

Fulbourn Neighbourhood Development Plan

2019-2031

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

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Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by South Cambridgeshire District Council in January 2022 to carry out the independent examination of the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 11 February 2022. The examination was undertaken mainly by written representations. However, I considered that there was a need to arrange a hearing to discuss elements of Policies FUL/01, FUL/05 and FUL/14. The hearing took place on 4 July 2022.
- 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 and ensuring that the Green Belt is respected.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. It is clear that 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 Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum should be held within the neighbourhood area.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
12 September 2022

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2031 (the 'Plan').
- 1.2 The Plan has been submitted to South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) by Fulbourn Parish Council (FPC) 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 and 2021. 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 or not 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 as a result 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 in particular. It has a clear focus on securing high quality design and safeguarding the openness of the Green Belt.
- 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 Plan area and will sit as 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 FPC, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both SCDC and FPC. 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. In previous roles, I have over 35 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level. I am a chartered town planner and have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service.

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;
- the Basic Conditions Statement;
- the Consultation Statement;
- the SEA/HRA Screening Determination Statement;
- the six Evidence Papers;
- the responses to the Clarification Note;
- the representations made to the Plan;
- the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan;
- the National Planning Policy Framework (2021);
- Planning Practice Guidance; and
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 11 February 2022. 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 5.12 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 majority of the Plan could be examined by written representations. However, parts of Policies FUL/01, FUL/05 and FUL/14 were examined by way of a hearing which was held on 4 July 2022. The hearing note is appended to this report (Appendix A).

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, FPC 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 (January to February 2021). It captures the key issues in a proportionate way and is then underpinned by more detailed appendices
- 4.3 The Statement is particularly helpful in the way in which it reproduces elements of the consultation documents used throughout the plan-making process. Their inclusion adds life and depth to the document.
- 4.4 The Statement sets out details of the comprehensive range of consultation events that were carried out in relation to the initial stages of the Plan. They include:
- the public meetings (March 2018);
 - the publicity articles inserted in Parish Magazine (Pump) and Village Magazine (The Mill);
 - the launch of a dedicated website for the Plan (October 2018);
 - the Village Design Study Consultation Day (November 2018); and
 - the questionnaire to every household (July 2019).
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 Appendix 5 of the Statement provides very specific details on the comments received on the pre-submission version of the Plan. Appendix 6 identifies the principal changes that worked their way through into the submission version. This process helps to describe the evolution of the Plan.
- 4.7 It is clear that 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.

- 4.8 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

- 4.9 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by SCDC that ended on 18 January 2022. This exercise generated comments from a range of organisations as follows:

- National Grid
- Cambridge Past, Present and Future
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Trust (the Trust)
- Cambridgeshire Constabulary
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Castlefield International
- Countryside Properties
- Defence Infrastructure Organisation
- Ely Diocesan Board of Finance (EDBF)
- Environment Agency
- Hill Residential
- Historic England
- Janus Henderson Property UK
- KG Moss Will Trust
- Natural England
- South Cambridgeshire District Council

- 4.10 I have taken account of all the representations received. Where it is appropriate to do so, I refer to particular 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 Fulbourn. Its population in 2011 was 4673 persons living in 1935 houses. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 13 August 2018. As the Plan describes, Fulbourn is situated 8km to the southeast of the centre of Cambridge, with which it shares its western boundary. The parish is predominantly agricultural land and part of the Green Belt of Cambridge.
- 5.2 The principal settlement in the parish is Fulbourn. It is an attractive village with a range of retail, commercial and community facilities. Its historic core is based around High Street, Church Street and St Vigor's Church.
- 5.3 Cambridge Road to the west of the village connects Fulbourn with Cambridge. A series of hospital and commercial buildings are located between Cambridge Road (to the south) and Fulbourn Old Drift (to the north).

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/9 identifies a series of Minor Rural Centres, including Fulbourn. Within these identified Centres the policy comments that residential development and redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings will be permitted within the relevant development frameworks.
- 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.
- 5.8 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.

Unaccompanied Visit

- 5.9 I visited the neighbourhood area on 11 February 2022. I approached from the A11 from the south. This allowed me to understand its setting in the wider landscape and its proximity to the main road network. I refreshed my knowledge of the parish on 3 July 2022 on the day before the hearing.
- 5.10 I spent time in the village centre including the recreation area and the area around the Fulbourn Centre.
- 5.11 I paid particular attention to the western part of the parish in the Green Belt. I looked at the various designations as proposed in Policy FUL/01.
- 5.12 I left the parish along Yarrow Road. This helped me to understand the relationship of the parish to Cambridge/Cherry Hinton and its relationship with the strategic highway network (A14) to the north.

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;
- be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations; 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 2021. 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 particular relevance to the Fulbourn 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 within the context of its status within the development strategy in the Local Plan and the scale and nature of the Cambridge Green Belt. 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. The majority 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. It is clear that the submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension, the Plan includes a policy for employment development (Policy FUL/12). In the social dimension, it includes a policy on community facilities and amenities (Policy FUL/14) and on local green spaces (Policy FUL/05). In the environmental dimension, the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built and historic environment. It includes policies for distinctiveness and landscape setting (Policy FUL/01) and design (Policy FUL/11). FPC 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 report 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. As such 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 The screening report also undertook a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan. It is equally thorough on this matter. It identifies that there are no habitats sites within scope for this HRA screening report. The assessment indicates that the Plan is not predicted to have likely significant effects 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) was 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. On the basis of 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. In particular, it makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that they have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 My recommendations focus on the policies themselves 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 FPC 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 (41-004-20190509) which indicates that neighbourhood plans must address the development and use of land. The Plan includes a series of Community Aspirations.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted plan. Where necessary I have identified the inter-relationships between the policies. I address the Community Aspirations after the policies.
- 7.6 For clarity this section of the report comments on all policies whether or not I have recommended modifications in order to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 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 normal print.

The initial section of the Plan (Sections One to Five)

- 7.8 These initial parts of the Plan set the scene for the range of policies. They do so in a proportionate way. The Plan includes a series of maps and figures which highlight specific elements of the Plan and its policies. A very clear distinction is made between its policies and the supporting text.
- 7.9 The Introduction comments about the development of the Plan. Paragraph 1.6 neatly summarises the contents of the Plan. It also provides background information on the wider national agenda in relation to neighbourhood plans.
- 7.10 Section 2 describes the neighbourhood area. Figure 1 shows its boundary.

- 7.11 Section 3 describes the planning policy context. Figure 2 helpfully shows the overlaps with Local Plan policies.
- 7.12 Section 4 comments about the local context of the parish. It is both helpful and comprehensive. It provides a very detailed context for the way in which the various policies have been developed.
- 7.13 Section 5 comments about the relationship between the Plan's vision, objectives and the various policies. It helpfully highlights the relationship between these matters in Chart 3. This approach is best practice.
- 7.14 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.

FUL/01: Protecting the Distinctiveness and Landscape Setting of Fulbourn

- 7.15 This is a very comprehensive policy. In essence it seeks to safeguard the setting and character of the village. In particular it identifies the following proposed policy components:
- an Important Visual Gap (Part 2);
 - a series of Important Countryside Frontages (Part 3); and
 - a series of Locally Important Views (Part 4)

Parts 2 and 3 of the policy were discussed at the hearing.

