing shortfalls in, our community's amenity and infrastructure needs. The supporting text to Policy S&GS 16 highlights where shortfalls or potential issues in infrastructure are known to exist. During the Plan period, different infrastructure needs may occur depending on the level and type of development that comes forward.

Background context and policy rationale

Open space provision

- 9.7 In 2013, South Cambridgeshire District Council prepared the district-wide 'Recreation and Open Space Study'. Using the recommended standards reproduced in the table below, this study found that Stapleford and Great Shelford had surplus provision of open spaces suitable for sports (by 2.01 hectares) and surplus provision of allotments (by 1.15 hectares). But it also found that Stapleford and Great Shelford had a shortfall of play space (by 4.43 hectares) and a shortfall of informal open space (by 0.73 hectares) (Table 7).
- 9.8 Since 2013, the population of our villages has grown (by 7.2% between the 2011 and 2021 Censuses). In terms of changes in play space provision, there has been an improvement in quality, although not in quantity:
- a new PlayScape at Great Shelford Recreation Ground opened in 2021, replacing old children's playground equipment
 - new provision of logs for den building in a small copse at Great Shelford Recreation Ground
 - replacement of old playground equipment for younger children at Stapleford Recreation Ground with the new Jubilee Playground, opened in 2022
 - installation of adult gym equipment at Stapleford Recreation Ground
 - replacement of old asphalt tennis courts with a multi-user games area (MUGA) at Stapleford Recreation Ground in 2021.
- 9.9 In addition, since 2013 old play equipment for young children at land behind the Slaughterhouse on Church Street in Stapleford has been steadily removed as it wore out.

Type	Provision in 2013 (hectares)	Requirement from recommended standard (hectares)	Surplus/Shortfall (hectares)
Sport	11.5	9.49	+2.01
Play space	0.31	4.74	-4.43
Informal open space	1.64	2.37	-0.73
Allotments	3.52	2.37	+1.15

Table 7: Open space provision in Stapleford and Great Shelford. Source: South Cambridgeshire District Council Recreation and Open Space Study, July 2013

- 9.10 Publicly accessible open space is not evenly distributed within the two villages. Residents within walking distance to either Great Shelford Recreation Ground or Stapleford Recreation Ground will have better access than others. In fact, open space in the northern part of the built up area, characterised by high density family houses, is limited to small areas of 0.13 hectares of informal open space at Macaulay Avenue, Great Shelford, and 0.19 hectares of informal open space at Davey Crescent, Great Shelford.
- 9.11 South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan recognises the shortage of informal open space in Stapleford and Great Shelford as an issue. Indeed, it allocates an area of 1.42 hectares of "land east of Bar Lane, Stapleford and west of the access road to Green Hedge Farm" as future open space, as well as an area of 4.8 hectares of "land south of Granhams Road, Great Shelford" as future open space (See Policy SC/1: Allocation for Open Space). These site allocations have not been delivered despite neighbourhood area population growth of 7.2% between censuses in 2011 and 2021. The need for additional informal open space remains and will continue to grow during the Plan period.
- 9.12 Due to a lack of off-road routes suitable for non-motorised users, access to important natural green spaces located in the neighbourhood area, such as Magog Down and Wandlebury Country Park, can be difficult. See also Policy S&GS: 18 'Facilitating active travel in Stapleford and Great Shelford' and Policy S&GS 20: 'Protecting and improving routes into our countryside'.
- 9.13 With respect to land east of Bar Lane and west of the access road to Greenhedge Farm, Stapleford, Policy S&GS 14 is seeking to designate this as Local Green Space in recognition of the visual amenity provided by this area of open land.

Primary school capacity

- 9.14 Stapleford Community Primary school and Great and Little Shelford Church of England Primary School each provide just one form entry per year group and there is little space around the two existing school buildings for expansion to take place. Information provided by the County Council in 2024 indicates that, for the period 2024/2025 to 2032/2033, there is adequate capacity at Stapleford Community Primary School but not at Great and Little Shelford CofE Primary School. When capacity at both schools is taken into account, there is forecast to be adequate capacity across the neighbourhood area to meet expected pupil projections.

Early years provision

- 9.15 There is a current and projected shortfall in early years provision across the neighbourhood area. At the time of writing¹³, Stapleford has 29 fifteen-hour places, with local demand forecast to be 55 places for April 2024, 47 in September 2024 and 62 in April 2025. Great & Little Shelford currently has 117 fifteen-hour places, with local demand forecast to be 187 places for April 2024, 142 in September 2024 and 195 in April 2025.

Health capacity

- 9.16 The S&GS neighbourhood area is served by the Granta Medical Practice's Shelford Health Centre, which provides services at six locations as a 'primary care network'. One of these locations, Granta Shelford Health Centre, sits within the neighbourhood area. Data specifically about Granta Shelford Health Centre are not publicly available,

¹³ Data provided by the County Council in May 2024

although it is reasonable to assume that it serves the majority of the total population of Stapleford and Great Shelford (6,500, according to Census 2021).

- 9.17 The most timely data available for the Practice as a whole date from a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection in October 2019, prior to the inclusion of Royston Health Centre as a sixth service centre. CQC at that time described the Practice as "a large partnership formed from the merger of four local practices over a three-year period from 2016 to 2018. They are a provider at scale for the delivery of healthcare to their local population. They cover a 25 mile by 10-mile practice area, with a list size of 43,500 patients."¹⁴ The overall rating of the Practice was 'outstanding'. An interim review in July 2023 found no evidence to justify a reassessment of the rating at that stage.
- 9.18 It seems reasonable to estimate that the list size in 2024, incorporating Royston Health Centre, is in the region of 50,000 to 55,000. The Greater Cambridge Local Plan Infrastructure Development Plan Interim Report (September 2021) assumes a required GP to patient ratio of 1 FTE GP for every 1,800 patients. This would imply that there are 27-31 FTE GPs working across the six service centres, and this squares with information about the GP teams on Granta Medical Practice's website (www.grantamedicalpractices.co.uk). Granta Shelford Health Centre currently has eight GPs attached to it and one physician associate.
- 9.19 In the process of drafting this NP, we invited input on two occasions from Granta Medical Practice but did not receive a response. Hence, we are using proxy data to illustrate how demand for primary care within the neighbourhood area may increase over the period to 2041. We postulate that demand will be driven by:
- overall population growth within the neighbourhood area
 - particular growth of the older population – this includes those residing in the three new residential/care facilities for the older population which are currently under construction, plus other similar facilities which may come forward over the Plan period.
- 9.20 Total population growth within the neighbourhood area is predicted by HNA 2023 to be just over 2% from 2021 to 2043. However, the proportion of people aged 75+ is expected to grow by 59% from 2021 to 2043.
- 9.21 HNA 2023 also records that between 2011 and 2021 there was clear growth in the older population, with increases of 11.7% and 33.5% in the 65-84 and 85+ age categories, respectively. There was also an increase in the younger working age population (25-44) and children, potentially indicating growth in families alongside the older population.
- 9.22 These data have clear implications for growth in demand for primary care, since the older population is the greatest consumer of primary care services, followed by young families. The question is, then, whether Granta Shelford Health Centre has capacity to meet this demand for care at its current site at Ashen Green.
- 9.23 Granta Shelford Health Centre is single-storey (roughly 40 years old) and has its own private car park. It is located alongside a car yard, a privately owned and enclosed green space, and a car park. The land for the latter is in private ownership and

¹⁴ <https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-558910435> (Nov 2019)

made available free for public use and managed by Great Shelford Parish Council. In theory, therefore, in a village with a lack of brownfield and other undeveloped sites, there might be scope to expand into some of these spaces and/or to replace the current building with a 2+ storey modern healthcare centre offering a wider range of community-based services. There are arguments for utilising the existing site in preference to looking elsewhere. For example, it is central to Great Shelford and therefore able-bodied residents living in or near the village centre can walk there. Adequate vehicular access exists for those who cannot and the village centre is served by local bus routes.

- 9.24 In principle, this NP supports any or all of these scenarios and developers could via S106 agreements make financial contributions towards the capital cost of providing additional healthcare facilities. To be clear though, we are not putting forward any specific development sites and no discussion has taken place with either relevant landowners or Granta Medical Practice.

Public transport

- 9.25 The neighbourhood area is served by rail links and public buses. Shelford Station is one stop and around 5 minutes south of Cambridge on the West Anglia Main Line to London Liverpool St Station; in- and out-bound trains typically stop at Shelford Station two to four times per hour.
- 9.26 Two main bus routes, Stagecoach 7 via the A1301 and Stagecoach 13 via the A1307, serve the neighbourhood area. From Monday to Saturday, service 7 passes through the neighbourhood area three times hourly during day time hours en route to Addenbrooke's Hospital and Cambridge City, reducing to once hourly in the evenings. The same is true in the opposite direction. On Sundays, it runs once hourly in either direction. Service 13/13A/13X passes through the neighbourhood area three times an hour in either direction during peak times from Monday to Saturday, reducing to 1-2 times an hour in the evening. Only the 13 runs on Sundays (hourly in either direction). A2B operates service 31 four times daily (Mon-Sat) in either direction through the neighbourhood area, linking it to Addenbrooke's and, less frequently, to Cambridge City. CG Myall & Son run the infrequent 132 on Sundays from Saffron Walden to Cambridge, and vice versa. All services may be subject to change as a result of emerging plans to bring most local services under public control. As the population grows and employment opportunities in and around Cambridge expand, there will be a need to improve the regularity, reliability and range of destinations of buses serving the neighbourhood area.

Delivery of new and improved infrastructure

- 9.27 New and improved infrastructure primarily depends on infrastructure providers, such as the National Health Service and the County Council as education provider. Infrastructure provision is relevant to plan making when:
- land is required to deliver infrastructure
 - financial contributions are required from new development to mitigate the impact of development, e.g. new homes creating infrastructure shortfalls
 - development opens up opportunities to address short falls in infrastructure
 - necessary infrastructure to support a development is simply not in place. In which case the delivery of sustainable development is ruled out.
- 9.28 Policy SC/4: 'Meeting Community Needs' in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan requires that all housing developments should include or contribute to the provision

of the services and facilities necessary to meet the needs of the development. The types of services and facilities referred to include primary and secondary schools, meeting places, health facilities, libraries, sports facilities, commercial facilities important to community life (including childcare nurseries, local shops, restaurants and cafes and public houses), and provision for faith groups, burials, and waste and recycling.

- 9.29 Policy TI/8: 'Infrastructure and New Developments' in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals which have made suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. This includes securing financial contributions towards the delivery of infrastructure. The types of infrastructure referred to include affordable housing, education, healthcare, public open space, sports and recreation facilities, improvements for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, highways, and public and community transport, other community facilities, landscaping and biodiversity, drainage and flood prevention, waste management, arts and cultural provision, community development workers and youth workers, utilities and telecommunications, and preservation or enhancement of the historic landscape or townscape.

Policy S&GS 16: Delivering community infrastructure priorities alongside new development

- 1. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should contribute towards infrastructure priorities where it is necessary to make the development acceptable and where directly, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.**
- 2. The provision of new and improved community infrastructure will depend on the location and specific impacts of individual development proposals, and should respond positively to the needs of our ageing population as well as the following local infrastructure priorities:**

Open space:

- a need to address the existing deficiency in informal open space, in particular in the north of the settled area
- a need to address existing deficiencies in available play space
- a need to improve access (via active travel routes) to natural green space in the surrounding countryside, as set out in Policy S&GS 20 'Protecting and improving routes into our countryside'
- as the population grows, a need to provide improved provision in terms of quality and quantity in recreational space, including associated infrastructure such as public toilets.

Policy continues overleaf...

Policy continued:

Education:

- a need to address existing shortfalls in early years places
- a need to address existing projected shortfalls in primary school capacity at Great and Little Shelford CofE Primary School.

Other:

- delivery of active travel priorities as set out in Policy S&GS 18
- maintaining and modernising existing community meeting spaces (including Great Shelford Memorial Hall) so they are fit for purpose in meeting needs during the Plan period.

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy TI/8: Infrastructure and New Developments
- Policy SC/4: Meeting Community Needs

Also relevant:

- Policy S&GS 18: Facilitating active travel in Stapleford and Great Shelford
- Policy S&GS 20: Protecting and improving routes into our countryside

10. Active travel and managing the impacts of traffic movement

ACTIVE TRAVEL

Objective 7: Residents travelling in and out of the neighbourhood area, and people travelling through the neighbourhood area, will find it increasingly easy to choose active travel modes to reach their destinations, whether for work or leisure purposes. The safety of active travellers will be both a priority of new development and be upgraded throughout the neighbourhood area.

- 10.1 There is one planning policy sitting under this objective:
- Policy S&GS 17: Facilitating active travel in Stapleford and Great Shelford.

Community perspective

- 10.2 In 2022, an initial public opinion survey to support this NP suggested that 45% of respondents used private cars or motorbikes for their most common weekly journey (e.g. the school run, work commute or shopping); cycling and walking also scored highly at 27% and 20%, respectively. Active travel is, therefore, moderately widespread within the community, with users noting the health and environmental benefits of this. However, also noted were the poor condition of many paths and road surfaces around the villages, hazardous parking, congestion on Church Street (Great Shelford), speeding traffic and unsafe crossing points, improvements to which could encourage more active travel.
- 10.3 Choice of transport mode was mainly dictated by travel distance and convenience, although some residents do not feel that they have a choice. For example, ageing, disability, a lack of regular and reliable buses, compound journeys, travelling with young children or carrying heavy shopping may predispose individuals towards private car use. Perhaps this explains several requests that active travel improvements should not make private car use any more difficult than it can already be.
- 10.4 Digging deeper, community consultation in 2023 sought to understand residents' active travel priorities. Participants were presented with a map of the current active travel network and asked which local destinations they would most like served by improvements to active travel. Out of a list of 12 options, the top four in order of priority were:
- open spaces (e.g. Recreation Grounds, Magog Down)
 - shops and other amenities in the civic centre of Great Shelford
 - routes to Cambridge City
 - local primary schools.
- 10.5 A point was eloquently made that it is not always the case that new active travel routes need to be created, so much as existing ones can be made to work harder and hence attract more users by being upgraded and joining safely with other active travel routes.

- 10.6 The personal safety of active travellers was also raised during consultation and, although not a majority view, is sufficiently important to reiterate here. A visitor to a pop-up display in spring 2023 whose school-age child had been threatened and their bike stolen on the DNA Path observed that the bar for what constitutes 'safe' should be set at the level of the most vulnerable users, such as children and females travelling alone in the dark. Unless this happens, active travel will always discriminate in favour of a less vulnerable demographic and broader uptake will be compromised.

Policy S&GS 17: Facilitating active travel in Stapleford and Great Shelford

- 10.7 We want to make it safer and easier for people travelling in or through the neighbourhood area to choose active travel modes, reducing reliance on private cars and hence also traffic congestion. Development proposals are expected to incorporate active travel within their sites and connect to the existing network. When appropriate, they should also contribute towards new and/or upgrade existing routes in the neighbourhood area. In this respect, our NP identifies five active travel priorities. Further background information and policy context are supplied below.

