

**BEACONSFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
**2023 - 2040**

**JULY 2023**

**BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT**

Published by Beaconsfield Town Council under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

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## 1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement has been prepared by Beaconsfield Town Council (“the Town Council”) to accompany its submission of the Beaconsfield Neighbourhood Plan (“the Neighbourhood Plan”) to the local planning authority, Buckinghamshire Council (“the LPA”), under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (“the Regulations”).

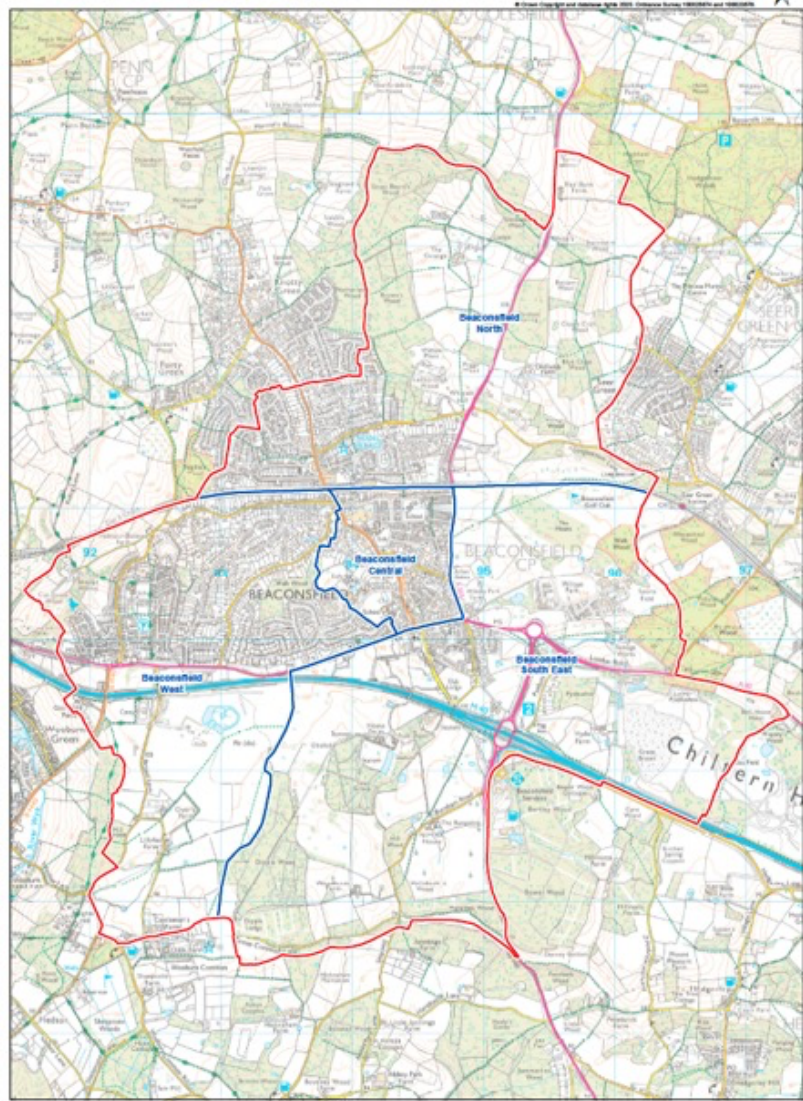
1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Town Council, the ‘Qualifying Body’, for the Neighbourhood Area (“the Area”), which coincides with the boundary of the Parish of Beaconsfield shown on Plan A below. The LPA designated the Area in November 2020.

1.3 The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Area. They do not relate to ‘excluded development’, as defined by the Regulations. The plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan is from 2023 to 2040, the end date of which corresponds with the proposed plan period of the emerging Local Plan for Buckinghamshire (“the emerging Local Plan”).

1.4 The statement addresses each of the four ‘Basic Conditions’, which are relevant to this plan, required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act.

1.5 The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the Conditions if:

- a) Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Development Plan,
- b) (Not relevant for this Neighbourhood Plan),
- c) (Not relevant for this Neighbourhood Plan),
- d) The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,
- e) The making of the Neighbourhood Development 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),
- f) The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations.