- 7.16 The supporting text helpfully sets out the context to this policy and its relationship with the ongoing application of Green Belt policies as follows:

'Fulbourn has the character of a distinct and individual village surrounded by agricultural fields and natural countryside. It has a well-defined village boundary / Development Framework (defined in Local Plan Policy S/7) but also developed areas outside of it, mainly towards Cambridge. The western part of the Parish area, the fully developed Beechwood Estate, has become an integral part of Cherry Hinton in Cambridge. Going forward, it will be very important to protect the remaining visual and physical separation between Fulbourn and Cambridge, avoiding any development that could compromise the individuality of Fulbourn and result in coalescence between the settlement.

Fulbourn occupies a position within the Green Belt that surrounds Cambridge, and this has historically provided a strong protection from unrestricted sprawl from Cambridge and has safeguarded agricultural fields from encroachment. Additional protection, however, is considered necessary because:

- a) The thriving technology and educational city of Cambridge suffers significant land pressures due to the protected status of many of its sites, complex land ownership within the historical centre and the constraining girdle of the Green Belt that surrounds it. As a result, Cambridge seeks additional resources for its businesses and housing needs outside its own boundaries.
- b) Over recent times many of the surrounding villages have become absorbed by the spread of the city: Cherry Hinton, Chesterton, Girton, Trumpington etc.
- c) The Green Belt boundary has been revised at each Local Plan, for example to allow the development of the Beechwood Estate some decades ago, and more recently for the extension of the Peterhouse Technology Park. These revisions bring Cambridge's urban spread into the Fulbourn area.
- d) Some land within the Green Belt that separates Fulbourn from Cambridge is already developed (the Fulbourn Hospital site, Capital Park and the Ida Darwin site). These sites, historically very green and with barely visible buildings from the outside, are targets for intensification or new development.
- e) Under pressure for residential development, the status of the Green Belt, although formally maintained, is being eroded through redevelopment and intensification of sites and through development of "exception sites". This includes, for example, further development between Fulbourn and Teversham through expansion of farm buildings and fourteen new houses on Balsham Road, at the eastern edge of Fulbourn'

7.17 In assessing the policy against the basic conditions, I have considered the various representations which comment on the elements included in this policy and the discussions which took place at the hearing.

7.18 The first part of the policy takes a general approach and requires that development proposals respect the setting and character of Fulbourn as a village. I recommend detailed modifications to the wording used to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to ensure that the policy is expressed in a positive fashion. Otherwise, it meets the basic conditions.

Important Visual Gap (IVG)

7.19 The Plan comments that the identification of an IVG seeks to ensure that the visual separation of Fulbourn from Cambridge is reinforced. The intention of the Gap is to ensure that regeneration, intensification or redevelopment of sites within the Gap are designed to present a dominant green aspect and to minimise visual encroachment and urbanisation (including light and noise pollution).

7.20 The IVG is wholly within the Green Belt. On this basis I sought clarification from FPC on the extent to which the identification of the IVG would add value

to the existing protection afforded to the area by Green Belt policy. It commented that:

'It is evident from the recent development history that the Green Belt designation is insufficient to retain a 'visual gap'. As parts of the 'gap' are already developed and are considered brownfield sites, the Green Belt designation has proven to be weak: buildings have been added and development has become more compact, trees have been removed, etc. The Important Visual Gap is intended to add additional requirements to control 'visual' encroachment, as redevelopment in these areas cannot be prevented. It is important that new development safeguards or enhances the tree cover and parkland, dim lighting and barely perceivable buildings in between trees that gives the perception of separation when going from Cambridge to Fulbourn, even where development is present'

- 7.21 I also sought clarity from FPC on the way in which the IVG had been defined. In several cases it does not follow obvious boundaries based on either physical or man-made features. It commented that:

'When the 'Visual Gap' approach was first identified as part of the Village Design Guide (SPD) it was not considered necessary to exactly define the boundaries as the gap was intended as a loose green area separating Cambridge and Fulbourn. It was considered important at the time to extend the gap to include both developed and agricultural areas to reinforce the principle of separation through green and countryside settings. It is difficult, however, to precisely state where the gap stops: it should be where open land is no longer under pressure for development'

- 7.22 These issues were explored further at the hearing. I heard the in-principle objections of several landowners about the identification of the IVG. In summary their views were that it was both unnecessary and added no value to the effect of existing Green Belt policies.
- 7.23 I have considered the matter very carefully. On the balance of the information available, I am not satisfied that there is a need for the designation of an IVG. Whilst I understand the concerns expressed by FPC about the robustness of Green Belt policy and the way in which it has been applied by SCDC, I can see no evidence that Green Belt policy has been applied incorrectly. On the contrary, the recent proposal for the replacement Resource Centre on the Hospital Site identified the way in which SCDC had grappled with the 'very special circumstances' presented by the application. I saw first-hand the way in which the partly-constructed building was incorporated within the wider openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.24 In addition, the proposed policy has been designed in a way which may undermine the effectiveness of Green Belt policy (which is based on

preventing inappropriate development coming forward). The policy in the submitted Plan would apply a more flexible approach based on an assessment of the visual encroachment and urbanisation, including light and noise pollution of the proposal concerned and ensuring that its impact on the IVG has been minimised.

7.25 Finally the implementation of a policy based on the identified IVG would create tension with the existing Green Belt. This matter would be complicated by the lack of clarity about the proposed boundary of the IVG.

7.26 On this basis I recommend the deletion of the second part of the policy.

Important Countryside Frontages

7.27 As the Plan describes, the designation of Important Countryside Frontages (ICF) is intended to provide physical protection of the countryside setting and character in accordance with the definition of ICFs in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Policy NH/13). They are described in Evidence Paper 2. The Plan comments that the proposed ICFs identify the fields essential to define Fulbourn as an individual village, separated from Cambridge and other nearby settlements. In summary form they are proposed:

- Ida Darwin (ICF1);
- Capital Park (ICF2);
- Lanthorn Stile (ICF3); and
- Gog's View (ICF4).

7.28 The hearing clarified that FPC is proposing to add to the existing ICF in the parish identified in the Local Plan (to the east of Manor Walk and Home End). On this basis it was anticipating that the existing Local Plan policy would apply to the additional ICFs identified in the neighbourhood plan. The policies map shows the existing ICF in the parish as identified in the Local Plan.

7.29 Policy NH/13 of the Local Plan identifies that ICFs are defined where land with a strong countryside character either penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area providing 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 a development framework. I have assessed the three proposed ICFs on this basis.

7.30 I have considered this matter very carefully and taken account of the various representations made both by the landowners concerned and SCDC. I have concluded that the proposed ICF3 and ICF4 comfortably to the approach taken in the Local Plan policy. However, I have concluded that the proposed ICF1 and ICF2 do not relate to the approach taken in the Local Plan. By

definition, they are remotely located from the development framework of the village. In addition, their boundaries are clearly defined and naturally relate to the uses within their respective areas.

- 7.31 At the hearing KG Moss Will Trust commented that the existing ICF in the parish should not be displayed on the Policies Map to ensure consistency with the approach taken in another neighbourhood plan in the District. I consider this to be a neutral matter. The policies map helpfully shows a range of other matters (such as the Green Belt). The inclusion of these and other matters in the Plan will assist in its use, application and legibility.
- 7.32 I recommend that the policy is modified so that it more closely identifies that the Plan incorporates additional ICFs to the ICF included in the Local Plan, and that the Local Plan policy will apply to the additional ICFs.

