

Great Bardfield

Neighbourhood Plan

2024 – 2033

SUBMISSION DRAFT PLAN

MARCH 2025



Neighbourhood planning in a nutshell

The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to prepare neighbourhood plans, which establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood. These Plans, when properly “made” become part of the legal planning framework for the designated area.

A neighbourhood plan is, therefore, a community-led planning plan for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. It concentrates on the use and development of land and can contain planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, and the allocation of sites for specific kinds of development.

Parish councils are encouraged to produce their own neighbourhood plans, enabling local people to have a say as to how their neighbourhood grows and develops. In a designated neighbourhood area, which contains all or part of the administrative area of a parish council, that council is responsible for the preparation of the Plan. Neighbourhood plans cannot contradict the main government planning policies or the strategic policies in the Local Plan for the area. For example, they cannot propose less development than is planned for in the adopted Local Plan.

Before a neighbourhood plan can be brought into force it needs to complete the following stages:

- 1 “Pre-submission” consultation on the Draft Plan by Parish Council**
This was carried out by the Parish Council in June 2024. It took place over a period of seven weeks allowing residents, businesses, landowners and a range of government bodies and service providers an opportunity to comment on the Draft Plan.
- 2 Submission of Draft Plan to Braintree District Council**
All comments received at the “pre-submission” consultation were considered and reviewed and any necessary amendments to the Plan made. The amended Plan, together with supporting documents was then be submitted to Braintree District Council.
- 3 “Submission” consultation on draft Plan by Braintree District Council**
This is the stage that the Plan has now reached
- 4 Independent examination of draft Plan**
- 5 Parish Referendum**
- 6 Adoption by Braintree District Council**

Stages 3-6 are likely to take around 6-9 months to complete.

Prepared by Great Bardfield Parish Council with the assistance of Places4People Planning Consultancy



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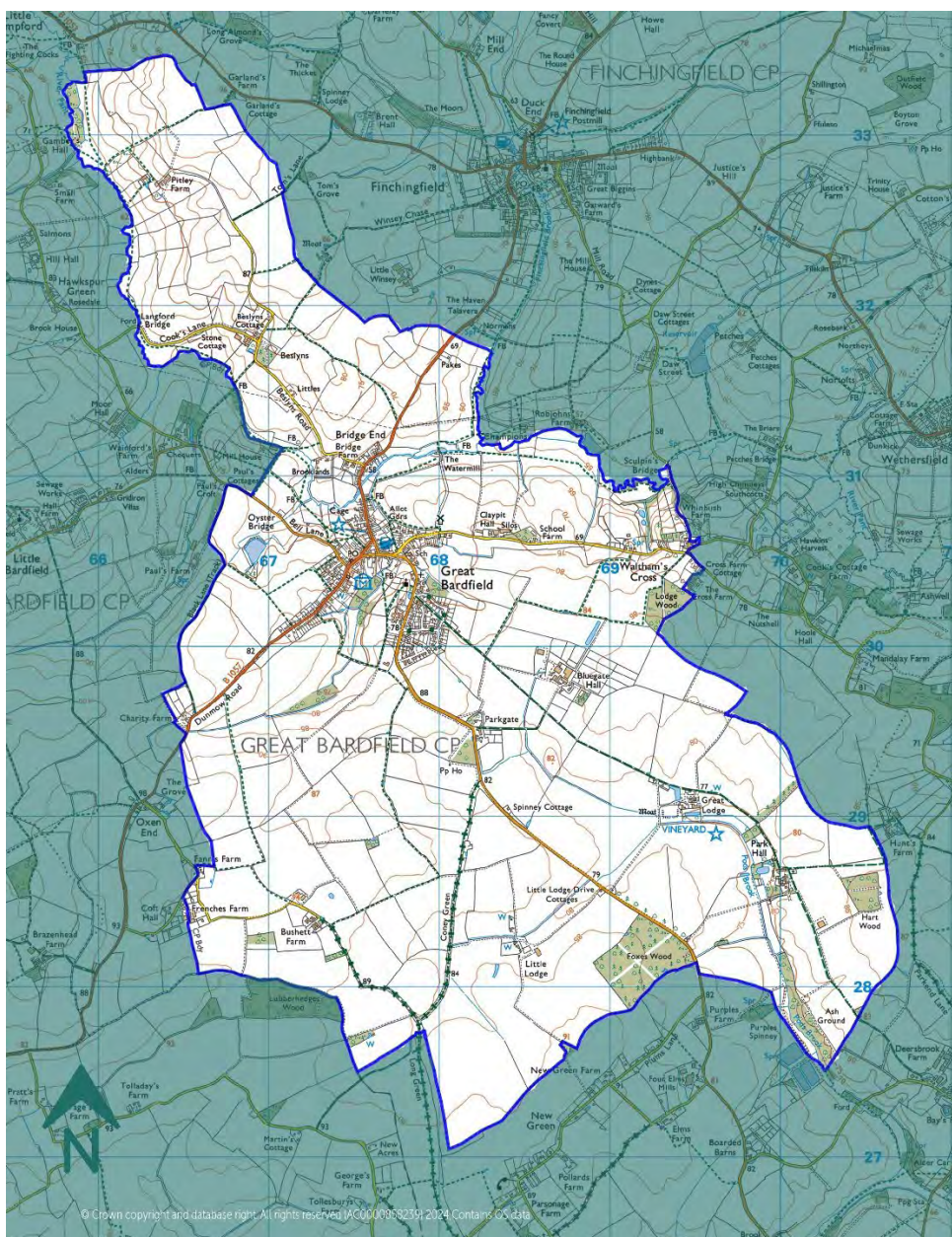
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1. The Great Bardfield Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to prepare a neighbourhood plan, which can establish local planning policies for the development and use of land in a designated area. It provides the community with greater opportunities than ever before to influence change and development in the local area. Once complete, a neighbourhood plan becomes part of the development plan for a district, which for Great Bardfield means it will sit alongside the Braintree Local Plan.
- 1.2 Neighbourhood plans contain planning policies that are only applied when the district council is determining planning applications. The policies must conform to both national and “strategic” local plan policies, but the process does enable locally specific policies to be developed, such as for the location and type of development or for the protection of areas. They will only apply to matters that need planning permission.
- 1.3 In April 2019 Great Bardfield Parish Council resolved to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish, to be prepared by a Neighbourhood Plan Committee of parish councillors and volunteers. An application was made to Braintree District Council to designate the whole of the parish as the Neighbourhood Area, the area covered by the Plan, in the same month and the District Council formally designated the area on 15 April 2019. Map 1 identifies the extent of the Neighbourhood Area.

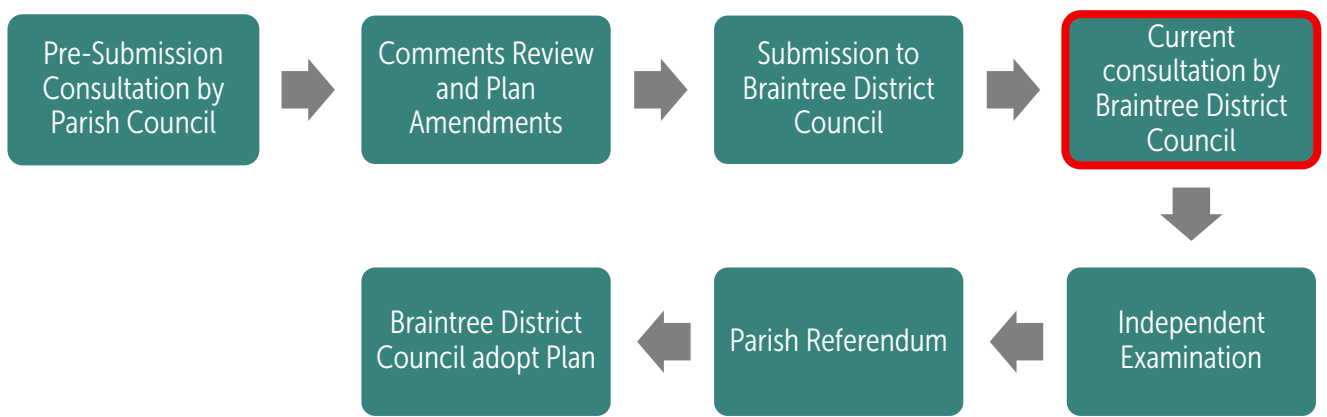


Map 1 – Great Bardfield Neighbourhood Area

- 1.4 Since the area was designated, work has been carried out to gather information and evidence to support the content of the Plan and, in particular, its planning policies. This includes:
- A household survey in Summer 2022
 - Housing Needs Assessment prepared by Urban Vision Enterprise CIC – April 2020
 - Design Guidance prepared by AR Urbanism as part of the Government’s Neighbourhood Planning support package – November 2021
 - Landscape Appraisal by Liz Lake Associates and also funded by the Government’s Neighbourhood Planning support package – April 2022

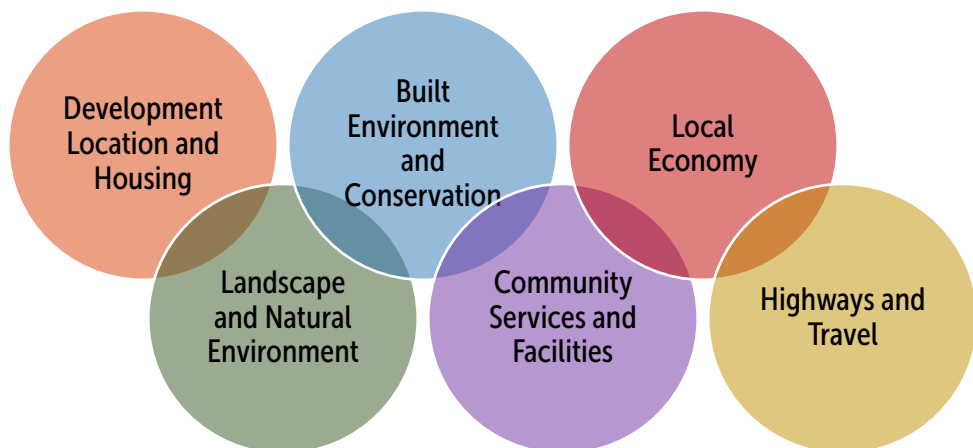
In addition, a number of events have taken place within the community to gather views and opinions including a feedback event in September 2022.

- 1.5 Consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan was carried out by the Parish Council commencing in June 2014 and lasting for seven weeks. The draft Plan was then amended to take account of comments received and submitted to Braintree District Council. The Plan will progress through the stages illustrated in the diagram. It cannot be used unless the majority of those residents that vote at the Parish Referendum are in favour of the Plan.



- 1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2024 to 2033 and provides a framework of planning policies that will supplement, rather than repeat, the planning policies in the Braintree Local Plan which was adopted by the District Council in July 2022. These policies are distinctly identified in coloured boxes with a prefix of GBD. In addition to planning policies, the Neighbourhood Plan contains “community aspirations” that, although they do not apply to planning applications, identify local initiatives that address issues and concerns raised during community engagement. The community aspirations are identified differently from the planning policies to avoid confusion.

- 1.7 The Plan focuses on the themes illustrated below:



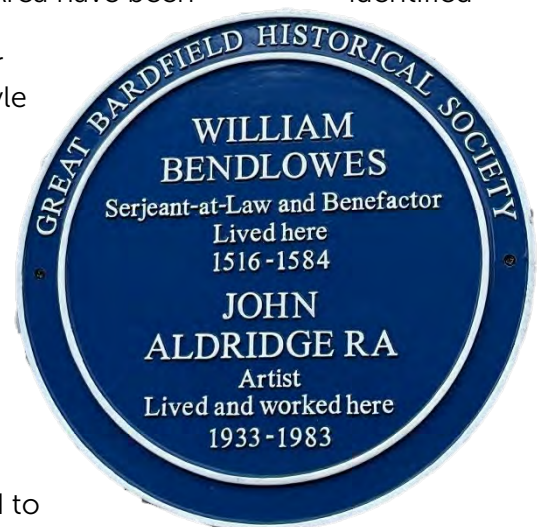
- 1.8 For the Parish Council, the adoption of the Plan will not be the end of the process as it is recognised that current challenges and concerns that face Great Bardfield are likely to change over the Plan period. The Parish Council will consequently be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure it remains relevant and to monitor its use.

2. Great Bardfield Past and Present

- 2.1 Great Bardfield is one of several environmentally and historically precious villages situated in the valley of the River Pant. It is a Domesday village recorded in 1086 with evidence of settlement since pre-Roman days. From the C13th until 1914 the largest Horse Fair in East Anglia took place on Midsummer Day in and around the greens and the wide village streets, with all spare space used for tethering horses. In 1317 the Lady of Clare, Elizabeth de Burgh inherited the Manor of Great Bardfield and managed the estate until her death in 1360. She described it as her 'Beloved Bardfield.' Her regular visits with a huge entourage brought employment and prosperity to the village. Her close friend Edward, the Black Prince enjoyed hawking in the deer park. In 1564 William Bendlowes, Sergeant-at-Law to Queen Elizabeth I and generous benefactor to the village, lived with his wife Alienor at the Grade II* listed Place House, later the home of artist John Aldridge.
- 2.2 The shape of the historic core of the village has not changed significantly over time. It is built on varying gradients with the elegant and harmonious medieval High Street at the highest level, descending from an ancient green, now housing the War Memorial, down the wide expanse of Brook Street to the valley of the Bardfield Brook. The Brook crosses the greens known as School Green and Causeway Green and flows behind Bridge Street to join the River Pant at Pipers Meadow, a site of special scientific interest where the Bardfield Oxlip flourishes.
- 2.3 The changes in the topographical levels are significant in giving the village its special character, enhancing the views and providing interesting variety, especially to the roof levels throughout the village. The parish church of St Mary the Virgin, dating from the C12th, stands high on its hill and can be seen from many positions in the village. The street pattern, changes in levels and the distribution of open spaces enables an interesting succession of views both across the settlement and into backyard spaces and out to the windmill, church and open countryside. A Conservation Area covers much of the village centre which also contains the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin as well as seven Grade II* and 67 Grade II listed buildings. Additionally, a number of buildings within the Conservation Area have been identified by Braintree District Council for inclusion as non-designated heritage assets. These include the Town Hall, built by Quaker Henry Smith in 1859 and which is noted by Pevsner for its style and continues to be a centre for many village activities.
- 2.4 Many people visit Great Bardfield to enjoy its unspoilt historic character and to experience the setting in which the artists known collectively as 'The Bardfield Artists', lived and worked from the 1930s to the 1980s. Most notably these include Edward Bawden, Eric Ravilious and John Aldridge whose works record and reflect the character of Great Bardfield and its surrounding landscape.