*Plan A: Beaconsfield Designated Neighbourhood Area*

1.6 The responsibility for determining if a Neighbourhood Plan has had regard to national policy and is in general conformity with strategic policy rests with a combination of the qualifying body, the LPA and the independent examiner (Planning Practice Guidance §41-070 and §410-074). Case law, established in the Tattenhall Neighbourhood Plan in 2014 (see §82 of EWHC 1470) but endorsed by the Courts on a number of occasions since, makes clear that:

*“... the only statutory requirement imposed by Condition (e) is that the Neighbourhood Plan as a whole should be in general conformity with the adopted Development Plan as a whole ... any tension between one policy in the Neighbourhood Plan and one element of the ... Local Plan (is) not a matter for the Examiner to determine.”*

1.7 The case acknowledged that there will often be tensions between different strategic policies when considered against the non-strategic policies of a specific local area covered by a Neighbourhood Plan. It sensibly concluded that such tensions can only be resolved by the qualifying body using its planning judgement to strike an appropriate balance across the plan as a whole. The examination tests the extent to which the qualifying body has exercised its judgement in a reasonable way.

## **2.BACKGROUND**

2.1 The decision to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan was made by the Town Council in early 2020. The key driver of this decision was a sense of wanting to plan positively for the future of the town given concerns with the increasing age of the adopted development plan and with the policy direction being taken by the then emerging Chiltern & South Bucks Local Plan. That plan was withdrawn from its examination by the LPA later in 2020. Although all of the Parish outside the built-up area of Beaconsfield lies within the designated Green Belt, it is still considered the Neighbourhood Plan presents an opportunity to shape how the town should evolve in the coming years.

2.2 A steering group was formed comprising the residents and Town Council representatives. The group has been delegated authority by the Town Council to make day-to-day decisions on the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, as the qualifying body, the Town Council approved the publication of the Pre-Submission plan in July 2022 and the Submission Plan now.

2.3 The Town Council has consulted local communities extensively over the duration of the project. It has also sought to work closely with officers of the LPA to collate and examine the evidence base, to design and iterate policy proposals and to define the proper relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan and the emerging Local Plan. The outcome of that work is the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.4 The Neighbourhood Plan contains 11 land use policies (BEACON1 – BEACON11), which are defined on the Policies Map where they apply to a specific part of the Area. The Plan has deliberately avoided containing policies that duplicate saved or forthcoming development plan policies or national policies that are already or will be used to determine planning applications. The policies are therefore covering development management matters that seek to refine and/or update existing policies.

### **3. CONDITION (A): REGARD TO NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY**

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with full regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is mindful of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in respect of formulating Neighbourhood Plans. In overall terms, there are four NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded:

#### General Paragraphs

3.2 The Town Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan “support(s) the delivery of strategic policies contained in (the) local plan ... and ... shape(s) and direct(s) development that is outside of these strategic policies” (§13), although such policies are now more than a decade old. It considers the Neighbourhood Plan contains only non-strategic policy proposals or proposals that refine strategic policy to fit the circumstances of the Area without undermining the purpose and intent of those strategic policies (§18). It considers that the Neighbourhood Plan sets out more “detailed policies for specific areas” including “the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies” (§28).

3.3 The Town Council considers that its Neighbourhood Plan has provided its community with the power to develop a shared vision for the Area that will shape, direct, and help to deliver sustainable development, albeit in a modest way and focused within the town’s built up area, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the development plan. The Neighbourhood Plan contains no site allocation proposals nor any other policies that will unreasonably result in less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area (§29).

3.4 In this regard, the LPA has not been able to provide an ‘indicative housing figure’ for the Parish in accordance with the NPPF provisions of meeting local housing needs (as per §65/§66). But, with all of the land in the Parish outside the town’s boundaries lying in the Green Belt, such a figure is meaningless when the Neighbourhood Plan does not have the policy tools to meet the figure. Land within the boundary is deemed developable in principle and therefore the focus of the Plan is on shaping how such change can be as successful as possible. The Plan is underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This is considered to be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned (§31).

## Specific Paragraphs

3.5 Each policy engages one or more specific paragraphs of the NPPF. Those that are considered to be of the most relevance and substance are identified in Table A below.

