



# **Steeple Ashton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 – 2038 Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Draft Plan July 2025**

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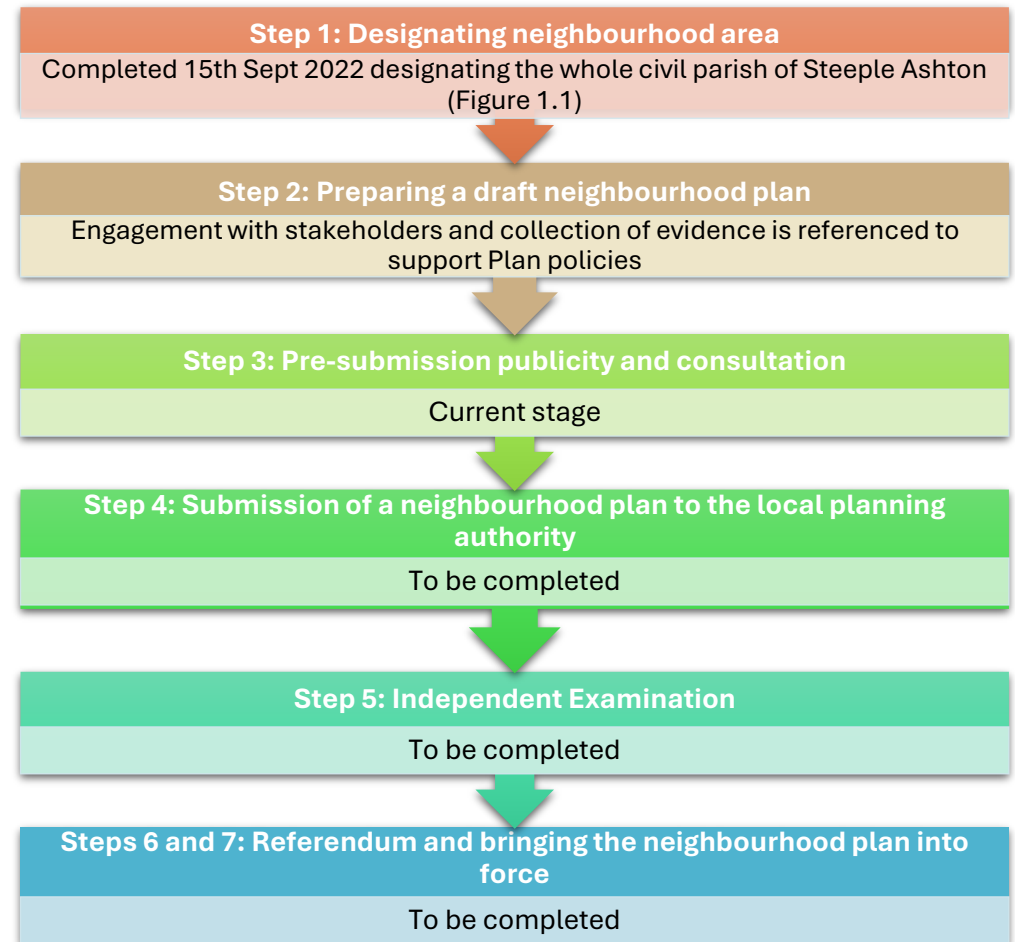
# ONE



## 1. Introduction

### What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

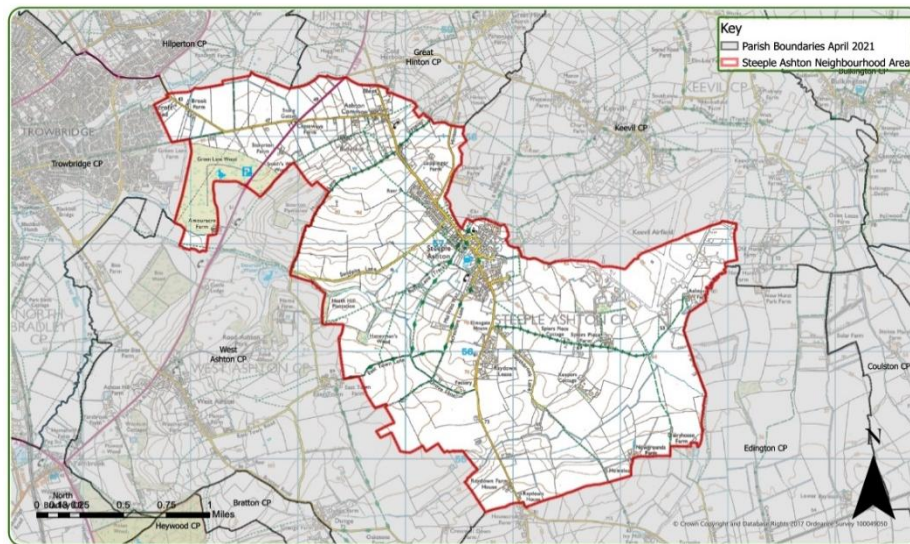
- 1.1. The Localism Act 2011 enabled communities to shape new development and promote better land use in their community by preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs). The aim of the legislation is to empower local communities to use the planning system to promote appropriate and sustainable development in their area.
- 1.2. A NDP can set out a vision for an area and planning policies for the use and development of land. The plan must be in conformity with the government's National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF), as well as the Wiltshire Core Strategy/Local Plan (currently under review) and must also satisfy the legally required Basic Conditions.
- 1.3. The Regulations set out the steps that must be taken in preparing an NDP, including formal consultation, examination and a parish referendum to approve it. Once adopted – the formal term is 'made' - the NDP becomes part of the Wiltshire Development Plan and forms the basis for determining planning applications in Steeple Ashton Parish.



## Why produce a NDP for Steeple Ashton?

- 1.4. The NDP covers the whole of the civil parish of Steeple Ashton as defined at Figure 1.1. The NDP has been prepared by residents and members of the Parish Council, working as part of the Steering Group and supported by independent consultants.
- 1.5. The overarching aim of preparing the Steeple Ashton NDP is to involve the local residents, through consultation, in decisions about how their village and rural setting will develop. The NDP provides a significant opportunity for local people to influence planning decisions, as planning applications are determined by Wiltshire Council 'in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.

Figure 1.1: Designated Steeple Ashton Neighbourhood Area



## What is the Plan period?

- 1.6. The NDP looks ahead to 2038, to coincide with the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan (2020-2038), which it shares its evidence-base with. The NDP will be reviewed following adoption of the Local Plan to ensure that it remains up to

date, taking into account the updated Local Plan evidence base and any additional housing requirements.

## How does our NDP reflect views of the local community?

- 1.7. Through our NDP, we have set out what the community expects from any new development, the assets and areas defined for protection, and what we need more of to help us prosper. In order to ensure that our NDP reflects a community-shared long-term vision, a range of community engagement activities were undertaken:
  - Public Launch event in December 2022 – presentation and exhibition followed by a community questionnaire to form the basis of the Plan objectives and policy direction.
  - Call for Sites Exercise in December 2022
  - Site Assessment Exhibition on the potential site options for housing and commercial development in January 2024
  - Continued reporting in the Steeple Ashton Village Newsletter.
- 1.8. A full explanation of the engagement with all stakeholders is provided within the accompanying Consultation Statement.
- 1.9. The accompanying Consultation Report of the Regulation 14 consultation explains how the representations have been taken into account and modifications made to the Submission Plan.
- 1.10. The NDP will only be 'made' following a successful referendum thereby ensuring the Plan has a mandate from the local community.

# TWO

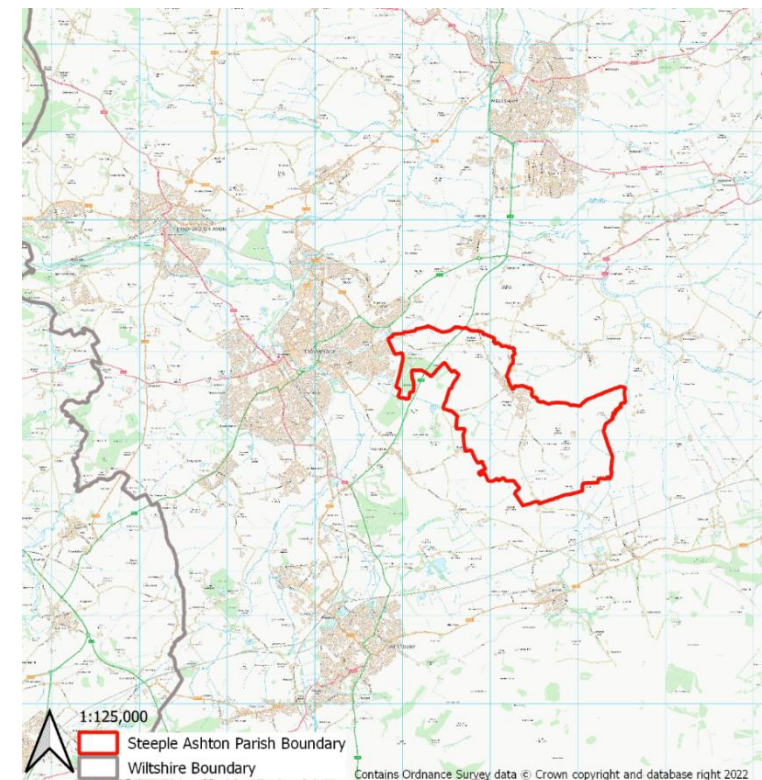


## 2. A Portrait of Steeple Ashton

### Location

- 2.1. The Civil Parish of Steeple Ashton covers an area of just over 1,025 hectares and lies within west Wiltshire. The village is situated in a triangle bounded by the towns of Trowbridge, Devizes, and Westbury. Despite its proximity to the county town of Trowbridge, Steeple Ashton remains a distinct settlement with its own community and character. The village is linear in form, with the settlement area extending about one mile in length in a southeasterly direction.
- 2.2. The main village of Steeple Ashton is surrounded by small clusters of development at Ashton Common to the north as well as to the south along Edington Road, where there are a number of commercial properties.
- 2.3. Steeple Ashton lies adjacent to the Parishes of Hilperton (northwest), Great Hinton (North), Keevil (northeast), Edington (southeast), and West Ashton (southwest).

Figure 2.1 Geographical context of the designated neighbourhood area



## A Brief History of Steeple Ashton

- 2.4. The first known mention of a place called Ashton is in a document of 964, when King Edgar defined its boundaries. At this time, the parish covered an extent far wider than the present parish, extending north and west to include Great Hinton, Semington, and West Ashton within its boundary. Each area was however separated into individual civil parishes in the late 1900's, which greatly reduced the overall area of Steeple Ashton.
- 2.5. In the Middle Ages Steeple Ashton was the centre of the great Romsey Abbey estates in the district. The courts of the abbey's Hundred of Whorwellsdown were held there, and in 1266, Henry III granted a weekly market and yearly fair, held in September, to the abbess. The market 'cross' still stands on the village green. It consists of a stepped base surmounted by a short circular column, which is crowned by a square stone block with a sundial on each face and a ball finial with wrought iron cross over. The date 1679 is carved on it and an inscription states that it was set up in 1071.
- 2.6. Steeple Ashton was a prosperous village. In the taxation of 1334 Steeple Ashton paid more than Trowbridge or Westbury, and in 1377 its 260 poll-tax payers placed it 18th in the whole county<sup>1</sup>. This prosperity was further added to in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century through the growth of the local cloth industry. The Church of St Mary the Virgin is a splendid reminder of this, and several other houses in the village have structures of the medieval period.
- 2.7. At around the year 1500, a fire destroyed a part of the village, the market gradually fell into disuse and the most prosperous clothiers moved away. Steeple Ashton fell into a long decline, although remained a wealthy working village with a lawyer, doctor, and a number of tradesmen living side by side with the farmers. Two failed attempts were made to revive the market in the 18th century, with the 1831 market held on 18<sup>th</sup> September said to be inconsiderable.

- 2.8. In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the main road from Bath to Salisbury ran through Steeple Ashton, but after a short while, traffic moved to the Warminster Route. Not until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, did it become possible to live in the village again and work in neighbouring towns and further afield, leading to a considerable expansion of the village with the construction of several sizeable new estates.
- 2.9. Following the decline of the cloth trade, agriculture became the mainstay of Steeple Ashton. Historically, the parish was farmed by the Common field (strip-field) system, but the arable lands have gradually been enclosed with hedges to create the landscape we see today.



<sup>1</sup> 'Steeple Ashton', A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 8, Warminster, Westbury and Whorwellsdown Hundreds, (London, 1965), pp. 198-218. British History Online <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilts/vol8/pp198-218>

## Population

- 2.10. The population of the civil Parish is approximately 1,200 persons living in 510<sup>2</sup> dwellings. According to the latest census data, most of the residents are of an older population, with approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of residents being over 60 years old, which is higher than the Wiltshire average of 28%. 25% of the population of Steeple Ashton are between the age of 40-60, 19% are between the age of 20-40, and 22% are under 20 years old.

## Heritage and Built Form

- 2.11. Steeple Ashton has a strong linear form of built development. The main village street, High Street, winds through the village from the northwest to the southeast, with development fronting the road along much of its length. The more visually prominent focal point towards the centre of the village is the Church of St Mary the Virgin, a Grade I Listed building dating from the late 15<sup>th</sup> Century. The church, with its tall tower and pinnacles forms a dominating feature across Steeple Ashton and the surrounding area. Some of the oldest buildings can be found near the church along Church Street, such as Manor House (also Grade I Listed), as well as on High Street. There are also 5 Grade II\* listed buildings within the village which include Ashton House and Black Barn Cottage.
- 2.12. The Parish contains a small village green which sits centrally within the village, adjacent to the road at High Street. The green hosts a 17<sup>th</sup> century market cross in the form of a Tuscan column and an 18<sup>th</sup> century village lock-up and is framed by 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings. There is also a war memorial cross situated on the High Street. The village also holds three 1930's gas petrol pumps which remain at a disused George Moore petrol station with a further pump in a gated area behind.
- 2.13. Church Street, Vicarage Lane and Dark Lane form a series of loops off the northeastern side of High Street and these streets make up much of the village's Conservation Area. They additionally maintain a sense of containment and rural character of the village. Many of these lanes extend out

into the countryside, linking the centre of the village with a network of rural footpaths and green lanes. These older parts of the village contain a rich variety of house types, styles and materials. Most are two-storey in scale, except for The Manor, The Longs Arms and Woodlune House. Walls are mainly of brick and stone construction, some of which have been painted or rendered. Clay tile is the dominant roof material, with only two thatched roofs and several Welsh slate.

- 2.14. The central part of the village is especially notable for heritage importance, which portrays the tower and pinnacles of the Church of St Mary rising above the historic buildings on The Green as a focal point. Stretches of ancient pitch paving have been retained and restored as well as roadside walls, grass verges, and trees & hedges down Church Street, Dark Lane North, The Strand and areas of Butts Lane – all of which contribute to a sense of enclosure and character throughout the village.



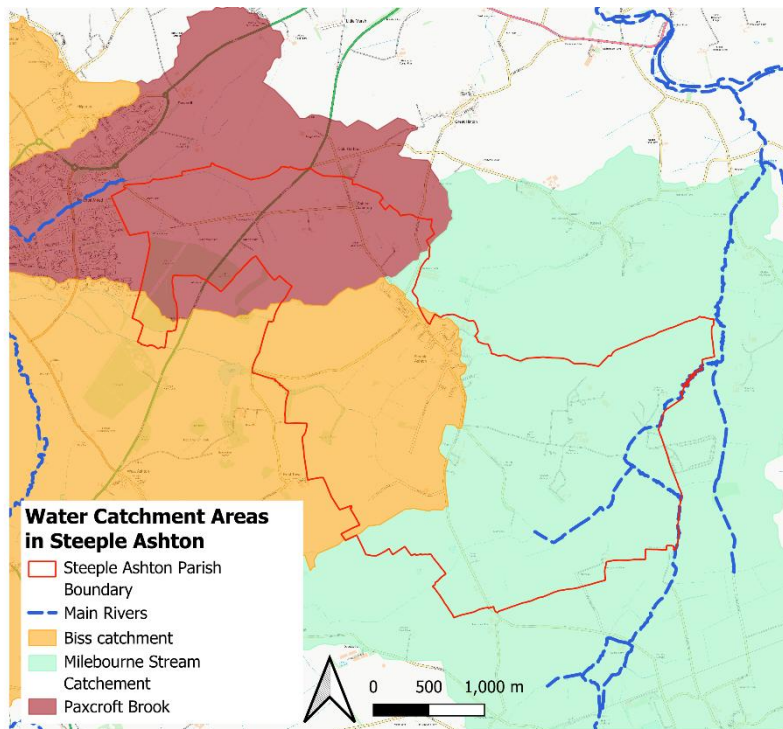
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<sup>2</sup> 2021 Census data

## Drainage and Flooding

- 2.15. The Parish lies within the Severn River Basin District and forms part of the Avon Bristol and Somerset North Streams catchment. The elevated ridge, upon which much of the village sits, acts as a watershed from which three water bodies flow.
- 2.16. The Milebourne Stream rises from springs along the northern edge of Salisbury Plain and flows north, around the eastern edge of the parish, towards Semington Brook and ultimately the Bristol Avon. This stream picks up surface water running off the eastern side of Steeple Ashton and from Keevil Airfield.
- 2.17. The Paxcroft Brook, a tributary of the River Biss, borders the northern and northwestern corner of the Parish Boundary. This brook picks up surface water from farmland in the Ashton Common area of the parish.