Locally Important Views

- 7.33 As the Plan describes the Locally Important Views are important vantage points defined by the community, which are considered to define Fulbourn identity as a village “set among trees” and separated from Cambridge.
- 7.34 The views are described in Evidence Paper 1. The Paper describes the various views into and out of Fulbourn that are considered to make a significant contribution to the character of the village. They are categorised as long-distance views which allow an appreciation of Fulbourn as a separate and individual village set in the countryside (Views A1- A4), views towards the village (Views B1 - B4) and outward views from the village (Views C1 - C8).
- 7.35 I looked at several of the views very carefully during the visits to the neighbourhood area. I looked in particular at the views identified from the built development within the Green Belt to the west of the village. In general terms I am satisfied that the views are appropriate and distinctive to the neighbourhood area. They help to describe and shape its rural identity. However, they are views which are already identified in the Village Design Guidance (Figure 17). Whilst there would be a degree of merit in the incorporation of the various views into a development plan document (such as a neighbourhood plan), the information contained in Evidence Paper 1 is limited to a description of the various views. In particular it includes neither photographs nor an assessment of the importance of the views within the wider landscape. In several cases, the identified views are of a general rather than a specific nature. As such they do not necessarily identify particular aspects of the relationship between the village and the surrounding countryside. In these circumstances I recommend the deletion of the fourth and fifth parts of the policy.

Village Design Guide

- 7.36 The sixth part of the policy comments that development proposals should comply with the Village Design Guide (VDG). The VDG is an excellent document. However, this part of the policy is out of context with the remainder of the policy. In any event the VDG is addressed more fully in other policies in the Plan. On this basis I recommend that the sixth part of the policy is deleted.

Supporting text in Section 6 of the Plan

- 7.37 The recommended modifications highlighted in relation to this policy will have consequential implications on the supporting text in Section 6. In these circumstances, I recommend that SCDC and FPC reconfigure Section 6 accordingly in the event that the recommended modifications are agreed.

Replace the first part of the policy with:

‘Development proposals should respect and where practicable enhance the setting and special character of Fulbourn as an individual village set in a rural landscape. Proposals should be located and designed to ensure that they do not have an unacceptable impact on the rural character and openness of the landscape setting’

Delete the second part of the policy.

Replace the third part of the policy with: ‘The Plan designates Important Countryside Frontage to the north of Barleyfields and Lanthorn Stile (ICF3) and at Gog’s View (ICF4) (as shown on Figure 9) to which Local Plan Policy NH/13 will apply’

Delete the fourth, fifth and sixth parts of the policy.

Renumber the parts of the policy accordingly.

Delete the IVG, the two ICFs and the Locally Important Views from Figures 8, 9 and 10.

SCDC and FPC reconfigure Section 6 of the Plan in the event that the recommended modifications to the policy are agreed.

FUL/02: Development outside the Development Framework

- 7.38 The Plan uses the development framework as identified in the Local Plan. It identifies a series of criteria with which any applications outside the development framework should comply.
- 7.39 The policy has generated a series of related comments. EDFB and Hill Residential suggest that Policy FUL/02 is deleted because it repeats

development plan policies and national and local guidance on development outside village boundaries and design matters. SCDC raise a series of detailed issues and a general point about the way in which the first part of the policy relates to Policy S/7 of the Local Plan.

- 7.40 I have considered the policy and the comments very carefully. On the one hand, the approach taken has been designed to be complementary to the approach taken in Policy S/7 of the Local Plan. However, on the other hand, its opening element is less restrictive than the second part of Policy S/7 as it simply requires that development proposals do not compromise the special character and rural setting of Fulbourn and its visual and physical separation from Cambridge or other nearby settlements. In contrast the Local Plan policy only supports development in the countryside which complies with national policy. On this basis I recommend that the first part of the policy is deleted.
- 7.41 I also recommend that the opening element of the second part of the policy is modified so that its contents will then provide a local supplement to the strategic policy in the Local Plan. In addition, I recommend detailed modifications to the wording of the criteria to address the points made by SCDC. This approach will ensure that the policy has the clarity required by the NPPF and can be applied through the development management process.
- 7.42 I also recommend that the supporting text is expanded to explain the relationship and overlaps between the Local Plan policy and this policy.

Delete the first part of the policy.

Replace the opening element of the second part of the policy with: ‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals outside the Development Framework should demonstrate that:’

In the criteria in the second part of the policy:

Replace c) with: ‘Appropriate levels of street lighting are used’

Replace d) with: ‘The design of the proposal is sensitive to its landscape setting and, where necessary, tree planting and buffer planting and soft outer edges are provided’

At the end of paragraph 6.6 add: ‘Policy FUL/07 has been designed to be complementary to Policy S/7: Development Frameworks of the Local Plan. In particular it sets out locally-distinctive criteria to the more general, district wide approach taken in the second part of the Local Plan policy’

FUL/03: Creating a Connected Green Infrastructure Network

- 7.43 The policy follows on from extensive supporting text which sets out the community's ambition to safeguard the Green Infrastructure (GI) network and to ensure that new development should sustain the existing GI and where possible extend the network. The policy has three related elements as follows:
- where possible development proposals should contribute towards an extended GI network;
 - new development should not prejudice opportunities for the creation of an integrated GI network in identified locations; and
 - the GI network will be subject to management and maintenance plans and secured through appropriate legal agreements.
- 7.44 The policy sets out a very ambitious agenda to create a connected GI network in the parish and to ensure that new development does not prejudice its implementation and, where practicable, contributes to its delivery. In this context the policy reads as a hybrid approach which is part a land use policy and part a community aspiration. As such, both SCDC and the EDFB raise a series of issues with the approach taken and the extent to which it could be delivered through a land use policy.
- 7.45 FPC's response to the clarification note acknowledges the hybrid nature of the policy in commenting that:
- 'The interconnectedness of the village and countryside is very important for its character. Even more now that there is a greater recognition within the community of the importance of biodiversity and therefore enriching the ecology partially lost to intensive agriculture in recent decades. The identification, protection and integration of the green spaces within the village with the external wildlife corridors is therefore considered an essential factor in the current and future environmental development of Fulbourn. Many of the component parts already exist and there is some 'green connectivity' around parts of the area. It is however a fragile concept project that requires commitment and safeguarding into the future.'
- It also responded by suggesting an addition to the Community Aspirations section of the Plan.
- 7.46 I have considered all these matters very carefully. On the balance of the evidence, I recommend that the policy is replaced by one which comments more generally on the opportunities for new development to be designed in a way which would consolidate and extend the existing green infrastructure in the parish. As submitted, the policy requires developers to make unspecified contributions to an ambitious GI Network where a delivery plan is not in place and agreement has not been secured with the relevant landowners.

7.47 I also recommend that the broader ambitions of the policy are included in an additional Community Aspiration. Its details largely follow the suggested wording offered by FPC in its response to the clarification note.

Replace the policy with:

‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should consolidate and extend existing Green Infrastructure in the immediate locality. Wherever practicable, development proposals should incorporate the following elements of green infrastructure:

- **Existing accessible open space, woodlands, designated green spaces and wildlife sites;**
- **Natural greenspace;**
- **New green spaces and habitats to promote a net gain in biodiversity, particularly when forming a link between existing biodiversity rich sites;**
- **Walking and cycling access to the countryside including a range of permissive countryside routes;**
- **Areas of open space contributing to Locally Important Views.**

Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on existing Green Infrastructure will not be supported’

Delete Figures 11 and 12 and the relevant designations from Figure 8.

