



Staploe Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Basic Conditions Statement

September 2025

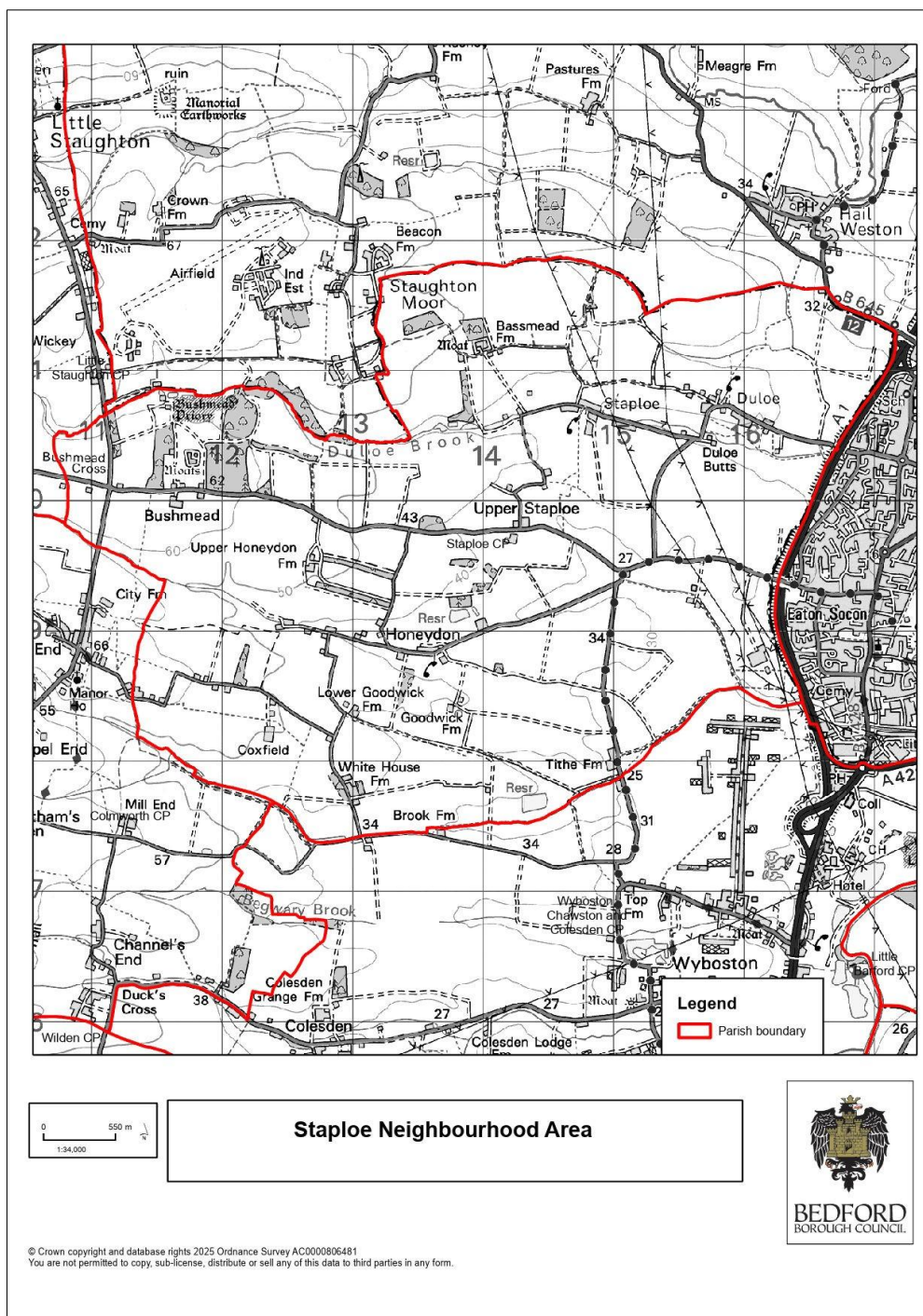
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement has been prepared by Staploe Parish Council (SPC) to accompany the Staploe [Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2035](#) (Submission Version March 2025) on submission to Bedford Borough Council (BBC) under regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended (“the Regulations”).
- 1.2. In September 2020, Bedford Borough Council resolved to designate Staploe Neighbourhood Area to be contiguous with the Parish boundary. The Neighbourhood Area is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Map showing extent of Neighbourhood Planning Area