Figure 2.2: Water Catchment Area within Steeple Ashton



- 2.18. A further tributary of the River Biss rises at the rear of Ashton House and flows west through farmland to Stourton Water and then joins the main river at Biss Meadows Country Park in Trowbridge. This stream takes much of the surface water drainage from the central and western part of the village.
- 2.19. The village of Steeple Ashton itself is not vulnerable to fluvial flooding due to its elevated location. However, a large area of medium and high flood risk is associated with the Milebourne Stream in the east of the Parish. The centre of the village, particularly along High Street, can be vulnerable to surface water flooding when drain capacity is overwhelmed. Farmland adjacent to the A350 in the north of the parish can also be affected by surface water flooding.
- 2.20. Despite its elevated position, groundwater can be found at shallow depth across much of the village. This is associated with layers of sandstone and limestone which hold localised perched water tables. As a result of this, wells can be found in the gardens of some older properties.

## Geology and Landscape

- 2.21. The landscape of Steeple Ashton is characterised by its low rolling hills, rising from the flat Clay Vale of the Avon Valley and extending to the scarp edge of the chalk downland to the south. The area is described in the 2019 Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment as Rolling Clay Lowland.
- 2.22. This landscape is closely linked to its geology and the various rock strata can be picked out by the changes from lower lying flat pasture to undulating higher ground. The land extending from Trowbridge east towards Ashton Common is underlain by the Oxford Clay, the oldest geological unit; normally seen as a heavy grey clay and often used for brick making. As the ground rises to the south and east of Ashton Common, so the geology changes to interbedded limestones, sandstones and mudstones of the Corallian Group. These strata underlie the entire village of Steeple Ashton and some of the limestone may have historically been used as a local building stone. Fossil corals can still be found in the local fields, originating from these strata.
- 2.23. The youngest strata in Steeple Ashton are encountered as Edington Road drops down to the south from Drove Lane and this is the Kimmeridge Clay;

which continues through the flat pastures across to the railway line and the villages of Edington and Bratton.

- 2.24. The geology of Steeple Ashton dates back to the Jurassic period, some 150 to 160 million years ago. At this time parts of Britain were covered by shallow tropical seas in which mudstones, limestones and sandstones were deposited.
- 2.25. The soils in Steeple Ashton comprise mainly limestone brash and some clay, with drier loams to the south of the village. The limestone ridge is surrounded by poor draining lower-lying clay valleys on all sides.
- 2.26. The setting of Steeple Ashton encompasses an area of rolling topography, with the main village situated in an elevated position in relation to the surrounding landscape. The rolling lowlands are covered by a mixture of arable and pastoral farmland. Patches of rough grassland are also peppered throughout the area. Field pattern is relatively regular, consisting of a spread of small to medium-sized fields. Landscape structure is generally mature, with intact hedgerows demarcating field boundaries. Mature hedgerow trees and small clumps of trees within fields are also a distinctive characteristic. Distinct woodlands are present in the west, comprising Stourton Plantation, Smith's Well Wood and Green Lane Wood. Keevil airfield occupies a large proportion of the landscape within the eastern part of the parish (and is a distinct and recognisable landscape feature). An interconnecting network of minor rural roads serves the area and provides connection to adjoining villages. In places, these roads are single track and lined on both sides by tall hedgerows. Several footpaths also traverse the landscape.
- 2.27. Within the settlement boundary along High Street, the landscape is contained and focusses on the sensitivity of the designated conservation area. The village houses a combination of attractive and distinctive historic buildings. St. Mary's church provides a landmark within the village and within views from the surrounding landscape. A number of other traditional vernacular buildings (combination of red brick, or black timber-with white infilling) line the High

Street. Manor houses also form distinctive characteristics within the village fabric.

- 2.28. From various vantage points around the village, the panorama is quite impressive with views westwards to East Town and West Ashton, south to the escarpment of Salisbury Plain, east towards Keevil and the high chalk downs beyond Devizes, and northwards from Ashton Common towards Trowbridge, Bradford-on-Avon, Bowden Hill, and Corsham<sup>3</sup>. These views contribute towards a strong, recognisable sense of place.
- 2.29. Surrounding the village are arable fields and pastureland which are bordered with established hedgerows and contains woodlands such as Biss Wood and Green Lane Wood, both of which belong to Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. These areas are home to mammals including foxes, badgers, brown hares and hedgehogs – the latter of which are also to be observed in the settlement area. The village itself contains many trees and green spaces that attract songbirds and larger birds such as owls, cuckoos, and woodpeckers<sup>4</sup>. Corvids prosper noisily in the taller village trees. In addition to house martins, swifts can be heard above the village in summer, but fewer buildings offer them suitable habitats.

## **Biodiversity**

- 2.30. Most of the land in Steeple Ashton is open countryside in agricultural use which has a rich network of hedgerows and trees. There is one large Local Nature Reserve to the west of the Parish at Green Lane Wood.
- 2.31. In terms of Statutory Designations, there is one SSSI at Steeple Ashton between Spiers Piece and Southbrook Lane. Much of the village is within the 6.4km visitor catchment of the Salisbury Plain SPA where additional recreational pressures associated with new residential development should be mitigated to protect ground nesting birds and their habitats.
- 2.32. Steeple Ashton is not far from the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This is a Natura 2000 site and an HRA is normally required for development that might affect it. Although the Bath and Bradford

<sup>3</sup> <https://steeple-ashton.co.uk/document-category/neighbourhood-plan-documents/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://steeple-ashton.co.uk/document-category/neighbourhood-plan-documents/>

on Avon Bat SAC forms the ‘main hubs or nodes’ for bat habitat, guidance describes how bats travel far beyond these for temporary roosts, foraging areas and community corridors. Wiltshire Council have produced a Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy SPD (TBMS), which states:

*“The landscape surrounding Trowbridge is known to be of high importance for bats, supporting at least 14 of the 18 UK bat species... In particular, woodlands to the east and southeast of Trowbridge are known to support a large and significant breeding meta-population of Bechstein’s bat, including significant maternity colonies in Biss Wood... The landscape surrounding Trowbridge is also known to be important for greater and lesser horseshoe bats, with roosts of conservation significance recorded in the area.”*

- 2.33. The Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (TBMS) identifies Green Lane Wood as woodland used by breeding Bechstein’s Bats. The north-west part of the village is therefore within the Medium Risk Bat Sensitivity Zone where development will have the potential to adversely impact the nearby SAC and any development will require considerable mitigation measures to retain, enhance or create bat habitats. A smaller area is within the High-Risk Sensitivity Zone where development is unlikely to be acceptable due to high impacts on the bat SAC populations because of increased recreational pressures.



## Housing

- 2.34. As of the 2021 census data, the parish hosts approximately 510 households, a mixture of mostly detached and semi-detached dwellings with character. Some of the properties are of historical importance which can be found mainly along High Street and Church Street, all of which propose different house types and materials. There are also several cul-de-sacs that extend off the southwestern side of the main village street and serve more recent housing developments, which have a more geometric layout than the historic parts of the village. Much of these recent developments have taken place on the western side of the High Street, the most recent of which have been the developments at Home Farm and Bartletts Mead. Since then, new developments have been through small sites of 1 or 2 units. More modern houses across the village tend to have been faced with reconstructed stone and have cement tile roofs.
- 2.35. Considering the 510 households, almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> are occupied by a single person and 66% made up of one-family occupiers. 84% of the dwellings are owner-occupied with approximately 8% socially rented. 83% of the housing stock is made up of 3- and 4-bedroom houses, leaving only 18% made up for 1- or 2-bedroom houses which is significantly lower than the Wiltshire average. The average bedroom per household is 3.3 with over half of the dwellings being detached and 31% semi-detached. 90% of all the dwellings are over-occupied by 1 or more bedrooms.
- 2.36. There is a low percentage of houses that have no permanent residents (i.e. holiday let properties), with over 95% of households having at least one permanent occupier.

## Economy and Employment

- 2.37. The economic activity in Steeple Ashton is characterised by low levels of unemployment. Of those who are economically active, only 2% are unemployed. 42% of the of the population are, however, economically inactive, reflective of the higher proportion of the older population, where 27% are retired, and 17% of students which is also reflective of the unemployment rates.

- 2.38. Of all residents that are in employment, over 1/3<sup>rd</sup> are in full-time employed work, 13% are in part-time employed work, while 15% are self-employed. 34% of the population have Level 4 qualifications and above while another 37% of the population have Level 1-3 qualifications, leaving only 20% without qualifications. The majority of those in employment are managers, directors, senior officials, or in professional and technical occupations.
- 2.39. There are a few forms of light industry that have been established in the village. The local transport company, Geo T Brown, has operated from the village since 1872. Additionally, a small industrial estate at Spiers Piece houses manufacturing and transport jobs but there are also small amounts of employment that cover retail, leisure, general services, building and maintenance, and agricultural throughout the whole village. Additionally, there are three working farms in the village which include Manor Farm, Bartletts Farm, and Loppinger Farm, and another 5 just outside of the Parish.



## Keevil Airfield

- 2.40. A large area of land to the east of Steeple Ashton and south of Keevil is made up of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Keevil Airfield, part of the MOD estate operated by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). The airfield

was built as a 'Class A' bomber station with large concrete runways, T2 aircraft hangers and blister type aircraft hangers. It performed a number of roles, initially from 1940 as a Spitfire completion and dispersal centre for airframes constructed in the Trowbridge area. The airfield was allocated to the United States Army Air Force from September 1942 - January 1944, principally for use by transport and observation aircraft. During 1944 the RAF utilised the airfield to mount large scale glider borne operations in Normandy in support of the D-Day landings, and later at Arnhem during Operation MARKET GARDEN. A number of Special Operations Executive (SOE) clandestine missions into occupied Europe were also mounted from Keevil.

- 2.41. At the end of the war some airfield facilities were utilised for Polish refugees who fled Nazi occupation; many subsequently settled in the Trowbridge area. During the Cold War, the airfield was used by the US Air Force as well as for RAF training. After the end of the Cold War in 1989, the airfield remained busy as a satellite airfield for RAF Lyneham, supporting day and night training for transport aircraft as well as heavy-drop cargo and special forces parachuting, including training for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- 2.42. The airfield was transferred to RAF Brize Norton in 2012 and its use for fixed-wing training declined. In 2023, management of the airfield was transferred to the Army Air Corps element of Joint Aviation Command (JAC), and in May 2023 the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) authorised the Army's WATCHKEEPER Remotely Piloted Aviation System (RPAS) to fly from Keevil. In addition to use by helicopters and RPAS, the airfield also continues to be designated as a parachute drop zone and a gliding site.
- 2.43. As a result of this, much of the Parish is subject by statutory safeguarding zones in force for new development. Statutory safeguarding zones are designed to ensure that the MOD is consulted where development has the capacity to degrade or otherwise impact the operation and capability of MOD sites and assets.

## Open Space and Recreation

- 2.44. The Steeple Ashton recreation ground is located fairly centrally within the village, at St Marys and Sandpits Lane. The recreation ground provides space for football, five-a-side and cricket, and contains a play area to the northeastern corner.
- 2.45. An additional recreation ground is located at Acre Short Lane to the southern end of the village, which includes a play park, playing field and the Guides Hut.
- 2.46. Other open spaces in the Parish include the Village Green surrounding the Market cross and lock-up which forms a geographical focal point of the village, the community orchard at Silver Street, and the Newleaze children's play area.



## Accessibility

- 2.47. The Steeple Ashton recreation ground is located fairly centrally within the village, at St Marys and Sandpits Lane. The recreation ground provides space for football, five-a-side and cricket, and contains a play area to the northeastern corner.
- 2.48. A few small businesses are established in the village but most of the working population are employed and commute outside the parish to key employment areas such as at Trowbridge, Melksham, and Devizes, as well as Bristol and Oxford even further afield.

- 2.49. The parish is not served by a railway station but is situated approximately 8.7km southwest of Melksham station, 8km east of Trowbridge station, and 10km northeast of Westbury Station. These stations offer various connections to Bristol, Bath, Swindon, Reading, and London.
- 2.50. Bus services are operated through the Parish including Faresaver numbers 76 and 77 which travel from Devizes through to Trowbridge and the Faresaver number 63 which travels to Steeple Ashton from Trowbridge. Further routes are available from Trowbridge via bus which offer connections to Westbury, Bath, Bristol, and Frome, and connections to Swindon from Devizes.
- 2.51. Steeple Ashton benefits from well-established recreational and functional footpaths and bridleways which include routes to nearby smaller settlements including Ashton Common, Keevil, West Ashton, and Edington as well as more established areas further afield including Trowbridge. The Public Rights of Way network is much appreciated by a variety of users. There are no national cycle routes within the Parish. Through the length of the village there are continuous segregated footways along the High Street, Common Hill, and most of the residential streets. However, residents feel that most footpaths are damaged, stating that maintenance and management should be considered to improve the village as well as clearing the rubbish and maintaining the verges.

## Highways

- 2.52. Steeple Ashton benefits from a direct road that runs through the centre of the Parish, which is an unclassified C road, known as Common Hill from the northern end of the village, which is formed off the A350 that runs from Melksham to south of Trowbridge. This road hosts vehicles from both directions and is reduced to 30mph when approaching the village. This road leads to High Street which is wide enough for two-way traffic but sees the absence of road markings. The road at High Street hosts several on-street parking provisions for residents and visitors to the village, where rights of ways must be considered for oncoming traffic. This is particularly apparent during peak times and makes passing on foot difficult. Out from the southern end of the village, Edington Road provides a continuation of High Street which leads

to Edington, providing connections to Bratton and Erlestoke. This road is slightly narrower but is still suitable for two-way traffic.

2.53. A recent survey was conducted by residents at two strategic points in the village to identify the types and numbers of vehicles travelling through Steeple Ashton. The data collected showed that there was a total of 2,100 vehicles passing through per day, the majority from the south. 80% of which were private cars, 11% were commercial/tradesman vans, 6% were HGV's/lorries, and the remainder were motorcyclists and PSVs.

## **Services and Facilities**

2.54. The community benefits from the following services and facilities:

- Two places of worship – the Church of St Mary the Virgin, and the Methodist Chapel on the High Street.
- Village Hall which supports a number of community groups including Women's Institute, dance classes and skittle alley.
- One public house 'The Longs at Steeple Ashton'.
- The Village Shop to the south of the High Street, which hosts a weekly Post Office service.
- Common Hill allotments.

2.55. For other daily services such as a supermarket, primary and secondary schools, retail park, library, doctors, and train station, residents predominantly rely on larger towns and neighbouring settlements, Trowbridge being the closest town approximately 5km away. Most of the primary aged children go to Keevil CofE Primary School which is approximately 2 miles from the village.

## **Infrastructure**

2.56. The mains electricity supply to the village is distributed mainly by a network of overhead cables. There is no gas supply within the village. The village is also served by a telephone communication network using either overhead wires or an underground cable system.

2.57. There is no mains gas supply to the village, and the majority of premises are reliant on oil for heating. Provisions of mains sewage is broadly confined to properties within the existing settlement boundary.

# THREE



## 3. Planning Context

### Planning Policy Context

- 3.1. The NDP has been prepared with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 as well as guidance set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental – 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).
- 3.2. As well as having regard to national policies, the NDP must be in general conformity with strategic policies of the development plan in force, which are the Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted January 2015 and Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan DPD adopted February 2020.
- 3.3. The Core Strategy contains policies on how the county will develop through to 2026. Steeple Ashton is within the Melksham Community Area and is designated as a ‘Large Village’ where development will be limited to that needed to help meet the housing needs of settlements and to improve employment opportunities, services and facilities. A settlement boundary has been drawn (and last revised in 2020) to define where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, whereas in the countryside more restrictive policies apply.

- 3.4. The planning context is evolving as Wiltshire Council is preparing a new Local Plan 2020-2038 (LP) to replace the Core Strategy. Wiltshire Council submitted their Draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The LP proposes to identify Steeple Ashton within the Trowbridge Housing Market Area (HMA) and remain a ‘Large Village’ in the settlement hierarchy. Table 4.16 proposes housing growth of 29 dwellings in the period 2020 to 2038. The residual housing requirement at 1st April 2022 is 28 dwellings after deducting those homes already built and those in the pipeline with either planning permission or estimated to be built on sites already allocated in the development plan. The methodology for the housing requirement is set out in the Wiltshire Council Rural Housing Requirements September 2023, which concludes:

*“Overall, while there are some environmental constraints at Steeple Ashton, there are some less constrained areas within and around the settlement which may be capable of accommodating further development over the Local Plan period to 2038. The planned level of growth can be accommodated from an education perspective, and could help support local services and businesses. The Local Plan therefore proposes to set a requirement of 29 homes, with a residual figure of 28 still to be planned for over the remainder of the plan period to 2038.”*

- 3.5. Other key documents include, but are not limited to:
  - Saved policies of the West Wiltshire Local Plan 1st Alteration adopted 2004.

- Saved policies of the West Wiltshire Local and Recreation DPD adopted 2009.

