



**The Cotton End Plan 2023 to 2040  
Neighbourhood Development Plan  
Basic Condition Statement**

**September 2023**

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Cotton End Neighbourhood Plan

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#CottonEndPlan

The Cotton End Neighbourhood Development Plan has been produced by the Cotton End Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

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## 01 Introduction

The following pages set out how the Neighbourhood Plan proposal fulfils the 'Basic Conditions' of neighbourhood planning and other considerations. This in order to satisfy the requirements set out in legislation and pass the independent examination. This Basic Conditions Statement explains how the Neighbourhood Plan proposal as a whole and the policies it contains meet each Basic Condition and other legal tests. The submitted Neighbourhood Plan proposal should also be read in conjunction with two additional documents, which have been prepared separately and in accordance with the relevant regulations:

**Consultation Statement:** this sets out the consultation and engagement with local residents and statutory consultees during the plan's preparation.

**SEA Screening / Sustainability Appraisal:** The Neighbourhood Plan proposal has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. The purpose of the SA is to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are considered throughout the plan making process and that all aspects of economic, social and environmental sustainability are considered in its production.

### 1.1 Basic conditions and tests to be met

Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act (Para. 8) sets out conditions which a Neighbourhood Development Plan is required to meet.

1. The examiner must consider the following:

- (a) whether the Neighbourhood Plan proposal meets the Basic Conditions,
- (b) whether the area for any referendum should extend beyond the neighbourhood to which the Neighbourhood Plan proposal relates, and

2. The Neighbourhood Plan proposal meets the Basic Conditions if:

- (a) having regard to national planning policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Development Plan,
- (b) 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),
- (c) the making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan contributes to sustainable development,
- (d) the making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations

This Basic Conditions Statement addresses these requirements in four sections:

- Section A demonstrates the conformity of the Cotton End Plan with the NPPF;
- Section B Demonstrates how the Cotton End Plan will contribute to the delivery of sustainable development;
- Section C demonstrates the conformity of the Cotton End Plan with the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan; and
- Section D demonstrates compliance with the appropriate EU obligations.

This section explains how the Neighbourhood Plan proposal complies with provision made by or under sections 61E(2), 61J and 61L.

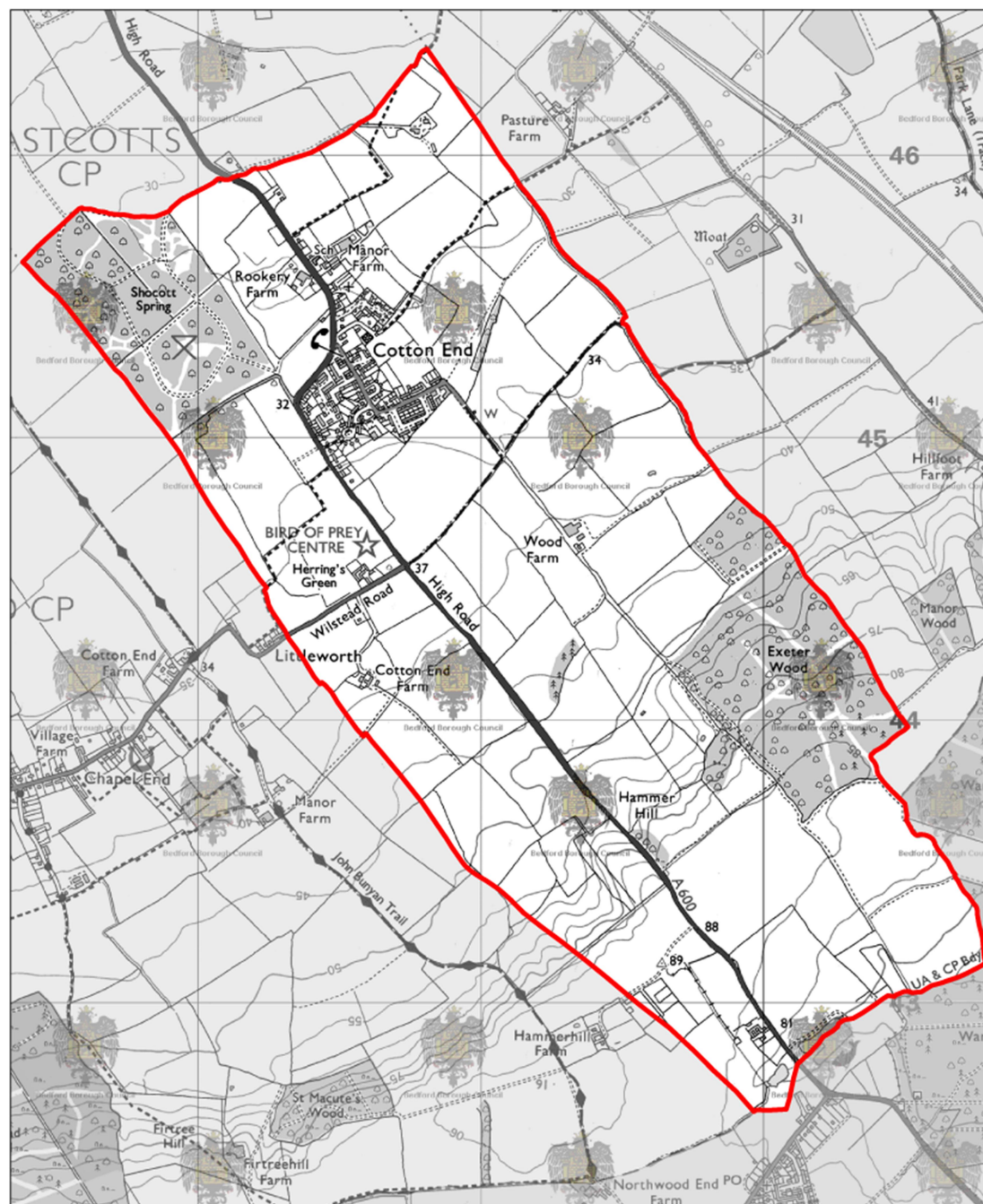
### 1.2 Submitting Body

The Cotton End Neighbourhood Development Plan is submitted by Cotton End Parish Council, which is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011.