2. The Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for the Neighbourhood Area. The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area and do not relate to any other designated Neighbourhood Area. The plan period is from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2035.
- 2.2. The Neighbourhood Plan does not contain policies relating to excluded development in accordance with the Regulations. The document also contains a number of non-statutory proposals that relate to Aspirations which do not form part of the examined 'neighbourhood development plan' but provides a 'wish list' that has emerged during consultation that the Parish Council has considered during the preparation of the document.
- 2.3. This Statement addresses each of the 'basic conditions' required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2.4. The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:
 - Having regard to National Policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan,
 - The making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,
 - 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),
 - The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations,
 - Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the plan.

3. Background

- 3.1. The plan preparation has been led by Staploe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. It has comprised three main stages:
 - Evidence gathering and community engagement which has been incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan
 - Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan February 2025 (Draft version); the draft plan and accompanying background documents were published for more than 6 weeks in accordance with regulation 14 of the Regulations from 12th April to 31st May 2025.
 - Submission Neighbourhood Plan (September 2025) which takes into account representations received on the earlier version and has been modified for submission to BBC; it is accompanied by the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement, Staploe Design Guidelines and Codes (by Aecom), Green Infrastructure Plan, HRA Screening and SEA Screening Reports.
- 3.2. The Steering Group has consulted the local community extensively throughout the process.
- 3.3. The Parish Council website [Staploe Parish Council](#) has been used throughout the process to disseminate information, act as a depository for documentation and to publicise consultations.

- 3.4. A number of methods to raise awareness have been used, including articles in Hamlets Voice, banners, flyers and notices on the Parish Council website and noticeboards around the Parish.
- 3.5. It has also worked closely with officers of BBC since the start of the project to collate and examine the evidence base, to design and iterate policy proposals and to define the proper relationship between the NP and the Local Plan.
- 3.6. The Plan has not duplicated Local Plan policies which will be used in determining planning applications. This has allowed the Neighbourhood Plan to focus on a smaller number of locally relevant and important policies.

4. Conformity with National Planning Policy

- 4.1. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) and the revised Framework of February 2025 and is mindful of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans.
- 4.2. There are several NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded:
- 4.3. In relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development:
 - Paragraph 12: the development plan is the starting point for decision making and this includes any neighbourhood plan.
 - Paragraph 13: neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.
 - Paragraph 14: reminds us of the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to be significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits provided, four criteria apply.
- 4.4. The Parish Council believes that the Neighbourhood Plan is planning positively for future development in the Area and supports the delivery of the strategic policies of the adopted Development Plan as advised in the above paragraphs of the NPPF.
- 4.5. Paragraphs 18 and 21 advise that policies to address non-strategic matters and detailed matters should be included within neighbourhood plans, and the Neighbourhood Plan contains such policies.
- 4.6. Advice on non-strategic policies and the role of neighbourhood plans is identified in paragraphs 29 and 30. The Neighbourhood Plan establishes a shared vision for the Parish and its policies shape, direct and help deliver sustainable development. It has sought to translate aims into a number of meaningful planning policies to complement other development plan policies for managing development.
- 4.7. The Neighbourhood Plan strikes a positive balance between the policy constraints of the Area and the need to support the general requirements of the development plan as set out in section 5 below.
- 4.8. The Neighbourhood Plan avoids duplicating development plan policies by focusing on policies that translate the general requirements of the development plan into a local context. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan should be easily considered alongside the development plan and any other material considerations in determining planning applications.
- 4.9. Set out below is a brief summary of how each policy conforms to the NPPF. The particular paragraphs referred to in the table are those considered the most relevant to each policy but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible relevant paragraphs.