Settlement Form and Great Bardfield Today

- 2.5 It was not until the nineteenth century that the village started to expand. Industries such as a brewery and an agricultural machinery workshop appeared, and a terrace of brick cottages was built in Bridge Street. Some of the old timber-framed houses in the village centre were rendered or encased in brick, and much of the thatch was replaced by slate or tile.
- 2.6 In 1851 the population was 1,100 and most people found jobs and all their day-to-day requirements in the village. Infilling took place in all the approach roads with Bridge End and, later the northwest side of Dunmow Road, were developed. Further significant development did not take place until just before the second world war, when the Bendlowes Estate was started but not completed until the mid-1950s. This was followed by the building of houses in Braintree Road (St. Mary's Villas and Hall Villas), Northfields around 1960 followed by Mill Close. Around 1966 the single storey houses along the southeast side of Dunmow Road were built, and in the 1970s Durham Close was built on the land previously owned by Gobions. The meadow adjacent to Northampton House was developed in the mid-1990s for Northampton Meadow, a small, mixed development which includes social housing. In the 1990s further houses were built at



Squire's Mead, and the farm buildings of Bardfield Hall Farm were converted into a business centre. In the last few years houses have been built in Bridge Street extending down to the bridge, in the farmyard of Bridge Farm, on the builder's yard in Bendlowes Road and on the site of the Rolls Royce garage in the village centre.

2.7 More recently, as well as infill plots within the main built-up area, new estates have been developed, including the development of affordable housing to meet local needs at Castle Shot and Hall Field and the development of a mix of 37 market and affordable houses at Deer Park View. Away from the centre, there have been barn conversions that have created new homes at Bushett Rise and Park Farm Barns.

2.9 The 2021 Census identified that the population of the parish was 1,372 an almost 11% increase since 2001. Significantly, the biggest changes in population over the last twenty years are in those aged 45 and over. In 2001 this age group accounted for 45% of the population but this had increased to 56% in 2021.

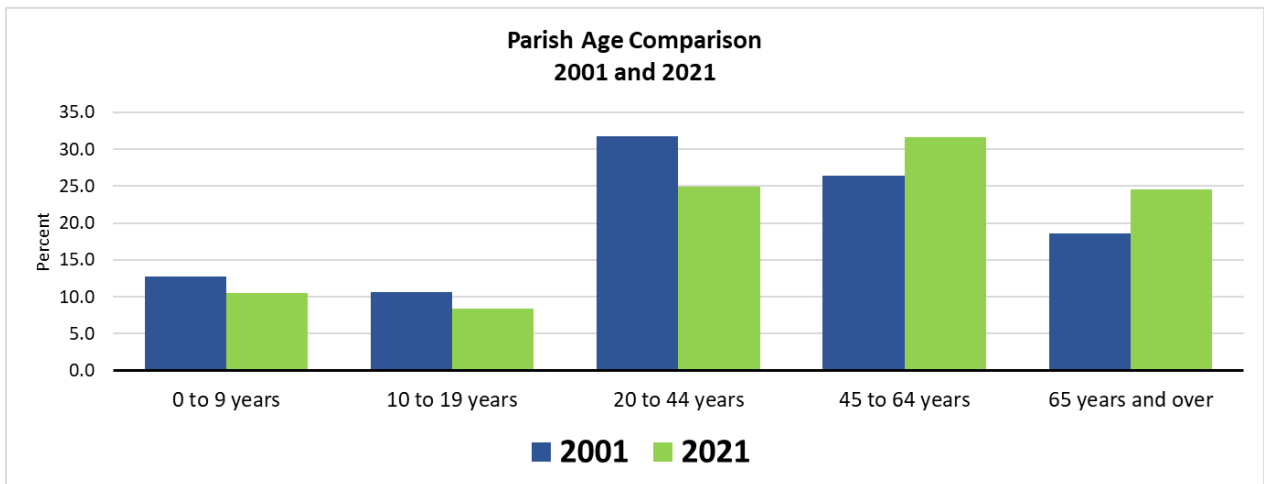


Figure 1 – Parish Age Comparison 2001 and 2021 (Source- Office for National Statistics)

2.10 In 2024, when this Plan was prepared, the parish had:

- A primary school
- A range of shops in the village centre
- Business units at Bluegate Hall Farm and Blue Egg Shop and Post Office; Café, Children's Nursery and Garden Centre, south of the village centre along Braintree Road
- The Town Hall
- Quaker Meeting House
- St Mary's Parish Church
- The Catholic Church
- Two public houses (The Vine and The Bell)
- The Community Information Point



3. Planning Policy Context

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the content of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the relevant Local Plan documents that cover the parish. The Plan must have regard to the content of the NPPF and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan. The paragraphs below identify how these are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's high-level planning policies that must be taken into account in the preparation of development plan documents and when deciding planning applications. In December 2024 the Government published a Revised NPPF which sets out, in paragraph 8, that the planning system has three overarching objectives to achieve sustainable development, namely:

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

3.3 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states:

Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:

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

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

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

3.4 The NPPF acknowledges that neighbourhood plans can "shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development" but that they "should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies."

The Local Plan

3.5 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the strategic policies in the Braintree Local Plan, which was fully adopted in July 2022 and sets out the development strategy for the period to 2033 and provides planning policies for the determination of planning applications. Throughout the topic sections that follow, reference is made to the strategic and relevant local policies of the Local Plan. They are not repeated in the Neighbourhood Plan, but are relevant and should, as appropriate, be taken into consideration when proposing development.

- 3.6 The Local Plan sets out a settlement hierarchy for the district with Great Bardfield being identified as a "Second Tier" village which *"are those which may not serve a wider hinterland but provide the ability for some day to day needs to be met, although they lack the full range of facilities of a Key Service Village. Development of a small scale may be considered sustainable within a Second Tier village, subject to the specific constraints and opportunities of that village."*
- 3.7 In 2024 the District Council announced the commencement of a Local Plan Review. Early work commenced later that year and, at the time the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the District Council, consultation on the "issues and Options" had just concluded. The Review is not expected to be adopted until the end of 2026.
- 3.8 Essex County Council is the Minerals and Waste Authority for the Plan area and is responsible for the production of mineral and waste local plans. The Development Plan in Great Bardfield therefore also comprises of the Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014 (MLP) and the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan 2017 (WLP). These plans set out the policy framework within which minerals and waste planning applications are assessed. They also contain policies which safeguard known mineral bearing land from sterilisation, and existing, permitted and allocated mineral and waste infrastructure from proximal development which may compromise their operation.





4. The Vision for Great Bardfield

To conserve and protect Great Bardfield's characteristics as a village within its rural environment whilst ensuring that it is a vibrant, safe, welcoming and greener community, providing an attractive location for people of all ages to live, learn and work.

Plan Objectives

Development Location and Housing

- To support the development of small scale housing sites in the Parish to meet local and specialist housing needs which are at an affordable level relative to the average local income.
- To ensure that any new housing scheme includes an appropriate mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet local need including accommodation that is or can be made adaptable for a variety of life stages, including independent living housing for older people and people with disabilities, elderly accommodation and care.

Landscape and Natural Environment

- To protect and enhance the countryside within the Parish, including important ecological sites, trees, hedgerows and watercourses, together with the village greens and other green spaces in Great Bardfield.
- To encourage multifunctional green initiatives within the community for a cleaner and healthier future.
- To protect important views from both outside and within Great Bardfield, particularly those featuring in the works of the Bardfield artists.

Built Environment and Conservation

- To protect and enhance the parish's many heritage assets and their setting and ensure that any development serves to make a positive contribution to the existing environment.
- To ensure that the landscape surrounding the Great Bardfield conservation area is not fundamentally altered to the detriment of the village.
- To encourage and facilitate the installation and uptake of renewable energy for the existing housing stock and business properties.
- To strongly encourage that the design, style and density of any new housing scheme is in keeping with the character of Great Bardfield and built to a high sustainability standard.
- To ensure that all planning applications for new housing in the Parish shall include renewable energy technology, including low carbon technology, for each unit built.

Community Services and Facilities

- To continue to provide opportunities for all ages for cultural, leisure, community, sport, religious and other activities within the Parish to foster a sense of community.
- To support retention of existing education facilities in the village for all age groups.
- To sustain a vibrant, safe and welcoming village.
- To consider how best to accommodate green infrastructure such as electric car charging points in the village given the growth in this sector.

The Local Economy

- To promote the provision of high speed broadband in the Parish to aid local businesses and home workers.
- To support and enhance opportunities for local businesses and to encourage home working.
- To strengthen and enhance the existing village centre.
- To support and enhance the visitor economy, building on the legacy of the Bardfield artists.

Highways and Travel

- To improve car parking, traffic management and public transport for Great Bardfield.
- To improve conditions for walking and cycling through the village including promoting lower speed limits in the core of Great Bardfield.
- To ensure that any new developments do not exacerbate the current problems with parking, speeding and road safety.

5. Development Location and Housing

Objectives

- To support the development of small scale housing sites in the Parish to meet local and specialist housing needs which are at an affordable level relative to the average local income.
- To ensure that any new housing scheme includes an appropriate mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet local need including accommodation that is or can be made adaptable for a variety of life stages, including independent living housing for older people and people with disabilities, elderly accommodation and care.

Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 The adopted Local Plan identifies “Development Boundaries” for settlements which “mark the existing built form of a town or village and represent the distinction between a built up area and its surrounding countryside.” The defined Development Boundary for Great Bardfield is illustrated in Appendix 1 and Local Plan Policy LPP1 states that, within the Boundary, “development is generally considered sustainable and acceptable in principle subject to the detailed assessment of issues such as design, amenity, highways and impact on historic assets.”
- 5.2 Outside of the development boundaries, areas are considered to be 'countryside'. In these locations, development will be confined to uses appropriate to the countryside whilst also protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Residents’ Survey

- 5.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Residents’ Survey asked questions about future development in the parish. In terms of the consequences of new development in Great Bardfield, significant proportions of respondents were very concerned about the consequences of development on elements of the village, as illustrated in Figure 2.

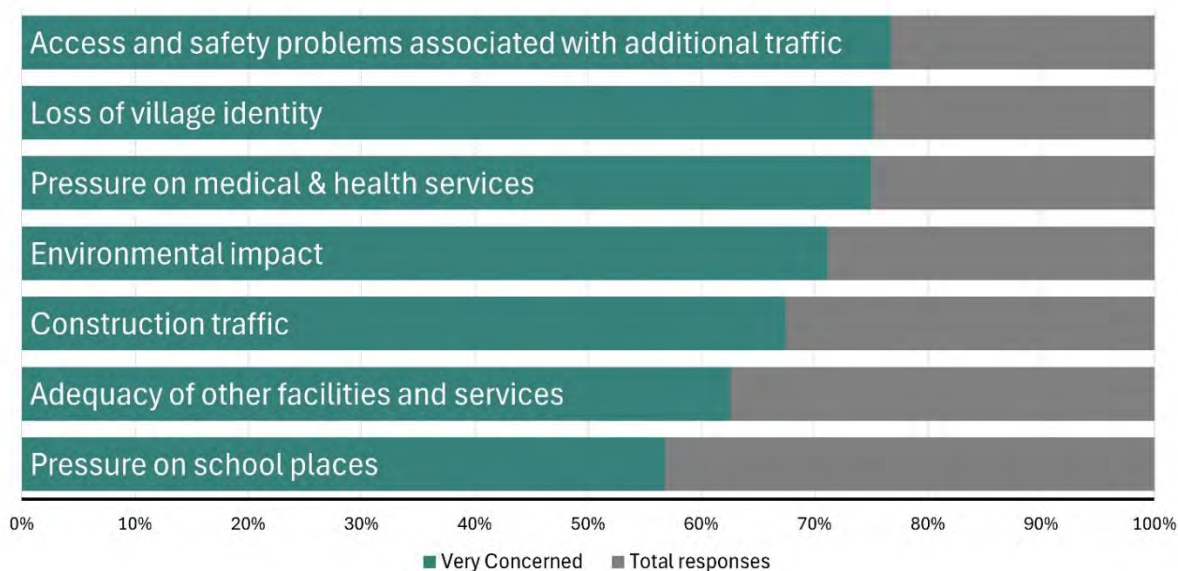


Figure 2 – Residents’ concerns about new development in Great Bardfield

- 5.4 When asked how important certain issues were, over 90% of respondents said it was very important to retain the rural nature of the village.

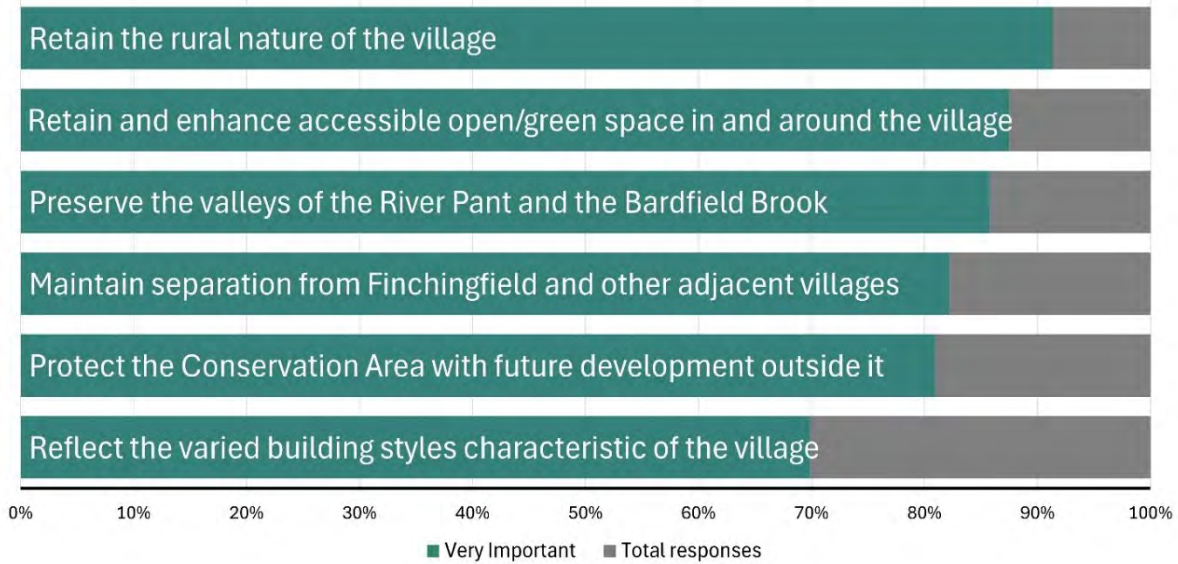


Figure 3 – Important factors when considering new development in Great Bardfield

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 5.5 Prior to the adoption of the Local Plan in 2022, the 2005 Braintree Local Plan defined a Development Boundary around the cluster of houses at Bridge End. Evidence of a grouping of houses around Bridge Farm north of the River Pant is clear on the 1897 Ordnance Survey map and today there are around 40 dwellings in this area.
- 5.6 Paragraph 3.13 of the Local Plan notes that Development Boundaries will be revised periodically through the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans to ensure they meet the needs of their communities. Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan has provided an opportunity to reinstate the Development Boundary for Bridge End, as illustrated on Map 2. Any development proposals within this area will be considered in accordance with Policy LPP1 of the Braintree Local Plan.



