

Heydon Neighbourhood Development Plan 2025-2041

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

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Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by South Cambridgeshire District Council in February 2026 to carry out the independent examination of the Heydon Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 6 March 2026. The examination was undertaken by written representations.
- 3 The Plan includes a range of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. There is a very clear focus on safeguarding local character and the setting of the village in its wider landscape. It proposes a package of local green spaces. The Plan has been prepared in short order.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. All sections of the community have been actively engaged in its preparation.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report, I have concluded that the Heydon Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum area should coincide with the neighbourhood area.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
18 May 2026

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Heydon Neighbourhood Development Plan 2025-2041 (the 'Plan').
- 1.2 The Plan has been submitted to South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) by Heydon Parish Council (HPC) 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 allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and its updates in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024. The NPPF continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative plan, or a potentially more sustainable plan except where this arises because of my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope and can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The submitted plan has been designed to be distinctive in general terms, and to be complementary to the development plan. There is a very clear focus on safeguarding local character and the setting of the village in its wider landscape. It proposes a package of local green spaces.
- 1.6 Within the context set out above this report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.7 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then be used to determine planning applications within the neighbourhood area and will 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 HPC, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both SCDC and HPC. I do not have any interest in land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. I have 43 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level and more recently as an independent examiner. I have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral System.

Examination Outcomes

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

Other examination matters

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

- 2.7 I have addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.6 of this report. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan complies with the three requirements.
- 2.8 Section 98 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 requires that a neighbourhood plan:
- so far as the qualifying body considers appropriate, and having regard to the subject matter of the plan, must be designed to ensure that the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change; and
 - so far as the qualifying body considers appropriate and having regard to the subject matter of the plan, must be designed to take account of any local nature recovery strategy under section 104 of the Environment Act 2021 that relates to all or part of the neighbourhood plan area.
- 2.9 I have addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.8 of this report and have taken account of the information in the Addendum to the Basic Conditions Statement. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan complies with the two requirements.

3 Procedural Matters

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

- the submitted Plan;
- the Basic Conditions Statement;
- the Addendum to the Basic Conditions Statement (April 2026);
- the Consultation Statement;
- the SCDC SEA/HRA Screening Determination Statement;
- the Environmental Report (August 2024);
- the supporting evidence for the Plan (as listed on SCDC's website);
- HPC's responses to the Clarification Note;
- the representations made to the Plan;
- the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan;
- the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - December 2024;
- Planning Practice Guidance; and
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 6 March 2026. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular. The visit is covered in more detail in Section 5 of this report.

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

3.4 The enactment of Section 99 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 on 25 March 2026 changed the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is assessed. In order to address this matter HPC produced an Addendum to the Basic Conditions Statement. Targeted consultation took place on the Addendum. Section 4 of this report addresses this matter alongside the broader responses to the Plan. Sections 2.8 and 2.9 of this report have addressed other matters in relation to the contents of a neighbourhood plan as a set out in Section 98 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.

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, HPC 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 (May to June 2025). It captures the key issues in a proportionate way and is 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 (and Appendix 1 of the Statement) sets out details of the comprehensive range of consultation events that were carried out in relation to the various stages of the Plan. They are arranged into the phases of the Plan as follows:
- the initial development phase (Section 3);
 - the advanced Plan development (Section 4); and
 - the pre-submission stage (Section 5).
- 4.5 I am satisfied that the engagement process was both proportionate and robust. In many instances, the ways in which HPC engaged the community and statutory bodies was extremely thorough and detailed.
- 4.6 Appendix 6 of the Statement provides details on the comments received on the pre-submission version of the Plan and the principal changes that worked their way through into the submission version. These details help to describe the evolution of the Plan.
- 4.7 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 9 February 2026. This exercise generated comments from a range of organisations as follows:

- Bromley Wharf Limited
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Environment Agency
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Heydon Parish Council
- NHS Property Services
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Sport England
- National Highways
- Swifts and Panning Group
- The Coal Authority
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- The Trustees of 3rd Viscount Devonport's Discretionary Trust (the Trust)
- Cambridgeshire Geological Society

4.10 Comments were also received from several people who live in the neighbourhood area.

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

4.12 A separate consultation exercise was undertaken by SCDC on the revised Basic Conditions Statement which ended on 15 May 2026. This generated representations from the District Council, the Environment Agency and National Highways.

5 The Neighbourhood Area and the Development Plan Context

The Neighbourhood Area

- 5.1 The neighbourhood area consists of the parish of Heydon. It lies 13 miles to the south of Cambridge and 6 miles to the east of Royston. Its population in 2021 was 213 persons living in 96 households. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 15 March 2024.
- 5.2 The village is located close to the highest elevation in Cambridgeshire at the edge of the steep chalk scarp and at the tip of Heydon Valley, a notable dry valley and rare in the context of Cambridgeshire. The village is located within the Southern Chalk Hills Landscape Character Area (as identified in the Greater Cambridge LCA 2021).
- 5.3 As the Plan describes, the village is a narrow linear settlement hugging the ridge and its built form is primarily of domestic scale with properties varying in age and style. There is a strong local theme to the architecture, materials and construction of many buildings which adds greatly to the appeal of the village. A large proportion of the buildings are of historic or architectural importance. Most of the built environment in the village is within the Conservation Area.

Development Plan Context

- 5.4 The development plan covering the neighbourhood area is the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. It was adopted in 2018 and covers the period up to 2031. Policy S/6 (The Development Strategy) focuses new development on the edge of Cambridge, at new settlements and, in the rural areas at Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres.
- 5.5 Policy S/11 identifies a series of Infill Villages, including Heydon. The policy advises that residential development and redevelopment within the development frameworks of these villages, as defined on the Policies Map, will be restricted to scheme sizes of not more than 2 dwellings (indicative size) where a series of criteria are met. The Local Plan advises that Infill Villages are generally amongst the smallest in South Cambridgeshire. These villages have a poor range of services and facilities and it is often necessary for local residents to travel outside the village for most of their daily needs. These villages generally lack any food shops, have no primary school and may not have a permanent post office or a village hall or meeting place.
- 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 HQ/1	Design Principles
Policy NH/13	Important Countryside Frontages
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 SC/3	Protection of Village Services and Facilities
Policy SC/4	Meeting Community Needs

- 5.7 SCDC and Cambridge City Council are jointly preparing the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. It covers the period up to 2045. Once adopted it will replace the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. It is anticipated that it will be submitted for its own examination in December 2026.
- 5.8 The submitted Plan has been prepared within its wider adopted development plan context. In doing so, it has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned existing planning policy documents in the District. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter. It is also clear that the submitted Plan seeks to add value to the different components of the development plan and to give a local dimension to the delivery of its policies. This is captured in the Basic Conditions Statement and its Addendum.

