

# Potton

Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2035



Planning for the Future

August 2019 - reviewed April 2025

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# Foreword

In the Localism Act 2011, provision was made for communities to produce Neighbourhood Plans or Neighbourhood Development Orders to bring forward land use based policies and allocations for their area. The Town and Country Planning (Neighbourhood Planning) Regulations 2012 were introduced in April 2012, setting out the formal legal process. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the basic criteria and linkages with Local Plans produced by Local Planning Authorities and is the overarching planning document for the whole country, and together with the Town and Country Planning (Neighbourhood Planning) Regulations 2012 sits with other Acts to guide and control the development of local Neighbourhood Plans. The Potton Neighbourhood Plan attempts to embody all these relevant statutory undertakings in the preparation of the plan.

**The Potton Neighbourhood Plan reflects community-wide comments, observations and concerns about its future, bringing them together with census information, strategic and statistical evidence into a “living promise” that mirrors the community’s overwhelming desire to make Potton an even better place to live and work, both now and for future generations.**

The plan has been produced by a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) including Town Council members, community volunteers, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC), and with the help of Central Bedfordshire Council. This plan was endorsed by Potton Town Council on 10 April 2018.

The Plan was made in 2019, following a favourable local referendum, and now the Potton Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan and becomes, with the Central Bedfordshire Council’s Local Plan, the starting point for deciding where development should take place and the type and quality of that development.

The plan was reviewed during 2024/2025 and changes made to bring the plan up to date with revisions to the NPPF (December 2024) and other reference documents. No changes were made to Vision, Aims or Policies.

## Glossary of Terms

NP	Neighbourhood Plan
GI Plan	Green Infrastructure Plan
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
BRCC	Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
NPSG	Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
PTC	Potton Town Council
BREEM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method
NPPF	National Planning Policy framework
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area

Spread Your Wings, a Sculpture by local Artist Paul Pibworth





Story in Stone - Potton Mosaic History Trail,  
designed by Oliver Budd



# Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) aims to make Potton an even better place to be, now and for future generations. It will cover a 20 year time period with a review every 5 years. It covers the period 2016 to 2035, broadly the same as the Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Local Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan process enables communities to better shape their town, to inform how housing and infrastructure development takes place and helps to influence the type, quality and location of that development, ensuring that change brings with it local benefit. The parish of Potton was designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area in January 2016.

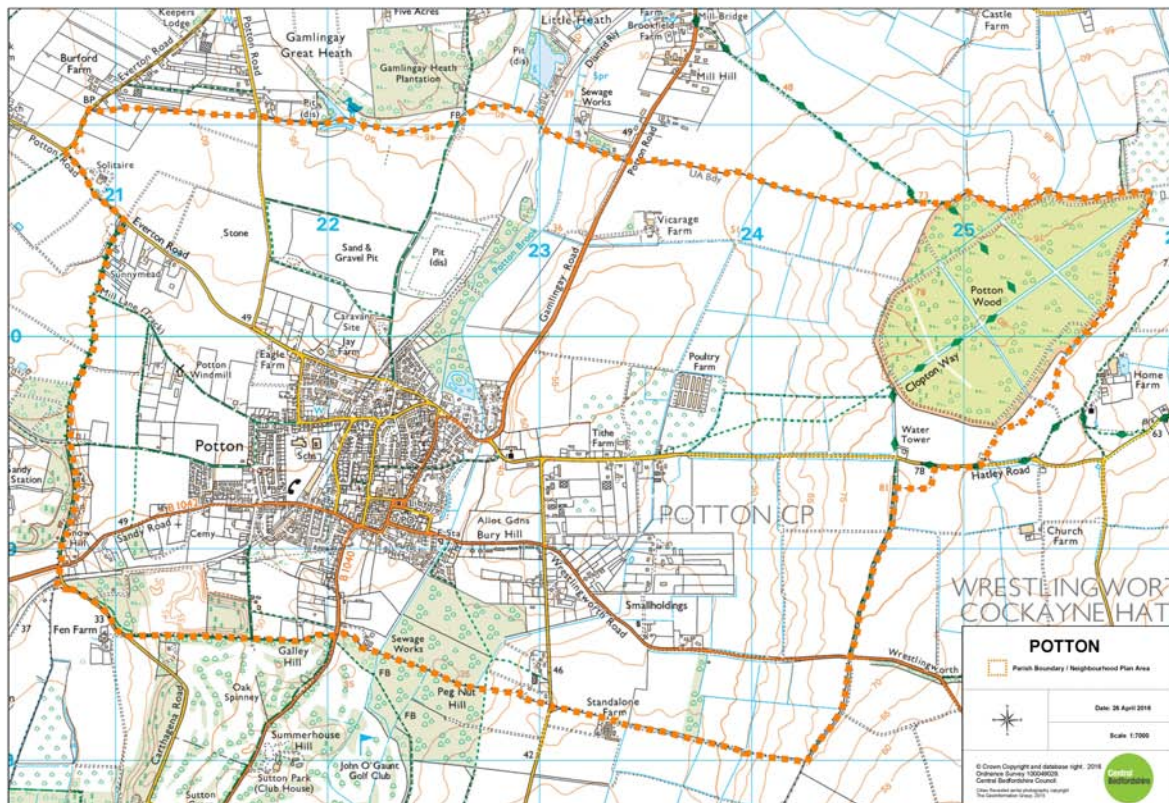
Potton has previously developed a Potton Town Plan and an associated Green Infrastructure Plan (GI Plan). These were both ratified by Potton Town Council and set out a vision and action plan for how the Town wished to see itself develop and a number of the aspirations were met. However, those that were outstanding have been reviewed as part of the process of creating the

neighbourhood plan and brought forward into this plan.

Neighbourhood Planning now provides an opportunity for the community to have a real say over local decision making, to achieve its long-standing goals through the planning system and address the challenges and opportunities facing the future vitality of the Parish.

The Neighbourhood Plan is based on extensive research and influenced by robust engagement with the local community. In the lead up to the referendum, decision makers should consider this to be an important reference point and give it weight as a material consideration in any development planning decisions. When the Plan is published it will have very significant weight in the determination of planning applications.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment screening report has been produced by CBC which can be found in the supporting documents.



Potton Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area



# Location and History

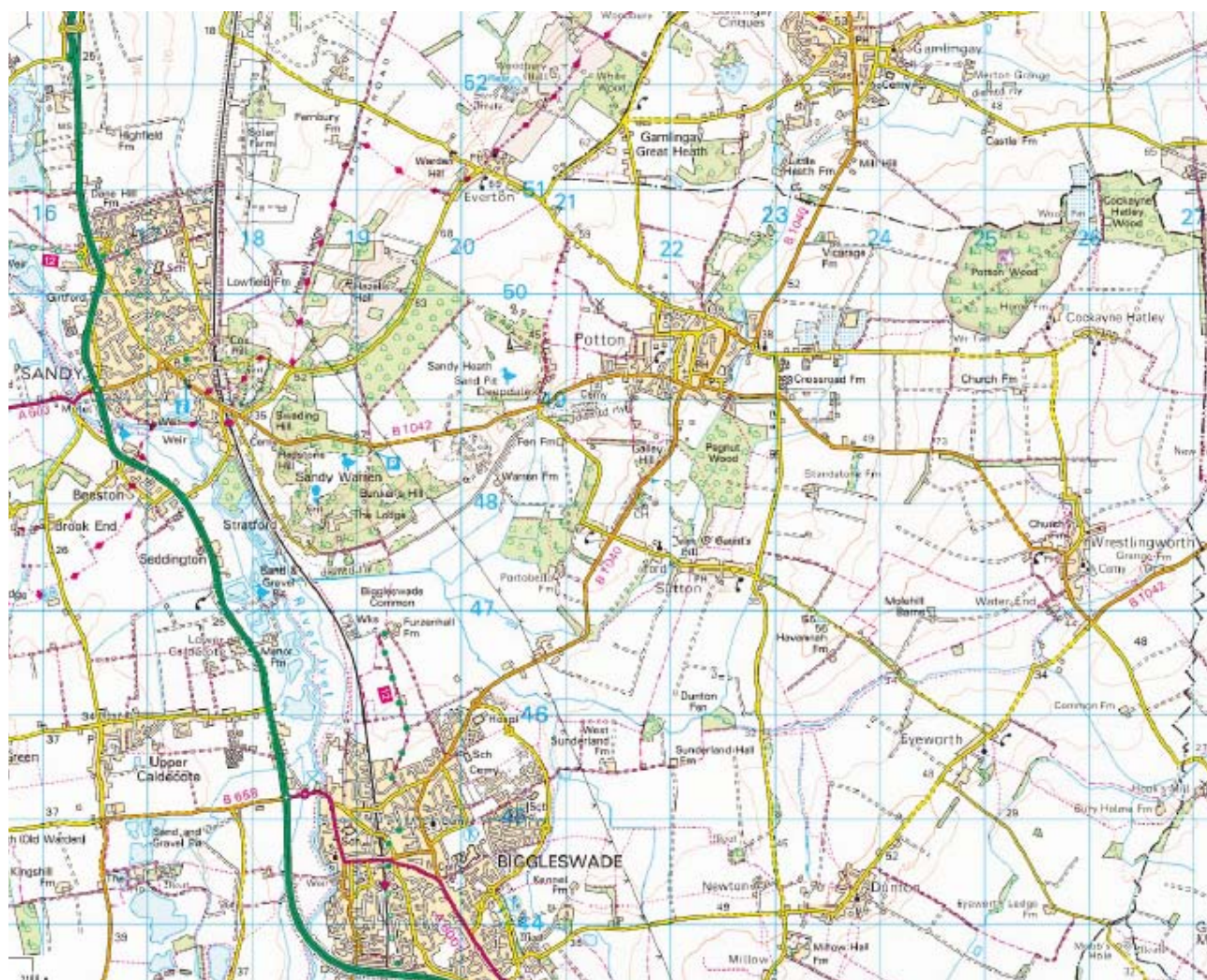
Potton is a rural market town located some 4km east of Sandy and 5km north of Biggleswade. The town was originally a prosperous market town and today has a population of approximately 5000 people in around 2,250 dwellings. Potton Brook borders the town to the east and there are two sand quarries in the area surrounding the town, one to the north and one to the west.

Potton sits within the Everton Heath Greensand Ridge area, an elevated landscape that forms the eastern most part of a long ridge. There is a varied landscape pattern with open heathland, arable cropping, plantation and deciduous woodland. There are a number of large estate houses and surrounding parkland, as well as active and restored mineral extraction works. Since the granting of a market in 1086, Potton was to develop into one of the most important market towns in Bedfordshire by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but declined in Victorian times until only a Horse Fair was left in the 1930's.

The prosperity of Potton as a market town is reflected in its oldest houses on the south side of the Market Square and in Sun Street. These have timber frames which may have originated in late medieval or early Tudor times, although many of these buildings were destroyed in the 1783 fire. This historic significance has been recognized and the main area has been designated as a conservation area.

By 1970 the town's population had risen to 3026 with many of the population commuting rather than working locally.

In the last part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the town steadily grew and developed more small businesses and a wide range of social groups. Throughout, Potton has remained a vibrant and diverse market square and town.





Potton has an historic Georgian Market Square which is the heart of the Town, in which there are many busy local shops in and around the Square. These include a florist, food store, newsagent, hairdressers, estate agents, butchers, Chinese takeaway, fish and chip shop, traditional hardware shop, chemist, veterinary surgery, hotel, bakery, post office, dental surgery, two small supermarkets, public houses and a car showroom as well as several small businesses. In the centre stands the Clock House in which is located the Town Library watched over by the Town Clock. There are also many small businesses situated in and around the town providing local employment.

Potton is a friendly town with strong artistic community. There are many theatre groups and choirs, sports clubs, community groups and social organisations for both young and old. Potton also hosts a number of community events including, Four Seasons Market, The Potton Show, Party on Potton, Potton Apple Day, Christmas Lights and Remembrance Day. Many are held within the main square, all of which help to maintain that community spirit.



# How the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared

The Potton Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by residents and members of Potton Town Council working as part of a Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group with support from Central Bedfordshire Council and the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity. The key stages in undertaking the production of the Plan were:

- Creation of a steering group by Potton Town Council.
- Creation of a dedicated web page and social media (Facebook) page.
- Collection and collation of background data about Potton.
- Consulting with the Town's residents as to their future vision for the Town through questionnaires, public meetings and brochures/flyers.
- A Neighbourhood Plan survey questionnaire sent to all dwellings within the town with 727 responses.
- A Town Centre Benchmarking Survey conducted by People and Places Insight Limited.
- Creation of the draft Neighbourhood Plan and all its associated supporting documents.
- Planning the consultation exercises on the draft plan with the residents and other stakeholders.
- The draft plan examination by CBC and the planning inspector.
- Planning for a referendum to adopt the plan.

