



Basic Conditions Statement

Reference: 0266-DAT

Submission Stage (Issue 1)

October 2024

This document has been produced by Chapman Planning (www.chapmanplanning.co.uk) on behalf of the Aston Abbotts Parish Council

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Background.....	4
3. Conformity with National Planning Policy	5
4. Contribution to Sustainable Development.....	7
5. General Conformity with Strategic Local Policy	9
6. Compatibility with EU Legislation.....	10
7. Conclusion	12

List of Figures

Figure 1- Map showing extent of Neighbourhood Planning Area	4
--	----------

List of Tables

Table 1 - NPPF Conformity.....	6
Table 2 - Sustainability Attributes	7
Table 3 - Conformity with VALP Policies	9
Table 4 - Human Rights.....	11

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement has been prepared by Aston Abbots Parish Council (AAPC) to accompany the Aston Abbots Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2039 (Submission Version October 2024) on submission to Buckinghamshire Council (BC) under regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended (“the Regulations”).
- 1.2. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the Parish, as designated by Aylesbury Vale District Council (now Buckinghamshire Council) on 8th July 2015. (Figure 1 below).
- 1.3. The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area and do not relate to any other designated Neighbourhood Area. The plan period is from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2039.
- 1.4. The Neighbourhood Plan does not contain policies relating to excluded development in accordance with the Regulations. The document also contains a number of non-statutory proposals that relate to Aspirations which do not form part of the examined neighbourhood plan but provides a ‘wish list’ that has emerged during consultation and that the Parish Council has considered during the preparation of the document.
- 1.5. The Statement addresses each of the ‘basic conditions’ required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 1.6. The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:
 - Having regard to National Policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan
 - The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
 - The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area)
 - The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations
 - Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the or neighbourhood plan.