Unaccompanied Visit

- 5.9 I visited the neighbourhood area on 6 March 2026. I approached from Royston and then Great Chishill from the west. This allowed me to understand its setting in the wider landscape and its proximity to the main road network.
- 5.10 I looked initially at the village centre. I saw the importance of the Church.
- 5.11 I focused the visit on looking at the Plan's proposals for the designation of local green spaces, heritage assets, Important Countryside Frontages, important views, and a Valued Landscape.
- 5.12 I left the neighbourhood area and drove along the Fowlmere Road to the A505. As with the initial part of the visit this allowed me to understand the setting of the neighbourhood area in the wider landscape.

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. It has been supplemented by the April 2026 Addendum.

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;
- not have the effect of preventing development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area of the authority;
- not breach, and otherwise be compatible with, the assimilated obligations of EU legislation (as consolidated in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Amendment) Regulations 2023; and
- not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

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

National Planning Policies and Guidance

6.4 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in December 2024. This approach is reflected in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement (and the Addendum).

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 relevant to the Heydon 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. The Plan has a very clear focus on safeguarding local character and the setting of the village in its wider landscape. It proposes a package of local green spaces. The Basic Conditions Statement (and the Addendum) maps the policies in the Plan against the appropriate sections of the NPPF.
- 6.9 At a more practical level, the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraph 16d). This is reinforced in Planning Practice. Paragraph ID:41-041-20140306 indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise, and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.10 As submitted the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. Most of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

Contributing to Sustainable Development

- 6.11 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social, and environmental. I am satisfied 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 residential development to meet local needs (Policy HEY10). In the social dimension, it includes policies on local green spaces (Policy HEY5), community infrastructure (Policy HEY11), and the King William IV public house (Policy HEY12). In the environmental dimension, the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built, and historic environment. It includes policies on landscape character (Policy HEY1), locally important views (Policy HEY3), the built environment (Policy HEY4), heritage assets (Policy HEY6), and biodiversity (Policy HEY8). HPC has undertaken its own assessment of this matter in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

Not have the effect of preventing development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area of the authority

- 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. Whilst the Plan proposes a series of policies relating to its built and natural environment, it does not prevent the potential for new development to come forward as identified in Policy S/11 for Infill Villages. As such I am satisfied that the implementation of the Plan will not have the effect of preventing development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan.

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 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion was prepared by Place Services on behalf of SCDC for the Plan. The Assessment is detailed and thorough. The report (April 2025) advises that the Plan does not allocate land for development purposes and that it is therefore considered 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.

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 advises that without mitigation embedded, the Heydon Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have a likely significant effect on any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The requirement for the Plan to undertake further assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Regulations 2017 (as amended) is therefore screened out.
- 6.17 This approach provides assurance to all concerned that the submitted Plan takes appropriate account of important ecological and biodiversity matters. Having reviewed all the relevant information 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 neighbourhood planning obligations.

Human Rights

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

Summary

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

7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. It makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that the various policies have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 The recommendations focus on the policies in the Plan given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the neighbourhood area. The wider community and HPC 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 four important elements. The first is the way in which several of its policies are directly underpinned by technical Appraisals. The second is its clear and attractive presentation. The structure of the Plan and its policies is very understandable and the use of colour and well-chosen photographs makes the document very attractive and user-friendly. The third is its policy-by-policy approach towards setting out 'the policy in a nutshell'. The fourth is that the supporting text of each policy includes a policy intent and then lists relevant Local Plan policies.
- 7.5 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance (ID:41-004-20190509) which indicates that neighbourhood plans should address the development and use of land. It also includes a series of Community Actions which are incorporated within the six themed parts of the Plan.
- 7.6 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted Plan. The Community Actions are addressed thereafter. For clarity, this section of the report comments on all the Plan's policies.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

The initial parts of the Plan (Sections 1 to 4)

- 7.8 The Plan is very well-organised and presented. It has been prepared with much attention to detail and local pride. It makes an appropriate distinction between the policies and their supporting text. The initial elements of the Plan set the scene for the policies. They are proportionate to the neighbourhood area and the subsequent policies.

- 7.9 The Introduction (Section 1) comments about the neighbourhood plan agenda in general, and identifies both the neighbourhood area (in Map 1) and the Plan period (in paragraph 1.1.3). It comments about the purpose of the preparation of the Plan and how the community was engaged in its production.
- 7.10 Section 2 provides information about the neighbourhood area. The interesting and comprehensive details help to set the scene for the policies.
- 7.11 Section 3 sets out the planning policy context within which the Plan was prepared. It comments about national policy, the adopted Local Plan and the emerging Local Plan.
- 7.12 Section 4 comments about the vision, themes, and objectives of the Plan. The Vision neatly summarises the ambition for the parish as follows:
- 'In 2041 Heydon will be a distinctive and tranquil rural settlement recognised as a special place within an exceptional protected landscape setting, accommodating appropriate sustainable development whilst retaining its tranquillity, unique qualities, and scale. It will enjoy facilities and services which support the needs of the village community, embrace new technology and respect the historic importance of the village and its natural environment.'*
- 7.13 The Vision is supported by nine objectives which are grouped around six themes.
- 7.14 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.6 and 7.7 of this report.
- Policy HEY 1: Protecting and enhancing Heydon's landscape character and recognising its area of Valued Landscape
- 7.15 This policy requires development to be sensitive to Heydon's distinctive landscape and settlement character which is described in the Heydon Landscape Appraisal 2022. It proposes the identification of a Valued Landscape Area in Heydon and requires any development to maintain and enhance the distinctive qualities of this and the setting of the village.
- 7.16 The Heydon Parish Landscape Appraisal (undertaken by Alison Farmer Associates in 2022) sets out the context for the identification of a proposed Area of Valued Landscape including Heydon Valley, Chishill Down, and the Heydon North west Slopes character areas.
- 7.17 The policy has general elements (parts 1-3) and then a detailed element on the proposed Area of Valued Landscape (part 4). I comment on these two parts in turn.