Include a further Community Aspiration after Policy FUL/03 to read:

‘11 – Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Network

The community values the features of Fulbourn that result from its rural setting and is committed to the enhancement of the natural environment both around and within the village. A high biodiversity network of green infrastructure that links the village to its surroundings is an ambition that will increase the quality of our natural greenspace and provide improved access to the countryside. There is an aspiration that future developments will also contribute to this ambition (Policy FUL/03).

The natural environment within and surrounding Fulbourn would be enhanced by the protection and enhancement of the green corridors that enable the flourishing of flora and fauna across the area. This would potentially connect the Gog Magog Hills, Roman Road, Fleam Dyke, the Fulbourn Nature Reserve and other important biodiversity sites with the green spaces within the village.

The extended Green Infrastructure Network will increase the area of accessible natural greenspace and provide improved access to the countryside as they frequently correspond with existing bridleways, footpaths and permissive paths.

The protection of these wildlife corridors will contribute to the important views that surround Fulbourn.’

FUL/04: Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

7.48 This policy seeks to ensure that new development incorporates proportionate measures to protect and enhance natural features. It identifies a series of detailed matters which should be considered as part of this process including:

- the requirements for new development;
- the identification of a series of landscape measures;
- specific proposals for developments of 10 or more homes; and
- management and maintenance agreements

Both the policy and my recommended modifications overlap with the assessment of Policy FUL/03 earlier in this report.

7.49 Hill Residential comment that the policy is largely unnecessary as it repeats existing policies in the Local Plan. Whilst there is a healthy degree of overlap, I am satisfied that the submitted policy provides locally-distinctive information to supplement the existing development plan. In particular, it provides information and analysis which refers to its particular natural environment.

7.50 SCDC makes several helpful and detailed comments about the policy. I have taken account both of those comments and FPC’s responses to them in the clarification note. In general terms, I recommend that the policy is simplified so that it provides guidance to developers on the way in which their proposals should protect and enhance the environment. I recommend the deletion of the third and the fourth parts of the policy. The third part (on larger scale developments) adds little value either to the existing policies in the development plan or to the first and second parts of the submitted policy. The fourth part of the policy (on maintenance and management of green infrastructure) is more of a process issue rather than a policy.

7.51 I also recommend the insertion of additional supporting text into the Plan to explain the purpose of the policy and its relationship to the very distinctive local environment in the parish. It largely follows the format suggested by FPC in its response to SCDC’s comments on the policy.

Replace the opening element of the first part of the policy with:

‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should incorporate measures to protect and where practicable enhance existing natural features and demonstrate:’

Replace the opening element of the second part of the policy with:

‘Where appropriate, development proposals should seek to incorporate the following measures to ensure that their design and layout will respect and enhance the village landscape’

Delete the third and fourth parts of the policy.

Insert the following additional supporting text at the end of paragraph 7.10:

‘As a fen edge village, Fulbourn has many deep ditches and watercourses. Some are fed by springs, others by water runoff from adjacent fields, or, as in Teversham Road, fed by pumped groundwater in an effort to reduce the water table to prevent flooding in built-up areas at this low point in the village. Some are mainly dry, but all provide capacity in extreme weather events to accommodate the resulting high volume of water. The watercourses that do not dry potentially provide habitat for flora and fauna - water voles and little egrets have been recorded - contributing to the biodiversity of the area. Local Plan Policy CC/8 Sustainable Drainage Systems requires that SuDS are an integral part of all new developments. In Fulbourn it is particularly important that any surface water drainage scheme works with the existing water infrastructure and does not compromise its ability to prevent flooding, prevent pollution, and encourage wildlife.’

FUL/05: Local Green Space and Protected Village Amenity Areas

- 7.52 This policy has two related purposes. The first proposes the designation of four local green spaces (LGSs). The second proposes the designation of a series of Protected Village Amenity Areas (PVAAs). I address these matters in turn below.

LGSs

- 7.53 This policy proposes the designation of a series of local green spaces (LGSs). They are shown on Figures 13 and 14. The proposed LGSs reflect the character and the nature of the village. The proposed LGSs are as follows:
- Pound Green
 - Victoria Hospital Parkland
 - Fulbourn Hospital Parkland
 - Fulbourn Hospital Old Cemetery.
- 7.54 The hearing considered the extent to which the three proposed LGSs in the western part of the parish meet the basic conditions.
- 7.55 The details of the various LGS are set out in Evidence Paper 3.

- 7.56 I looked carefully at the proposed LGSs when I visited the neighbourhood area.
- 7.57 On the basis of all the information available to me, including my own observations, I am satisfied that the proposed Pound Green LGS comfortably complies with the three tests in paragraph 102 of the NPPF and therefore meet the basic conditions. It is precisely the type of green space which the authors of the NPPF would have had in mind in preparing national policy.
- 7.58 In addition, I am satisfied that its proposed designation would accord with the more general elements of paragraph 101 of the NPPF. Firstly, I am satisfied that its designation is consistent with the local planning of sustainable development. It does not otherwise prevent sustainable development coming forward in the neighbourhood area and no such development has been promoted or suggested. Secondly, I am satisfied that it is capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period. Indeed, it is an established element of the local environment and has existed in its current format for many years. In addition, no evidence was brought forward during the examination that would suggest that the proposed LGS would not endure beyond the end of the Plan period.
- 7.59 The hearing considered the extent to which the three proposed LGSs in the western part of the parish meet the basic conditions. The discussions focused on the extent to which the three parcels of land met the three criteria in the paragraph 102 of the NPPF and the extent to which their proposed designation as LGSs added any value to the protection already provided by their locations in the Green Belt.
- 7.60 At the hearing FPC set out its case for the designation of the three LGSs and consolidated the approach already taken in the Evidence Paper. It commented that the proposed LGSs have a very significant value in the local landscape and that their designation would be consistent with sustainable development. In particular it commented that the Plan did not attempt to interfere with the existing uses of the wider locations in which they are found.
- 7.61 I address the three proposed LGS in turn below:
- Fulbourn Hospital Parkland
- 7.62 As the Plan describes this area of open parkland is located in the south western quadrant of the overall Fulbourn Hospital/Capital Park site to the west of the main building of Victoria House. It is bounded on the western side by the access road to the current Fulbourn Hospital low-rise buildings and to the east by the range of Victorian buildings extending from Victoria house. The southern edge is Cambridge Road and the northern limit is the start of the buildings of Fulbourn Hospital itself. It is 4.7 ha in size.

- 7.63 There was general consensus at the hearing that the proposed LGS met the three criteria in paragraph 102 of the NPPF.
- 7.64 Planning Practice Guidance (ID:37-010-20140306) comments that if land is already protected by Green Belt policy, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space. One potential benefit in areas where protection from development is the norm (such as villages included in the green belt) but where there could be exceptions is that the Local Green Space designation could help to identify areas that are of particular importance to the local community. This matter was explored at the hearing. The Trust indicated that whilst its aspirations were very similar to those of FPC for the use of the site, it was looking for a degree of flexibility to deliver high-quality health services to people in the area served by the Trust. I saw first-hand the ongoing development of the new Resource Centre which had been approved by SCDC taking account of the very special circumstances raised by that application.
- 7.65 I have considered this matter very carefully. I have also considered that the proposed LGS lies within a conservation area and the tests in these circumstances required by a parallel element of Planning Practice Guidance (ID:37-011-20140306). On the balance of the evidence, I am not satisfied that the designation of the parcel of land as LGS brings any additional local benefit beyond its existing location within the Green Belt. In addition, I saw nothing within the site which was inherently of such overwhelming importance to the local community to justify its designation as LGS. As such I recommend that it is deleted from the Plan.