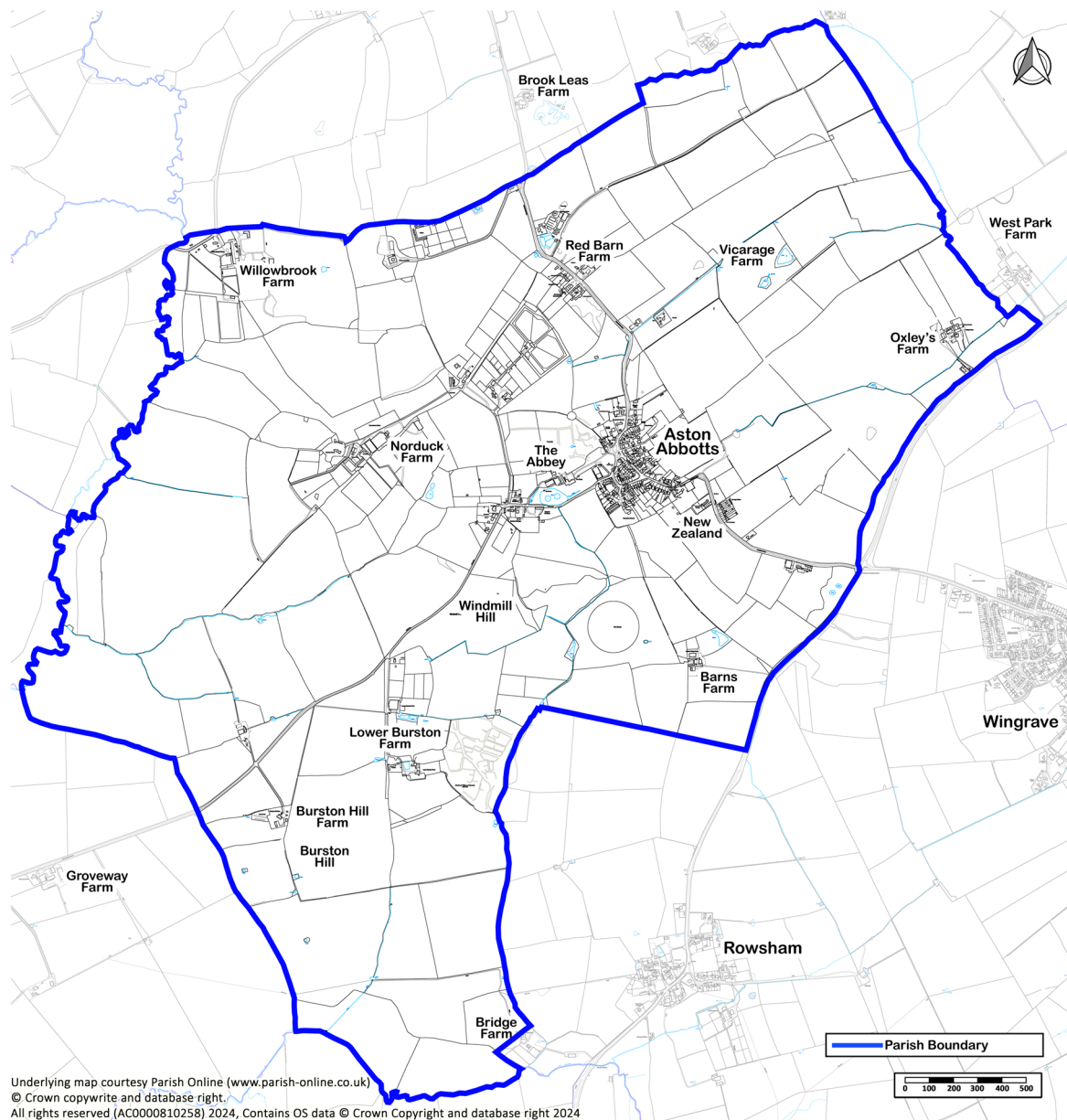


Figure 1 – Map showing extent of Neighbourhood Planning Area

2. Background

2.1. The plan preparation has been led by AAPC, through the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. It has comprised three main stages:

- Evidence gathering and community engagement which has been incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan,
- Formal consultation: the Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan March 2024 and accompanying background documents were published for more than 6 weeks in accordance with regulation 14 of the Regulations,
- Submission Neighbourhood Plan (October 2024) which takes into account representations received on the earlier version and has been modified for submission to BC; it is accompanied by the Basic Conditions Statement, the Design Code and the Consultation Statement report, plus other background evidence reports.

2.2. AAPC has consulted the local community extensively throughout the process.

- 2.3. The AAPC website (astonabbotts-pc.gov.uk) has been used to disseminate information and publicise consultations. A number of methods to raise awareness have been used, including flyers, email notices, Facebook and notices on the Parish Council noticeboards.
- 2.4. The Draft Neighbourhood Plan was formally consulted upon from 1st July 2024 to the 19th August 2024. Full details are set out in the Consultation Statement.
- 2.5. It has also worked with officers of BC since the start of the project.
- 2.6. The Plan has not duplicated Local Plan policies which will be used in determining planning applications. This has allowed the Neighbourhood Plan to focus on a smaller number of locally relevant and important policies.

3. Conformity with National Planning Policy

- 3.1. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) and the revised Framework of December 2023 and is mindful of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans.
- 3.2. There are several NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded:
- 3.3. In relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development:
 - Paragraph 12: the development plan is the starting point for decision making and this includes any neighbourhood plan.
 - Paragraph 13: neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.
 - Paragraph 14: reminds us of the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to be significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits provided, four criteria apply.
- 3.4. The Parish Council believes that the Neighbourhood Plan is planning positively for future development in the parishes and supports the delivery of the strategic policies of the adopted Development Plans as advised in the above paragraphs of the NPPF.
- 3.5. Paragraphs 18 and 21 advise that policies to address non-strategic matters and detailed matters should be included within neighbourhood plans, and the Neighbourhood Plan contains such policies.
- 3.6. Advice on non-strategic policies and the role of neighbourhood plans is identified in paragraphs 29 and 30. The Neighbourhood Plan establishes a shared vision for the area and its policies shape, direct and help deliver sustainable development. It has sought to translate objectives into a number of meaningful planning policies to complement other development plan policies for managing development.
- 3.7. The Neighbourhood Plan strikes a positive balance between the policy constraints of the Parish and the need to support the general requirements of the development plan as set out in section 5 below.
- 3.8. The Neighbourhood Plan avoids duplicating development plan policies by focusing on policies that translate the general requirements of the development plan into a local context. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan should be easily considered alongside the development plan and any other material considerations in determining planning applications.

3.9. Set out below is a brief summary of how each policy conforms to the NPPF. The particular paragraphs referred to in the table are those considered the most relevant to each policy but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible relevant paragraphs.