Background context and policy rationale

- 10.8 'Active travel' refers to journeys on foot, cycle or other 'wheeled' modes of active travel (e.g. mobility scooter, wheelchair, pushchair, cycle freight), although other non-motorised users may also use the network. It aims to reduce reliance on private cars, particularly for short journeys and by single passengers, and to reduce congestion and our carbon footprint.
- 10.9 The importance attributed to 'active travel' nationally is reflected in the creation of Active Travel England, a government agency set up in the UK in 2020. Cambridgeshire County Council adopted its own Active Travel Strategy in March 2023. The County Council states that the strategy "provides a comprehensive set of policies that will enable quality provision of active travel infrastructure and initiatives in Cambridgeshire to contribute to the County Council's target to achieve net zero carbon by 2045. By enabling and encouraging more people to travel by active travel modes, the number of journeys made by car can be reduced" (www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk¹⁵).
- 10.10 It is considered that the 2023 community engagement results reflect a community-wide demand for a local network of active travel routes which can, on the one hand, facilitate everyday journeys around the neighbourhood area and, on the other hand, provide safe links to existing travel routes (to Cambridge). This means (a) providing new local-level routes which can link in with the wider network, and (b) making our existing network perform harder. People are more likely to be incentivised to use their bicycles, walk, travel by mobility scooter, etc, if the existing pavement and road surfaces are kept in good condition, and routes feel safe and inviting.
- 10.11 Policy S&GS 17 sets out the Plan's approach towards facilitating active travel in Stapleford and Great Shelford. The second part of the policy comments about opportunities for developer contributions. Any such planning obligations would need to meet the national tests set out in paragraph 57 of the NPPF 2023.

¹⁵ Accessed 02 October 2023

- 10.12 The following improvements to our active travel network have been prioritised in this Plan.

Bridge across River Cam at Great Shelford Recreation Ground

- 10.13 Despite the presence of the River Cam/Granta in the neighbourhood area, public access to it is extremely limited because much of its route is through private land. Bridging the River Cam at the southern edge of Great Shelford Recreation Ground would have several benefits, such as opening up new routes for leisure, and reducing congestion and parking on Church Street by providing an alternative and safe route to the primary school. This project is also identified as an aspired-to new rural route under Policy S&GS 20.

Haverhill Road between A1307 and Stapleford: improvements to path

- 10.14 Improvements to the path alongside Haverhill Rd between the A1307 and Stapleford village so it provides a viable, safe and inviting active travel route from the settlement edge to Magog Down and Wandlebury Park is a key priority. The path will need to be made suitable for all non-motorised users and link with routes through the new countryside park between Haverhill Road and Hinton Way. It is at the time of writing in particularly poor condition due to incursions by heavy goods vehicles delivering to the Rangeford construction site and UK Power Networks compound, both of which lie immediately outside the village on Haverhill Road. This prioritised active travel route is also identified as an aspired-to new rural route under Policy S&GS 20.

Improving existing infrastructure for users of the active travel network

- 10.15 To incentivise active travel, it is important that adequate infrastructure is in place to support users of the active travel network. This includes ensuring that the condition of roads, pavement surfaces and designated cycle routes is maintained to a high standard. For example:
- when cycling on the road, cracks and uneven surfaces (which are extremely common within the neighbourhood area) present additional challenges to cyclists on top of the ongoing need to negotiate personal safety in relation to moving traffic. A recent report¹⁶ by the Office for Road and Rail showed that the condition of road surfaces in the East region (which includes Cambridgeshire) is consistently lower than in the rest of England, whilst Cambridgeshire had the highest number of potholes of any county in the UK in 2020, according to a Freedom of Information request by MoneySuperMarket
 - cycle lanes must be sufficiently wide to avoid conflict with other users and to maintain a safe distance from moving traffic. Appropriate widths will depend on the location and type of infrastructure being provided. See Cycle Infrastructure Design, Local Transport Note 1/20 (Department for Transport) for further guidance. As an example, a one way cycle route should be a minimum width of 2m
 - people dependent on mobility aids, such as a mobility scooters, are unlikely to make their journeys if pavement widths are insufficiently wide and safe crossing points are too few and far between. The same applies if pavement surfaces are cracked or uneven
 - the DNA Path is identified as in need of upgrading to improve its surface, lighting and wider segregation between cyclists and pedestrians
 - providing new secure and safe cycling parking facilities at key destinations.

¹⁶ <https://www.orr.gov.uk/media/24816>

- 10.16 Image 8 shows the reality of active travel in the neighbourhood area, in this instance a large and deep pothole within the section of road typically used by cyclists. This is Church Street, Stapleford, which is also National Cycle Route 11, part of Sawston Greenway and a key section of many students' route to/from Sawston Village College.



Image 8: Poor road conditions along National Cycle Route 11, Church Street, Stapleford

Improving and maintaining a pleasant street scene environment throughout the neighbourhood area and in Great Shelford civic centre

- 10.17 To incentivise active travel, it is also important that active travel routes are safe, attractive and not exposed to excessive levels of pollution. For example:
- walking to local destinations will be discouraged if the street scene environment is poor due to excessive noise, pollution, lack of green infrastructure or otherwise lacking in visual interest
 - improving the street scene environment in Great Shelford civic centre is an important aspect of maintaining and improving the vitality and vibrancy of our shops, services and community facilities.

Sawston Greenway – extension through Great Shelford

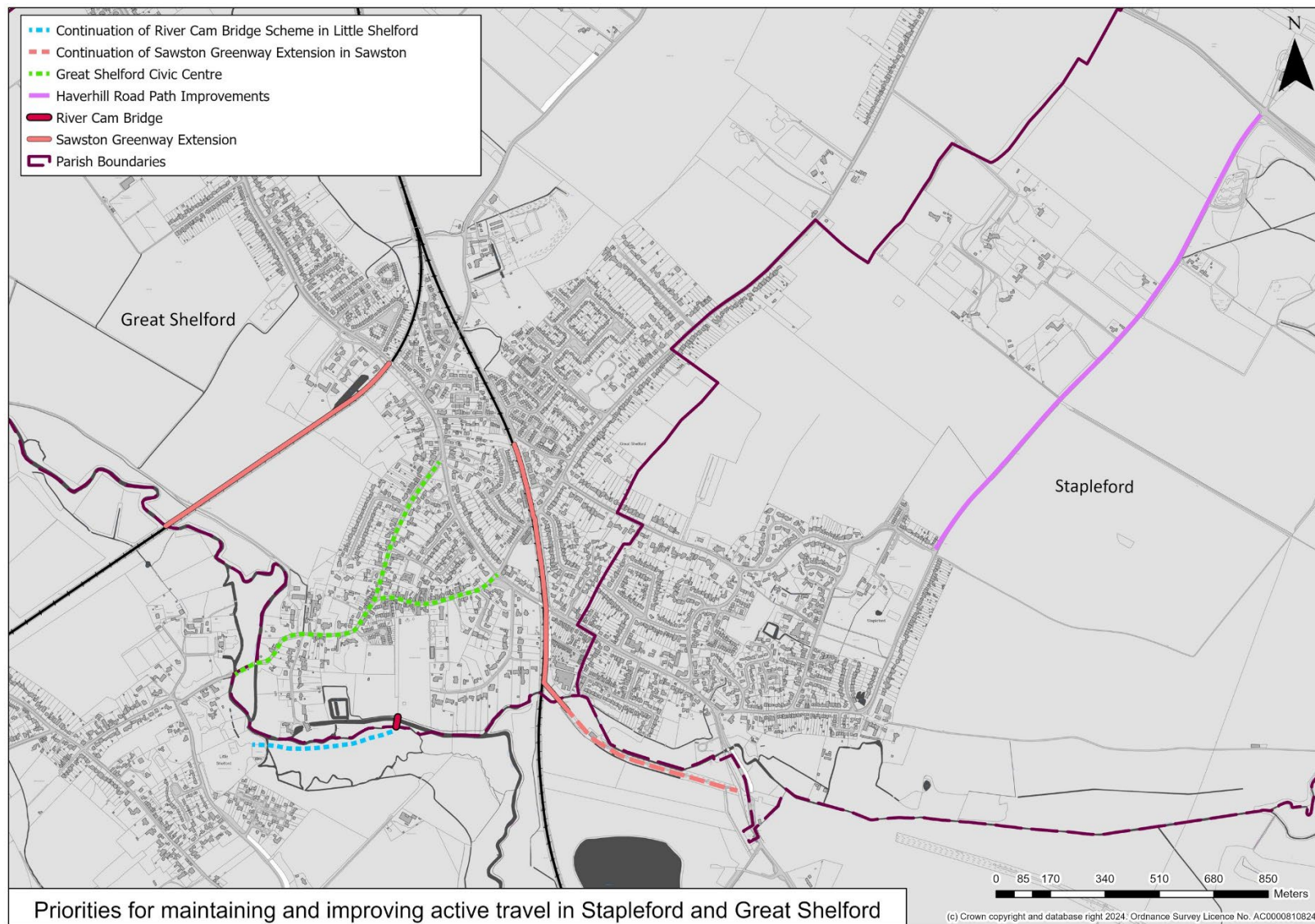
- 10.18 The NP supports the Sawston Greenway initiative and identifies a priority to extend the Greenway through Great Shelford to improve cycling safety, notably for young people travelling from Great Shelford to Sawston Village College and cyclists from the west of the neighbourhood area heading to/from Cambridge.

Policy S&GS 17: Facilitating active travel in Stapleford and Great Shelford

- 1. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should incorporate safe and attractive walking and cycling routes on site and take opportunities to connect to the wider public rights of way, walking and cycling routes in the neighbourhood area. Development proposals should also respond positively to design code CN.02 Connected Streets (in the S&GS Design Guidance & Codes 2023).**
- 2. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should take every available opportunity to improve connectivity throughout the neighbourhood area through the provision of or through contributions towards improved or new active travel links or active travel infrastructure. Where appropriate, the active travel projects shown on Map 10 and described in the supporting text to the policy should be prioritised for such connectivity.**
- 3. Development proposals which result in decreased pedestrian connectivity between residential areas and shops and services (including schools) or which fail to take reasonable and practicable opportunities to provide new connections will not be supported.**

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy CC/1: Mitigation and adaptation to climate change
- Policy HQ/1: Design principles
- Policy T1/2: Planning for Sustainable Travel



Map 10: Priorities for maintaining and improving active travel in Stapleford and Great Shelford

MANAGING THE IMPACTS OF TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS

Objective 8: The adverse effects of increased road traffic movements from new development on our community's quality of life (and apparent in, for example, air pollution, noise, vibration, road safety, accessibility and street scene environment) will be identified and appropriately mitigated.

10.19 There is one planning policy under this objective:

- Policy S&GS 18: Managing the impacts of new development in the neighbourhood area with respect to the movement of people and vehicles.

Community perspective

10.20 The initial NP opinion survey of 2022 found that increasing traffic congestion and pressure on local services were the second and fourth most common worries about living in the neighbourhood area over the next 15-20 years, attracting 87% and 76% of votes, respectively. Congestion at key pinch points (notably both primary schools and shops on Woollards Lane, Great Shelford), through-traffic volume, traffic speed and traffic noise were already seen as unwelcome side-effects of the growth of adjacent villages and the wider Cambridge economy, and this in turn is impacting decisions to shop locally: 36% said they would be more likely to use the villages' shops if there was less traffic congestion.

10.21 In our 2023 survey, a general theme linked to transport infrastructure also emerged: improving existing highways (e.g. lighting, prioritisation, better paths and cycleways) in and around the villages could do a lot to improve traffic problems and hence daily life without the requirement for more expensive interventions. Complex, costly solutions may not be the answer.

Policy S&GS 18: Managing the impacts of new development in the neighbourhood area with respect to the movement of people and vehicles

10.22 This policy defines how the traffic implications of major development schemes in our neighbourhood area should be assessed in planning proposals.

Background context and policy rationale

10.23 The A1301 which cuts through the two villages is one of several radial routes serving the ever-growing City of Cambridge. Cambridge can also be reached by car via the A1307, which cuts through the northeastern part of the neighbourhood area. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the villages experience high levels of through-traffic and, with this, congestion, especially at peak travel times.

10.24 Without effective interventions, congestion and high traffic volumes through the neighbourhood area and the knock-on impacts of this (e.g. pollution, deterring residents from choosing active travel options, adverse impacts to the street scene and residential amenity) will only increase.

10.25 The Greater Cambridge transport challenge is recognised by all plan-making bodies, including the two Parish Councils, the two District Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council in its capacity as Highway Authority, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Combined Authority in its capacity as Transport Authority for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area (and responsible for preparing and maintaining the Local Transport Plan), and the Greater Cambridge Partnership, in its capacity as the delivery body for the Greater Cambridge City Deal. For ease of reference, Appendix 7 to this Plan provides an overview of the strategic response to aspects of the Greater Cambridge transport challenge in so far as it affects the Stapleford and Great Shelford neighbourhood area.

What can our Neighbourhood Plan do?

- 10.26 The planning policies in this NP can only influence planning applications that come forward for development within the neighbourhood area boundary. As traffic congestion and traffic volumes on the villages' roads is generated largely from development outside the neighbourhood area boundary, the NP is limited in the extent to which it can address village-specific traffic issues.
- 10.27 The NP can, however, have a say on:
- how schemes in the neighbourhood area should be assessed with respect to traffic implications
 - what type of traffic-related infrastructure would be particularly supported in the neighbourhood area.
- 10.28 Key congestion points in the neighbourhood area at the time of writing are, in no particular order:
- Shelford level crossing
 - Granhams Road level crossing
 - junction of A1301/Granhams Road
 - Great and Little Shelford CofE Primary School (Church Street, Great Shelford)
 - Woollards Lane and High Street shops, Great Shelford
 - Stapleford Community Primary School (Bar Lane, Stapleford).
- 10.29 Although traffic issues along Church Street, Woollards Lane and High Street (all Great Shelford) are dealt with separately below, it should be noted that together these routes channel traffic in and out of the civic centre of Great Shelford and link directly or indirectly with the A1301. It would be a challenge to manage the impact of development on traffic movements on one of the routes without knock-on effects on the others and, indeed, potentially on the wider neighbourhood area as well.
- 10.30 In 2023 Great Shelford Parish Council consulted residents and sought wider advice about appropriate traffic calming measures and options to divert through-traffic away from the village centre. This is a continuation of long-term efforts to improve traffic flow and safety in the parish. For example, previous public consultation in 2016 eventually gave rise to a zebra crossing on Woollards Lane, 20mph speed limits in the village centre, an HGV loading bay outside Tesco Express, various parking restrictions, and a flashing speed indicator device on London Road (Great Shelford Village News, June 2016).

Shelford level crossing (incorporating Granhams Road level crossing)

- 10.31 Shelford level crossing lies at the transition of Station Road/Hinton Way in the 'centre south' of the neighbourhood area. It is crossed every day by approx. 150 passenger and freight trains (www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/safety-in-the-community/level-crossing-safety/active-level-crossings/) operating between London Liverpool St and Cambridge North/Ely, Stansted Airport and Norwich, and cross-

country trains between Stansted Airport and Birmingham New Street. In addition to multiple through-trains, there are typically hourly stopping trains in each direction off-peak and half hourly at peak times.

- 10.32 The crossing utilises Public Highway Manually Controlled Barriers managed from Cambridge Station, rather than track-activated circuits. The location of Shelford station relative to the level crossing means that barriers have to be lowered before trains enter the station in case they overrun the signal, with southbound trains giving rise to longer barrier closures than northbound. Observational data collected by a local resident in 2016 suggested that average closure times between 06:30 and 18:30 on weekdays were 3.5mins; there were typically 6.5 closures per hour; barriers were closed for a total of 23mins per hour, equating to a 40% chance of finding the barriers closed. Longer delays were also observed, including one 'three-trainer', closing the gates for up to 8.5mins and creating queues of up to 30 cars east and west of the level crossing (Great Shelford Village News, August 2016).
- 10.33 Regular and at times lengthy level crossing closures result in significant disruption to vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist flows along Station Road/Hinton Way. At peak times, stationary traffic frequently tails back through signals at the four-way junction of Station Road/Tunwells Lane/London Road/Woollards Lane, interfering with traffic movements, public transport timetables and active travel safety on the A1301. These problems are exacerbated in the event of main road closures or congestion in the surrounding area which divert more traffic through Shelford level crossing. The impact on travel times extends to all children of school age who live east of the railway and use Hinton Way/Station Road to access the primary school in Great Shelford or the bus to Sawston Village College. Idling traffic also causes noise and air pollution in the vicinity.
- 10.34 Similar but less severe problems exist at the level crossing at Granhams Road, although barriers are closed for less time because there is no station. Idling traffic can still often tail back west and obstruct the A1301.
- 10.35 Neither level crossing has a footbridge and this can result in dangerous behaviour by pedestrians not inclined to wait for barriers to open. Reporting on Network Rail's response to a MailOnline Freedom of Information request, www.dailymail.co.uk (26 September 2021) described Shelford Station as "...the worst in the UK for barrier-hopping and other reckless trespassing incidents. Shelford level crossing recorded 11 'incursions' in 2020, with one man being knocked to the ground by a head blow from a descending barrier."

