

Pampisford Neighbourhood Development Plan 2024-2041

**A report to South Cambridgeshire District Council
on the Pampisford Neighbourhood Development
Plan**

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Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by South Cambridgeshire District Council in September 2024 to carry out the independent examination of the Pampisford Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 24 October 2024. The examination was undertaken by written representations.
- 3 The Plan includes a range of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. There is a very clear focus on safeguarding local character, enhancing the appearance of employment areas and designating local green spaces.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. All sections of the community have been actively engaged in its preparation.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report, I have concluded that the Pampisford Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum should coincide with the neighbourhood area.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
6 January 2025

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Pampisford Neighbourhood Development Plan 2024-2041 (the 'Plan').
- 1.2 The Plan has been submitted to South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) by Pampisford Parish Council (PPC) in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and its updates in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024. The NPPF continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative plan, or a potentially more sustainable plan except where this arises because of my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope and can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The submitted plan has been designed to be distinctive in general terms, and to be complementary to the development plan. It has a clear focus on safeguarding the character of the parish and designating local green spaces.
- 1.6 Within the context set out above, this report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.7 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then be used to determine planning applications within the neighbourhood area and will form a part of the wider development plan.

2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by SCDC, with the consent of PPC, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both SCDC and PPC. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. I have 42 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level and more recently as an independent examiner. I have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral System.

Examination Outcomes

- 2.4 In my role as the independent examiner of the Plan I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the Plan as submitted proceeds to a referendum; or
 - (b) that the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
 - (c) that the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 2.5 The outcome of the examination is set out in Sections 7 and 8 of this report.

Other examination matters

- 2.6 In examining the Plan I am required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
 - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and
 - the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.
- 2.7 I have addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.6 of this report. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan complies with the three requirements.

3 Procedural Matters

3.1 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:

- the submitted Plan;

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- the ten appendices;
- the Basic Conditions Statement;
- the Consultation Statement;
- the SEA/HRA Screening Determination Statement;
- the Design Codes;
- the Open Spaces Assessment;
- the Site Options and Assessment;
- the Housing Needs Survey;
- PPC’s responses to the Clarification Note;
- the representations made to the Plan;
- the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan;
- the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023 and December 2024);
- Planning Practice Guidance; and
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 24 October 2024. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular. My visit is covered in more detail in paragraphs 5.9 to 5.13 of this report.

3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the available information, including the representations made to the submitted Plan, I was satisfied that the Plan could be examined by written representations.

The update of the NPPF

3.4 The NPPF was updated on 12 December 2024. Paragraph 239 of the NPPF 2024 sets out transitional arrangements for plan-making. It comments that the policies in the Framework will apply for the purpose of preparing neighbourhood plans from 12 March 2025 unless a neighbourhood plan proposal has been submitted to the local planning authority under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) on or before the 12 March 2025.

3.5 On this basis, the examination of the Plan against the basic condition that it should regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State is based on the 2023 version of the NPPF. Plainly the Plan was submitted in 2024 in that context. Where NPPF paragraph numbers are used in this report, they refer to those in the December 2023 version.

3.6 Paragraph 6.2 of this report sets out full extent of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is examined.

4 Consultation

Consultation Process

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such, the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.

- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, PPC prepared a Consultation Statement. The Statement sets out the mechanisms that were used to engage the community and statutory bodies in the plan-making process. It also provides specific details about the consultation process that took place on the pre-submission version of the Plan (October to November 2023). It captures the key issues in a proportionate way and is underpinned by more detailed appendices.
- 4.3 The Statement sets out details of the comprehensive range of consultation events that were carried out as the Plan was being developed. They are helpfully arranged around the following sections:
- Plan inception (Section 3);
 - Initial Plan development (Section 4);
 - Evidence gathering (Section 5); and
 - Advanced Plan development (Section 6).
- 4.4 I am satisfied that the engagement process has been both proportionate and robust. In many instances, the ways in which the Parish Council engaged the community and statutory bodies was extremely thorough and detailed.
- 4.5 Appendix 9 of the Statement provides very specific details on the comments received on the pre-submission version of the Plan. Appendix 10 then identifies the principal changes that worked their way through into the submission version. This process helps to describe the evolution of the Plan.
- 4.6 Consultation has been an important element of the Plan's production. Advice on the neighbourhood planning process has been made available to the community in a positive and direct way by those responsible for the Plan's preparation.
- 4.7 From all the evidence provided to me as part of the examination, I can see that the Plan has promoted an inclusive approach to seeking the opinions of all concerned throughout the process. SCDC has carried out its own assessment that the consultation process has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

Representations Received

- 4.8 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by SCDC. It ended on 21 June 2024. This exercise generated comments from a range of organisations as follows:

- Anglian Water Services Limited
- British Horse Society
- Cambridge Past, Present and Future
- Cambridgeshire Constabulary
- Cambridgeshire County Council (Lead Flood Authority)
- Cheveley Park Farms Limited
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Highways England
- Historic England
- National Grid
- Natural England
- Solopark Limited
- Sport England
- South Cambridgeshire District Council

4.9 I have taken account of all the representations received. Where it is appropriate to do so, I refer to specific representations in my assessment of the policies in Section 7 of this report.

5 The Neighbourhood Area and the Development Plan Context

The Neighbourhood Area

5.1 The neighbourhood area consists of the parish of Pampisford. Its population in 2021 was 361 persons living in 146 houses. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 29 March 2018. As the Plan describes, Pampisford is a rural parish and village, approximately nine miles south of Cambridge City. The parish sits between the Rivers Cam and Granta, which combine and flow through Cambridge City as the River Cam. The eastern boundary of the

parish follows the Roman Road, which runs north from Junction 9 on the M11 (Stump Cross), with the remaining boundary following the irregular pattern of field edges.

- 5.2 Pampisford is an attractive village with a range of community facilities. Its historic core is based around St John the Baptist Church, in Church Lane. The remainder of the parish is predominantly open countryside comprising farmland, woodland, and parkland.
- 5.3 The parish has a high level of business activity with several main employment areas (Brewery Road, Rectory Farm, London Road, and Solopark Trading Estate). This concentration of business uses is reflected in several of the policies.