<b>Table A: Neighbourhood Plan &amp; NPPF Conformity Summary</b>			
<b>No.</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>NPPF Ref.</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
BEACON1	A Spatial Plan for the Town	86, 93, 104, 106, 120, 137, 149, 176	In establishing the core spatial principles for development in the town, the policy accords well with the NPPF provisions for the protection of the Green Belt (§137), conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB (§176), making efficient use of urban (notably brownfield) land (§120), ensuring the distinctive, co-dependent vitality of its two town centres (§86) and tackling the effects of traffic (§104 & §106). It also recognises the roles of Holtspur as a local centre serving the western part of the town (§93) and the adopted strategic policy and supplementary guidance managing past and future development at Wilton Park, a brownfield site in the Green Belt (§149).
BEACON2	New Town at the Heart of the Community	93, 104	This policy seeks to encourage the retention and growth of the established mix of town centre/housing uses and the enhancement of community facilities in the New Town area to secure its vitality and viability in line with §93. It also requires that transport issues are considered from the earliest stages of development proposals (§104), particularly to improve the current traffic issues at Penn Road and Station Road and to improve the public realm. And in combination with Policy BEACON10 it is intended to include safe and effective walking and cycling routes (also §104).
BEACON3	A Thriving Old Town	86, 104, 150	Firstly, this policy seeks to encourage the retention and enhancement of the commercial, business and service uses of the defined Old Town area to secure its vitality and viability in line with §86. Secondly, the policy encourages proposals which reduce harmful traffic effects by identifying traffic management measures in key locations, as per §104. It also seeks to allocate land off Windsor End for parking to reduce the need for on and off-street parking in the Old Town area. Although the land is located within the Green Belt, the use of the land for a public car park to alleviate problems in the most important part of Beaconsfield Old Town Conservation Area is considered to be appropriate development in the Green Belt by way of it being defined as 'local transport infrastructure' for which the land is the only viable and available alternative, in accordance with §150(c) of the NPPF.



BEACON4	A Sustainable Holtspur	86, 93	This policy seeks to promote the retention and development of the shopping parades at Mayflower Way and at Heath Road/Top Lane New Town to secure their vitality and viability in line with §86. It also seeks to protect and enhance popular and cherished community facilities in Holtspur in accordance with §93.
BEACON5	Green Infrastructure Network	153, 174, 179	The policy defines the green infrastructure network as one means of ensuring the future resilience to climate change impacts and to support nature recovery (§153 and §174). The policy contributes to and enhances the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures through identifying, mapping, and safeguarding these components. It is therefore consistent with the aims of §174 and §179 in these respects.
BEACON6	Local Green Spaces	102	This policy designates Local Green Spaces having taken into the criteria in §102. They are publicly accessible green open spaces that are used for relaxation or recreation and most are publicly owned. It is consistent with planning for sustainable development as any future consideration of growth in the Parish will be determined by strategic policy in a new Local Plan. With the town being inset from the Green Belt, the pressure for development of land within their boundaries is high and the designation of these Spaces will prevent the loss of precious green spaces but leaving opportunities for plot redevelopment and intensification in line with the design and other policies of the development plan. The owners of the land proposed for designation have been notified of this intention and given the opportunity to make representations in line with the advice set out in the Planning Practice Guidance.
BEACON7	Zero Carbon Buildings	56,152, 155, 157	This policy is a local response to a global challenge, the local community being convinced by the international evidence that ensuring zero carbon building performance through the PassivHaus standard is the most simple and cost-effective approach to take. It does not require that this standard is met but instead seeks to incentivise its use by exempting applicants using the standard from the requirement of the policy to provide a Post Occupancy Evaluation report. This provision for buildings is consistent with PINS model conditions of this type and is therefore considered in line with the use of planning conditions, as per §56. In doing so, it is consistent with the explicit climate change aims and provisions of §152, §155 and §157. It is inspired by innovative development plan making work in other parts of the country that has demonstrated this type of provision is necessary and possible in managing development proposals until national policy provisions are