Junction of A1301/Granhams Road

- 10.36 The A1301 is one of two main arterial routes to/from the City of Cambridge which cut through the neighbourhood area. Peak-time travel, most notably during weekday mornings, frequently results in extremely slow moving traffic tailing south on the A1301 beyond this point, exacerbated by traffic merging from Granhams Road (which supplies commuter traffic from outside the neighbourhood area) and occasional extended closures of the level crossing on Granhams Road when trains are not running to time. The junction lacks any traffic controls or crossing points. The closest signal-controlled crossing point is approximately 200m to the south, at the junction of Cambridge Road and High Street.

- 10.37 Existing traffic problems are predicted to get worse due to (a) ongoing development of land near the junction of Granhams Road/Babraham Road (A1307), which will supply more traffic from the east of the neighbourhood area and beyond, and (b) the opening of a new Coop store and associated car park at the junction of High Green/Granhams Road. It is noteworthy that the Highway Authority requested in June 2022 (and reiterated in November 2022) that the planning application relating to change of use for the site (22/01972/FUL) be refused because of its unacceptable impact on highway safety. Particular concerns included: the high potential for vehicles to stop within the heavily used mandatory cycle lane on the eastern side of High Green, forcing cyclists to enter a live traffic lane; a significant shortfall in off-street parking spaces; the frequent occupation of parking spaces by store delivery lorries.

Great and Little Shelford CofE Primary School (Church St)

- 10.38 Church Street leads out of Great Shelford to the west, crossing the River Cam as Bridge Street and entering the adjacent settlement of Little Shelford. To the east, it connects with Woollards Lane and High Street and then onwards to the A1301, one of the principal road links into Cambridge City. As part of the village's conservation area, there are several older properties on Church Street with no off-street parking provision. The village primary school and parish church are located at roughly the mid-point of this sinuous 20mph road and are a focus for congestion; however, problems are not only restricted to school peak hours.
- 10.39 Independent consultancy Intermodal Transportation Ltd (ITL) was commissioned by Great Shelford Parish Council to undertake a traffic study of several defined roads within the central area of Great Shelford, including Church Street. Its subsequent 'Traffic Study' (February 2023) highlighted speeding, congestion, illegal parking and dangerous driving as particular problems along Church Street. For example:
- over a typical 12 hour day, an average of 4,115 vehicles passed through Church Street with more travelling eastbound in the morning peak hour and westbound in the afternoon, suggestive of an element of 'rat-running' to/from central Cambridge
 - Church Street is typically 5.5m wide in the vicinity of the church and school and carried 451 vehicles during the highest peak hour surveyed (7.5 vehicle movements per minute). This is very high given that it is a rural lane connecting Great and Little Shelford
 - where parking exists on one side of Church Street, the effective remaining single road width operates by one-way shuttle and significantly reduces highway capacity
 - a significant number of cycle movements were observed during AM and PM peak hours on Church Street (70-80 and 30-40, respectively), yet there is insufficient road width for a segregated cycle lane to facilitate greater and safer active travel.

Woollards Lane and High Street shops

- 10.40 Many local shops and services are clustered along Woollards Lane in Great Shelford, notably at its western end, and at the southern end of High Street. Two free public car parks, Great Shelford Memorial Hall, the Recreation Ground and Great Shelford Tennis Club are accessed from Woollards Lane; the local primary care centre is located off High Street; Shelford Station is a short walk away. There are, therefore, multiple sources of traffic leaving and entering the main flow, and reasons for

wanting to park. Residents and visitors compete for on-street parking provision, with several older and listed properties lacking any private off-street parking.

- 10.41 Traffic flows along Woollards Lane in both directions, is limited to 20mph and has a 7.5 tonne vehicle weight restriction other than for access. ITL's traffic flow data suggest that Woollards Lane accounts for more local than commuter traffic movements than neighbouring Church Street or High Street. The most significant traffic problems were found to arise from indiscriminate parking and a lack of parking enforcement in the vicinity of Tesco Express and Days Bakery, with private cars and vans regularly parked in the loading bay adjacent to Tesco Express.
- 10.42 Parking is permitted along High Street although there are some restrictions in place, notably at the southern end around shops. Illegal parking is apparent. Like Church Street, ITL's traffic flow data suggest that High Street is favoured by commuter traffic into/out of the City. Speeding appears to be a particular issue on this road, with 85th percentile speeds in either direction being 25-28mph and thus above the 20mph speed limit.
- 10.43 As noted in the community perspective section supporting Policy S&GS 18, community engagement in 2022 for this NP found that over one-third of respondents would be more likely to use Great Shelford's shops if there was less congestion, indicating that traffic issues around the commercial heart of the village are having a negative impact on the local economy.
- 10.44 Paying heed to this, the fifth part of Policy S&GS 18 offers support to proposals which are designed to lead to an overall reduction in traffic volume and/or traffic congestion along the A1301/in the Great Shelford civic core. This could include the delivery of off-street parking provision designed to meet demand generated by visitors to village shops, services and other amenities and helping towards the implementation of the active travel priorities listed in Policy S&GS 17.

Stapleford Community Primary School (Bar Lane)

- 10.45 The primary school and Stapleford Nursery are co-located on Bar Lane, within the village's settled area. Road access to the site is via Gog Magog Way to the north and Bury Road/Haverhill Road to the south; additional foot-only access is via Vicarage Lane (a public right of way extending from Church Street (Stapleford) to Bar Lane) and a soft path from Haverhill Road through Stapleford allotments which emerges opposite the school. There are no pedestrian crossing points in the immediate locality.
- 10.46 Traffic surveys have not been conducted outside Stapleford's primary school, but that does not negate it and the surrounding area acting as a local pinch point for traffic congestion at school drop-off and collection times, as evidenced in residents' correspondence with Stapleford Parish Council and Parish Council meeting minutes. Concerns are not new. For example, the Stapleford Parish Plan (December 2011) proposed "converting the verge opposite the school entrance to a lay-by so as to resolve congestion at the start and end of the school day"; this has not yet happened. The same document reported that 78% of residents surveyed answered 'yes' to the question "Are cars parked on the road dangerous or obstructive?"
- 10.47 Other than on-street parking, the closest parking spaces to the primary school are at Stapleford Recreation Ground, but they are generally under-utilised for temporary

school parking purposes. Parking is preferentially done on either side of Bar Lane, where there are no restrictions other than yellow zigzag lines around the school entrance. The narrow width of Bar Lane plus some necessary on-street resident parking means that school parking can temporarily block driveways, pavements and the entrance to Stapleford allotments, reduce visibility at turnings and condense the usable width of local roads to a single lane. Cars parking on the east side of Bar Lane invariably make use of the grass verge.

- 10.48 Stapleford Parish Council is seeking residents' views on various traffic calming measures in the wider vicinity of the school and collating traffic speed data with a view to applying for future Local Highway Improvement funding for specific schemes. One aim of these measures is to make village streets safer and more supportive of active travel. However, an LHI application in 2024 to reduce the speed limit along Bury Road and Haverhill Road where it passes through the village to 20mph was unfortunately unsuccessful. The school also has a travel plan in place to encourage active travel and reduce traffic and congestion in its immediate vicinity.

Policy S&GS 18: Managing the impacts of new development in the neighbourhood area with respect to the movement of people and vehicles

- 1. When assessing development proposals, particular attention will be paid to the transport impact of proposals on existing congestion key points:**
 - Location 1: Shelford level crossing
 - Location 2: Granhams Road level crossing
 - Location 3: Junction of A1301/Granhams Road
 - Location 4: Great and Little Shelford CofE Primary School (Church Street)
 - Location 5: Woollards Lane and High Street shops, Great Shelford
 - Location 6: Stapleford Community Primary School (Bar Lane)
- 2. Proposals for major development (see glossary) in the neighbourhood area that are likely to trigger significant traffic movements will be required to be supported by highways information including, where applicable, a transport assessment which predicts the level and impact of increased traffic movements during both the construction and operation phases.**
- 3. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals which would exacerbate existing problems relating to traffic volumes and traffic congestion (i.e. by generating noticeable increases in traffic movements or by increasing demand for on-street parking or by causing obstructions to flowing traffic) in the neighbourhood area should be accompanied by local highways and environmental information which details:**
 - adverse impacts in terms of type (e.g. road safety, environment (noise, dust, air pollution)) and who or what is impacted (e.g. people, active travellers using pavements or cycle routes, the natural environment)
 - measures proposed to mitigate these impacts, e.g. street scene enhancement such as pavement widening, planting, provision of crossing points, or narrowing of junctions (to allow for safer pedestrian movement).
- 4. Proposals which lead to unacceptable adverse impacts on residential amenity in the neighbourhood area, or on the street scene environment in Great Shelford village centre or on road safety for all vulnerable users (pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians) will not be supported.**
- 5. Proposals which are designed to lead to an overall reduction in traffic volume and/or traffic congestion along the A1301/in the Great Shelford civic core, and which comply with other development plan policies will be supported.**

Other applicable NP policies:

- Policy S&GS 17: Facilitating active travel in Stapleford and Great Shelford

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy T1/2: Planning for Sustainable Travel

11. Countryside access and countryside enhancements

COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

Objective 9: Existing routes for non-motorised users into the much-valued countryside in our neighbourhood area will be protected and maintained. New routes for non-motorised users from our villages into our countryside will be opened up.

- 11.1 There is one planning policy under this objective:
- Policy S&GS 19: Protecting and improving routes into our countryside.

Community perspective

- 11.2 Despite being surrounded by green spaces, the paucity of public access in Stapleford and Great Shelford to much of this is well recognised. For example:
- Great Shelford's Village Design Statement (2004) noted that "One very significant feature of Great Shelford is that although there is pleasant countryside around the village, access to it by Rights of Way or permissible paths is very limited"
 - Stapleford Parish Plan (2011) commented that "...although the village sits amidst fields, access to the countryside is limited. Walks at Wandlebury and Magog Down are popular, but these sites are generally seen as accessible from the village only by driving. There are few paths or tracks through the fields, and they do not provide circular walks."
- 11.3 Little if anything has changed between then and now. An initial public opinion survey in 2022 further highlighted a lack of off-road, interconnected routes as a frustration of the neighbourhood area. As one respondent said, "Just because we are 'in the countryside' doesn't mean that the space is actually accessible."
- 11.4 This perspective was taken forward to consultation in 2023. 87% of participants strongly agreed or agreed with the draft objective pertaining to countryside access and it was ranked seventh out of 10 planning-related priorities.
- 11.5 To facilitate further discussion of improved countryside access, the consultation presented a map and descriptions of eight aspirational routes, with respondents asked to prioritise three for the benefit of residents and visitors. A total of 455 votes were cast. All proposed routes gained some support, the top three being:
- the path on the east side of Haverhill Road which links the settled part of Stapleford to Magog Down and onwards to Wandlebury Country Park
 - a bridge over the River Cam at the southern edge of Great Shelford Recreation Ground, which could open up new leisure routes and reduce congestion and parking on Church Street by providing an alternative and safe route to the village's primary school

- the Drift Track to the southeast of Haverhill Road, Stapleford, a private carriage and drift road, in current form a 'there and back' track with no official links to other off-road routes.

11.6 The consultation paper also proposed that, where practicable, improved existing and new routes into the neighbourhood area's countryside should be suitable for all forms of non-car use (on foot, on wheels, on a horse). Around 10 times as many respondents supported rather than opposed this, although free-text comments threw up practical tensions between different off-road users. Some value countryside access for quiet leisure and enjoyment of nature, some for sports purposes, and others for active travel to/from work. Hence, concerns were expressed about: runners requiring circuits which are safe and easy underfoot; safety on shared use paths (e.g. where cyclists and equestrians mix with walkers and dogs); surface improvements neither disturbing the natural environment nor promoting one type of user over another; whether investment should focus on specific off-road users rather than trying to encompass all possible users.

Policy S&GS 19: Protecting and improving routes into our countryside

11.7 Despite being surrounded by green spaces, our community recognises the lack of public access to it in general and of interconnected off-road routes in particular. As set out below, this policy protects our rights of way and requests that, where appropriate, new development improves the network with new routes and linkages. Our Plan identifies a set of priorities for this, as established through community consultation.

Background context and policy rationale

- 11.8 Whilst the neighbourhood area contains attractive countryside with rolling chalkland hills and river valleys together with country parks and local nature reserves, access to the countryside and links between the various public sites are limited for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. As can be seen from Map 11, there are no public rights of way providing access to the countryside from the settled areas.
- 11.9 Public access improvements to the surrounding countryside for villages like Stapleford and Great Shelford are also prioritised in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan via Policy CSF/5 in the Southern Fringe Area Action Plan (see Policy S&GS 20 for further context).
- 11.10 As part of preparing the NP, a number of priorities for improving access have been identified and consulted upon. The work has been informed by the S&GS LCA 2019, which included a range of proposals.
- 11.11 The resulting aspirations for improving our rural routes for non-motorised users are set out below and identified on Map 12.
- 11.12 Considerable work has gone into identifying these routes. Nevertheless, they are at this stage only aspirational and many are on privately owned land. Members of the public are not permitted to access privately owned land without landowner permission unless a route is a designated public right of way (see Map 11) or permissive access has been granted.

- 11.13 Improvements in the provision of rural routes in our two parishes could be delivered outside the planning process through collaborative working between landowners and the community. They could also be delivered through the planning process in the event that a specific development comes forward that opens up a new opportunity. Alternatively, improvements could be required as a condition of granting planning consent; this would apply where the improvements are necessary to mitigate specific adverse impacts of a development scheme.

Jenny's Path, Church Street, Great Shelford: extension to existing permissive route

- 11.14 Jenny's Path, off Church Street, Great Shelford: add two offshoots to create new circuitous route options:
- (a) across rear of Shelford Rugby Club to Stonehill Rd allotments, and
 - (b) across to Great Shelford cemetery.

Haverhill Road between A1307 and Stapleford: improvements and extension to path

- 11.15 Improvements to, and an easterly extension of, the path alongside Haverhill Road between the A1307 and Stapleford village are required to make it meet the needs of all non-motorised users. This would better link the village to Magog Down and Wandlebury Park, and link to routes through the new countryside park (Chalk Hill Down) between Haverhill Rd and Hinton Way.

River Cam bridge initiative

- 11.16 This initiative is popular among residents who participated in community engagement for this NP. If implemented, it would open up new active travel routes. It is also included in Policy S&GS 17 and described in supporting text for that policy.

Granhams Road path, Great Shelford: new off-road route linking edge of settled area to permissive path at White Hill Farm

- 11.17 Our aspiration is to provide an off-road route (where currently there is none) on the north side of Granhams Road from its junction with the DNA path, extending past Great Shelford Parish Council's 'pocket park' (a former clay pit, now informal nature reserve – see Policy S&GS 9) and onwards to the permissive path at White Hill Farm. At the eastern extent of the latter, it would be possible to link with another permissive route across fields to Hinton Way and from there with routes through the new (yet to be delivered) countryside park between Hinton Way and Haverhill Road, and on towards Magog Down and Wandlebury Country Park.