Fulbourn Hospital Old Cemetery

- 7.66 As the Plan describes, the proposed LGS is an area of open parkland located in the north-west corner of the overall Fulbourn Hospital/Capital Park site between the Denbigh Ward of the hospital to the south and the railway to the north. The land is predominantly flat and is covered in a range of vegetation with the majority under mown grassland. There are however clumps of trees with associated understorey of bushes and shrubs. Several specimen trees, of both indigenous and ornamental species are distributed across the area. The area includes what was once the hospital cemetery though the associated chapel no longer exists; two graves are marked, one being a Commonwealth burial of the First World War. Whilst the area is currently marked as private and signs discourage public ingress, the parkland is easily accessible to local people and is a pleasant walking location. The site is 1.1 ha in size.

- 7.67 There was general consensus at the hearing that the proposed LGS met the three criteria in paragraph 102 of the NPPF.
- 7.68 On the Green Belt issue, the Trust indicated that whilst it had no proposals for built development on the site it did not consider that its designation as LGS would add any value to the existing protection afforded by virtue of its location in the Green Belt.
- 7.69 I have considered this matter very carefully. I have also considered that the proposed LGS lies within a conservation area and the tests in these circumstances required by a parallel element of Planning Practice Guidance (37-011-20140306). On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the designation of the parcel of land as LGS would bring an additional local benefit beyond its existing location within the Green Belt. Its former use as a cemetery has a clear community significance. In addition, the footpath links through the site (connecting the Hospital, Tesco and Fulbourn Drift) are important elements of the local landscape and its wider accessibility.

Victoria Hospital Parkland

- 7.70 Agents acting for the owners of this site were invited to the hearing and decided not to attend. As such I have considered the proposed designation of the site as LGS mainly based on the information in the Plan and the written submissions from Janus Henderson Property UK PAIF. However, I raised a series of factual questions with FPC at the hearing.
- 7.71 As the Plan describes, the proposed LGS is an area of open parkland located to the front of Victoria House and which extends down the hill to Cambridge Road. The boundary to the east is the hedgerow of the two fields that separate the Fulbourn Hospital site from the main part of Fulbourn village and to the west it extends to the main hospital access road as marked by the gatehouse building. The disused Social Club that is now designated for redevelopment as a care home is excluded as are two residential buildings nearby. The hedged quadrangle that used to contain the bowling green and is now used for external seating is included. The area is covered in a range of vegetation with the majority under mown grassland. There are however clumps of trees with associated understorey of bushes and shrubs. Several specimen trees, of both indigenous and ornamental species are distributed across the area. On the southern boundary a mixed evergreen/deciduous hedge separates Cambridge Road from the parkland and to the east a substantial hedge and woodland margin delineates the area from the adjacent agricultural fields. It is 4.4 ha in size.

7.72 On the Green Belt issue, FPC highlighted the parkland setting of the proposed LGS and the relatively easy access which was used by workers on the adjacent employment sites and by local residents.

7.73 In its representation to the Plan Janus Henderson Property UK PAIF comment as follows:

- ...the grounds to the south of the former Fulbourn Hospital were not historically in use as an open parkland setting to the building. In fact, they were largely in agricultural use for crops. The aerial at Figure 4 (dating to the early 20th century) shows the petal-shaped layout also illustrated on historic maps of the period. The area was used for planting different crops, with grassland immediately in front of the hospital. (4.8).
- More recently, the reduced area of ‘garden’ associated with the hospital has been constrained into defined, formal areas contained within hedge and tree planting – in areas close to the hospital buildings themselves (4.10).
- It is evident therefore that the whole area proposed for allocation as “green space” was not historically usable garden or parkland space associated with the hospital building. A much smaller element of the proposed parcel did act in that specific role, but the vast majority provided a functional, agricultural purpose and was used for growing crops, vegetables and fruit. (4.11).
- The Site not publicly accessible nor the subject of permissive access rights. It also does not provide connection between Fulbourn and Cambridge, a public bridleway is located to the north of Capital Park (4.17)

7.74 I have considered this matter very carefully. I have also considered that the proposed LGS lies within a conservation area and the tests in these circumstances required by a parallel element of Planning Practice Guidance (37-011-20140306). On the balance of the evidence, I am not satisfied that the designation of the parcel of land as LGS brings any additional local benefit beyond its existing location within the Green Belt. In addition, I saw nothing within the site which was inherently of overwhelming importance to justify the additional local benefit of its designation as LGS. As such I recommend its deletion from the Plan.

The policy itself

- 7.75 Given the number and diversity of proposed LGSs I can understand the circumstances which have caused the Parish Council to design the policy both in general terms, and its reference to community engagement in particular. Nevertheless, I recommend a modification so that the policy takes the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. The recommended modification also takes account of the recent case in the Court of Appeal on the designation of local green spaces and the policy relationship with areas designated as Green Belts (2020 EWCA Civ 1259).
- 7.76 In the event that development proposals affecting designated LGSs come forward within the Plan period, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by SCDC. In particular SCDC will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the ‘very special circumstances’ required by the policy. I recommend that the supporting text clarifies this matter.

Protected Village Amenity Areas

- 7.77 The Plan also proposes the designation of a series of Protected Village Amenity Areas (PVAAs). As the Plan describes they are ‘small green spaces within the village neighbourhoods and at the entrances to them. These are important features that provide a contrast to the built form and give a sense of being in a village rather than an urban or suburban area. They make a significant contribution to village character and amenity with habitat opportunities for wildlife’. The details of the proposed PVAAs are set out in Evidence Paper 4.
- 7.78 In policy terms they are important amenity areas which have a particular value but which are not considered to meet the exacting standards to be designated as LGSs.
- 7.79 I looked at the various PVAAs carefully during the visit. Based on my observations and the details in Evidence Paper 4, I am satisfied that the approach taken meets the basic conditions in general terms. However, I recommend modifications to the wording of the policy on this issue. In combination they would bring clarity to the development management process and introduce a sharper policy distinction between LGSs and PVAAs.

Replace the first part of the policy with:

‘The following sites (as shown on Figures 8, 13 and 14) are designated as a Local Green Spaces:

a) Pounds Green; and

b) Fulbourn Hospital Cemetery

Development proposals within the designated local green spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.'

Replace the second part of the policy with:

'The following sites are designated as Protected Village Amenity Areas in accordance with Local Plan Policy NH/11 (identified in Fig. 13). Development proposals within or adjacent to the designated PVAAs will have an adverse impact on the character, amenity, tranquillity or function of the Area concerned will not be supported.'

Delete any reference to the deleted proposed LGSs in paragraph 8.3

Remove the deleted LGSs from Figures 8 and 14.

At the end of paragraph 8.3 add: 'Policy FUL/05 follows the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. In the event that development proposals come forward on the local green spaces within the Plan period, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the District Council. In particular it will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the 'very special circumstances' required by the policy'

FUL/06: Protecting and Enhancing Village Character

- 7.80 Policies FUL/06 to FUL/09 set out the Plan's approach to village character. The wider approach is heavily underpinned by the Fulbourn Village Design Guide 2020 (VDG).
- 7.81 In the round, the policies are an excellent local response to Section 12 of the NPPF which sets out the government's ambitions for high quality and distinctive design.
- 7.82 Policy FUL/06 has a sharp focus on protecting village character and in ensuring that new development is creatively and positively designed.
- 7.83 I recommend a series of modifications to ensure that the policy has the clarity required by the NPPF in general, and provides appropriate guidance for SCDC in its determination of planning applications. I also recommend that the second part of the policy is applied on a proportionate basis. As submitted, it has a very general effect which may not directly relate to the type of minor and domestic planning applications which will continue to form the majority of the planning applications in the parish.
- 7.84 Finally, I recommend that the fourth part of the policy is replaced with one which has regard to the contents of paragraph 202 of the NPPF (on non-

designated heritage assets). As submitted the policy is well-intentioned but does not have regard to national policy.