Map 2 – Bridge End Development Boundary

Policy GBD 1 – Bridge End Development Boundary

A Development Boundary is defined at Bridge End, as identified on Map 2. Within The Development Boundary, development will be permitted where it satisfies amenity, design, environmental and highway criteria and where it can take place without material adverse detriment to the existing character and historic interest of the settlement.

Relevant Braintree Local Plan Policy:
Policy LPP1 – Development Boundaries

Waltham's Cross

- 5.7 Waltham's Cross is a small group of dwellings and farmsteads located to the east of the main village and on the border of Finchingfield Parish. There are 13 dwellings in this area, but these are spread out over a wide area reflecting the fact that farms have been established here for many years. The Local Plan includes a policy (LPP39) concerning infill development within hamlets, which are defined as a nucleus of at least ten existing dwellings. However, it further states that "Properties which are situated substantially away from the classified road frontages, set within large grounds with a sizeable gap to neighbouring properties, or which are part of very small groups of less than ten dwellings, are not considered to form part of a hamlet." As can be seen on Map 3, there is no nucleus of ten dwellings in this area that would meet the definition of a hamlet for the purposes of Local Plan Policy LPP39.



Map 3 – Waltham's Cross Dwellings (illustrated in red)

- 5.8 Proposals for development in this area will be considered against the second paragraph of Local Plan Policy LPP1, which states "Development outside development boundaries will be confined to uses appropriate to the countryside whilst also protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside." Other relevant policies in relation to residential development proposals in the Waltham's Cross area include:

- Policy LPP 37 Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
- Policy LPP 38 Rural Workers Dwellings in the Countryside
- Policy LPP 40 Residential Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside

Housing

- 5.9 The Local Plan does not allocate any new sites for housing development in Great Bardfield, but Appendix 1 noted that as at 31 March 2021 there were 22 dwellings in the parish under construction and a further six dwellings with permission where construction had yet to start. Furthermore, the Local Plan does not set out any requirements for neighbourhood plans to deliver additional housing.
- 5.10 At the time of the 2021 Census there were 616 dwellings in the parish, representing a 13% increase over the previous 20 years or an average of 3.6 new homes a year. Taking into account the additional permissions referred to above, if the past growth rate were to continue over the next ten years, there would only be a need for a further 14 homes and this can be met through windfall permissions within the development boundaries. This would be in line with the results of the Residents' Survey which identified most support for ten or less more homes over the next ten years, as illustrated in Figure 4.

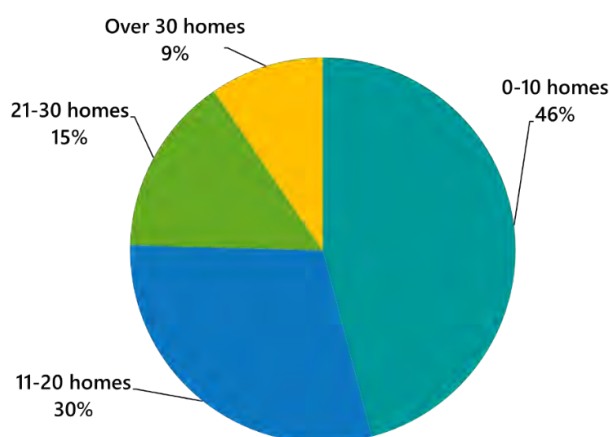


Figure 4 – Residents' opinions on the acceptable amount of additional housing

Housing Needs Assessment

- 5.11 In 2020 the Parish Council secured the preparation of a Housing Needs Assessment as part of the Government's Neighbourhood Plan support package. The Assessment looked at the overall need for additional housing in the parish, affordability of housing and the needs of older households and those requiring specialist housing. The report forms part of the suite of evidence documents that support the Neighbourhood Plan and is available to view on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council website. In summary, the Housing Needs Assessment concluded that:
- There is no need for additional housing to meet the general needs of the population;
 - There is some need for affordable housing both as affordable housing for sale and for rent; and
 - The provision of specialist housing (meaning residential care for the elderly, sheltered affordable rental housing or private retirement scheme) in the parish is not feasible.
- 5.12 Given this evidence, and in accordance with the Settlement Strategy of the Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any further sites for housing development during the period to 2033.
- 5.13 The Local Plan contains a number of up-to-date policies relating to the design and delivery of housing meaning that this Neighbourhood Plan does not need to repeat them. To summarise, those policies of relevance to Great Bardfield are:
- Policy LPP 32 Affordable Housing in Rural Areas
 - Policy LPP 35 Housing Mix, Density and Accessibility
 - Policy LPP 36 Residential Alterations, Extensions and Outbuildings
 - Policy LPP 37 Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
 - Policy LPP 38 Rural Workers Dwellings in the Countryside
 - Policy LPP 39 Infill Development in Hamlets
 - Policy LPP 40 Residential Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside

6. Landscape and Natural Environment

Objectives

- To protect and enhance the countryside within the Parish, including important ecological sites, trees, hedgerows and watercourses, together with the village greens and other green spaces in Great Bardfield.
- To encourage multifunctional green initiatives within the community for a cleaner and healthier future.
- To protect important views from both outside and within Great Bardfield, particularly those featuring in the works of the Bardfield artists.

Context

- 6.1 The Great Bardfield Landscape Assessment Study identifies that “Great Bardfield’s landscape setting on the valley-slopes of the River Pant and its tributary, the Bardfield Brook, is still overwhelmingly rural in character. There are numerous significant views out from the historic core of the settlement into the wider landscape, particularly to Gibraltar Mill and the Pant Valley and Bardfield Mill, as well as from the footpaths that run along the boundary of the Conservation Area.” It notes further that “Key characteristics which contribute towards the landscape’s special qualities include its:
- Strongly undeveloped rural character, with some areas of considerable time-depth; historic field patterns, extensive network of lanes and pathways and mature trees and hedgerows which all provide a strong sense of historic continuity, integrity and cultural value;
 - Visual amenity value, with attractive panoramic views across the countryside as well as more intimate, enclosed views within the valleys, which includes views of landmark buildings;
 - Biodiversity value; and
 - Agricultural value
- 6.2 In terms of wildlife and habitat designations, there are six County Wildlife Sites in the parish; Bridge End Meadows; Great Bardfield Marsh; Ash Ground; Foxes Wood; Lodge Wood; and Hart Wood. The latter three sites are also classified as ancient woodland. In addition, the Local Plan designates parts of Mill Road, Bell Lane, Beslyns Road and Cooks Lane as “Protected Lanes” – Policy LPP 69 refers.
- 6.3 Across the parish there are a number of deciduous woodlands that are identified as priority habitats and two small areas of traditional orchard.

Planning Policy Context

- 6.4 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning policies “should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by *as it relates to Great Bardfield*:
- a) *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
 - b) *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
 - d) *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*
 - e) *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local*

environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans;”

- 6.5 At the Local Plan level, development proposals must take available measures to ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity, also taking into account climate change and water scarcity in their design. Policy LPP64 states that proposals that are likely to adversely affect local wildlife sites “will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm to the nature conservation value of the site.
- 6.6 In terms of landscape impact, Policy LPP67 states that “Proposals for new development should be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the character of the landscape as identified in the District Council’s Landscape Character Assessments. Proposals which may impact on the landscape such as settlement edge, countryside or large schemes will be required to include an assessment of their impact on the landscape and should not be detrimental to the distinctive landscape features of the area such as trees, hedges, woodlands, grasslands, ponds and rivers. Development which would not successfully integrate into the local landscape will not be permitted.”
- 6.7 The Local Plan Policies Map for Great Bardfield, included as Appendix 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan, identifies several areas of the village that are visually important opens spaces.

Residents’ Survey

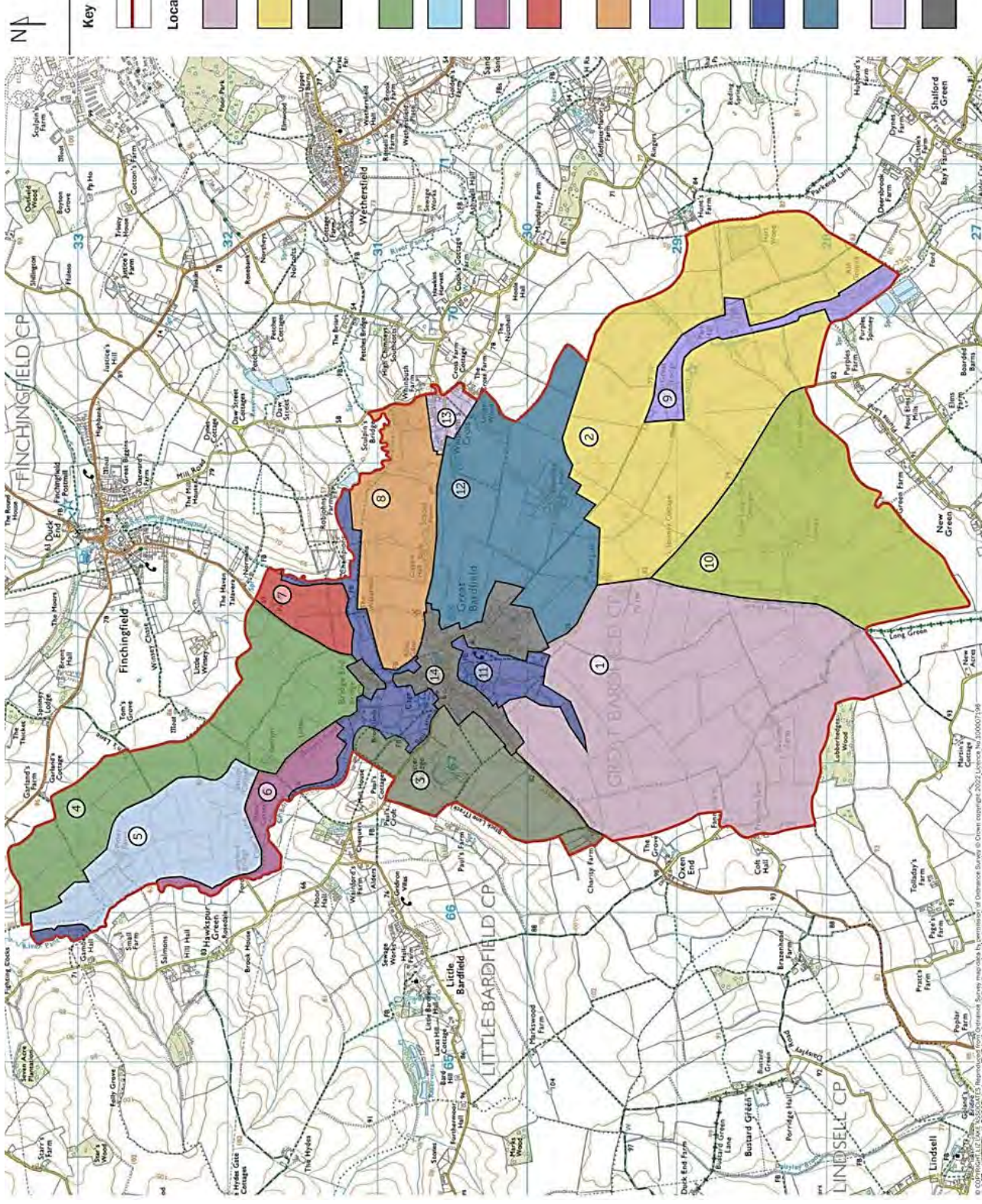
- 6.8 As noted in Figure 3 above, the most important issues for residents in the Neighbourhood Plan survey were the need to retain the rural nature of the village and retain and enhance accessible open/green space in and around the village.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The Landscape

- 6.9 As noted elsewhere, in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan a Landscape Assessment Study has been prepared. Outside the built-up area of the village, the Study identified 12 Local Parish Landscape Character Areas, as illustrated on Map 4. The Study concluded that the whole of the parish outside the built-up area has a high overall landscape sensitivity where the qualities should be conserved by seeking to protect and enhance the positive landscape features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- 6.10 Although development outside the Development Boundaries is only supported in exceptional circumstances, where such proposals do conform with Local Plan Policy LPP1, particular regard to the landscape character and qualities of the site and its setting will be necessary. On those occasions where proposals are in conformity with policy for development outside Development Boundaries, particular regard should be taken of the character and sensitivities of the landscape within which the site is located.
- 6.11 The Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Appraisal contains a set of generic guidelines for landscape management applicable across the whole parish, namely:
- Conserve and manage the ecological structure of woodland, copses and hedgerows within the study area;
 - Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern where appropriate to local landscape character, and strengthen through planting with hawthorn where gappy and depleted;
 - Conserve and manage the ecological structure of pasture and meadows alongside the Pant and its tributaries;
 - Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges; and
 - Use traditional management practices where possible.
 - Establish arable field margins as important nature conservation habitats.
 - Narrow, single track roads could be designated as Quiet Lanes.

However, the management guidelines can only be enforced where a planning application is considered. Otherwise, it would rely on voluntary action or local initiatives to protect and improve the character and quality of the landscape.



Map 4 - Local Parish Landscape Character Areas

Policy GBD 2 – Maintaining and Improving Great Bardfield’s Landscape Character

Proposals that enhance the character of the landscape will be supported.

To conserve the essential landscape, heritage and rural character of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, development proposals shall, as proportionate to the development:

- i. demonstrate how the landscape characteristics of the site and its vicinity have informed the design of the proposal; and
- ii. conserve and enhance the rural and landscape character and the setting of the built-up areas of the parish, having regard to Great Bardfield Landscape Assessment (August 2022).