### 1.3 Neighbourhood Plan Area

The Plan applies to Cotton End in Cotton End Parish Council in Bedford Borough Council. In accordance with part 2 of the Regulations Bedford Borough Council, the local planning authority, published the application from Cotton End Parish Council to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan and advertised a consultation period beginning July 2022 and ending November 2022. The application was submitted in July 2019 and the area approved in August 2019, and the Cotton End Parish was designated as the Neighbourhood Area.

**Figure 1: Neighbourhood Development Area (in red)**



Cotton End Parish Council confirms that this Cotton End Neighbourhood Development Plan:

- i. relates only to the Parish of Cotton End and no other Neighbourhood Areas; and
- ii. is the only Neighbourhood Development Plan in the designated area. No other Neighbourhood Development Plan exists nor is in development for part or all of the designated area.

#### 1.4 Plan Period

A neighbourhood plan must set out the period for which it is to have effect (section 38B(1)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Neighbourhood plan policies remain in force until the plan policy is replaced. The Cotton End Plan identifies the period to which it relates as 2023 to 2040. A review of the Cotton End Plan Policy is anticipated by 2028.

#### 1.5 Plan Compliance

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be considered in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.

The Plan contains policies relating to the development and use of land within the neighbourhood area. Proposals relating to planning matters (the use and development of land) have been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

The Plan does not deal with Borough Council matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or any other matters set out in Section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The Cotton End Plan is in support of strategic policies incl. site allocations. There are four sites allocated in the Cotton End Plan Area through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Source: Map provided by Bedford Borough Council



0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Kilometers



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**Cotton End Neighbourhood Plan:**  
Proposed Neighbourhood Area Boundary

Key:  
 Cotton End Neighbourhood Area

## Section A: Regard to National Planning Policy Framework

### 02 National Planning Policy and guidance

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is also mindful of the draft National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) published by the Government in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans. The following section describes how the Cotton End Plan proposal relates to the National Planning Policy Framework and how it contributes to sustainable development. The Submission document and the Pre-Submission Draft include specific key NPPF Policy reference for each policy and, where relevant, further reference in the supporting text.

#### 2.1 Sustainable Development and contributions to the achievement of sustainable development

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

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

These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11).” (NPPF, 2021)



## The presumption in favour of sustainable development

11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For **plan-making** this means that:

(a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;

(b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas <sup>6</sup>, unless:

(i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area <sup>7</sup>; or

(ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For **decision-taking** this means:

(c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

(d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date <sup>8</sup>, granting permission unless:

(i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed <sup>7</sup>; or

(ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

### Footnotes

(5) Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

[↩](#)

(6) As established through statements of common ground (see [paragraph 27](#)). [↩](#)

(7) The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in [paragraph 181](#)) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in [footnote 68 in chapter 16](#)); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change. [↩](#)

The following table maps NPPF 2021 Policies and how the Cotton End Plan vision, relevant objectives and policies contributes to achieving sustainable development within central theme of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In summary, there are five key non-strategic policy thrusts to the Cotton End Plan:

- A. Supporting high quality design in development including protecting and enhancing the landscape and village character of Cotton End
- B. Supporting the supply of smaller and more affordable homes, and homes suitable for people with higher accessibility demands in their living environments
- C. Improving the vitality and vibrancy of the village
- D. Improving local infrastructure for better, more active and healthy travel choices for residents of all ages
- E. Delivering early and meaningful engagement in pre-application design work