## Evidence Base

- 3.6. The main strands of evidence supporting the Steeple Ashton NDP are:
- The wishes of the community as expressed through community engagement.
  - The Steeple Ashton NDP Topic Papers:
    - Site Selection Topic Paper
    - Key Views Topic Paper
    - Local Green Space Topic Paper
    - Heritage Topic Paper
  - The Site Assessment Report (SAR) dated November 2023
  - The Steeple Ashton Character Assessment (Appendix C)
  - The Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping and Final Report by AECOM.
- 3.7. The overall approach has been that both evidence and community wishes should align or at least have good overlap, before draft policy is created. It was also felt wise to create the Vision and Objectives first and then let policy be checked against and conform with those, since the policies are intended to bring about both Vision and Objectives.
- 3.8. A range of Topic Papers have been prepared to guide the development of policies where a methodology and rationale were locally defined. These include the Local Green Space Topic Paper, Heritage Topic Paper, Key Views Topic Paper, Site Selection Topic Paper and the Character Assessment which is appended to the NDP.
- 3.9. Locally specific housing evidence has been prepared to guide plan-making decisions regarding the allocation of land within the Wiltshire Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (July 2017), Steeple Ashton Call-for-Sites (December 2022) and the Site Assessment Report (SAR) (2023) as well as inputs from the community.
- 3.10. AECOM has also been commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) in support of the NDP. SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. SEA of the NDP is a legal requirement and should be read in conjunction with the HRA.
- 3.11. A summary of the relevant evidence base is provided at Appendix A.

# FOUR



## 4. Vision and Objectives

### Our vision for Steeple Ashton

*“By 2038, Steeple Ashton will have maintained and enhanced its strong sense of community spirit and historic village character as a distinct rural settlement.*

*The village identity will be retained, and environmentally sustainable, small-scale development will meet the needs of local people and attract a diverse community, with a thriving population of all ages. The natural environment throughout and surrounding the parish, as well as the biodiversity and important historic assets will be enhanced and protected.*

*The community will be at the core of all future development. Steeple Ashton will be an accessible and safe space for all with enhanced footways, cycle routes and bridleways, and improved traffic management. Steeple Ashton will contribute to the net zero carbon targets as all new development will meet maximum energy efficiency standards, use renewable energy sources, and employ a high level of flood resilience.”*

## Our Objectives to 2038

- 1.** To retain the thriving village identity of Steeple Ashton and ensure sustainable development is of a scale appropriate to the size of the village and local community.
- 2.** To ensure future housing responds to locally generated needs, with an emphasis on family homes, starter homes, and housing for the older population, is of a high standard of design, and fits well into the context of the Parish in terms of type, mix, scale and character.
- 3.** To identify, protect and enhance Steeple Ashton's heritage assets and key public spaces, including the conservation area and setting of listed buildings. Ensure that any future development reflects modern day living whilst being sympathetic to the existing character and heritage of the Parish.
- 4.** To protect the community facilities, including the St Marys church, the village shop and post office and the Longs Pub, and encourage provision of additional facilities and amenities.
- 5.** To ensure new development is supported by the necessary services and infrastructure, including coverage of broadband and mobile networks.
- 6.** To protect and enhance the Parish's local open and recreational spaces and improve access to and enjoyment of the countryside.
- 7.** To ensure that development does not impact our valued natural environment and provides benefits to the climate and biodiversity net gain.
- 8.** To reduce the community's contribution to the future environmental impacts of climate change, encouraging development to meet net zero carbon standards through energy efficiency and renewable energy installations, as well as ensure the installation of sustainable drainage systems and flood resilience.
- 9.** To promote the environmental wellbeing and health of the residents of Steeple Ashton by providing safe and convenient access, by foot and bicycle, reducing vehicle congestion and pollution through encouraging the use of sustainable transport.
- 10.** To encourage improvements for traffic management, particularly along the High Street, with a focus on safety and speed reduction and ensure all new development provides sufficient levels of off-street parking.

# FIVE



## 5. Policies

- 5.1. This chapter sets out the policies for the development and use of land in the Parish and how they will be used by the Planning Officers in Wiltshire to help determine planning applications within the neighbourhood area. The policies have been pulled together into six themes as listed below.
- 5.2. Policies are shown within the coloured box and in bold text, to clearly distinguish them from explanatory supporting text which describes the reason for the policy. Each policy is defined by how it links back to the NDP Objectives in Section 4.

### Protecting our rural and natural landscape

- SA1 Landscape Character
- SA2 Key Views
- SA3 Local Green Space
- SA4 Green Infrastructure
- SA5 Biodiversity Net Gain
- SA6 Bat Conservation
- SA7 Salisbury Plain SPA

### Protecting our changing climate

- SA8 Sustainable Design and Construction
- SA9 Retrofitting Existing Buildings to Improve Energy Efficiency
- SA10 Renewable Energy
- SA11 Flooding and Drainage

### Protecting our historic and built environment

- SA12 Local Heritage
- SA13 Design and Character

### Supporting our community

- SA14 Community Facilities

### Delivering our housing requirements

- SA15 Development Strategy
- SA16 Land at Elmsgate
- SA17 Land at Loppinger Farm, adjacent 27 Common Hill
- SA18 Land at Loppinger Farm, adjacent former Police House
- SA19 Larks Leaze
- SA20 Housing Mix

### Protecting and enhancing our infrastructure

- SA21 Active Travel
- SA22 Parking
- SA23 Highway Management
- SA24 Broadband Connections
- SA25 Infrastructure priorities

# Protecting our Rural and Natural Landscape

## Landscape Character

- 5.3. The countryside and natural environment surrounding the village of Steeple Ashton is highly valued by the residents. It is a vital resource and provides opportunities for leisure, recreation and tourism, and contributes positively to the mental and physical wellbeing of the community. Public consultation has identified that residents value the tranquil setting of the village and the distance character of the settlements, away from the urban area of Trowbridge. Maintaining this separation is therefore a priority for the community.
- 5.4. The NPPF confirms the important role that planning contributes to and enhances the natural and local environment through protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The neighbourhood plan builds upon existing evidence on landscape character and expects all planning decisions to protect landscape character.
- 5.5. The whole parish is washed over by the Landscape Character Area 11C 'Trowbridge Rolling Clay Lowlands' as identified by the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment. The character area is described as a gently undulating, largely rural area of mixed arable and pasture land with the following key features:
- Medium to large rectangular fields bound by thick hedgerow and mature hedgerow trees.
  - Scattered woodland blocks including some ancient woodland of high ecological value.
  - Rich riparian vegetation along the stream, lined by hedgerows.
  - Semi-enclosed landscape with intermittent views to the steep scarps of the Chalk uplands.

- 5.6. The Rolling Clay Lowland character area has a settlement pattern of nucleated villages with a variety of vernacular building materials. It remains a largely rural and tranquil landscape although with some interruptions from the A350 trunk road and concentration of railway lines to the west.
- 5.7. The strategy for the Rolling Clay Lowland is to conserve the peaceful rural landscape with its hedgerow network, rich riparian vegetation, remnant meadows, ancient woodlands and pattern of small villages and scattered farmsteads and to strengthen its character through measures to minimise the urbanising influence of large towns, new settlement and transport routes and to improve the woodlands and farmlands by encouraging management to retain or enhance their biodiversity and historic character.
- 5.8. Policy SA1 supports NDP objectives 1 and 7.

## POLICY SA1 – LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

**As appropriate to their scale, nature, and location development proposals will be expected to recognise and seek to conserve and enhance the natural landscape and local character of the Parish, including the high-quality landscape features of the Trowbridge Rolling Clay Lowlands. Development should maintain the rural character of Steeple Ashton and Ashton Common as distinct settlements.**



## Key Views

- 5.9. The village is surrounded by open countryside, the nature of which means that there are opportunities for extensive views into and out of the village that are highly valued by the local community. Views within the village, towards landmark features and buildings have also been recognised as being important to the community and the identity of Steeple Ashton.
- 5.10. A Key View merits at least one of the following values: aesthetic, biodiversity, cultural heritage, functional, recreational, or tranquillity. Key Views must be publicly accessible and visible from the public highway, ProW network, open spaces, or proposed / designated local green space. Key Views should show a range of physical (natural or man-made) features and an expanse of the parish, not one particular object unless this is a building or feature of particular cultural heritage.
- 5.11. Key Views were identified according to the above criteria and described within the Key Views Topic Paper. The policy requires proposals to recognise and take account of these Key Views in their design and layout. The Key Views are shown on Map 2A and 2B below, with full details found within the Key Views Topic Paper. The features and values of the Key Views should continue to be enjoyed, and new development must avoid adverse visual impacts.
- 5.12. Policy SA2 supports NDP objectives 1, 3 and 7.



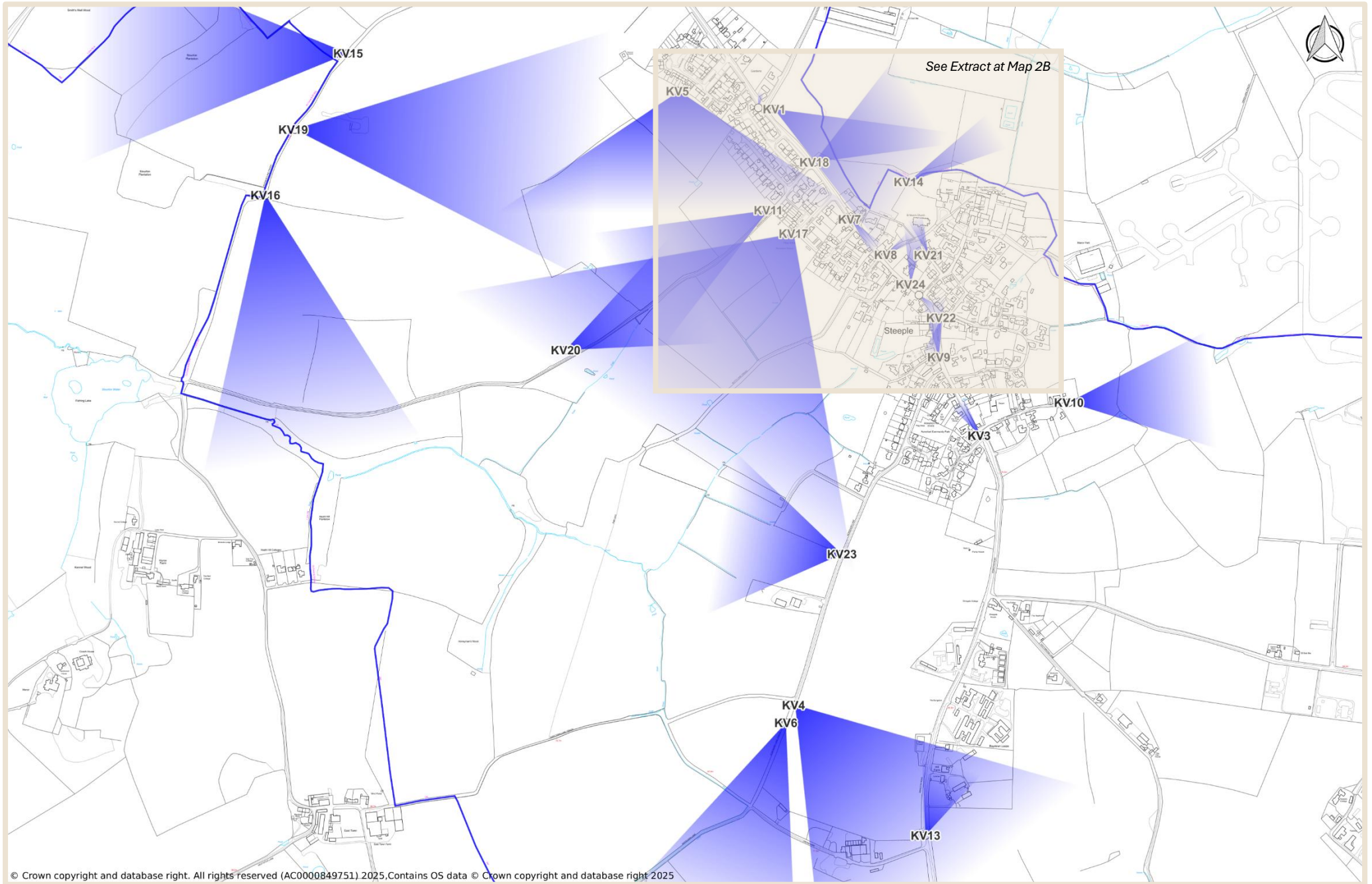
## SA2 – KEY VIEWS

**The Neighbourhood Plan identifies locally valued Key Views as listed below and identified on maps 1A and 1B.**

- KV1:** View south-east from Footpath SASH1 1 towards Church.  
**KV2:** View south/ south-east to Village Green from junction of High Street and Church Street.  
**KV3:** View north along the High Street from Junction with Silver Street.  
**KV4:** View south-east from end of Acreshort Lane toward Salisbury Plain.  
**KV5:** Panoramic views south and west from SASH8 at back of Newleaze  
**KV6:** View south-west across to the white horse and Westbury hills from Acreshort Lane.  
**KV7:** View south-east from Methodist Chapel towards central historic part of the village.  
**KV8:** View east towards St Mary’s Church from church street.  
**KV9:** View north from High Street (just before the pub) towards the church and Village Green.  
**KV10:** View east across Keevil Airfield towards Devizes from Footpath SASH38.  
**KV11:** View south-west looking towards West Ashton from Sandpits Lane.  
**KV12:** View north of the old fuel pumps on Common Hill.  
**KV13:** View north/ north-east towards southern village approach and airfield hangers.  
**KV14:** View north-east from corner of paddock by church towards Keevil and Roundway.  
**KV15:** View west from top of Mudmead Lane towards Trowbridge.  
**KV16:** View south-east from Mudmead Lane to north scarp of Salisbury Plain.  
**KV17:** 270-degree view from St Mary’s Recreation Ground.  
**KV18:** View north-east from farm gate at junction of Common Hill towards Keevil.  
**KV19:** View east from halfway down Mudmead Lane west towards church/village.  
**KV20:** View east/ north-east from Sandpits Lane towards village.  
**KV21:** View north t south face of church from Church Street.  
**KV22:** View south-west from Ashton House towards pub.  
**KV23:** View west from Acreshort Lane across fields.  
**KV24:** View north from High Street at entrance to Goddards looking towards church.

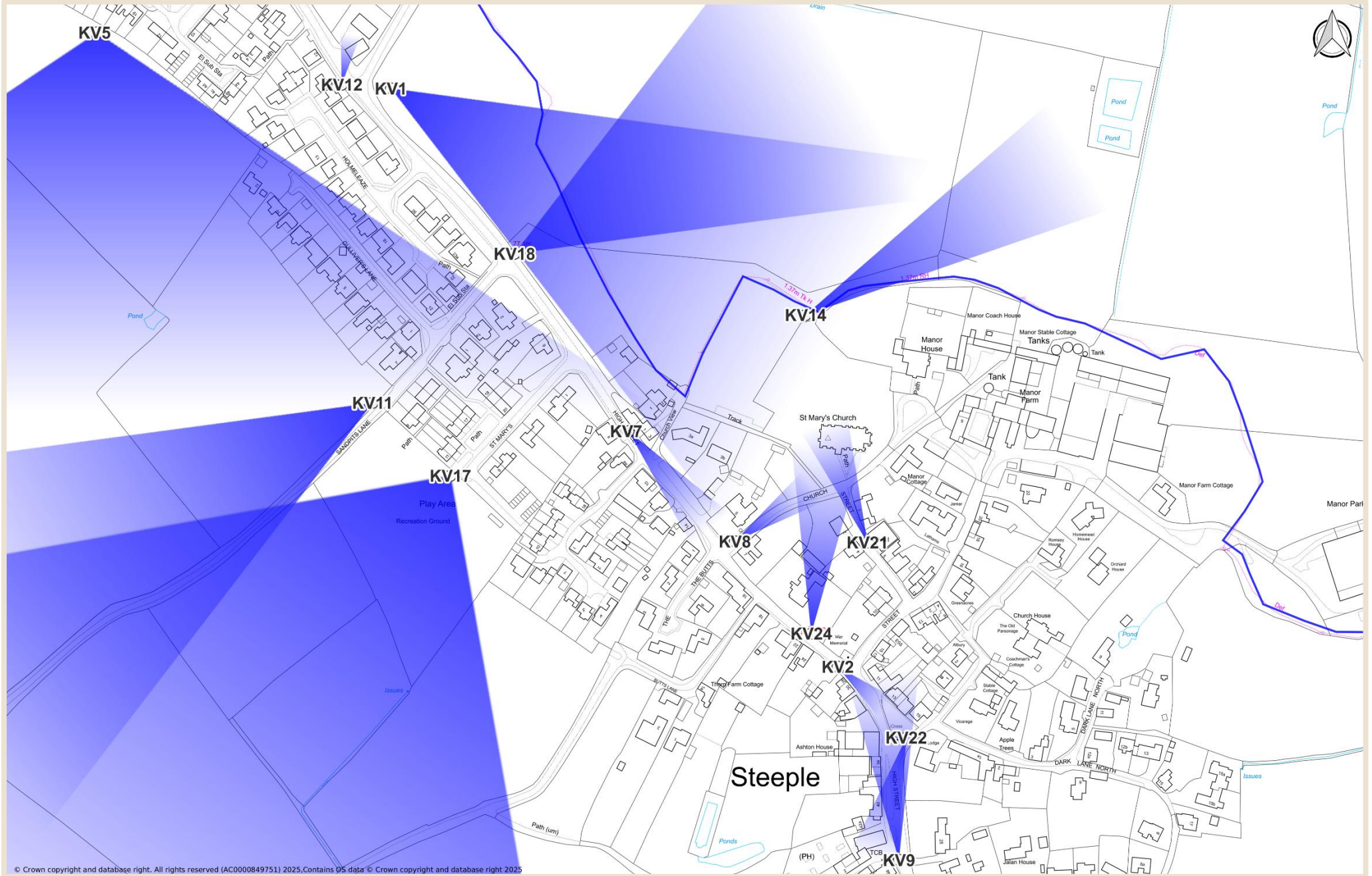
**Development that would affect a key view must demonstrate that its design, layout and massing will respond positively to the view concerned, and that the features and values of the view can continue to be enjoyed. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable visual impact on a Key View, unless suitably mitigated, will not be supported. A proportional Landscape and Visual Assessment must be submitted to demonstrate that the features and values of the view are maintained and/or enhanced.**

**Map 1A: All Key Views**



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**Map 1B: Central Key Views**



## Local Green Space

- 5.13. The NPPF enables the designation and protection of land of particular importance to local communities as Local Green Spaces ('LGS') in neighbourhood plans. Such designations rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.
- 5.14. The designation should only be used where the green space is:
- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
  - where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land
- 5.15. Important areas of open green spaces have been suggested by the community and the Steering Group, which are considered to make an important contribution to the character and setting of the parish or provide recreational locations for residents. Evidence has been defined to demonstrate the special nature of each space, enabling the Local Green Space to be identified and assessed in accordance with national policy and as detailed within the Local Green Space Topic Paper. A total of 23 candidate sites were assessed, 17 of which met the criteria for designation under Policy SA3, all of which are mapped below at Maps 3A-3Q.
- 5.16. Policy SA3 supports NDP objectives 3 and 6.