Aspirational new and improved routes yet to secure in principle

- 11.18 The above routes have been agreed in principle following community engagement as well as engagement with applicable landowners. There are, however, further routes that the community would like to see delivered. These have been identified as part of community engagement work and are supported by the two Parish Councils. Liaison work has taken place with landowners on some of these routes but agreement in principle is yet to be secured. During the Plan period, the community's aspirations with respect to delivering these and other countryside route improvements may become relevant, so they are described in Table 8 and mapped in Appendix 8.
- 11.19 The first four of these routes were included in the 'Mid-term community consultation' in 2023 and received support from residents. The final two emerged in residents' free-text comments on the latter and in residents' feedback on the Regulation 14 version of the draft NP. Routes 1, 5 and 6, which would provide new links to Magog Down, were additionally supported by Magog Trust in its Regulation 14 consultation comments.

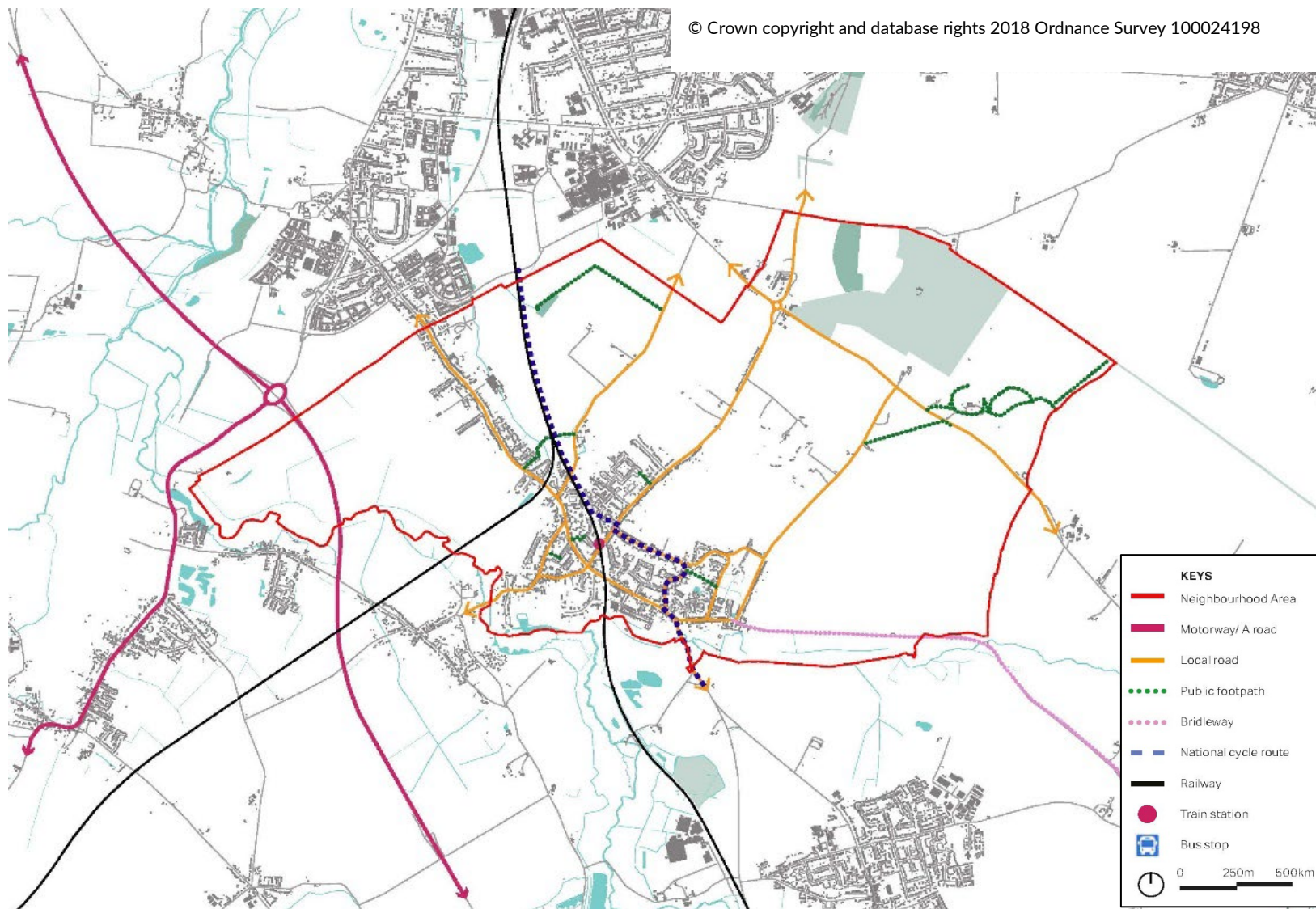
	Nature of improvement	Route description
1	Extension to existing route	Drift Track SE of Haverhill Rd, Stapleford: add a northeasterly spur along the NW-facing side of the existing hedgerow to link with Villedômer Wood at Magog Down. Onward travel could then go N to Wandlebury Country Park or S (as per route 6 below) to link with the track behind Stapleford Granary.
2	Improvements to existing route	Improvements to the existing path looping N around White Hill Farm to create a multi-user route with entry/exit points off Granhams Rd.
3	Extension to existing route	Extension of the existing path SE from Granhams Rd, initially following the parish boundary before crossing Hinton Way and onwards to Haverhill Rd near the entrance to Magog Down car park. Onward travel could then link to other routes, Magog Down and Wandlebury Country Park.
4	Improvements to existing route	Safety and multi-user improvements to the route along Wort's Causeway. Onward travel to the SE could connect with the Roman Rd and then to Linton Greenway via existing byways.
5	New connection between existing routes	Link between the track behind Stapleford Granary and Magog Down: starting from close to the bridge over the River Granta by the junction with Rowley Lane, following the field edge and parish boundary to the corner of Vestey Wood at Magog Down. This would link existing permissive routes to create a new circular route and allow onward travel to Magog Down and Wandlebury Country Park.
6	Re-establishment of former route to connect two existing routes	Link between the track behind Stapleford Granary and the Drift Track extending SE from Haverhill Rd: there was previously an unofficial path along planting boundaries from near the black barn behind Stapleford Granary to the Drift Track off Haverhill Road. Reinstated, it would provide a short circular route from the village, and a link to Magog Down and onwards from there via route 1 above.

Table 8: Aspirational new and improved routes yet to secure in principle

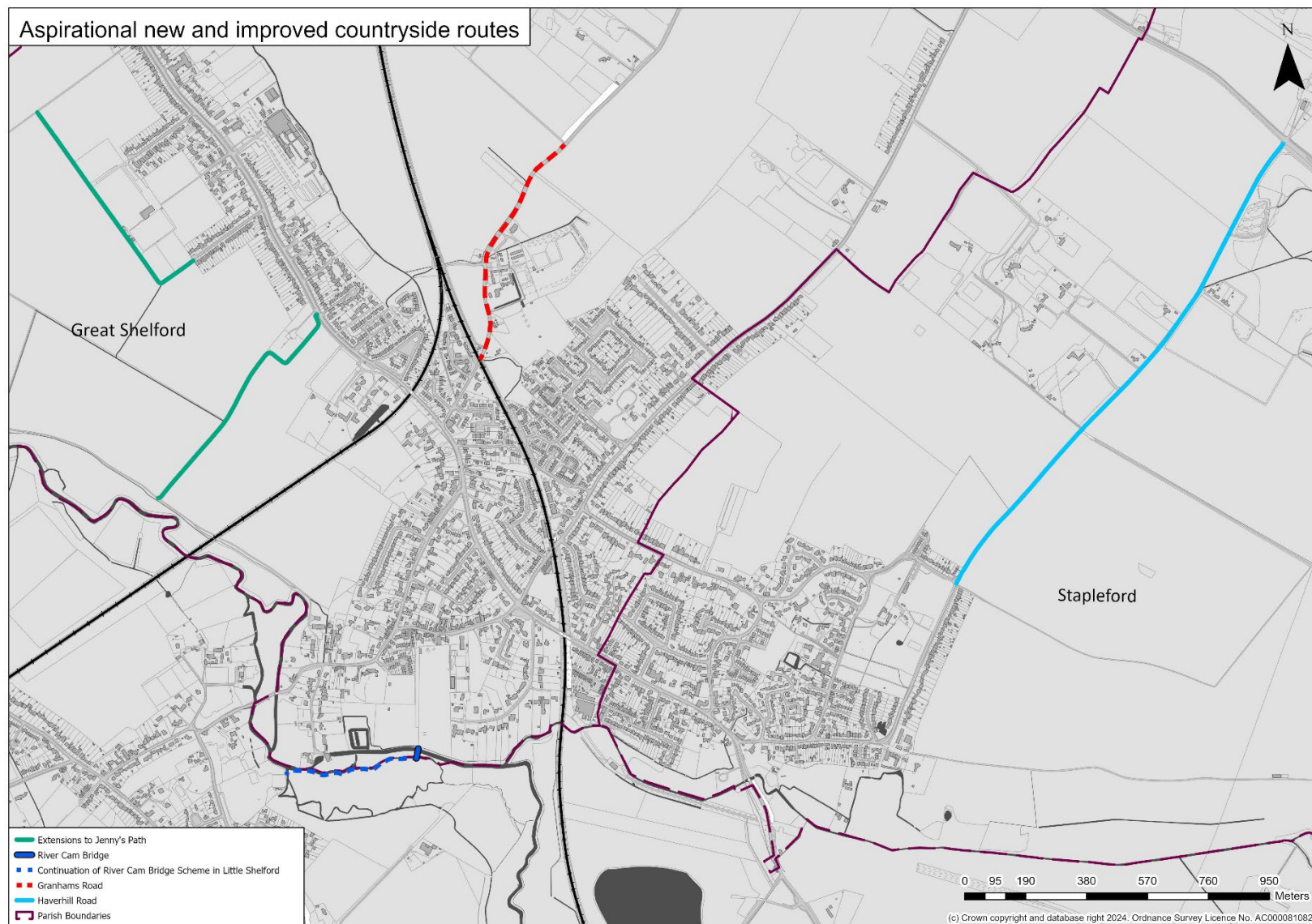
- 11.20 Where a new rural route is being delivered, the choice of surface should be suitable for meeting the needs of the users, be sustainable (with respect to carbon life cycle emissions and durability) and appropriate to the rural context of the neighbourhood area. Wherever feasible, new rural routes should be of at least bridleway status and ideally restricted byway status. This will provide amenity to as many users as possible. Guidance on suitable surfaces can be found at www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding/access-and-bridleways-advice/.
- 11.21 Where improvements are being agreed as part of complying with Policy S&GS 19, regard shall be had to the needs and safety of all non-motorised users of the network.

Policy S&GS 19: Protecting and improving routes into our countryside

- 1. The Public Rights of Way network shown in Map 11 and the permissive routes in the parish are valued for providing important outdoor recreational opportunities and will be protected or enhanced.**
- 2. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should take any reasonable opportunities to create new links, including bridleways, into the existing public rights of way network, to upgrade existing permissive paths into public rights of way, or to improve the quality of provision in the existing network. The Plan's aspirations for new routes are shown on Map 12.**
- 3. Where a development proposal involves the creation of a new public right of way, arrangements for the maintenance and funding of the route should form part of the overall package.**
- 4. Where appropriate, proposals for major residential development should either provide improvements to the network of public access routes into the open countryside or make financial contributions towards such improvements.**
- 5. Development proposals which would result in a reduction in the quality or quantity of rural routes accessible to non-motorised users will not be supported.**



Map 11: Existing routes, including Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the neighbourhood area. Map reproduced with permission from S&GS Design Guidance and Codes 2023 (AECOM)



Map 12: Aspirational new and improved countryside routes.

COUNTRYSIDE ENHANCEMENT

Objective 10: the Countryside Enhancement Strategy set out in the Landscape Character Assessment for the neighbourhood area will be implemented. These landscape, biodiversity and public access improvements will complement the existing landscape character of the area and protect and enhance the setting of Cambridge.

- 11.22 There is one planning policy under this objective:
- Policy S&GS 20: Delivering Stapleford and Great Shelford's Improved Landscape Area.

Community perspective

- 11.23 Consultation in 2023 explained the Countryside Enhancement Strategy as a series of landscape, biodiversity and public access improvements proposed for a specific section of the neighbourhood area falling within Policy CSF/5 area of SCDC's Southern Fringe Action Plan 2008. The NP can facilitate this by requiring development proposals which either directly affect this section of land, or come forward in the wider neighbourhood area, to make some of the enhancements by incorporating them into their designs or making financial contributions.
- 11.24 Although the draft objective linked to this attracted support from respondents (86% either strongly agreed or agreed with it), it was considered to be the least important of all 10 draft objectives in the event that a trade-off in our NP's coverage needed to be made. This is not necessarily a surprise: it is arguably less relatable for residents, being embedded in policy rather than rooted in the everyday experience of living/working within the neighbourhood area.
- 11.25 The Countryside Enhancement Strategy can be tackled outside of the NP, potentially by the parish councils, voluntary groups or working parties. However, developer involvement can happen if suitable planning applications come forward, so it makes sense to include it in the NP.

Policy S&GS 20: Stapleford and Great Shelford's Improved Landscape Area

- 11.26 An area of land between the villages and the City of Cambridge is identified in this NP as the Stapleford and Great Shelford Improved Landscape Area. This area aligns with that identified in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan as the CSF/5 Countryside Enhancement Area – see Map 2 and Map 13 in this report.
- 11.27 The Southern Fringe Area Action Plan (2008) includes Policy CSF/5: Countryside Enhancement Strategy, which commits SCDC to prepare a Countryside Enhancement Strategy 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 policy also specifies what the strategy should include as follows:
- new copses on suitable knolls, hilltops and scarp tops
 - management and creation of chalk grassland
 - management of existing shelter belts
 - new mixed woodland and shelter belts

- creation of a landscape corridor along Hobson's Brook
- reinforcement and planting of new hedgerows
- roadside planting
- new footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways creating routes through the area and linking to Wandlebury Country Park/Magog Down.

11.28 Available information tells us that the required Countryside Enhancement Strategy has not been progressed since the adoption of the Area Action Plan in 2008. However, in 2019, as the two parish councils were initially progressing the S&GS NP work, a Landscape Character Assessment (the S&GS LCA 2019) covering the neighbourhood area was commissioned and then prepared by a professional landscape architect. The S&GS LCA 2019 included recommendations with respect to a Countryside Enhancement Strategy for the area of land shown in Map 2 of this NP and referred to in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan as CS/5 Countryside Enhancement Area. The NP refers to this land as the Stapleford and Great Shelford Improved Landscape Area.

Why is a Countryside Enhancement Strategy needed?

11.29 The rationale for preparing the Countryside Enhancement Strategy is very similar to that laid out in the Southern Fringe Area Action Plan. The key points are:

- the importance of preserving and enhancing the existing landscape character, described as a: "mainly a chalklands character area comprising a rolling topography which rises gently towards Gog Magog Hills with a spur of high ground reaching towards the city between Babraham Road and Great Shelford/Stapleford villages. The landscape is broad in scale and offers uninterrupted views from the Magog Down in the south across large arable fields where enclosure is limited to occasional trimmed thorn hedges, shelterbelts and hilltop copses"

Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan, 2008

- difficult public access to Magog Down and Wandlebury Country Park: "there are no continuous footpaths, cyclepaths or bridleways from Cambridge or Great Shelford and Stapleford villages"

Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan, 2008¹⁷

- the large-scale complex of buildings at Cambridge Biomedical Campus dominating the northern edge of the neighbourhood area. Therefore, it is key that further development incorporates landscape mitigation measures. These should be focused on:
 - conserving the setting of the historic City of Cambridge
 - managing the impact on the Great Shelford and Stapleford landscape of such large scale development
 - improving public access via active travel methods to outdoor spaces, such as Wandlebury Country Park, to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

11.30 The landscape area improvements set out in Policy S&GS 20 have been informed by work undertaken as part of the S&GS LCA 2019. Members of the NP steering group, working on the behalf of the two parish councils, have undertaken further work on enhancements identified in the S&GS LCA 2019, including community engagement.

¹⁷ Since 2008, access to Wandlebury Country Park from Cambridge has been provided for some users.