Development Plan Context

- 5.4 The development plan covering the neighbourhood area is the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. It was adopted in 2018 and covers the period up to 2031. Policy S/6 (The Development Strategy) focuses new development on the edge of Cambridge, at new settlements, and in the rural areas at Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres.
- 5.5 Policy S/11 identifies a series of Infill Villages, including Pampisford. Within the identified villages the policy comments that residential development and redevelopment within their development frameworks, will be restricted to scheme sizes of not more than two dwellings.
- 5.6 In addition, the following policies in the Local Plan have been particularly important in influencing and underpinning the various policies in the submitted Plan:

Policy S/4 Green Belt
 Policy HQ/1 Design Principles
 Policy NH/14 Heritage Assets
 Policy H/10 Affordable Housing
 Policy H/18 Working at Home
 Policy E/16 Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside
 Policy E/19 Tourist Facilities and Visitor Attractions
 Policy SC/3 Protection of Village Services and Facilities
 Policy SC/4 Meeting Community Needs
 Policy SC/7 Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments
 Policy SC/8 Protection of Existing Recreation Areas

- 5.7 The submitted Plan has been prepared within its wider adopted development plan context. In doing so, it has relied on up-to-date information and research

that has underpinned existing planning policy documents in the District. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter. It is also clear that the submitted Plan seeks to add value to the different components of the development plan and to give a local dimension to the delivery of its policies. This is captured in the Basic Conditions Statement.

- 5.8 SCDC is working with Cambridge City to produce a Greater Cambridge Local Plan. Whilst the timetable for the preparation of this Plan will be confirmed in Spring 2025, it is not sufficiently advanced to be considered as part of this examination.

Unaccompanied Visit

- 5.9 I visited the neighbourhood area on 24 October 2024. I approached from the A505 from the south. This allowed me to understand its setting in the wider landscape and its proximity to the main road network.
- 5.10 I spent time looking at the various employment areas so that I could understand better the policies which applied to these parts of the parish.
- 5.11 Throughout the visit, I paid particular attention to the various proposed local green space designations as proposed in Policy PAM5.
- 5.12 I spent time in High Street and Church Lane. I saw the significance of the Church of St John the Baptist and the importance of the Village Hall. I saw several other fine historic buildings. I took the opportunity to look at the remains of the former Chequers PH at the junction of High Street and Town Lane.
- 5.13 I left the parish by driving to Sawston to the north. This helped me to understand the relationship of the parish to this settlement.

6 The Neighbourhood Plan and the Basic Conditions

- 6.1 This section of the report deals with the submitted neighbourhood plan as a whole and the extent to which it meets the basic conditions. The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has helped considerably in the preparation of this section of the report. It is a well-presented and informative document. It is also proportionate to the Plan itself.
- 6.2 As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area;
- not breach, and otherwise be compatible with, the assimilated obligations of EU legislation (as consolidated in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Amendment) Regulations 2023; and
- not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

6.3 I assess the Plan against the basic conditions under the following headings.

National Planning Policies and Guidance

6.4 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in 2023. This approach is reflected in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

6.5 The NPPF sets out a range of core land-use planning issues to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following are of relevance to the Pampisford Neighbourhood Plan:

- a plan led system– in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan;
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- building a strong, competitive economy;
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving local communities;
- taking account of the different roles and characters of different areas;
- highlighting the importance of high-quality design and good standards of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings; and
- conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

6.6 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 13 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the development plan.

- 6.7 In addition to the NPPF I have also taken account of other elements of national planning policy including Planning Practice Guidance and ministerial statements.
- 6.8 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that subject to the recommended modifications in this report that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance in general terms. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the neighbourhood area and respects its character and appearance. The Basic Conditions Statement maps the policies in the Plan against the appropriate sections of the NPPF.
- 6.9 At a more practical level, the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraph 16d). This is reinforced in Planning Practice. Paragraph ID:41-041-20140306 indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise, and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.10 As submitted the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. Most of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

Contributing to sustainable development

- 6.11 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social, and environmental. The submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension, the Plan includes a policy for residential development (Policy PAM1), and policies for its employment areas (Policies 15-17). In the social dimension, it includes a policy on local green spaces (Policy PAM5), and a policy on the Chequers pub site (Policy PAM8). In the environmental dimension, the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built, and historic environment. It includes policies for landscape character (Policy PAM3), and heritage assets (Policy PAM9). PPC has undertaken its own assessment of this matter in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

- 6.12 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in South Cambridgeshire in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.
- 6.13 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context. The Basic Conditions Statement helpfully relates the Plan's policies to policies in the development plan. Subject to the incorporation of the recommended modifications in this report, I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

European Legislation – Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 6.14 The Neighbourhood Plan General Regulations 2015 require a qualifying body either to submit an environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or a statement of reasons why an environmental report is not required.
- 6.15 In order to comply with this requirement SCDC commissioned a Screening Assessment. The resulting report (April 2023) is thorough and well-constructed. It identifies that the Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and does not include any content that could give rise to significant negative effects on the environment, or any social or economic tenets of sustainability. On this basis it concludes that the Plan can therefore be screened out for its requirement of Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC.

European Legislation - Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 6.16 SCDC also commissioned a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan. It is equally thorough on this matter. It concludes that the Plan is not predicted to have a Likely Significant Effect on any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The requirement for the Plan to undertake further assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Regulations 2017 (as amended) is therefore screened out.
- 6.17 This approach provides assurance to all concerned that the submitted Plan takes appropriate account of important ecological and biodiversity matters.
- 6.18 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination, I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various regulations. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I

am entirely satisfied that the submitted Plan is compatible with this aspect of European obligations.

European Legislation – Human Rights

- 6.19 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. In addition, there has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. Based on all the evidence available to me, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

Summary

- 6.20 On the basis of my assessment of the Plan in this section of my report I am satisfied that it meets the basic conditions subject to the incorporation of the recommended modifications contained in this report.

7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. It makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that the various policies have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 The recommendations focus on the policies in the Plan given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the neighbourhood area. The wider community and PPC have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in their Plan. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.

- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance (ID:41-004-20190509) which indicates that neighbourhood plans should address the development and use of land. It also includes a series of Community Actions.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted Plan. The Actions are addressed thereafter.
- 7.6 For clarity, this section of the report comments on all the Plan's policies.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

The initial parts of the Plan (Sections 1 to 5)

- 7.8 The Plan is very well-organised and presented. It has been prepared with much attention to detail and local pride. It makes an appropriate distinction between the policies and their supporting text. The initial elements of the Plan set the scene for the policies. They are proportionate to the neighbourhood area and the subsequent policies.
- 7.9 The Introduction (Section 1) comments about the neighbourhood plan agenda in general terms and identifies the neighbourhood area (in Map 1). It also identifies the Plan period (in paragraph 1.1). In the round, it is an excellent introduction for the casual reader.
- 7.10 Section 2 provides information about the neighbourhood area. The interesting and comprehensive details help to set the scene for the policies.
- 7.11 Section 3 identifies the evidence which has underpinned the Plan. The information provides assurance to all concerned. Section 4 identifies key issues to be addressed in the Plan. It includes a very informative SWOT analysis (Table 2).
- 7.12 Section 5 sets out the vision and goals for the Plan. It makes a strong functional relationship between the various issues and, in several cases, they feed directly into the resulting policies. The Vision neatly summarises the ambition for the parish as follows:

'Pampisford will be a village community that combines the benefits of its rural, historic character and connectedness to modern facilities and travel routes to be an ever more friendly and sustainable place to live for all generations.'

- 7.13 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of this report.

General Comments

7.14 A key element of the Plan is the way in which the policies are presented. Each policy is structured as follows:

- policy Context and Rationale – the background to the issue concerned and relevant information;
- policy Intent – what it is seeking to achieve; and
- the resulting policy.

This is best practice and provides assurance to all concerned about the information which underpins the relevant policies.

Policy PAM 1 – Residential development

7.15 The intent of this policy is to ensure new housing development is suitable to meet needs in the parish during the Plan period. The policy also welcomes the provision of serviced plots providing opportunities for self-build and custom build. This is in response to the 2020 Housing Needs Survey which reported a local demand for such plots. The final element refers to larger schemes coming forward under the very exceptional circumstances set out in Policy S/11 of the Local Plan. The Plan advises that there are no such sites within the development framework that could deliver this quantity of housing. However, it advises that this element is included should such sites become available during the Plan period.

7.16 The wording of the policy has generated differences of opinion between PPC and SCDC. I have taken careful account of PPC's responses to the clarification note, and PPC's responses to SCDC's representation. On the balance of the evidence, I recommend that the policy is recast to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow SCDC to be able to apply its provisions through the development management process. The recasting addresses the following matters:

- the submitted wording of the first part of the policy goes well beyond the traditional criteria included in Policy S/11 of the Local Plan, and would prevent otherwise acceptable proposals from coming forward;
- the shifting of the commentary about housing for accessible needs - Building Regulations Parts M4(2) and M4(3) - into the second part of the policy; and
- modifications to the final part of the policy (on larger infill schemes) based on PPC's response to the clarification note.

7.17 I also recommend consequential modifications to the supporting text. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Infill residential development within the development framework will be supported where it otherwise complies with development plan policies.

Where it is practicable to do so, the housing mix of infill developments should respond positively to current household sizes and meeting the needs of the growing older population. The following types of housing will also be supported:

- **the construction of homes which meet the Building Regulations M4(2) and wheelchair user M4(3) standards; and**
- **the delivery of serviced plots on appropriate sites to provide opportunities for self-build or custom build.**

Larger residential development schemes coming forward under the very exceptional circumstances set out in Policy S/11 of South Cambridgeshire’s Local Plan will only be supported where the identified positive overall benefit to the village includes the delivery of homes that will help to meet identified needs within the parish, including smaller homes (one and two-bedroom homes) suitable for older people and younger people and families.

Schemes that deliver affordable homes to meet the needs of local people whose needs are not met by the market will also be supported.’

Replace paragraph 6.1.11 with: ‘Policy PAM 1 supplements Policy S/11 of the Local Plan. It advises that where it is practicable to do so, the housing mix of infill developments should respond positively to current household sizes and meet the needs growing older population.’

Replace paragraph 6.1.12 with: ‘The policy also supports proposals which would comply with higher Building Regulations accessibility requirements - M4(2) and M4(3).’

Policy PAM 2 - Rural exceptions housing in Pampisford

- 7.18 The Plan advises that the policy supports the delivery of small rural exceptions housing schemes on suitable sites on the edge of the development framework if this would meet the needs of local households with a parish connection. It also advises that the policy considers the 2021 First Homes Ministerial Statement where it allows a First Home exception site to come forward on land which is not designated as Green Belt. The Plan also advises that the final paragraph of the policy has been included to ensure that the priority of allocation to people with a strong local connection to the parish applies to all types of rural exception sites.
- 7.19 I sought PPC’s comments on the extent to which the policy brought added value beyond national and local policies on rural exception housing. In its response to the clarification note, it advised that:

'we wished to define more exactly the aspects of character (criterion b) that are important to the village, and also complement the existing criteria with an additional one to help address the paucity of housing options available for people with a strong local connection to Pampisford. See paragraphs 3.14 (housing survey), 4.17 (key issues), Table 2 (SWOT analysis). Policy PAM 2 also requires that any First Homes being delivered as exception sites should be offered to householders with a local connection on a preferential basis.

7.20 I have considered this matter very carefully. On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the policy is locally-distinctive. As PPC comments, criteria b and c are particularly important in the context of the neighbourhood area. In the round I am also satisfied that the policy has regard to Sections 5 and 8 of the NPPF.

7.21 In this broader context, I recommend a modification to the wording used in the first criterion. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

In criterion a) replace 'all criteria' with 'all the criteria'

Policy PAM 3 - Maintaining and enhancing landscape character in Pampisford

7.22 The intention of the policy is to ensure new development proposals come forward in a way which protects the existing village and landscape character and takes opportunities to improve it.