## SA3 – LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The Neighbourhood Plan designates Local Green Space in accordance with National Policy, as listed below and identified on maps 2A-Q

- LGS1** St Mary's Recreation Field
- LGS2** The Village Green
- LGS3** Acreshort Park/ Old School Field
- LGS4** Allotments, High Street
- LGS5** Newleaze Park
- LGS6** Community Orchard, Farr field, Silver Street
- LGS7** Luffenham Field
- LGS8** Verges in Newleaze
- LGS9** Grass paddock, Butts Lane
- LGS10** Grass verge outside The Old Merchant's Hall, High Street
- LGS11** Lime Trees from Hinton Lane to St Mary's, High Street
- LGS12** The Mulberry Tree Green outside Holmeleaze
- LGS13** Verges in St Mary's
- LGS14** St Mary's Green
- LGS15** Verge south of Home Farm Close entrance
- LGS16** Verge at the top of Common Hill
- LGS17** St Mary's Church Cemetery

**All new development on Local Green Spaces will be managed consistent with national policy for Green Belts.**

**Development that would positively enhance the beneficial use of these spaces will be supported, provided that the openness of the space is preserved. Such enhancements could include improving access to the site, allowing opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation, enhancing the landscapes or visual amenity, and improving opportunities for biodiversity.**

**Map 2A – LGS1 St Mary’s Recreation Field**



**Map 2B – LGS2 The Village Green**



**Map 2C – LGS3 Acreshort Park/ Old School Field**



**Map 2D – LGS4 Allotments**



**Map 2E – LGS5 Newleaze Park**



**Map 2F – LGS6 Community Orchard, Silver Street**



**Map 2G – LGS7 Luffenham Field**



**Map 2H – LGS8 Verges in Newleaze**



**Map 2I – LGS9 Grass Paddock, Butts Lane**



**Map 2J – LGS10 Grass verge, The Old Merchant's Hall**



**Map 2K – LGS11 Lime Trees from Hinton Lane to St Mary's**



**Map 2L – LGS12 Mulberry Tree Green, Holmeleaze**



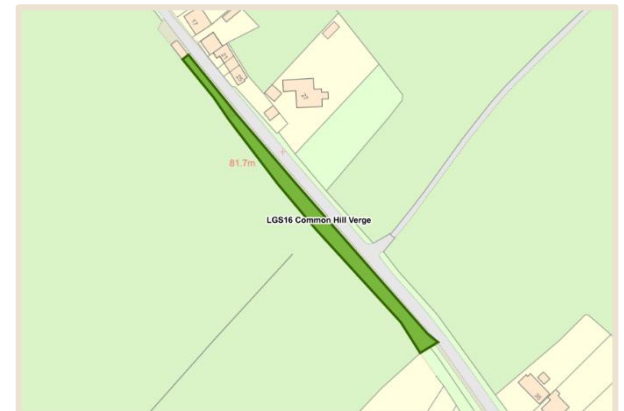
**Map 2M – LGS13 Verges in St Mary's**



**Map 2O – LGS15 Verge south of Home Farm Close**



**Map 2P – LGS16 Verge at the top of Common Hill**



**Map 2N – LGS14 St Mary's Green**



**Map 2Q – LGS17 St Mary's Church Cemetery**



## Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 5.17. As set out in Wiltshire Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, strengthening the network of multi-functional green and blue infrastructure has an important role to play in halting biodiversity loss, nature recovery, building resilience to climate change, as well as promoting healthy and resilient communities through enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and food or energy production.
- 5.18. Planning Practice Guidance sets out how natural resources and GBI provide a range of benefits known as eco system services. There are five key goals which GBI can help to achieve, including:
- Building a strong, competitive economy – GBI can drive economic growth and regeneration.
  - Achieving well -designed places – GBI can enhance the built environment and reinforce or enhance the local landscape character.
  - Promoting healthy and safe communities – GBI can support physical and mental wellbeing through recreation, exercise and social interaction.
  - Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change – GBI can contribute to carbon storage, cooling and shading, and flood risk management among other things.

- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – GBI provides for ecological connectivity and BNG opportunities.

- 5.19. The local Green and Blue infrastructure (GBI) network is made up of spaces and connections that provide multifunctional benefits for both the natural environment and for people. These can be as small as private gardens, boundary features and street trees, through to the Steeple Ashton SSSI, Local Green Space Designations and allotments, then even further beyond to the Salisbury Plain SPA and surrounding countryside.
- 5.20. Nine GBI corridors have been identified within the Parish, as defined on Map 3 below and explained in detail in Appendix B. These are linear elements of Steeple Ashtons GBI that link local sites and features of importance and deliver connectivity of assets between and within different parts of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 5.21. It is recognised that there may be other assets of GBI not identified on the map, but which still provide important ecological, recreational, economic, community or environmental benefits and therefore form part of the GBI network to be considered in any development proposal.
- 5.22. Policy SA4 supports NDP objectives 6, 7, 8 and 9.

## POLICY SA4 – GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Neighbourhood Plan designates a Green and Blue Infrastructure Network, as shown on the Map 3, for the purpose of promoting ecological connectivity, outdoor recreation, and sustainable movement through the parish and into neighbouring parishes and helping mitigate climate change. The Network comprises a variety of green infrastructure assets, including informal open space; Local Green Space; allotments; playing fields; public rights of way; and GBI corridors that links assets of habitat, hedgerow and watercourse biodiversity value.

All development must demonstrate, where relevant to the scale and form of the development and its location, how the proposal connects into and where appropriate extends the Green and Blue Infrastructure network, by way of their landscaping schemes, layouts, access and public open space provision.



**Map 3: Steeple Ashton Green and Blue Infrastructure Network**



## Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.23. Biodiversity plays an important role within our community as it underpins much of the economic and social value we obtain from nature. It helps to improve air quality, provides resilience to climate change, adds amenity value and supports wellbeing. However, it is widely acknowledged that biodiversity continues to decrease at an alarming rate. All new development within Steeple Ashton must therefore seek to reverse this trend.
- 5.24. Net gain for biodiversity is now enshrined in law, with the Environment Act 2021 requiring at least 10% net gains. Policy SA5 seeks to exceed this requirement and for developers to deliver a minimum 20% net gain for biodiversity. The approach follows that of Wiltshire Council in their emerging Local Plan to add greater certainty to its policy for net gain and support the recovery of biodiversity assets.
- 5.25. Steeple Ashton, being washed over by both the Salisbury Plain SPA mitigation zone, the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy as well as significant areas of woodland opportunity enhancement areas, has potential to contribute positively to the overall net gain of the District.
- 5.26. Biodiversity net gain is defined as ‘development that makes sure the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development’. Net gains will be measured using the latest Biodiversity Metric or its successor and that Biodiversity Net Gain delivery be in accordance with established good practice principles within Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development (CIEEM, CIRIA and IEMA) and BS 8683:2021.
- 5.27. SA5 also seeks to ensure that developments maximise on the opportunities to support and increase biodiversity within the design of buildings through the use of features such as green roofs, bat and bird boxes or bricks, wildflower planting and hedgehog tracks.
- 5.28. Policy SA5 supports NDP objective 7.

## POLICY SA5 – BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

**Development proposals must retain and where possible, enhance, features of biodiversity value including mature trees, species rich hedgerows, habitats, ponds, streams and existing areas of woodland.**

**Development resulting in loss or deterioration of habitats will not be supported, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.**

**Development proposals should seek to maximise opportunities to support biodiversity through building design and are also encouraged to deliver at least 20% net gain in ‘biodiversity value’ to deliver tangible benefits for biodiversity. In line with the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy, it is expected that proposals will first seek to explore all opportunities to deliver net gain on-site. Off-site mitigation will only be supported where on-site opportunities are evidenced as not possible.**



## Bats SAC

- 5.30. Steeple Ashton falls within the Trowbridge Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) consultation zone. Wiltshire's Planning Guidance for Bat SACs requires that for development within a core area, potential impacts should be considered at an early stage in regard to physical changes, lighting, noise and vibration, recreational disturbance, and pollution. Where development may affect sensitive features such as roosts, foraging areas and commuting corridors, the potential impacts should be considered at an early stage, including surveys by a suitable ecologist in accordance with published best practice. Where survey work has confirmed that a sensitive feature used by a SAC species is likely to be affected, a mitigation strategy will need to be submitted with the planning application.

## Salisbury Plain SPA

- 5.31. A large proportion of Steeple Ashton also lies within the 6.4km buffer zone for the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA). The SPA was designated in 1993 as it contains the largest expanse of unimproved chalk downland in north-west Europe, and provides important habitat for Wild Birds, including Stone Curlew and wintering Hen Harrier. Wiltshire Council has produced a Salisbury Plain HRA and Mitigation Strategy (2018) to identify a strategy to secure the conservation status of the Stone Curlew populations, and which ensures planned growth of the area would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA.

## POLICY SA7 – SALISBURY PLAIN SPA

Where relevant, Applicants must provide sufficient information to inform project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment in order to demonstrate that the development will have no likely significant effect on the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area, in line with the Salisbury Plain Mitigation Strategy (2018) or any future review of this document.

## POLICY SA6 – BAT CONSERVATION

**New development will not be supported where it would lead to loss, degradation and/or disturbance to bat habitat, physical damage or disturbance to bat roosts and would also likely necessitate the installation of artificial lighting, and therefore developments have the potential to lead to likely significant effects on the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC if not suitably mitigated in accordance with the Bat SAC Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015) and Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (2020) or successor documents.**

**All development proposals that are likely to negatively affect bats or their: roost habitats foraging habitats; and commuting habitats must be accompanied by the relevant ecological survey work as informed by a preliminary assessment, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist.**

**Proposals where external lighting is required should include a full lighting scheme that provides information about layout and beam orientation, a schedule of the light equipment proposed including luminaire type, mounting height, aiming angles and lumen unit levels. The approach to lighting for new development should be undertaken in accordance with the guidance in Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals, 2018 or successor document.**

- 5.32. Policies SA6 and SA7 support NDP objective 7.

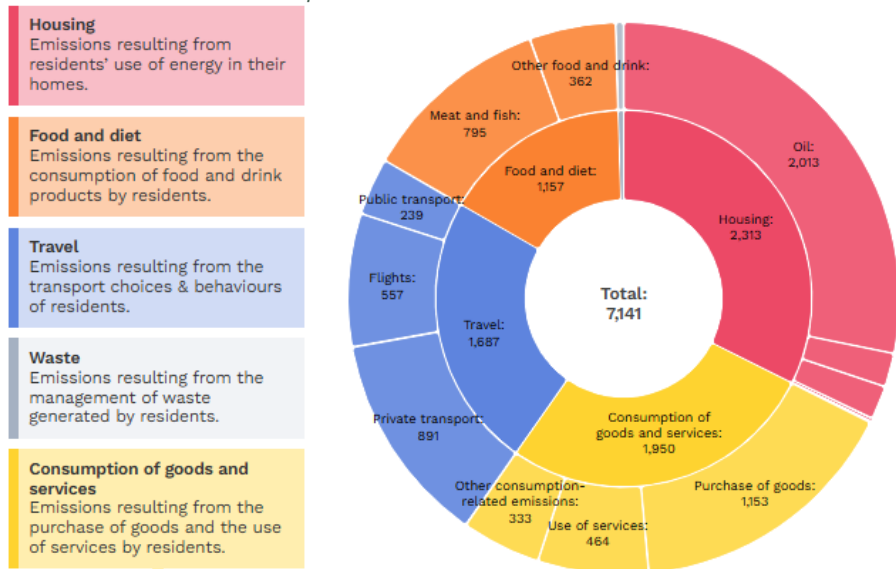


# Protecting our Changing Climate

## Sustainable Design and Construction

5.33. Wiltshire Council has set a target for carbon neutrality by 2030, following the declaration of a Climate Emergency in February 2019. Across the UK, the residential buildings sector is the second highest-emitting sector, accounting for 12% of UK emissions<sup>5</sup>. The largest source of emissions being the use of fossil fuels for space heating and hot water. In Steeple Ashton, the annual carbon emissions emitted by our housing (resulting from the resident’s use of energy in the home) makes up 32% of our community’s total consumption footprint (according to data by the CfSE<sup>6</sup>). This is above the Wiltshire average of 26%. In the average UK home, 64% of energy is used for space heating, 17% for heating water, 16% for lighting and appliances, and 3% for cooking. The type of heating systems and how well the homes retain heat are critical factors shaping the scale of a home’s emissions.

Figure 5.5 Extract from the CfSE Impact Tool -Annual Carbon emissions (CO2e2) emitted by resident’s activities within Steeple Ashton



5.34. In order to help achieve the net zero carbon target, it is therefore important that new buildings are built to net zero standards, or better, as soon as possible and use less energy to run. The Committee on Climate Change states that “the technology exists to deliver homes that are low-carbon, energy efficient and climate- resilient, with safe air quality and moisture levels. The costs are not prohibitive, and getting design right from the outset is vastly cheaper and more feasible than having to retrofit later.”

5.35. Policy SA8 reinforces Wiltshire’s commitment to being carbon neutral. It reflects National Policy (NPPF Chapter 14) which requires plans to take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change through policies that support appropriate measures to ensure future climate resilience of communities and infrastructure. SA8 seeks new development to focus on sustainability and climate change resilience through prioritising energy efficiency as far as possible in accordance with the energy hierarchy. The energy hierarchy is a list of energy options which help to guide the transition towards sustainable energy systems and set out priorities as follows:

- Be lean: the first priority is to seek to avoid the consumption of any energy, whatever its source.
- Be clean: following minimisation of energy demand, the next priority is to ensure an efficient and lean energy supply.
- Be green: energy should be sourced from renewable sources and, where possible, provide excess to the grid to enable positive offsets from development.
- Offset: the least favourable option, and one which should be avoided where possible, is the use of unsustainable energy sources (fossil fuels) and the implementation of measures to offset their emissions.

5.36. To minimise energy use at the outset to aspire to zero carbon developments, applications for new residential and commercial buildings should seek to optimise energy demand and increase energy efficiency through building fabric, thermal bridging to minimise heat loss, and carefully considered design,

<sup>5</sup> [Climate Change Committee 7<sup>th</sup> Carbon Budget February 2025](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Centre for Sustainable Energy Impact Tool \(2021\) – Steeple Ashton](#)

orientation, and innovation. The Future Homes Standard 2025 confirms that a 75-80% reduction in carbon emissions is required.

5.37. Whenever possible, exploiting local energy resources such as small-scale district heating networks, which supply heat to buildings through a network of pipes carrying hot water underground should be used. However, it is recognised this may not always be available and so other low carbon options for heating must be explored, such as the use of ground and air source heat pumps.

5.38. For any remaining energy demands, development proposals should make up the shortfall through renewable sources. There is strong local support for the provision of renewable energy, most notably in the form of Solar PV through the use of roofspaces.