Table 1 – NPPF Conformity

Policy	NPPF Para no.	Commentary
Policy RC1: Rural Character	131, 132, 135 180	Sets the context for new development to ensure rural character is retained.
Policy HE1: Conservation Area and its Setting	131, 135, 195, 196, 212	Seeks to conserve and enhance the Conservation Areas and its setting
Policy HE2: Protecting and enhancing local heritage assets	131, 135 196, 203, 209	Seeks to protect non-designated historic assets
Policy NE1: Protecting the Landscape	132, 180	The setting of the built forms of the settlement in the Parish is very important in the context of NPPF policies which seek to ensure development contributes to and enhances the natural environment.
Policy NE2: Biodiversity	185, 186	New development is expected to retain natural features, designated nature conservation sites and enhance them and plant new landscaping
Policy SD1: Development within the Settlement Boundary	82, 83 88, 89, 97	The emphasis on supporting new development within the Settlement Boundary is consistent with NPPF policies.
Policy SD2: High Quality Design	96, 97, 131, 132, 135, 136, 139	This policy seeks high quality sustainable design for new development which respects the character of the Area.
Policy SD3: Provision of energy and water efficient buildings	158, 159, 164	Energy and water efficient development is encouraged in this policy aligning with NPPF policies.
Policy C1: Community Facilities	96, 97	Promotes protection of existing community facilities which are locally valued and increase community cohesion
Policy C2: Local Green Spaces	105, 106, 107	Designates Local Green Spaces in line with the criteria set out in the NPPF
Policy C3: Supporting Local Business and Agriculture	85, 86, 88, 89	New businesses and expansion of existing businesses are supported in line with the NPPF principle of building a strong competitive economy
Policy TT1: Transport	108, 110, 114, 116	Requires new development to manage traffic, provide parking and ensure new traffic related infrastructure is appropriate to the rural character

Policy	NPPF Para no.	Commentary
Policy TT2: Public Rights of Way	108, 110, 116	The policy seeks to improve/provide traffic calming, connectivity and access with encouragement for additional rights of way and safe routes for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

4. Contribution to Sustainable Development

- 4.1. Buckinghamshire Council has determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was not required for the Neighbourhood Plan as it considered the policies were unlikely to have a significant environmental effect, as defined by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The report is dated July 2024.
- 4.2. However, the basic condition of “contributing to the achievement of sustainable development” requires a broader scope of assessment to embrace social and economic as well as environmental objectives. For completeness therefore, Table 2 summarises the economic, social and environmental attributes of each policy.
- 4.3. The vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan comprise a balance of social, economic and environmental goals. The social goals are to retain and support the local facilities and green spaces for the local community. Economic goals are relatively limited in scale in the Parish, but the provision of local business and agriculture is recognised. Environmental goals include the protection and enhancement of the area’s natural and historic environment.
- 4.4. However, the objectives make clear that there are environmental parameters within which these social and economic goals must be kept by ensuring development is in scale with the rural character of the existing parish.
- 4.5. The chosen policies therefore translate the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan into viable and effective development management policies which will deliver strong social, economic and environmental impacts.
- 4.6. The sustainability attributes of each policy are summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Sustainability Attributes

Key: ↑ positive - neutral ↓ negative

Policy	Soc	Econ	Env	Commentary
Policy RC1: Rural Character	↑	↑	↑	Ensures rural character is retained which is beneficial to both the environment and the wellbeing of residents. There is a minimal economic positive impact because the policy allows for appropriate development.
Policy HE1: Conservation Area and its Setting	↑	↓	↑	This policy will deliver a very positive impact on the historic environment and enhance the wellbeing of residents through sympathetic design.