- 7.18 In the round the general parts of the policy take a very positive approach to the landscape character of the neighbourhood area. They are carefully underpinned by the details in the Parish Landscape Appraisal (2022). Their ambition is to ensure that new development has an appropriate relation with the landscape character in the parish.
- 7.19 Within this overall context I recommend the following package of modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow SCDC to be able to apply the policy through the development management process:
- a revision in the wording in the first part of the policy so that it has a more explicit format;
 - a recasting of the second part of the policy alongside the inclusion of a proportionate element; and
 - the deletion of the unnecessary use of the word ‘potential’ in the third part of the policy
- 7.20 I looked at the proposed Area of Valued Landscape during the visit and related its details and extent to the information contained in the Parish Landscape Appraisal. I noted the significance of the Heydon Valley and the Heydon North West Slopes.
- 7.21 The Trust comments that:

‘The Technical Review highlights that the Heydon Parish Landscape Appraisal (April 2022), prepared for draft HNP, does not provide the evidence to support the decision to include land at Chishill Down within the proposed valued landscape designation. Pg.13 of the Heydon Parish Landscape Appraisal provides a description of Chishill Down, but it is noted that this description does not provide evidence or a conclusion that Chishill Down is a valued landscape. Bullet Point No.2 in Paragraph 5.1.4 of draft HNP repeats the description of Chishill Down, but does not explain or justify the inclusion of this area within a valued landscape. Paragraph 041 (Ref ID: 41) of the PPG states that “It [neighbourhood plan policies] should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence”. There is no evidence to include the Chishill Down local landscape character area within the proposed valued landscape area designation. If there is no evidence to include Chishill Down in this designation then it would be inconsistent with Paragraph 041 of the PPG and would not meet Basic Condition (a).’

- 7.22 The representation from the Trust includes a technical review of the matter. It advises that:

‘Policy HEY 1 Introductory text (Par 5.1.6) identifies the Heydon Northwest Slopes and the Heydon Valley as “valued landscapes.” These areas are supported by qualitative descriptions within the Heydon Landscape Appraisal

(pg. 11 and 12) and are generally consistent with recognised methodologies for identifying local landscape value (e.g., GLVIA3 Box 5.1). However, there is a notable inconsistency in the treatment of the Chishill Down. While Figure 4 of the Landscape Appraisal includes the Chishill Down within the area highlighted as “valued landscape,” the description in the Landscape Appraisal (pg.13) does not evidence that this should be considered a “valued landscape”. Furthermore, the policy text (par 5.1.4) omits a detailed description of the Chishill Down landscape unit.’

7.23 In its response to the clarification note, HPC advised that:

The Parish Council believes that the HLA 2022 and policy context and rationale within the NP provide a very robust evidence base for inclusion of Chishill Down within the area of Valued Landscape. We would refer the Examiner in particular to pages 11,13 and 14 of the HLA 2022. Chishill Down is in addition the location of Down Plantation which forms a key and prominent feature in the wider landscape setting of the village, visible over a significant distance.

7.24 I have considered these differing approaches very carefully. On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the Plan and the Parish Landscape Appraisal has demonstrated in general terms that there is sufficient merit in the local landscape to justify the identification of an Area of Valued Landscape. Nevertheless, I recommend that the Chishill Down Character Area is deleted from the proposed designation. I have reached this view for the following reasons:

- the justification for this part of the proposed Area of Valued Landscape in the Parish Landscape Appraisal is less compelling than those for the other components;
- its landscape character is much less dramatic than that of the Heydon Valley and the Heydon North West Slopes; and
- its key feature (the Down Plantation) is comprehensively addressed in Policy HEY3 (Locally Important Views).

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

In the first part of the policy replace ‘must be sensitive’ with ‘should respond positively to’

Replace the second part of the policy with:

‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should retain or where practicable enhance existing features

of landscape value (including trees, hedgerows and water features) within the site and work within the context of existing features of landscape value in its wider surroundings.'

In the third part of the policy delete 'potential'

Replace the fourth part of the policy with:

'The area shown on Map 6, is designated as a Valued Landscape. Development that would be visually prominent from the wider landscape should be avoided including such development that is in the 'sensitive breaks in slopes' as shown on Map 7. Development proposals in the Valued Landscape should maintain or where practicable enhance its distinctive qualities and the contribution it makes to the setting of Heydon village.'

Delete Chishill Down from the proposed Area of Valued Landscape (as shown on Map 5)

Replace paragraph 5.1.6 with: 'The HLA 2022 recognises the special quality of the landscape surrounding Heydon because of its scenic qualities and cultural and natural heritage interest. It identifies the need for further recognition of this, outlining a proposed Area of Valued Landscape including Heydon Valley, and the Heydon North west Slopes character areas (see HLA 2022 Fig 4, p14).'

Policy HEY 2: Important Countryside Frontages

- 7.26 This policy recognises the Important Countryside Frontages (ICFs) in the village and seeks to protect these from any development which could compromise their qualities and function. The policy proposes to designate two new ICFs in addition to those already identified in the Local Plan.
- 7.27 I note that the HPC proposes to follow the same basis for identifying Important Countryside Frontages that was used by the SCDC in the adopted Local Plan. I also note the descriptions of proposed Important Countryside Frontages 3 and 4 in paragraph 5.2.3 of the Plan.
- 7.28 SCDC comments that ICF3 (Map 8) is in an area of countryside character; the development framework for the village of Heydon does not extend beyond Holy Trinity Church and it is not a rural break between two nearby, detached parts of the development framework. It therefore suggests that it is deleted from the Plan as it does not meet either of the requirements to be considered for an ICF.
- 7.29 The Trust also comments that proposed ICF3 (land south of Heydon Lane) does not meet the criteria for an important countryside frontage. It advises that

it is not adjacent to the defined development framework boundary of the village. It also advises that this part of Heydon Lane has limited physical or visual relationship with built-up area of the village. Holy Trinity Church is visible from Heydon Lane, but it is separated by a cemetery and mature trees. It also comments that there is no relationship with any other buildings or the village from this part of Heydon Lane. Finally, it comments that this part of Heydon Lane does not sweep into the built-up area of the village, and there is no connection between it and the street scene of the village.