## Retrofitting Existing Buildings

5.39. New buildings will make up only a very small proportion of all the buildings in Steeple Ashton. This means that it is even more important to encourage existing buildings, including heritage assets, to be retrofitted so that they are energy efficient, use low carbon sources and are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

5.40. It is recognised that existing buildings may have fewer options for improving energy performance and therefore measures should be sensitive to the constraints and location of the existing building. Proposals for works to historic buildings must take into account the significance and character of the building and its setting. Some examples of retrofitting buildings to improve energy efficiency include:

- Installation of solar PV and/or Solar thermal renewable energy sources
- Installation of low carbon heat sources such as air or ground source heat pumps
- Use of loft insulation, cavity or solid wall insulation, underfloor insulation and draught-proofing measures
- Use of energy efficient lighting and appliances

- Use of double, triple or secondary glazing on windows
- Introduction of passive cooling measures
- Use of water efficient appliances and harvesting rainwater
- Consideration of solar shading

5.41. Policies SA8 and SA9 support NDP objective 8.

## POLICY SA8 – SUSTAINABLE DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

All new residential and commercial development must be ‘zero carbon ready by design’ and will achieve net zero operational carbon emissions by applying the energy hierarchy through the following:

- a) Energy efficient design and construction to minimise the heat, power and water demand of the building and increase energy efficiency, this should be achieved through consideration of the landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping;
- b) Providing connection to a low or zero carbon District Heating network where available;
- c) On site renewable energy generation to, as a minimum, match the total energy use, with a preference for roof mounted solar PV, subject to building orientation and heritage considerations, or individual heat pumps.

## POLICY SA9 – RETROFITTING EXISTING BUILDINGS TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of small-scale domestic renewables in existing buildings will be supported.

Retrofitting measures to existing historic buildings, including listed buildings, non-designated heritage assets and those in the Conservation Area, will be supported where they satisfactorily demonstrate how the special characteristics of the individual heritage assets are preserved and where possible, better enhanced or revealed.

## Renewable Energy

- 5.42. The NPPF confirms that plans should help to increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat. Plans should set a positive strategy for energy from these sources that maximises the potential for suitable development, and their future re-powering and life extension, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed appropriately. Community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy should also be supported.

### **Solar Energy**

- 5.43. Solar energy is the most abundant of all energy resources and can even be harnessed in cloudy weather. Solar technologies can deliver heat, cooling, natural lighting, electricity, and fuels for a host of applications. Solar technologies convert sunlight into electrical energy either through photovoltaic panels or through mirrors that concentrate solar radiation. The cost of manufacturing solar panels has reduced dramatically in the last decade, making them not only affordable but often the cheapest form of renewable electricity.
- 5.44. The delivery of solar schemes through optimisation of ‘brown roofs’ provides significant opportunity throughout the UK. Steeple Ashton Parish Council encourage existing roofspaces to be maximised through solar PV, including through the implementation of expanded permitted development rights. Greenfield solar PV projects must avoid the use of agricultural land in-line with the NPPF that seeks to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land. The protection of agricultural land used for food production should be considered when deciding what sites are most appropriate for development.

### **Wind Energy**

- 5.45. Wind energy harnesses the kinetic energy of moving air by using large wind turbines located on land (onshore) or in sea- or freshwater (offshore). Wind energy has been used for millennia, but onshore and offshore wind energy technologies have evolved over the last few years to maximize the electricity produced - with taller turbines and larger rotor diameters. Though average wind speeds vary considerably by location, the world’s technical potential for

wind energy exceeds global electricity production, and ample potential exists in most regions of the world to enable significant wind energy deployment. Many parts of the world have strong wind speeds, but the best locations for generating wind power are sometimes remote ones.

### **Geothermal Energy**

- 5.46. Geothermal energy utilizes the accessible thermal energy from the Earth’s interior. Heat is extracted from geothermal reservoirs using wells or other means. The technology for electricity generation from hydrothermal reservoirs is mature and reliable and has been operating for more than 100 years.

### **Hydropower**

- 5.47. Hydropower harnesses the energy of water moving from higher to lower elevations. However, with only small feeder brooks which dry up in summers and which only have sufficient volume and flow rates ‘in flood’ hydropower is not viable in Steeple Ashton.
- 5.48. Policy SA10 supports NDP objective 8.

## **POLICY SA10 – RENEWABLE ENERGY**

**Support will be given to local and community level renewable and low carbon energy schemes, subject to there being no significant adverse impacts on:**

- a) **The amenities of residential properties, including visual, noise, odour, flicker, vibration and other impacts;**
- b) **Heritage assets and their settings, including non-designated heritage assets;**
- c) **The rural character of the immediate locality and wider landscape area;**
- d) **The local wildlife including bat habitats and wider Green Infrastructure Network;**
- e) **Access and rights of way;**
- f) **The risk of flooding and,**
- g) **MOD operational safeguarding zones**

## Flooding and Drainage

- 5.49. As set out in Chapter 2, the Parish lies within the Severn River Basin District and forms part of the Avon Bristol and Somerset North Streams Catchment. The Milebourne Stream, classified by the Environment Agency as a Main River, the Paxcroft Brook, and a further tributary of the River Biss all flow within and adjacent to the parish.
- 5.50. The village itself is not vulnerable to fluvial flooding due to its elevated position, however some significant areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 extend along the Milebourne Stream to the east of the Parish. The centre of the village, particularly along High Street, can be vulnerable to surface water flooding when drain capacity is overwhelmed or maintenance neglected. Farmland adjacent to the A350 in the north of the parish can also be affected by surface water flooding. Any development has the potential to worsen surface water flooding.
- 5.51. Climate change will additionally exacerbate flooding problems in the future and predicted effects must be taken into account where an applicant undertakes a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). Any FRA must take into account the latest evidence on flood risk within the Wiltshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), published by the Environment Agency and other sources of information. Other sources of information include pre-application engagement with the Parish Council and the Parish Council Flood Warden on the most up-to-date flooding events that have been reported.
- 5.52. Policy SA11 sets out a range of flood risk considerations for all new development in the parish. The aim is to steer development to areas at lowest risk from flooding and mitigate against the existing and predicted risks from all sources of flooding through best practice approaches to flood resilient design and construction. A key focus is the impact of 'concreting over' greenfield areas with impermeable surfacing which is a major contributing factor to flood problems. New development on previously undeveloped sites or gardens will reduce the surface area through which rain can percolate into the soil. Permeable surfacing solutions and controlled run-off to effective infiltration systems should therefore be incorporated into new developments.

5.53. Policy SA11 supports NDP objectives 6, 7 and 8.

### POLICY SA11 – FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

**Development should not have any adverse impact on surrounding land and properties in terms of flood risk, including cumulative impacts with other development and impacts where there are existing problems with flooding, as demonstrated by Environment Agency mapping or latest available evidence.**

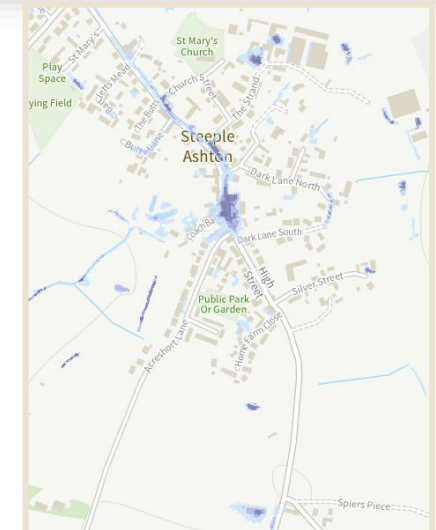
**Proposals must incorporate a sustainable and integrated approach to the management of flood risk, surface water (including run off) and foul drainage. These proposals should be robust to the expected impacts of climate change.**

**SuDS must be designed as an integral part of the green infrastructure network. The system should effectively mitigate any adverse effects from surface water run-off and flooding on people, property and the ecological value of the local environment.**

**Proposals for new buildings, wherever possible, must incorporate grey and rainwater harvesting measures to help manage surface water flood risk and improve water neutrality.**



Extracts from the Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Map (May 2025)



# Protecting our Historic and Built Environment

## Local Heritage

- 5.54. All listed buildings, designated monuments, and identified archaeological sites in the parish, and the settings and surroundings of these heritage assets, will be protected in-line with legislation and national policy. There are also a number of local assets that have been identified as being locally important to the architectural and historic heritage of the parish. These non-designated heritage assets are identified on Map 4 below. These assets are not only important due to their contribution to the parish's history, but also because of their significant contribution to the local character of the parish.
- 5.55. These assets do not have statutory protection and are therefore referred to as 'non-designated'. Identification of these buildings, structures and sites as part of our NDP ensures that the effect of a development proposal on their significance is taken into account, to ensure their conservation and enhancement into the future.
- 5.56. The reasons for why these local heritage assets are important to the community is varied and often goes beyond only historical or architectural interest to demonstrate a range of values that all contribute to the distinctiveness and historical character of the parish. The Steeple Ashton Heritage Topic Paper provides an assessment of nominated assets and their significance. The Parish Council will consider further nominations for the consideration of non-designated heritage assets as part of a review of the list in accordance with the Historic England Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage Historic England Advice Note 7 (Second Edition)' or revised guidance'.
- 5.57. Policy SA12 supports NDP objective 3.



## POLICY SA12 – LOCAL HERITAGE

**Development proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and enhance the historic environment, including through the safeguarding of heritage assets and their setting in a manner consistent with their significance.**

**The Neighbourhood Plan identifies non-designated heritage assets, as identified in the Steeple Ashton Heritage Topic Paper, or successor document, and shown on Map 4, by way of their local, architectural and historic value. Development proposals that may directly or in-directly affect the significance of a Local Heritage Asset must take that significance into account in demonstrating that the scale of any proposed harm to or loss of the heritage asset is justified.**

**This should be done via submission of a heritage statement, describing the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.**



*The Old Garage Petrol Pumps*



*The Village Hall*



*The Methodist Chapel*



*The Pitched Paths (throughout the village)*



*The Parish Well*

#### Map 4: Non-Designated Heritage Assets



## Design and Character

- 5.58. The quality of design is a national issue, with the NPPF highlighting at paragraph 131 how the “the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.” The Wiltshire Design Guide advises that neighbourhood plans shall be the mechanism by which local preferences and priorities are factored into decision making.
- 5.59. The community consider it to be important that new residential development is designed to the highest standard of architecture and village design to ensure that it is in keeping with the design quality that can be seen in the village. Of key concern is that new developments should complement the village, whilst seeking to create a unique sense of place with its own distinct identity and character. A traditional or modern aesthetic style could be used, but in both instances, high quality natural materials should be used to construct buildings. Consideration should be taken towards the detail, height, scale, and massing to ensure development adds value to the street scene and wider environment. The village has a distinctive settlement pattern, with a prominent linear form of development along main roads including the High Street and Common Hill. Policy SA13 seeks to ensure that this distinctive character and pattern is maintained.
- 5.60. The Steeple Ashton Character Assessment at Appendix C distinguishes between a number of different character areas to address the importance of high-quality design and the need for new development to acknowledge and respond to the special qualities, local distinctiveness and countryside character of Steeple Ashton. Adopting such an approach is intended to ensure that new development is well grounded to create a ‘positive sense of place’ in its context and is more likely to be acceptable to our community. The Assessment identifies the characteristics of each area to ensure new developments are sympathetic to local character and history.
- 5.61. Early engagement with the local community can help the delivery of successful design in new developments, therefore Appendix D includes

recommendations for pre-application engagement with the community for all new development, including any planning applications at the Site Allocations.

- 5.62. Policy SA13 supports NDP objectives 1 and 2.

### **POLICY SA13 – DESIGN AND CHARACTER**

**In order to create high quality buildings and places that are beautiful and enduring, and meet the challenges of climate change, development proposals will be expected to respond positively and distinctively to the National Model Design Code, National Design Guide, the Wiltshire Design Guide and the Steeple Ashton Character Assessment at Appendix C as appropriate to their scale, nature and location.**

**In particular, development proposals should be designed in a way which takes account of their surroundings in their built form, height, materials, historic character and boundary treatments.**



# Supporting our Community

## Community Facilities

5.63. The NPPF defines community facilities as facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. Policies should plan positively for the provision of these services, to help promote healthy and safe communities, and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.

5.64. This policy seeks to protect, enhance and develop key community facilities. During the public consultation, it was clear that residents valued the existing community facilities and amenities such as the shop, village hall and pub, very highly. The facilities support socialisation and community wellbeing amongst all age groups of the village and contribute to the strong sense of community spirit that many residents value. The Steeple Ashton NDP will seek to protect these facilities, as well as support their future development, modernisation or expansion should that be required.

5.65. In addition, support is also given to proposals for new facilities where a demand for such facility can be evidenced. In particular, the community have highlighted a general need for additional facilities to support young families and children, such as new play equipment, sports facilities or additional allotments. The provision of healthcare services was also recognised by the community as something that would be valued in the village given the nearest GP surgery is approximately 2.9 miles away; however, it is recognised such a decision is outside the scope of the NDP policy.

5.66. The existing community facilities in the Plan area are listed and identified on Map 5 below:

- Acreshort Recreation Ground
- Allotments
- Methodist Church
- Newleaze Play Park

- St Mary's Church
- St Mary's Recreation Ground
- The Longs at Steeple Ashton
- The Village Hall
- Village Shop

5.67. Policy SA14 supports NDP objective 4.

## **POLICY SA14 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**There will be a presumption in favour of safeguarding existing community facilities (as shown on Map 5) against any proposals that would result in their loss.**

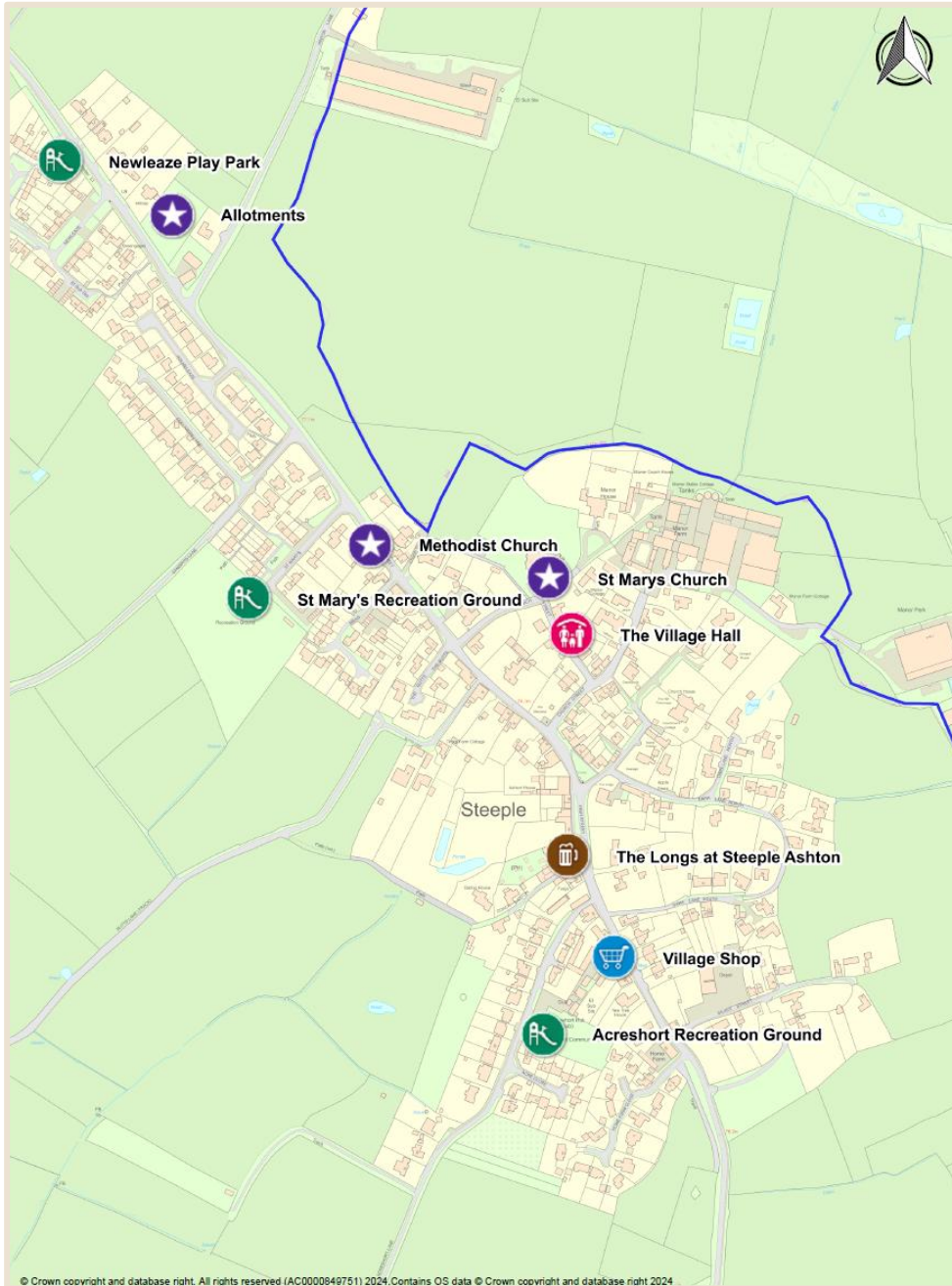
**Proposals that could result in loss of any facility will only be supported where:**

- **It has been determined by appropriate, detailed and robust evidence that there is no local demand for the use and that the facility is not needed for any alternative social, community, or leisure use; facility is no longer needed; and**
- **It can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable, nor likely to become viable. In such circumstances, a viability report providing financial evidence of the last 18 months is required to accompany any application; or**
- **Alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves.**

**Proposals for the development and modernisation of existing valued services and facilities will be supported subject to compliance with design, amenity and parking policies so that they are retained for the benefit of the community.**

**Proposals for new community facilities within and adjoining the village will be supported where there is shown to be a need for such facility and where it complies with all other relevant policies of the development plan.**

**Map 5: Community Facilities**



*The Longs at Steeple Ashton*



*St Mary's Church*



*Newleaze Play area*



*Village Shop*



*Recreation Ground*



*Allotments*

# Delivering our Housing Requirement

## Housing Strategy

- 5.68. The indicative housing requirement figure provided by Wiltshire Council in Table 4.16 of the Regulation 19 Local Plan is the basis for NDP housing policies and allocations. The indicative housing requirement of 29 has been reduced to 28 dwellings from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, owing to completions since 2020 and other commitments – see Site Selection Topic Paper.
- 5.69. The housing strategy for Steeple Ashton aligns with the Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan to focus limited development at the Large Village and within the settlement boundary. For the purposes of monitoring the policy, all sources of housing supply within the designated neighbourhood area contribute towards the delivery of the housing requirement so it is capable of being met by 2038.
- 5.70. Evidence on the availability of land has demonstrated that the housing requirement is not capable of being met within the existing settlement boundary, which continues to offer potential for windfall development. The NDP is a community-led planning framework to determine a sustainable choice of suitable, deliverable and achievable sites to accommodate housing, as informed by the Site Assessment Report and community consultation. The site selection process is explained within the Site Selection Topic Paper.
- 5.71. Four sites are proposed for allocation which can deliver approximately 35 dwellings. Planning applications for development of the four sites proposed for housing allocation should be made in accordance with Policies SA16 to SA19 and other policies of the development plan, including the provision of affordable housing on-site where required by national or local policy.
- 5.72. The NDP would meet the housing requirement of 29 dwellings in full through completions and commitments, policies, and allocations. Allocating four sites for development in excess of the requirement demonstrates that the neighbourhood plan is planning positively for new homes, and provides greater certainty for developers, infrastructure providers and the community

of where development will be located. This also contributes to the local authorities' housing land supply, ensuring the right homes are delivered in the right places.