- 11.31 The identified improvements described below and shown in Map 14 are consistent with other ongoing initiatives in the wider area, including the Cambridge Nature Network 2021. Whilst considerable work has gone into identifying the initiatives, the areas of land are, at this stage, identified as *potentially* suitable for enhancement. The exact nature and scale of potential enhancements would be subject to site studies and collaboration between stakeholders (landowners, parish councils, statutory bodies). Initial landowner engagement has taken place but, prior to anything happening, landowner agreement and cooperation would be needed.
- 11.32 The delivery of these improvements could happen outside the planning process via community-led initiatives. They could also be delivered through the planning process should a specific development come forward which presents a new opportunity. In most cases a developer will only be able to secure countryside enhancement measures within the application site concerned. Alternatively, improvements could be required as a condition of granting planning consent; this would apply where the improvements are necessary to mitigate specific adverse impacts of a development scheme.
- 11.33 The identified improvements are:
1. Riverside pastures, Stapleford meadows. Manage for biodiversity and create access to form a circular loop from Bury Farm.
 2. Riverside pastures, Shelford meadows. Manage for biodiversity and create access to some sections on Rectory Farm.
 3. Tree planting along southwest side of Haverhill Road to complement existing path along the road. Open views to be retained or enhanced.
 4. New hedgerows and hedgerow trees corridor. These are sought on field boundaries on small fields east of The Hectare and Walden Way and south of the footpath from the railway bridge and along the railway to Davey Close.
 5. The Clay Pit (aka 'pocket park'), Granhams Road. Requires restoration and the provision of interpretation boards. Owned by Great Shelford Parish Council.
 6. Hobson's Brook Corridor. Seek creation of an improved landscape corridor.
 7. New public open space (e.g. providing a mosaic of woodland and grassland) sufficiently close to Nine Wells Local Nature Reserve to relieve pressure on Nine Wells LNR and provide an alternative space for local residents and biomedical employees to visit.

Policy S&GS 20: Delivering Stapleford and Great Shelford's Improved Landscape Area

The Plan identifies the Stapleford and Great Shelford Improved Landscape Area as shown on Map 13.

Development proposals which may come forward in or which would otherwise impact on the identified Stapleford and Great Shelford Improved Landscape Area, should take any reasonable opportunities to implement the countryside enhancement measures described in paragraph 11.33 of this Plan and shown on Map 14.

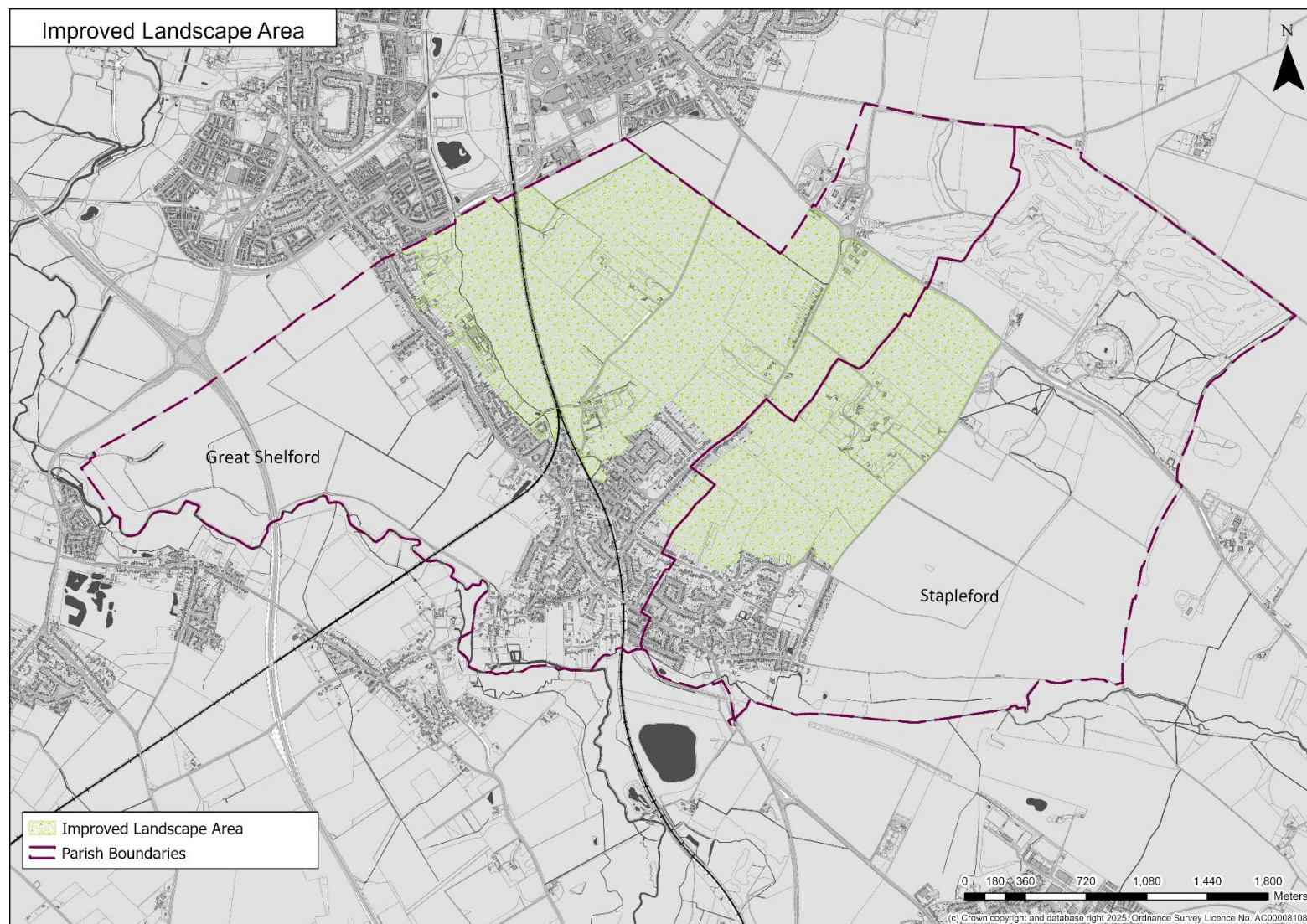
Where development proposals would impact on the character of the Stapleford and Great Shelford Improved Landscape Area and measures are required to protect and enhance the landscape setting of the two villages and their separation from Cambridge, financial contributions towards the delivery of any relevant initiatives in paragraph 11.33 of the Plan will be sought where they are directly, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Other applicable NP policies

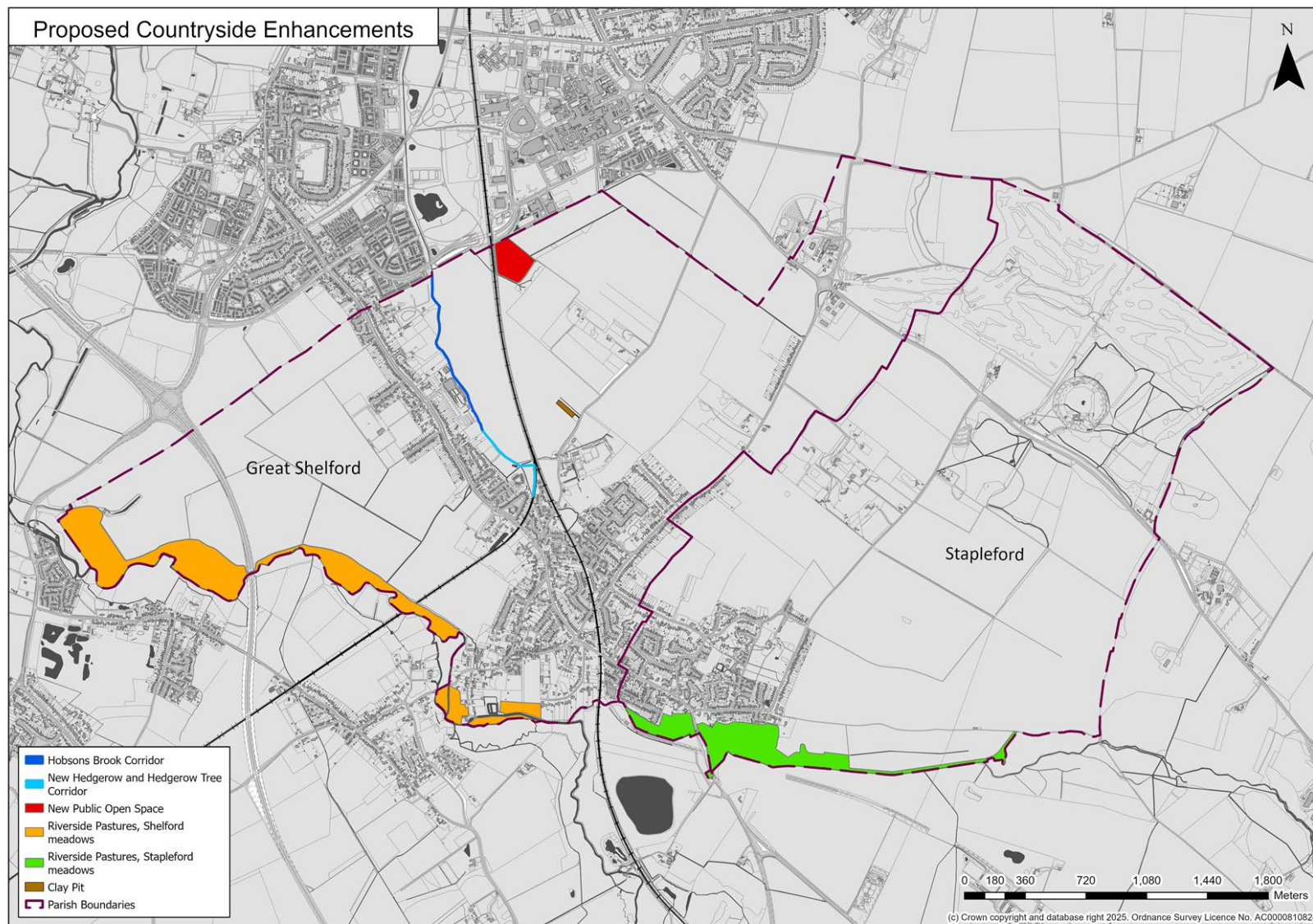
- Policy S&GS 12: Protecting and enhancing Stapleford and Great Shelford's landscape character
- Policy S&GS 16: Delivering community infrastructure priorities alongside new development

Relevant policies from South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan

- Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
- Policy NH/4: Biodiversity
- Policy NH/5: Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance
- Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure
- Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development in and Adjoining the Green Belt
- Policy NH/9: Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites and Infilling in the Green Belt
- Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan 2008



Map 13: Stapleford and Great Shelford Improved Landscape Area



Map 14: Stapleford and Great Shelford Proposed Countryside Enhancements

Section III

12. Implementation and monitoring

- 12.1 The two parish councils acknowledge that circumstances and local priorities may change during the Plan period. In addition, some policies will be more effective than others in addressing the vision and objectives set out in Chapter 5.
- 12.2 The two parish councils will therefore commit to reviewing the effectiveness of the NP's policies and the appropriateness of its vision and objectives on a regular basis, and at the very least once annually as part of the Annual Parish Council Meeting.
- 12.3 It is recommended that the Chairs of each parish council and at least one other councillor per parish are specifically tasked with this, and that they meet as a group at least once annually to discuss the NP and matters arising therefrom.
- 12.4 Over time, and depending on the outcomes of the interim reviews, a full or partial review of the Plan will be considered. Within this broader context the parish councils will consider the need or otherwise for a full or partial review of the Plan within six months of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan, which will provide an up-to-date planning context for both the wider District and the neighbourhood area.

Mechanisms for reviewing planning applications and monitoring planning decisions

- 12.5 When the two parish councils consider planning applications, they will consider how proposed development accords with the planning policies contained in this Plan. Where responses are returned to the local planning authority with respect to planning applications, the two parish councils will identify the planning policies in the S&GS NP which are relevant to the planning application and, where applicable, provide a view as to how the planning application accords with the S&GS NP or otherwise.
- 12.6 The two parish councils will also monitor planning decisions made by the local planning authority and maintain a record as follows:
- note which S&GS NP planning policies are applicable to the decision, and
 - whether these are being appropriately cited in planning decisions, and
 - whether decisions by the local planning authority are compatible with the policies in the S&GS NP.
- 12.7 In the event of there being concerns that the local planning authority has not used applicable S&GS planning policies in its decision making, these will be raised directly with the local planning authority.

Delivering aspirations set out in this Plan

- 12.8 A Section 106 (S106) is a legal agreement made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, signed by SCDC and developers, which sets out what financial contributions will be paid and what additional, non-financial obligations are

required as part of a planning consent for a development. These agreements, and the contribution obligations within them, are used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, including highways, recreational facilities, education, health and affordable housing. SCDC is the accountable body for the spending of received S106 financial contributions and must ensure that they are spent on facilities or projects which can be demonstrated to be required because of the new development and/or need in the locality of the development. Projects supported must be necessary, viable, deliver the required social and community benefits, and be well managed and sustainable.

- 12.9 As part of NP monitoring, the parish councils will scan all development projects coming forward in their respective parishes from which developer contributions may be sought. This will enable the parish councils to flag appropriate projects or community aspirations to SCDC in a bid to secure S106 contributions towards them.
- 12.10 Projects and community aspirations which have arisen during production of the S&GS NP and towards which developer contributions could be sought (when taking into consideration the nature and impact of each development proposal) are set out in the table below. The table also lists the 'delivery mechanism' for each (i.e. the body which would be responsible for bringing it into being) because S106 monies cannot reasonably be secured towards a piece of infrastructure unless a particular body is identified as being responsible for its delivery.
- 12.11 The table may be used as follows:
- A development proposal comes forward for which S106 contributions may be merited. As part of reviewing the proposal and making a recommendation to SCDC, the PC will identify which S&GS NP policies are impacted by the development proposal.
 - Relevant projects or community aspiration(s) relating to each impacted NP policy are identified. The PC agrees which of these it wishes to prioritise for potential S106 contributions and identifies the body/bodies responsible for bringing it into being. Where appropriate, an in principle agreement from this body is sought.
 - The PC makes a formal approach to SCDC for S106 contributions towards a project to deliver a specific project or community aspiration linked to a specific development proposal coming forward in its parish.