- 7.30 The Trust also comments that Proposed ICF4 (land west of Chishill Road) does not meet the criteria for an important countryside frontage. It advises that the proposed ICF4 is approximately 350m in length, and that this part of Chishill Road is an edge of village location only. It also comments that the proposed ICF does not penetrate or sweep into the built-up area of the village, and it has no visual relationship with the centre of the village.
- 7.31 I looked at the two proposed ICFs during the visit. On the balance of the evidence in the Plan, that in the representations, and my own observations I am not satisfied that the two proposed additional ICFs meet the criteria for such designations as set out in the adopted Local Plan. In the case of proposed ICF3 I am not satisfied that it penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area providing a significant connection between the street scene and the surrounding rural area. In contrast it is located on the eastern edge of the village.
- 7.32 In the case of ICF4 I am also not satisfied that it penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area providing a significant connection between the street scene and the surrounding rural area. In contrast it is located on the western edge of the village and sits opposite the ribbon development to the eastern side of Chishill Road.
- 7.33 In these circumstances I recommend that the first part of the policy is deleted.
- 7.34 The second part of the policy restates the Local Plan policy in relation to the two existing ICFs in the neighbourhood area. There is no need for a neighbourhood plan to restate an existing policy in the Local Plan. As such I recommend the deletion of the second part of the policy. In the absence of a policy, I also recommend the deletion of the supporting text.

Delete the policy

Delete Section 5.2 of the Plan

Policy HEY 3: Locally Important Views

- 7.35 This policy identifies views which are important locally and sets out requirements for their protection and wherever possible enhancement in any future development proposals. Appendix 1 comments comprehensively about each view.
- 7.36 The Plan advises that the Heydon Parish Landscape Appraisal (HLA) 2022 identifies several locally important views into and out of the settlement. It also advises that subsequent consultation with the community further refined and identified views which are of particular importance to villagers.
- 7.37 I looked at the proposed locally important views during the visit.
- 7.38 SCDC comment that:

'(The) Regulation 14 consultation response suggested a review of Policy HEY 3 and Appendix 1 to focus on views that are or could be under threat, or most likely to be affected by development. Our comments also suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan should clearly identify the significant feature(s) that are the focus of the Locally Important View (LIV), and that the landscape appraisal should also be used to support the distinctiveness of the views.

The key features identified for many views include locally ubiquitous features, such as an appreciation of the rural village setting. However, Policy NH/2 of the adopted Local Plan and Policy HEY 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan already seek to ensure that local landscape character is respected, retained and enhanced. Only a small number of views identify specific key features

The relatively low threshold for designation has resulted in effectively all land to the North, South, West and East of the village's built-up area being included within the frame of a proposed LIV, and we therefore question whether this policy meets the basic conditions of having regard to national policies and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.'

- 7.39 The Trust comments that:

Policy HEY3 seeks to identify locally important views on the edge of the village. The list of proposed locally important views include views of Holy Trinity Church across Church Field (View No.1), at Church Field (View No.2), at Chishill Down (View No. 7), and from High Close over Heydon Valley (View No.17).

Paragraph 041 (Ref ID: 41) of the Planning Practice Guidance states that "It [neighbourhood plan policies] should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence". The evidence put forward to explain and justify the proposed locally views at No.1, No.2, No.7, No.17 are not robust, and as such

these proposed designations do not have regard to national policy and would not meet Basic Condition (a).

- 7.40 In this overall context, I sought advice from HPC about which views were identified in the HLA, which have been proposed by the community, and if any of the HLA views have been refined by the community. In its response to the clarification note, it commented that:

'The HLA 2022 identifies a number of views towards the settlement and outward to the wider landscape from the settlement, these are indicated on Figures 5, 6 and 7 of the HLA. This document alongside the output and action plan resulting from the Community Led Plan 2022 (p 23) formed the basis of further work within the Neighbourhood Plan. Improved, and in some cases additional, photographs have been added on many of the views for greater clarity.

The following LIVs have been added or refined during the Plan process through community engagement and further review - View 4, View 5, View 6, View 8, View 9, View 10, View 12, View 14, View 15, View 16, View 17, and View 18.'

- 7.41 I have considered the policy and the comments carefully, including HPC's responses to the representations received from SCDC and the Trust. On the one hand, the identified views reflect the broader work undertaken as part of the HLA and as underpinned by public consultation and engagement. However, on the other hand several of the views are general in nature.
- 7.42 The Trust also comments that other neighbourhood plans in the District have proposed views which have not been accepted by the examiner. I have considered this comment carefully and acknowledge the need for consistency. However individual plans are supported by their own evidence bases and should be addressed on their merits against the basic conditions.
- 7.43 Based on the available evidence and my own observations during the visit, I am satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to justify the identification of most of the views identified in the Plan. They have been carefully defined and directly relate to the character of the landscape as described in the HLA. The relevant views are listed below:
- Views 6A/B/C
 - Views 7A/B
 - View 8
 - View 9A/B
 - Views 11A/B
 - View 12

- Views 13A/B, C and D
- Views 14A/B/C
- View 15A/B
- View 16A/B/C
- View 18

- 7.44 In this context I am not satisfied that the other views are appropriate to be identified and safeguarded in the Plan. In several cases, they are of a general rather than a specific nature. This particularly applies to several of the views within the village. As such they do not necessarily identify specific aspects of the relationship between the village and the surrounding countryside which might otherwise justify the preparation of a policy of this type.
- 7.45 I looked carefully at proposed view 10 (Avenue of Field Maples). Clearly the avenue is an iconic element of the parish. Nevertheless, it is a feature rather than a specific view. Inevitably there are multiple views of the avenue due to its length and prominence in the neighbourhood area.
- 7.46 Whilst the intention of the policy is clear it has repeating elements. In addition, it has an underpinning approach that development proposals may be able to enhance views. Whilst this approach is understandable, the development management process requires that such views are safeguarded by development proposals rather than enhanced. In these circumstances I recommend that the policy is recast. The revised policy also includes a proportionate element to acknowledge that individual proposals will have different impacts on the identified views.
- 7.47 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘The Plan identifies a series of Locally Important Views (as identified on Map 9 and 10a).