## Designation and Raising Awareness

The parish of Potton was designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area in January 2016. A steering group was formed to discuss the creation and scope of the neighbourhood plan process. During 2016 and 2017 the steering group members attended many events informing residents of the forthcoming neighbourhood plan.

## Consultation and Evidence Gathering

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group mobilised themselves to begin the process of gathering evidence to support the Plan. This included reviewing evidence reports prepared by CBC, preparing a neighbourhood profile using key national and local statistics and producing a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, which contains a broad range of statistics and information that helped to identify issues for the Parish. This information is provided in separate supporting documents all of which can be found on the Potton Town Council website

The key activities that were undertaken were:

- Attendance at community events to engage with the community (May Day fete, seasonal markets, Party on Potton, Potton Show).
- A Pre-Vision questionnaire to test the proposed Vision for Potton was carried out both on-line via our website and paper-based at community events.
- The Vision and objectives were tested at community events with residents asked to comment on the interpretation of their vision and concerns.



Potton Green Infrastructure Plan workshop



- The Green Infrastructure Plan for 2018 was created based on Consultation with Potton residents (two workshops were arranged to determine their aspirations relating to Potton's green infrastructure.) These workshops were promoted on the NP website, social media and by posters in the Market Square
- The town centre benchmarking survey was conducted by People and Places Ltd to benchmark the town against others of similar size and profile and to highlight issues and opportunities.
- A Neighbourhood plan questionnaire was created both on-line and in paper form to ensure maximum inclusion. It was promoted through advertising banners, at community events and through social media to encourage participation. The results were shared with residents at a number of roadshows and used to formulate the Vision's supporting policies.

All events, questionnaires, workshops and interactions were communicated using a variety of methods to engage as many of the town's residents as possible. These include:

- Social media (Facebook – We Love Potton, Potton Residents for Sustainable Growth).
- The local newspaper (Biggleswade Chronicle).
- Potton Town Council Website.
- Adam Zerny's Newsletter (our CBC ward Councillor).
- Posters throughout the town.

A full detailed description of all the consultation activities is include in [Potton NP - Annex C Consultation](#).

## Vision and Objectives Development

Analysing the findings of the consultation exercises and local evidence, the Steering Group drafted a Vision and Objectives document for the Neighbourhood Plan. The findings were grouped into eight themes, with each of these themes identifying the local issues for the topic and the proposed actions to address them. The Vision and Objectives document was published on the website in January 2018 as part of the ongoing consultation with residents.

## Plan Creation

Throughout January 2018 to March 2018 the Vision and Objectives proposals, responses to community engagement exercises and local

evidence were used to develop the Neighbourhood Plan. In an effort to reduce the overall cost to the residents and enhance the efficiency of the process it was decided that physical copies of the Plan would be located in key locations throughout the town and a link provided to an electronic version of the plan documents. A flyer was sent to each household and neighbouring parish councils providing details of these locations and link for the Parish during a six week public consultation. A Sustainability Appraisal of the Plan was undertaken.

## Final Plan, Submission and Examination

Analysis of the comments from the six week statutory local consultation exercise (regulation 14) was undertaken and resulted in review of the draft plan. The draft plan was then submitted for a "Health Check" by an independent planning officer. This resulted in a further review (regulation 15) and the production of the final plan ready for submission for regulation 16 consultation and independent examination.

Following the successful examination the Plan will proceed to a local referendum where the residents of the Parish will be asked whether they want Central Bedfordshire Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Plan area. If a favourable response is received the Plan will become part of the statutory 'Development Plan' for the area and, with the Local Plan, become the starting point for deciding planning applications in Potton.

## Structure of the Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out:

- The Vision and Objectives for the future of Potton.
- The Neighbourhood Plan Strategy – Sustainable Development for the Whole Community – setting out the broader aims of the Plan's approach.
- The Neighbourhood Plan Policies – Providing the local policy framework for managing new development so that it contributes to the vision, aims and strategy for the District.
- The implementation and monitoring criteria for the plan are detailed in annex H of the plan document. Following the adoption of the plan relevant project and actions plans will be produced as specified in the annex







# The Neighbourhood Plan Vision, Aims and Policies:

## Background

A Neighbourhood Plan is a way of helping local communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live and work. It can be used to:

- Develop a shared vision for the neighbourhood.
- Choose where new homes, shops, offices and other development should be built.
- Identify new infrastructure needed to support any development.
- Identify and protect important local green spaces.
- Influence what new buildings should look like.
- Promote and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the plan area.

In consultation with the Community, the established vision for Potton is to ensure it remains a thriving and prosperous community that delivers a high quality of life for all residents, specifically that:

- a) Potton will retain its character as a small Georgian Market Town with a vibrant market square that has a variety of shops and services to meet the needs of the Town's residents.
- b) There will be a controlled, proportionate and uniform growth over the period of the Plan with sustainable developments that meet the needs of the town and its residents.
- c) Growth and development of small businesses in the Town to promote local employment is encouraged and supported.

d) The Town will retain and develop an infrastructure that meets current needs of its residents and has the capacity to support future growth.

e) Good leisure facilities to meet the needs of the whole Town are provided.

f) There are endorsed policies that have a positive effect on the environment and provide a high quality natural environment that protects wildlife.

g) A network of footpaths and cycle-ways linking major areas of the Town is provided to encourage pedestrians and cyclists with associated environmental and parking benefits.

h) Parking congestion in the Market Square is eased and provision made for the use of alternative transportation methods.

The aims of this plan are directly related to the vision statements which have been developed in conjunction with the people of Potton. To achieve this, policies have been written, where each policy has a specific series of policy objectives that support and facilitate achievement of the Plan's overall aims and vision. Each of the visions is considered below and the aims related to the vision and the policies to achieve this are listed. The individual policies and their specific objectives are detailed in *The Policies*. The relationship between the vision, policies and objectives is shown in detail in *Potton NP - Annex G Vision, Policies and Objectives*.



## Vision A

**Potton will retain its historic character as a small Georgian Market Town with a vibrant market square that has a variety of shops and services to meet the needs of the Town's residents.**

### **Supporting policies: CI-2, HO-1, HO-5, HO-6, EV-1, EV-2**

The purpose of a Character Assessment is to understand and record the distinct features of a town, which combine to create its unique character. The approach used is to identify broad character areas using on-site fieldwork, local knowledge and photographs to illustrate the buildings and other features described. However, in order to capture the general character of an area individual atypical properties have been disregarded. In the Conservation Area the same process has been followed but has been supplemented by reference to a number of existing published works to assist in defining heritage aspects.

The Character Assessment when combined with the aspirations and objectives of the associated policies will help developers, designers and builders produce high quality designs of new houses and other buildings in accordance with our 'vision' for the future of the town. This vision includes the need to ensure that expansion:

- Takes in to account healthcare and education provision and any associated funding required to enhance these as necessary.
- Is undertaken such that growth is gradual, not excessive and enhances the town by a diversity of styles that reflect its core nature.
- Promotes the use of alternative transport for commuters and where parking provision is made ensure that it is adequate in quantity, off road to limit the need for on road parking and the resultant congestion.

The aim is that any new designs for development will build on, or reflect some of the identified character aspects of Potton that make Potton a unique market town and not just another place to build standard developer housing. The complete assessment can be found in [Potton NP - Annex D Character Assessment](#).

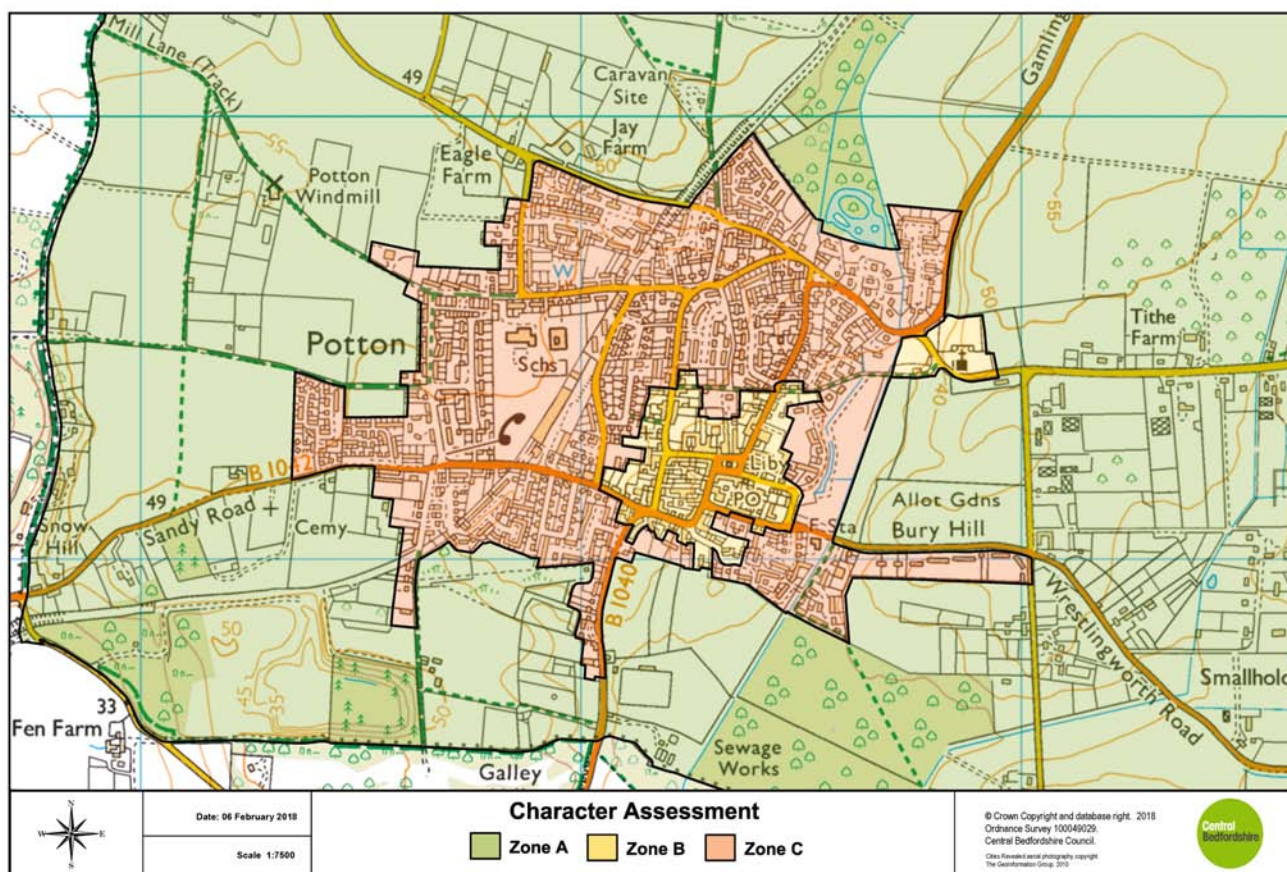
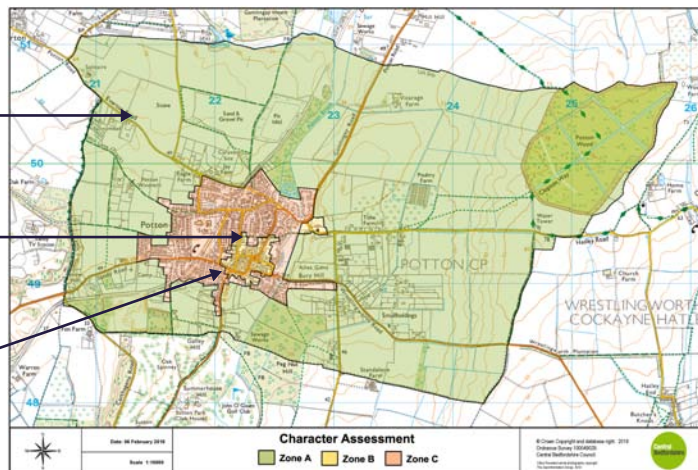


The town and parish have been split into 3 geographical areas shown on the plan below.

**Zone A** – Area outside the settlement area within the NP area. Principally rural and agricultural.

**Zone B** – Conservation area

**Zone C** – Mixed residential and light industrial with views to Greensand Ridge to the North, West and East.







View to the North-East over Potton showing horse paddocks and Potton Wood

### Zone A - Boundary of Neighbourhood Plan Area

Potton is situated at the edge of the south-east facing dip slope of the Greensand Ridge. The slope gradually falls away into the vales of Wrestlingworth and Biggleswade. The slope reaches a low point at Potton Brook and rises eastward to its highest elevation at Potton Wood. To the north-west, at Everton the plateau meets the steep scarp slope of the Ridge and drops steeply away into the Ouse valley.



Mill Lane

Potton Brook flows through the parish and enters the town from Gamlingay to the north and flows out southward toward Sutton, finally entering the River Ivel in Biggleswade.