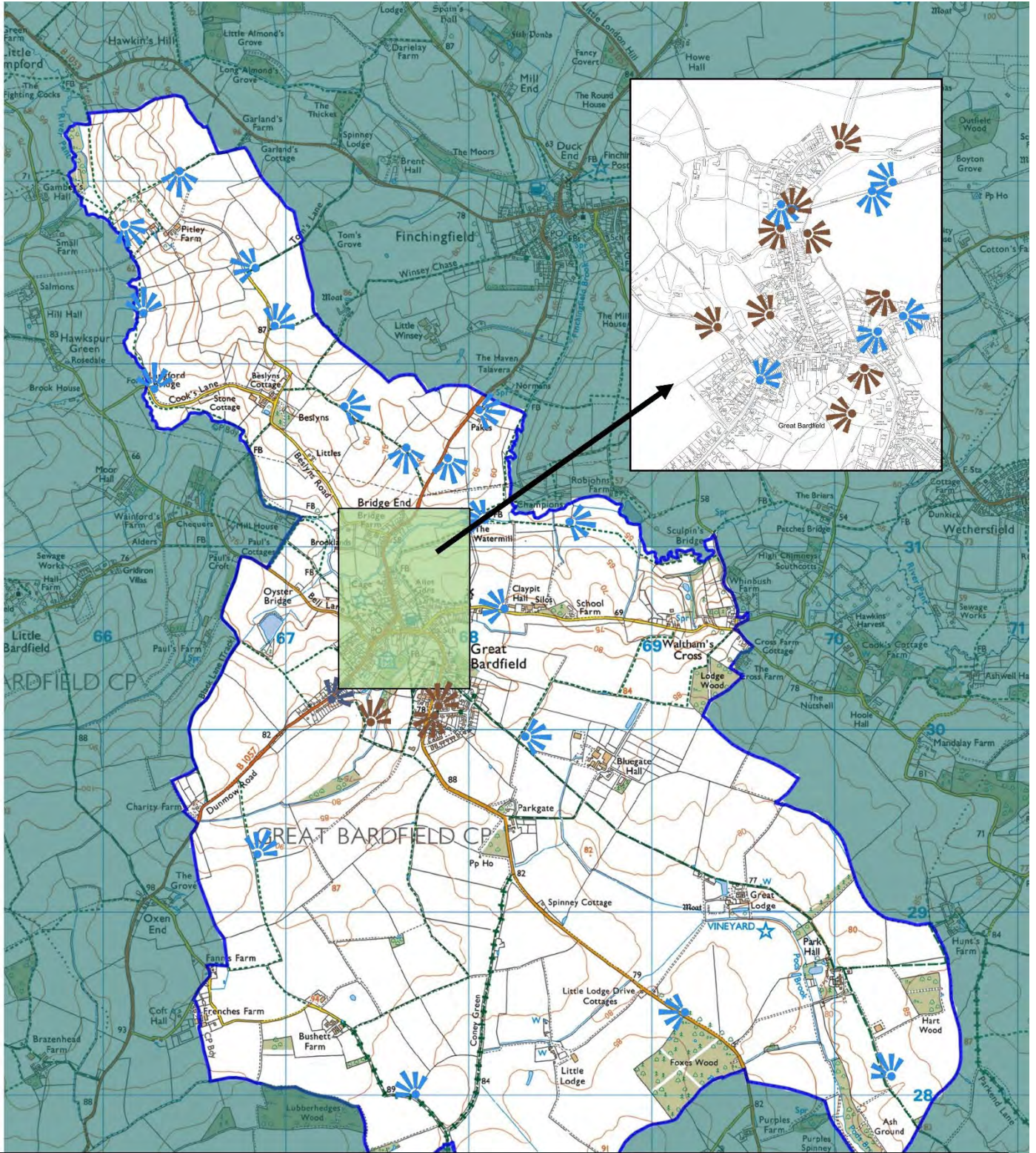
Proposals for new buildings outside the Development Boundaries will be required to be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, or other appropriate and proportionate evidence, that demonstrates how the proposal can be accommodated in the countryside without having a significant adverse impact, by reason of the building’s scale, materials and location, on the character and appearance of the countryside and its distinction from the built-up area.

Relevant Braintree Local Plan Policy:
Policy LPP 67 - Landscape Character and Features

Important Views

- 6.12 The nature of the landscape is such that there are opportunities for extensive views into and out of the built-up area of the village from publicly accessible points. The most significant are identified on Map 5 and in either the Great Bardfield Landscape Assessment (August 2022) or the Great Bardfield Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2020). There could be circumstances where a development proposal would have a significant detrimental impact on the key features of that view as identified in the Appraisal and such a proposal would not be supported.





-  Conservation Area Appraisal Views
-  Landscape Appraisal Views
-  View identified in both documents

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Map 5 – Important Views

- 6.13 When proposals for development in the parish are being prepared, it will be necessary to take account of the impact on views and, as appropriate to the proposal, demonstrate how the development can be satisfactorily accommodated within the landscape. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) are a recognised tool that specifically aim to ensure that all possible effects of change and development both on the landscape itself and on views and visual amenity are considered in decision-making.

Policy GBD 3 - Protection of Important Views

Important views from public vantage points, either within the built-up area or into or out of the surrounding countryside, are identified on Map 5. Development will not be supported where it would have a detrimental visual impact on the key landscape and built development features of these views, as identified in the Great Bardfield Landscape Assessment (August 2022).

Relevant Braintree Local Plan Policies: None relevant

Wildlife Habitats

- 6.14 As noted above, the parish is rich in wildlife habitats and natural features including six County Wildlife Sites. The loss of natural habitats as part of a development can have a significant detrimental impact on the wider landscape and opportunities for maintaining and improving the biodiversity of the area. Paragraph 187 d) of the NPPF (2024) notes that decisions should “contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by.....minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs”. The National Planning Practice Guidance notes that; “Net gain in planning describes an approach to development that leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. Net gain is an umbrella term for both biodiversity net gain and wider environmental net gain.”
- 6.15 In Great Bardfield, development proposals that deliver biodiversity improvements will be particularly supported. The National Guidance states that examples might include creating new habitats, enhancing existing habitats, providing green roofs, green walls, street trees or sustainable drainage systems. Relatively small features can often achieve important benefits for wildlife, such as incorporating ‘swift bricks’ and bat boxes in developments and providing safe routes for hedgehogs between different areas of habitat, specifically hedgehog tunnels in any new development.
- 6.16 The Environment Act 2021 places a statutory requirement for all appropriate developments, defined in the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, to deliver a minimum 10 per cent measurable net gain in biodiversity. Planning applications must be accompanied by a statement explaining if the proposal is subject to the requirement for biodiversity net gain and why together with details relating to the baseline on-site conditions. The same Act also introduced a statutory requirement to produce “Local Nature Recovery Strategies” and the County Council is the responsible body for the preparation of the Strategy for Essex. Its aim will be to find broad locations for the creation or improvement of habitat and identify those most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment. At the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan the final Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy had yet to be published.
- 6.17 Local Plan Policy LPP6 – Protection, Enhancement, Management and Monitoring Biodiversity requires that “Development proposals shall provide for the protection of biodiversity and the

mitigation or compensation of any adverse impacts” and that “enhancement of biodiversity should be included in all proposals.” However, the policy does not require a measurable net gain in biodiversity as will be required by the implementation of the Environment Act. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore supplements the requirements of the Local Plan by requiring new development to, as appropriate, deliver a minimum ten percent of measurable net gains in biodiversity. It also encourages development that is exempt from the national regulations to deliver biodiversity net gain.

Policy GBD 4 – Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and other Natural Features

Qualifying development proposals are required to achieve a biodiversity net gain of at least 10 per cent, or the advised national minimum amount, whichever is greater, measured using the national biodiversity net gain calculation methodology.

Where previously developed land is exempted from biodiversity net gain under the relevant regulations, a minimum net gain will be encouraged but not be required, unless the site supports at least one protected or priority species population or habitat, or an assemblage of species with an otherwise demonstrably high biodiversity value.

Where new access is created, or an existing access is widened, through an existing hedgerow, a new hedgerow of native species shall be planted on the splay returns into the site to maintain the appearance and continuity of hedgerows in the vicinity. Accesses should also conform with the Essex Design Guide, Highways Technical Manuals “Visibility” and “Planting in sight splays”.

Relevant Braintree Local Plan Policies:

Policy LPP6 – Protection, Enhancement, Management and Monitoring Biodiversity

- 6.18 Tree planting can have a significant benefit in both the creation of new habitats and the capture of Carbon Dioxide. While the parish has a good stock of trees it is important that we do not become complacent and the planting of new trees needs to be encouraged if that characteristic is to remain for future generations. The Parish Council can play an important role in facilitating additional tree planting across the parish.

Community Aspiration 1 – Tree Planting

The Parish Council will proactively seek locations to continue tree planting throughout the parish and encourage residents, where possible, to plant appropriate local species in their gardens.

Protected Open Spaces

- 6.19 Green spaces within the Neighbourhood Area, make an important contribution to the amenity, character and setting of the village. The NPPF enables the designation and protection of land of particular importance to local communities as Local Green Spaces (‘LGS’) in neighbourhood plans. Such designations rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 107 of the NPPF states that the designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and

- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

It is recognised that the designation of Local Green Spaces should not be used simply to block development.

- 6.20 A separate Local Green Space Appraisal has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, which demonstrates how certain local spaces meet the criteria in paragraph 107 of the NPPF. The spaces that meet the criteria are identified in Policy GBD 5 and are illustrated on Map 6.
- 6.21 The identification of these spaces as Local Green Space means that development is restricted to that which can be demonstrated as being essential for the site, in line with the Green Belt policies defined by the NPPF. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation.

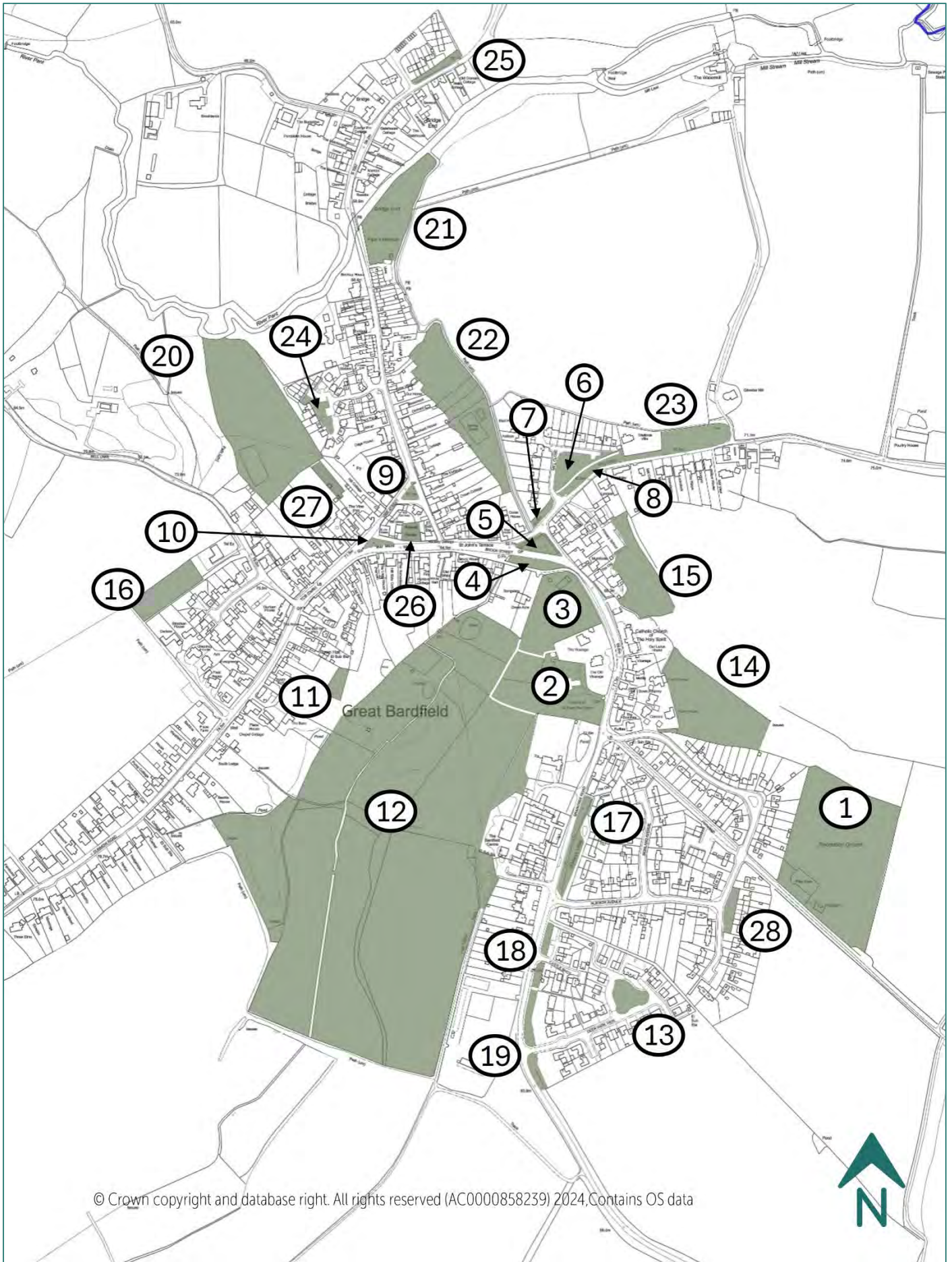
Policy GBD 5 – Local Green Spaces

The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on Map 6:

1	Recreation Ground/Playing Field/Children’s Playground	15	School Playing Field
2	St. Mary’s Churchyard	16	Land Rear of Telephone Exchange
3	Glebe Meadow	17	St. Mary’s Villas Verge
4	Causeway Green	18	Castle Shot Verge
5	School Green	19	Deer Park View Verge
6	Mill Close Green	20	Vine Meadow and allotments
7	Mill Close Verge	21	Piper’s Meadows
8	Mill Road Verge	22	Land rear of Bridge Street
9	Crown Green	23	Land near Gibraltar Mill
10	Memorial Green	24	Northampton Meadow Green
11	Quiet Space	25	North Field Verge
12	The Valley of Bardfield Brook	26	Quakers Burial Ground
13	Deer Park View Green	27	The Vine Garden
14	Land off Bendlowes Road	28	Land at top of Aleinor Avenue

Development in the Local Green Spaces will be consistent with national policy for the Green Belt.