Policy	Soc	Econ	Env	Commentary
Policy HE2: Protecting and enhancing local heritage assets	↑	↓	↑	This policy will deliver a very positive impact on the historic environment and enhance the wellbeing of residents through sympathetic design.
Policy NE1: Protecting the Landscape	↑	-	↑	Ensures the rural and historic character of the Parish landscape is retained which is beneficial to both the environment and the wellbeing of residents.
Policy NE2: Biodiversity	↑	-	↑	Provides a positive impact for the natural environment and for the sense of place which can enhance the wellbeing of residents.
Policy SD1: Development within the Settlement Boundary	↑	↑	↑	This policy is positive in all aspects, allowing sustainable development while maintaining the character of the village and promoting community uses/facilities.
Policy SD2: High Quality Design	↑	↑	↑	In economic terms, this policy is only slightly positive because well designed places and buildings can ensure value is retained/increased, but it is positive in environmental and social terms. It seeks to ensure that important design and biodiversity features are retained and enhanced.
Policy SD3: Provision of energy and water efficient buildings	↑	↓	↑	Provision of energy and water efficient buildings, is very good for the environment and also health, however, such homes can have a higher cost, especially if retrofitting, which could impact on economics.
Policy C1: Community Facilities	↑	↑	↑	The retention and encouragement of community facilities will clearly be positive in terms of wellbeing and social aspects of village life as well as retaining local businesses.
Policy C2: Local Green Spaces	↑	-	↑	This policy protects green spaces from being developed and therefore has a positive social and environmental impact
Policy C3: Supporting Local Business and Agriculture	↑	↑	↓	The retention and expansion of local businesses will clearly have a positive impact on economic factors and social factors, potentially neutral or negative on the environment.
Policy TT1: Transport	↑	↓	↑	Ensuring the traffic environment is safe for pedestrians and does not lead to inappropriate levels of traffic is both positive for the environment and for social goals. Economically the policy may have a negative impact as it would require additional investment in infrastructure. Adequate provision of parking is good for residents who are dependent on cars in this location and also economic factors. It is not positive for the environment as cars are not a sustainable form of transport.

Policy	Soc	Econ	Env	Commentary
Policy TT2: Public Rights of Way	↑	-	↑	The provision of footpath and cycleways improve the health of residents and also is a positive benefit for the environment, reducing pollution.

5. General Conformity with Strategic Local Policy

- 5.1. Aston Abbots Parish lies within the local planning authority of the new Buckinghamshire Council, which was formed in April 2020. However, the most recent development plan was started by the former Local Authority for the area, which was Aylesbury Vale District Council. The Vale of Aylesbury Plan 2013-2033 (VALP) was adopted on the 15th September 2021.
- 5.2. The following table sets out the comparison of Neighbourhood Plan policies with policies from the VALP. Accordingly, the AAPC considers that the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and the policies have been designed to add local context to the development plan policies of the area.

Table 3 – Conformity with VALP Policies

Policy	VALP policy	Commentary
Policy RC1: Rural Character	BE2	Design of new development.
Policy HE1: Conservation Area and its Setting	BE1, BE2	NP policy is in line with VALP policies BE1 and BE2 by requiring the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment which can be achieved through good design.
Policy HE2: Protecting and enhancing local heritage assets	BE1, BE2	NP policy is in line with VALP policies BE1 and BE2 by requiring the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment (non-designated heritage assets) which can be achieved through good design.
Policy NE1: Protecting the Landscape	NE1, NE4, NE8	Respecting Landscape character and locally important landscape, trees, hedgerows and woodlands are all consistent with VALP policies.
Policy NE2: Biodiversity	NE1, NE8	Biodiversity net gain in the NP policy is in general conformity with VALP NE1, and NE8, trees, hedgerows and woodlands.
Policy SD1: Development within the Settlement Boundary	S2, D4, BE2	VALP S2 allocates no sites for development due to the unsustainable nature of the small village, i.e., Aston Abbots, whilst VALP policy D4 covers housing development at small villages, allowing infill where there would not be any significant adverse impact. The designation of a settlement boundary in the NP is entirely consistent with the VALP approach, particularly bearing in mind the constraints at Aston Abbots in terms of its historic character. Design of new development is a key issue and NP policy is consistent with BE2.
Policy SD2: High Quality Design	BE2	Design of new development is a key issue nationally and locally and NP policy is consistent with BE2 and also requires development to adhere to the Aston Abbots Design Guide.