In the first part of the policy:

- **replace ‘will be required to’ with ‘should’**
- **add ‘documents’ after ‘these’**

In the second part of the policy:

- **insert ‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location’ at the beginning**
- **replace ‘by demonstrating’ with ‘and propose’**

In the third part of the policy:

- **replace ‘A creative and contemporary design response will be encouraged taking into account’ with ‘New developments which incorporate creative and contemporary design will be supported which take account of’**

Replace the fourth part of the policy with:

‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset as identified in the Fulbourn Conservation Area Appraisal (or any documents which update or supersede that Appraisal) should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.’

FUL/07: Building and Landscape Design

- 7.85 This policy follows on from Policy FUL/06. In this case, its focus is on identifying design criteria for new development. It does so under four headings – height, density, built form and parking. It addresses a range of matters in a comprehensive fashion.
- 7.86 I recommend a series of detailed modifications to the policy. They are principally designed to ensure that it will have the necessary clarity to be applied by SCDC through the development management process. In particular they address the following matters:
- the potential for the VDG to be refreshed or updated in the Plan period;
 - a degree of flexibility on development density to ensure that the approach taken is in general conformity with the approach taken in the Local Plan;

- clarifying the references to building materials in part C of the policy; and
- correcting policy numbering issues.

7.87 There is an inevitable overlap between the wording of the policy and that of the VDG. On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that this approach is appropriate. It helps to ensure that the policy is relatively self-contained and does not require the casual reader to refer to the VDG on an extensive basis.

7.88 I also recommend modifications to ensure that the policy can be applied on a proportionate basis. On the one hand, the policy as submitted would apply on a universal basis. On the other hand, many of its criteria may not naturally apply to the minor and domestic applications which will continue to make up the majority of the proposals which will arise in the Plan period.

7.89 Finally I recommend the deletion of the final criterion of the fourth part of the policy. It is not necessary for the Plan to comment that the development plan needs to be read as a whole.

Replace part 1 of the policy with:

‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals, including infill, extensions and housing alterations, should be of a high design quality and respond positively the design principles and guidance set out in the Village Design Guide (2020).’

In Part 2 of the policy (Height):

Replace ‘may be permitted in exceptional circumstances’ with ‘will be supported’

Replace ‘The height of a 2.5-storey building should be similar to that of a typical 2-storey building with an upper floor plan significantly smaller than the floors below and a window or dormer fully contained within the roof area.’ with ‘Any 2.5-storey buildings should include an upper floor plan significantly smaller than the floors below and with a window or dormer fully contained within the roof area.’

Replace Part 2 of the policy (Density) with ‘Net density (as defined in the Local Plan) should not exceed 30 dwellings per hectare in any particular part of the development unless it can be demonstrated that the proposed higher density would be appropriate through a design-led approach which responds positively the character of the locality and are in accordance with other policies in this Plan.’

In Part 2 of the policy (Built Form):

Insert a full stop after ‘context’

Replace ‘and avoids the use of different materials, contrasting colours and styles that have no architectural links with the village’ with ‘Individual buildings should use a simple palette of vernacular materials. The use of different materials, contrasting colours and styles that have no architectural links with the village should be avoided.’

Replace the numbering to the second paragraph (2 and 3 and 4) with 3-4-5

In Part 3 of the policy replace the opening component of the submitted policy with: ‘Proposed alterations or extensions to existing dwellings should comply with the following design criteria:’

In Part 4 of the policy delete criterion d)

FUL/08: Village Street and Lane Layout

- 7.90 This policy continues the theme set out in the previous two policies. In this case, its focus is on village street and lane layout. In particular it seeks to ensure that the existing streets and lanes should retain their positive character as defined by green aspect, scale, width and alignment.
- 7.91 The policy takes a positive and sensitive approach to this important matter. It continues the excellent approach adopted in this section of the Plan. I recommend a series of detailed modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to assist in the effective implementation of the development management process. They refine the effectiveness of the policy rather than alter its efficiency and approach.

Replace the first part of the policy with: ‘Development proposals should respond positively to the character of the existing streets and lanes in general, and their green aspect, scale, width and alignment in particular.’

In the initial element of the second part of the policy replace ‘will be required to’ with ‘should’

In criterion d delete ‘signage’

Replace criterion e with: ‘Make use of traditional kerbstones and follow the kerb free character of many village streets and lanes.’

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

FUL/09: Larger Residential Development (10 or more units)

- 7.92 This policy sets out the Plan’s approach to large scale residential development. It comments that any such developments should consider local

housing needs and the promotion of well-integrated and inclusive communities. It identifies a series of issues which should be addressed, and to contribute towards sustainable development.

- 7.93 I recommend detailed modifications to the first and second parts of the policy to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to ensure that it can be applied successfully through the development management process.
- 7.94 I recommend the deletion of the third and the fourth parts of the policy. The third part largely repeats information which is already captured in Policy H/9 of the Local Plan. The fourth part of the policy reads as an explanation of the implementation of the policy rather than as a policy in its own right. Nevertheless, I recommend that the fourth part of the policy is relocated into the supporting text. It will help to provide a context to developers about the way in which FPC would expect any required developer contributions to be directed.

Replace the first part of the policy with:

‘Larger housing developments should address local housing needs and promote well-integrated and inclusive communities through:

- **delivering an appropriate housing mix taking into account local needs and circumstances, in accordance with Local Plan Policy H/9; and**
- **delivering at least 40% affordable houses in accordance with Local Plan Policy H/10 with a mix of affordable housing tenures determined by local circumstances at the time of granting planning permission’**

Replace the second part of the policy with:

‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location larger housing development should also make a demonstrable contribution to sustainable development through:

- **Providing a Building for a Healthy Life assessment or other appraisal system**
- **The incorporation of appropriate energy generation technology (solar PV, solar thermal, heat pumps, etc).**
- **The inclusion of wildlife friendly gardens and the provision of guidance on promoting biodiversity to new residents.**
- **Ensuring that their design and layout assists in the delivery of sustainable transport modes’**

Delete the third and fourth parts of the policy.

Renumber the parts of the policy accordingly.

At the end of paragraph 10.17 add: 'In the event that a developer is required to contribute to the provision of social and community infrastructure to meet the needs arising from residential development, these contributions will be directed in preference towards increasing and strengthening the existing facilities and amenities which serve the village as a whole and to support community integration. The provision of new facilities to serve only new development will actively be discouraged.'