Map 6 – Local Green Spaces



7. Built Environment and Conservation

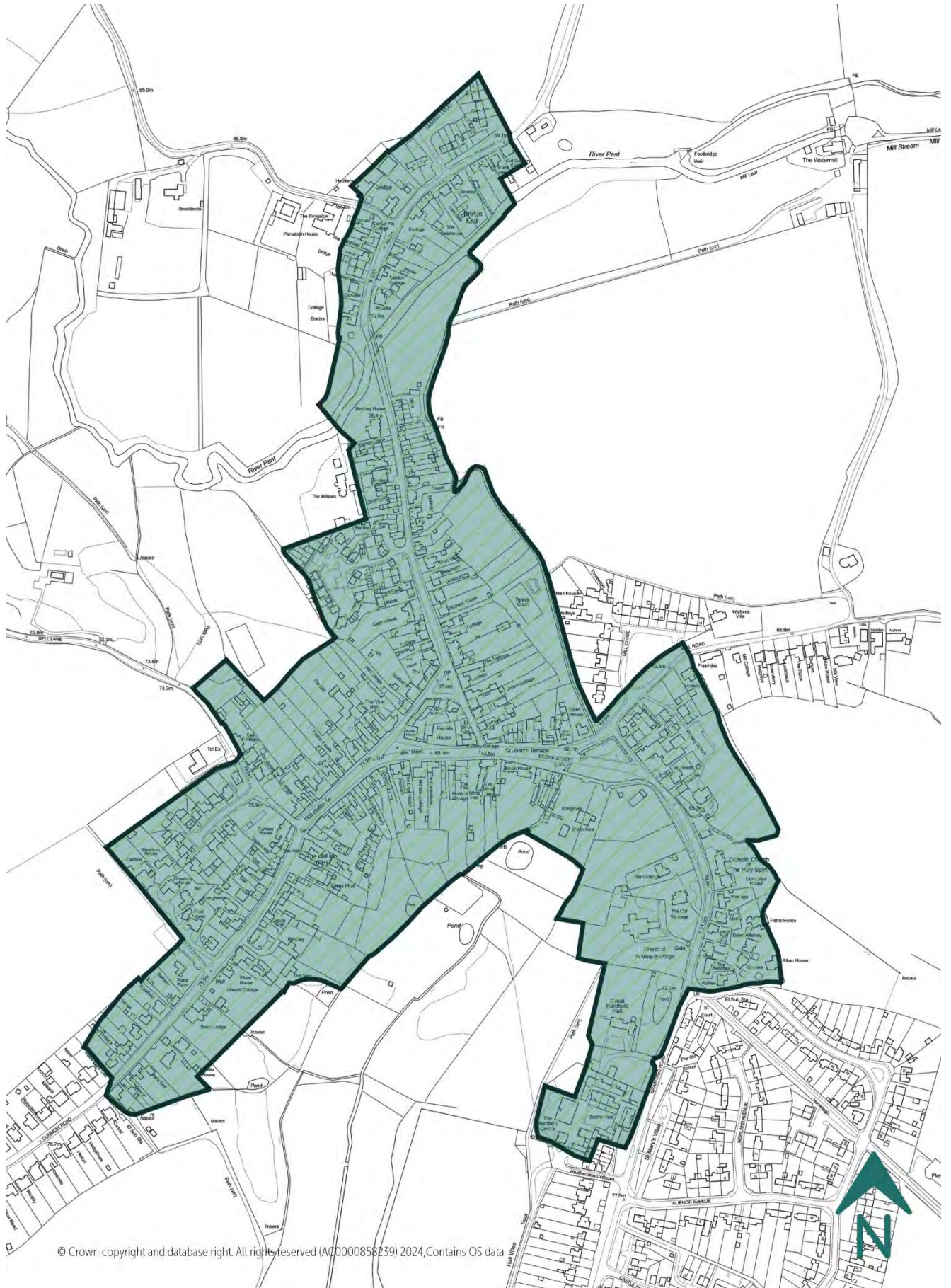
Objectives

- To protect and enhance the parish's many heritage assets and their setting and ensure that any development serves to make a positive contribution to the existing environment.
- To ensure that the landscape surrounding the Great Bardfield conservation area is not fundamentally altered to the detriment of the village.
- To encourage and facilitate the installation and uptake of renewable energy for the existing housing stock and business properties.
- To strongly encourage that the design, style and density of any new housing scheme is in keeping with the character of Great Bardfield and built to a high sustainability standard.
- To ensure that all planning applications for new housing in the Parish shall include renewable energy technology, including low carbon technology, for each unit built.

Context

- 7.1 The built environment covers both the historic buildings and features of the parish as well as the design of new development that will come forward during the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.2 Great Bardfield is an ancient settlement, with evidence that points to potential prehistoric occupation, as well as late evidence of Roman burials. The heritage significance of Great Bardfield is derived from its history as a large rural village with late medieval and post-medieval housing stock in good condition. The street-scape of the village has benefited from sensitive infilling over the centuries to create an almost continuous street frontage with varied roof-scape and a limited and consistent material palette.
- 7.3 The parish contains 102 listed buildings, of which 73 are within the Great Bardfield Conservation Area (first designated on the 2 October 1969) which covers much of the built-up area of the village as illustrated on Map 7. Details of the listed buildings are contained in Appendix 2.



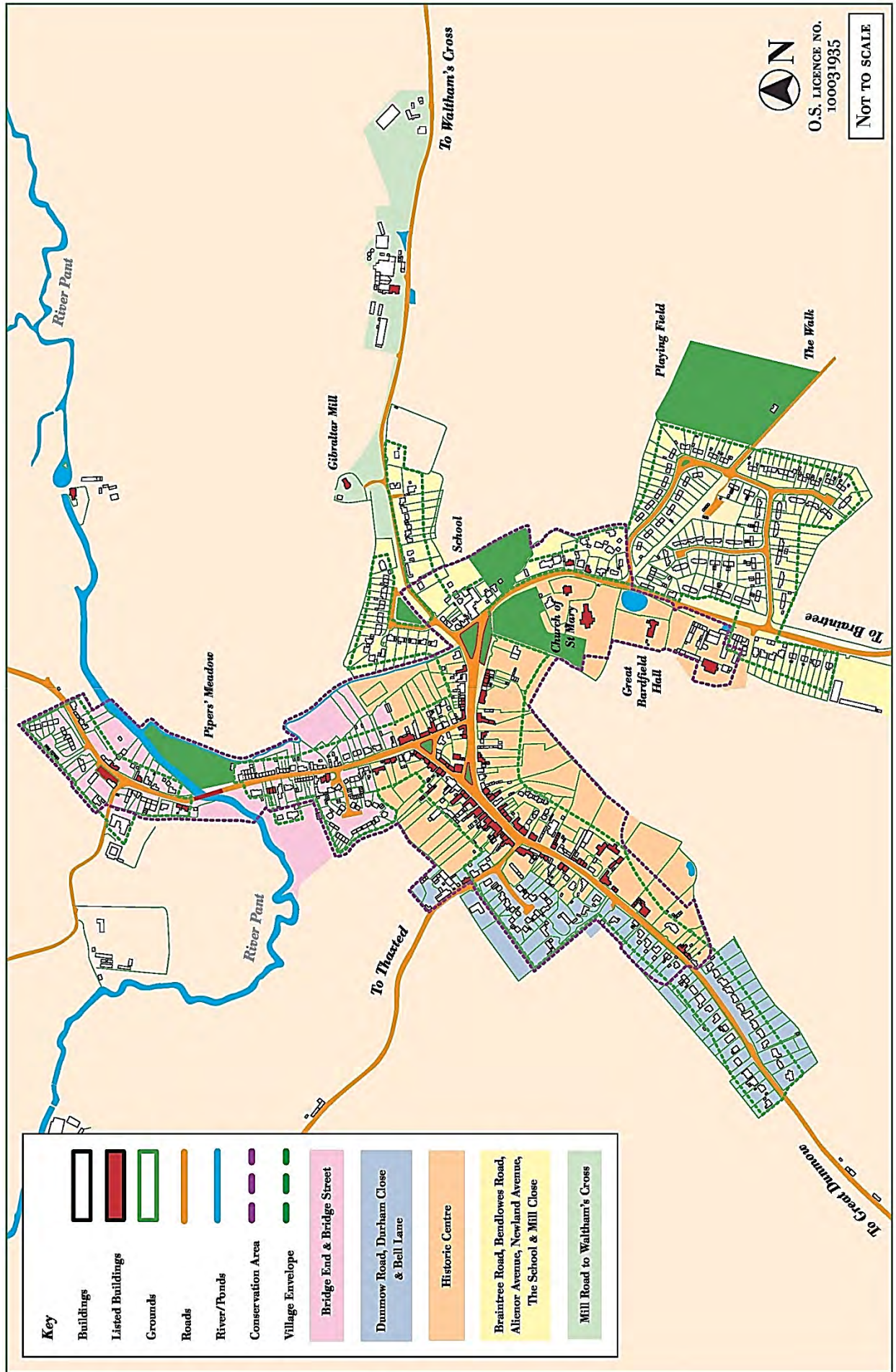


Map 7 – Conservation Area

Local Plan Context

- 7.4 The Local Plan contains up-to-date policies covering the protection and management of heritage assets and the design of new development. Strategic Policy SP 7 – Places Shaping Principles, requires all new development to meet high standards of urban and architectural design and lays down criteria to which all new development should have regard. These are:
- Respond positively to local character and context to preserve and enhance the quality of existing places and their environs;
 - Provide buildings that exhibit individual architectural quality within well-considered public and private realms;
 - Protect and enhance assets of historical or natural value;
 - Incorporate biodiversity creation and enhancement measures;
 - Create well-connected places that prioritise the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport services above use of the private car;
 - Provide a mix of land uses, services and densities with well-defined public and private spaces to create sustainable well-designed neighbourhoods;
 - Enhance the public realm through additional landscaping, street furniture and other distinctive features that help to create a sense of place;
 - Provide streets and spaces that are overlooked and active and promote inclusive access;
 - Include parking facilities that are well integrated as part of the overall design and are adaptable if levels of private car ownership fall;
 - Provide an integrated and connected network of biodiverse public open space and green and blue infrastructure, thereby helping to alleviate recreational pressure on designated sites;
 - Include measures to promote environmental sustainability including addressing energy and water efficiency, and provision of appropriate water and wastewater and flood mitigation measures including the use of open space to provide flora and fauna rich sustainable drainage solutions; and
 - Protect the amenity of existing and future residents and users with regard to noise, vibration, smell, loss of light, overbearing and overlooking.
- 7.5 A number of other policies in the Local Plan address how planning applications will be considered in relation to heritage and property design. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to repeat these policies.
- 7.6 Of specific relevance to Great Bardfield is the Great Bardfield Village Design Statement that was prepared by residents in conjunction with Braintree District Council and adopted by the District Council. It contains:
- A brief historical context
 - The way the settlement has developed over time
 - The setting of the village in the surrounding countryside
 - The character of individual areas in the village
 - The characteristics of the buildings and spaces
 - Other features regarded as important by villagers

Map 8 is an extract from the Village Design Statement that illustrates the five character areas that were identified during its preparation.



Map 8 – Great Bardfield's Character Areas as identified in the Village Design Statement

7.7 While the character as described in the Character Appraisal remains largely unaltered, the more recent Conservation Area Appraisal and the Great Bardfield Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide and Codes (referred to below) provide a more thorough and up-to-date approach to understanding the character of the built-up areas of the parish.

Residents' Survey

7.8 When asked what areas should be preserved or improved, nearly 90% of respondents said it was very important to retain the historic centre of the village. Residents were asked for opinions on the style of new development that is most appropriate for Great Bardfield. There was little support for modern architecture. 97% of respondents said it was very important or important to protect the Conservation Area, with future development outside it.

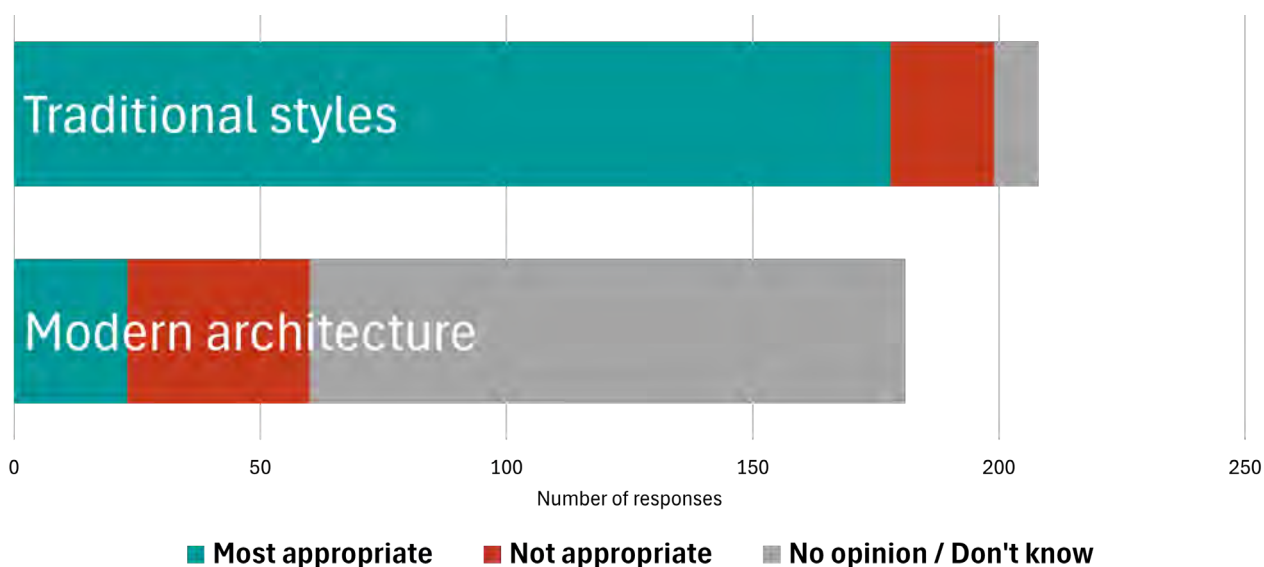


Figure 5 – Residents' opinion on style of new homes

Conservation Area

7.9 A Conservation Area Appraisal was completed for the District Council in 2020 and is available to view on the District Council's website. It provides an overview of the Area, outlining its designation history and highlights its special interest as well as considering those buildings, spaces, and features which contribute to its character and special interest. The Appraisal should be used as a baseline to inform future development and design with regard to the sensitivities of the historic environment and its unique character.

7.10 As well as noting the designated heritage assets in the parish, the Conservation Area Appraisal identified six potential non-designated heritage assets in the Conservation Area, namely:

- The Primary School, Braintree Road
- Stone House, Braintree Road
- Townsends, Braintree Road
- Brookside and Meadowside Cottages, Mill Road
- The Town Hall, High Street
- Old Granary, Bridge Street

The Appraisal noted that these buildings are identified as they are either considered to be good examples of their type or architectural style, are prominent local landmarks, demonstrate use of local materials or design features, or are connected to local historical events, activities or people, and are all relatively complete in their survival. It was also stated that the District Council had commenced the process of creating a Local Heritage List in 2017 but that no non-designated heritage assets within Great Bardfield had been considered for inclusion. At the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan there remained no Local Heritage List for Great Bardfield.

Community Aspiration 2 – Local Heritage List

The Parish Council will work with Braintree District Council to prepare a Local Heritage List for Great Bardfield to include the six potential non-designated heritage assets identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal and any other buildings in the parish and features considered worthy of inclusion.

- 7.11 The Conservation Area Appraisal noted some heritage assets that the authors considered to be “at risk”, namely:
- The listed building (ancillary building) 25m north of The Vine Public House: “in poor condition and needs considerable repair work to make it weather-tight and structurally sound”.
 - The bridge over the River Pant and Bridge End, “due to structural failings and the impact of modern traffic levels”.

Repairs to the bridge, including the adjoining footbridge, were carried out in Summer 2022 but the ancillary building rear of The Vine remains in need of some attention at the time of preparing the Plan.

- 7.12 Included at Appendix 3 are details of the management proposals for the Conservation Area that are included in the Appraisal. While it is primarily for the District and County Councils to initiate projects for improvements in the Conservation Area, the Parish Council has a role in bringing the community together and lobbying for their delivery.

- 7.13 Policy LPP 53 of the Local Plan states that the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of designated Conservation Areas and their settings will be encouraged. For Great Bardfield, it is essential that proposals have regard to the Conservation Area Appraisal findings and, specifically:
- i. the need to demonstrate how it would mitigate against exacerbating the on-street car parking issue.
 - ii. the impact of modern development on the outskirts of the village or the Conservation Area will need to be controlled or appropriately mitigated so that it does not impact on the setting of the Conservation Area, or on its wider views, and the contribution these make to its significance.
 - iii. to ensure that currently neutral buildings, in terms of character and appearance of the conservation area, do not become negative through inappropriate alterations and additions.
 - iv. realising opportunities to achieve a consistent approach to public realm features across the area.