			implemented. Other neighbourhood plans that have included this identical provision have been successfully examined and made elsewhere, including by this LPA.
BEACON8	The Beaconsfield Design Code	127, 128, 190	'Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development' (§127). The policy seeks to bring 'clarity about design expectations' within Beaconsfield town and the wider Parish (§128) using the model approach recommended by the National Model Design Code (§128). The specific matters included in the policy 'provide a framework for creating distinctive places' to deliver a 'consistent and high-quality standard of design'. Given there are three conservation areas in the town, the code also incorporates character assessment and design guidance covering the historic environment (§190). The Code has been designed to fit neatly with the emerging Buckinghamshire Design Code.
BEACON9	Local Heritage Assets & Areas of Special Character	128, 203	This policy has two parts. First, it identifies a number of local heritage assets to engage the provisions of §203. They have been derived from local history analysis and have been evaluated against the criteria advocated by Historic England. Secondly, the policy identifies three Areas of Special Character (also shown in the Design Code), two of which are a carry-over from Policy H10 of the adopted Local Plan, with the addition of the Penn Road/Ledborough Lane area. The Code provides the detail guidance for applicants of schemes in each Area (§128).
BEACON10	Walking & Cycling in the Town	100, 104, 106	The policy requires that transport issues are considered from the earliest stages of development proposals so that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued (§104). It also seeks to improve the use of public rights of way to encourage walking in the Parish, as per §100 and §106.
BEACON11	Smaller Housing	61	This policy seeks to influence housing mix for housing developments to deliver a wide choice of homes that reflects local demand and to create a demographically balanced community (§61). It has been derived from an analysis of the housing stock data, to qualify the more general data of the District Housing Needs Assessment.

3.6 It is considered that all of the policies have had full regard to national policy, with no incidence of two or more national policies being in tension, nor of the Town Council having to strike a balance between them. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan, as a whole, meets Condition (a).

## 4. CONDITION (D): CONTRIBUTING TO ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The NPPF states that, “achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- Economic - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- Social - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- Environment - to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

4.2 As neither a Sustainability Appraisal nor Strategic Environmental Assessment Report have been required of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Statement sets out in Table B below how each of the policies contribute to the achievements of sustainable development. It does so by identifying the potential of each policy to lead to significantly positive (++), minor positive (+), neutral (0), minor adverse (-) or significant adverse (--) effects, taking into account the proposed mitigation measures.

4.3 In summary, the analysis shows that the Neighbourhood Plan will have a number of significant or moderate positive sustainability effects, with at least one such effect of every policy. Some policies will have neutral effects, primarily in terms of economic matters, as the scope and focus of the Plan is on delivering important environmental and social benefits. There are considered to be no adverse effects of any policy.

**Table B: Neighbourhood Plan & Sustainable Development**

Policy		Social	Economic	Environmental	Commentary
BEACON1	A Spatial Plan for the Town	++	++	++	The policy will have positive social effects by containing and managing sustainable growth in the town by bolstering its different areas. The containment of the town will ensure that its character, and the surrounding landscape, will be protected to avoid causing a negative environmental effect. Its economic effect is positive in restating the distinct roles of New Town, Old Town and Holtspur as important places to shop and to access local services.
BEACON2	New Town at the Heart of the Community	++	++	+	The policy will have significantly positive social and economic effects in seeking to protect shops and services in the New Town and encouraging the enhancement of community facilities. It will have a minor positive effect in encouraging proposals which will resolve congestion and other traffic issues. If the public realm and walking and cycling routes (promoted in Policy BEACON10) are delivered here this could have a significant impact on reducing car usage for shorter journeys and therefore positive environmental effects.
BEACON3	A Thriving Old Town	++	++	++	The policy will have significantly positive social and economic effects in seeking to protect the critical mass of shops and services in the Old Town Area. It will also have a positive environmental effect in reducing air pollution from traffic and car parking.
BEACON4	A Sustainable Holtspur	+	++	0	The policy will have positive economic effect in protecting the shops and services at Mayflower Way and Heath Road/Top Lane. It will also have a minor positive social effect in encouraging proposals for the development and enhancement of community facilities in Holtspur. Its environmental effect is neutral.
BEACON5	Green Infrastructure Network	++	0	++	The policy will have a significantly positive environmental and social effects in protecting the defined Green Infrastructure Network which consists of a range of assets of biodiversity value in the Parish from inappropriate development. Its economic effect is neutral.