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should respond positively to the identified Locally Important Views.’

Delete views 1A/B, 2, 3A/B, 4A/B, 5A/B, 10, and 17 from Map 9 and 10a.

Policy HEY 4: Preserving and enhancing the special characteristics of Heydon's built environment

7.48 This policy sets out requirements and guidance for future development proposals to ensure that the distinctive quality of built environment and character of Heydon is maintained.

7.49 The Trust comments that the policy:

'identifies the key design principles for development in the village. These principles are appropriate and relate to the character of the village. However, draft HNP does not allocate any land for development and includes policy designations that would prevent new development from being delivered, which means that these design principles might never be applied.'

7.50 I have considered this comment carefully. Nevertheless, I am satisfied that a neighbourhood plan can include a general policy on design without also including more detailed policies to allocate sites for development. This acknowledges that there is sufficient flexibility in development plan policies to allow modest infill development to come forward in the parish. Furthermore, it is to HPC's credit that it has decided to craft a policy to address the design of any such proposals.

7.51 In general terms this an excellent policy which is underpinned by the work on Character Areas. In the round it is a first-class local response to Section 12 of the NPPF. In this context I recommend modifications to the wording used in the first and the third parts of the policy to bring the clarity required by the NPPF. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In part 1b of the policy delete the text in brackets

Throughout the third part of the policy replace 'could' with 'would'

In the third part of the policy replace 'Heydon Lane village gateway' with 'Heydon Lane inner village gateway'

Policy HEY 5: Local Green Spaces

7.52 This policy proposes the designation of four Local Green Spaces (LGSs). The approach taken is underpinned by the LGS Assessment.

7.53 I saw the significance of the proposed Local Green Spaces during the visit. Spring Pond and The Churchyard/Church Pond are key elements of the character and appearance of the village. I note that the policy is also supported by details of the proposed LGS in the supporting text. I note

SCDC's comments about the limited nature of the information available. Nevertheless, I am satisfied that the proposed LGSs meet the criteria in paragraphs 106 and 107 of the NPPF. I have also taken account of the lack of any objections to the proposed designations.

- 7.54 I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Policy HEY 6: Conserving and enhancing heritage assets in Heydon parish

- 7.55 This policy identifies non-designated historic, archaeological, and other heritage assets in Heydon and sets out requirements of any future development in relation to the assets.
- 7.56 I looked at a selection of the proposed non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs) during the visit, and I note that Appendix 2 comments comprehensively about each proposed asset. I also note that the second part of the policy follows the approach taken in paragraph 216 of the NPPF.
- 7.57 In general terms I am satisfied that the policy has taken an appropriate and positive approach to this matter. I saw the significance of the various brick and flint wall and the flint frontages on the buildings along Fowlmere Road.
- 7.58 The representation from the Trust (the Trust) includes a Heritage Technical Assessment. The representation makes the following specific comments that:

'There is limited evidence provided in Appendix 2 of draft HNP to explain or justify that the site of Earles (Asset No.6) as a non-designated heritage asset. Paragraph 039 (Ref ID. 18a) of the PPG requires details of the heritage significance to be provided in order for sites to be identified as non-designated heritage assets. There is no assessment of the heritage significance of the site of Earles provided in Appendix 2 of draft HNP. For this reason, the site of Earles (Asset No.6) should not be identified as a non-designated heritage asset.'

The brick walls on the south side of Heydon Lane are included within the proposed designation of visually important walls (Asset No.7) as a non-designated heritage asset. It is concluded in the Heritage Technical Assessment that the walls included within this designation are of different materials, dates and construction, and should not be grouped together as a single non-designated heritage asset. The brick walls on the south side of Heydon Lane are not of sufficient quality to justify designation as a non-designated heritage asset. For this reason, the brick walls on the south side of Heydon Lane (included as part of Asset No.7) should not be identified as a non-designated heritage asset.'

- 7.59 In its response to the clarification note HPC advised that the evidence base and descriptive content has been significantly enhanced in this area and that it believes that the Plan presents a robust case in support of all designations.
- 7.60 I have considered these comments carefully. In relation to proposed asset 6 (the site of Earles) I am satisfied that the information in Appendix 2 of the Plan is both relevant and proportionate. I looked carefully at the brick walls to the south of Heydon Lane. I noted that they relate to the open agricultural landscape in this part of the village and had a different character and scale to those to the north of Heydon Lane. On the balance of the evidence, I recommend that they are deleted from the Plan. In reaching this conclusion I have taken account of HPC's responses to the clarification note (on the comments both from SCDC and the Trust).
- 7.61 SCDC comment that the proposed NDHAs should be illustrated on a map in the main body of the Plan, as opposed to just being identified in a separately published appendix. I agree with this suggestion. It will bring the clarity required by the NPPF and avoid the need for interested parties (including SCDC) having to access the relevant details in a separate document.
- 7.62 Given the significance of the identification of the NDHAs I recommend that the relevant map in Appendix 2 is included in the main body of the Plan.
- 7.63 I recommend that the fourth part of the policy is recast and simplified. In doing so I recommend that the explanatory text weaved into the policy is relocated into the supporting text. This will acknowledge that it describes processes to be followed rather than functioning as land use policy.
- 7.64 With the incorporation of the various recommended modifications the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the fourth part of the policy with: 'Development proposals should respond positively to the potential of buried archaeology.'

Delete the walls on the south side of Heydon Lane from the map in Appendix 2 along with any references and photographs relating to these structures in Asset 7 of Appendix 2

Show the proposed NDHAs on a map in the main body of the Plan

At the end of paragraph 5.6.8 add: 'The fourth part of Policy HEY6 addresses archaeological matters. Developers should engage with the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record to establish the potential of a development site to include artefacts of archaeological interest. Where required by national

policy a proportionate desk-based assessment and field evaluation should be included in the details submitted with planning applications.'