Sustainability Dimension	Key Sustainability Policies, NPPF	Cotton End Plan Vision response / accord	Cotton End Plan objectives (13) response / accord	Cotton End Plan Policy response / accord
Economic Dimension Social Dimension Environmental Dimension	All sustainability polices apply	All of Cotton End Vision applies in full.  Cotton End will have maintained and improved its attractive character as a tranquil verdant village, retaining its heritage, identity and spirit, surrounded by highly cherished tranquil open countryside, maintaining separation from, and does not coalesce with Shortstown and Wilstead, with an active, thriving and diverse community.	All of Cotton End objectives apply	The Cotton End Plan established a vision and 13 objectives for the improvement of the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the neighbourhood area and its residents and visitors. The development of the vision and objectives is based on facts and figures, studies by others and local analysis, village surveys and consultations. The objectives guided the policy making stage of the plan, have regard to and supports the presumption in favour of sustainable development of the area over the plan period. Further, the objectives are also considered helpful in the delivery of the community's aspirations by supporting the full range of stakeholders including developers, lawmakers, planning committees and development control to understand the wider community ambitions for the neighbourhood.
Economic Dimension Social Dimension Environmental Dimension	All sustainability polices apply	All of Cotton End Vision applies in full.  Cotton End will have maintained and improved its attractive character as a tranquil verdant village, retaining its heritage, identity and spirit, surrounded by highly cherished tranquil open countryside, maintaining separation from, and does not coalesce with Shortstown and Wilstead, with an active, thriving and diverse community.	All of Cotton End objectives apply specifically Objective 13  + To ensure CEPC and the local community have a meaningful opportunity to engage with developers and their design teams in the early stages of designing proposals for sites, including the key locations for development as identified in the Cotton End Plan (Objective 13)	
Economic Dimension Social Dimension Environmental Dimension	NPPF Sustainability Policy 6 Building a strong, competitive economy §81 §82b) §84  NPPF Sustainability Policy 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities  NPPF Sustainability Policy 9 Promoting sustainable transport  NPPF Sustainability Policy 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  NPPF Sustainability Policy 11 Making efficient use of land §119 §120 c) d) e) §121 §123 §125  NPPF Sustainability Policy 10 Supporting high quality communications infrastructure §114	+ Good accessibility for public and private modes of transport and sufficient parking for all modes including cars, bicycles and motorbikes.  + A variety of types, sizes and styles of attractive and durable homes positively reflecting on the character of the area;  + A broad range of well-kept and highly frequented community and cultural facilities within easy walking distance of public transport, with transport links to other destinations nearby such as shops and services;	+ To encourage and facilitate the development of community buildings and sites in the village, in order to protect and enhance community facilities and amenities for the community and visitors (Objective 8);  + To meet new housing demand in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the village, without infringing on green spaces, while preserving the landscape character of the village and remaining within the Settlement Policy Area only, having regard to context and the character of Cotton End (Objective 2);  + To maintain a modern and vibrant village, by supporting smart and green technologies throughout Cotton End enabling a more connected and mobile community, and improving ease of access to local products and services outside the village (Objective 6);  + To seek improvements to roads and transport infrastructure facilitating a smooth traffic flow through the village (Objective 12);  + To promote the protection and positive use of the Green Space surrounding the village Settlement Policy Area by providing more opportunity for the community to access it by foot, horseback and bicycle (Objective 4);	Supporting the vitality and vibrancy of the village, by endorsing development in locations approved by the community, is expected to contribute to NPPF sustainability policies. This is achieved by providing opportunities for development supplying a mix of highly accessible and affordable new homes with less need for new infrastructure such as new roads and utilities. Support for digital connectivity in new development is also expected to support a stronger and more competitive local economy.  In support of NPPF sustainability polices the following Cotton End Plan policies have particular relevance:  ✓ Housing & Design Polices: HD1 to HD2 ✓ Getting Around Infrastructure Policy: GA 1

Sustainability Dimension	Key Sustainability Policies, NPPF	Cotton End Plan Vision response / accord	Cotton End Plan objectives (13) response / accord	Cotton End Plan Policy response / accord
<p>Economic Dimension Social Dimension Environmental Dimension</p>	<p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 12 Achieving well-designed places</p> <p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities</p> <p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment</p> <p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change</p> <p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 9 Promoting sustainable transport</p>	<p>+ A variety of types, sizes and styles of attractive and durable homes positively reflecting on the character of the area;</p> <p>+ A broad range of well-kept and highly frequented community and cultural facilities within easy walking distance of public transport and other destinations such as shops and services;</p> <p>+ Protecting and enhancing the leafy and biodiverse nature of Cotton End's roads and open countryside;</p>	<p>+ To ensure Cotton End Parish Council, Cotton End Residents Group, and all the local community have a meaningful opportunity to engage with any developers and their design teams in the early stages of designing proposals for sites, including the key locations for development as identified in the Key Proposal Map (Objective 13);</p> <p>+ To meet new housing demand in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the village, without infringing on green spaces, while preserving the landscape character of the village and remaining within the Settlement Policy Area only, having regard to context and the character of Cotton End (Objective 2);</p> <p>+ To seek improvements to roads and transport infrastructure facilitating a smooth traffic flow through the village (Objective 12);</p> <p>+ To maintain a modern and vibrant village, by supporting smart and green technologies throughout Cotton End enabling a more connected and mobile community, and improving ease of access to local products and services outside the village (Objective 6);</p>	<p>A high level of design quality of new buildings and landscapes, with well-functioning infrastructure are at the heart of the Cotton End Plan. This is in light of current needs and related to the anticipated but yet undefined growth in population and employment in Bedford Borough and Cotton End's and understanding of possible growth in local population.</p> <p>In support of NPPF sustainability policies the following Cotton End Plan policies have particular relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Housing &amp; Design Polices: HD1 to HD7</li> <li>✓ Open Space Polices: OS1 to OS4</li> <li>✓ Getting Around Infrastructure Policy: GA1</li> </ul>
<p>Social Dimension Environmental Dimension Economic Dimension</p>	<p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes</p> <p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 12 Achieving well-designed places</p> <p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 9 Promoting sustainable transport</p> <p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment</p>	<p>+ A diverse mix of local residents and employees of different faiths, ages, ethnicity and socio-economic means being able to live, work, study, and socialise;</p> <p>+ A variety of types, sizes and styles of attractive and durable homes positively reflecting on the character of the area;</p> <p>+ A broad range of well-kept and highly frequented community and cultural facilities within easy walking distance of public transport and other destinations such as shops and services;</p> <p>+ Protecting and enhancing the leafy and biodiverse nature of Cotton End's roads and open countryside;</p>	<p>+ To protect and enhance the tranquil verdant character of Cotton End (Objective 1);</p> <p>+ To encourage and facilitate the development of community buildings and sites in the village, in order to protect and enhance community facilities and amenities for the community and visitors (Objective 8);</p> <p>+ To maintain a modern and vibrant village, by supporting smart and green technologies throughout Cotton End enabling a more connected and mobile community, and improving ease of access to local products and services outside the village (Objective 6);</p> <p>+ To meet new housing demand in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the village, without infringing on green spaces, while preserving the landscape character of the village and remaining within the Settlement Policy Area only, having regard to context and the character of Cotton End (Objective 2);</p> <p>+ To require any development and public realm improvements to make a positive contribution to the natural, built and historic environment of Cotton End Parish (Objective 10);</p> <p>+ To ensure Cotton End Parish Council, Cotton End Residents Group, and all the local community have a meaningful opportunity to engage with any developers and their design teams in the early stages of designing proposals for sites, including the key locations for development as identified in the Key Proposal Map (Objective 13)</p>	<p>The need for smaller and more affordable homes for downsizing mature households and first-time buyers is documented for the borough. This is particularly acute for Cotton End, which has an existing housing stock with an unusually high proportion of very large and expensive homes. With very little new build of smaller homes or conversions in the past, it is very difficult for more mature households to downsize within Cotton End and younger families and first-time buyers to stay/move into the village.</p> <p>The Cotton End Character Assessment documents some of the key features and characteristics of the built form of the local housing. The verdant character in the village and the need for smaller homes has been have been stated as key priorities by the community throughout the neighbourhood plan-making from early surveys to the Regulation 14 consultation.</p> <p>Fast and reliable digital networks and accessible information systems can reduce the need for unnecessary travel, for example between home and work, and home and shopping. The Cotton End Plan supports the expansion of electronic communication and high-speed broadband along with improvements to connectivity.</p> <p>In support of the NPPF sustainability policies the following Cotton End Plan policies have particular relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Housing &amp; Design Polices: HD1 to HD7</li> </ul>