Projects and aspirations against which developer contributions may be sought, grouped by relevant S&GS NP policy	Bodies responsible for delivering these aspirations
Policy S&GS 4: Meeting the needs of the older population Improved health provision	Health providers, e.g. primary care networks, strategic health authority
Policy S&GS 16: Delivering community infrastructure priorities alongside new development Infrastructure priorities, such as:	
Informal open space provision, in particular in the north of the settlement	Developer-led, although resulting open spaces could be maintained by PCs in long term
Addressing existing deficiencies in play space	PC-led
Improving access to natural green space from settlements to surrounding countryside	PC, landowners, County Council

Projects and aspirations against which developer contributions may be sought, grouped by relevant S&GS NP policy	Bodies responsible for delivering these aspirations
Improving provision in quantity of recreational space	PC-led; developer-led if delivered as part of a development
Improving provision in quality of recreational space	PC-led
Education: expanding early years and primary school capacity	County Council as education authority is lead
Active travel priorities as per Policy S&GS 18	See below
Maintaining and modernising community meeting spaces	PC-led
Policy S&GS 17: Facilitating active travel	
Active travel priorities:	
Bridge across River Cam at Great Shelford Recreation Ground	Landowner, Great Shelford Parish Council
Haverhill Road between A1307 and Stapleford: improvements to path	County Council as highways authority, landowner and Stapleford Parish Council
Improving infrastructure for users of the active travel network	County Council as highways authority, developers, PCs
Improving and maintaining a pleasant street scene environment in neighbourhood area and in Great Shelford civic centre	County Council as highways authority, developers, PCs
Sawston Greenway – extension to Great Shelford	PCs, GCP's greenways project and landowners
Policy S&GS 19: Protecting and improving routes into our countryside.	
Maintaining or improving routes:	
Jenny's Path: extension to existing route	Landowners, Great Shelford Parish Council
Haverhill Road between A1307 and Stapleford: improvements to path	County Council as highways authority, landowner and Stapleford Parish Council
Bridge across River Cam at Great Shelford Recreation Ground	Landowner, Great Shelford Parish Council
Granhams Road path, Great Shelford: new off-road route linking edge of settled area to permissive path at White Hill Farm	County Council as highways authority, landowner and Great Shelford Parish Council
Policy S&GS 20: Stapleford and Great Shelford's Improved Landscape Area:	
Landscape improvements:	
Riverside pastures, Stapleford meadows: manage for biodiversity and create access to form a circular loop from Bury Farm	Developer, landowners
Riverside pastures, Shelford meadows: manage for biodiversity and create access to some sections on Rectory Farm	Developer, landowners

Projects and aspirations against which developer contributions may be sought, grouped by relevant S&GS NP policy	Bodies responsible for delivering these aspirations
Tree planting along southwest side of Haverhill Road to complement existing path along the road; open views to be retained or enhanced	County Council as highways authority, landowners and Stapleford Parish Council
New hedgerows and hedgerow trees corridor: these are sought on field boundaries on small fields east of The Hectare and Walden Way and south of the footpath from the railway bridge and along the railway to Davey Close	Developer, landowners
New linear woodland/shelterbelt to south of biomedical campus: linear green infrastructure, such as a hedgerow between buildings and the cycle track, is sought to screen buildings flanking the access road; hedging is also sought around the link to the biomedical campus to the north	Developer, landowners and Great Shelford Parish Council
The Clay Pit (aka 'pocket park'), Granhams Road: requires restoration and the provision of interpretation boards	Great Shelford Parish Council
Hobson's Brook Corridor: creation of an improved landscape corridor	Landowners and Great Shelford Parish Council
New public open space (e.g. providing a mosaic of woodland and grassland) sufficiently close to Nine Wells Local Nature Reserve to relieve pressure on Nine Wells LNR and provide an alternative space for local residents and biomedical employees to visit	Landowner, CBC, Great Shelford Parish Council

Annual reporting

12.12 It will be the responsibility of each parish council to report annually, and to share and discuss its annual report (and, where appropriate, any intermediate reports) with its NP partner PC, with regard to the following:

- a) the use of the S&GS NP planning policies by the PC as it prepares its comments to the local planning authority in response to planning applications coming forward in its parish
- b) the use of the S&GS NP planning policies by the local planning authority in the decision making process
- c) for those projects/community aspirations identified in the S&GS NP where developer contributions may be sought, a report of their progress. This aspect of monitoring is key to ensuring future development contributions can be appropriately directed
- d) the effectiveness of the NP's policies and the appropriateness of its vision and objectives.

Glossary, abbreviations and references

Glossary

Term	Definition
Active travel	Refers to journeys on foot, cycle or other 'wheeled' modes of travel (e.g. mobility scooter, wheelchair, pushchair, cycle freight), although other non-motorised users may also use the active travel network.
Affordable housing	Defined in the NPPF 2023 as housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers) and which complies with one or more of the following definitions: a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent). b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used. c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households. d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.
Biodiversity net gain (BNG)	A strategy to develop land and contribute to the recovery of nature. It is a way of making sure that the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development.

Term	Definition
Climate change adaptation	Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.
Climate change mitigation	Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
'Fabric first' approach to reducing heat demand of a building	Refers to a focus on conserving heat through wall insulation, windows, airtightness (together with ventilation) and optimising design to passively capture heat, before looking at heat generation.
First Homes	Defined in National Planning Practice Guidance in 2021 as: "a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of 'affordable housing' for planning purposes. Specifically, First Homes are discounted market sale units which: a) must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value; b) are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria (see below); c) on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and, d) after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London). First Homes are the government's preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations."
Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)	The local delivery body for a city deal with central government, working to improve the quality and efficiency of transport, housing and skills in Greater Cambridge. Partners in the GCP are Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge, and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Business Board.
Local plan	A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.
Local Planning Authority	The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. In Stapleford and Great Shelford, the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Services (GCSP) is the local planning authority. The GCSP is made up of South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council.
Major development	For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m ² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023	Sets out the government's planning policies for England and requirements for the planning system. The policies in the NPPF must be taken into account when preparing local and neighbourhood plans. It was last updated in September 2023.
Neighbourhood plan	Defined in NPPF 2023 as: a plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Term	Definition
Net zero	The point at which the amount of greenhouse gases being put into the atmosphere by human activity equals the amount of greenhouse gases that are being taken out of the atmosphere.
Older people	Defined in the S&GS HNA 2023 (AECOM) as people over retirement age, ranging from the active newly retired to the very frail elderly.
Paragraph 57 in the NPPF 2023	"Planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all of the following tests: a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; b) directly related to the development; and c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development."
Rural exception sites	Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.
South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC)	The local authority for the South Cambridgeshire District.
Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)	SuDS are designed to manage stormwater locally (as close to its source as possible), to mimic natural drainage and encourage its infiltration, attenuation and passive treatment.
Supplementary planning documents	Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.
Sustainable travel network	Network of public transport routes (rail and bus), together with active travel routes.
Transport assessment	A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies measures required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car, such as walking, cycling and public transport, and measures that will be needed deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.
Transport statement	A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising from development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.
'Whole house' approach to retrofit	Ensures the retrofit process considers improvements to the fabric, services and renewable energy generation in a coherent way to minimise risks and carbon emissions.

Abbreviations

BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
GCP	Greater Cambridge Partnership
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
PC	Parish Council
SCDC	South Cambridgeshire District Council
S&GS	Stapleford and Great Shelford
S&GS DG&C 2023	Stapleford and Great Shelford Design Guidance & Codes 2023
S&GS HNA 2023	Stapleford and Great Shelford Housing Needs Assessment
S&GS LCA 2019	Stapleford and Great Shelford Landscape Character Assessment 2019
S&GS NP	Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan

References

Document & explanation
Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment 2021 A strategic level study covering the entirety of Greater Cambridge commissioned by Greater Cambridge Planning Services and undertaken by Chris Blandford Associates. The document includes findings applicable to the neighbourhood area such as: • categorising Great Shelford and Stapleford as chalkland villages • recognising the importance of the separation between Cambridge city and the 'necklace villages' (includes Stapleford and Great Shelford) in terms of contributing to the 'defining character' of Cambridge • identifying 15 strategic view points also as being of 'defining' character to Cambridge with one of these (Little Trees Hill, Magog Down) situated in the S&GS neighbourhood area.
Stapleford and Great Shelford Design Guidance & Codes 2023 (S&GS DG&C 2023) A document prepared by AECOM for the two parish councils, funded by the government's neighbourhood planning support programme, led by Locality. The document includes an analysis of the built environment in the two parishes and provides a set of design guidelines and codes for the purpose of guiding new development and informing the Neighbourhood Plan.
Stapleford and Great Shelford Housing Needs Assessment (2023) A document prepared by AECOM for the two parish councils, funded by the government's neighbourhood planning support programme, led by Locality. Distinct from a Housing Needs Survey (which is primarily undertaken by surveying residents), the Housing Needs Assessment is a desktop piece of research (drawing on existing sources of demographic and socio-economic data) that helps build the picture with

Document & explanation
respect to expected demand (quantity, tenure, size, accessibility requirements etc) for housing over a specific period.
Stapleford and Great Shelford Landscape Character Assessment 2019 (S&GS LCA 2019) Commissioned by the two parish councils in 2019, this study provides a detailed analysis of the landscape character in the unbuilt areas of the neighbourhood area. The study breaks the neighbourhood area down into 10 different character area types and identifies 27 different character areas in the neighbourhood area. The document describes key sensitivities for each of the 27 character areas, together with guidelines for future management. The study includes the identification of important landscape views, areas of visually important land and recommendations for landscape enhancements to assist with the implementation of the Southern Fringe Area Action Plan (a plan adopted by SCDC in 2008). An addendum to the document was prepared in 2024 to update the landscape character area map (see Map 5 in the NP).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Housing affordability thresholds

Tenure	Mortgage value (90% of price)	Annual rent	Income required	Affordable on average incomes? £55,600	Affordable on LQ earnings (single earner)? £19,392	Affordable on LQ earnings (2 earners)? £38,784
Market Housing						
Median House Price	£468,000	-	£133,714	No	No	No
NA New Build Entry-Level House Price (2021)	£328,500		£93,857	No	No	No
LQ/Entry-level House Price	£324,000	-	£92,571	No	No	No
LA New Build Median House Price	£393,300	-	£112,371	No	No	No
Average Market Rent	-	£17,513	£58,375	No	No	No
Entry-level Market Rent	-	£14,475	£48,250	Yes	No	No
Affordable Home Ownership						
First Homes (-30%)	£229,950	-	£65,700	No	No	No
First Homes (-40%)	£197,100	-	£56,314	Marginal	No	No
First Homes (-50%)	£164,250	-	£46,929	Yes	No	No
Shared Ownership (50%)	£164,250	£4,563	£62,137	No	No	No
Shared Ownership (25%)	£82,125	£6,844	£46,277	Yes	No	No
Shared Ownership (10%)	£32,850	£8,213	£36,761	Yes	No	Yes
Affordable Rented Housing						
Affordable Rent	-	£7,625	£25,392	Yes	No	Yes
Social Rent	-	£5,890	£19,614	Yes	Marginal	Yes

Source: AECOM Calculations

Figure 6: Table 4-5 in Stapleford and Great Shelford Housing Needs Assessment 2023

Appendix 2: Design Guidance and Codes checklist

As noted in Policy S&GS 6, the two parish councils will use this checklist as part of the ongoing monitoring of planning applications. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to use this tool as a self-assessment exercise in the process of preparing design-led schemes.

Checklist for new development	NA	Yes	No	Notes
General design guidelines for new development – does the proposal...				
Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity?				
Reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens and other spaces?				
Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use?				
Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views?				
Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness?				
Retain and incorporate important existing landscape or historical features into the development?				
Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing?				
Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details?				
Provide adequate open green space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality?				
Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features?				
Ensure all components (e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space) are well related to each other?				
Positively integrate energy efficient technologies with regard for impact on neighbouring properties?				
Create soft landscape edges in places where development borders open green belt at the periphery of the settlement?				
Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation and minimisation where				

Checklist for new development	NA	Yes	No	Notes
appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours?				
Ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind?				
Seek to implement passive environmental design principles by, firstly, considering how the site layout can optimise beneficial solar gain and reduce energy demands (e.g. insulation) before specification of energy efficient building services and, secondly, by incorporating renewable energy sources?				
Local green spaces views and character				
Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?				
Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed over the long term?				
Have opportunities to increase the local area's biodiversity been fully explored?				
Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?				
Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?				
How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?				
Do all properties have acceptable levels of natural light in habitable rooms?				
Building line, access and boundary treatment				
What are the characteristics of the building line?				
How has the building line been respected in the proposals?				
Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatment been considered in the context of the site?				
What is the arrival point; how is it designed?				
Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?				

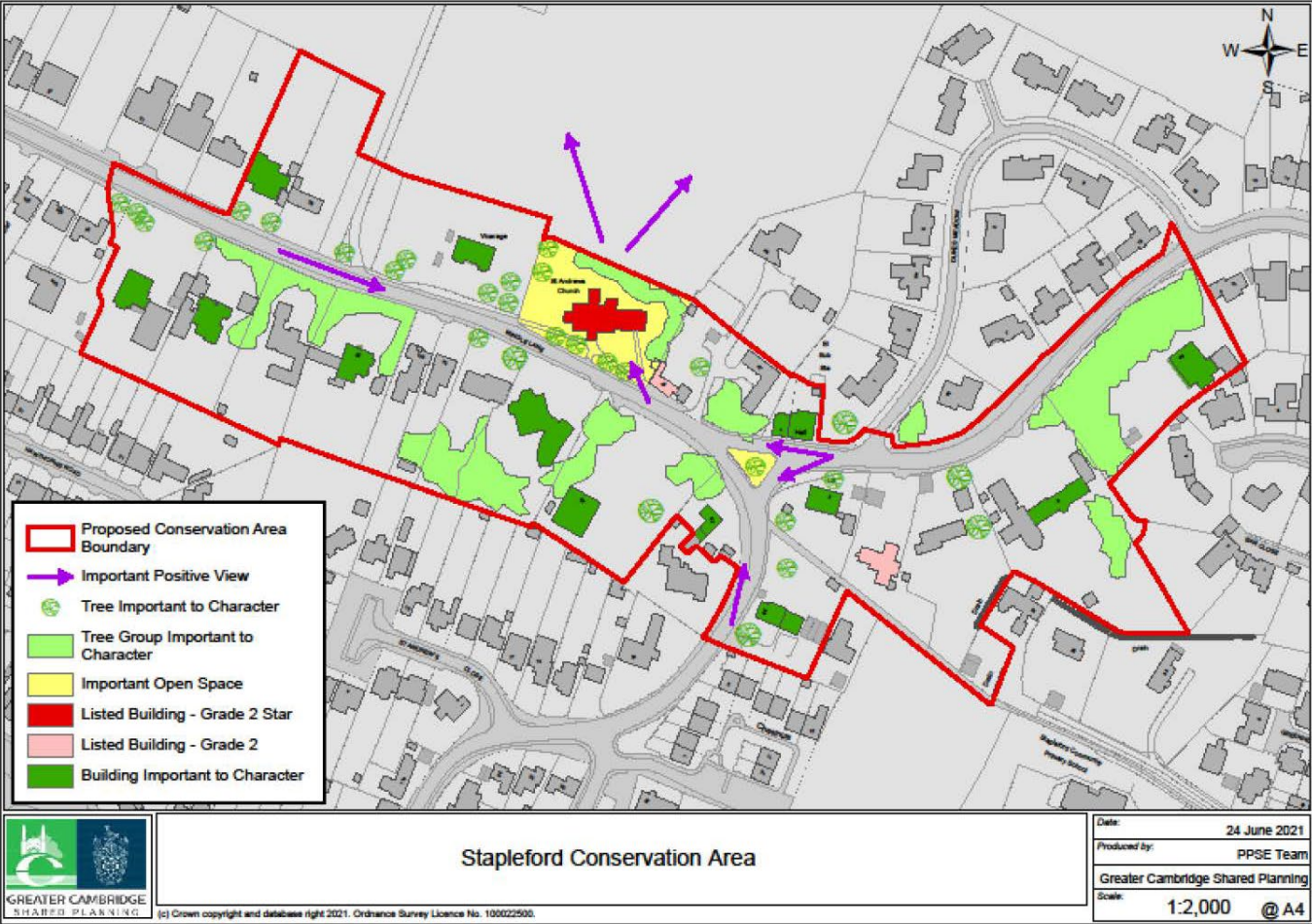
Checklist for new development	NA	Yes	No	Notes
Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?				
Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?				
Street grid and layout				
Does it favour accessibility and connectivity (especially on foot or bike)? If not, why?				
Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development, in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?				
What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?				
How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?				
Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?				
Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?				
Building heights and roofline				
What are the characteristics of the roofline?				
Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale in relation to surrounding context?				
If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher and how would its impact on neighbouring buildings be controlled?				
Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now or in the future?				
Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so, can they be screened from view, being careful not to cause over-shading?				
Building materials and surface treatment				
What is the distinctive material in the area?				
Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?				

Checklist for new development	NA	Yes	No	Notes
Does the proposal use high-quality materials?				
Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof been addressed in the context of the overall design?				
Do the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?				
Are recycled materials or those with high recycled content proposed?				
Can the proposed materials be sourced locally and/or responsibly sourced (e.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems)?				
Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.				
Is all hardstanding to the front, sides and rear of the properties permeable?				
Can SuDS be incorporated into the landscape design in a considered manner?				
Building layout and grouping				
Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles with, for example, one of the main glazed elevations within 30° of due south, whilst also minimising overheating risk?				
Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night? This is to reduce peak loads. And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?				
What are the typical groupings of buildings?				
How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?				
Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?				
What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape and on-street parking?				