FUL/10: Rural Exception Sites

- 7.95 This policy comments about the potential for rural exception sites outside the development framework. It seeks to complement existing development plan policy by adding local criteria.
- 7.96 I have taken account of the representation made by SCDC and FPC's response to the clarification note. That response comments:
- 'There has been a lot of pressure for exception sites in the recent past, and the representations of developers and landowners to (the Plan) indicates that this will not become any less in the future. It is very important that rural exception sites, should they come forward, have real benefit for the community (in terms of access and affordability to housing) and respect the landscape setting, Important Countryside Frontages, Important Visual Gap, views, green infrastructure, etc.'
- 7.97 Taking account of all the available evidence, I am not satisfied that the policy adds any distinctive value to the approach on this matter beyond that provided by other policies in the development plan. National policy is clear that there is no need for a neighbourhood plan to repeat or to restate existing policies. Equally the Plan does not provide any direct evidence about the extent to which those existing policies are failing in their purposes or need consolidation or refinement. In addition, there is no supporting text on this matter. As such I recommend that the policy is deleted.

Delete the policy

FUL/11: Housing Design Quality

- 7.98 This policy continues the approach towards housing development. It indicates that proposals for new housing development should comply with the guidance in the VDG both in general and in relation to specific criteria.
- 7.99 SCDC raise some very specific comments on the policy. Hill Residential comment that the policy largely repeats the approach taken in Policies HQ/1 and CC/3 of the adopted Local Plan.

7.100 I have considered these matters very carefully. On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the policy is distinctive to the parish and adds value to the relevant policies in the Local Plan. Nevertheless, I recommend that the opening element of the policy is modified so that it more closely relates to the development management process. I also recommend that criterion g (on car parking) is simplified so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF.

Replace the opening element of the policy with: ‘Proposals for housing development should respond positively to the Fulbourn Village Design Guide (2020) or any document which replaces that Guide and demonstrate the way in which they comply with the following criteria’

Replace criterion g with: ‘Provides well-designed and sensitively located car and cycle parking.’

FUL/12: Employment Development

7.101 This policy sets out the Plan’s approach to employment development. It does so both for sites within the development framework (Part 1) and outside (Part 2). The two parts of the policy seek to add value to Policies E/12 and E/13 of the Local Plan.

7.102 SCDC raise several queries about the extent to which the detailed wording in the policy is appropriate and could be properly implemented through the development management process. In its response to the clarification note, FPC commented that:

‘Even a small increase in traffic, which would not normally cause concern in an urban area, can be very daunting in the narrow lanes of Fulbourn. Experience has shown that standard assessment and mitigation measures are inadequate to recognise the impact of even a handful of HGVs turning into the village lanes. The policy aims to discourage new employment uses that rely on heavy vehicles moving through the village and place more scrutiny on how new businesses plan their site’s car parks and access and impact on the village.’

7.103 I can understand the concerns expressed by FPC about the level of traffic in the village and its environmental impacts. Nevertheless, I did not see any significant concentrations of traffic to justify such a potentially restrictive policy. Similarly, there is no direct evidence to this effect. In addition, several of the elements of the policy are either unclear (‘adequate measures will be implemented to mitigate any adverse impacts associated with vans and heavy vehicles’) or unenforceable (‘no increase in HGV movements throughout the village’).

7.104 In addition I am not satisfied that the policy adds any distinctive value beyond Policies E/12 and E/13 of the Local Plan.

7.105 In all the circumstances I recommend that the policy is deleted from the Plan.

Delete the policy

FUL/13: Large Employment Sites

7.106 This policy continues the approach taken in Policy FUL/12. It comments specifically about large employment sites. The first part comments specifically about Capital Park and the Peterhouse Technology Park Extension site. The second part comments about the need for sustainable travel modes to be associated with such developments.

7.107 The EDFB comments that the policy adds no distinctive local value to Policies E/13 (New employment development) and TI/2 (Sustainable Travel) of the Local Plan.

7.108 The policy also requires that any large employment sites should comply with the VDG. On the one hand this approach is entirely appropriate within the existing context that the VDG has been adopted by SCDC as a SPD in January 2020. On the other hand, the policy does no more than signpost the reader of the policy to the VDG. In addition, whilst the VDG is an excellent and very recent document it does not offer any particular guidance on the development of large employment sites.

7.109 Taking account of all the relevant information I recommend that the policy is deleted. As submitted, it offers no added value to Policies E/13 and TI/2 of the Local Plan. I am not satisfied that the policy has a clear purpose. In addition, it simply serves to create an unnecessary duplication of existing policies. Plainly the recommended deletion of Policy FUL/13 of the submitted Plan will not detract from the applicability of the relevant Local Plan policies.

Delete the policy

FUL/14: Community Facilities

7.110 This policy comments about community facilities in the parish. It has three related parts as follows:

- the loss of community facilities will be resisted subject to certain exceptions;
- the field adjacent to the Recreation Ground is designated for the provision of additional outdoor pitches; and
- commentary on the way in which developer contributions towards community facilities will be applied.

- 7.111 The proposed designation of the field to the east of the existing recreation ground for the provision of additional outdoor pitches was considered at the hearing. FPC set out its case for the expansion of the recreation ground. Hill Residential set out its wider ambitions to promote residential development in this part of the parish through the emerging Local Plan. On the one hand, it commented about its willingness for an appropriate amount of recreational development to accompany that proposed residential development. On the other hand, it restated its specific objections to the designation of the land for recreational purposes in isolation in the neighbourhood plan.
- 7.112 It was common ground at the hearing that strategic growth in the wider District would be addressed in the emerging Local Plan. This is particularly important given the scale and significance of the Green Belt in the parish.
- 7.113 On the balance of the evidence, I am not satisfied that the approach taken in the submitted Plan on the extension to the recreation ground meets the basic conditions. It has neither taken account of viability issues nor has it achieved the support of the land owner. In this context the policy is not deliverable as anticipated in the submitted Plan.
- 7.114 I recommend that both the policy and the relevant sections of the supporting text are modified to provide a broader context to this matter and to become a focus for future discussions locally. The recommended modifications rely heavily on the commentary provided by SCDC, FPC and Hill Residential at my request after the hearing. They acknowledge the overlap of the policy with Policy SC/3 of the Local Plan. In addition, they provide a broader context on the use of developer contributions for the consolidation of existing community and recreational facilities in the parish rather than for the development of new facilities.

Replace the policy with:

‘In accordance with Local Plan Policy SC/3, proposals that result in the loss of community facilities will not be supported unless there is clear evidence that the asset is no longer required, or an alternative, suitable and enhanced facility is provided at an accessible location within the village and with the support of the local community.

Where the development of large sites is required to make a contribution towards community facilities, the expansion and strengthening of the existing facilities will be the preferred option in accordance with Policy FUL/09.’

Replace paragraphs 12.5 and 12.6 with:

‘The preparation of the Plan has identified that the Fulbourn Recreation Ground is insufficient for future needs. In particular:

- The Greater Cambridge Area Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2031 (June 2016) identified that there is a current shortfall of one cricket pitch.
- Both cricket and football take place on the same area and this creates conflicts at the start and end of the summer period, when football and cricket seasons overlap.
- The National Playing Fields Association standards require a minimum 1.6 hectares per 1,000 population for outdoor sport. The current Recreation Ground is 5.5 hectares and, based on a current estimated parish population of 4,890 (Office for National Statistics mid-2020 estimates) there is currently a deficit of 2.3 hectares, which would increase to a deficit of 4.1 hectares should the population increase to 6,000 with the current planned developments.

An extension to the Recreation Ground would enable the most efficient management of facilities in the village. It would ensure that all the pitches are in one place. Such an extension could, realistically, only take place to the south-east of the existing site. An allocation for an extension to the recreation ground is not included in this Neighbourhood Plan. However, opportunities for additional sports pitches in this location will be explored by the Parish Council in the Plan period. In this context the NPPF and Policies S/7 and NH/10 of the Local Plan support the development for outdoor recreation uses outside of development frameworks and within the Green Belt, where specific criteria are met.'