Sustainability Dimension	Key Sustainability Policies, NPPF	Cotton End Plan Vision response / accord	Cotton End Plan objectives (13) response / accord	Cotton End Plan Policy response / accord
Environmental Dimension Social Dimension Economic Dimension	NPPF Sustainability Policy 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities §98 §99 §100 §101 §102  NPPF Sustainability Policy 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change	+ Protecting and enhancing the leafy and biodiverse nature of Cotton End's roads and open countryside;	+ To protect and enhance the tranquil verdant character of Cotton End (Objective 1);  + To require any development and public realm improvements to make a positive contribution to the natural, built and historic environment of Cotton End Parish (Objective 10);  + To protect open spaces in the village Settlement Policy Area from development and to ensure that all residents have access to community open spaces for leisure and recreational purposes within a reasonable walking distance (Objective 5)	The tranquil verdant character of Cotton End village, and the protection and enhancement of the green and open spaces are stated as key priorities by the community. Improving access to and amenity of the green and open spaces, while recognising their natural functions incl. flood risk and biodiversity are strongly promoted by the Cotton End Plan.  In support of the NPPF sustainability policies the following Cotton End Plan policies have particular relevance:  ✓ Housing & Design Policies: Housing & Design Policies: HD3 to HD7 ✓ Open Space Policies: OS1 and OS4 ✓ Getting Around Infrastructure Policy: GA1
Economic Dimension Social Dimension Environmental Dimension	NPPF Sustainability Policy 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.  NPPF Sustainability Policy 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.  NPPF Sustainability Policy 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change	+ A variety of types, sizes and styles of attractive, durable, quality homes positively reflecting the character of the village;  + Protecting and enhancing the leafy and biodiverse nature of Cotton End's roads and open countryside;	+ To meet new housing demand in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the village, without infringing on green spaces, while preserving the landscape character of the village and remaining within the Settlement Policy Area only, having regard to context and the character of Cotton End (Objective 2);  + To protect and enhance the tranquil verdant character of Cotton End (Objective 1);  + To require any development and public realm improvements to make a positive contribution to the natural, built and historic environment of Cotton End Parish (Objective 10);  + To protect open spaces in the village Settlement Policy Area from development and to ensure that all residents have access to community open spaces for leisure and recreational purposes within a reasonable walking distance (Objective 5)	Protecting and enhancing the heritage in the built and natural environment is a thread weaved through many of the policies in the Cotton End Plan and its ambitions for future development. The Design Policies aim to deliver contributions to conserving heritage and enhancing the historic environment without being too prescriptive.  In support of NPPF sustainability policies the following Cotton End Plan policies have particular relevance:  ✓ Open Space Policies: OS1 and OS4 ✓ Housing & Design Policies: HD1 to HD7
Social Dimension Environmental Dimension	NPPF Sustainability Policy 9 Promoting sustainable transport  NPPF Sustainability Policy 11 Making efficient use of land	+ Good accessibility for public and private modes of transport and sufficient parking for all modes including cars, bicycles and motorbikes;  + A broad range of well-kept and highly frequented community and cultural facilities within easy walking distance of public transport, with transport links to other destinations nearby such as shops and services;	+ To maintain a modern and vibrant village, by supporting smart and green technologies throughout Cotton End enabling a more connected and mobile community, and improving ease of access to local products and services outside the village (Objective 6);  + To encourage walking and cycling to and from key local destinations by improving the facilities for safe walking and cycling, and adequate parking (dedicated and safe paths, lanes and tracks) within and outside Cotton End (Objective 9);  + To promote the protection and positive use of the Green Space surrounding the village Settlement Policy Area by providing more opportunity for the community to access it by foot, horseback and bicycle (Objective 4);  + To support proposals improving access, capacity, appearance and functioning of parking facilities for cars, bicycles and motorbikes (Objective 11);	Providing and promoting alternatives to the car by improving walking, cycling and access to public transport is key ambition of the Cotton End Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and the BBC Local Plan. It will be vital to delivery of this in light of the expected growth across Bedford Borough, and known health benefits of physical active lifestyles in all age groups.  A more comprehensive strategy can be delivered and considered in the development of key sites expected to be coming forward in the village over the plan period.  Increasing the delivery of sustainable transport options supports the reduction in the need for using a car.  Support for proposals that result in better bus, cycling and walking connections with surrounding villages and facilities are strongly supported as part of an infrastructure strategy that supports sustainable transport choices and healthier communities for all ages.  In support of NPPF sustainability policies the following Cotton End Plan policies have particular relevance:  ✓ Getting Around Infrastructure Policy: GA1