Policy GBD 6 – Great Bardfield Conservation Area

Proposals within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, the Conservation Area, as illustrated on Map 7, should:

- i. retain, and, where appropriate, enhance features that contribute positively to the area’s special character, appearance and setting, including as identified in the Great Bardfield Conservation Area Appraisal; and
- ii. where relevant and practical, remove features which have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and
- iii. assess, and mitigate against, any negative impact the proposal might have on the townscape, roofscape, skyline and landscape of the Conservation Area; and
- iv. aim to protect trees, or where losses are proposed, demonstrate how such losses are appropriately mitigated against.

Relevant Braintree Local Plan Policies:

Policy LPP 53 – Conservation Areas

Policy LPP 54 – Demolition In Conservation Areas

Policy LPP 55 – Shop Fronts, Fascias and Signs in Conservation Areas

Policy LPP 56 – Illuminated Signs in Conservation Areas

Street Furniture and Clutter

- 7.14 In some areas of the Conservation Area, the quality of the built environment is spoilt by the poor quality of things such as bins, railings, traffic signs etc as well as the clutter of overhead wires. This is defined as the “public realm” and the lack of investment over the years is having a detrimental impact on the area.
- 7.15 In other towns and villages the investment in the public realm has resulted in a higher quality environment that is better for residents and visitors and reduces clutter, such as the illustrated examples from Lavenham and Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk.



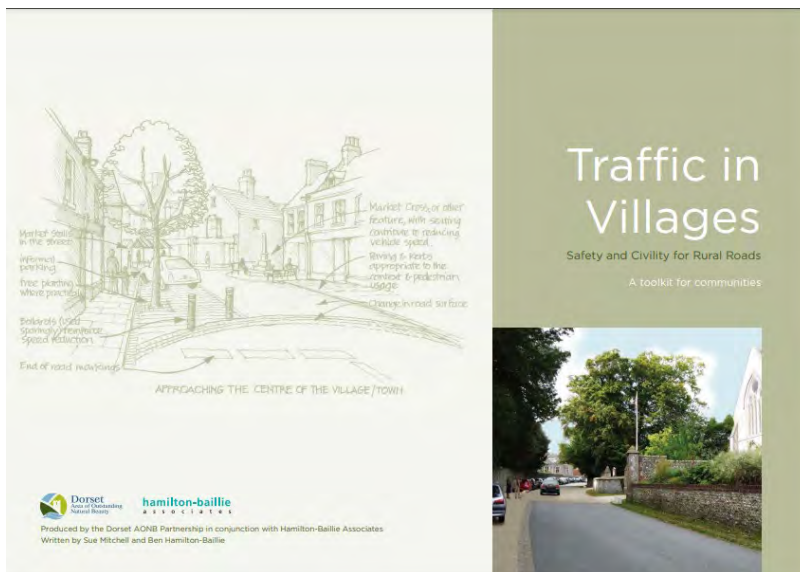
Lavenham



Bury St Edmunds

- 7.16 The use of signs and painted lines bring an urban solution to the rural environment and are therefore not always appropriate. Large traffic signs in particular can have a detrimental impact on the natural environment while the removal of white lines in some villages has been proven to reduce traffic speeds.

- 7.17 Given the concerns raised previously by residents, it would be fitting to investigate a project to find suitable measures to reduce the impact of traffic in the village in a sympathetic way. One possible example of such an initiative is contained in "Traffic in Villages" produced by the Dorset AONB Partnership in conjunction with Hamilton-Baillie Associates and using the checklist of features contained within the document to inform an action plan.



- 7.18 The Government's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allows local authorities to place a charge on new developments which can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure projects. At present, the CIL regulations allow Parish Councils to receive 15% of the levy collected in their parish which increases to 25% for those with a neighbourhood plan in place. The collection of CIL is optional and Braintree District Council currently collects infrastructure contributions via Section 106 planning obligations connected to planning permissions. At the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, it is understood that the introduction of CIL is being investigated by the District Council and, if introduced, the money could be used by the Parish Council for improvements to street furniture, as an example.

Community Aspiration 3 – Street Furniture Review

The Parish Council will seek to work with the District Council and the County Council Highways Department to undertake a review of street furniture and signs, road markings and overhead lines with a view to producing a strategy for their improvement and replacement with higher quality street furniture that is more sympathetic with the historic environment.

Development Design

- 7.19 The design and construction of any new development can, if not considered carefully, have a significant detrimental impact on the environment, the amenity of existing residents and the local infrastructure. It is important that careful consideration of the site and its surroundings is made at the outset of designing a project, in order to understand how the proposal impacts on the character of the area and existing residents. Unsympathetic and poorly designed development, especially within the vicinity of a heritage asset, can have a significant detrimental impact on the area. It will also be crucial that the design pays attention to minimising environmental impact through, for example, the incorporation of energy saving measures.
- 7.20 The NPPF makes it clear, in paragraph 129, that 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.' In January 2021 the Government published the National Design Guide to illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It 'provides a structure that can be used for the content

of local design policies, guides and codes, and addresses issues that are important for design codes where these are applied to large scale development on single or multiple sites.’ This was followed up in July 2021 by the more detailed National Model Design Code which sets out guidance for what could be included in a Design Code for sites and places.

- 7.21 Originally published in 1973, the Essex Design Guide was a pioneering approach to providing guidance for developers, primarily on the design of new housing. The Guidance was revamped in 2018 with an online interactive version now providing updated guidance on a range of themes including active design, the ageing population, health and wellbeing, digital and smart technology and garden communities.
- 7.22 As part of the government-funded Neighbourhood Planning Technical Support package, Design Guidelines and Codes have been prepared for the parish by AR Urbanism design consultants. The document is published as supporting evidence to the Neighbourhood Plan and seeks to inform the design that any future development should follow. The Design Guidance and Codes build upon the work and content of the Village Design Statement, in particular updating the extent of the character areas identified in the Village Design Statement and the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 7.23 The Design Codes and Guidance effectively supersedes the Village Design Statement and provides guidance for each of the character areas as well as providing parish-wide guidance. Development proposals will be expected to have regard to the design guidance for the character areas, reproduced below, as well as the parish-wide guidance.
- 7.24 A development design checklist has been prepared based on the parish-wide guidance and included as Appendix 4 of the Plan. Planning applications should, as appropriate to the nature of the development, include a demonstration as to the proposal meets the checklist.

Bridge End and Bridge Street Character Area Guidance

- The Bridge over the River Pant is an important heritage asset for Great Bardfield, and any necessary repairs must protect the integrity of the design and character of the bridge;
- New development along Bridge Street must preserve or provide discreet and appropriate off-street parking to help minimise any potential contribution to on-street parking pressures;
- Pipers’ Meadow and the wider River Pant should be protected as a natural landscape through maintenance and management that promotes biodiversity, water quality, and flood resilience;
- Views to Gibraltar Mill are a particular characteristic of the character area, and should be protected, enhanced, and new views enabled where possible;
- Any proposed development along Bridge Street should not diminish visual connections to surrounding landscape and should promote, wherever possible, new public connections to the countryside and existing public rights of way;
- The character, quality and integrity of Beslyns Road, as a protected lane, must be preserved and proposals that remove existing embankments and hedgerows for new access points should be resisted;
- The topography around the River Pant must be considered in any proposal for development, and the visual impact of development from within the village and surrounding landscape of the parish must be demonstrated and mitigated in any proposal for new development;
- Existing beech hedges, forming characteristic boundaries within the character area, should be protected and proposals for their removal should be resisted.

Dunmow Road and Bell Lane Character Area Guidance

- The visible presence of overhead cables diminish the quality of Dunmow Road, and any opportunity to remove or diminish their visual impact should be taken where possible;
- Applications for extensions and alterations to existing buildings must minimise the visual impact of the proposal from the surrounding open countryside, and demonstrate the extent of this impact and how it will be mitigated at application stage;
- Bell Lane should be protected and enhanced as a characteristic rural sunken lane leading into Great Bardfield, particularly in regard to its embankments and hedgerows;
- Gaps between existing buildings along Dunmow Road offer incidental views to surrounding countryside from the road and should be protected to preserve the character of Great Bardfield and its visual connection to its landscape;

- Front gardens and hedges are prominent features in the character area and should be protected, with proposals to convert front gardens to hard impermeable parking surfaces resisted where possible;
- Enhanced way-finding provision for public rights of way leading to the open countryside, such as visible signage of an appropriate character, should be provided.

Braintree Road and Mill Road Character Area Guidance

- Gibraltar Mill is a key landmark for the village, and views of the Mill from both within the village and surrounding open countryside should be enhanced and protected through appropriate landscape management. Opportunities to create new views to the Mill would be encouraged where this contributes to the character of Great Bardfield;
- Further alterations and extensions to Great Bardfield Primary School should follow and enhance the heritage character of the original building, and opportunities to update existing poor quality extensions would be supported;
- Any additional proposals for the Primary School must provide a holistic approach to the accommodation of drop-off and pick-up, demonstrating how proposals would minimise the impact of congestion and traffic around School Green;
- Mill Road retains the character of a rural lane, and this should be protected with the retention and enhancement of its embankments and vegetation. Any proposals for new development along the village edge by Mill Road should not contribute to the fragmentation of the existing hedgerows;
- Extensions within Mill Close should be mindful of retaining the gaps between existing buildings where these gaps create views to the surrounding open countryside;
- Access to existing public rights of way should be enhanced through appropriate and sensitive signage, and opportunities to create new access points should be promoted where possible.

Bendlowes Road and Deer Park Character Area Guidance

- The Walk is an important heritage and community asset, and opportunities to make the path more inclusive and accessible through enhancements to surfacing, signage and integration with existing roads would be supported;
- Proposals adjacent to the Walk must demonstrate how development protects and enhances the Walk and takes opportunities to integrate this landscape feature sensitively;
- Front gardens with hedges are prominent features within Bendlowes Road, Alienor Avenue and Newland Avenue, and should be protected with proposals for their replacement with hard parking courts resisted;
- Mature trees are particularly prominent within the character area, and should be protected with provision made for succession planting where appropriate;
- Any proposal along Braintree Road for infill or redevelopment should follow the existing set-back of houses with green verges designed in a manner that prevents inappropriate informal parking while delivering opportunities for new planting and sustainable drainage channels;
- Proposals that seek to promote further 'ribbon' development along Braintree Road would not be supported.

Historic Centre Character Area Guidance

- The buildings in the Historic Centre exhibit a wide variety of building forms, materials, massing and design, however together these form a language of design which is characteristic of the village and wider region. Any proposals within the historic centre must submit evidence of analysis and assessment of the wider context and demonstrate how design proposals respond to this language of design;
- Gaps between buildings, providing visual links to surrounding landscape, are important contributors to the character of the Historic Centre and must be protected from inappropriate development that would obstruct these visual links;
- Glebe Meadow remains a visually important open space, and its management should prioritise preserving and enhancing key views of the spire of St Mary's Church from School Green;
- The spire of St Mary's Church is the predominant landmark of the village, and should not be challenged (in terms of height and visibility) by any development proposal within the village;
- Any proposal for alteration or development within the Bardfield Centre should recognise its historic use as an agricultural site and incorporate designs that respond to the local typology of farmyards within the parish;

- Any proposal within the Historic Centre must demonstrate at application stage how parking demand has been mitigated in a way that limits contribution to on-street parking pressures, while ensuring designs respond to and enhance the character of the Historic Centre;
- Opportunities to reduce the impact of cars around the Greens within the Historic Centre would be supported provided they enhance the Greens as comfortable and accessible public spaces;
- Opportunities to promote new street trees within the Historic Centre would be encouraged where they contribute and enhance the historic character of the area;
- Opportunity to create new access and footpaths to open countryside adjacent to the Historic Centre would be supported where appropriate;
- Improvements to quality and materiality of pavements in the Historic Centre should be consistent and seek to use materials and specifications that respect and reinforce the heritage aspects of Great Bardfield;
- Opportunities to emphasis cultural connections to the artistic heritage of Great Bardfield would be promoted within the public realm, such as the integration of public art, signage and information, where this is designed in a way that enhances the heritage character of Great Bardfield.

Policy GBD 7 - Design Considerations

Proposals for new development must, as appropriate to the proposal, demonstrate how the proposal addresses the Character Area Guidance, as identified in the Great Bardfield Design Guidelines and Codes, and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.

In addition, all planning applications should demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Development Design Checklist in Appendix 4 of this Plan.

Relevant Braintree Local Plan Policies:

SP 7 – Places Shaping Principles

Policy LPP 52 – Layout and Design of Development





8. Community Services and Facilities

Objectives

- To continue to provide opportunities for all ages for cultural, leisure, community, sport, religious and other activities within the Parish to foster a sense of community.
- To support retention of existing education facilities in the village for all age groups.
- To sustain a vibrant, safe and welcoming village.
- To consider how best to accommodate green infrastructure such as electric car charging points in the village given the growth in this sector.

Context

- 8.1 The village has a wide range of services and facilities that meet the day to day needs of residents as well as the many visitors to the village. These include a primary school, local supermarket, specialist shops, public houses and the Town Hall. It is vital that the facilities that serve residents' needs are maintained and, where feasible, complemented with additional facilities to maintain a level of self-sufficiency for the village to support the wider parish.

Local Plan Context

- 8.2 The adopted Local Plan notes that "The District Council, with the help of the community, has to plan positively for the provision of community facilities and other local services, to ensure people have access to the services they need." Policy LPP 60 seeks to protect existing educational establishments from being lost and Policy LPP 61 seeks the retention of all existing community facilities and services "where they meet an identified local need."
- 8.3 However, the Local Plan does not include a policy to prevent the change of use of retail premises to other uses. Such a loss could have a significant detrimental impact on the functioning of the village.

Residents' Survey

- 8.4 Some 97% of residents that responded to the Neighbourhood Plan survey agreed that the services provided by local shops and businesses are either very important or fairly important. In terms of particular services, local shops and the school were considered most important.