Potton settlement envelope is surrounded by a number of plantations and semi-natural ancient woodlands. Potton Wood is the largest area of woodland and is situated on the north east boundary of the zone. The primary land use outside the town is arable with a number of small horse paddocks on the edges around the town.

Zone A is the region within the Parish boundary but outside the settlement envelope. There are a few private residences in the zone but principally, the land is Rural/Agricultural in character. Structures on the land are mainly stables, barns or other agricultural buildings.

To the east of the town there is a Poultry Farm, Deepdale Trees tree nursery and also some smallholdings which were originally Land Settlement Areas.

To the north of the town there is one working and one disused gravel pit. Another disused sand and gravel pit is situated to the south west of the town.

There is a CBC owned permanent Gypsy & Traveller site to the north of the town.

The overriding character of this area is its rural and agricultural nature with significant natural features and attractive views worthy of preservation.



## Zone B – Conservation area

This assessment of the Conservation area is largely taken from the Central Bedfordshire Council appraisal dated 2009, updated as appropriate.



Most of the buildings in Potton are residential and it is clear that the town now serves larger settlements in commuting distance more than it does local agriculture. Indeed, many farm buildings and workshops have been converted to domestic use and other uses. Home Farm in Horne Lane, for instance, is no longer in farming use.



The Market Square is, of course, the main space and focus for the town. The formality of this rectangular space has an underlying organic feel as the routes running from it lead obliquely from the corners. The Market Square and King Street are the focus for small businesses and shopping. There are also several public houses, notably the George and Dragon on the east side of Market Square and the Coach House on the north side.



As well as St Mary's Church, there is a Baptist chapel on Horslow Street, the Salvation Army Hall in Chapel Street and the former chapel behind Sun Street. For secular assembly, the community centre in Brook End has been converted.

The town centre is very self-contained and the continuous frontages give a strong sense of enclosure. Views are generally internal, therefore, including those on Blackbird Street and from streets leading into the Market Square. The notable exception is the dramatic panorama of open countryside seen from the elevated churchyard of St Mary's Church.

The quality of the town centre is confirmed by the consistency of buildings that make a positive contribution, including the statutory listing of almost all the buildings in the Market Square. The 20th century has been least kind to Potton at Royston Court and, to a lesser extent, at Nos.1-3 Market Square. New development continues on back land off King Street and Horslow Street and there is a strong case for avoiding intensification to the point where the qualities for which the conservation area has been designated are diminished.



Old Railway Station



### Zone C – Settlement area

With very few exceptions, this area is predominantly given over to housing. Accommodation ranges from single bedroom Housing Association flats in Sheffield Close and affordable housing in Wingfield Drive to 4/5 bedroom houses in newer developments.

Residential buildings are characterised by the wide range of different types, sizes, ages and designs which have evolved throughout the last 100 years of growth of the town.

A wide range of housing types and styles reflect the outward development of the town between 1900 and today.

The main open space in the eastern area of the zone is the Henry Smith Playing Fields including a park with play equipment, a bespoke skate park and an adult gym.

In some areas the pleasantly undulating topography affords good views to the north, east and west over the Greensand Ridge.

In general the views over the town have a range of property types, roof heights, building styles and colours.



Henry Smith Playing Fields - Gym



## The shops and services

The shops and services in Potton range from food retailing to hardware, carpets and flooring to gifts including the following:

- 5 food shops (two small supermarkets, a convenience store, a butchers and bakers)
- A newsagent
- A post office
- A pharmacy
- A hardware store
- A flooring/carpet store
- 4 hairdressers
- 3 vehicle servicing/repairers
- A fuel station
- A veterinary clinic
- 2 estate agents
- A gift shop
- A florist
- A variety of restaurants / takeaway outlets

There are also number of other small to medium size business, located in and around the square and town providing services such as metalwork, fencing, windows, building, security services and garage doors.





## Vision B

**There will be a controlled, proportionate and uniform growth over the period of the Plan with sustainable developments that meet the needs of the town and its residents.**

**Supporting policies:** HO-1, HO-2, HO-3, HO-4, HO-5, HO-6, EV-1, EV-4, EV-5, EV-6

In recent years the expansion of the town has been notable and has included large (in relationship to the town's size) developments. These developments have been predominantly on the boundaries of the town and have resulted in a significant change to the character of some areas. They have also not directly met the requirements of those living in, or wishing to remain in the town as needs have changed. The predominance, as shown by the survey results, is for out-commuting as a result of the disparity of house prices further south resulting in population displacement. Any development has primarily been aimed at this market and not addressed the needs of those from the more immediate area for affordable family housing, housing for those wishing to downsize as they age and have different needs.

The aim of this vision and its associated policies is, regardless of development, to maintain the essential nature of Potton, as a small Georgian market town with a vibrant market square that has a variety of shops and services meeting the needs of the town and its residents. This will be achieved by development of the town's housing and other buildings so that it does not appear to be random in nature which would result in changing the appearance of the town away from its core characteristic of a small Georgian market town. This will be achieved by applying controls over house appearance, size and quality ensuring that the existing character of the town is maintained and development does not result in an identical series of buildings that could be anywhere in any modern development. It will also be achieved by supporting:

- Appropriate growth that takes place close to the Market Square that supports local businesses and eases parking issues by encouraging pedestrian and cycle traffic.
- Future housing development that occurs in the areas, identified in the site assessments contained in this plan and accepted as part of the local plan, which is suitable and sustainable and acceptable to the town's population.
- New housing developments which address the shortage of smaller sized affordable houses for first time buyers, young people in Potton living with their parents who want to move out and people whose children have left home, looking to downsize.
- Development that addresses the identified shortage of properties (smaller houses/ bungalows) suitable for retired/older people. This will facilitate downsizing freeing up larger family sized houses thus reducing the need for larger houses on new developments.
- Development of properties that are designed to Lifetime Homes standards which are particularly suitable for frailer elderly people and also wheelchair-bound residents.
- Development that supports the paucity of genuinely affordable housing as indicated by over 50% of respondents to the Housing Needs Survey which showed that they or someone in their household was either considering affordable rent or shared ownership due to lack of financial means to purchase or rent on the open market. Such development may include development of Rural Exception Housing in line with the Housing Needs Survey and Central Bedfordshire Council's current requirements.



- Strategies that address the need identified by the Neighbourhood Plan survey to support out-commuting by rail from Biggleswade and Sandy stations, through improvement of access to the wider public transport network for those in the parish and promotion of the development and use of alternative methods of travel other than private vehicles.
- The growth in working from home by keeping up to date with communications technologies and encouraging service providers to give a good service level throughout the town.
- Provision for people who come in to the Town to work through appropriate provision for parking and alternative transport.

Over time it is not unusual for houses that were proposed and built to meet specific needs is subsequently changed such that it is no longer suitable for the original purpose. The plan aims to discourage this. For example, if a number of bungalows have been built as suitable accommodation for households with specific needs

such as incapacity, then a subsequent request to add another floor/convert the loft will not be supported as it reduces the availability of such housing for those who need it and wish to remain in community rather than move away.

In the production of these objectives and the associated policies it is recognised that the rate of development will exceed that which has been set as a target in the associated design guide as a result of planning being granted on a number of site prior to the acceptance of this plan. However it will be some time before all of these sites are completed and there is still the opportunity to influence the nature of the sites so that they recognise our policies before the designs are finalised and agreed.





## Vision C

**Growth and development of small businesses in the Town to promote local employment is encouraged and supported.**

**Supporting policies:** CI-1, CI-2, EI-1

The aim of this vision is to encourage the growth and development of a vibrant business environment in the town providing the local population with enhanced job opportunities. In order to achieve this future developments should:

- Ensure changes to Potton include provision for facilities or premises that enable businesses to be started and run within the Town. People who are currently working from home or running small home based businesses can instead use some form of common business facility or hub as shown in the community consultation.
- Ensure that any development of the town supports the existing businesses in the town rather than encouraging use of local shopping centres in nearby towns.
- Ensure that facilities appropriate to the surrounding dwellings are built in areas identified as reserved areas for future employment development or as designated Employment Areas are protected from housing development.
- Support the improvement of communications technologies and encourage service providers to give a good service level throughout the town as a business enabler.
- Ensure there is adequate provision for in-commuting employees of businesses based in Potton both for parking and alternative transport means. The scoping study showed that the majority of people employed by Potton businesses with premises commute daily from outside of Potton.
- Where appropriate help businesses move from potentially unsuitable locations to other locations that have been identified in the plan designated as suitable for light industrial use.





## Vision D

**The Town retains an infrastructure that meets current needs of its residents and has the capacity to support future growth.**

### **Supporting policies: CI-1, CI-2, EI-1, T-1, T-2**

The aim of this vision and its associated policies is to ensure that, as the Town grows through natural and accepted development, the supporting infrastructure maintains pace and that it has sufficient capacity to allow for any future growth. The community engagement process highlighted certain concerns of residents related to the provision of healthcare, education and physical infrastructure such as roads paths etc. This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring that any development takes into account the need for funding for expansion or creation of appropriate healthcare and educational facilities and ensure appropriate funds are made available.
- Ensuring proposals where appropriate promote the creation of small and medium sized businesses to enhance employment opportunities within the community. Where possible, proposals should include provision for facilities or premises that enable businesses to be started and run within the Town. This will include the ability for people to work from home, run small home based businesses or use some form of common business facility or hub.
- Ensuring proposals support the existing businesses in the town rather than encouraging out-commuting to other local shopping centres in nearby towns, and easy safe use of non-vehicular travel to the town centre.
- Ensuring that any development of the town includes provision for funds to further develop identified community projects or provides ongoing funding to cover the cost of maintaining existing community projects for the town's residents. For example:
  - The upgrade and creation of cycleways linking Potton to Sandy and Gamlingay.
  - The building of the Potton Hall for All as a new multi-use, environmentally friendly community space for the Town to expand the leisure and sport opportunities available.
  - Provision of good pre-school facilities.
- Including strategies that address the need identified by the Neighbourhood Plan survey to support out-commuting by rail from Biggleswade and Sandy stations, through improvement of access to the wider public transport network for those in the parish and promotion of the development and use of alternative methods of travel other than private vehicles.
- Supporting the improvement of communication technologies and encouraging service providers to give a good service level throughout the town as a business enabler.
- Supporting development proposals that alleviate existing congestion, improve pedestrian safety and improve traffic flows through Potton. Proposals are viewed favourably and supported, notably where they divert HGV traffic away from the Market Square and King Street or help enforcement of traffic restrictions. Ensuring support where proposals:
  - maximise opportunities to walk and cycle within the town.
  - provide segregated footpaths and cycleways from traffic.
  - provide a safe footpath layout within the scheme and good pedestrian links to the settlement.
  - offer safe connections to the highway and enable those particularly with special needs or more elderly members of the community easier access to the town centre facilities.
- Supporting new developments that contribute towards improvements in private, public and community transport in the parish.





## Vision E

**Good leisure facilities to meet the needs of the whole Town are provided.**

**Supporting policies: EV-1, EV-2, EV-3**

The aim of this vision is to ensure as development takes place and the community expands that the leisure facilities and opportunities in the town meet the need of the whole community. The scoping study showed that there is a good range of groups and activities already available. However, there are areas where the community believes these could be improved. It has also been shown that there is an identified deficiency of Country Parks, Natural and Semi Natural Green Space and Amenity Greenspace. It should also aid in addressing the reported 6.5 ha deficiency in Potton of Recreational Space, allotments and community gardens. This will be achieved through:

- Ensuring that any development of the town includes useable public space for leisure use by all ages and sectors of the community and plentiful play areas that cover ages up to and including young adults. These must be usable for both residents of the new development and those living within at least a 500m radius of the surrounding town thus addressing the identified deficiency in Potton of Country Parks, Natural and Semi Natural Green Space and Amenity Greenspace and the reported 6.5 ha deficiency in Potton of Recreational Space, allotments and community gardens.
- Ensuring that any development of the town includes provision for funds to further develop identified community projects or to provide ongoing funding to cover the ongoing cost of maintaining existing community projects, for example:
  - Renovation of the MUGA at the Hollow.
  - Improvement of football pitches at Mill Lane.
- Ensuring as the town expands the needs of young adults are addressed by providing and or enhancing activities aimed at them within the community as opposed to them having to travel to nearby towns.
- Ensuring that the Potton Green Infrastructure Plan produced and issued as part of the overall neighbourhood planning is given due consideration when any development is undertaken so that important existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets (including wildlife habitats), accessible green space and rights of way within the Parish of Potton are identified and the local environment evolves, in the manner desired by the residents, for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Protection of those areas identified by the Green Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Plans as being important for wildlife and to the community for its amenity, health and social well-being benefit.
- Ensuring that any new developments address the issues of climate change and sustainability through:
  - The reduction of carbon emissions by using renewable and low carbon energy sources such as solar and wind power.
  - Maximising energy efficiency and optimising the use of natural light through the layout and design of buildings and landscaping.
  - Minimising water usage through water efficiency measures such as grey water recycling and use of water butts.
  - Minimising the impacts of overheating through the use of green roofs, walls and other Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) source control features within hard and soft landscaping and planting schemes thus providing shade and helping cool the atmosphere.