7.23 The policy is comprehensive. It identifies four general criteria which development proposals should meet, and details for tree planting and landscape schemes. It also comments about development proposals which would abut the development framework.

7.24 The policy proposes an additional Important Countryside Frontage (off London Road) beyond the two already identified in the adopted Local Plan (off Brewery Road). I am satisfied that such an approach is appropriate. However, I recommend that its northern boundary is modified to reflect natural features. This will assist in its delivery through the development management process.

7.25 I sought PPC's comments on whether the second and third parts of the policy should be applied in a proportionate way. In its response to the clarification note, it advised that:

'We accept that the criteria may not be applicable to all schemes, and this will depend on the location and nature of a scheme and to some extent scale. With respect to scale however, small scale development that is insensitive in landscape terms to its surroundings can have a harmful impact.

Any development abutting the development framework will impact on the transition from built form to the surrounding landscape to a larger or lesser degree. The policy will therefore always be applicable. The description of the buffer needing to be generous and comprehensive dissuades any tokenistic application. It implies a landscaping which as far as possible avoids creating any abrupt edges and softening ones that may already exist.'

7.26 I have considered these various matters carefully. On the one hand, the policy helpfully captures the nature of the landscape in the parish and the many sharp contrasts between built development and the countryside. On the other hand, its wording will be difficult to apply through the development management process and may result in a disproportionate (and unquantified) impact on both minor development proposals and/or small businesses. I recommend a package of modifications to remedy these issues and to bring the clarity required by the NPPF as follows:

- the incorporation of a proportionate element into the second part of the policy;
- an acknowledgement that planting schemes (in the second part of the policy) may not always be required; and
- a more general approach to the need for a landscape buffer, and a clearer distinction between creating new buffers and safeguarding existing buffers.

7.27 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the second part of the policy replace 'To be supported development proposals must:' with 'As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should:'

In the second part of the policy replace 'Planting/landscaping schemes:' with 'Where otherwise required, planting/landscaping schemes:'

Replace the third part of the policy with:

'Where new development abuts the development framework around either Pampisford Village or the Rural Centre of Sawston (insofar as it is in the neighbourhood area), an appropriate landscape buffer should be created (or retained where one exists) to allow the transition from built form to the surrounding landscape. Any new landscape buffer should avoid abrupt edges with little vegetation.'

Revise the northern boundary of the Proposed Important Countryside Frontage on Map 7 so that its northern boundary follows the line of the watercourse.

Policy PAM 4 - London Road street scene improvement area

- 7.28 The Plan advises that there is scope to improve the appearance of both the Brewery Road/London Road village gateway (London Road village gateway north) and the London Road village gateway south. In addition, the built-up frontages (on the western side of the road) between these two gateways suffers from incoherent boundary treatment, incoherent building lines and poor public realm which is not helped by poorly landscaped car parking areas.
- 7.29 The intent of the policy is to deliver street scene and landscape improvements, together with traffic calming measures, along London Road and its entrances.
- 7.30 As submitted, the policy is unclear about the development proposals which would be expected to implement the policy. In its response to the clarification note, PPC advised that:
- ‘the wording of the policy aims to be comprehensive in its application, i.e. relevant to any development within this tightly defined area, whether new buildings or – as stated – redevelopment of existing buildings, whether commercial or domestic. The existence of relatively large, commercial landholdings, with significant frontage onto London Road, nevertheless represent the most important opportunity to improve the street scene when such areas are developed in the future. That is why we particularly highlight landscaping improvements and traffic calming measures, more appropriate to bigger schemes.’*
- 7.31 Based on all the evidence, I am satisfied that the policy addresses an important issue. The industrial units to the west of London Road sit in sharp contrast to the countryside to the east. Nevertheless, I recommend that a proportionate element is weaved into the policy. This will allow SCDC to apply the policy in a pragmatic way. It will also avoid excessive requirements being placed on modest proposals (and extensions) if the policy was applied in a mechanistic way. I also recommend that the three criteria in this part of the policy are reconfigured so that they become principles with which development proposals should comply.
- 7.32 The second part of the policy is supporting text rather than a land use policy. It explains how the policy will be implemented so that it has regard to national policy. In this context, I recommend that it is deleted and repositioned into the supporting text.
- 7.33 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘The area shown on Map 8 is defined as the London Road street scene improvement area. As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals along London Road including those for the redevelopment of existing buildings, should respond positively to the following principles:

- **the incorporation of landscaping (e.g. improved boundary treatment around grassed island) and streetscaping (such as better-defined footways and the reduction of street clutter) that will better define the London Road village gateway north;**
- **the incorporation of landscaping and traffic calming measures that results in a stronger sense of arrival and place at the London Road village gateway south (such as landscaping scheme on land proposed as Local Green Space and along the road frontage, and the installation of traditional village gates); and**
- **the implementation of design and/or landscaping features that help to create a more coherent and attractive streetscape along the built-up frontage of London Road (e.g. increased landscaping and better-defined boundary treatment of properties, amenity spaces or other areas of public realm).**

At the end of paragraph 6.4.2 add: ‘Policy PAM 4 sets out the Plan’s expectations for street scene improvements in this part of the parish. The delivery of landscaping improvements or, where applicable, payment of contributions towards the delivery of landscaping improvements in the public realm will be required where necessary to achieve sense of place as part of new development, and where directly, fairly, and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.’

Policy PAM 5 - Local Green Spaces

- 7.34 The intention of the policy is to designate existing open spaces in the parish as local green spaces (LGSs), as defined in national policy.
- 7.35 The policy proposes the designation of five LGSs. They are shown on Map 9 and a brief description of each space is included in the supporting text. The overall approach taken is underpinned by the Open Spaces Assessment.
- 7.36 I looked at the proposed LGSs very carefully. I am satisfied that they meet the various criteria in paragraphs 105 and 106 of the NPPF.
- 7.37 The policy simply lists the proposed LGSs. I recommend that wording is included to reflect the matter-of-fact approach taken in paragraph 107 of the NPPF. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

At the end of the policy add: ‘Development proposals within the identified Local Green Spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.’