Sustainability Dimension	Key Sustainability Policies, NPPF	Cotton End Plan Vision response / accord	Cotton End Plan objectives (13) response / accord	Cotton End Plan Policy response / accord
Social Dimension	<p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities</p> <p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 11 Making efficient use of land</p> <p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes</p> <p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 9 Promoting sustainable transport</p>	<p>+ A diverse mix of local residents and employees of different faiths, ages, ethnicity and socio-economic means being able to live, work, study, and socialise;</p> <p>+ Protecting and enhancing the leafy and biodiverse nature of Cotton End's village neighbourhood and surrounding open countryside;</p> <p>+ A variety of types, sizes and styles of attractive and durable homes positively reflecting the character of the area;</p>	<p>+ To meet new housing demand in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the village, without infringing on green spaces, while preserving the landscape character of the village and remaining within the Settlement Policy Area only, having regard to context and the character of Cotton End (Objective 2);</p> <p>+ To maintain a modern and vibrant village, by supporting smart and green technologies throughout Cotton End enabling a more connected and mobile community, and improving ease of access to local products and services outside the village (Objective 6);</p> <p>+ To ensure Cotton End Parish Council, Cotton End Residents Group, and all the local community have a meaningful opportunity to engage with any developers and their design teams in the early stages of designing proposals for sites, including the key locations for development as identified in the Key Proposal Map (Objective 13).</p> <p>+ To protect and enhance the tranquil verdant character of Cotton End (Objective 1);</p> <p>+ To require any development and public realm improvements to make a positive contribution to the natural, built and historic environment of Cotton End Parish (Objective 10);</p> <p>+ To protect open spaces in the village Settlement Policy Area from development and to ensure that all residents have access to community open spaces for leisure and recreational purposes within a reasonable walking distance (Objective 5)</p> <p>+ To seek improvements to roads and transport infrastructure facilitating a smooth traffic flow through the village (Objective 12);</p>	<p>The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Loneliness is a recognised issue in communities with proportions of aging single households, and is increasingly better understood as having negative impacts on health and well-being.</p> <p>Supporting the increase in supply of smaller homes for people with accessibility needs such as step free or wheelchair user suitable environments is expected to provide better choices for local residents wishing to downsize and/or stay in Cotton End, near friends and established social networks. This is expected to contribute to the health and social well-being of local residents.</p> <p>Support for improved community facilities, services and improvements in the village are all aimed at creating accessible services and invitations for people to visit the village.</p> <p>Access to public transport was a key need identified by the community, with expected contributions to reduced congestion and improved air quality and more opportunities for social interaction.</p> <p>Protecting and enhancing local green spaces and open spaces including sports and play areas, as well as better, safer walking and cycling environments are considered basic infrastructure for more social interaction, healthy and inclusive communities.</p> <p>High quality communications infrastructure on the hyperlocal level of a neighbourhood is expected to contribute to a better connected, engaged and informed local community.</p> <p>Early and meaningful engagement taps into local knowledge when planning applications are prepared and homes are designed. It will offer opportunities to create consensus, more local community ownership and pride, more distinct designs closely aligned with local needs and ambitions, and a smoother application process.</p> <p>In support of the NPPF principal and listed NPPF sustainability policies the following Cotton End Plan policies have particular relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Housing &amp; Design Polices: HD1 to HD7</li> <li>✓ Getting Around Infrastructure Policy: GA1</li> <li>✓ Open Space Polices OS1 and OS4</li> </ul>
Economic Dimension Social Dimension Environmental Dimension	<p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 112 Achieving well-designed places §126 §130 §131 §132 §134</p> <p>NPPF Sustainability Policy 4 Decision-making § 39 §40 §42</p>	<p>+ A variety of types, sizes and styles of attractive and durable homes positively reflecting the character of the area;</p> <p>+ A diverse mix of local residents and employees of different faiths, ages, ethnicity and socio-economic means being able to live, work, study, and socialise;</p> <p>+ Protecting and enhancing the leafy and biodiverse nature of Cotton End's village neighbourhood and surrounding open countryside;</p>	<p>+ To ensure Cotton End Parish Council, Cotton End Residents Group, and all the local community have a meaningful opportunity to engage with any developers and their design teams in the early stages of designing proposals for sites, including the key locations for development as identified in the Key Proposal Map (Objective 13).</p>	<p>Early and meaningful engagement taps into local knowledge when planning applications are prepared and homes are designed. It will offer opportunities to create consensus, more local community ownership and pride, more distinct designs closely aligned with local needs and ambitions, and a smoother application process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Housing &amp; Design Polices: HD3</li> </ul>



## Section B: Fit of Cotton End Plan with Strategic Local Plan Polices

3.1 The Cotton End Plan must demonstrate that it is in general conformity with the development plan for the area of the local authority. This section shows how the Cotton End Plan is in general conformity with the objectives and strategic policies in current Bedford Borough Council Local Plan Local Plan 2030 and the emerging Local Plan Local Plan 2040.

In summer, 2022 Bedford Borough Council carried out consultation as part of the emerging Local Plan 2040 production. The plan is expected to be adopted in 2023 or 2024. In the preparation of the Cotton End Plan regard was given to the issues and options presented. The work on the emerging Local Plan 2040 was conditioned by the core strategies in the Local Plan 2030, adopted in 2020. Both the Local Plan 2030 and emerging Local Plan 2040 documents set out strategic locations for large scale development, but neither propose small sites. The Cotton End Plan has focused on design quality in new development and made provisions to respond to small site allocations not currently explored, tested or specified by the emerging Local Plan 2040 or the adopted Local Plan 2030. A review of the Cotton End Plan Policy is anticipated by 2029.