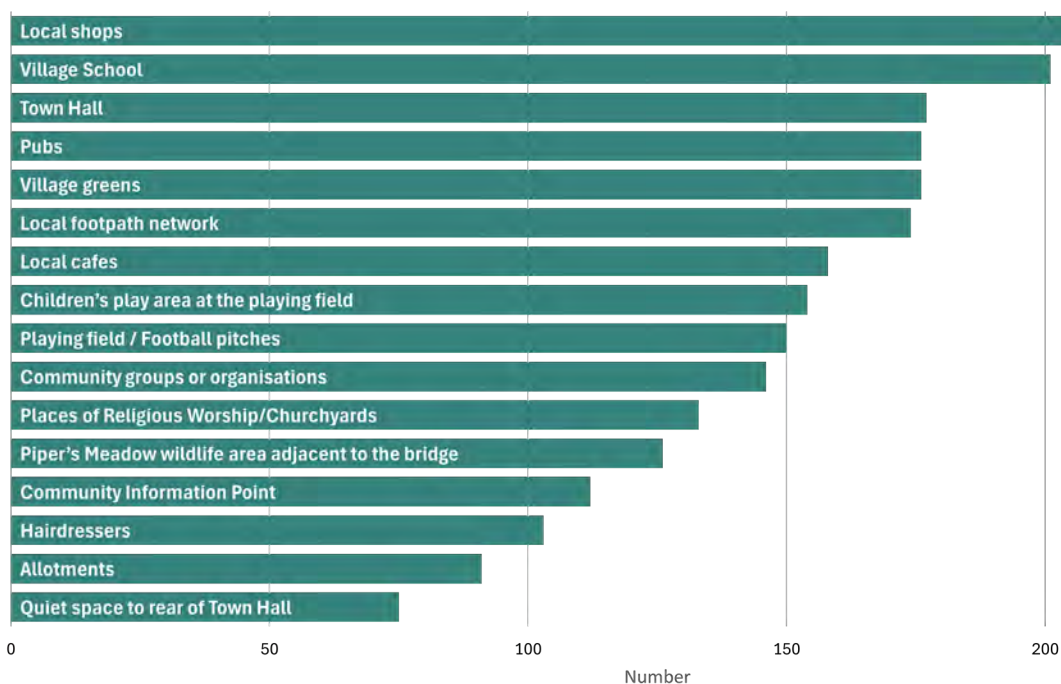


Figure 6 – Services and facilities considered very important by residents

Neighbourhood Plan Policy

- 8.5 During the lifetime of the Plan there may be circumstances that force the closure of a shop or community facility and there might be no demand, or it is not viable, for it to remain in its current or alternative community use. In such circumstances it might be better for the premises to revert to an alternative use but only if certain circumstances can be proven. Policy GBD 8 provides criteria which, together with the policies in the Braintree Local Plan, will be used to determine any such proposals.
- 8.6 In some instances, the loss of a facility might have a significant detrimental impact on the Village and its sustainability. The 'Assets of Community Value' / 'Community Right to Bid' scheme was introduced by the government in the Localism Act 2011 and came into force in September 2012. The aim was to give community groups time to make realistic bids to buy land or buildings that are of importance to the local community when they come up for sale. Under the Community Right to Bid, community groups are able to nominate non-residential buildings or land within their area as 'Assets of Community Value' which cannot be sold without the community group being given the opportunity to put together a bid to purchase the asset. A building or other land is an asset of community value if its main use has recently been, or is presently used, to further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community and could do so in the future. The Localism Act 2011 states that 'social interests' include: cultural, recreational and sporting interests. However, although Assets of Community Value are not governed under planning procedures and policies, their status can be a material planning consideration and taken into account when making a planning decision. There may, during the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan, be circumstances where the Parish Council would consider it appropriate to seek the protection of community facilities as an Asset of Community Value.

Policy GBD 8 – Protecting Existing Services and Facilities

Proposals that would result in the loss of valued facilities or services which support the local community (or premises last used for such purposes) will only be permitted where:

- a. it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable and is not likely to become viable. Supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 6 months on realistic terms first agreed with the Local Planning Authority; and
- b. it can be demonstrated, through evidenced research, that there is no local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or
- c. alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling or walking.

Relevant Braintree Local Plan Policies:

Policy LPP 60 - Educational Establishments

Policy LPP 61 - Local Community Services and Facilities

Community Aspiration

Community Aspiration 4 – Outdoor Community Spaces

The Parish Council will:

- a) encourage use and enhancement of existing outdoor spaces and support the inclusion of facilities such as an outdoor gym; and
- b) review the maintenance of the Quiet Space; identify any additional planting and promote its use.

9. The Local Economy

Objectives

- To promote the provision of high-speed broadband in the Parish to aid local businesses and home workers.
- To support and enhance opportunities for local businesses and to encourage home working.
- To strengthen and enhance the existing village centre.
- To support and enhance the visitor economy, building on the legacy of the Bardfield artists.

Context

- 9.1 The 2021 Census noted that some 60% of Great Bardfield's residents aged 16 years and over were "economically active", defined as being either in employment or unemployed, compared with 63% for Braintree district as a whole. The largest occupation sector was managers, directors and senior officials, with nearly 20% of those in employment in these roles.
- 9.2 There are a number of businesses based across the parish although there is no one significant concentration in any one location or one single major employer. Tourism plays an important part of the local economy, albeit in relation to day visits and, in part, due to the connection with the "Great Bardfield Artists", a community of artists who lived in the village during the middle years of the 20th century.

Local Plan Context

- 9.3 The Local Plan focuses on locating most employment growth to the main centres of the district.
- Policy LPP 2 "Location of Employment Land" notes that all employment sites and sites or buildings in current or recent use as an employment site, will be retained for such uses where they continue to offer a viable and sustainable location for such employment uses.
 - Policy LPP 7 "Rural Enterprise" applies to proposals for small-scale commercial development, which involves the conversion and re-use of existing buildings.
 - Policy LPP 8 "Tourist Development within the Countryside" supports, where certain conditions apply, proposals for new tourist accommodation and facilities, including extensions to existing tourist accommodation and facilities, within the countryside.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy

- 9.4 Given that the Local Plan policies are up-to-date, the Neighbourhood Plan does not include additional policies relating to proposals for economic development or tourism.





10. Highways and Travel

Objectives

- To improve car parking, traffic management and public transport for Great Bardfield.
- To improve conditions for walking and cycling through the village including promoting lower speed limits in the core of Great Bardfield.
- To ensure that any new developments do not exacerbate the current problems with parking, speeding and road safety.

Context

- 10.1 Neighbourhood plans have little power to introduce highway improvements as most schemes will not require planning permission. Improvements are therefore reliant on the County Council's Highways Department for investment in projects or improvements required as part of the mitigation of the impact of development proposals.
- 10.2 The village is located on the B1057 linking the village with Great Dunmow to the south-west and Finchingfield to the north. Lesser grade but equally as busy roads link the village to the A120 and Braintree to the south-east and to Thaxted to the west. There is a good network of public rights of way across the parish, comprising public footpaths, bridleways and byways.
- 10.3 In February 2025 the following bus services serve the village:

Origin/Destination	Days	Frequency at Great Bardfield
Wethersfield – Chelmsford (No 16)	Mon-Sat	4 times a day
Chelmsford – Wethersfield (No 16)	Mon-Sat	4 times a day
Rayne – Newport via Saffron Walden High School (No 417)	Mon-Fri (term time only)	Once a day to and from Newport JF Academy School

The loss of the number 9 service to and from Braintree during 2024 has had a significant impact on the availability of buses for travel to work, shopping and accessing services. It was replaced by the 'DaRT' demand responsive service, which seeks to group together passengers making similar journeys at similar times of day and has to be booked. There are no weekend services to the nearest town of Dunmow.

- 10.4 Within the village centre the roads are narrow in places and parked cars combined with narrow footways results in both congestion and an environment dominated by vehicles. There is no public car park.

Local Plan Context

- 10.5 The adopted Local Plan seeks to promote sustainable modes of travel and to better integrate all forms of transport and improve roads and public transport and to promote cycling and walking. Strategic Local Plan Policy SP 6 - Infrastructure & Connectivity sets out a number of high level initiatives focused primarily on the larger centres and growth areas of north Essex. Policy LPP 42 requires that "Sustainable modes of transport should be facilitated through new developments to promote accessibility and integration into the wider community and existing networks. Priority should be given to cycle and pedestrian movements and access to public transport".

Residents' Survey

- 10.6 Few questions in the Residents' Survey focused on transport and travel issues due to the limited effect that the planning policies of the Neighbourhood Plan could have on such matters. However, it did seek opinions on the provision of car parking in the village and whether there was enough. Most respondents felt that there was not enough, as illustrated.

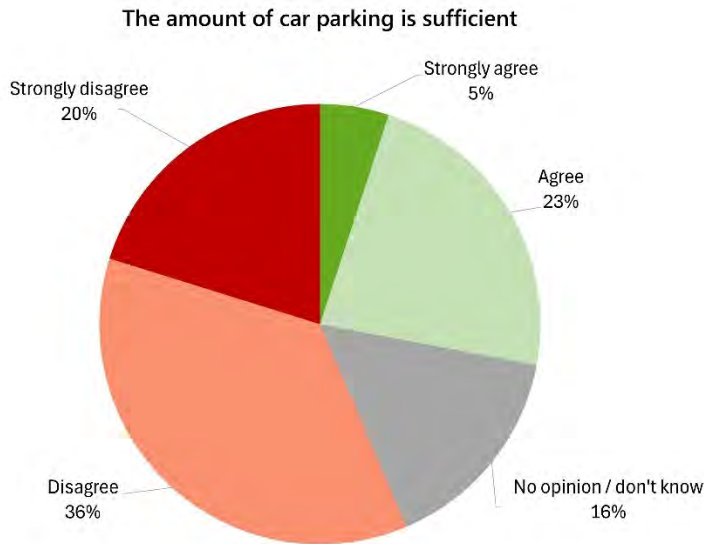


Figure 7 – Residents' Survey response to statement 'The amount of car parking is sufficient'

- 10.7 In terms of the use of bus services, 79% of respondents never used the bus to Braintree and 82% never used it to Chelmsford.

Planning Policies

- 10.8 Supplementing the coverage of policies in the Braintree Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan addresses the specific issue of the shortage of off-street car parking in the Conservation Area and the potential impact that the loss of any off-street parking provision could have in exacerbating the high levels of on-street parking that is causing congestion and blocking footways.
- 10.9 Development proposals that would result in the loss of off-street parking spaces in the Conservation Area, whether for public or private parking, and including the loss of garages, will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that these car parking spaces are being re-provided in an equal or better position off the public highway to serve that main use.

Policy GBD9 – Off-street parking in the Conservation Area

Proposals within the Conservation Area that would result in the loss of off-street car parking spaces and/or garages will only be acceptable where it can be shown, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that these car parking spaces are being re-provided in an equal or better position to serve that main use.

Traffic Management

- 10.10 The volume of traffic passing through the village centre and, in places, its speed has a significant detrimental impact on the quality of life for residents. Combined with frequent occurrences of pavement parking, the result is a Conservation Area dominated by traffic. The pedestrian environment is especially compromised where footways are narrow and users with pushchairs or mobility scooters cannot get passed cars parked on pavements.
- 10.11 The village centre does not have the benefit of dedicated off-street car parking for visitors and this has an impact on the ability to reduce on-street parking as well as limiting the ability for visitors of shops and services to be able to park and stay.

Community Aspiration 5 - Traffic Management:

The Parish Council will seek to work with the County Council Highways Department and District Council Heritage Officers to agree and deliver initiatives to address concerns regarding parking and speeding. The installation of sensitively designed traffic calming measures and 20mph zones will be supported.

Community Aspiration 6 - Pavements

The Parish Council will seek to work with the County Council Highways Department to establish and agree a strategy for the management of pavements and seek to repair, at minimum, those most in need of resurfacing work.



Community Aspiration 7 – Car Parking

The Parish Council will continue to seek a suitable piece of land for a car park for the use of residents and visitors.

Protected Lanes and Highway Verges

- 10.12 Beslyns Road and Mill Road are designated as “Protected Lanes” in the Local Plan. Policy LPP 69 ‘Protected Lanes’ states that the District Council will “conserve the traditional landscape and nature conservation character” of Protected Lanes and that proposals that would “have a materially adverse impact on the physical appearance of these Protected Lanes or generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate for the traditional landscape and nature conservation character of a protected lane, will not be permitted.”

Community Aspiration 8 - The Protection of Lanes

The Parish Council will seek the appropriate management of verges:

- a) through protection from erosion through increased traffic and large vehicles.
- b) only mowing verges after flowers and grasses have seeded unless considered a road safety risk, such as where visibility is impaired.

Public Rights of Way

- 10.13 Walking provides an important opportunity for people to have a healthy lifestyle, as well as potentially reducing car use. The parish has a good range of public rights of way, including public footpaths, bridleways and byways, that provide both links to neighbouring villages as well as recreational circular walks. Walking has become a more popular pastime since the 2020 Covid pandemic and it is important that the paths are maintained and clear year-round.
- 10.14 Local Plan Policy LPP 42 ‘Sustainable Transport’ covers how contributions will be sought for the construction of new or improvements to the existing public rights of way network, protects them from the adverse effects of development and seeks the improvements of public rights of way in association with new development.

Community Aspiration 9 – Public Rights of Way

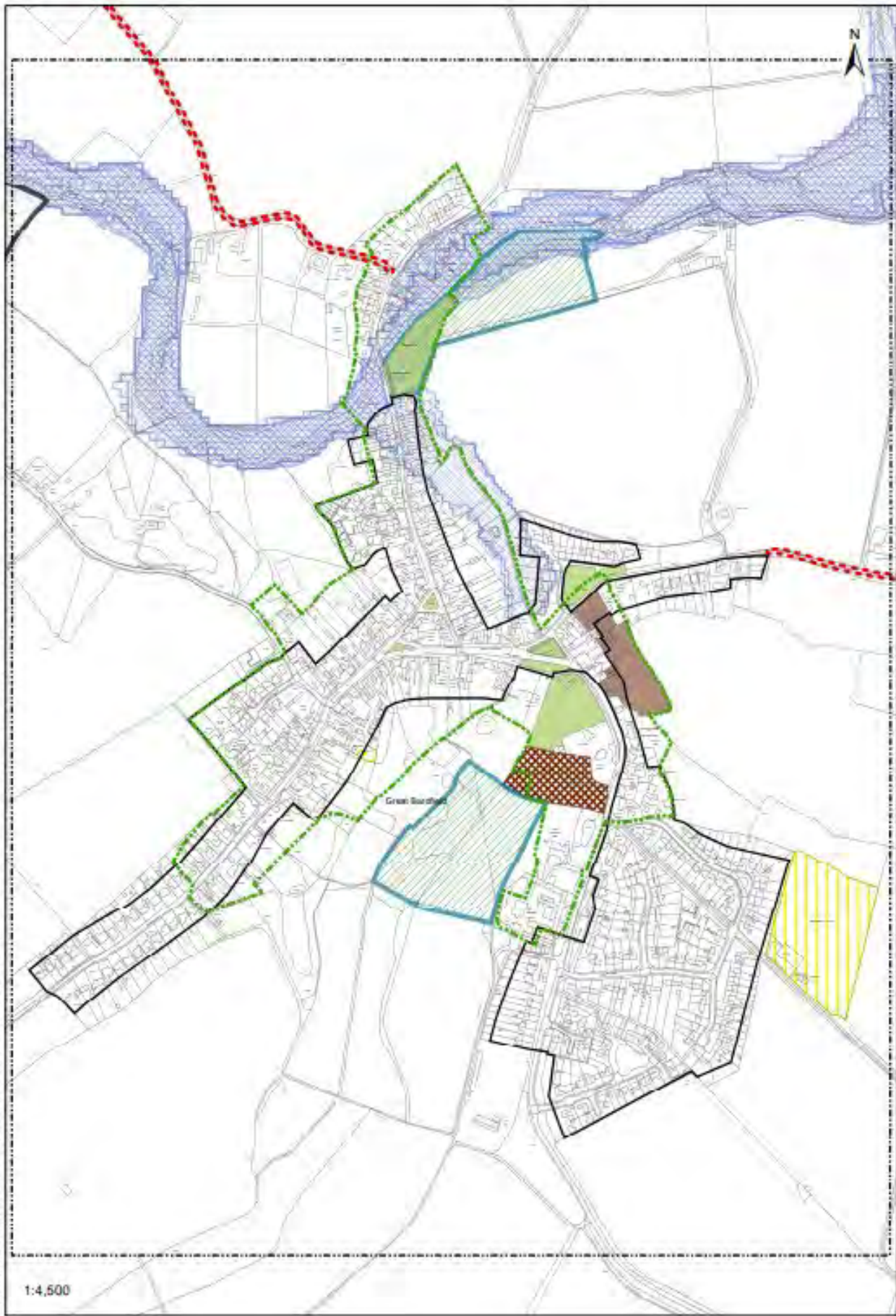
The Parish Council, working with the County Council rights of way team and landowners, will promote the use of public rights of way and ensure they are accessible along the network.