- 5.73. Policy SA15 supports NDP objectives 1 and 2.

## **POLICY SA15 – HOUSING STRATEGY**

**The identified housing requirement for a minimum 29 houses in the period 2020 to 2038 for the Steeple Ashton designated neighbourhood area will be met by:**

- a) **Completions and existing commitments that have not yet been implemented.**
  - **Windfall development through the development or redevelopment of suitable sites within the Steeple Ashton Settlement Boundary, as defined on Map 6. Substantial weight will be given to using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs,**
- b) **The reuse and enhancement of disused buildings or sensitive conversion of historic buildings in accordance with the development plan and national planning policies;**
- c) **Rural exception sites in accordance with the development plan and national planning policies;**
- d) **The development of the following site allocations as shown on Map 6 and policies SA16 – SA19:**
  - **SA16: Land at Elmsgate for approximately 17 dwellings**
  - **SA17: Land at Loppinger Farm, adjacent 27 Common Hill for approximately 2 dwellings**
  - **SA18: Land at Loppinger Farm, adjacent former Police House for approximately 10 dwellings**
  - **SA19: Larks Leaze for approximately 6 dwellings.**

**Proposals for new residential development that does not accord with the housing strategy will not be supported.**

## Housing Allocations

- 5.74. The NDP allocates sites in Policies SA16 to SA19 for housing development following an appraisal of options and an assessment of individual sites against clearly identified criteria. The delivery of approximately 35 dwellings across the proposed four allocated sites form a key component of future supply to meet the residual indicative housing requirement. The remainder will be met through windfall development in accordance with Policy DM11.
- 5.75. The site selection process and justifications for allocations are set out in the Site Selection Topic Paper accompanying the NDP, with full assessment under the SEA. The overall objective was to meet local need on a site(s) which met the sustainability objectives by delivering development appropriate to the scale of the village and within the overall context of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the NPPF. No sites were available within the settlement boundary. The NDP seeks to prioritise a brownfield first approach in accordance with the NDP objectives and community views. The release of green field land was done for smaller sites only to ensure the delivery of a sufficient supply of housing.



Land at Elmsgate



Loppinger Farm adj 27 Common Hill

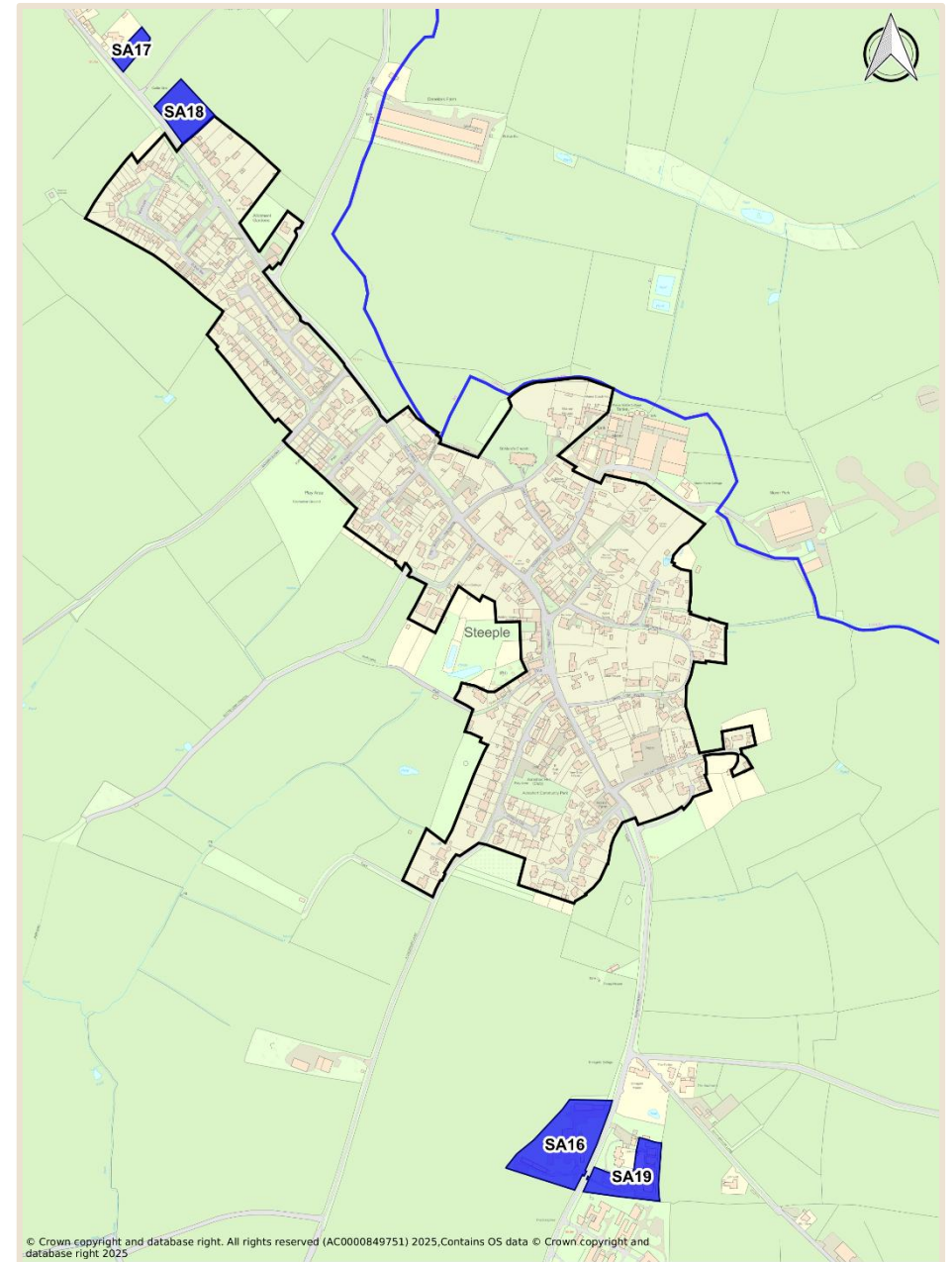


Loppinger Farm adj Former Police House



Larks Leaze

## Map 6: Housing Site Allocations and the Steeple Ashton Settlement Boundary



## Land at Elmsgate

- 5.76. The site is brownfield land in current employment use, located approximately 400m south of the Steeple Ashton settlement boundary. The site is situated to the west of Edington Road, which is the main road to the village from the south. The site extends to 1.1 hectares and lies adjacent to a built-up area to the east, offering scope for approximately 17 dwellings, including on-site affordable housing and smaller homes in line with Policy SA20.
- 5.77. The site has previously been subject to planning permissions in 2022 (prior approval notifications) for the change of use of the eastern and southern-most buildings to be converted into residential units. This has not been implemented.
- 5.78. Edington Road has a lack of consistent footways. The nearest footway is approximately 80m to the north of the site on the eastern side of Edington Road. Safe access will be required for all users and pedestrian improvements to mitigate this issue, such as the provision of a new footway to connect to the existing, will be required and should be informed by a Transport Statement in consultation with the Local Highway Authority.
- 5.79. Access should be taken from the existing point of access towards the south of the site, directly to Edington Road. A second point of access to the north of the site was approved by Wiltshire Council in November 2022. While this has not been implemented, there were no objections from the Highways Authority and
- 5.80. so it is considered a second access could be implemented as part of the development, subject to appropriate visibility splays and tracking, as demonstrated through a Transport Statement.
- 5.81. The site is exposed to the wider agricultural landscape where development may be restricted, and so development must be accompanied by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). It is therefore important to maintain and enhance the boundaries, taking account of the landscape sensitivity to the west.
- 5.82. The site is situated approximately 100m southwest of the Grade II Listed, Elmsgate House, where appropriate mitigation should be accompanied by a Heritage and Archaeological Assessment to inform any potential harm.

- 5.83. Development of the site should retain and protect core bat habitat features which should remain outside of the curtilage of any residential properties. The capacity and layout of the development will be informed by ecological surveys which will determine the location and size of necessary buffers and other mitigation to avoid effects on the SAC. Contributions to off-site measures are required by the TBMS to mitigate for increased recreational pressure on the core roosts and woodlands around Trowbridge. The site is also located within the 6.4km recreational zone of influence around the Salisbury Plain SPA, and project specific Habitats Regulations Assessments will be required to demonstrate the development has no likely significant effect on the SPA.
- 5.84. The site is situated within the MOD Safeguarding zone (both height and birdstrike safeguarding zones) where all development and change of use will require statutory consultation with the MOD as part of any future planning application.



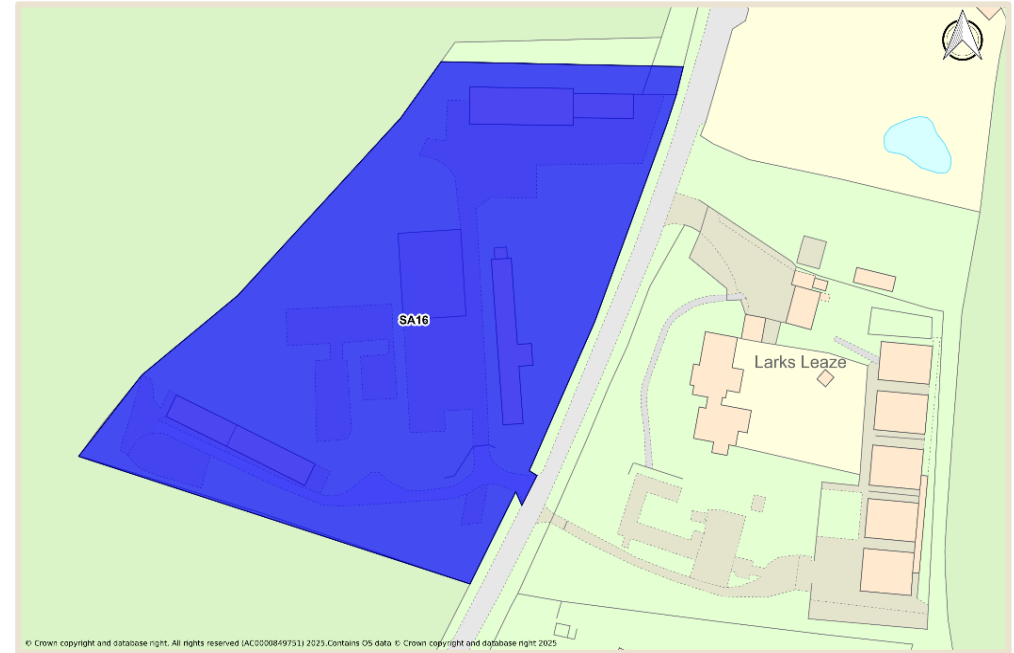
## POLICY SA16 – LAND AT ELMSGATE

Land at Elmsgate (1.1ha) as identified on Map 7 is allocated for residential development of approximately 17 dwellings.

Proposals should conform with the criteria below and relevant policies within the Development Plan.

- The development will deliver approximately 17 dwellings to meet local needs including affordable homes in accordance with local and national policies;
- Delivery of improved pedestrian connectivity to the existing footway to the north on Edington Road;
- Delivers a surface and foul water drainage scheme that meets SuDs principles;
- Delivers a design and layout that has been informed by heritage and archaeological impact assessment including potential harm on the setting of the Grade II Elmsgate House, as well as Historic Environment recorded assets.
- Delivers a suitable landscape scheme which takes into account the landscape sensitivity to the west of the site owing to the intervisibility with the surrounding agricultural landscape character;
- Delivers appropriate ecological mitigation, including funding contributions towards management, monitoring and any off-site measures as necessary, as informed by the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy;
- Applicants must undertake and submit a project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment in order to demonstrate that the development will have no likely significant effect on the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area, in line with the Salisbury Plain Mitigation Strategy or any future review of this document;
- Achieves an overall net enhancement to biodiversity; and
- Delivers uses, layout and scale that is compatible with the MOD safeguarding zones, as informed by appropriate consultation and risk assessment.

Map 7: Allocated site SA16, Land at Elmsgate



## Land at Loppinger Farm, adjacent 27 Common Hill

- 5.85. The site is a small well-defined parcel of greenfield land, located approximately 150m north of the Steeple Ashton settlement boundary. The site is situated to the northeast of Common Hill, which is the main road into the village from the north. The small sized site extends to 0.17 hectares and lies adjacent to a built-up area to the north, offering scope for approximately 2 dwellings.
- 5.86. The site frontage is onto Common Hill, subject to a 30mph speed limit. A single vehicle access should be provided, to be informed by a supporting Transport Statement. Common Hill has strong existing pedestrian connectivity, with a continuous footpath along the western side of the road running into the village centre. Development should ensure safe connection to the existing footway.
- 5.87. The site is in Medium Risk Zone for bat habitat sensitivity and therefore any development of the site should retain and protect core bat habitat features which should remain outside of the curtilage of any residential properties. The site is in the medium risk zone for recreational impacts where additional financial contributions would be sought from the LPA.
- 5.88. The layout of the development will be informed by ecological surveys which will determine the location and size of necessary buffers and other mitigation to avoid effects on the SAC. The Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy will guide any development through planning and site design requirements.
- 5.89. The site is situated approximately 160m southwest of the Grade II Listed, Loppinger Farmhouse, where appropriate mitigation should be provided and informed by a Heritage and Archaeological Assessment.
- 5.90. The site is situated within the MOD Safeguarding zone (both height and birdstrike safeguarding zones) where all development and change of use will require statutory consultation with the MOD as part of any future planning application. Early engagement with the MOD and Defence Infrastructure Organisation is encouraged.

- 5.91. The site is well defined and enclosed by hedgerows. Any development proposed on the site should retain and enhance the existing boundary treatments and should be informed by an appropriate landscape scheme to mitigate any future impact to landscape and habitats.
- 5.92. Part of the site has been subject to a previous Outline Planning Application for a single bungalow in 2019. This application was refused by Wiltshire Council due to the site's location outside of the settlement boundary. There were no technical objections to housing on this site.



## **POLICY SA17 – LAND AT LOPPINGER FARM, ADJACENT 27 COMMON HILL**

Land at Loppinger Farm, adjacent 27 Common Hill (0.17ha) as identified on Map 8 is allocated for residential development for approximately 2 dwellings.

Proposals should conform with the criteria below and relevant policies within the Development Plan.

- The development will deliver approximately 2 dwellings to meet local needs;
- Provides a single point of safe vehicular access onto Common Hill;
- Considers the operation of the Strategic Road Network, including the A350 crossroads (Stoney Gutter) junction;
- Delivers a design and layout that has been informed by heritage and archaeological impact assessment including potential harm on the setting of the Grade II Loppinger Farmhouse;
- Delivers appropriate on-site ecological mitigation, including mitigation for the both the recreational impacts and bat habitat impacts of development as set out in the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy. The design and layout must be informed by appropriate surveys and impact assessments undertaken by a qualified ecologist.
- Achieves an overall net enhancement to biodiversity; and
- Delivers uses, layout and scale that is compatible with the MOD safeguarding zones, as informed by appropriate consultation and risk assessment.