### 2.0 Vision and objectives

2.1 The purpose of the vision is to demonstrate the focus and direction of the local plan.

By the end of the plan period:

The borough will have become a greener, more sustainable, more attractive and prosperous place to live and work. Tackling climate change and adapting to and mitigating its effects will be at the heart of new development throughout the borough.

Well-planned growth supported by appropriate infrastructure and avoiding areas of high flood risk will enable the creation of strong, safe and resilient local communities in environments that facilitate healthy and independent living for all. Sustainable development and transport, the use of sustainable and renewable energy technology, green infrastructure and new green spaces will all contribute to reducing the borough's carbon footprint and securing a net-gain in both biodiversity and environmental quality.

The development of new settlements at Little Barford and Kempston Hardwick will play a primary role in delivering much needed housing to 2040 and beyond. The development at Stewartby Brickworks will be complete, forming a new community on the old brickmaking site, celebrating its heritage.

The development of East West Rail through Bedford will be complete. Bedford will benefit from a new town centre railway hub with direct links to Oxford and Cambridge, increasing connectivity, investment and growth. As a requirement of the planning process, local development will be well served up-front transport links and speedy internet access. Development of high quality commercial and office spaces, greater connectivity and the completion of significant infrastructure projects will have a positive impact on the local economy attracting high tech employment sectors, creative industries and supporting existing retail centres.

In Bedford town centre a wide range of uses will provide greater variety and a broader visitor experience that will make the town centre more diverse and sustainable. Improvements to the High Street will make it a more enjoyable place, where local independent retailers thrive and people choose to linger. Previously planned vibrant new town neighbourhoods will be complete, widening housing choices in and close to the town centre, and transforming brownfield sites on the western side of the town and south of the river. Additional town centre living will encourage sustainable methods of travel, enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre

and support for local businesses. A regenerated Mayes Yard will bring vacant spaces back into use. The town centre will be used increasingly as a community space, accessible to residents in the town, the borough and beyond.

Good design will help to improve quality of life and to create safer, vibrant and more sustainable places, both in the urban area of Bedford and Kempston and in the surrounding village communities. More walkable neighbourhoods that can include schools, health facilities, community halls, green spaces including allotments and other services will be in place. The borough's built heritage and wider historic environment will continue to be respected, protected and enhanced.

Development will be sensitively planned to complement the borough's natural environment. The borough's countryside, its intrinsic character and beauty including areas of tranquil retreat will be recognised. Rural communities will embrace appropriate development, in many instances through their own neighbourhood plans. This development will reflect each area's unique local character whilst providing and supporting much needed housing and employment, rural facilities and services, including high speed broadband and public transport. Locally important green spaces and valued local landscapes will be protected and enjoyed by all.

The Embankment and formal Victorian parks in Bedford, along with the River Great Ouse valley and its riverside villages, will continue to form the backbone of the borough's rich green and blue infrastructure. There will be new multi-functional green spaces to complement and expand the existing network of paths and green corridors. Country parks north of Brickhill, west of Bedford and in the new town centre neighbourhoods will have matured and along with the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Park will encourage healthy lifestyles, tourism and a diverse ecology.

The Forest of Marston Vale will continue to grow and mature, transforming the landscape. Together with the completed Bedford River Valley Park this part of the borough will be transformed through new leisure opportunities, encouraging increased visitor numbers.

The Local Plan 2030 and emerging Local Plan 2040 contain objectives for the whole of Bedford Borough. In the following table, both sets of objectives are mapped against the Cotton End Plan's objectives and policies demonstrating accord with overarching strategic objectives.

In summary, there are five key policy thrusts to the Cotton End Plan:

- A. Supporting high quality design in development including protecting and enhancing the landscape and village character of Cotton End  
(in accord with NPPF Sustainability Policy 12 Achieving well-designed places and NPPF Sustainability Policy 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)
- B. Supporting the supply of smaller and more affordable homes, and homes suitable for people with higher accessibility demands in their living environments  
(in accord with NPPF Sustainability Policy 11 Making efficient use of land and NPPF Sustainability Policy 12 Achieving well-designed places)
- C. Improving the vitality and vibrancy of the village  
(in accord with NPPF Sustainability Policy 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities)
- D. Improving local infrastructure for better, more active and healthy travel choices for residents of all ages  
(in accord with NPPF Sustainability Policy 9 Promoting sustainable transport)
- E. Delivering early and meaningful engagement in pre-application design work  
(in accord with NPPF Sustainability Policy 12 Achieving well-designed places)

Local Plan 2040 <b>Theme 1</b> for all of Bedford Borough	Local Plan 2040 Objectives for all of Bedford Borough	Cotton End Plan Objectives	Cotton End Plan Policy Response
Theme 1: Greener – Working towards making Bedford a net zero carbon emissions borough whilst improving, enhancing and creating green infrastructure and spaces	Deliver the necessary health and social infrastructure to increase well-being in both the urban and rural areas of the borough.	<p>+ To protect and enhance the tranquil verdant character of Cotton End (Objective 1);</p> <p>+ To promote the protection and positive use of the Green Space surrounding the village Settlement Policy Area by providing more opportunity for the community to access it by foot, horseback and bicycle (Objective 4);</p> <p>+ To protect open spaces in the village Settlement Policy Area from development and to ensure that all residents have access to community open spaces for leisure and recreational purposes within a reasonable walking distance (Objective 5);</p> <p>To maintain a modern and vibrant village, by supporting smart and green technologies throughout Cotton End enabling a more connected and mobile community, and improving ease of access to local products and services outside the village (Objective 6);</p>	<p>✓ Housing &amp; Design Policies: HD1 HD4 HD5</p> <p>✓ Open Space Policies: OS1 to OS4</p> <p>✓ Getting Around Infrastructure Policy: GA1</p>
Theme 1: Greener – Working towards making Bedford a net zero carbon emissions borough whilst improving, enhancing and creating green infrastructure and spaces	Improve the borough's transport infrastructure in time to support growth in the local economy and to make the borough more attractive as a place to live and do business.	<p>To encourage walking and cycling to and from key local destinations by improving the facilities for safe walking and cycling, and adequate parking (dedicated and safe paths, lanes and tracks) within and outside Cotton End (Objective 9);</p> <p>To seek improvements to roads and transport infrastructure facilitating a smooth traffic flow through the village (Objective 12);</p>	<p>✓ Getting Around Infrastructure Policy: GA1</p>