Policy HEY 7: Delivering sustainable climate adapted and resilient design in the parish

- 7.65 This policy sets out requirements and action to be taken in relation to future design and construction work to ensure any development contributes positively to mitigating the effects of climate change.
- 7.66 In general terms, the policy takes a positive approach to these matters and has regard to Section 14 of the NPPF. Its non-prescriptive approach also has regard to the Written Ministerial Statement (Planning: Local Energy Standards Update) published in December 2023.
- 7.67 I recommend modifications to the policy to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow SCDC to be able to apply its contents through the development management process. They are based on SCDC's helpful comments and address the following matters:
- the inclusion of a proportionate element into the first part of the policy. This approach acknowledges that minor and domestic proposals will have less opportunity to address climate adapted design than larger projects;
 - detailed revisions to the wording used in the second and third parts of the policy;
 - a recasting of the fourth part of the policy to ensure that any proposals relating to historic and traditional buildings retain their character; and
 - the deletion of the seventh part of the policy as it restates national and local planning policies on flood risk.
- 7.68 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the first part of the policy with:

'As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should adopt design and construction approaches that demonstrate sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency levels and ensure that they contribute positively to mitigating climate change.'

In the second part of the policy replace 'all development proposals must' with 'development proposals should'

In the third part of the policy (first bullet) replace the second sentence with: ‘Where new build is involved, the use of materials which are reused, reclaimed or natural from the local area or from sustainable sources and that are durable is encouraged.’

Replace the fourth part of the policy with:

‘Proposals relating to historic and traditional buildings which enhance the environmental performance of these heritage assets will be supported where the integrity and character of the asset concerned is retained. In such cases, proposals will be expected to demonstrate they have adopted a whole-building approach to their carbon footprint and the efficient use of energy.’

Delete part 7 of the policy.

Policy HEY 8: Protecting and enhancing Heydon’s features and sites of biodiversity value

- 7.69 This policy aims to protect the natural environment of Heydon including veteran trees. It identifies sites of known biodiversity and specific protected species and sets out required action for all development to avoid, mitigate, or compensate for any impact.
- 7.70 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to sites of biodiversity value and has regard to Section 15 of the NPPF. However, in places it conflates policy with explanatory text, and in other places adopts a prescriptive approach which does not acknowledge that development proposals will not always be able to conform with the requirements of the policy. On this basis I recommend a package of modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF.
- 7.71 Part of the package of recommended modifications is that the third part of the policy is deleted. Whilst its purpose is to list important sites of ecological interest in the parish this information is already comprehensively addressed in the supporting text. The recommended modification to the submitted fourth part of the policy provides a cross reference to the relevant details in paragraph 5.8.3 of the Plan.
- 7.72 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the second part of the policy with: ‘Development proposals that would result in harm to or the removal of veteran trees will not be supported, unless special circumstances can be demonstrated.’

Delete the third part of the policy.

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

‘Development proposals that would have a direct or indirect ecological impact on their immediate locality should demonstrate in a proportionate ecological assessment that:’

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

‘Development proposals affecting known and important sites and features of biodiversity value (as set out in paragraph 5.8.3 of the Plan) should take appropriate opportunities to improve habitats and their networks. Appropriate measures for delivering biodiversity enhancements in the parish (including Biodiversity Net Gain where applicable) include:’

Policy HEY 9: Protecting the dark skies in Heydon

- 7.73 This policy requires development proposals to minimise light pollution to preserve dark skies in the village and sets out specific guidance on this matter. I noted the dark skies environment in the parish during the visit.
- 7.74 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to this matter and has regard to Sections 8 and 15 of the NPPF. In this context I recommend the deletion of the unnecessary use of an example in the first part of the policy and a recasting of the second part of the policy. In both cases the recommended modifications will bring the clarity required by the NPPF.
- 7.75 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In part 1a of the policy delete the wording in brackets.

Replace the second part of the policy with: ‘Where external lighting is proposed, details of the luminaire type, mounting height, aiming angles and lumen unit levels will need to be provided with the details of the wider proposal as part of a Lighting Plan.’

Policy HEY 10: Delivering homes that meet the village’s needs

- 7.76 This policy requires development proposals to prioritise smaller dwellings over larger homes to meet local needs. The approach taken reflects the information about housing sizes included in the 2021 Census.
- 7.77 I note that Heydon is classified as an Infill Village in Policy S/11 of the Local Plan with a development site size limit of up to two dwellings. I also note that

Policy H/9 of the Local Plan outlines the housing mix requirements for development, but applies only to developments of 10 or more dwellings. Policy H/9 also refers to a requirement that 5% of homes in a development should be built to the accessible and adaptable dwellings M4(2) standard, and that this standard would not be triggered by a site size limit of up to two dwellings that applies to the village.

7.78 In these circumstances, I raised the following questions with HPC:

- is the policy deliverable?
- is the element in the policy about accessible and adaptable buildings either reasonable or commercially-viable?

7.79 In its response to the clarification note HPC commented that:

‘(it) believe(s) that the Plan provides justification of the housing needs through Figure 5 and Figure 7 – setting out the number of bedrooms in the parish compared to the district, and occupancy rates in dwellings in parish and district. The Census data evidences that 43% of dwellings have four bedrooms or more, and that 63% of the dwellings in the Parish have two more bedrooms than required and is considerably higher than the district wide level. Therefore, we wish to retain the policy to ensure that smaller homes are prioritised over larger homes and believe that this is deliverable.

In relation to policy HEY 10 part 3, whilst the we would anticipate that the cost thresholds for delivering these homes would be higher, the PC would be flexible in amending the policy to provide more emphasis that the policy supports the design of these homes in being either M4 (2) or M4 (3) which allows for a more viable approach.’

7.80 I have considered the policy very carefully and have taken account of the comments received from SCDC, the Trust and several residents. The aspirations of the policy are self-evident. On the one hand HPC’s wish to promote the development of smaller homes is very appropriate and would help to provide accommodation in the neighbourhood area for a range of people (including homes for younger people and for older persons). However, on the other hand, the approach taken is supported by basic information from the Census rather than a more detailed assessment that is often provided in a neighbourhood plan through a housing needs assessment.

7.81 In these circumstances I recommend that the first part of the policy is recast so that offers support for development proposals that prioritise the delivery of smaller homes (with one or two bedrooms) over larger homes (three or more bedrooms) rather than requiring such provision. It also recommends that the final element of this part of the policy is reconfigured so that it sets out a more general requirement that development proposals should identify the way in

which the dwelling size, type and housing mix respond positively to up-to-date evidence on Parish housing stock and local needs or to local site-specific circumstances.