## Vision F

There are endorsed policies that have a positive effect on the environment and provide a high quality natural environment that protects wildlife.

**Supporting policies:** CI-3, EV-1, EV-2, EV-3, EV-4, EV-5, EV-6

The aim of this vision is to ensure that as development takes place and the community expands that the green infrastructure in the town meet the needs of the whole community. The consultation engagement with the community has shown a strong communal desire to maintain the rural nature of Potton and to enhance the Green Infrastructure, in turn protecting the local wildlife, the environment and preventing the continued fragmentation of habitat. With this in mind BRCC were commissioned to provide an update to Potton's Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan.

This plan details specific aspirations for green infrastructure improvements and Local Green Space designations, and includes an action plan in order to track progress towards achieving these aspirations. Community workshops were used to compile and validate the plan. Key aims were to ensure the advancement of the aspirations from the GI Plan and the creation of the associated Green Wheel infrastructure. The key green infrastructure aspirations that were developed during the process are shown in the following table and on the accompanying [Green Infrastructure Map on page 26](#).



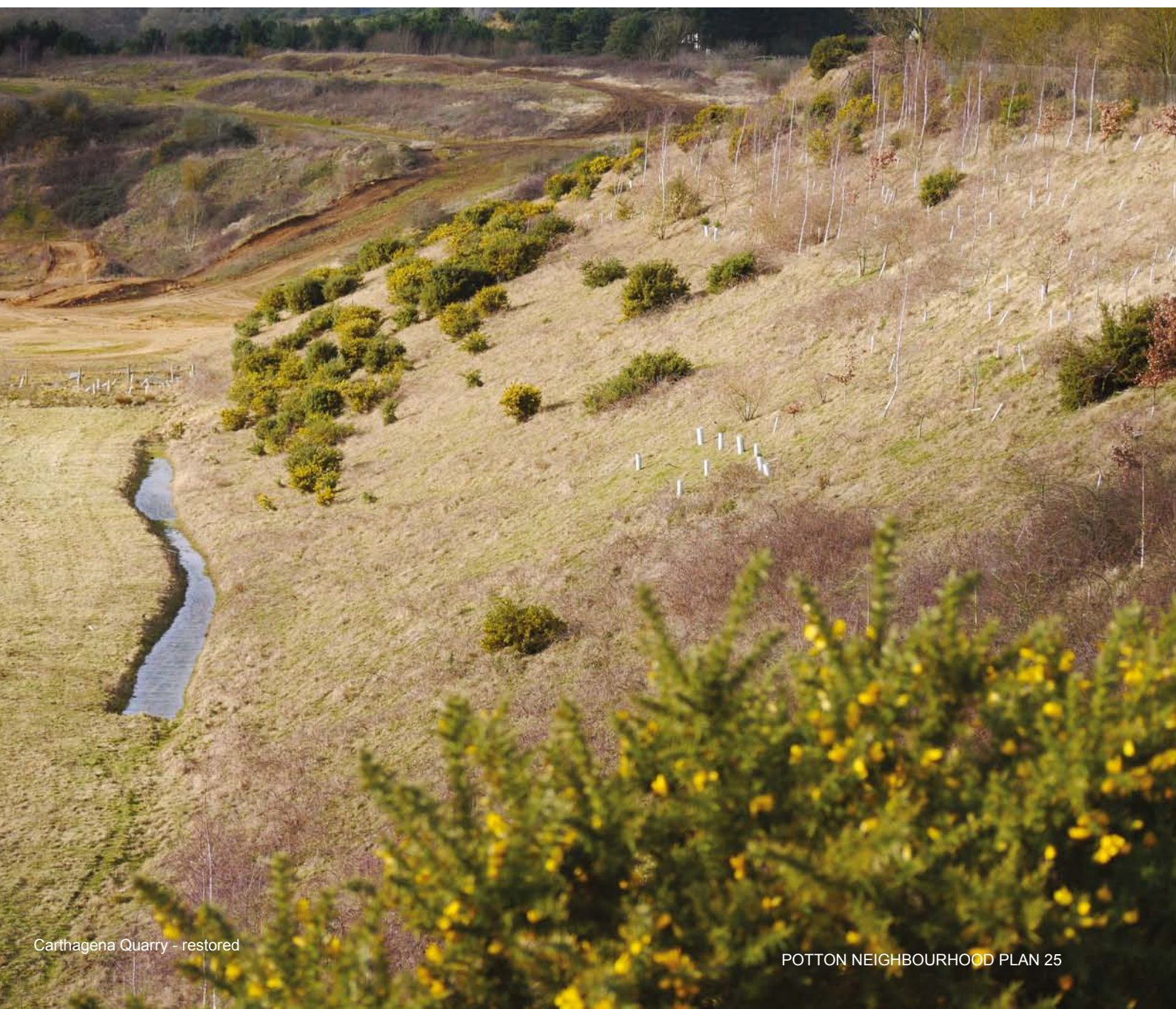
Pegnut Wood



	<b>Aspirational GI Enhancements</b>
1	Create new access route from BW11 to Potton Wood (discussion required concerning status)
2	Reinstate old bridge over Potton Brook
3	Create roadside footpath / cycleway from Potton Church northwards to Gamlingay
4	Create wildlife corridor with wetland features, east of Potton Brook, between Bury Hill and Church Causeway
5	Create Public Bridleway to link BOAT7 to BW13, creating circular route
6	Create link between BW7 and BW19 south of Potton Road / Carthagera Road crossroads
7	Create permanent Public Rights of Way on existing permissive routes in Potton Wood
8	Create Public Bridleway to link BW14 to Wrestlingworth BW15
9	Create new footpath along north-west side of Pegnut Wood, linking Potton FP1 To Sutton FP1
10	Create Public Footpaths to link Potton Wood to Cockayne Hatley Church via Cockayne Hatley's FP11 and FP12
11	Create permanent RoW's, including a bridleway along the central ride, on existing permissive routes in Pegnut Wood
12	Manage area, south and west of the cemetery, as accessible acid grassland / heathland site
13	Upgrade FP1 and Sutton FP2 to Bridleway (from Bury Hill southwards to Sutton High Street)
14	Formalise footpath access to Sheepsbridge Wood / Lammas Meadow, with link to Aspiration 25
15	Improve condition of Sutton BW8 beside Biggleswade Road to enable cycling
16	Upgrade surface of BW9, linking to FP8 at Newtown
17	Create roadside footpath from BOAT 7 to Everton village
18	Allocate for future expansion of the Mill Lane recreation ground
19	Enhance Potton Brook for water vole conservation and seek recognition as a County Wildlife Site
20	Extend Pegnut Wood, northwards, with accessible woodland and grassland areas
21	Extend Sheepsbridge Wood / Lammas Meadow northwards as accessible woodland
22	Create publicly accessible nature reserve including woodland, heathland, exposed sand banks etc.
23	Create accessible GI land west of Sutton Road
24	Manage area to north and south of Old Bedford Road as accessible acid grassland site
25	Seek public access to woodland and lake, south of Sheepsbridge Wood / Lammas Meadow (access via Aspiration 14)
26	Manage Deepdale Quarry as an accessible nature reserve
27	Create new community green space and orchard adjacent to Potton Brook
28	Manage area, east of Sutton Mill Road, as an accessible nature reserve / amenity area with nature value of acid grassland and scrub
29	Increase wildlife value of Potton Wood and Pegnut Wood through appropriate habitat management
	<b>Aspiration outside of Parish</b>
30	Create new footpath link between Sutton FP2 and Sutton BW6

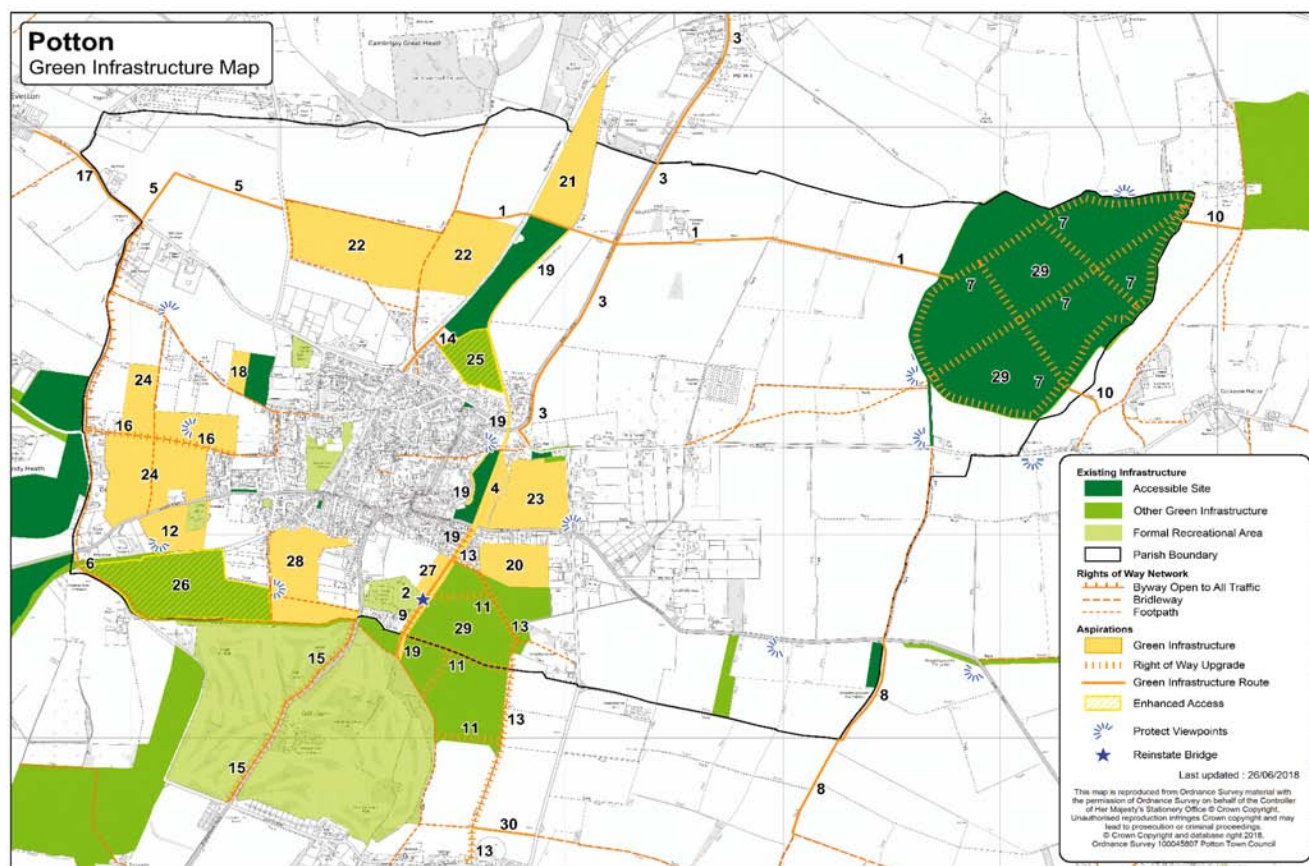


	General comments
A	Promote the planting of trees within the town
B	Provide more benches on walking routes
C	Ensure existing allotment site is protected
D	Adopt mowing regime on publicly owned grassland within town to maximise wildflowers and biodiversity interest
E	Create / retain wildlife corridors, especially those with locally distinct woody hedgerow species
F	Create a clearly marked circular route around Potton, staying off the roads
G	Create lizard habitat and hibernacula in appropriate locations throughout the parish
H	Seek CWS recognition for sites that meet the criteria (e.g. Carthagen Road / Biggleswade Road corridor)





## Green Infrastructure Map



The Green Infrastructure Plan identifies the following important Green Spaces and describes a route to Local Green Space designation for some of them.

Priority Ranking	Aspiration Reference	Site
1	(existing)	Henry Smith Playing Fields
1	(existing)	Potton Wood
1	(existing)	Pegnut Wood
4	23	Aspirational GI land west of Sutton Road
5	4	Aspirational wildlife corridor with wetland features, east of Potton Brook, between Bury Hill and Church Causeway
6	24	Aspirational managed area to north and south of Old Bedford Road as accessible acid grassland site
7	28	Aspirational managed area, east of Sutton Mill Road, as an accessible nature reserve / amenity area with value of acid grassland and scrub
8	20	Pegnut Wood extension (northwards), with accessible woodland and grassland areas
8	22	Aspirational publicly accessible nature reserve on restored Potton Quarry (Breedon) including woodland, heathland, exposed sand banks etc.
8	26	Deepdale Quarry – managed as an accessible nature reserve
8	27	Aspirational community green space and orchard adjacent to Potton Brook

- The complete Green Infrastructure Plan can be found in [Potton NP - Annex B Green Infrastructure](#).