Local Plan 2040 <b>Theme 2</b> for all of Bedford Borough	Local Plan 2040 Objectives for all of Bedford Borough	Cotton End Plan Objectives	Cotton End Plan Policy Response
Theme 2: More accessible – Encouraging sustainable travel as well as taking the opportunities offered by strategic infrastructure for greater regional and national connectivity	Reduce congestion in the borough, particularly into and around the town centre, including making journeys by public transport, walking and cycling more attractive to encourage an increase in more sustainable and healthy modes of transport.	<p>To encourage walking and cycling to and from key local destinations by improving the facilities for safe walking and cycling, and adequate parking (dedicated and safe paths, lanes and tracks) within and outside Cotton End (Objective 9);</p> <p>To seek improvements to roads and transport infrastructure facilitating a smooth traffic flow through the village (Objective 12);</p>	<p>✓ Getting Around Infrastructure Policy: GA1</p>
Theme 2: More accessible – Encouraging sustainable travel as well as taking the opportunities offered by strategic infrastructure for greater regional and national connectivity	Improve “first mile / last mile” local connections to strategic infrastructure, allowing for easier access and greater integration.	To maintain a modern and vibrant village, by supporting smart and green technologies throughout Cotton End enabling a more connected and mobile community, and improving ease of access to local products and services outside the village (Objective 6);	<p>✓ Housing &amp; Design Policies: HD1</p>



<b>Local Plan 2040 Theme 3 for all of Bedford Borough</b>	<b>Local Plan 2040 Objectives for all of Bedford Borough</b>	<b>Cotton End Plan Objectives</b>	<b>Cotton End Plan Policy Response</b>
Theme 3: More prosperous – Supporting new innovative businesses, educational and employment opportunities	Deliver the necessary health and social infrastructure to increase well-being in both the urban and rural areas of the borough.	+ To maintain a modern and vibrant village, by supporting smart and green technologies throughout Cotton End enabling a more connected and mobile community, and improving ease of access to local products and services outside the village (Objective 6);  + To promote an active community within the village, with improved community and cultural facilities for residents and visitors (Objective 7);  + To encourage and facilitate the development of community buildings and sites in the village, in order to protect and enhance community facilities and amenities for the community and visitors (Objective 8);	✓ Housing & Design Polices: HD1  ✓ Getting Around Infrastructure Policy: GA1
Theme 3: More prosperous – Supporting new innovative businesses, educational and employment opportunities	Improve the borough's transport infrastructure in time to support growth in the local economy and to make the borough more attractive as a place to live and do business.	To seek improvements to roads and transport infrastructure facilitating a smooth traffic flow through the village (Objective 12);	✓ Getting Around Infrastructure Policy: GA1

<b>Local Plan 2040 Theme 4 for all of Bedford Borough</b>	<b>Local Plan 2040 Objectives for all of Bedford Borough</b>	<b>Cotton End Plan Objectives</b>	<b>Cotton End Plan Policy Response</b>
Theme 4: Better places – Developing high quality, well-designed and beautiful places for all to use and enjoy	Deliver the level of housing growth required by the Government's standard methodology calculation.	+ To meet new housing demand in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the village, without infringing on green spaces, while preserving the landscape character of the village and remaining within the Settlement Policy Area only, having regard to context and the character of Cotton End (Objective 2);	✓ Housing & Design Polices: HD1 HD2 HD3
Theme 4: Better places – Developing high quality, well-designed and beautiful places for all to use and enjoy	Support and create a high quality, inclusive and safe built environment which promotes healthy living, values and enhances local landscapes and settlement character, and which conserves and enhances the historic environment to be enjoyed by all.	+ To meet new housing demand in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the village, without infringing on green spaces, while preserving the landscape character of the village and remaining within the Settlement Policy Area only, having regard to context and the character of Cotton End (Objective 2);  + To support the retention of smaller homes available to younger people and older downsizers (Objective 3);	✓ Housing & Design Polices: HD1 to HD7
Theme 4: Better places – Developing high quality, well-designed and beautiful places for all to use and enjoy	Encourage the re-use of land that has been previously developed where it is viable and sustainable to do so.	+ To meet new housing demand in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the village, without infringing on green spaces, while preserving the landscape character of the village and remaining within the Settlement Policy Area only, having regard to context and the character of Cotton End (Objective 2);	✓ Housing & Design Polices: HD2
Theme 4: Better places – Developing high quality, well-designed and beautiful places for all to use and enjoy	Provide appropriate amounts and types of housing to meet the needs of the borough's urban and rural communities over the lifetime of the Plan making the housing stock more adaptable and resilient.	+ To meet new housing demand in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the village, without infringing on green spaces, while preserving the landscape character of the village and remaining within the Settlement Policy Area only, having regard to context and the character of Cotton End (Objective 2);  + To support the retention of smaller homes available to younger people and older downsizers (Objective 3);	✓ Housing & Design Polices: HD1 HD2 HD7
Theme 4: Better places – Developing high quality, well-designed and beautiful places for all to use and enjoy	Achieve a borough where everybody has appropriate access to high quality health and social care, as well as everyday essential services and community facilities, where social and cultural wellbeing are supported, enabling all residents to lead healthy and independent lives.	+ To maintain a modern and vibrant village, by supporting smart and green technologies throughout Cotton End enabling a more connected and mobile community, and improving ease of access to local products and services outside the village (Objective 6);  + To promote an active community within the village, with improved community and cultural facilities for residents and visitors (Objective 7);  + To encourage and facilitate the development of community buildings and sites in the village, in order to protect and enhance community facilities and amenities for the community and visitors (Objective 8);	✓ Housing & Design Polices: HD1  ✓ Getting Around Infrastructure Policy: GA1