Table 1: NPPF Conformity

Policy	Policy Title	NPPF Para no.	Commentary
RC1	Strategic Gaps	131, 132, 135, 139	Provides separation between the hamlets which make up the Parish where the erosion of the gaps would have an adverse, irreversible impact on the character of the area.
RC2	Rural Character and landscape	131, 132, 135, 136, 187	Sets the context for new development to ensure rural character is retained. Developments should ensure that they are sympathetic to local character including the landscape setting.
NE1	Hedgerows Trees and Woodlands	187, 193	Requires proposals to prepare a tree and hedgerow survey and retain those of value and replace those that could be lost or removed.
NE2	Biodiversity	187, 192, 193	New development is expected to retain natural features, and enhance them, provide at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity and plant new landscaping.
HE1	Protecting and Enhancing Non Designated Heritage Assets	131, 202, 203, 207, 208, 212, 216	Seeks to conserve non-designated historic assets and their setting.
HE2	Protecting and Enhancing Archaeological Sites	131, 202, 203, 207, 208, 212, 216	Seeks to conserve archaeological historic assets.
SD1	New Housing Development	61	New housing development should provide a mix of size of property appropriate to the area.
SD2	High Quality Design	96, 131 – 135, 137, 139	This policy seeks high quality sustainable design for new development which respects the character of the Area.
SD3	Provision of Energy Efficient Buildings	8c, 161, 164, 166, 167	Ensuring that new development is built sustainably and is energy efficient.
SD4	Water Management and efficiency	162, 170, 181, 182	New development should include measures to conserve water and mitigate flooding
C1	Community facilities	96, 98	Promotes protection of existing community facilities which are locally valued and increase community cohesion.
C2	Local Green Spaces	106, 107, 108	Designates Local Green Spaces in line with the criteria set out in the NPPF.
LBA1	Supporting Local Employment and Agriculture	85, 88, 89	New businesses and expansion of existing businesses are supported in line with the NPPF principle of building a strong competitive economy
T1	Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders	96, 109, 111	New development to provide pavements and improve pedestrian and cyclist safety.

5. Contribution to Sustainable Development

- 5.1. The basic condition of “contributing to the achievement of sustainable development” requires a broad scope of assessment to embrace social and economic as well as environmental objectives.
- 5.2. The vision and aims of the Neighbourhood Plan comprise a balance of social, economic and environmental goals. The social goals are to retain and encourage the local facilities including amenity and green spaces. Economic goals are relatively limited in scale in the Parish, but the provision of local businesses is recognised. Environmental goals include the protection and enhancement of the area’s natural and historic environment.
- 5.3. However, the aims make clear that there are environmental parameters within which the social and economic goals must be kept by ensuring development is in scale with the character of the existing village and Parish.
- 5.4. The chosen policies therefore translate the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan into viable and effective development management policies which will deliver strong social, economic and environmental impacts.
- 5.5. The sustainability attributes of each policy are summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Sustainability Attributes

Key: *positive - neutral x negative

Policy	Policy Title	Soc	Econ	Env	
RC1	Strategic Gaps	*	-	*	Ensures the character of the hamlets in the Parish is retained which is beneficial to both the environment and the wellbeing of residents.
RC2	Rural Character and landscape	*	x	*	The policy delivers a positive impact for both social and environmental aspect as it would retain well being for residents and reduce impact on the environment. It could have a negative impact economically as it may reduce development in certain circumstances.
NE1	Hedgerows Trees and Woodlands	*	x	*	Provides a positive impact for the natural environment and for the sense of place which can enhance the wellbeing of residents. It could have a negative impact economically as it may reduce development in certain circumstances.
NE2	Biodiversity	*	*	*	Provides a positive impact for the natural environment and for the sense of place which can enhance the wellbeing of residents.
HE1	Protecting and Enhancing Non Designated Heritage Assets	*	-	*	This policy will deliver a very positive impact on the historic environment and enhance the wellbeing of residents through sympathetic design
HE2	Protecting and Enhancing Archaeological Sites	*	X	*	This policy will deliver a very positive impact on the historic environment and enhance the wellbeing of residents through sympathetic design. It may have a minor economic impact due to the requirements of investigations prior to development.