## Vision G

A network of footpaths and cycle-ways linking major areas of the Town is provided to encourage pedestrians and cyclists with associated environmental and parking benefits.

**Supporting policies:** CI-3, T-1, T-2, T-3, EV-1, EV-2, EV-3

The aim of this vision is to put in place a Potton Green Wheel. This will provide a well surfaced circular bridleway around the perimeter of Potton, with a number of spokes leading to the centre of the town. It will also link with the planned improved cycle ways to Biggleswade, Sandy and Gamlingay. This infrastructure should result in encouraging a better use of and interaction with the natural rural environment with the associated benefits to health and leisure opportunities.

For more detail, refer to the Green Infrastructure Plan which can be found in [Potton NP - Annex B Green Infrastructure](#).



Potton Wood bridleway

## Vision H

Parking congestion in the Market Square is eased and provision made for the use of alternative transportation methods.

**Supporting policies:** T-1, T-3, EV-2, EV-3

The aim of this vision is to address the issue of difficulty in parking at certain times of the day as identified from consultation and engagement with the community. In addition, people indicated that they would prefer more sustainable and healthy modes of transport but are put off by poor infrastructure, difficult and dangerous roads for

cycling, poor underfoot conditions for walking, infrequent and expensive bus services. Also the work undertaken as part of the town centre benchmarking process highlighted concerns by traders related to short term parking issues and the negative effect on trade as a result of this.



# The Strategy - Sustainable Development for the Whole Community

Sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. These three dimensions constitute what is sustainable in planning terms.

**Economic** contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy

**Social** supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities

**Environmental** contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment

To achieve this, a thoughtful and innovative approach is required, which works more positively; with residents, landowners and developers taking a continuing interest in the future of the town.

There are key projects and facilities that the community would like to see funded through use of the Section 106 and CIL contributions that are made as part of the development process and agreements. These projects will go towards achieving this positive economic, social and environmental growth and include, but not be limited to, key projects such as:

- The building of the Potton Hall for All – a new multi-use, environmentally friendly community space for the Town to expand the leisure and sport opportunities available.
- Improvement of the existing football pitches at Mill Lane and renovation of the MUGA at The Hollow.
- Advancing the aspirations from the Potton GI Plan and the creation of the associated Green Wheel infrastructure.
- Improving the Potton to Sandy cycleway.

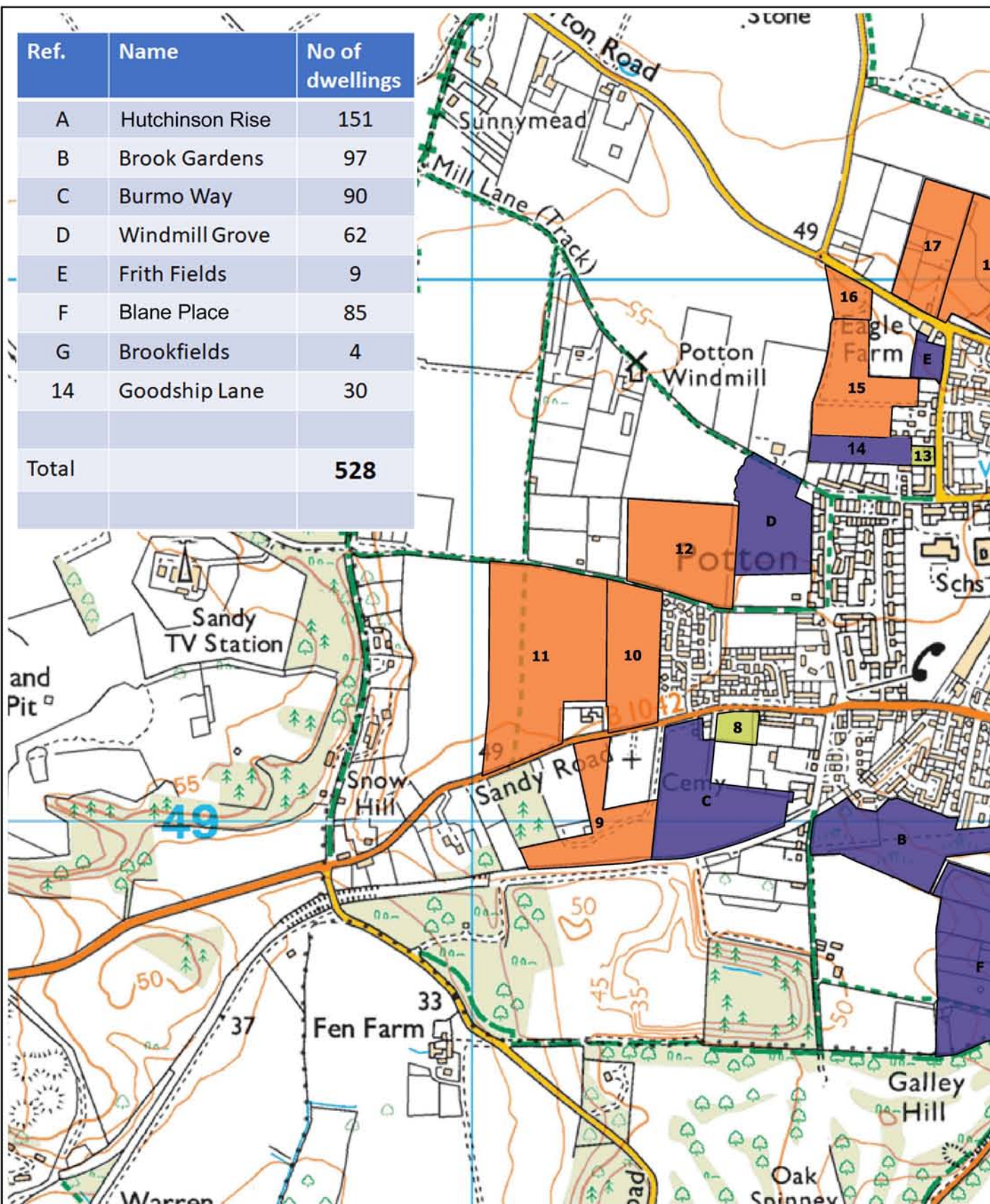
This is the approach adopted in the Plan and on the basis of this the Parish will look to engage positively with the statutory planning process to guide future development.

People living in Potton appreciate the special qualities the town possesses. It is a great place to live and in accommodating housing growth it will be vital that the qualities which make Potton so successful and desirable are protected. Current residents accept that more people will want to come and live in Potton and this is important to any thriving and evolving community.

This plan is not anti-development and the community understands the need to accommodate housing growth. But there is great concern that new development in Potton could erode the very qualities that make the town special if it is not carefully managed in terms of its scale and design. This next layer of growth for the town must create developments of quality which contribute to the character of the town and which provide local benefit. It must be more than an exercise in meeting housing supply ‘numbers’ by the addition of characterless estates on the rural fringes of the town more typical of suburban developments. Therefore, the objective is to enable the provision of a choice of new homes to meet the needs of all sections of the community in a manner, which respects the character of the town and wider parish.

Building for Life is the industry standard quality assessment for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods endorsed by Government (Building for Life Partnership, 2012). It provides a twelve point criteria to measure the quality of new development. Schemes are scored on a traffic light system of Red (unacceptable and not of planning approval quality), Amber (partial success with room for improvement or mitigating circumstances) and Green (excellent / exemplary). The use of this and other applicable standards is enshrined in the relevant policies in the following section.

Ref.	Name	No of dwellings
A	Hutchinson Rise	151
B	Brook Gardens	97
C	Burmo Way	90
D	Windmill Grove	62
E	Frith Fields	9
F	Blane Place	85
G	Brookfields	4
14	Goodship Lane	30
Total		528

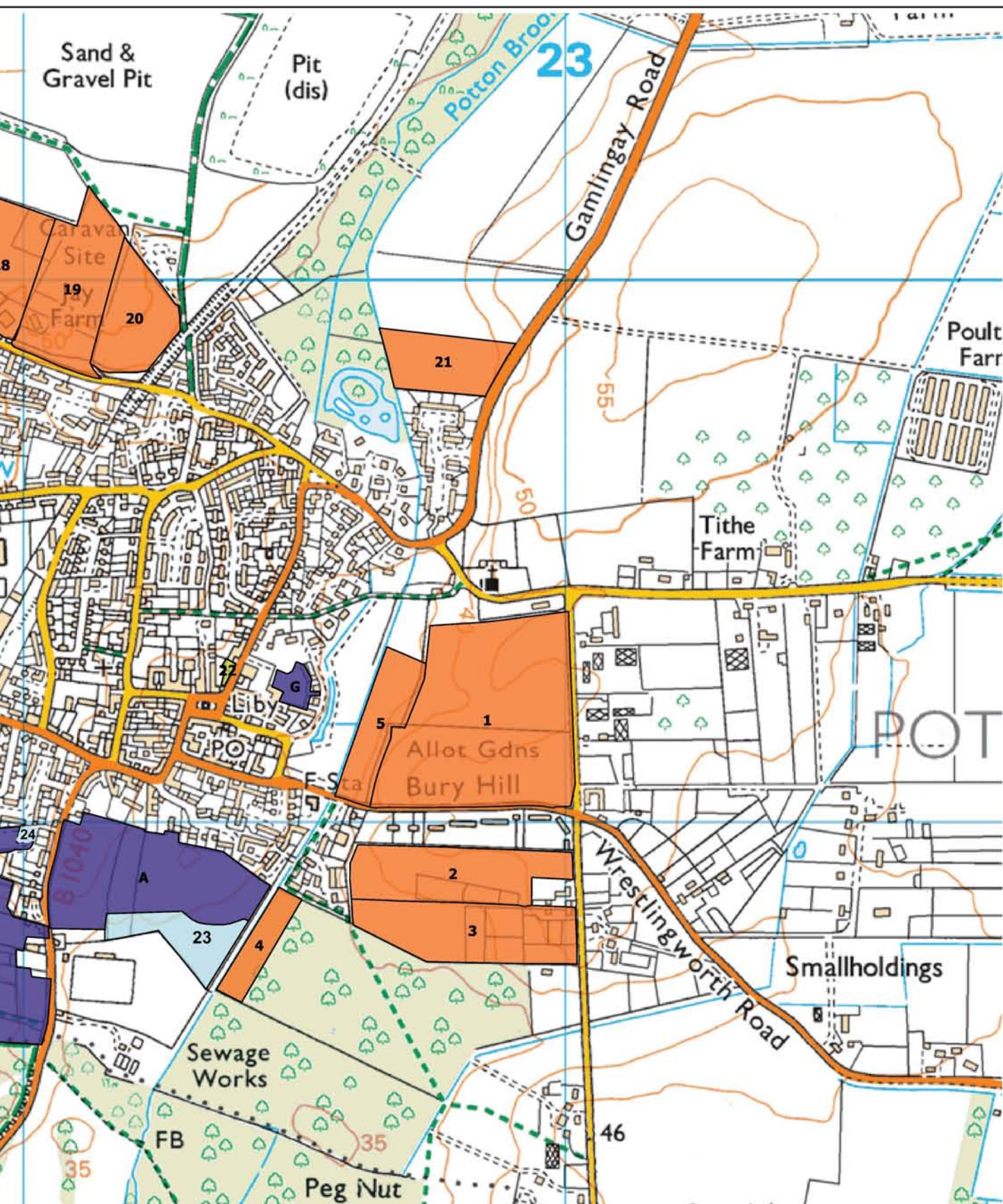


1:9,000

#### Potential Developments

- Housing built
- Not Supported
- Supported (E)
- Supported (H)





## mpment Sites

during NP duration 2016-2035

d

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ousing)

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Central  
Bedfordshire  
Council



# The Policies

The policies have been divided in five distinct areas to support the vision and aims of the plan. These areas are:

- Community infrastructure
- Housing
- Local employment and industries
- Transport
- Environment

Each policy area is explained below. The full detail of the policy objectives and interrelationships for each of the policies, and the relationship to the vision statements and other related plan annexes is provided in *Potton NP - Annex G Vision, Policies and Objectives*.



# Community infrastructure

## CI-1 Employment

Proposals for commercial or mixed-use development will be particularly supported where they include facilities or premises for small, starter or local businesses.

(Visions C, D)

The objective of this policy is to ensure that where it is possible proposals related to changes to Potton will include provision for facilities or premises that enable businesses to be started and run within the Town. To enable the Town to be a vibrant and successful community various types of and opportunities for employment are required. This will include the ability for people to work from home, run small home based businesses or use some form of common business facility or hub.