Policy	VALP policy	Commentary
Policy SD3: Provision of energy and water efficient buildings	S1 C3	NP policy goes further than VALP S1 and C3, seeking to ensure that new buildings are energy efficient. VALP policy I5 touches on water resources and the NP translates this further, giving more detail.
Policy C1: Community Facilities	D7, I3	The NP Policy seeks to retain community facilities in line with VALP D7 and I3 which seek to prevent the loss of essential facilities, community buildings and businesses and encourages small scale new facilities.
Policy C2: Local Green Spaces	NE6	The NP identifies LGS consistently with NPPF policy and NE6 Local Green Space in VALP.
Policy C3: Supporting Local Business and Agriculture	E4, E9	E4 supports working at home and NP policy follows this, particularly where many residents of this Parish work from home and there is a valuable opportunity to provide additional services within the village. The NP also wishes to support agriculture in this rural Parish in line with the provisions of E9.
Policy TT1: Transport	T6, T8	VALP T6 refers to parking standards and the NP policy reinforces this and also refers to electric vehicle charging points (T8). These are particularly important in a rural Parish where residents are heavily reliant on cars.
Policy TT2: Public Rights of Way	T7, C4	NP policy emphasizes the need for pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian safety on the rural network in line with T7 and protects public rights of way (C4)

6. Compatibility with EU Legislation

- 6.1. Strategic Environmental Assessment. A formal screening opinion has been issued by BC, available to view on the neighbourhood plan pages of Parish Council's website at astonabbotts-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan. No SEA was required as set out in Section 9 of that report. The Council received a response from Historic England and Natural England, noting that they agreed with the Council findings that the Aston Abbots NP does not require a full SEA to be undertaken. No response from the Environment Agency was received within the time limit. The Neighbourhood Plan has accordingly been prepared in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42 on strategic environmental assessment (SEA).
- 6.2. Habitats Regulations. Although part of the neighbourhood area is in the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC Zone of Influence for recreational disturbance at Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI, the nearest part of the parish is still 11.9km away to the SAC. However, the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, which does not allocate any sites for development, is not likely to exacerbate the vulnerabilities of the SAC. The screening was carried out by BC as a part of the SEA screening (see link above). The Council received a response from Natural England who agreed with the Council findings that the Aston Abbots NP does not require a stage 2 (Appropriate Assessment) to be undertaken. No response from the Environment Agency was received within the time limit.
- 6.3. Human Rights. The Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act. The overall purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to improve the

quality of life for people living and working now and in the future in the parish from an environmental, social and economic point of view. The aims and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have been formulated in response to local people's views and in the light of evidence gathered for the parish, in order to meet the needs expressed and address the issues identified. In order to confirm that the NP does not have any unintended consequences for particular groups the strategic aims and the policies in the Plan have been systematically scrutinised to ensure that they do not disadvantage any potentially vulnerable groups. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between persons who have a "protected characteristic" and those who do not. "Protected characteristics" are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

- 6.4. An assessment has been made on whether the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics, the results of which are presented in Table 4.
- 6.5. Certain protected characteristics are not affected by the Neighbourhood Plan, namely gender reassignment, race, religion, or sexual orientation. For persons with these characteristics, the Plan has a neutral effect. Where policies in the Plan would adversely affect persons with these protected characteristics, they would not be differently affected than persons without these characteristics. For example, if a person with these protected characteristics were disadvantaged by a policy, it would have the same consequence for a person without the protected characteristic who wished to do the same thing. Similarly, if a person with one of these protected characteristics were to benefit from a policy, it would have the same benefit for a person without the protected characteristic in the same way.

Table 4 – Human Rights

Policy	Outcomes for persons with certain protected characteristics
Policy RC1: Rural Character	Neutral impact
Policy HE1: Conservation Area and its Setting	Neutral impact
Policy HE2: Protecting and enhancing local heritage assets	Neutral impact
Policy NE1: Protecting the Landscape	Neutral impact
Policy NE2: Biodiversity	Neutral impact
Policy SD1: Development within the Settlement Boundary	Neutral impact
Policy SD2: High Quality Design	Broadly positive impact
Policy SD3: Provision of energy and water efficient buildings	Neutral Impact
Policy C1: Community Facilities	Broadly positive impact
Policy C2: Local Green Spaces	Broadly positive impact
Policy C3: Supporting Local Business and Agriculture	Broadly positive impact
Policy TT1: Transport	Broadly positive impact
Policy TT2: Public Rights of Way	Broadly positive impact

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. Aston Abbotts Neighbourhood Plan has been carefully prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations and satisfies the Basic Conditions as set out in Paragraph 1.6 thereby contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.