- 7.82 I also recommend that the second part of the policy is recast so that it offers support for the subdivision of existing homes where they otherwise comply with relevant development plan policies.
- 7.83 Finally I recommend that the accessibility issues addressed in the third part of the policy are applied where it is practicable and commercially viable to do so. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Development proposals should identify the way in which the dwelling size, type and housing mix respond positively to up-to-date evidence on Parish housing stock and local needs or to local site-specific circumstances.

Development proposals that prioritise the delivery of smaller homes (with one or two bedrooms) over larger homes (three or more bedrooms) will be supported.

Proposals for the subdivision of existing detached and semi-detached houses into more than one separate housing unit will be supported where they respond positively to development plan policies in respects of design, amenity, and car parking.

Wherever practicable and commercially viable, new dwellings and residential conversions should be designed to meet the Building Regulations accessible and adaptable dwellings M4 (2) standard or the Building Regulations wheelchair user M4(3) standards.’

Policy HEY 11: Delivering improved community infrastructure for the parish community

- 7.84 This policy supports potential future delivery of a community space and play space in Heydon. In general terms this is a good policy which acknowledges the importance of community facilities. The second part of the policy acknowledges that the use and viability of the facilities may alter in the Plan period. I recommend the deletion of the unnecessary use of ‘in principle’ in the first part of the policy.

7.85 I sought HPC's comments on the extent do the second and third parts of the policy repeat the content of policies in the Local Plan. In its response to the clarification note it advised that:

'(it) acknowledge(s) this issue and would suggest inclusion of the second and third parts of the policy in the supporting text.'

7.86 I agree with this approach and recommend that these elements of the policy are incorporated into an expanded paragraph 5.11.6 of the Plan which already addresses this issue.

7.87 The Trust comments that:

'the principle of seeking to deliver additional community facilities for the village is consistent with national policy. There is an identified need for community facilities, a community meeting space and children's play area for the village. There is support for those community facilities to be located within or adjacent to the village. However, (the Plan) does not allocate land for development that could support the delivery of additional community facilities at the village. In addition, (the Plan) includes proposed policy designations for land adjacent to the development framework boundary of the village, which would prevent the delivery of new development including community facilities from coming forward on suitable sites on the edge of the village. The lack of an effective policy mechanism and a lack of suitable sites make it very unlikely additional community facilities would be delivered for the village.'

7.88 I have considered these comments carefully. As the Trust comments the Plan does not allocate land for new development. However, the policy is general in nature and seeks to provide a positive context for the delivery of new community facilities. As such I am satisfied that there is no need for the approach to be specifically related to development sites. Plainly any relationship between new community facilities and other development will be assessed by SCDC through the development management process applying appropriate national and local planning policies.

7.89 Subject to the incorporation of the recommended modifications the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the first part of the policy delete 'in principle'

Delete the second and third parts of the policy.

Replace paragraph 5.11.6 with:

'This policy complements Policy SC/3 'Protection of Village Services and Facilities' in South Cambridgeshire's 2018 Local Plan. That policy advises that

proposals, including planning applications for change of use, which result in the loss of local community buildings (most recently used for this purpose where the use has ceased) will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no local need for the facility or that its continuing function is no longer viable following a marketing exercise that complies with the local planning authority's requirements or an equivalent facility in terms of quality is provided to serve the community in an accessible location. The policy also advises that where additional needs arise through a specific development and where directly, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development in the Plan Area, the developer will be required to contribute, wherever possible, (through Section 106 Agreements, section 278 Agreements, any future Community Infrastructure Levy, and/or direct investment or works) to the delivery of new community facilities.'

Policy HEY 12: Public house safeguarded site

- 7.90 This policy sets out to safeguard the continued operation of the King William IV as a public house and secure community meeting space provision should the use change in future.
- 7.91 I saw the significance of the King William IV public house during the visit.
- 7.92 As currently worded, the second part of the policy sets a requirement for the provision of a community meeting space on the site alongside other proposed uses, if the use as a public house is not to be retained having been demonstrated to no longer be a viable use through a marketing exercise. In the context of the overall policy, I raised a series of questions with HPC as follows:
- has HPC any evidence to suggest that such an approach would be commercially-viable?
 - did it consider an alternative option for a potential developer to demonstrate that there is no requirement for such a community meeting space, and that it makes no allowance for alternative community uses of the site (using evidence to demonstrate that delivery of either a public house or a community meeting space on the site would not be viable or feasible)?
 - did it consider the appropriateness of allowing alternative community uses of the site, should evidence be available to demonstrate that the delivery of either a public house or a community meeting space on the site would not be viable or feasible?
- 7.93 In its response to the clarification note HPC commented that:
- '(it) would suggest some flexibility in the wording of the first bullet of policy HEY 12 part 2. The policy essentially seeks to ensure that all options to provide continued community use are exhausted before the loss of the King William IV*

is accepted, therefore amendments to the policy to ensure this objective remains clear are welcomed.'

- 7.94 I have considered these issues very carefully. In doing so I have noted SCDC's comments about the prescriptive nature of the policy and the limited options proposed for the future uses of the site. In this context I recommend that the second part of the policy is recast so that it provides a series of options (including either general community facilities or the meeting room proposal as set out in the submitted policy). This approach will allow a broader assessment of alternative uses (and their commercial viability) to take place.
- 7.95 I have noted the potential overlap between the policy and Community Action 11 which comments about the delivery of an alternative village meeting space within the village. I am satisfied that this approach is appropriate and that the two issues will work side-by-side throughout the Plan period.
- 7.96 With the incorporation of the recommended modifications the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the second part of the policy with:

'Development proposals for alternative uses of the building or the site will only be supported where:

- **they would deliver an alternative community use of the site; or**
- **they would deliver an on-site community meeting space capacity (which includes secure bicycle parking and adequate off-street car parking); or**
- **there is clear demonstration that the existing use is no longer commercially viable and all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve the public house (including all reasonable diversification options) or to deliver alternative community uses of the building and the wider site. Any such development proposals should be accompanied by robust evidence to demonstrate that diversification options have been explored and that the building has been marketed at an appropriate commercial price over a period of at least 12 months without securing an appropriate sale.'**

Policy HEY 13: Protecting and improving our network of rural routes suitable for safe use by walkers and other non-motorised users

- 7.97 This policy requires development proposals to maintain and where practicable enhance the existing public rights of way network and supports proposals which help achieve the Parish's aspiration to create a safe pedestrian and cycling route to Heydon Chalk Pit.