## CI-2 Town Centre Vitality

As appropriate to their scale and location new residential developments should incorporate measures for local residents to have easy and safe non-vehicular means of travel between the site and Potton Town Centre.

(Visions A, C, D)

The objective of this policy is to ensure that any development of the Town Centre will support the existing businesses in the town rather than encouraging out-commuting to other local shopping centres in nearby towns. This objective will be supported by the travel policies and design that encourage easy and safe use of non-vehicular travel to the town centre.

## CI-3 Foot, Cycle and Bridle Paths

As appropriate to their scale and location new residential developments should incorporate measures for their connection to existing green infrastructure, public footpaths and bridleways.

Proposals which provide future connections to the proposed Potton Green Wheel will be particularly supported.

(Visions F, G)

The objective of this policy is to ensure that in line with the community consultations there is an holistic view to the provision, use and linkage of all green spaces, foot and cycle paths as part of the overall creation of a Green Wheel. This should also promote use of non-vehicular movement in and around these spaces and to and from the existing and any future community facilities in line with overall sustainability aims.

## Additional Community Infrastructure Objectives

The following objectives are supported by existing NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance and/or CBC Local Plan policies as follows:

### Essential Services Provision (Vision A, D)

When planning applications are approved, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that attention is paid to the infrastructure needs of Potton to support the increase in population. We will work closely with our elected CBC Councillors to ensure that contributions received as a result of development is directed to meet the needs of the Potton Parish.

NPPF Paragraph references
8b, 20c, 35, 96a, 98d, 100a, 100b, 103, 132, 135e, 137
Associated CBC Local Plan Policy
HQ2, HQ3

### Recreation Space Provision (Visions E, F, G)

When planning applications are approved, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that attention is paid to the provision of useable public space and play areas for leisure use by all ages and sectors of the community, within or in close proximity to those developments as appropriate. We will seek to ensure these spaces are for both residents of the new development and those living within at least a 500m radius of the surrounding town. This aim is to address the identified deficiency in Potton of Country Parks, Natural and Semi Natural Green Space and Amenity Greenspace and to help address the reported 6.5 ha deficiency in Potton of Recreational Space, allotments and community gardens.

NPPF Paragraph references
8b, 8c, 96b, 96c, 98b, 103, 105, 132, 135e, 135f, 137
Associated CBC Local Plan Policy
EE13, HQ10

### Support for community projects (Visions B, D, E)

This Neighbourhood Plan will seek to ensure that CBC is aware of identified community projects and will thus allocate funds from new developments in the Town accordingly. We will also work closely with our elected CBC Councillors to ensure that any such funding is allocated to these projects for the benefit of the Town's population.

NPPF Paragraph references
8b, 8c, 96b, 96c, 98b, 103, 105, 132, 135e, 135f, 137
Associated CBC Local Plan Policy
EE13, HQ10



Proposed new multi-purpose Community Hall



Proposed new multi-purpose Community Hall





Skatepark in Henry Smith Playing Fields



Potton Town Cricket Club - The Hutchinson Hollow



Mill Lane play area

# Housing

## HO-1 Design Guide Requirements

As appropriate to their scale and location, any proposals for new residential developments should comply with the requirements contained in the Potton Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide. This guide gives guidance on design principles for new housing developments.

*See Annex E – Design Guide*

*(Visions A, B)*

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure that whilst the Neighbourhood Plan supports and accepts housing growth provided it is not excessive, the growth allows Potton to remain and retain its character of a 'Small Georgian Market Town'. This policy supports the Strategic Policies within the NPPF December 2024 Chapter 12.
- To address the issue identified by the Neighbourhood Plan survey that 68% of working people in Potton out-commute by car. This results in a high proportion of households owning multiple cars. A total of 87% of survey respondents support a policy for new houses to have at least 2 off-road parking spaces.

The complete Guide is contained in Annex E and is supported by the environmental proposals in Annex F, Green Infrastructure Design Guide which is the design code for Green Infrastructure, Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Drainage.



## HO-2 Meeting Housing Needs

Proposals for new residential development which directly address the local housing requirements identified in the Potton Housing Needs Survey 2014 and in the Neighbourhood Plan survey 2017 will be supported.

*Surveys are in Supporting Documents*

*(Vision B)*

The objective of this policy is to ensure that the new housing developments address the issues identified by the Housing Needs Survey which specifically include a shortage of smaller sized affordable houses for:-

- First time buyers.
- Young people in Potton living with their parents who want to move out.
- Older people whose children have left home and who are looking to downsize.

## HO-3 Housing for Retired People

Applications for bungalows and 1 & 2 bedroom houses, flats or apartments to suit the needs of retired people will be supported.

*(Vision B)*

The objective of this policy is to address the identified shortage of properties suitable for retired/older people. A better supply of smaller houses and bungalows, say 5% of every development, would facilitate downsizing and thus free up larger family sized houses, reducing the need for new housing developments to offer these larger houses. In the design of these properties it would be anticipated that necessary provision is made for potentially reduced mobility and access. See Policy HO-4



## HO-4 Lifetime Homes

The development of dwellings and new specialist residential Care Home accommodation in appropriate locations for the elderly and people with special needs will be supported. Dwellings for these categories of elderly and those with disabilities should generally be either 1 or 2 bed properties. Care Homes and other specialist units shall also comply with the Potton Neighbourhood Plan Building Design Guide.

*See Annex E – Design Guide*

*(Vision B)*

The objective of this policy is to recognise that there has been a clear ageing on average of the Potton population over the past 10 years. Many elderly people living here at the moment are living in conventional accommodation which is not specifically designed for their needs. Additionally, properties should be designed to Lifetime Homes standards making them particularly suitable for frailer elderly people and also wheelchair users.

## HO-5 Design Features

As appropriate to their scale and location, proposals for new residential of commercial developments should:

- Be in keeping with existing nearby properties and maintain the essential character of the town in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment study. These are summarised in section Vision A of the plan and expanded in *Potton NP – Annex D Character Assessment*.
- Apply the best practice design features in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide requirements. These are expanded in *Potton NP – Annex E Design Guide and Annex F Green Infrastructure Design Guide*.
- Take account of vernacular building materials in the immediate locality and incorporate such materials where practicable into the construction of new buildings and boundary treatments

*(Visions A, B)*

The objective of this policy is to ensure that the development of the town's housing and other buildings does not appear to be random in nature and result in changing the appearance of the town away from its core characteristic of a small Georgian Market Town. To this end, suitable controls over house appearance, size and quality will ensure that the existing character of the town is maintained and development does not result in an identical series of buildings that could be anywhere in any modern development.

## HO-6 Potton's Heritage

As appropriate to their location, proposals for new housing development should take account of the town's heritage. In particular the layout, design and massing of new residential development should take account of and respond to any designated and non-designated heritage assets in a way that is appropriate to the significance of the assets affected.

### (Vision A)

The objective of this policy is to ensure that the valued heritage aspects of Potton are not affected by housing or commercial developments which are unsympathetic to the heritage of the existing building environment. In particular they should avoid impact on non-designated Heritage Assets (i.e. Railway Shed, Old Railway Station etc.).

## Additional Housing Objectives

The following objectives are supported by existing NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance and/or CBC Local Plan policies as follows:

### Rate of Development| (Vision A, B).

This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address the identified significant existing pressure on infrastructure such as Parking, Traffic, Health Service provision etc. by ensuring that housing growth is supported by appropriate infrastructure improvements.

Housing growth for Potton will be Medium Scale which is in the range 50-500 dwellings over the plan period. An even rate of growth will allow necessary infrastructure changes to keep pace with the housing growth.

NPPF Paragraph references
77, 78
Associated CBC Local Plan Policy
HQ2, HQ3

## Brownfield Sites (Vision A, B).

This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to:

- Promote effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- Ensure that future housing and development occurs in the areas that are identified as suitable, sustainable and acceptable to the populace of the town as evidenced through the site assessments contained in this plan and accepted as part of the local plan.
- Encourage the relocation of industry from unsuitable town locations to designated preferred locations that have been identified in the plan as suitable for light industry use; thus freeing up brownfield locations for future domestic development, especially for those people with special needs requiring easy access to the town centre.

NPPF Paragraph references
124, 125, 126, 127, 128
Associated CBC Local Plan Policy
EMP2, EMP3, DC1, DC2





## Affordable Housing (Vision B).

This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address the issue of affordable housing. Over 50% of respondents to the Housing Needs Survey questionnaire who indicated that they or someone in their household was currently intending to move to different accommodation in Potton in the near future, were either considering affordable rent or shared ownership or had insufficient financial means to purchase or rent on the open market.

NPPF Paragraph references
62, 63, 64, 65
Associated CBC Local Plan Policy
H1, H4

## Rural Exception Housing (Vision B).

The Potton Housing Needs Survey has identified that there is a need for some Rural Exception Housing in line with Central Bedfordshire Council's current requirements. Thus the Neighbourhood Plan will specifically support Rural Exception Housing proposals during the plan period provided:-

They meet the expressed policy requirements.

The evidence at the time supports the requirements for the development.

The proposal does not conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan policies and objectives.

The proposal is acceptable to Potton Town Council.

NPPF Paragraph references
82
Associated CBC Local Plan Policy
H5



# Local employment and industries

## El-1 Communication Technologies

The implementation of advances in broadband and other communication technologies to maintain and enhance the opportunity for effective business and home communications will be actively supported

(Vision C, D)

The objective of this policy is to support the Neighbourhood Plan survey findings that have identified a growth in working from home. This, coupled with the vision to “encourage and support growth and development of small businesses in Potton to promote local employment”, means that it is essential to keep up to date with communications technologies and encourage service providers to give a good service level throughout the town. For example by the inclusion of broadband connections to all new residential and commercial developments.

Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution). NPPF paragraph 119.

## Additional Local Employment and Industries Objectives

The following objectives are supported by existing NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance and/or CBC Local Plan policies as follows:

### Employment Areas (Vision C)

This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address the needs identified for support of a local business centre. In the NP survey 2017, out of 144 respondents who run a business or work from home in Potton, 88 said that if a business centre was provided they would use it. We also support the inclusion of broadband connections to all new residential and commercial developments.

NPPF Paragraph references
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8a, 8b, 85, 86a, 87, 88a, 98e, 132, 137
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Associated CBC Local Plan Policy
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EMP1, EMP3, H1, R2
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# Transport

## T-1 Foot, Cycle and Bridle Paths

New developments, where appropriate and practical, shall provide safe pedestrian and cycle access, to link up with existing footpaths and cycle ways, ensuring that residents can walk and cycle safely throughout the parish.

### (Vision D, G, H)

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

- Proposals that maximise opportunities to walk and cycle within the town are viewed favourably and supported.
- Developments will be supported where footpaths and cycle ways that are segregated from traffic are provided.
- New developments shall provide a safe footpath layout within the scheme, good pedestrian links to the settlement and safe connections to the highway.
- New developments, shall enable those particularly with special needs or more elderly members of the community easier access to the town centre facilities.



## T-2 Transport Links

Measures will be supported that promote the improvement of:

- Transport links within the parish.
- Access to the wider public transport network.
- Alternative modes of transport.

### (Vision D)

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Address the need identified by the Neighbourhood Plan survey to support out-commuting by rail from Biggleswade and Sandy stations as restricted parking at these stations makes it highly desirable to develop alternative methods of travel, for example cycling.
- Improve access to the wider public transport network for those in the parish.
- Promote the development and use of alternative methods of travel other than private vehicles.

## T-3 Transport Improvements

Proposals that improve appropriate public car parking in the Town Centre will be supported.

### (Vision G, H)

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that any new developments shall provide for off-road parking sufficient to meet the needs of the development and specifically that:

- New development which provides additional off-road car parking spaces to alleviate current parking congestion shall be supported.
- Town centre car parks shall be reviewed to optimise signage, length of parking limits and capacity.

## Additional Transport Objectives

The following objectives are supported by existing NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance and/or CBC Local Plan policies as follows:

### Traffic Flow(Vision D)

This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to:

- Ensure that where development proposals alleviate existing congestion, improve pedestrian safety and improve traffic flows through Potton they are viewed favourably and supported.
- Ensure that methods to Divert HGV away from the Market Square and King Street will be sought and supported.

- Seek and support enforced traffic restrictions.
- Ensure that, in recognition of the extra load put upon public, private and community transport in the town by any new development, there is funding to maintain and support the necessary infrastructure expansion.