Checklist for new development	NA	Yes	No	Notes
Does the proposal maintain the character of the dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?				
Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?				
Household extensions				
Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing or overshadowing impact?				
Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch?)				
Do the proposed materials relate to or complement those of the existing dwelling?				
In the case of side extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?				
Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope? If so, are they sympathetic to the original building scale and the existing rhythm of fenestration?				
Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?				
Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?				
Does the extension offer the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures to the existing building?				
Can any materials be used in situ to reduce waste and embodied carbon?				
Does the extension incorporate all relevant sustainable features?				
Does the extension reduce existing off-street parking space? If so, how is this mitigated?				
Are any new outdoor hardstanding spaces permeable?				
Car parking				
What car parking solutions have been considered for cars/bicycles (including larger cargo bikes)/mobility scooters?				

Checklist for new development	NA	Yes	No	Notes
Are the parking spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?				
Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?				
Does the proposed parking space compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?				
Can electric vehicle charging points be provided and integrated within the design?				
Can secure cycle storage be provided at individual building level or through a central facility where appropriate?				
If covered car ports or cycle storage is included, can it incorporate roof mounted photovoltaic panels, a biodiverse roof, and/or rainwater harvesting in its design?				

Appendix 3: Stapleford Conservation Area Appraisal



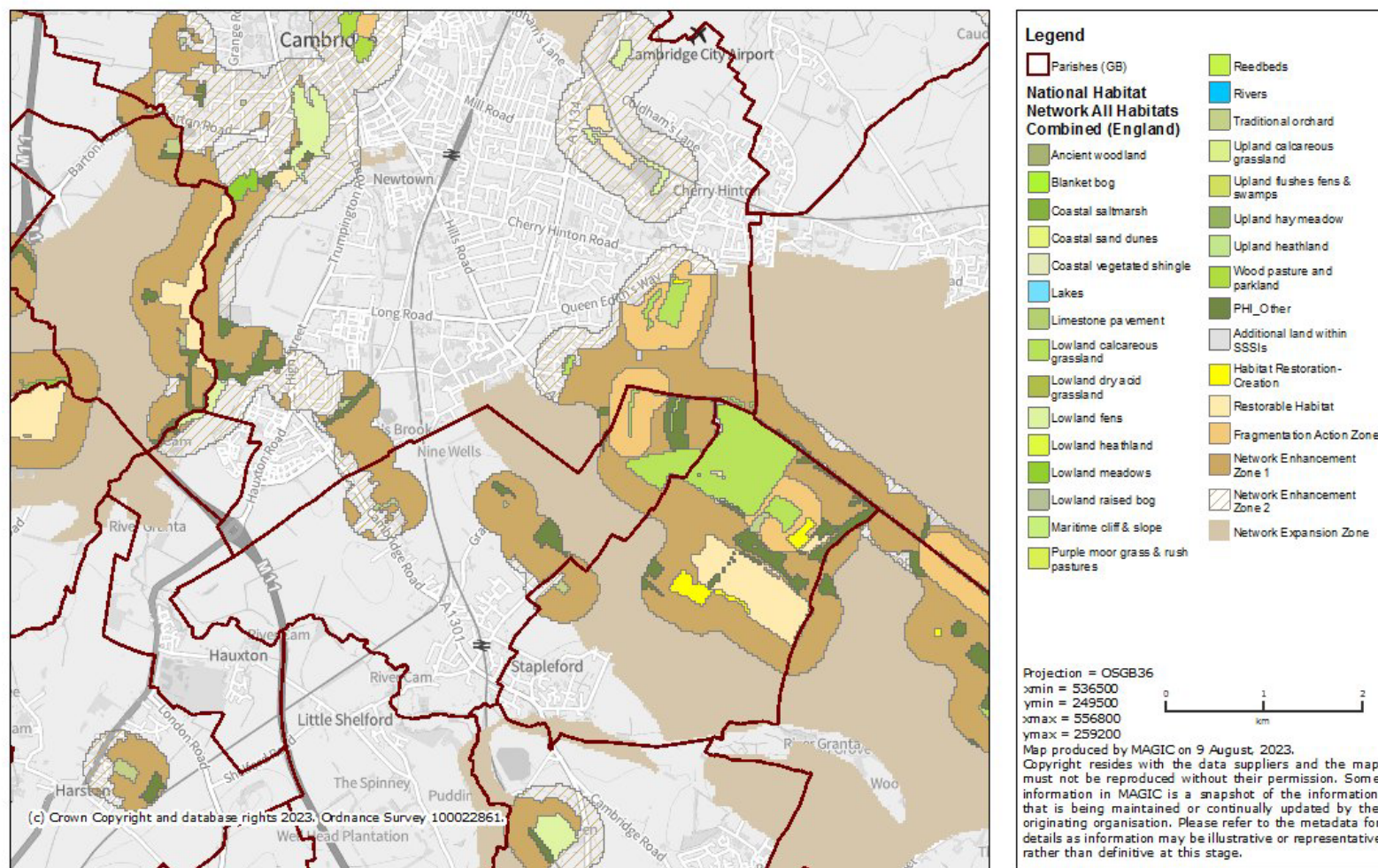
Map 15: Stapleford Conservation Area key features. Source: Stapleford Conservation Area Appraisal (2021)

Appendix 4: Natural England habitat networks

Natural England has prepared habitat networks for each of its identified 23 priority habitats. These components are divided into 'existing habitat' and 'network enhancement and expansion'. The aim of the habitat network maps is to help identify possible locations for actions to improve ecological resilience of the current habitat network. The zones for potential action are (i) decreasing habitat fragmentation (ii) increase the extent of the habitat (iii) restoring degraded habitat, and (iv) expanding, linking and joining the networks.

The following map shows that a large part of the neighbourhood area has been identified as suitable for action, notably:

- Hobson's Brook corridor reaching into the northeastern part of Great Shelford parish
- a corridor to the east appearing to link up to areas of deciduous woodland
- a corridor identified for expansion in the southern part of Stapleford parish, presumably linking in with the Dernford Fen SSSI in the Sawston parish
- a large area and corridor focused around Gog Magog Golf Course SSSI and Wandlebury Country Park. Here, all the land to the northeast of both settlements is identified as part of a network expansion zone.



Map 16: Existing habitat and opportunities for enhancement and expansion using MAGIC data 2023

Appendix 5: Cambridge Nature Network

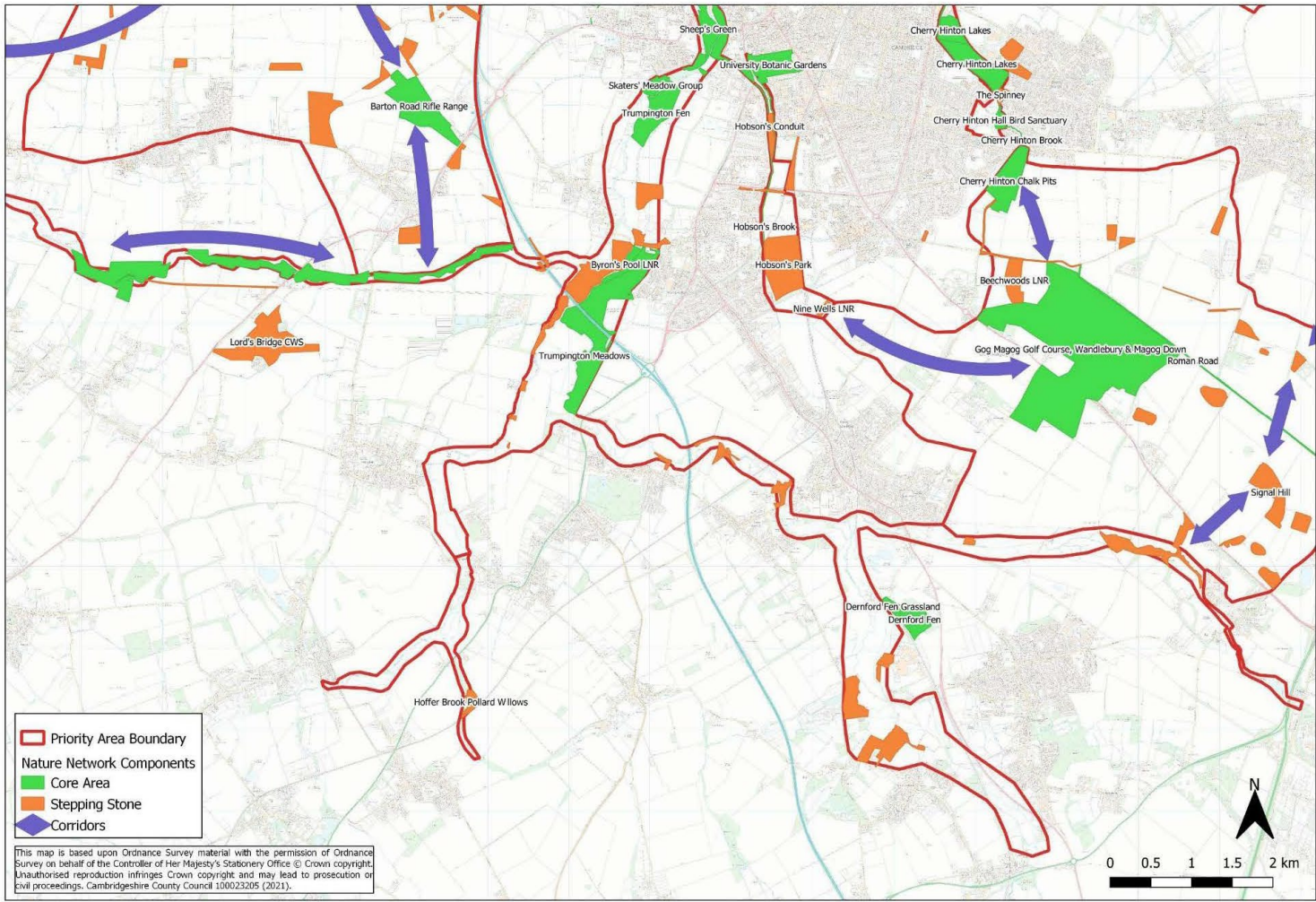


Figure 7: River Cam Corridor South Existing Habitat Network, Cambridge Nature Network Final Report March 2021

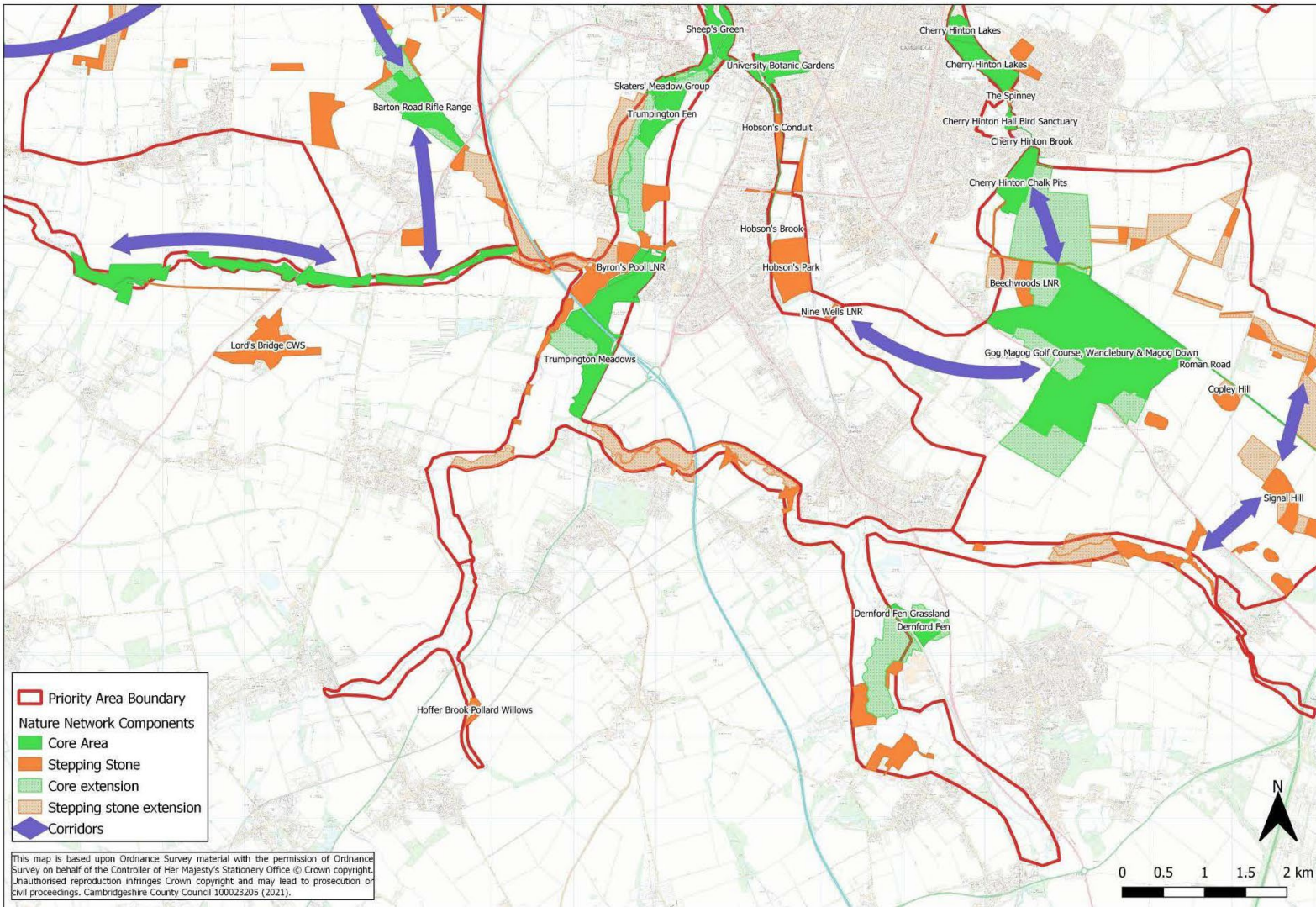


Figure 8: River Cam Corridor South Proposed Habitat Network, Cambridge Nature Network Final Report March 2021

Appendix 6: Visually Important Open Land in Stapleford and Great Shelford

Visually Important Open Land (VIOL)	S&GS LCA 2019 findings	South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan	How the VIOL contributes to the character, amenity, tranquillity and function of the two villages	Other notes re. S&GS NP
Name: De Freville Farm Fields Location: Site 1 on map 6 Description: A pastoral landscape set around De Freville Farm House Landowner: private landowner	The S&GS LCA 2019 identifies De Freville Farm Fields as visually important open land. It observes the attractive pastoral landscape set around both De Freville Farm House and Trinity House (see site 2 below). These spaces are bisected by the railway line and have some significant shelterbelts, mature trees and a small lake.	Policy NH/13 identifies the road frontage as an Important Countryside Frontage.	The land provides a rural break in the built up frontage along Cambridge Road/A1301. There is also a locally valued view to the southwest, from south of the railway bridge on Cambridge Road over fields. The land provides a connection between the village and its rural surroundings.	
Name: Trinity Farm Field, the cemetery and strategic gap in development Location: Site 2 on map 6 Description: A pastoral landscape set around Trinity House Landowner: private landowner	The S&GS LCA 2019 identifies this area as visually important open land. See Site 1 above.	Policy NH/13 identifies the road frontage as an Important Countryside Frontage.	The land provides a rural break in the built up frontage along Cambridge Road/A1301. There is also a locally valued view scanning around from southwest to west-southwest from Trinity House over pasture and open arable field. The land provides a connection between the village and its rural surroundings.	
Name: Rectory Farm Location: Site 3 on map 6	The S&GS LCA 2019 identifies this area as	The area is in a gap in Great Shelford's	It is important to the village's identity and history. Rectory Farm is so-called because it once belonged to the mediaeval rector of the parish. The immediately	Extensive long views from

Visually Important Open Land (VIOL)	S&GS LCA 2019 findings	South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan	How the VIOL contributes to the character, amenity, tranquillity and function of the two villages	Other notes re. S&GS NP
Description: An area of open land around Rectory Farm, including a green frontage onto Church Street.	visually important open land. Rectory Farm pits bordering the area are a designated priority habitat.	development framework. It is adjacent to a PVAA that is protected through Policy NH/11	adjacent Rectory Farmhouse (grade II listed) is one of the oldest properties in the village. This open land marks the modern transition from civic core to rural west boundary of Great Shelford. Visual amenity: a pleasing view from Church Street into Rectory Farm, recognised in S&GS LCA 2019. Countryside access: it marks the entrance to Jenny's Path (a permissive path and a rare opportunity to walk near the River Cam).	permissive tracks across Rectory Farm
Name: The Hermitage and Kings Mill Meadows Location: Site 4 on map 6 Description: An area of semi-improved meadows traditionally used as paddocks for horses, directly south of Great Shelford's 'water bridges'. The land is at the parish boundary and provides a strategic gap between the two settlements. Landowner: private landowner	The S&GS LCA 2019 identifies this area as visually important open land. Descriptions include: <i>Picturesque scene with the noise of the river audible at the southern bridge.</i> <i>Long public frontage between the bridges.</i> <i>Open grassland affording long views broken up by mature trees, a tranquil village scene of meadows and the river with some properties nestling in the wooded gardens along Kings Mill Lane in the background.</i> The work explains that the Hermitage field is	It is adjacent to a PVAA that is protected through Policy NH/11.	It contributes greatly to the village's history, character and identity at the entrance/departure point to Great Shelford. There is also a locally valued view looking southeast from Church Street/Bridge Lane junction at the Great Shelford/Little Shelford parish boundary, over meadows towards the River Cam and mature trees. Visual amenity is provided by the overall setting. The meadow landscape contributes to the tranquillity of this part of the parish. It is also part of the functional flood plain, provides natural green space close to the village centre and is an important buffer to habitats alongside the river.	