BEACON6	Local Green Spaces	++	+	+	The policy will have a significant positive social effect in protecting a range of publicly accessible open spaces within the town from inappropriate development. The policy will have a moderate environmental effect as some but not all the spaces have some environmental (e.g. biodiversity, heritage) value. Proximity to green spaces has a significant impact on house prices. If green spaces are lost particularly in Beaconsfield, which has less than that normally found in towns of a similar size, this could have a harmful economic effect on the town. Research is clear that poor green space provision leads particularly to families seeking other places to live with green space for relaxation, recreation and sport.
BEACON7	Zero Carbon Buildings	++	++	++	The policy will have a significant positive environmental effect in maximising the zero-carbon performance of all new buildings. It will have increasingly positive social and economic effects in the ongoing financial savings to the building (residential and commercial) occupiers in very low energy costs.
BEACON8	The Beaconsfield Design Code	+	0	++	The policy will have a significant positive environmental effect and a minor positive social effect in conserving the essential character of the town, and some of its history, which local people care about. Its economic effect is neutral.
BEACON9	Local Heritage Assets & Areas of Special Character	+	0	++	The policy will have a significant positive environmental effect and a minor positive social effect in ensuring that features of local historic and/or architectural value are understood and kept as far as possible in new development proposals as part of retaining the character of the town, for the enjoyment of the local community. Its economic effect is neutral.
BEACON10	Walking & Cycling in the Town	++	+	++	The policy will have significant positive environmental and social effects in reducing traffic to improve air quality and in encouraging healthier lifestyles by walking and cycling. The economic effects of walking and cycling should be positive - the town would be a more attractive as place to live with less congestion, better air quality and ease of getting around. This could impact house prices and retail/ office attractiveness.
BEACON11	Smaller Housing	++	0	0	The policy will have a major positive social effect by addressing an increasing imbalance in the range of housing types in the town, that may result in a more balanced demographic profile in the longer term. Its economic and environmental effect is neutral.

## **5. CONDITION (E): GENERAL CONFORMITY WITH THE STRATEGIC POLICIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to ensure its general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the former South Bucks District, that is the South Bucks District Local Plan 1999 (“the 1999 Local Plan”), the South Bucks Core Strategy 2011 (“the Core Strategy”) and the Bucks Minerals & Waste Local Plan 2019 (“the Minerals & Waste Plan”), taken as a whole. However, the Town Council has been very mindful of the lengthening age of both plans, which predate the 2012 NPPF, and especially of some policies that are now more than 25 years old in their formulation.

5.2 The emerging Local Plan is in progress but has not reached the stage at which Neighbourhood Plans in the county have been able to derive a significant steer in formulating their policies. Its evidence base is currently limited but the Brownfield Call for Sites data published in 2022 has been insightful in confirming the Town Council’s own local intelligence that land within the town is likely to become available for redevelopment in the later stages of the plan period. Unfortunately, it has been too early for this version of the Neighbourhood Plan to make specific policy provision, but this may be something the first review of the Plan may address.

5.3 By far the most significant constraining factor on neighbourhood plan policy making is the designation of all of the land outside the built-up area of the town as Green Belt. Policy GB1 of the 1999 Local Plan remains in accordance with the NPPF in this respect and there is no NPPF §142 ‘hook’ to allow the Neighbourhood Plan to modify the Green Belt boundary. More generally, it is the later Core Strategy that has been used to judge the relevance of strategic policy, rather than the saved policies of the 1999 Local Plan, which are generally non-strategic in nature.

5.4 In Table C below is set out a summary of the most relevant adopted strategic policies and commentary on the general conformity of the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

**Table C: Neighbourhood Plan & Development Plan Conformity Summary**

No.	Policy Title & Refs	Commentary
BEACON1	A Spatial Plan for the Town	This policy is very much in line with the broader spatial strategy objectives of the Core Strategy, which defines the town in the settlement hierarchy of the District as a 'Principal Settlement'. It supports the protection of the Green Belt and AONB around the town's edges in line with Local Plan Policy GB1 and Core Policy 9 respectively. It acknowledges and is consistent with Core Policy 11, which defines New Town as a District Centre and Old Town as a Local Centre, with Holtspur as a Neighbourhood Centre. And with its Core Policy 14, defines the Wilton Park Opportunity Area as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt (and with the adopted Supplementary Planning Document for that site). The policy also highlights the traffic and parking issues in the Parish in line with the Spatial Strategy.
BEACON2	New Town at the Heart of the Community	This policy updates the outdated policies S2 - S4 of the 1999 Local Plan by focusing on managing ground floor frontages of existing commercial, business and service uses in the defined New Town area, in so far as proposals require planning permission. It is consistent with the aims of those policies and of Core Strategy Policy 11 in seeking to maintain a critical mass of viable and vital services. The policy also refines TR5 in providing a means by which traffic management effects and measures are tackled and invested in by development proposals in the Parish.
BEACON3	A Thriving Old Town	This policy updates the outdated 1999 Local Plan policies S2 - S4 in serving the same general purpose but by defining a boundary for Old Town, rather than just a shopping frontage. This allows for the policy to encourage new residential uses within the area but not at the cost of a loss of commercial space on the London End and Wycombe End frontages. In doing so, it also relates to the changes in the Use Class Order 2020 and permitted development rights since the Core Strategy. It is consistent with the aims of those policies and of CP11 in seeking to maintain a critical mass of viable and vital services. The policy also refines 1999 Local Plan Policy TR5 in providing a means by which traffic management effects and measures are tackled and invested in by development proposals in the town. Its specific encouragement to relocate parking within the vicinity of the main commercial area on land in the Green Belt is considered to meet clause (g) of 1999 Local Plan Policy GB1 as creating new spaces would not compromise the purpose of the Green Belt in that location.
BEACON4	A Sustainable Holtspur	This policy updates the outdated 1999 Local Plan Policy S3 in serving the same general purpose but by defining a boundary for the neighbourhood shopping area on the parades at Mayflower Way and Heath Road/Top Lane in Holtspur to which the policy applies. It is consistent with the aims of that policy in recognising the importance of local services within walking distance of a large number of local residents.