Policy PAM 6 - Achieving high quality design and reflecting local character

- 7.38 The context to this policy is the overall ambition to ensure that new development is associated with high quality design which reflect the character of the parish. The policy is underpinned by the Pampisford Village Design Codes which identifies six character areas in the parish. The Plan advises that Local Plan Policy HQ/1: Design Principles addresses many of the design codes set out in Appendix One and that Policy PAM 6 seeks to complement the Local Plan through focusing on Pampisford-specific elements. In addition, the policy requires the user to complete a check list when submitting a planning application.
- 7.39 In the round, the policy and the Design Codes are a first-class local response to Section 12 of the NPPF.
- 7.40 In this broader context, I recommend a series of modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow SCDC to be able to apply its provisions through the development management process. They include a proportionate element. This acknowledges that whilst design is universally important, the policy will have a greater impact on larger proposals and/or those in sensitive locations. Nevertheless, the recommended modifications do not alter the approach taken by PPC.
- 7.41 I also correct an error in the supporting text. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the first part of the policy replace ‘All development proposals with ‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals’

In the second part of the policy replace ‘will be expected to’ with ‘should’

Replace the opening element of the fourth part of the policy with: ‘Where relevant, development proposals should respond positively to the following parish-specific features:’

In the final part of the policy replace ‘be refused’ with ‘not be supported’

In paragraph 6.6.1 replace ‘five’ with six’

Policy PAM 7 - Pampisford village allotment

- 7.42 The context to the policy is that the allotment site is located to the north of Brewery Road and has ten plots. The allotments provide an important

opportunity for residents to grow their own produce and lead active lifestyles. In both the 2017 survey and the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan survey the allotments were identified as an important community asset to be retained. The intent of Policy PAM 7 is to recognise the community value attributed to the Pampisford allotments.

- 7.43 The policy comments that the site at Brewery Road, currently used as allotments by residents, is safeguarded for continued allotment use. Loss of this allotment site will only be supported if allotments, of a similar size, are re-provided for residents in a suitable site near the village centre.
- 7.44 I have noted the representation made by SCDC on this policy. Whilst it would broaden the scope of the policy, it is not needed to ensure that it meets the basic conditions. I recommend a modification to the second paragraph of Goal 3 as suggested by PPC in response to SCDC comments.
- 7.45 The policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the second paragraph of Goal 3 with: 'The parish greatly values its existing community facilities. Consistent with national planning policy, Local Plan Policy SC/3: Protection of Village Services and Facilities and Local Plan Policy SC/8: Protection of Existing Recreation Areas, Playing Fields, Allotments and Community Orchards resist the loss of valued village services and open spaces. These Local Plan policies would apply to the Village Hall, the Church and the Recreation Ground and the neighbourhood plan supports this approach.'

Policy PAM 8 - The site of the Chequers Pub

- 7.46 The intention of the policy is to ensure a viable development can come forward on this important site at the heart of the community in a manner that preserves or enhances the character of its historic core. The policy is criteria-based. The re-provision of a public house is preferred to other uses, alongside other types of community meeting space.
- 7.47 I looked carefully at the site of the former Chequers PH during the visit. The policy is both positive and non-prescriptive. It also reflects the sensitive location of the site.
- 7.48 I recommend a modification of the wording of the final part of the policy to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow SCDC to be able to apply its provisions through the development management process. In recommending this approach, I have given weight to the comments in PPC's response to the clarification note. I share its view that the policy should underpin the concerted local efforts to find a means of restoring the site to a new public house and community meeting point.

7.49 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

In the final part of the policy replace ‘The following would be particularly welcome:’ with ‘The following uses will be particularly supported:’

Policy PAM 9 - Development and climate change

7.50 The Plan advises that this policy expects new development proposals in the parish to make a meaningful contribution to decreasing the carbon footprint of the built environment. The policy addresses a range of issues based around the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

7.51 I am satisfied that the policy takes a positive approach to such matters and has regard to Section 14 of the NPPF. In addition, its non-prescriptive approach accords with the Written Ministerial Statement Planning: Local Energy Efficiency Standards (December 2023).

7.52 In this broader context, I recommend the following modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow SCDC to be able to apply its provisions through the development management process:

- the introduction of a proportionate element into the first part of the policy;
- a more detailed reference in the policy to the relevant local plan policy;
- the introduction of an additional element in the second part to acknowledge that the approach in the policy will not always be practicable; and
- to use language more appropriate for a neighbourhood plan.

7.53 The fourth part of the policy comments about flood risk issues to good effect. However, it is general commentary rather than a land use policy. As such, I recommend that it is deleted and repositioned in the supporting text. In reaching this judgement, I have considered carefully PPC’s response to the clarification note. However, there is no need for a neighbourhood plan to repeat national and local planning policies. In addition, it is not within my remit to comment about the importance attached to flood issues in the local delivery of the development management process.

7.54 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the first sentence of the first part of the policy with: ‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should embed the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation in accordance with Local Plan policy CC/1.’

At the beginning of the second part of the policy add: ‘Where practicable,’

In the third part of the policy replace ‘are strongly encouraged’ with ‘will be particularly supported’

Delete the fourth part of the policy.

At the end of paragraph 6.9.3 add: ‘Flood risk from all sources (fluvial, surface water and groundwater) as shown on maps 2, 3 and 4, and detailed in the most up-to-date Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, will need to be fully considered when ensuring developments proposals meet Local Plan and national policy requirements relating to development and flood risk.’

Policy PAM 10 - Sustainable work-life patterns

7.55 The intention of the policy is to ensure new development is designed in a way which helps residents and employees live more sustainable lives.

7.56 SCDC comment that the policy replicates adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan policies. In its response to the clarification note, PPC advised that:

‘This policy and its supporting text was carefully reviewed following the Regulation 14 consultation and in response to a similar comment made by the local planning authority. The first bullet point is included to address Pampisford specific issues as described in supporting paragraph 6.10.7. The third bullet point refers directly to design codes 3.2.1 and 3.2.7, prepared for Pampisford Parish by AECOM via the Design Codes document. The second paragraph expects design to allow for home working – this is in response to the levels of home working in the parish, as set out in paragraph 6.10.2.