Delete Figure 19 and the proposed extension to the recreation ground on Figure 8.

FUL/15: Healthcare Facilities

- 7.115 This policy comments on a series of healthcare facilities. It has a clear focus on safeguarding the existing Health Centre and securing its enhancement.
- 7.116 I recommend that the policy is replaced so that it is both clear and realistic in terms of its ambitions and has the clarity required by the NPPF. I recommend that the first part of the policy makes the distinction between general enhancements and those which may generate a multi-purpose healthcare facility. In relation to the second part, I recommend that the details about any alternative location are simplified. As submitted the policy is unnecessarily prescriptive.
- 7.117 The third part of the policy comments that there will be an expectation that new proposals will be developed in collaboration with the current GP practice and the community. This approach would be very appropriate. However, as the language suggests, it is an expectation rather than a land use planning policy. As such I recommend that it is deleted. However, it would complement

the existing supporting text on this matter and as such I recommend that it is repositioned so that it sits at the end of the bullet point at the end of paragraph 12.8.

Replace the policy with:

‘Proposals for the enhancement of the existing Health Centre in general, and to provide a new multi-purpose healthcare, social and life-style facility in particular will be supported.

Proposals for the redevelopment of the existing Health Centre for alternative uses will not be supported unless they include proposals for the relocation of the existing facilities in an accessible location within the village.’

At the end of the bullet point in paragraph 12.8 add: ‘The Parish Council expects that new proposals will be developed in collaboration with the current GP practice and the wider community.’

FUL/16: Sustainable Mobility

7.118 This policy sets out the Plan’s ambition that new development should include sustainable mobility. It takes a positive approach to this important matter.

7.119 I recommend a series of modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to the development management process. Its substance and ambitions remain unaffected. In particular, the recommended modifications will ensure that the different elements of the policy can be applied in a proportionate fashion. In the second part of the policy, I recommend that the reference to the work of Cambridge Sustainable Mobility is deleted. Whilst that organisation is undertaking excellent work, reference to a specific organisation is inappropriate in a planning policy. In the third part of the policy, I recommend the deletion of reference to other important destinations. The absence of any information about such destinations would make the policy difficult for SCDC to apply with any certainty.

Replace the opening element of the first part of the policy with: ‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals within the village should:’

Replace part 2 of the policy with: ‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should incorporate safety and sustainable mobility measures.’

Replace part 3 of the policy with: ‘Where it is practicable to do so, large developments should make provision for safe pedestrian and cycle connections to the village centre.’

Community Aspirations

- 7.120 The Plan includes a series of community actions. They are non-land use issues which have naturally arisen as the Plan has been developed. They are weaved into the Plan under its various subject headings
- 7.121 National planning guidance indicates that community actions should be set out in a separate part of the Plan so that they are distinguished from the land use policies. I have considered this matter very carefully. On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the approach taken is appropriate. I have reached this conclusion for two principal reasons. The first is that their inclusion within the main body of the Plan highlights their overlap with the relevant planning policies. In addition, this approach will assist in the way in which a casual observer would read and understand the Plan. The second is that the Aspirations are identified in a different colour to distinguish them from the land use policies.

Other Matters – General

- 7.122 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 as a result 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 as a result of the recommended modifications to the policies. It will be appropriate for SCDC and FPC 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.

Other Matters – Specific

- 7.123 SCDC has helpfully made a series of specific comments on the Plan. Within the context of paragraph 1.4 of this report I recommend the following modifications which are necessary to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions:

Conservation Area boundary changes – the Conservation Area Appraisal was approved in September 2021 whilst the Plan was being developed.

Show the revised boundaries on Figures 2 and 4

Figure 2 – there are some designations from the Local Plan which are inaccurately described

Revise the key to Figure 2 accordingly

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 2031. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community.
- 8.2 Following my independent examination of the Plan I have concluded that the Fulbourn 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, the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

Referendum Area

- 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 originally approved by South Cambridgeshire District Council on 13 August 2018.
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in an efficient manner. SCDC organised the hearing in a very effective yet relaxed fashion and the Fulbourn Centre was a perfect venue for the event.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
12 September 2022

Appendix A

Fulbourn Neighbourhood Development Plan

Arrangements for a hearing

Independent Examiner's Note

Context

The examination is now at an advanced stage. I have visited the neighbourhood area, read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. I have also prepared a clarification note for the Parish Council and read its responses to that note.

Hearing

In accordance with paragraph 9 (3) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, I have concluded that it is in order to ensure an adequate examination of the Plan it is necessary to hold a hearing.

The hearing details are as follows:

Date: 4 July 2022 10:30

Venue: Fulbourn Centre, Home End Fulbourn CB21 5BS.

I would like to meet with the participants at 10.00 on the day of the hearing at the venue. This brief meeting will discuss the format of the hearing (based on the following sections of this Note). This meeting will not discuss the substantive matters to be debated at the hearing itself.

The participants

In accordance with paragraph 9 (3) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Fulbourn Parish Council (the qualifying body) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (the local planning authority) will be entitled to make oral representations at the hearing.

In addition, the following organisations are invited to attend.

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (1);
- Ely Diocesan Board of Finance (2);
- Hill Residential (3);
- Countryside Properties (UK) Limited (4);
- Janus Henderson Property UK (5); and

- KG Moss Will Trust (6).

The issues

The hearing will consider the following issues:

Session 1

Policy FUL/1

Parish Council, District Council and participants 1,2,4,5 and 6

To what extent do the proposed Important Visual Gaps bring any added value beyond the application of Green Belt policies?

What is the intended purpose of the proposed Important Countryside Frontages?

In particular, would the Important Countryside Frontages bring any added value beyond the application of Green Belt policy?

Session 2

Policy FUL/05

Parish Council, District Council and participants 1, 5

Do proposed Local Green Spaces B (Victoria House Parkland), C (Fulbourn Hospital Parkland) and D (Fulbourn Hospital Old Cemetery) comply with the criteria in paragraph 102 of the NPPF?

Is their designation as Local Green Spaces consistent with the local planning of sustainable development?

Is their designation as Local Green Space capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period?

Would their designation as Local Green Spaces bring any added value beyond the application of Green Belt policy?

Session 3

Policy FUL/14

Parish Council, District Council and participant 3

Is the proposed allocation of land for recreational use adjacent to the Recreation Ground realistic and deliverable?

General Comments

The various parties should each be represented by no more than two persons at any of the sessions.

The public and other interested parties will be able to attend the hearing. However, there will be no opportunity for their direct participation.

The format of the hearing

The hearing will address the matters set out above. I will ask the various questions and lead any follow-up discussions. There will be no opportunity for any party to question the other parties. As the representations made by the parties invited to the hearing are clear and comprehensive, I am satisfied that additional hearing statements are not required.

A neighbourhood plan hearing is intended to achieve a balance between getting to the heart of identified issues and having a light-touch approach so that lay people can both understand and take an active part in its proceedings. The hearing will proceed on this basis.

The wider examination

I am satisfied that the remainder of the Plan can be examined by way of written representations.

Following the hearing, I will produce a report on the submitted Plan as quickly as possible. Its timing will relate to the nature of the outcomes of the hearing. There will be no separate report arising from the hearing. Its findings and conclusions will form part of the overall report.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
Fulbourn Neighbourhood Development Plan

25 April 2022