Policy	Policy Title	Soc	Econ	Env	
SD1	New Housing Development	*	*	-	The provision of a mix of sizes of housing will bring a positive social benefit to the Parish. There is a minimal economic positive impact because the policy allows for appropriate development.
SD2	High Quality Design	*	-	*	In economic terms, this policy is only slightly positive because well designed places and buildings can ensure value is retained/increased, but it is positive in environmental and social terms. It seeks to ensure that important design and biodiversity features are retained and enhanced
SD3	Provision of Energy Efficient Buildings	*	-	*	This policy is important for the environment and has a very positive impact. It may have a slightly positive impact on social aspects because people are increasingly aware that sustainable design is important. In terms of economic impact, this policy is neutral. Costs of sustainable building are not expensive when designed into a building and could improve saleability.
SD4	Water Management and efficiency	*	-	*	All positive because development should not add to flood risk which can have a detrimental effect on people, business and the environment and water needs to be conserved.
C1	Community facilities	*	*	-	The retention and encouragement of community facilities will clearly be positive in terms of wellbeing and social aspects of village life as well as retaining local businesses.
C2	Local Green Spaces	*	-	*	This policy protects green spaces from being developed and therefore has a positive social and environmental impact
LBA1	Supporting Local Employment and Agriculture	*	*	*	Supporting local businesses, including agriculture and broadband is very important and contributes to the economic aspect of sustainable development.
T1	Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders	*	*	*	Ensuring the traffic environment is safe for pedestrians and does not lead to inappropriate levels of traffic is both positive for the environment and for social goals. The provision of footpath and cycleways improve the health of residents and also is a positive benefit for the environment, reducing pollution.

6. General Conformity with Strategic Local Policy

- 6.1. Staploe Neighbourhood Area lies within the local planning authority of the Bedford Borough Council. The Development Plan currently consists of the following:
 - Bedford Local Plan 2030 which was adopted in January 2020. This Local Plan includes policies for development management as well as allocating sites for new housing and employment development.
 - Allocations and Designations Local Plan which was adopted in July 2013
- 6.2. There is a requirement for neighbourhood plans to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with this in mind. The BBC documents define which policies they consider to be strategic by the suffix 'S'.
- 6.3. The following table sets out the comparison of Neighbourhood Plan policies with policies from both the Local Plan and Allocations and Designations Local Plan.
- 6.4. The Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with all relevant policies in the development plan and the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been designed to add local context to the existing development plan policies of the area.
- 6.5. Whilst there is no requirement to conform to strategic policies of emerging plans, National Planning Practice Guidance says that emerging plans should be taken into account and the Neighbourhood Plan has taken into account the emerging Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040 which likely to be withdrawn.

Table 3: Conformity with BBC Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 and Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030

NP Policy	Policy Title	Policies (LP=Local Plan, AD = Allocations & Designations)	
RC1	Strategic Gaps	AD 42	The strategic gaps identified in the NP use the same principles as the 'Local Gaps' identified in Policy 42 of the Allocations and Designations Local Plan.
RC2	Rural Character and landscape	LP 28S, 29 & 30, 35S, 37, 38, 39	To have a positive relationship with the surrounding area integrating and respecting the character and adding to local distinctiveness. This policy seeks to protect the landscape and retain key features in accordance with Policies 37-39.
NE1	Hedgerows Trees and Woodlands	LP39, 40	The policy seeks to retain trees and hedgerows where possible and replace those that are lost.
NE2	Biodiversity	LP 35S, 42S, 43, 93	The policy seeks to ensure that natural features and the biodiversity network is protected and enhanced, in particular biodiversity net gain expected through new development in accordance with policies 42S and 43. SuDS (LP Policy 93) are expected to complement nature conservation.