The final paragraph in Policy PAM 10 is also specific to Pampisford Parish. It is supported by paragraph 6.10.6 and Map 10. Without this element of Policy PAM 10 that works together with the supporting information (including information on existing user safety issues along the network), this parish level policy ‘hook’ for considering the importance of Pampisford’s existing network of active travel routes and identifying opportunities for improvements in Pampisford will be completely lost. This element of PAM 10 will directly help with implementation of strategic policy TI/2 ‘Planning for Sustainable Travel’ at the parish level.’

7.57 I have considered these different views very carefully. On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the bulk of the policy is locally-distinctive rather than a repetition of national or local policies. However, I recommend that the

second part of the policy (on dedicated facilities for working from home) is deleted as it is beyond the control of the land use planning system to determine the use of specific rooms in a private dwelling. In addition, as SCDC comments, any such controls would be impractical to monitor.

- 7.58 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the first part of the policy replace 'All development proposals will be expected to' with 'Wherever practicable, development proposals should'

Delete the second part of the policy.

Policy PAM 11 – Trees and Woodland

- 7.59 The intention of the policy is to retain existing and increase the coverage of trees, hedgerows, and woodland in the parish. The policy is comprehensive and comments about:

- the relationship between trees and new development;
- guidance for proposals which would result in the loss of or harm to veteran trees; and
- details about new and replacement planting.

- 7.60 In general terms, the policy takes a positive approach which has regard to Section 15 of the NPPF. Nevertheless, I recommend the following modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow SCDC to be able to apply its provisions through the development management process:

- a revision to the first bullet point of the first part of the policy;
- a recasting of the first sentence of the second part of the policy;
- the removal of technical details from the third part of the policy; and
- the deletion of the fourth part of the policy which serves no clear purpose.

- 7.61 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the first bullet point of the first part of the policy with: 'will be expected to be accompanied by a professional arboricultural survey report undertaken to the appropriate standards (to BS5837) and a

preliminary ecological survey identifying the arboricultural landscape and biodiversity value of the trees. Proposals which would result in the loss or harm to veteran trees will not be supported.'

In the third part of the policy delete the wording in brackets.

Delete the fourth part of the policy.

Policy PAM 12 - Protecting and enhancing biodiversity in Pampisford Parish

7.62 The intent of the policy is to protect and enhance biodiversity in the parish. It has four related sections:

- the application of the mitigation hierarchy;
- a requirement for the delivery of biodiversity net gain;
- commentary on how biodiversity enhancements (including biodiversity net gain) could be delivered locally; and
- biodiversity measures for birds and bats, and in relation to brownfield sites.

7.63 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to these matters and has regard to Section 15 of the NPPF.

7.64 SCDC suggests that the second part of the policy (on biodiversity net gain) is not needed given that the matter is now addressed in national legislation. In its response to the clarification note, PPC commented that:

'we do not see any significant fault with the current formulation of the policy which is logical in how it sets out the general principle of the mitigation hierarchy, summarises the national BNG framework, and details how we wish to see this applied in our parish.'

7.65 I have considered the matter very carefully. Based on all the evidence, I recommend that the first part of the policy is deleted and repositioned into the supporting text. This acknowledges that it restates the national approach to the mitigation hierarchy rather than being a land use planning policy.

7.66 I also recommend the deletion of the second part of the policy. Biodiversity net gain is now embedded in national legislation and there is no need for The Plan to restate those requirements. I recommend that the opening element of the third part of the policy is recast so that it provides a context for the local delivery of biodiversity enhancements and/or biodiversity net gain.

7.67 Finally, I recommend modifications to the fourth part of the policy so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF and can be applied by SCDC through the development management process. The recasting includes a proportionate element, and a more prescriptive approach towards living or green roofs, where it is practicable to incorporate such features on the site concerned.

- 7.68 I also recommend consequential modifications to the supporting text. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Delete the first and second parts of the policy.

Replace the opening element of the third part of the policy with: ‘Appropriate measures for delivering biodiversity enhancements (including the national requirement for biodiversity net gain where applicable) in the parish include the following:’

Replace the fourth part of the policy with:

‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should take opportunities to integrate biodiversity measures within buildings through the provision of integrated bird, bat, and/or insect boxes to be targeted at protected species (e.g. swift, sparrow, starling, and pipistrelle bats). Wherever practicable, Integrated living, brown or green roofs should be incorporated within buildings on brownfield sites to accommodate invertebrates that are displaced through the development.’

Add the contents of paragraph 6.12.14 to paragraph 6.12.13

Replace paragraph 6.12.14 with:

‘Policy PAM 12 sets out the Plan’s approach to these important matters. It is underpinned by the hierarchy of mitigation which should be embedded into the design of the development with the following steps implemented in order:

- *Firstly, avoid impacts. This means retaining habitats of value for enhancement and management and retaining species in situ;*
- *Secondly, mitigate impacts, where these have been found to be unavoidable; and*
- *Thirdly, compensate if mitigation measures are insufficient.’*

Policy PAM 13 - Development, movement, and traffic

- 7.69 The Plan advises that the context to this policy is that in the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan Survey, traffic noise from the A505 was one of the three most mentioned current negative impacts on the village, and was the most problematic travel issue for 35% of the survey respondents. The Plan also advises that it is within its scope to require all development proposals in the parish to be assessed in terms of their impact on the safety of all road users and in terms of traffic volumes, and the subsequent implications of these on the parish.

7.70 I sought PPC's comments on the extent to which the policy added local value above national and local policies. In its response it advised that:

'Given the high levels of concern about parking and traffic volume and speed, evidenced in our engagement activities within the Parish (see paragraphs 4.10-4.12), it is important to the Parish Council to have a strong policy in this area contained within our Plan. The policy adds specific detail that, inevitably, is not contained in existing strategic and national policies, for example mentioning key areas within the village (e.g. London Road, Brewery Road, site of the former Chequers Pub) where the policy should be targeted. This distinctive layer of detail at the parish level will ensure strategic policies existing at the Local Plan level and at the national level can be reliably applied at the local level.'