BEACON5	Green Infrastructure Network	This policy is consistent with Core Strategy Policy 9, particularly in ‘maintaining existing ecological corridors and avoiding habitat fragmentation’.
BEACON6	Local Green Spaces	There are no strategic policies relating to Local Green Spaces. However, the policy is consistent with the aims of Core Strategy Policy 5 in seeking to protect the most important open spaces within the inset settlements from harmful development.
BEACON7	Zero Carbon Buildings	This policy complements some, and replaces other, parts of Core Strategy Policy 12 to bring this policy context up to date with contemporary thinking and national policy provisions for tackling climate change through the energy performance of new buildings. In those respects, Policy 12 is significantly out of date.
BEACON8	The Beaconsfield Design Code	The policy refines Core Strategy Policy 8 by identifying local context and specific design features of Beaconsfield town and the wider Parish.
BEACON9	Local Heritage Assets & Areas of Special Character	This policy brings greater clarity and meaning to help implement Core Strategy Policy 8, which seeks to protect, conserve, and enhance local heritage assets (or ‘locally important heritage features’), including historic landscapes. The policy wording is consistent with the NPPF which postdates that policy.
BEACON10	Walking & Cycling in the Town	This policy is consistent with Core Strategy Policy 7 in giving a renewed emphasis to sustainable travel routes in the town.
BEACON11	Smaller Housing	This policy refines Core Strategy Policy 2 through encouraging an emphasis on two or three-bedroom homes as the evidence shows that the market in the town is only delivering large homes (either new or extending existing, smaller homes) on infill or existing plots. The policy does not exclude the provision of larger dwellings and therefore continues to seek a mix of dwelling types and size.

5.5 It is considered that all of the policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted development plan, with no incidence of two or more strategic policies being in tension, nor of the Town Council having to strike a balance between them. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan, as a whole, meets Condition (e).



## 6. CONDITION (F): COMPATABILITY WITH EU-DERIVED LEGISLATION

6.1 Bucks Council confirmed on 9 July 2021 that it agreed with the screening opinion produced and consulted on with statutory bodies by the Town Council that determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required, as per Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessments of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended). A copy of the opinion is published separately – it concluded thus:

*“Having reviewed the document and on the basis that it implies limited or no additional development and any development proposed to be focussed within the existing built up area of the Beaconsfield town it is agreed unlikely that the proposed neighbourhood plan would have potential to have significant environmental effects. It is therefore agreed at this stage that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be necessary”.*

6.2 Bucks Council qualified its opinion in the event that the scope and purpose of the submitted Neighbourhood Plan had changed. Although there had been no material changes to the submission plan, it chose to rescreen in any event in February 2023 and unsurprisingly came to the same conclusion.

6.3 The Town Council has also met its obligations in relation to the provisions of the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). In this regard, the Town Council provided the LPA with all the necessary information it required for the purposes of determining whether an Appropriate Assessment was required or to carry out the Appropriate Assessment if one was required. The LPA’s Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment concludes that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the 2017 Regulations) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Again, this was reconfirmed in its February 2023 rescreening.

6.4 The Town Council has been mindful of the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights in process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and considers that it complies with the Human Rights Act. The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to extensive engagement with those people local to the area who could be affected by its policies and their views have been taken into account in finalising the Plan.