7.98 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach towards protecting and improving rural routes in the parish. I recommend detailed modifications to the wording used in the first two parts of the policy to bring the clarity required by the NPPF. The recommended modification to the second part of the policy ensures that it has a positive rather than a negative approach.

7.99 I note the relationship between the third part of the policy and Community Action 13. I sought advice from HPC about whether there are any emerging or costed proposals for the delivery of the intended pedestrian and cycling route. In its response it advised that:

‘there are no current proposals but the policy seeks to improve the network for safe use by walkers and other non-motorised users if development was to come forward and any financial contribution to the improvement would be based on the cost of works required.’

7.100 I also sought advice from HPC about the extent to which the third part of the policy was intended to support the access-related works anticipated in paragraph 5.13.8 of the Plan or general built development that would assist in the delivery of the pedestrian and cycling route. In its response it commented that it:

‘would like part three of the policy to be clear in achieving a safe, accessible pedestrian and cycling route linking Heydon village to the Heydon Chalk Pit, and are comfortable in removing the reference to ‘where they comply with other planning policy requirements’ if this is ambiguous or vague, and neither adds to, or detracts from the meaning of the policy.’

7.101 I have considered these comments carefully. I am satisfied that it is appropriate for the Plan to formulate a policy which enables the implementation of an important Community Action. In this context I recommend that the wording used is modified so that it will ensure that any development proposals which may assist in the implementation of the route comply with development plan policies. This will avoid unintended consequences. I also recommend modification to the wording of the fourth part of the policy so that it will be consistent with the third part.

7.102 I correct the reference to the map number in the policy.

7.103 With the incorporation of these recommended modifications the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the first part of the policy replace ‘must’ with ‘should’

**In the second part of the policy replace the first bullet point with:
'safeguard the accessibility and enjoyment of any affected public rights of way'**

Replace the third part of the policy with:

'Development proposals which would help to achieve the delivery of a safe, accessible pedestrian and cycling route linking Heydon village to the Heydon Chalk Pit (as shown on Map 15) will be supported where they otherwise comply with development plan policies. Proposals which would prejudice the delivery of such a route will not be supported.'

Replace the fourth part of the policy with:

'Where additional walking or other active travel infrastructure needs arise as a result of proposed development and where directly, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind, the proposed developer will be required to contribute, wherever practicable, (through Section 106 Agreements, section 278 Agreements, any future Community Infrastructure Levy, and/or direct investment or works) to the delivery of the pedestrian and cycling route as shown on Map 15.'

Community Actions

- 7.104 The Plan includes a series of Community Actions. They are set out in the main body of the Plan on a theme-by-theme basis and in Appendix 4.
- 7.105 National policy advises that community aspirations should be included in a separate section of a neighbourhood plan to ensure that they are distinct from the land use policies. On balance, I am satisfied that the way in which the Plan has incorporated the community actions is appropriate. I have come to this judgement for three reasons. The first is that in most cases the community aspirations consolidate the approach taken in the relevant land use policies. The second is that the community aspirations are shown in a different way to the land use policies (and not within a policy box). The third is that the distinction is addressed in paragraph 4.1.2.
- 7.106 I am satisfied that the Community Actions are appropriate and distinctive to the parish. The following are noteworthy:
- Community Action 3: Secure review and explore extension of the Conservation Area.
 - Community Action 4: Encourage and facilitate collective sustainability initiatives on energy provision and recycling.

- Community Action 7: Develop with relevant authorities and landowners appropriate management policies for identified open spaces and features.
- Community Action 10: Work with landowners to restore and strengthen networks of existing hedgerows and verges in the Parish.
- Community Action 11: Identify a potential location for a village meeting space.
- Community Action 12: identify/secure a site for community recreation/play area.
- Community Action 13: Work towards the provision of a viable off-road route to connect the village to the Chalk Pit.

Monitoring and Review

7.107 The Plan is silent on monitoring and review. In a broader context it is now best practice that neighbourhood plans address these matters. It is a particularly important matter where an emerging Local Plan is well-advanced. Section 5 of this report has commented about the current stage of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

7.108 I recommend that these matters are addressed in a new section of the Plan. Within this overall context I also recommend that HPC considers the need for a full or partial review of the Plan within six months of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan. This is important both generally, and given the wider growth ambitions in that Plan.

Include a new section in the Plan to read:

‘Section 1.8 Monitoring and Review

The Plan has been prepared to deal with issues raised by residents. It includes a vision, themes-based objectives, and planning policies. It is important that the Plan remains both up to date and topical. In this context its monitoring and potential review will be addressed as follows:

Monitoring

The Parish Council will monitor the following:

Implementation of the Plan

- *How the planning policies are being applied to shape decisions on planning applications;*
- *Whether the community projects are being delivered; and*
- *Whether the plan objectives and plan vision are being achieved.*

Appropriateness of the Plan

- *Whether the Plan's vision and objectives remain representative of views in the community;*
- *Whether the policies are informed by the most up to date information; and*
- *Whether the planning policies are effective.*

Review

Over time, and depending on the outcomes of any interim reviews, a full or partial review of the Plan will be considered. Within this broader context the Parish Council will assess the need or otherwise for a full or partial review of the Plan within six months of the adoption of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. That Plan will provide an up-to-date planning context for Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, and the neighbourhood area.'

Other Matters – General

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

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

Other Matters - Specific

7.110 SCDC has raised a series of detailed matters on the Plan. Where they relate directly to a policy they are addressed in the main body of the report.

7.111 The points raised also include detailed matters relating to the general parts of the Plan and to the supporting text. I recommend that the Plan is modified to incorporate the points below (using the SCDC referencing system set out in its formal response) where they are necessary to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions:

- Correct errors in map numbering (various)
- Appendix 3 Map (51)

- Community Action 9 (52)
- NPPF 2024 references (54)

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2041. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community to safeguard the character and setting of the neighbourhood area.
- 8.2 Following the independent examination of the Plan, I have concluded that the Heydon 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 Heydon Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

Other Matters

- 8.4 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as approved by the District Council on 15 March 2024.
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth manner. The responses to the clarification note were detailed, informative and delivered in a very timely fashion.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
18 May 2026