NP Policy	Policy Title	Policies (LP=Local Plan, AD = Allocations & Designations)	
HE1	Protecting and Enhancing Non Designated Heritage Assets	LP 41S	Designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets within the Parish are protected under this policy for their contribution to the character of the village.
HE2	Protecting and Enhancing Archaeological Sites	LP 41S	Designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets within the Parish are protected under this policy for their contribution to the character of the village.
SD2	High Quality Design	LP 28S, 29 & 30, 35S, 37, 38, 39, 40, 54	The policy seeks high quality design in many aspects, including retention of trees and hedgerows,
SD3	Provision of Energy efficient Buildings	LP 52, 53, 54	The principle of designing buildings sustainably is in conformity with the relevant LP policies on energy efficiency and water demand.
SD4	Water Management and efficiency	LP 92	This policy is in line with LP policy, reflecting the historic and periodic flooding that takes place in Staploe and seeking water efficiency in new development
C1	Community facilities	LP 99	This policy is in general conformity with Policy 99 which secures the protection of community facilities unless it is demonstrated that they are no longer viable.
C2	Local Green Spaces	LP 46, 35S	The Local Green Space designated within this policy has been determined to be demonstrably special to the local community thereby meeting the requirements of NPPF. These spaces are protected to conserve their importance to the character of the Parish and are in general conformity with the strategic policies.
C3	Local Employment and Agriculture	LP 75, 86S, 94	This policy supports appropriate provision and expansion of business enterprises including agriculture in conformity with Policy 75
T1	Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders	LP 91	All Rights of way including those throughout the village are protected by this policy and improvements are encouraged in conformity with Policy 91.

7. Compatibility with EU Legislation and other Prescribed Conditions

- 7.1. **Strategic Environmental Assessment.** Staploe Parish Council have issued a final screening assessment, determination and statement of reasons for the determination of the need to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Staploe Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with EU Directives, as incorporated into English law. The report is dated March 2025 and the conclusions

at paragraphs 6.1 and 7.1 are that it is unlikely that there will be any significant environmental effect arising from the Staploe Neighbourhood Plan and that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

- 7.2. The Neighbourhood Plan has accordingly been prepared in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42 on strategic environmental assessment (SEA) as incorporated into English law.
- 7.3. **Habitats Regulations** The conclusion of the HRA screening assessment carried out by AECOM Ltd (April 2025) demonstrate that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan will not breach the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The report concludes at paragraph 4.8 that the policies will not give rise to Likely Significant Effects and there is no further requirement for further assessment under the Habitats Regulations.
- 7.4. **Human Rights.** The Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act. The overall purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to improve the quality of life for people living and working now and in the future in the Parish from an environmental, social and economic point of view. The aims and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have been formulated in response to local people's views and in the light of evidence gathered for the Parish, in order to meet the needs expressed and address the issues identified. In order to confirm that the Neighbourhood Plan does not have any unintended consequences for particular groups the strategic aims and the policies in the Plan have been systematically scrutinised to ensure that they do not disadvantage any potentially vulnerable groups. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between persons who have a "protected characteristic" and those who do not. "Protected characteristics" are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 7.5. An assessment has been made on whether the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics.
- 7.6. Certain protected characteristics are not affected by the Neighbourhood Plan, namely gender reassignment, race, religion, or sexual orientation. For persons with these characteristics, the Plan has a neutral effect. Where policies in the Plan would adversely affect persons with these protected characteristics, they would not be differently affected than persons without these characteristics. For example, if a person with these protected characteristics were disadvantaged by a policy, it would have the same consequence for a person without the protected characteristic who wished to do the same thing. Similarly, if a person with one of these protected characteristics were to benefit from a policy, it would have the same benefit for a person without the protected characteristic in the same way.

Table 4: Human Rights

NP Policy	Policy Title	Outcomes for persons with certain protected characteristics
RC1	Strategic Gaps	Neutral impact
RC2	Rural Character and landscape	Neutral impact
NE1	Hedgerows Trees and Woodlands	Neutral impact
NE2	Biodiversity	Neutral impact
HE1	Protecting and Enhancing Non Designated Heritage Assets	Neutral impact

NP Policy	Policy Title	Outcomes for persons with certain protected characteristics
HE2	Protecting and Enhancing Archaeological Sites	Neutral impact
SD1	New Housing Development	Broadly positive impact
SD2	High Quality Design	Neutral impact
SD2	Provision of Energy Efficient Buildings	Neutral impact
SD3	Water Management and efficiency	Neutral impact
C1	Community facilities	Broadly positive impact
C2	Local Green Spaces	Broadly positive impact
LBA1	Supporting Local Employment and Agriculture	Neutral impact
T1	Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders	Broadly positive impact

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. Staploe Neighbourhood Plan has been carefully prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations and satisfies the Basic Conditions as set out in Paragraph 2.4 thereby contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.