# Environment

## EV-1 Green Infrastructure

As appropriate to their scale and location development proposals for new development will be supported where they take account of the Potton Green Infrastructure Plan. Development which would deliver a net-positive biodiversity gain or deliver elements of the Green Infrastructure Action Plan will be particularly supported. [See Annex B – Green Infrastructure.](#)

(Vision A, B, E, F, G)

The objective of this policy is to ensure that the Potton Green Infrastructure Plan that has been produced and issued as part of the overall Neighbourhood Plan is given due consideration when any development is undertaken. Specifically it:

- Provides a snapshot baseline document with an action plan that supports and underpins the Potton Neighbourhood Plan.
- Identifies important existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets (including wildlife habitats), accessible green space and rights of way within the Parish of Potton.
- Provides a robust approach to mapping and implementing the wishes of the community for a high-quality green infrastructure network.
- Informs important decision-making that helps meet the aspirations of the community by identifying what is important to them and how they would like to see their local environment evolve for the benefit of present and future generations.



## EV-2 Building for Sustainability

As appropriate to their scale and location, proposals for new developments should incorporate measures to provide mitigation, adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate change by minimising the vulnerability of the development and its surroundings.

Developments which incorporate energy efficient solutions beyond building regulation standards will be particularly supported.

[See Annex F – Green Infrastructure Design Guide.](#)

(Vision A, E, F, G, H)

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that any new developments address the issues of climate change and sustainability specifically through measures that:

- Reduce carbon emissions through the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources such as solar and wind power and provide a minimum contribution of 10% toward a developments energy demands.
- Maximise energy efficiency and optimise the use of natural light through the layout and design of buildings and landscaping .
- Minimise water usage and promote water efficiency such as grey water recycling and use of water butts on all dwellings.
- Minimise the impacts of overheating through the use of green roofs, walls and other Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) source control features within hard and soft landscape and planting schemes that will provide shade and help cool the atmosphere by providing a minimum of 25% tree, large shrub or green wall cover within the development.

### EV-3 Local Green Space

The following parcels of land are designated as Local Green Space:

LGS-1 (Henry Smith Playing Fields);

LGS-2 (Pegnut Wood); and

LGS-6 (land east of Henry Smith Playing Fields).

Development will not be supported within local green spaces except in very special circumstances. [See Annex B – Green Infrastructure.](#)

(Visions E, F, G, H)

The objective of this policy is to protect those areas identified by the Green Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Plans as being important for wildlife and to the community for its amenity, health and social well-being benefit.

### EV-4 Green Wheel

Development proposals which would assist in the development of a Potton Green Wheel will be supported. [See supporting documents.](#)

(Vision B, F)

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that any new developments will actively:

- Assist in the connecting of footpaths and bridleways through and around the parish and facilitate the creation of cycle ways linking Potton to neighbouring villages and towns.
- Contribute to the social wellbeing and health of the community by providing access to green space and nature.
- Facilitate the protection and provision of landscape and habitat enhancement or the creation of new habitat opportunities for wildlife and public amenity.
- Contribute to the enhancement and creation of existing and new corridors adjacent to or within the vicinity of developments that complement the wider landscape benefit to wildlife.

- Enhance community education about wildlife and the environment through signage and interpretation boards where appropriate, leaflets, audio guides and other media to improve public enjoyment of the area.

### EV-5 Landscape and Habitat

As appropriate to their scale and location development proposals for new residential and commercial development should protect and where practicable enhance existing landscape, habitat features and wildlife species as appropriate to their significance. Development which would deliver a net-positive biodiversity gain will be particular supported. [See Potton Ecological Potential Report and Potton NP-Annex-F Green Infrastructure Design Guide.](#)

(Vision B, F)

The objectives of this policy are to make sure that any new developments will ensure:

- All existing habitats and species, particularly those of priority importance to Potton, are protected and retained and their populations enhanced by appropriate mitigation on and off site.
- Appropriate choices of native plant mixes are made with due regard to the characteristics of local habitats and distinctive species assemblages of flora and fauna.
- All formal, non-native planting schedules benefits pollinators and includes where appropriate local heritage fruit varieties avoiding use of invasive non-native species.



- **EV-6 Wildlife Management**

As appropriate to their scale and location development proposals for new residential and commercial development should incorporate a long-term green space wildlife management plan for existing landscape, habitat features and wildlife species as appropriate to their significance. *See Potton Ecological Potential Report and Potton NP-Annex-F Green Infrastructure Design Guide.*  
(Vision B, F)

The objectives of this policy are to make sure that any new developments will:

- Contribute to the on-going management of existing and new features.
- Provide a specified schedule of sustainable management that benefits people and wildlife.
- Ensure the site is monitored for any positive or negative effects to inform the ongoing management of any necessary changes that might be required in the specification.



# Supporting Documents

There are a number of supporting documents that contain further information and text that supports this neighbourhood plan. These are:

Potton Neighbourhood Plan - scoping report v1.0

Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Annex A Site Assessments

Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Annex B Green Infrastructure

Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Annex C Consultation

- Consultation Data 161011
- Potton People and Places Insight Limited
- 2017 Potton Benchmarking Report
- NP survey report Potton 2017

Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Annex D Character Assessment

Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Annex E Design Guide

Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Annex F Green Infrastructure Design Guide

Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Annex G Vision, Policies and Objectives

Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Annex H Implementation and Monitoring

Each of these is briefly described/abstracted in the following sections to provide context for the document contents and a reference provided to the complete document.



# Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Site Assessments

As part of the process of developing the Potton Neighbourhood Plan an exercise was conducted to establish what development sites existed within the Potton Neighbourhood Plan area and which of these would be:

- Acceptable to the community.
- Appropriate taking in to account access to the site, location, size.
- Local knowledge related to the value of the site to the parish.
- Each of the sites was considered and given a rating of:
- Supported (Housing).
- Supported (Employment).
- Not Supported.

The overall data has been collated and presented in this document.

## Site Assessment Process

• To undertake the process there were a number of inputs used, namely:

- Neighbourhood Plan consultations (questionnaire).

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire and vision setting process the populace have been consulted as to their views on where development may be acceptable within the parish.

- Potton's Green Infrastructure Plan review.

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan development process the populace showed that they were in favour of maintaining and enhancing the green infrastructure of Potton. They were consulted during the creation of a green infrastructure plan/Green wheel and designation of local green spaces. This information has been used when assessing potential sites.

- Potential or existing development sites.

An exercise was undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan steering group to identify all the existing or potential development sites that were relevant for the period of the plan. Clearly there may be other small windfall sites that come forward during the plan period and these will be assessed using the same criteria at the relevant time by the Town Council. The sites identified comprise:

- Sites identified by the CBC in the call for sites.
- Sites that have previously been granted permission.
- Sites that are currently being developed.
- Sites that may fall within the category of windfall within the CBC Local Plan.
- Local knowledge of the sites in question.
  - Where potential sites exist there is a wealth of local knowledge relating to these that is not available to those who do not live within the community.
- Information on whether site rejection as part of CBC planning assessments.
  - The information for each site was then considered and detailed in the following sections, the site being given a status of:

- Supported (Housing).

- The plan will support the development of housing in line with the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan and associated design guidance.

- Supported (Employment).

- The plan will support the development of employment facilities/opportunities in line with the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan and associated design guidance.

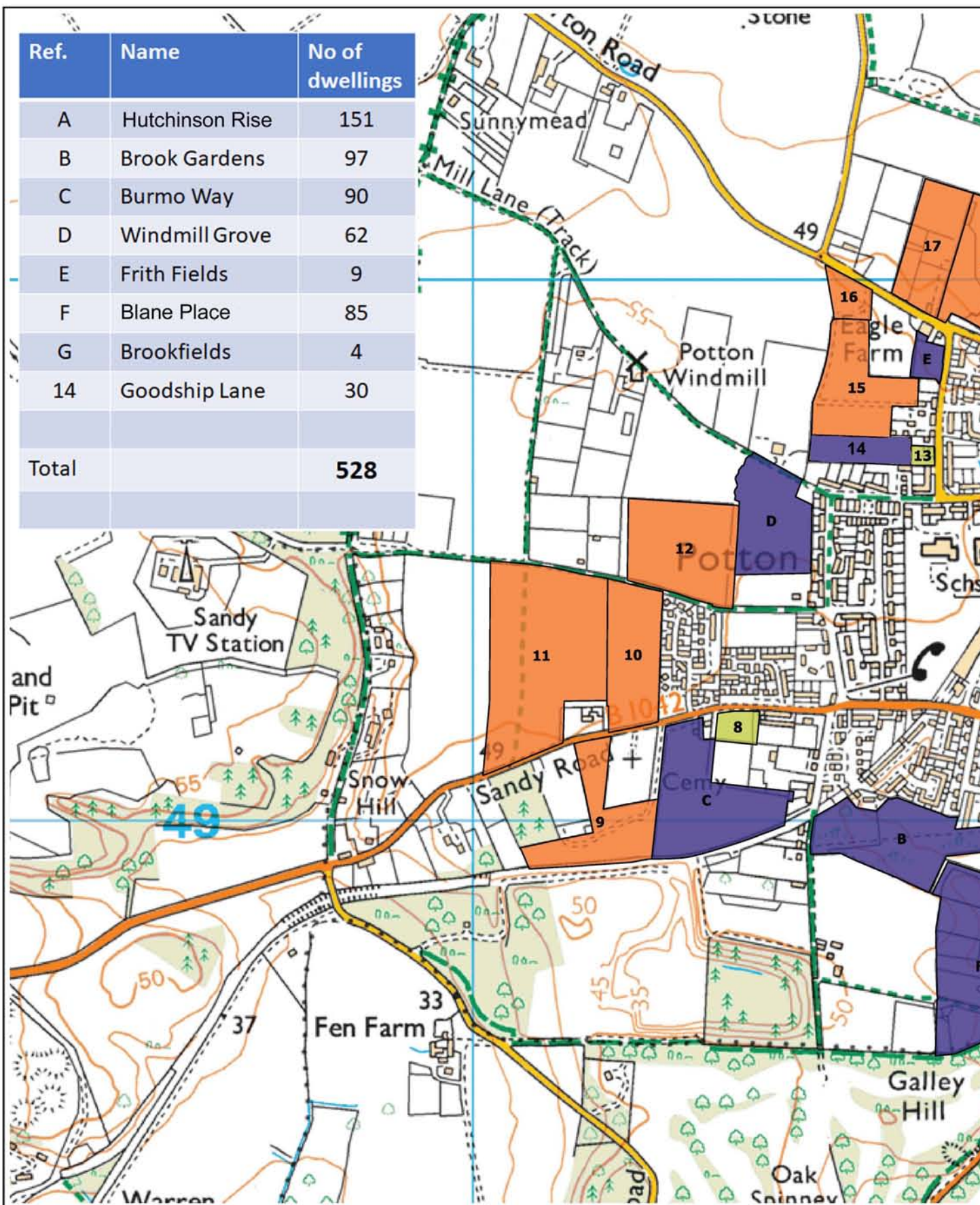
- Not Supported.

- The plan will not support the development of housing or employment facilities/opportunities on the site as it is deemed to be unsuitable.

## Reference

The full assessment is in the annex document titled [Potton NP - Annex A Site Assessments](#) which can be viewed on the Potton Town Council website supporting documents page

Ref.	Name	No of dwellings
A	Hutchinson Rise	151
B	Brook Gardens	97
C	Burmo Way	90
D	Windmill Grove	62
E	Frith Fields	9
F	Blane Place	85
G	Brookfields	4
14	Goodship Lane	30
Total		528