7.71 On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the policy is distinctive and provides evidence about local circumstances. In general, its approach has regard to Section 9 of the NPPF.

7.72 Nevertheless, to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow SCDC to be able to apply its provisions through the development management process I recommend that the policy is recast so that its format is simpler, and that it relates to the operation of the land use planning system. The recasting addresses the following matters:

- the removal of the unnecessary sub-headings;
- the use of language more appropriate to a neighbourhood plan;
- a direct reference to parking standards in the Local Plan in the second part of the policy;
- the removal of any reference to requirements for on-street parking as this cannot be controlled through the land use planning system;
- the removal of the reference to the latest 'quiet tyre' technology (in the submitted final part of the policy) as it is not directly a land use planning matter; and
- a reordering of some of the elements of the policy so that it has a more logical flow.

7.73 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Delete the two sub-headings (All development; and Development generating high traffic movements:)

Replace the policy with:

'Development proposals will be considered in the context of their impact on road safety for all users and especially cyclists. Where proposals will

impact adversely on road safety, including the areas of existing concern at the Brewery Road/London Road junction and the Brewery Road frontage along the site of the former Chequers Public House, they should mitigate their impact by providing or contributing to appropriate road safety measures.

Development proposals should incorporate a design-led approach towards meeting the car parking needs as set out in the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

In cases where significant increases in traffic movements along Brewery Road or London Road would be generated, development proposals should incorporate measures to mitigate adverse impacts (through noise, dust, air quality or visual impacts) on residential amenity. This mitigation should be achieved through either the implementation of, or financial contribution towards, appropriate measures such as street scene enhancement including pavement widening, street scene planting or provision of crossing points.

Proposals that will have an unacceptable impact on road safety for all users and especially cyclists after mitigation will not be supported.'

Policy PAM 14 - Preventing environmental pollution from Pampisford businesses

7.74 The Plan advises that the intent of the policy is to ensure neither the natural environment nor residential amenity is harmed through industrial practices at the various employment sites. It also advises that the control of processes and emissions is subject to legislation outside the planning system and an operator needs both planning permission and an environmental permit from pollution control authorities (normally the Environment Agency) before being able to operate industrial practices. The intent of Policy PAM 14 is to focus on the principle of land use only.

7.75 I sought PPC's comments on the extent to which the policy added local value above national and local policies. In its response it advised that:

'the Parish Council requires the plan to have a strong policy given the unusual amount of business activity in the village and the close proximity of the business/employment areas to residential areas (see paragraph 6.14.8). The types of pollution mentioned in this policy have all been experienced within the village and in some cases still are. The neighbourhood plan provides an additional level of detail that is required so that policies at the Local Plan and national level can be reliably applied at the local level.'

7.76 I have considered PPC's response to the clarification note, and SCDC's comments on the matter. I note that SCDC advises that the Local Plan

already requires assessments on development proposals through policies SC/10 (Noise Pollution), SC/12 (Air Quality), and SC/14 (Odour and Other Fugitive Emissions to Air). On the balance of the evidence, I am not satisfied that the proposed policy brings any added value beyond those policies. As such, I recommend its deletion from the Plan. I also recommend the consequential deletion of elements of the associated supporting text (Section 6.14) and a modification to its title

Delete the policy

Delete the Policy Intent heading and paragraph 6.14.11.

Change the title of Section 6.14 by the deletion of 'Policy PAM 14'

Policy PAM 15 - Brewery Road employment area

- 7.77 This employment area lies within the village to the north of Brewery Road. It abuts the open countryside and Green Belt land to the north and west and borders onto the Brewery Road recreation ground to the east. The intent of the policy is to encourage proposals to enhance landscaping along the northern boundary of the Brewery Road Employment area.
- 7.78 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to this matter and has regard to Sections 6 and 12 of the NPPF. However, to bring the clarity required by the NPPF, I recommend that its approach is more explicit, and incorporates a proportionate element. The latter will avoid unreasonable expectations being placed on minor developments.
- 7.79 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with: 'As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals on the Brewery Road employment area (as shown on Map 13) that are otherwise compliant with policies in the development plan should take opportunities to improve the character of the village and its landscape, including create an improved landscape buffer on the countryside edge of the development.'

Policy PAM 16 - London Road employment area

- 7.80 The Plan comments that the London Road employment area applies to the area to the west of London Road. It is referred to as the Sawston Trade Park in the Pampisford Design Codes document and is home to a range of business uses. Policy PAM 4 identifies opportunities for improvements along London Road. Policy PAM 16 seeks to ensure such opportunities are taken when applicable development proposals in the London Road employment area come forward.

- 7.81 I sought PPC's comments on the overlap between Policies PAM 4 and PAM 16. In its response to the clarification note, it advised that:

'there is overlap between PAM 4 and PAM 16. However, PAM 4 relates to the theme of Village and Parish Character, whereas PAM 16 relates to Local Economy. The strategic nature of the London Road employment area needs addressing in both respects. As stated in paragraph 6.16.2: The Policy PAM 4 identifies opportunities for improvements along London Road. Policy PAM 16 seeks to ensure such opportunities are taken when applicable development proposals in the London Road employment area come forward.'