**Map 8: Allocated site SA17, Land at Loppinger Farm, adj 27 Common Hill**



## Land at Loppinger Farm, adjacent former Police House

- 5.93. The site is Greenfield land, located adjacent to the Steeple Ashton Settlement Boundary. The site is situated to the northeast of Common Hill, which is the main road into the village from the north. The small-sized site extends to 0.42 hectares and lies adjacent to the built-up area of Newleaze to the southwest and linear development to the immediate southeast, offering scope for approximately 10 dwellings.
- 5.94. The site has no existing vehicular access from the frontage onto Common Hill. A single vehicle access should be provided to Common Hill as informed by a supporting Transport Statement. Common Hill has strong existing pedestrian connectivity, with a continuous footpath along the western side of the road running into the village centre. Development should ensure safe connection to the existing footway.
- 5.95. The site is in Medium Risk Zone for bat sensitivity and therefore any development of the site should retain and protect core bat habitat features which should remain outside of the curtilage of any residential properties.
- 5.96. The landowner has identified an indicative area of land (shown hatched blue on Map 9), adjacent to the site for the delivery of necessary buffers and other mitigation in line with the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy. The precise location and size of this mitigation, as well as the layout of the development should be informed by the appropriate ecology surveys to avoid significant effects on the SAC. The site is in the medium risk zone for recreational impacts where additional financial contributions would be sought from the LPA.
- 5.97. The site is situated approximately 180m southeast of the Grade II Listed, Loppinger Farmhouse, where appropriate mitigation should be provided and informed by a Heritage and Archaeological Assessment.
- 5.98. The site is situated within the MOD Safeguarding zone (both height and birdstrike safeguarding zones) where all development and change of use will require statutory consultation with the MOD as part of any future planning application. Early engagement with the MOD and Defence Infrastructure Organisation is encouraged.

- 5.99. The site is adjacent to the existing linear character along Common Hill, which could limit the development capacity so as to ensure proposals achieve a layout in accordance with the existing settlement. The site provides an opportunity to create an attractive development that provides a visual focal point when entering the village from the north.



## **POLICY SA18 – LAND AT LOPPINGER FARM, ADJACENT FORMER POLICE HOUSE**

Land at Loppinger Farm, adjacent the former Police House (0.42ha) as identified on Map 9 is allocated for residential development for approximately 10 dwellings.

Proposals should conform with the criteria below and relevant policies within the Development Plan.

- The development will deliver approximately 10 dwellings to meet local needs including affordable homes in accordance with local and national policies;
- Provides a single point of safe vehicular access onto Common Hill;
- Considers the operation of the Strategic Road Network, including the A350 crossroads (Stoney Gutter) junction.
- Delivers a design and layout that has been informed by heritage and archaeological impact assessment including potential harm on the setting of the Grade II Loppinger Farmhouse;
- Delivers a suitable landscape scheme which takes into account the landscape sensitivity to the north and east of the site owing to the intervisibility with the surrounding agricultural landscape character;
- Delivers appropriate on-site ecological mitigation, including mitigation for the both the recreational impacts and bat habitat impacts of development as set out in the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy. The design and layout must be informed by appropriate surveys and impact assessments undertaken by a qualified ecologist.
- Achieves an overall net enhancement to biodiversity; and
- Delivers uses, layout and scale that is compatible with the MOD safeguarding zones, as informed by appropriate consultation and risk assessment.

**Map 9: Allocated site SA18, Land at Loppinger Farm, adj former Police House.** Blue hatched land shows area for ecological mitigation only.



## Larks Leaze

- 5.100. The site is brownfield land associated with Larks Leaze, located approximately 400m south of the Steeple Ashton settlement boundary. The site is situated to the east of Edington Road, the main road into the village from the south. The small-sized site extends to 0.55 hectares and lies adjacent to a built-up area to the south and east, offering scope for approximately 6 dwellings, including on-site affordable housing and smaller homes in line with Policy SA15.
- 5.101. Edington Road has a lack of consistent footways. The nearest footway is approximately 80m to the north of the site on the eastern side of Edington Road. Safe access will be required for all users and pedestrian improvements to mitigate this issue, such as the provision of a new footway to connect to the existing, will be required and should be informed by a Transport Statement in consultation with the Local Highway Authority.
- 5.102. The site is situated approximately 100m south of the Grade II Listed, Elmsgate House, where appropriate mitigation should be accompanied by a Heritage and Archaeological Assessment to inform any potential harm.
- 5.103. The site is identified as a Habitat Enhancement Zone and therefore relevant habitat and biodiversity assessments should be undertaken to mitigate any potential adverse impacts to special habitats. Any development should be informed by the sensitivity of the site. Development of the site should retain and protect core bat habitat features which should remain outside of the curtilage of any residential properties. The capacity and layout of the development will be informed by ecological surveys which will determine the location and size of necessary buffers and other mitigation to avoid effects on the SAC. The Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy will guide any development through planning and site design requirements.
- 5.104. The site is also located within the 6.4km recreational zone of influence around the Salisbury Plain SPA, and project specific Habitats Regulations Assessments will be required to demonstrate the development has no likely significant effect on the SPA.

- 5.105. The site is situated within the MOD Safeguarding zone where development should not exceed a height of 10.7m above ground floor level in some areas, in order to mitigate the need for further consultation. Development above this height will require statutory consultation with the MOD as part of any future planning application. Early engagement with the MOD and Defence Infrastructure Organisation is encouraged.
- 5.106. A previous planning application was submitted and later refused for up to 9 dwellings in 2019 (19/02719/OUT). This application was refused only due to its location outside of the settlement boundary. There were no technical objections. More recently an application has been approved for a single dwelling towards the south of the site (PL/2023/07952). Any new planning application on this site should consider the latest proposal and reasons for refusals for application 19/02719/OUT.



## POLICY SA19 – LARKS LEAZE

Land at Larks Leaze (0.55ha) as identified on Map 10 is allocated for residential development of approximately 6 dwellings.

Proposals should conform with the criteria below and relevant policies within the Development Plan.

- The development will deliver approximately 6 dwellings to meet local needs including affordable homes in accordance with local and national policies;
- Delivery of improved pedestrian connectivity to the existing footway to the north on Edington Road;
- Delivers a surface and foul water drainage scheme that meets SuDs principles;
- Delivers a design and layout that has been informed by heritage and archaeological impact assessment including potential harm on the setting of the Grade II Elmsgate House.
- Delivers a suitable landscape scheme which takes into account the landscape sensitivity to the west of the site owing to the intervisibility with the surrounding agricultural landscape character;
- Delivers appropriate ecological mitigation to protect bats, including funding contributions towards management, monitoring and any off-site measures as necessary, as informed by the TBMS;
- Applicants must undertake and submit a project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment in order to demonstrate that the development will have no likely significant effect on the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area, in line with the Salisbury Plain Mitigation Strategy or any future review of this document;
- Achieves an overall net enhancement to biodiversity; and
- Delivers uses, layout and scale that is compatible with the MOD safeguarding zones, as informed by appropriate consultation and risk assessment.

**Map 10: Allocated site SA19, Larks Leaze**



## Housing Mix

- 5.107. All new housing should be of a type and size that meets the changing local needs of residents over their lifetime. The scale of new housing at Steeple Ashton is to be limited with all new developments (a net gain of two dwellings or more) contributing towards rebalancing the housing stock, providing suitable accessible and adaptable homes for residents to downsize and (where appropriate) delivering affordable homes.
- 5.108. The Wiltshire Local Housing Needs Assessment Update Volume Two (February 2023) establishes the need for all types of housing. Over the period to 2038 it is estimated there will be growth in single person households focused on the over 75 years category, as well as significant growth of families with dependent children. The assessment identifies that the overall greatest need for housing over the plan period will be for 3-bedroom dwellings. For affordable homes, 85% of the need is for 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom homes, and for market housing, 74% of the need is for 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom homes.
- 5.109. Steeple Ashton contains a higher percentage of larger homes than both the Wiltshire and national averages, with only 18% of the housing stock made up of 1- and 2-bedroom homes. Many larger homes are defined by the Census to be under-occupied and a lack of supply of suitable smaller homes does not reflect the demographic needs. New supply provides an opportunity to readdress this imbalance so that at least 80% of all new homes should contain one, two or three bedrooms. A mixture of sizes and tenures will be required, and all new housing proposals should be informed by the latest evidence of existing stock, need and demand.
- 5.110. With a local population in the Parish that is generally older than the Wiltshire average, all new homes must be able to meet higher accessible and adaptable housing standards in the Building Regulations to reflect how illness or disability affects resident's housing need or will develop within 10 years. The provision of an attractive stock of new housing that is suitable for adaptation will also enable residents to stay in their homes for longer and remain close to family connections.

- 5.111. The NDP expects all developments triggering the relevant thresholds for an affordable housing contribution in national or development plan policy, to seek affordable housing on-site, subject to viability. Given the demonstrable need to deliver affordable homes, developments that seek to avoid the requirements of making an affordable housing contribution by failing to make the most efficient use of land or by artificially subdividing land into smaller sites will not be permitted. The full requirement for the cumulative requirement of all the sites must be made.
- 5.112. Policy SA20 supports NDP objective 2.

### **POLICY SA20 – HOUSING MIX**

**All new housing development that will result in a net gain of two or more dwellings will be subject to the following criteria:**

- **Demonstrate how the proposal contributes to the overall sustainable mix of housing in the neighbourhood area informed by the current need, current demand and existing housing stock (including approved developments) considering the context and character of the site, in order to boost the supply of:**
  - **Smaller one-, two- and three-bedroom homes equating to a target of at least 80% of new dwellings to include housing suitable for first time buyers and those seeking to downsize; and**
  - **All new dwellings capable of adaptation under Building Regulations M4(2) and a minimum of 10% as M4(3) to meet changing needs over time and housing for older people and those with disabilities.**

**Delivery of on-site affordable housing of an appropriate mix according to the latest evidence, where required by the development plan and national policy.**

# Protecting and Enhancing our Infrastructure

- 5.113. In rural settings such as Steeple Ashton, travelling is often essential for access to key services such as work, education, healthcare and shops, transport and accessibility. The demand for travel must be balanced with the needs to reduce congestion and the impact on the environment.
- 5.114. Transport in this context focuses on the issues that are of concern to the Parish, as impacted by the change of use and development of land. However, many traffic and infrastructure matters of concern to the residents fall outside the scope of planning. For example, changes to existing transport networks, traffic lights, traffic volumes, speed limits, signage, traffic circulation etc.

## Active Travel

- 5.115. The Parish has an abundance of public footpaths and bridleways, which are all particularly important for the health and well-being of residents and wildlife, and for supporting movement throughout the Parish and beyond to neighbouring settlements. The countryside location and rural setting of these footpaths which provide access to nature is highly valued by many of the residents. Ensuring this network is protected, expanded and linked into where possible is important.
- 5.116. The protection and enhancement to these networks also makes a valuable contribution to the ability to partake in active and sustainable travel. The Rights of Way Network is shown on Map 11.
- 5.117. Policy SA21 supports NDP objectives 9 and 10.

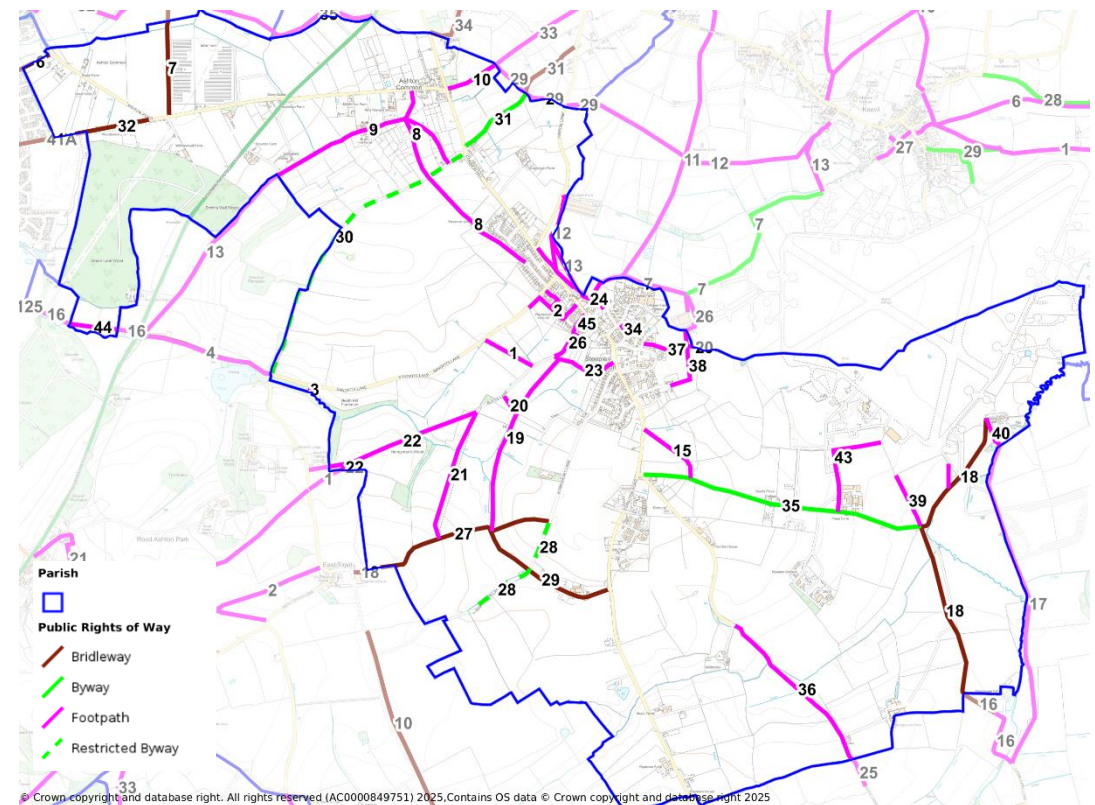
## POLICY SA21 – ACTIVE TRAVEL

The existing Public Rights of Way and active travel network, as shown on Map 11, will be protected and the recreational and functional value enhanced.

Development proposals adjacent to these routes should explore opportunities to provide links to the network, as appropriate to their scale, nature, and location.

Measures to improve and extend the existing network of public rights of way and bridleways are supported so long as their value as biodiversity corridors is recognised, protected and efforts are made to enhance biodiversity as part of the ‘development’ work wherever appropriate.

Map 11: Public Right of Way network across the parish



## Parking

- 5.118. Street parking and other issues around vehicle parking have been a long-standing concern in Steeple Ashton. Many houses in the Parish, old and new, have private parking facilities, however in the centre of the village, particularly surrounding the Village Green on the High Street, off-street parking is limited. Residents therefore must park on the roadside. There are few restrictions on roadside parking in the Parish.
- 5.119. While it is acknowledged that there is a need for private vehicles due to the village location, increasing car ownership is resulting in additional safety issues both for road users and pedestrians. Parking on the pavements presents a particular obstacle for the visually impaired, mobility scooters, prams, push chairs and wheelchairs.
- 5.120. Whilst it is not within the scope of the NDP to amend the parking standards set out by Wiltshire Council, policy SA22 seeks to ensure that in new developments, all parking requirements are provided off-street, and within individual residential plots to prevent the situation worsening.
- 5.121. Facilitating the use of low or zero-emission vehicles is also recognised as a key priority and will support the transition to becoming net carbon zero. It is the aim of the Government to phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars in 2030. A permissive approach to the installation of charging technology for electric vehicles is therefore required in both new and existing developments, including at non-residential car parks such as the pub, shop, churches, and recreation grounds.
- 5.122. Policy SA22 supports NDP objectives 8 and 10.

## **POLICY SA22 - PARKING**

**All parking for new development must, where possible, be provided off-street. The amount of parking provided must be, as a minimum, in accordance with the parking standards set by Wiltshire Council.**

**Proposals which result in the loss of accessible off-street parking provision, including the conversion of garages, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that this will not have an adverse impact on parking issues in the area, or that adequate parking of equivalent or better standard will be provided.**

**All new parking spaces should be equipped with appropriately located electric vehicle (EV) charging points providing a minimum power supply of 7kW or higher as set out in local or national guidance. Where shared parking is required, provision should be made for charging points in suitable locations that do not impact on the safety and amenity of pedestrians and residents.**

**The installation of electric vehicle charging points at existing residential or non-residential parking will be supported.**

## Highway Management

- 5.123. As part of the initial community consultation on the launch of the NDP, residents were asked what they felt most needed to be improved within the Parish. Overwhelmingly, the main suggestion made was the need for additional traffic calming measures in order to reduce speeding vehicles through the village, particularly along Common Hill/ High Street which leads right through the centre of the village from the A350 in the north and towards Bratton to the south.
- 5.124. Policy SA23 seeks to support the desire to mitigate adverse traffic impacts and improve safety for all users.
- 5.125. Policy SA23 supports NDP objective 10.

### **POLICY SA23 – HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT**

Development that generates additional vehicle movements must demonstrate no significant adverse impacts on:

- a. Highways safety for all users across the whole parish;
- b. Traffic capacity along Common Hill, High Street, and Edington Road, where there are already identified problems with speeding and on-road parking and potential for severe impacts; and
- c. Traffic capacity and safety at the Ashton Road and A350 crossroads (Stoney Gutter) junction.

Development proposals that contribute to traffic calming and control measures, including making improvement for pedestrian safety and connectivity in the Parish, will be supported.