The table below maps all relevant policies in the emerging Local Plan 2040 against Cotton End Plan policies. Cotton End Plan policies are in general conformity with the Local Plan 2040 policies and contribute to achieving sustainable development in Bedford Borough. There are no sites allocated in the Cotton End Plan Area through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Relevant Local Plan Local Plan 2040 Strategic Policies	Cotton End Plan Policies Response
✓ Policy DS1(S) Resources and climate change	<p>Housing &amp; Design Polices: HD3 HD5 HD6 and The Cotton End Design Code set out a list of requirements and expectations supporting development with eco design that move to carbon neutrality in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bee bricks</li> <li>✓ Bat boxes</li> <li>✓ Swift bricks or boxes</li> <li>✓ House Martin cups</li> <li>✓ Electric car charging</li> <li>✓ Solar energy</li> <li>✓ Rainwater harvesting</li> <li>✓ Heat pumps</li> <li>✓ In the case of extensions to existing buildings, retrofitting them with measures to reduce energy consumption</li> <li>✓ Taking opportunities to generate, incorporate and connect to renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure</li> <li>✓ Provision of new, and retention of, existing, healthy high quality trees, woodland and hedges</li> <li>✓ Managing flood risk associated with more extreme weather events</li> </ul> <p>Housing &amp; Design Policy: HD2 sets out expectations supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Delivery of a density of development that makes the most of accessible sites</li> </ul>
✓ Policy DS2(S) Spatial strategy	<p>Housing &amp; Design Polices: HD1 HD2 HD3 HD4 HD5 set out a list of requirements and expectations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Safeguard the intrinsic character of the countryside and the environment and biodiversity within it through the careful management of development to meet local needs whilst supporting the rural economy</li> </ul>
✓ Policy DS3(S) Amount and timing of housing growth	<p>Housing &amp; Design Polices: HD1 HD2 support the increase in supply of smaller homes, homes for the less able and asks applicants to demonstrate how local housing needs are met through the development. This is in the context of demographic trends such as an increasing proportion of elderly residents, that are identified in the Cotton End Housing Needs Survey and more detailed local evidence outlined in the Submission Cotton End Plan as part of the policy justification</p>
✓ Policy DS5(S) Distribution of growth	<p>Housing &amp; Design Polices: HD1 HD2 support the distribution of growth, and the Parish Council has chosen to allocate sites for development in the Submission Cotton End Plan to meet particular local needs.</p>
✓ Policy HOU12 South of Bedford area	<p>Housing &amp; Design Polices: HD1 HD5 support growth in the South of Bedford area</p> <p>Housing &amp; Design Policy: HD6 contributes to surface water management issues</p> <p>Getting Around Policy: GA1 supports active travel networks, healthy walking neighbourhoods and multi user routes</p>
✓ Policy DM3(S) Housing mix	<p>Housing &amp; Design Polices: HD1 HD2 HD7 support a mix of dwelling sizes and types to meet the identified needs of the community including families with children, older people, people and people with disabilities</p>
✓ Policy DM6 Residential space standards	<p>Housing &amp; Design Policy: HD1 sets out a list of requirements and expectations for all new dwellings to conform to described space standards, levels of private amenity and usable floor area</p>
✓ Policy DM7 Environmental Net Gain	<p>Housing &amp; Design Policy: HD5 requires any development proposals to provide environmental and biodiversity net gain</p>
✓ Policy DM9 Horse and Equestrian development / activities	<p>Housing &amp; Design Policy: HD4 supports Horse and Equestrian related non-residential development</p>
✓ Policy DM10 Non designated heritage assets	<p>Housing &amp; Design Policy: HD3 identifies non designated heritage assets within Cotton End</p>
✓ Policy DM11 Outdoor sports space in association with development	<p>Open Space &amp; Recreation Policy: OS4 supports the provision financial contributions for the enhancement to existing play areas in the Neighbourhood Area and the provision of enhancements to existing play areas</p>

## Section C Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment

In order to determine if a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment was required, for example, where: a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development, or the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals, CEPC subjected the draft Cotton End Plan proposal to Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation. As part of this formal consultation statutory consultees including the Historic England, Natural England and Environment Agency were consulted on the content of the plan, and this consultation concluded that the Cotton End Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects as:

- The Cotton End Plan at the present time will not play a role in allocating land for employment;
- The Cotton End Plan is unlikely to affect any designated sites in the vicinity or lead to other environmental effects;
- The Cotton End Plan seeks to align with the adopted Local Plan 2040 which has been subject to full SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal;
- The Cotton End Plan does not allocate any strategic sites or seek to depart from Bedford Borough Council's current planning policy framework;
- The small spatial extent and the magnitude of the population affected are not considered significant for the purpose of the SEA.

The full version of the **Cotton End Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement** is available on the Cotton End Plan website for review.

## Section D EU Obligations

The Cotton End Plan is considered to be compatible with the EU Habitats Directive and the subsequent 2017 Regulations domestic legislation derived from EU law. The Cotton End Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 2007) (Amendment) Regulations) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. So, it is concluded that the Cotton End Plan will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any internationally designated sites, either on its own or in combination with other plans, and as such, it does not need to be subject to an HRA Appropriate Assessment

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