- 7.82 I have considered this overlap very carefully. On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the policies fulfil different purposes. I am satisfied that Policy PAM 16 meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Policy PAM 17 - Rectory Farm employment area

- 7.83 The supporting text advises that Rectory Farm is home to Rectory Farm Limited, a long-established arable farm. It is located outside the development framework and is regarded in policy terms as being a countryside location. As such, development proposals, other than those concerning existing buildings, are not expected, or anticipated to come forward on this site. The Plan advises that the intention is to highlight the positive contribution this site makes to village character and to ensure this is maintained or enhanced.
- 7.84 SCDC makes a series of comments on the policy and the supporting text. PPC responded positively to the comments made. Taking account of all the evidence, I recommend that the policy is recast so that there is a more natural flow between the opening element and the four criteria. I also recommend detailed modifications to the wording of the criteria. Nevertheless, the overall thrust of the policy remains unchanged.
- 7.85 Finally I recommend a modification to the supporting text (as suggested by SCDC) and that the overlap between the Rectory Farm employment area and the Conservation Area is shown on a single map.
- 7.86 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

'Development proposals at Rectory Farm (as shown on Map 13), that are otherwise compliant with policies in the development plan, will be supported where:

- **the special contribution which the open space at Rectory Farm meadows makes to the setting of the conservation area (as shown on Map 5) is conserved or strengthened;**
- **they conserve or enhance the existing heritage assets (as shown on Maps 14 and 16), the conservation area and the street scene as a whole in this village-centre location;**
- **new or extended buildings are within the existing development footprint of Rectory Farm and do not exceed existing building heights; and**
- **existing features of landscape value (including mature trees and established hedgerows) are appropriately protected or complemented through additional planting.'**

Replace the fourth sentence of paragraph 6.17.1 with 'The special contribution which the open space at Rectory Farm meadows makes to the conservation area (see Map 5) should be conserved or strengthened.'

Show the extent of Rectory Farm Meadows, and the Conservation Area on one map (to provide clarity over how the different areas relate to each other).

Policy PAM 18 - Protecting and enhancing access to and enjoyment of the countryside

7.87 The Plan comments that the existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) network is shown on Map 15 and that the policy seeks to protect this network. Aspirations for extending our very limited network are also shown. It advises that the most appropriate way of delivering these improvements will be through agreement with local landowners to secure new permissive routes. It also advises about two specific scenarios:

- where a development proposal comes forward that affects our rural routes, the proposals will be expected to protect or enhance the routes concerned; and
- where a development proposal comes forward that presents an opportunity to create new links in our limited network of routes (considering the vision for improved routes shown in Map 15) this should be taken.

7.88 The second part of the policy (on proposals which would create new rights of way or connect into existing rights of way) is written in a confusing way. In addition, it fails to acknowledge that PROW are administered through separate (highways) legislation. I recommend that the policy is simplified so that it simply offers support for any such proposals.

7.89 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the second part of the policy with: ‘Development proposals that are otherwise acceptable and which include new public rights of way (including bridleways in suitable locations) or which provide attractive and safe connections to existing rights of way will be supported.’

Policy PAM 19 – Local heritage and non-designated heritage assets

7.90 The policy takes a comprehensive approach to heritage assets in the parish. It proposes the identification of a package of non-designated heritage assets.

7.91 The assets identified in Policy PAM 19 (and identified on Map 16) have been agreed following an assessment of a longer list of buildings and structures that had been identified as being of potential interest. All potential assets were assessed in terms of their potential significance in relation to age, rarity, architectural and artistic interest, archaeological interest, historic interest, landmark status, and social and communal value. In addition, landowners have been engaged. To assist with the implementation of this policy, the detail on the non-designated heritage assets and their significance is provided in Appendix Four.

7.92 The policy takes a positive approach towards heritage assets and has regard to Section 16 of the NPPF. Nevertheless, I recommend the following modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow SCDC to be able to apply its provisions through the development management process:

- revisions to the wording used;
- the deletion of the second part of the policy which is a process matter rather than a land use policy; and
- the repositioning of the second part of the policy into the supporting text.

7.93 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Delete the second part of the policy

In the third part of the policy replace ‘conserve and enhance’ with ‘preserve or enhance’

In the fourth part of the policy replace ‘(proportionate to the scale of the proposed development)’ with ‘(proportionate to the assets’ importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal)’

At the end of paragraph 6.19.5 add: 'Developers should refer to the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (maintained by the County Council) which provides information on heritage assets. This will ensure that planning decisions are fully informed.'

Community Actions

- 7.94 The Plan includes a series of Community Actions. They have naturally arisen as the Plan was prepared. They are set out in a separate part of the Plan (Section 7) to distinguish them from the land use policies. This is best practice.
- 7.95 I am satisfied that the Actions are both appropriate and distinctive to the parish. The following Actions are noteworthy:
- Community Action 1 Affordable Housing
 - Community Action 3 Public realm initiatives
 - Community Action 4 Footpaths
 - Community Action 6 Church and village hall

Other Matters – General

- 7.96 This report has recommended a series of modifications both to the policies and to the supporting text in the submitted Plan. Where consequential changes to the text are required directly because of my recommended modification to the policy concerned, I have highlighted them in this report. However other changes to the general text may be required elsewhere in the Plan because of the recommended modifications to the policies. Similarly, changes may be necessary to paragraph numbers in the Plan or to accommodate other administrative matters. It will be appropriate for SCDC and PPC to have the flexibility to make any necessary consequential changes to the general text. I recommend accordingly.

Modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies and to accommodate any administrative and technical changes.

Other Matters – Specific

- 7.97 SCDC has made a series of helpful comments on both the policies and the supporting text in the Plan. I have included them in the recommended modifications on a policy-by-policy basis where they are required to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.

- 7.98 I also recommend modifications to the text of the Plan to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions. They are based on SCDC's comments on the general elements of the Plan as follows:

Replace paragraph 1.8 with: 'It should be noted that there is not one parish-wide Policies Map provided as part of this version of the Neighbourhood Plan. Instead, where a planning policy has site-specific implications, a policies map showing the policy extent is included for that specific policy and referenced within the policy wording.'

Within the supporting text linked to policy PAM 10 add a reference to Map 10 (on page 57).

In Chapter 3 (Evidence supporting the neighbourhood plan) insert references to the South Cambridgeshire District Design Guide (2010) and to the National Design Guide (2019).

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2041. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community to safeguard the character and setting of the neighbourhood area, to improve the appearance of its employment areas, and to designate Local Green Spaces.
- 8.2 Following the independent examination of the Plan, I have concluded that the Pampisford Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.

Conclusion

- 8.3 On the basis of the findings in this report, I recommend to South Cambridgeshire District Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report that the Pampisford Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

Other Matters

- 8.4 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as approved by the District Council on 29 March 2018.
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth manner. The responses to the clarification note were detailed, informative and delivered in a very timely fashion.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
6 January 2025