Visually Important Open Land (VIOL)	S&GS LCA 2019 findings	South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan	How the VIOL contributes to the character, amenity, tranquillity and function of the two villages	Other notes re. S&GS NP
	part of an island created in 1610 when new river cuts were constructed by the miller to keep water flowing through King's Mill as Little Shelford Manor had blocked the river.			
Name: Shelford Mill grounds Location: Site 5 on map 6 Description: an 'island' of grass and trees largely bounded by water at the southwest boundary of Great Shelford parish. Landowner: private landowner	The S&GS LCA 2019 identifies this area as visually important open land.	The River Cam is recognised as a County Wildlife Site.	It provides the setting for grade II listed Kings Mill House and grade II listed Kings Mill. It is important to the village's identity and cultural history: Kings Mill House was Philippa Pearce's inspiration for <i>Tom's Midnight Garden</i>. Visual amenity is provided by the overall setting.	
Name: Grange Field, Location: Site 6 on map 6 Description: This land is in the green belt and outside Great Shelford's development framework. The land is directly adjacent to Great Shelford Recreation Ground. Landowner: four private landowners	The S&GS LCA 2019 identifies it as a visually important area of open land at the historic centre of the village. The field provides a tranquil setting for the Grange (a listed building), with activity and buildings at the busier Recreation Ground well screened by the shrubby layer at the base of the mature		The land provides an important setting for the Grange (a listed building). It provides visual amenity through natural green space adjacent to Great Shelford Recreation Ground and is a tranquil space in contrast to the busier Recreation Ground. The land is an important buffer to habitats alongside the River Cam. At its southern extent, it is part of the functional flood plain.	As part of 2023 NP community engagement work, 78% of respondents rated Grange Field as either 'very important' or 'important.

Visually Important Open Land (VIOL)	S&GS LCA 2019 findings	South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan	How the VIOL contributes to the character, amenity, tranquillity and function of the two villages	Other notes re. S&GS NP
	shelterbelt. The riverbanks are well wooded.			
Name: Stapleford Bridge meadows and riverside pastures Location: Site 7 on map 6 Description: Pastures set around River Granta and Bury Farm. Landowner: Stapleford Parish Council, multiple private landowners and Corpus Christi College	The river corridor is a County Wildlife Site and is recorded on the Priority Habitats register. It is also noted within the South Cambs Biodiversity SPD as being within the River Granta corridor, wetlands habitats, Countryside Enhancement Area. S&GS LCA 2019 notes that: <i>"The open natural nature of the land management retains a continuity, across differing land ownerships, with relaxed management of margins and the river banks...The river banks are undisturbed and provide a valuable habitat."</i>	River Cam recognised as County Wildlife Site	Historic connection as site of original settlement. Contributes to the rural setting of the village. Riverside amenity: Clerk's Piece gives rare public riverside access; mosaic of gentle fluvial environments, largely away from roads with naturalistic boundaries; part of functional flood plain. Biodiversity: individual mature willows and bankside vegetation and mature individual trees and adjacent woodland; small river, plus ditches and watercourses around field margins.	Clerk's Piece designated LGS in S&GS Policy 14
Name: Land comprising Greenhedge Farm horse fields, allotments and	This land provides an attractive pastoral landscape with hedgerows and mature trees in a prominent	Part of the land (the northwest corner) is safeguarded in the 2018 Local Plan as future	The area of land contributes greatly to the rural character of Stapleford, acting as a quiet green island to the east of the settled area of Stapleford, and	Land also identified as three separate LGSs

Visually Important Open Land (VIOL)	S&GS LCA 2019 findings	South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan	How the VIOL contributes to the character, amenity, tranquillity and function of the two villages	Other notes re. S&GS NP
Stapleford Recreation Ground Location: Site 8 on map 6 Description: Pastures set around Greenhedge Farm in heart of Stapleford village and recreation ground. Landowner: 3 different landowners (Peterhouse; Diocese of Ely; Stapleford Parish Council)	location of the village. It is highly visible from Gog Magog Way, Bar Lane and Haverhill Road, and is immediately adjacent to and partially visible from Stapleford Recreation Ground.	open space provision for the village.	characterised by grazing horses and an absence of motorised vehicles. The Recreation Ground and allotments have recreational value. A public footpath across the allotments allows off-road safe passage to Stapleford Community Primary School. Mature trees and allotments are an important habitat for local wildlife.	in S&GS Policy 14 Important links with the associated Important Countryside Frontage at Gog Magog Way

Appendix 7: An overview of the Greater Cambridge traffic challenge and implications for the neighbourhood area

The purpose of this note is to provide an overview of Greater Cambridge traffic challenges in so far as they impact the Stapleford and Great Shelford neighbourhood area, together with an overview of emerging strategies being developed in response to this.

Both adopted development plans (2018 Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire District and the 2018 Cambridge City Local Plan) and emerging plans (Greater Cambridge Local Plan) envisage significant further growth. Of particular note for Stapleford and Great Shelford is the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC), the City's largest employment site, currently with around 20,000 workers and projected, by CBC's own plans, to grow significantly over the period to 2050.

Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority are responsible for transport planning in our area. The latter has prepared the Local Transport Plan (adopted in 2020) which sets out a strategy for maintaining and improving transport across the combined authority area. This recognises the problems caused by congestion across the neighbourhood area and is clear that, without intervention measures, the radial routes serving Cambridge will see significant rises in congestion. Two of these routes, the A1301 and A1307, cross the S&GS neighbourhood area.

The 2020 Local Transport Plan is underpinned by the following guiding principles:

- supporting economic growth and distributing prosperity
- supporting social inclusion – improving accessibility and health for all
- integrating spatial planning and reducing the need to travel
- providing attractive alternatives to driving – 'mode shift'
- preparing for the future of mobility
- greening our transport infrastructure
- protecting and increasing biodiversity.

The Local Transport Plan includes proposals and projects to “exploit the opportunities and overcome the challenges faced by Cambridge and its environs.” Measures applicable to the Stapleford and Great Shelford neighbourhood area include:

- a new station at Cambridge South (currently under construction)
- high-quality active travel facilities, both within Cambridge and between smaller towns and villages in South Cambridgeshire, being delivered by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP), such as the Greenways. The Sawston and Linton Greenways traverse the S&GS neighbourhood area.

The new station at Cambridge South is likely to affect the neighbourhood area as follows:

- residents who work at or visit CBC may find the new station useful for work/leisure journeys. Passengers boarding at Shelford station will be able to change at Cambridge South for stations on the King's Cross line without needing to travel into Cambridge
- remodelling of the Shepreth Branch junction, which is located in the neighbourhood area within Great Shelford parish
- heavy goods vehicles travelling through the parish during the construction phase
- a potential reduction in local road traffic in the neighbourhood area if people currently travelling by car through our villages travel by train in the future.

The GCP, the delivery body for the Greater Cambridge City Deal, recognises (see www.greatercambridge.org.uk) that:

- forecast growth for the Greater Cambridge area is expected to create 26,000 more daily car journeys up to 2031¹⁸
- congestion is already a major and growing problem, threatening mobility, health and well-being.

The GCP planned to deliver a comprehensive programme of transport initiatives across the area focused on tackling the Greater Cambridge transport challenge, but due to funding issues some initiatives are now paused. Measures that have implications for Stapleford and Great Shelford include the Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) corridor project. This is intended to provide improved public transport and active travel options for the A1307 and A1301 area. It is made up of two phases:

- phase 1, comprising:
 - road safety, walking and bus priority measures along the A1307 between Haverhill and Cambridge
 - a continuous shared use path for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians from Cambridge to Linton
- phase 2, comprising:
 - a new public transport route (a busway) from the A11 via green belt at Sawston and Shelford to the CBC.

The 8km busway is planned to cross Haverhill Road (in Stapleford) and Hinton Way (in Great Shelford), roughly at the point where housing ends, continuing across Granhams Road and then running alongside the railway to the new Cambridge South station.

The S&GS NP recognises the need for improved infrastructure to reduce congestion and to provide sustainable travel options on the southeastern approaches to Cambridge. However, it also considers that the CSET phase 2 proposal is not the best way to deliver these improvements. Local campaign group Better Ways for Busways, supported by both parish councils and Cambridge Past, Present and Future, continues to oppose this plan and instead advocates a cheaper and less environmentally damaging alternative on-road route which would require only a short busway from Hinton Way roundabout into CBC and an inbound bus lane along the A1307. Over 6,200 people have signed the petition supporting this alternative route (October 2024). This builds upon local opposition registered in a consultation of residents conducted by Great Shelford Parish Council in May 2021. Participants were asked to prioritise three options relating to Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership proposals for the CSET corridor. Nearly 70% of the 80 respondents identified 'alongside the A1307' option as their preferred approach, with 64% identifying 'across the fields' as their least favoured option. When asked about important factors informing this choice, over 70% noted concerns over the "loss of farmland/green belt and opening up of the area for development."

In September 2023, GCP officers paused plans for the CSET busway. Inflation meant that CSET costs had risen to £160m and consequently the GCP no longer had sufficient funds to pursue all of its projects. However, the Chancellor announced in the spring 2024 budget that £7.2m would be allocated towards CSET to support the proposed expansion of CBC. At the time of writing (October 2024), the County Council, as highways authority, is preparing to decide whether to submit a Transport & Works Act Order application to the government. This would trigger a judicial inquiry.

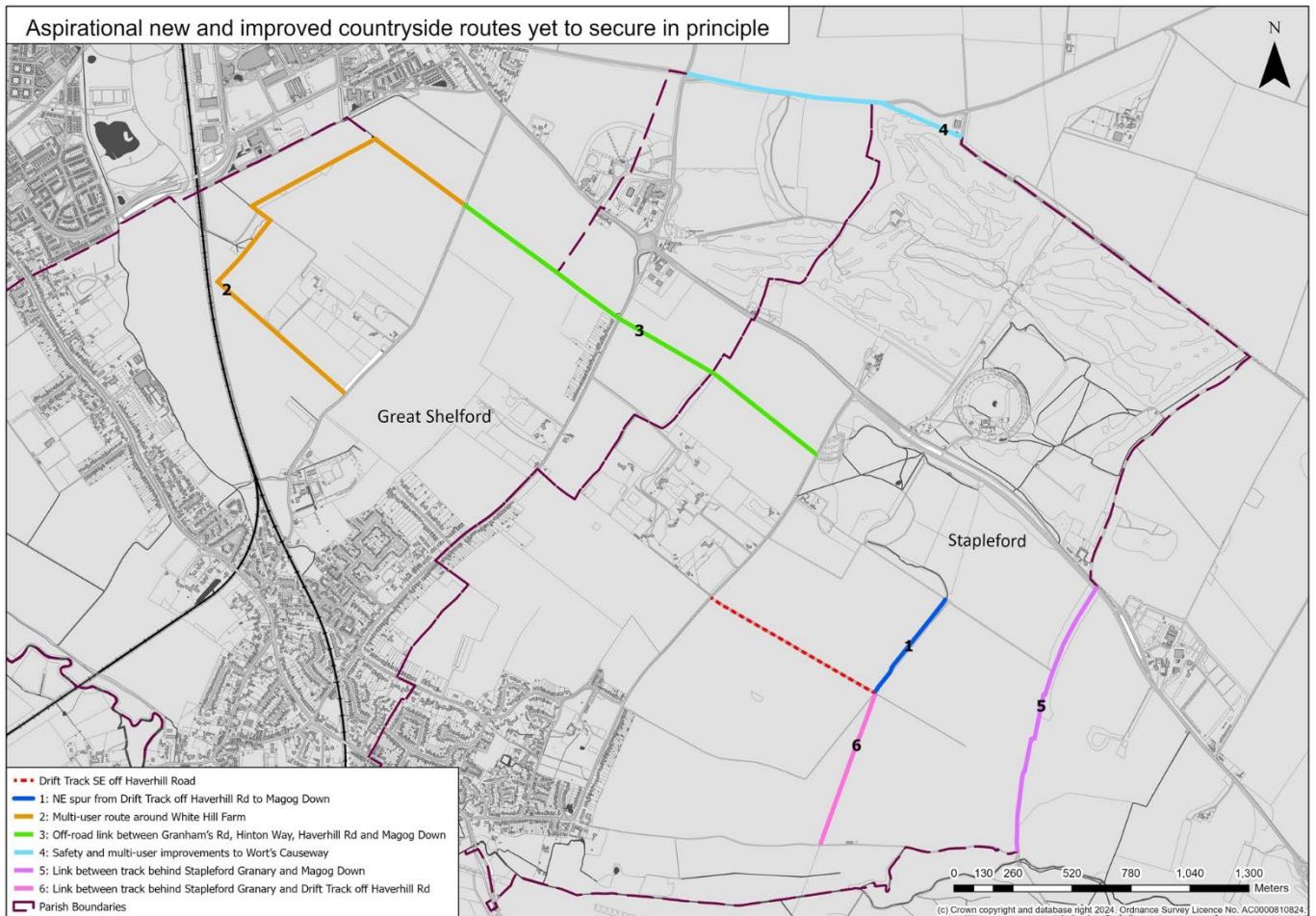
Combined with the 2023 revised forecasts for expansion at CBC and the associated increase in traffic, both parish councils continue to believe that current plans for traffic management

¹⁸ As reported <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/sustainable-transport-programme> accessed 7 November 2023

are inadequate. As a response to this, Great Shelford Parish Council has developed a Transport Infrastructure Policy which is available to view on its website [here](#).¹⁹

¹⁹ www.greatshelfordparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/105/2023/05/2023_TrafficInfrastructurePolicy.pdf

Appendix 8: Aspirational new and improved countryside routes yet to secure in principle



Map 17: Aspirational new and improved countryside routes yet to secure in principle