## Broadband Connections

- 5.126. Internet connectivity and mobile phone signal, for both personal and home use or to support businesses, is an essential requirement today, vital for a range of daily needs, as well as education and work.
- 5.127. The rural nature of the Parish means that availability of broadband and mobile connections are varied. Full Fibre is not available throughout the village and community consultation has highlighted a desire for upgrades, as well as improved phone and broadband signal. This will ensure the village is better connected to support the recent increase in home working patterns.
- 5.128. Policy SA24 seeks to ensure all new developments provide for the infrastructure to enable fibre optic broadband and mobile connections, or to enhance the existing provision where possible and proportionate to the scale of development.
- 5.129. Policy SA24 supports NDP objective 5.

### **POLICY SA24 – BROADBAND CONNECTIONS**

Future developments which will provide or enhance the provision of high-speed or fibre optic broadband, mobile phone communications and electronic communications to the Plan area (residential and commercial) will be supported providing the apparatus does not impact on the character of the settlement, the environment or the Landscape Character.

## **Infrastructure Priorities**

- 5.130. Developers will be required to contribute towards the provision of local infrastructure, including public facilities and access routes, and to mitigate impacts of development proposals in order to make them acceptable in planning terms, in accordance with National and Core Strategy policy. This may include both CIL contributions and those made by planning obligations.
- 5.131. The purpose of this policy is not to add further burdens to development, nor to duplicate higher level policy. The policy, based on the wishes of the community and objective evidence from the Parish Council, is designed to set out local priorities and to provide certainty to developers by adding detail to the existing policy framework.
- 5.132. Policy SA25 supports NDP objectives 4, 5, 7, 9 and 10.

### **POLICY SA25 – INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES**

**All new development should assess its impact on the quality of life of residents of the parish and mitigates any impacts. Proposals for new development will only be supported if they satisfactorily address their infrastructure impacts, including energy and water supply, drainage, waste disposal, transportation, rights of way, school places, sports and playing pitches, and health services.**

**The following Parish infrastructure priorities will be funded through financial contributions made in accordance with Wiltshire’s CIL schedule, planning obligations or other relevant mechanisms (not in order of importance):**

- **Improvements to community facilities, including St Mary’s Recreation Ground**
- **Traffic capacity enhancements and traffic calming**
- **Improvements to Broadband Quality and Infrastructure**
- **Biodiversity Enhancements and Improvement to Green Infrastructure Network**

# SIX



## 6. Parish Priorities and Projects

### Community Action Plan and Parish Priorities

6.1. Not all issues that were highlighted by the community and Steering Group are capable of being dealt with in the formal policies of the NDP as these can only relate to land-use matters. However, where something of a non-land-use nature is of importance to the community this can form the basis for informal community action-plan that can still feature in the plan as informal policy. While this would have no legal force, such a policy can form the basis for coordinating positive local action from the Parish Council. The following list therefore forms the basis of a Community Action Plan:

- Explore the opportunity to increase the activities available for young people and families, such as the creation of new clubs/ classes which could be held within the village.
- Use potential Section 106 financial contributions and CIL receipts to provide improvements to footpaths and cycleways and extend/ improve the Public Rights of Way network in consultation with landowners to widen access to the countryside.
- Coordination with the recreational development groups to deliver improvements to and maintenance of all existing recreation grounds and play parks.
- Provide feedback to the local village shop on community views, received from the community questionnaire, about product range and pricing.
- Development of a Sustainable Travel Plan for the parish to tackle the current transport and highways safety issues, such as measures to control speeding, traffic calming and improvements to public parking, particularly near the recreation ground and along High Street with introduction of EV charging.
- Work with Wiltshire Council, Wessex Water, Highways Agency and the Environment Agency to support the introduction of measures to improve drainage and prevent or reduce future flooding and the effects of extremes of weather due to climate change.
- Use potential Section 106 financial contributions and CIL receipts to secure, maintain and improve the open green spaces in and around the village and enhance hedgerow/ tree planting throughout.
- Encourage the owner of existing allotments to increase awareness and determine demand/ potential for establishment of new allotments.
- Encourage service providers to invest in local broadband and mobile technologies to future proof the needs of the community.

# SEVEN



## 7. Monitoring and Review

- 7.1. The Steeple Ashton Neighbourhood Plan covers the period to 2038. Neighbourhood plan policies remain in force until the plan policy is replaced.
- 7.2. Monitoring of development plan documents is a legal requirement. Wiltshire Council prepares an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and will assess the overall performance of the Development Plan in Wiltshire, including all of the neighbourhood plans. This will meet the main requirements for monitoring.
- 7.3. Steeple Ashton Parish Council will monitor the effectiveness of this NDP and whether modifications are required to keep the plan relevant and up to date so that sustainable development can be delivered.
- 7.4. A focused review of the NDP may be commenced in circumstances including where (1) strategic housing policies are being updated that change the housing requirement figure, so that the NDP is in accordance with policies of a new Local Plan; and (2) where no planning application has been made on any site allocated within this NDP within a period of 5-years from the plan being made.

# Appendix A: NDP Evidence Base

AECOM, Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report (May 2025)	Wiltshire Council, Developers Guidance Notes – Surface Water Soakaways (2018)
AECOM, Strategic Environmental Assessment (June 2025)	Wiltshire Council, Employment Land Review (2018)
DEFRA, Magic Maps	Wiltshire Council, First Homes Interim Position Statement (2022)
DIO Safeguarding Zones and MOD information regarding Keevil Airfield	Wiltshire Council, Housing Site Allocations Plan (2020)
Environment Agency, Flood Map for Planning	Wiltshire Council, Landscape Character Assessment (2005)
Historic England, Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage Advice Note 7 (Second Edition)	Wiltshire Council, Local Needs Assessment (2019) and Updates May 2022 and February 2023
Historic England, Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Advice Note 12	Wiltshire Council, Local Plan Review Examination Documents (2025)
Landscape Institute, TGN 02-21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations (2021)	Wiltshire Council, Local Plan Review Consultation January – March 2021
Natural England, National Character Area Profile: 117 Avon Vales (2014)	Wiltshire Council, Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation (and supporting documents)
OPS, Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)	Wiltshire Council, Local Plan Rural Housing Requirements (September 2023)
Steeple Ashton Community Questionnaire Results (April 2023)	Wiltshire Council, Local Plan Transport Review (2021)
Steeple Ashton Heritage Topic Paper (June 2025)	Wiltshire Council, Open Space Assessment (2020)
Steeple Ashton Key Views Topic Paper (June 2025)	Wiltshire Council, Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion
Steeple Ashton Local Green Space Topic Paper (May 2025)	Wiltshire Council, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Stage 1 (2018 and 2019)
Steeple Ashton Site Assessment Report (November 2023)	Wiltshire Council, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2017)
Steeple Ashton Site Selection Topic Paper (June 2025)	Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan (2008)
Swindon Wiltshire LEP, Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan (2016)	Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Community Environmental Toolkit
United Kingdom Census (2011) (2021)	Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Design Guide Draft (2023)
West Wiltshire District Landscape Character Assessment (2006)	Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Employment Land Review Update Final Report (September 2023)
West Wiltshire District Local Plan 1st Alteration (2004)	Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment
West Wiltshire Leisure and Recreation DPD (2009)	Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment
Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record	Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds
Wiltshire Council HRA and Mitigation Strategy for Salisbury Plain SPA	National Design Guide
Wiltshire Council, A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire Wiltshire's Natural Environment Plan 2022-2030 (2022)	National Model Design Code
Wiltshire Council, Air Quality Action Plan for Wiltshire (2015)	National Planning Policy Framework (September 2023)
Wiltshire Council, Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire 2019 – 2024	National Planning Practice Guidance
Wiltshire Council, Climate Strategy (2022)	Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)
Wiltshire Council, Climate Strategy Delivery Plan (2022)	Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017
Wiltshire Council, Community Environmental Toolkit (2021)	Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016)
Wiltshire Council, Core Strategy 2006-2026 (2015)	Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

# Appendix B: Steeple Ashton Green and Blue Infrastructure Corridors

## GBI1: Milebourne Stream

Following the line of the Milebourne Stream and its tributaries, this corridor is important for flood mitigation and biodiversity. The stream forms an attractive element of footpath EDIN17 on the edge of the parish boundary, and those that cross the corridor, including Bridleway SASH18. An assortment of hedgerows and small copses along the corridor provide a sheltered connection for wildlife and enhance the stream passing through them. In combination they provide a green corridor through otherwise featureless arable land. GBI1 supports the following GI goals:

- Achieving well-designed places through promoting the role of the Milebourne Stream in reinforcing local distinctiveness.
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Mitigating climate change and flooding
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity along the watercourse.

## GBI2: Southbrook Lane to Edington

This corridor is formed of an assortment of hedgerows and small copses at the southern end of Southbrook Lane and a linear connection of field margins down to the southern boundary of the parish. These features provide a sheltered connection for wildlife directly connected to the Milebourne Stream. In combination they provide a green corridor through otherwise featureless arable land, that is separated into fairly small fields. The greenery also enhances the enjoyment of footpath SASH36. GBI2 additionally takes in the large grounds of Midbrooks, recognised as being a significant garden with ecological value by the Steering Group. GBI2 supports the following GI goals:

- Promoting healthy and safe communities

- Mitigating climate change and flooding
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity of the linear route

## GBI3: Acreshort Lane

Following the direction of Acreshort Lane, Byway SASH28 and Whitelawn Lane, this corridor provides a green walking route out towards East Town and West Ashton. The lane is lined by an assortment of hedgerows which provide sheltered connection for wildlife out of the village. GBI3 supports the following GI goals:

- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Mitigating climate change and flooding
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity of the linear route

## GBI4: Mosaic of wooded gardens on east side of Steeple Ashton

A line of well wooded gardens exists on the east side of the village, extending from The Manor south to Edington Road. The trees and wilder parts of these gardens enable connectivity for wildlife, enhance the bat roosts and contribute to the ambience of this part of the village. The trees also provide shading, helping to cool these areas. The corridor incorporates a number of designated Local Green Spaces, and area of priority habitat. GBI4 supports the following GI goals:

- Achieving well-designed places
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Mitigating climate change and flooding

## GBI5: Stourton Water and Biss Tributary

The corridor connects the Stourton Water fishing lake just outside of the parish, important for leisure activities, Heath Hill Plantation – designated as priority habitat for deciduous woodland – and along the Biss Tributary water course into the village near Butts Lane, connecting to a large area of designated priority habitat within the grounds of Ashton House. This corridor is important for flood mitigation and biodiversity. The assortment of

hedgerows and small copses along this corridor provide a sheltered connection for wildlife between Steeple Ashton village and more extensive areas of woodland to the west at Rood Ashton Park and Stourton Water. These features also contribute strongly to the attractive views enjoyed from Butts Lane and footpaths in this area. GBI5 supports the following GI goals:

- Achieving well-designed places
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Mitigating climate change and flooding
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity

#### **GBI6: Honeyman’s Wood to Sandpits Lane**

This corridor links Honeyman’s Wood – designated as priority habitat for deciduous woodland – to the assortment of hedgerows and small copses, and watercourse that leads north to Sandpits Lane. The corridor provides a sheltered connection for wildlife between Steeple Ashton village and more extensive areas of woodland to the west at Rood Ashton Park and Stourton Water. These features also contribute strongly to the attractive views enjoyed from Sandpits Lane and footpaths in this area. GBI6 supports the following GI goals:

- Building a strong, competitive economy
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Mitigating climate change and flooding
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity

#### **GBI7: Mudmead Lane and Smith’s Well Wood Corridor**

This wide corridor that runs east to west below Ashton Common encompasses public footpath SASH9 and WASH13 from Ashton Common, Smith’s Well Wood (an area of priority habitat for deciduous woodland and part of the Green Lane Wood Local Nature Area) and onto Bleet. The corridor comprises mature hedgerows and small wooded copses, providing a link between these large areas of protected woodland. The southern edge of the corridor is marked by Byway SASH30, comprising mature hedgerows and trees, providing a mixed habitat connection around extensive arable fields and a sheltered quiet path for walking or horse riding. Between these PROWs

are significant rows of hedgerows with provide a link for wildlife to connect from Green Lane up to Mudmead and then spread out along Mudmead Lane. The area is recognised as an area of woodland opportunity. GBI7 supports the following GI goals:

- Building a strong, competitive economy
- Achieving well-designed places
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Mitigating climate change and flooding
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity

#### **GBI8: Paxcroft Brook**

This corridor runs along the very north of the parish, following the course of the Paxcroft Brook and surrounding watercourses. It is important for flood mitigation and biodiversity, forming a linear connection from Trowbridge to the west, across to Great Hinton to the east. The blue infrastructure and surrounding hedgerows and field margins provide an important corridor through otherwise featureless arable land. GBI8 supports the following GI goals:

- Mitigating climate change and flooding
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity

#### **GBI9: Green Lane Woods to Paxcroft Brook**

This corridor follows the line of Bridleways SASH7 and SASH32 which combine to form a circular walking route to the east of Trowbridge. The mature trees and hedgerows along these corridors provide part of a link for bats migrating between Green Lane Woods Local Nature Reserve and wildflower meadows and Waddon. The area is recognised as an area of woodland opportunity. GBI9 supports the following GI goals:

- Building a strong, competitive economy
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity

# Appendix C: Steeple Ashton Character Assessment

*Please see in separate document.*

# APPENDIX D: Pre-Application Engagement Protocol

- i. The aim of the Protocol is to do all possible to that all new development in Steeple Ashton Parish can help to shape good quality places to live and work and as a means of working towards improved outcomes for the current and future communities. One particularly effective way of achieving this is through early, planned engagement with the community via the Parish Council.
- ii. The Protocol has been drafted to apply where a site has been allocated or is located within the settlement boundary. Where an applicant intends to bring forward an application on a site not formally allocated, it will be a matter of judgement by the Parish Council whether or not they wish to use this Protocol and engage in any form of pre-application work.
- iii. This Protocol should not be looked at in isolation. Applicants are encouraged to utilise any pre-application service offered by the local planning authority and consult with other stakeholders, where appropriate.
- iv. Use of this Protocol is without prejudice to the eventual judgement of Dilton Marsh Parish Council on the merits of any final application, even if a good engagement process has been agreed and followed.

## Context

- v. The NPPF makes various references to the purpose and value of engagement:

*“39. Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”*

*“132. Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.”*

- vi. Locally, the Wiltshire Statement of Community Involvement encourages pre-application discussions for all types of applications. The SCI continues to state:

*“8.13...applicants are encouraged to involve the community as early as possible in the process of developing their ideas especially where major proposals are being brought forward. Town and Parish Councils are also encouraged to take advantage of pre-application discussions with developers and applicants when offered.”*

## Process

- vii. Initial contact should be made at the very outset with the Parish Council via The Clerk.
- viii. The Parish Council commits to arranging an initial meeting as soon as possible following this contact. Notice will be given whether the meeting will be public or private. The Clerk will co-ordinate and attend all meetings. Any minutes will be made public.
- ix. Potential applicants should work with Steeple Ashton Parish Council to fulfil the following principles:
  - **‘Day One’ contact:** By far the best results for all emerge when contact is made with our Parish Council, and through us with

our local community, at the very start of any process; consulting people late with already prepared schemes is not productive.

- **Agreed Process:** A key aim of this early contact is to discuss and agree the nature, scope, timetable, information and so forth of the engagement – i.e. the process to be followed.
- **Applicant Leadership but Shared Responsibility:** Although it is the applicant's role to lead and fund engagement, the Parish Council will offer as much support as possible to any agreed process; for example, by providing local information, contact details for local groups, advice on meeting places, access to newsletters etc.
- **Openness and Transparency:** Building trust between all and ensuring an agreed outcome depend heavily on having a process that is as open as possible on all sides, though the Parish Council will respect any issues of clear commercial confidentiality. However, the Parish Council reminds applicants that any viability assessment should be prepared on the basis that it will be made publicly available other than in exceptional circumstances.
- **Agreed Community:** A project may have an impact on a limited number of people or on all of the parish. The details of those to be involved will need to be discussed and agreed for any project, as will the potential ways to contact and engage them.
- **Agreed Scope:** There will also need to be agreement about the scope of the engagement, i.e. what is and is not open to change (e.g. layout, quantum of development, design etc.).
- **Proportionality:** The nature and scale of engagement will be balanced in appropriate proportion to the scale and likely impact of any proposals.

- **Final Reporting:** The applicant should submit with their planning application a full and accurate report (Statement of Community Involvement) describing and summarising the outcomes of the engagement, demonstrating how the proposals have (or have not) responded to results. If they have not, a short note should be included to explain this. If the process has been followed fully, the Parish Council will endorse this report; if not they may submit their own evaluation of it.

# APPENDIX E:

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of the following people who have contributed their valuable time and input into preparing this neighbourhood plan throughout the process:

### *Local Residents and Town Councillors:*

- Robert Leonard
- Francesca Buffery-King
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- Lucy Wilcox
- Malcolm Jones
- Mike Beard
- Hannah Wright
- Brent Hodges
- Alan Burge
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### *Professional Support Team*

- Hollie Sturgess, Master Land and Planning
- Aaron Smith, Master Land and Planning
- Henrietta Cole, Master Land and Planning
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