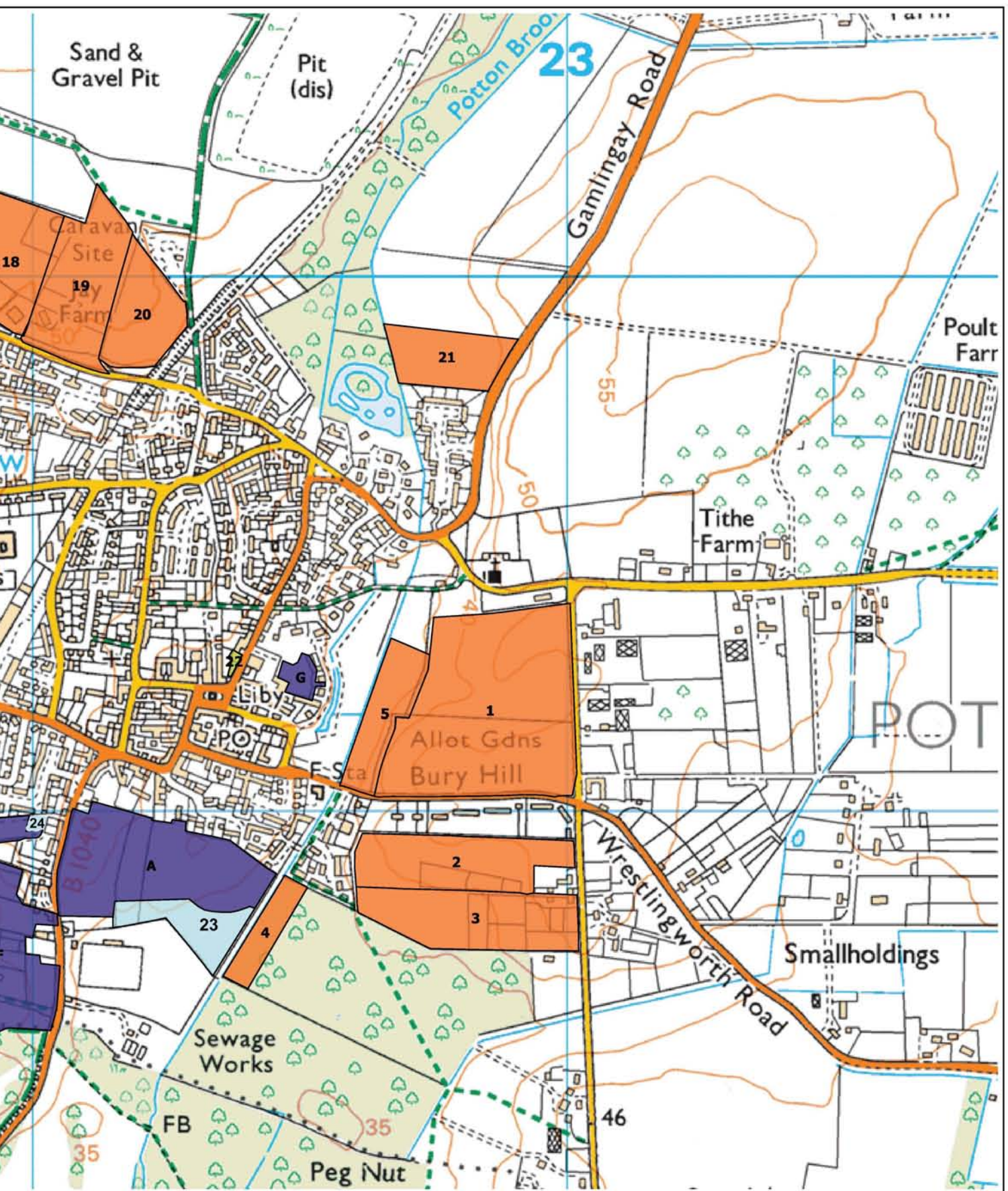


1:9,000

#### Potential Development

- Housing built
- Not Supported
- Supported (B)
- Supported (H)





## Development Sites

Development during NP duration 2016-2035

(Employment)  
(Housing)

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**Central Bedfordshire Council**

# Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Green Infrastructure

The Potton Parish Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan is one of more than 40 parish and town GI plans to have been produced across Bedfordshire.

The Potton Parish GI Plan is funded by Potton Town Council (PTC) as part of their funding of the Potton Parish Neighbourhood Plan, and is facilitated by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC).

The production of the GI Plan was requested by the Potton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) on behalf of PTC; to be a valuable tool in its own right as a planning document, and to inform policies and objectives in the emerging Potton Neighbourhood Plan.

The need for green infrastructure planning has been identified at all levels, from central government, through regional bodies (the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy), to County and District levels. The Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic GI Plan was produced in 2007 by the Bedfordshire & Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium. Parish and Town GI Plans are valuable tools for planners, committees, developers and communities themselves. They can help inform important decisions and help local people identify what is important to them, and what they would like to happen in the future. Parish and Town GI Plans have been used to support funding bids, helping people make important improvements to their local environment, and they also provide a snapshot of the local environment.

It should be acknowledged that not all of the aspirations identified will be delivered, because there are many other influencing factors, such as the views of landowners, existing planning permissions and allocations, potential future land use allocations and the cost of implementation. The value of this GI Plan lies in the fact that it has been produced by local residents for their own

community. It can help inform planning decisions and be used as a mechanism to identify where financial benefits from development should be directed. It cannot be used as a tool to prevent development but may influence considerations in the planning process. All aspirations that gained community support have been included; however, it remains a community owned document that, while endorsed by CBC, has not been formally adopted. The plan as a whole is based on a robust approach to mapping and implementing a high quality green infrastructure network for the existing, and future, residents of the parish of Potton.

## Reference

The full plan is in the annex document titled [Potton NP - Annex B Green Infrastructure](#) which can be viewed on the Potton Town Council website supporting documents page

# Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Consultation

This report provides the details of the consultation process undertaken as part of the development of the Potton Neighbourhood Plan (PNP), as set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Potton Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) have been working on the development of the PNP since January 2016 and have undertaken a series of public consultations as outlined below. The consultations identified a range of issues which have all been recorded, considered and where possible addressed as part of the development of the draft neighbourhood planning document.

The full details of the consultation activities are in the annex document titled [Potton NP – Annex C Consultation](#) which can be viewed on the Potton Town Council website, Supporting Documents page.



# Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Character Assessment

A Neighbourhood Plan is a way of helping local communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live and work. It can be used to:

- Develop a shared vision for the neighbourhood
- Choose where new homes, shops, offices and other development should be built
- Identify and protect important local green spaces
- Influence what new buildings should look like
- This Character Assessment is an important part of the last item.

The purpose of a Character Assessment is to understand and record the distinct features of a town, which combine to create its unique character. The approach we have used is to identify broad character areas using on-site fieldwork and record this on a pro-forma. This has then been used together with local knowledge to write up the text. We have then added photographs to illustrate the houses and other features described.

Within each of the character areas there are houses or other property not typical of the general character of the area. What we have done is to try and capture the general character of an area and ignore individual properties that are not typical. In the Conservation Area. On-site fieldwork has been supplemented by reference to a number of existing published works to assist us in heritage aspects but we have followed the same process as the other areas.

The full details of the character assessment are in the annex document titled *Potton NP – Annex D Character Assessment* which can be viewed on the Potton Town Council website, Supporting Documents page.

## Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Design Guide

The purpose of this document is to provide design guidance for any new development or extension/alteration to existing properties within the Parish of Potton. It is to sit alongside the Central Bedfordshire Council Design Guide together with all its Supplements, 'A guide for Designing High Quality Developments' produced by Central Bedfordshire Council in September 2014. The Potton Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide together with its appendices and any supporting documents also requires all new developments to have regard to the Potton Town Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment in relation to height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design and materials of buildings in order to achieve high quality design and to ensure buildings and places reflect local identity, create a sense of pride and work well for people's needs now and into the future.

### Aims and objectives

Potton is unique in many ways but perhaps one of its main features is the fact that it has retained much of the gradual historical development which has evolved over many centuries. The vision of the people who live and work in the Parish is to preserve the essence of a Market Town by ensuring that it retains its core appearance by establishing and maintaining the highest quality of future building development. We shall judge a design using the following criteria:

- The kind of place that people want
- The physical, economic and social aspirations for the area
- How much change may be needed, of what type and over what time
- Realistic outcomes for development
- Examples of good practice from local or neighbouring towns and villages

Good design in relation to building and spaces means solutions which put people first by addressing the way building or space functions, namely what it is used for and how it is used.

### Reference

The full design guide is in the annex document titled *Potton NP - Annex E Design Guide* which can be viewed on the Potton Town Council website supporting documents page.

# Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Green Infrastructure Design Guide

It is imperative that green infrastructure and sustainability is considered at the earliest opportunity of the Planning process for all types of development proposals in Potton.

Innovative multi functional biophilic design helps meet statutory requirements and provides many socio-economic and environmental objectives required by Potton Town Council and its community. Potton demands a holistic approach to planning that integrates green infrastructure, biodiversity, sustainability and climate resilience, which contributes toward a development fit for purpose with multiple benefits.

The term "Green Infrastructure" has many definitions. However it is generally agreed to be a network of multi-functional environmental assets both new and existing in the rural and urban setting. Green Infrastructure supports natural ecological processes integral to the health and wellbeing of sustainable communities.

It comprises stand-alone elements and strategically planned and delivered networks of high quality green space and other environmental features. Seldom referenced by definitions, it also includes the opportunities presented by hard surfaces such as pavements, roads, driveways, car parks and buildings that can incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services into their design.

Green infrastructure intrinsically links and underpins several complimentary functions, which should be treated as a whole and not in isolation of each other. It provides habitats and access to nature, space for access, recreation, movement and leisure, attractive landscape, water resource management and climate adaptation, socio-economic and health benefit and resource efficiency.

The Parish of Potton has an area of approximately 1,085ha and sits between the north-west scarp and the edge of the south-east facing dip slope of the Greensand Ridge with its free draining sandy soils and generally flat topography. To the south and east of Potton an undulating topography, over heavy boulder clays becomes more prominent. Against the largely wooded backdrops, land use is primarily a mosaic of arable with a network of hedges, footpaths and bridleways. There are some planted woodlands and a number of paddocks dotted around the perimeter of the town. Within the town green spaces are limited with two principle recreational areas being Henry Smith Playing Fields and Mill Lane Recreation Ground. Other green spaces comprise small verges and greens alongside roads, at road junctions and between housing.

Accordingly all developments must consider and respond sensitively to the landscape character of Potton. The Parish of Potton has three CBC Landscape Character Areas within its bounds - 1C - Cockyane Hatley Clay Farmland & 5G – Dunton Clay Vale and 6C – Everton Heath Greensand Ridge.

## Summary design principles

Countless opportunities arise to design in features that will deliver net positive biodiversity. The following summarises some of those:

- Avoid fragmentation of habitats - retain, enhance and buffer existing habitats
- Create new habitats to link with habitats throughout the landscape
- New structural planting with native species of local provenance and characteristic of the area.
- Ensure a balanced mix of native and non-native species and ornamentals benefit pollinators.
- Plant local heritage fruit trees at an approximate ratio of 1:5 (trees:plots)
- Sow all grass areas with appropriate flower rich seed mixes.
- Avoid the use of invasive non-native species in formal planting schemes.
- Following restorative tree work, all arisings as far as is practically possible must remain on site.
- Consider lighting impacts on wildlife corridors and use directional lights with no spillage.
- Consider the orientation, design and content of mounds and bunds to benefit wildlife
- Where required, use crib and gabion walls to increase wildlife benefit.
- Each development must include reptile hibernacula.
- Provide integral nest bricks for swifts and roost bricks for bats.
- Provide external nest cups for house martin and boxes for starling.
- Provide 13 x 13 cm holes in garden boundaries to enable wildlife to move through the site.
- Prioritise source control Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) features in streetscapes
- Design detention basins as a multifunctional play areas with a gentle slope into the main basin.

## Reference

The full design guide is in the annex document titled [Potton NP - Annex F Green Infrastructure Design Guide](#) which can be viewed on the Potton Town Council website supporting documents page.



# Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Vision, Policies and Objectives

A full detail of the policy objectives and interrelationships for each of the policies, and the relationship to the vision statements and other related plan annexes is provided in [Potton NP - Annex G Vision, Policies and Objectives](#) which can be viewed on the Potton Town Council website supporting documents page.

# Potton Neighbourhood Plan - Implementation and Monitoring

The Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered and implemented over the lifetime of the Plan by identified stakeholders and partners. Flexibility will be needed as new challenges and opportunities arise over the plan period.

For greater detail about Implementation, monitoring and update see *Annex H - Implementation and Monitoring*

## The Plan will be used by the Potton Town Council to:

- Guide comments on planning applications.
- Negotiate with landowners and developers to achieve the best possible outcomes from new development.
- Direct financial resources to the town / parish in a structured way.
- Bring together groups or working parties to improve the town / parish environment.
- Lobby Central Bedfordshire Council to support the parishioners' wishes and aspirations.

It is important to check that progress is made towards meeting the objectives and policies of the Plan. To this end specific action plans and a policy use tracker will be created to enable progress tracking and reporting by Potton Town Council. Using the collected data Potton Town Council will report on the implementation of the Plan annually and consider:

- If progress is being made to achieve the vision and the objectives of the Plan.
- If progress is being made towards the implementation of the policies in the Plan.
- If the policies in the Plan remain current and relevant.
- If financial contributions available to the community arising from development is being targeted towards the identified plans and projects effectively and appropriately.
- If the Plan remains based on the most up to date information.
- If the Plan and its attendant policies are being taken into account by Central Bedfordshire Council when determining planning applications.

Potton Town Council will then conclude whether a review of the Plan is required. If so, it will secure opinions of residents and stakeholders to update the Plan.

The adoption of the emerging Central Bedfordshire Local Plan will alter the strategic planning context for the town. The need or otherwise for the neighbourhood plan to be reviewed will be assessed at the first annual report on its effectiveness after the adoption of the Local Plan.



The Millennium Path - Henry Smith Playing Fields





### Help us to make the Vision a reality

We will be looking for volunteers to join us in implementing the policies and Objectives outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan. Are you interested in:

- The Community Infrastructure
- Housing
- Local Employment and Industries
- Transport
- The Environment

If so, you can join our team in working to enforce the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

### Let's make the Vision of your Neighbourhood Plan a reality



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