Appendix 1 – Local Plan Policies Map for Great Bardfield

Key: Local Plan 2013-2033

	District Boundary		Designer Outlet Centre		Formal Recreation
	Inset Map		Strategic Growth Location		Informal Recreation
	Development Boundary		Residential Site 10 or more Dwellings		Visually Important Space
	Conservation Area		Specialist Housing		Structural Landscaping
	Road Proposal		Proposed Gypsy/Travellers Site		Local Wildlife Site
	Halstead Bypass Corridor		Business Parks		Cemetery/Churchyard
	Protected Lanes		Employment Policy Area		Local Nature Reserve
	Proposed WCH Route		Comprehensive Development Area		Green Buffer
	Local Centre		Special Employment Area		Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace
	District Centre		Vehicle Storage		Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
	Town Centre		Transport Related Policy Area		Historic Parks and Gardens
	Primary Shopping Area		Education		Scheduled monument
	Primary Frontage		Car Park		Flood Zone 2
	Secondary Frontage		Community Uses		Flood Zone 3
	Retail & Town Centre Uses		Leisure and Entertainment		Flood Zone 3B
	Retail Warehousing		Allotments		



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Appendix 2 – Listed Buildings

The buildings and features listed below are reproduced from the Historic England database of Listed Buildings and reflect the description held by Historic England. Buildings may be known differently locally but it is important that the nationally recognised reference is used in this Plan to avoid confusion. Local names are indicated in square brackets [].

Grade I

Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Braintree Road

Barn approximately 45 meters east of Great Lodge, Braintree Road

Grade II*

6, 7 and 8 Brook Street

Gobions, High Street

Rear wing of Bank House, High Street

Great Lodge, Braintree Road

Barn approximately 60 metres south south west of Great Bardfield Hall, Braintree Road

Place House, High Street

Grade II

1 and 2 Bell Lane,

2-4 High Street

5 High Street

Ancillary building approximately 25 metres north the Vine Public House, Vine Street

Bank House, High Street

Bardfield Cottage Museum, High Street

Barn approximately 30 metres south east of Cross Farmhouse, Walthams Cross

Barn approximately 40 metres east north east of Place House, High Street

Barn approximately 40 metres east of Place House, High Street

Barn approximately 80 metres north west of Bluegate Hall Farmhouse, Braintree Road

Barn approximately 80 metres south east of Park Hall, Braintree Road

Barn approximately 95 metres north west of Beslyns Farmhouse, Cooks Lane

Barn at Bushett Farm

Cage Cottage, Bridge Street & Beam Cottage, Bridge Street

Beslyns Cottage, Cooks Lane

Bluegate Hall Farmhouse, Braintree Road

Box Cottage, High Street & Pippins Cottage, High Street

Brick House, High Street

Bridge Farmhouse, Bridge End

Brook House, Brook Street

Buck's House, Vine Street

Byre approximately 10 metres south east of High Street

Cage House, Bridge Street

Cart Lodge approximately 25 metres south east of Place House, High Street

Chapel Cottage, High Street
Charity Farmhouse, Dunmow Road
Chief's Farmhouse, Walthams Cross
Claypit Hall Farmhouse, Wethersfield Road
Claypits Cottage, High Street
Coach House/Stable Block approximately 10 metres north east of South Lodge, Dunmow Road
Tudor Cottage, Brook Street | Markswood Gallery, Brook Street | Cottage between Tudor Cottage and Markswood Gallery, Brook Street
Cottesbrook, Brook Street
Cross Farmhouse, Walthams Cross
Crown House, Crown Street
Vane Cottage, Dunmow Road | Dell Cottage, Dunmow Road
Devon, Dunmow Road | Wayside Cottage, Dunmow Road
Dixon House, Vine Street
Drinking fountain in front of number 3 Fountain Terrace, Brook Street
Ethel House, High Street
Fountain Terrace, 1 and 2 Brook Street | Fountain Terrace, 1-3 Brook Street
Gatehouse Cottage, Bridge End
Gibraltar Mill, Mill Road
Granary/cartlodge approximately 80 metres east south east of Park Hall, Braintree Road
Great Bardfield Hall, Braintree Road
Great Bardfield Quaker Meeting House, Brook Street
Great Bardfield Watermill and Bridge, Mill Road
Great Pitley Farmhouse, Beslyns Road, Great Bardfield
Hill Cottage, Vine Street
Hill Cottages, 1 and 2 High Street | Primrose Cottage, High Street
Hill Place, High Street
Hillside Cottage, Brook Street | The Homestead, Brook Street
Hope Cottage, High Street
Shepherd's Place, Bridge Street | Kalon, Bridge Street | Shepherd's Cottage, Bridge Street
King's House, Brook Street
Little Lodge, Braintree Road
Lower Hall, Braintree Road
Lumleys, Crown Street
Saddlers, Crown Street | North Place, Crown Street
Northampton House, Bridge Street
Oak Cottages, 1 and 2 High Street
Orger's Farmhouse, Wethersfield Road
P and A Wood, High Street [Royce House]
Park Hall, Braintree Road
Road bridge over the River Pant, Bridge Street | Road Bridge over the River Pant, Bridge End

Serjeant Bendlowes Cottage, Brook Street
Shelter shed approximately 60 metres north west of Bluegate Hall Farmhouse, Braintree Road
South End, High Street
South Lodge, Dunmow Road
Stable block approximately 30 metres south east of Great Bardfield Watermill, Mill Road
Stable block approximately 40 metres north west of Bluegate Hall Farmhouse, Braintree Road
Stable block approximately 80 metres of Beslyns Farmhouse, Cooks Lane
Stubbards, Vine Street
Telephone Kiosk next to Post Office, High Street
The Bell Public House, High Street
Walnut Tree House, High Street | The Corn Dolly Restaurant, High Street [Walton House]
The Firs, Brook Street
The Gables, Vine Street
The Golden Sovereign, High Street | formerly listed as Essex County Police Office, High Street
The Great Bardfield Cage, Bridge Street
The Mill House, Mill Road
The Post Office, High Street
The White Hart, Brook Street
Town House, High Street
Town House Cottages, High Street [Town House Cottage]
Trinity Cottage, High Street
Valley Cottage, Bridge End
Vicarage Cottage, Braintree Road
Vine Cottage, Walthams Cross
2 Vine Street | Vine Cottage, 1 Vine Street
Wall extending eastwards from barn of Great Lodge, Braintree Road
Wall extending west from stable block at Bluegate Hall Farmhouse, Braintree Road
Wellington Cottage, Bridge End
White Hart House, Brook Street
York House, Braintree Road

Appendix 3 – Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan

Management Plan Proposal	Neighbourhood Plan response
<p>Local Heritage List Great Bardfield would benefit from the local planning authority adopting and maintaining a comprehensive Local List in order to preserve its historic environment from further deterioration. A Local List identifies buildings and structures of local architectural and/or historic interest, and these are considered to be ‘non-designated heritage assets’ under the provisions of the NPPF. A Local List may be beneficial to ensure the upkeep of buildings which are significant to Great Bardfield’s history and character. The exercise would also facilitate a greater understanding of the area and could be utilised as a public engagement strategy to improve awareness and understanding. There are a number of buildings within the Conservation Area which are of sufficient quality to be considered for Local List status, as highlighted in Section 2.6 [of the Conservation Area Appraisal].</p>	<p>Community Action 2 notes that the Parish Council will lobby Braintree District Council to prepare a Local Heritage List for Great Bardfield to include the six potential non-designated heritage assets identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal and any other buildings in the parish and features considered worthy of inclusion.</p>
<p>Enforcement Where the necessary permission has not been sought for alterations, such as advertising signage and building alterations which are not contained within the General Permitted Development Order, the Local Planning Authority’s powers of enforcement should be considered. This could assist in reinstating any lost character or architectural features whose loss may have a negative cumulative effect on the Conservation Area, as well as avoiding a precedence being set for similar, uncharacteristic works.</p>	<p>The Parish Council has a role to act as the “eyes on the ground” in this matter and report possible concerns to the District Council.</p>
<p>General Maintenance: Public Realm and highways Through the agreement of a standard good practice within the Conservation Area between relevant local authority teams and other landowners, long term goals can be set to promote good design within the public realm, such as avoiding excessive road markings or signage and agreeing a standard street furniture to ensure consistency over time as elements are introduced or replaced. This will have a long term positive impact on the Conservation Area.</p> <p>Consultations should be held with Essex Highways to secure an ongoing programme of maintenance of the Bardfield Bridge. Early intervention will help halt decay caused by previous inappropriate alterations.</p>	<p>Community Actions 3, 5 and 6 seek environmentally sensitive improvements to the public realm and footway and traffic management improvements.</p>
<p>Heritage Statements Paragraph 195 of the [2019] NPPF states that where proposal development could impact on the significance of heritage assets or their settings, applicants must describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of</p>	<p>Local Plan Policy LPP 57 ‘Heritage Assets and their Settings’ requires planning applications for heritage assets to include a Heritage Statement that contains details of the significance of the heritage asset, within and including any contribution made by their setting.</p>

Management Plan Proposal	Neighbourhood Plan response
<p>the proposal on their significance. This information is usually contained within a 'Heritage Statement'.</p> <p>All applications within the Conservation Area and setting require an appropriately detailed Heritage Statement in order to understand the impact of a proposed development on the area. Any application without a Heritage Statement should not be validated.</p> <p>The key views identified within this document are in no way exhaustive. The impact of any addition to, alteration to or removal of a building, structure, tree or highway within any of the key views should be considered to aid decision making. This includes development outside the conservation area. Where appropriate, views must be considered within Design and Access or Heritage Statements. This should be in accordance with Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017). Applications which fail to have assessed impact upon views, setting and significance should not be validated.</p>	
<p>Tree Management</p> <p>In line with Braintree District Council's policy, all trees in Conservation Areas which have a trunk diameter of more than 75mm, at a height of 1.5m from the ground, are subject to protection. They may not be felled or lopped unless six weeks written notice has been given to the Council. If the Council objects to the work a TPO may be served. It is also considered that any prominent trees, street trees, and trees with amenity value on private land throughout the Conservation Area should be monitored and maintained appropriately. Any tree that makes a positive contribution to the area should be retained, maintained and, if felled (only if dead, dying or dangerous) replaced with an appropriate new tree.</p>	<p>Policy GBD 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan addresses this</p>
<p>New Development</p> <p>One of the distinctive characteristics of the Conservation Area is the unusually large gardens associated with the historic properties. Back-land development of garden spaces for residential or commercial purposes should be discouraged. Care needs to be taken within the Conservation Area that windows, doors, roofs and other architectural elements are not replaced with those of inappropriate design and materials. To be successful, any future development needs to be mindful of the local character of the conservation area, while at the same time addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability. Historic England and CABE guidelines are:-</p> <p>Successful new development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land; 	<p>Policy GBD 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan addresses this</p>

Management Plan Proposal	Neighbourhood Plan response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it (including public footpaths); • Respect important views; • Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings; • Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings; • Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of their setting. <p>Braintree Council should guide development in a positive manner by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with developers at an early stage through the Pre-Application Process to ensure modern development is high quality in design, detail and materials; • Ensuring medium-large scale development schemes are referred to a Design Review (or similar) to ensure that new buildings, additions and alterations are designed to be in sympathy with the established character of the area. The choice of materials and the detailed design of building features are important in making sure it's appropriate to a conservation area; and • Seeking opportunities for developers to make a positive contribution to the wider historic environment through Section 106 Agreements. 	
<p>Neutral Elements</p> <p>Braintree Council must not allow for the quality of design to be 'averaged down' by the neutral elements of the built environment, and avoid neutral elements becoming negative through inappropriate alterations and extensions. Where possible the Local Planning Authority should seek opportunities which enhance the built environment.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance should be used in to inform planning applications and decisions in the Conservation Area.</p>
<p>Public Facing Resources</p> <p>The preservation and enhancement of private properties can be improved through the publishing of resources aimed to inform property owners and members of the public. An introductory summary of the Conservation Area Appraisal in the form of a leaflet or factsheet(s) is a simple way to communicate the significance of the area and ensure members of the public are aware of the implications of owning a property within a conservation area. In addition, a maintenance guide would assist property owners in caring for their property in an appropriate manner. A single Good Practice Design Guide on standard alterations such as signage, shop-fronts, windows, doors, rainwater goods, boundaries and roof extensions will ensure inappropriate development does not become the accepted norm.</p> <p>Poor maintenance leads to the deterioration of the fabric of the built environment and results in a loss of architectural details. Improved awareness of simple maintenance and repair would be conducive with the preservation of Great Bardfield's built heritage.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance addresses some of this but more needs to be done outside those matters covered by planning policies.</p>

Management Plan Proposal	Neighbourhood Plan response
<p>Improved Understanding and Awareness At present there is a Museum highlighting Great Bardfield's history and the role of the Bardfield Artists, and there are further information boards at The Cage and at Piper's Meadow as well as number of 'blue plaques' highlighting those buildings that were associated with the Bardfield Artists. These should be maintained where necessary and further opportunities should be sought to improve understanding and awareness.</p>	<p>No actions are proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan</p>
<p>Longer Term These proposals are focussed around positive management but either take longer to implement or are better suited to a longer time frame.</p>	
<p>Boundary The conservation area boundary has been considered within this appraisal in accordance with the NPPF (2019) and Historic England Advice Note 1 Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019). The Conservation Area should be reviewed from time to time to monitor change and inform management proposals. The boundary should be assessed as part of this review to ensure it is robust and adequately protects the significance of the area.</p>	<p>This is a matter for the District Council to carry out but the Parish Council will seek a further timely review during the Neighbourhood Plan period.</p>
<p>Public Realm The first opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area is through investment to improve the wider public realm. This can be achieved through continuing to improve and rationalise existing street furniture. Opportunities should be to work with Essex Highways to preserve and enhance the bridge and the wider highway network.</p>	<p>The Parish Council strongly supports such an initiative</p>

Appendix 4 – Development Design Checklist

- 1. General questions to ask and issues to consider when presented with a development proposal:**
 - 1.1 Do the proposals seek to replicate the townscape of Great Bardfield, taking a 'design-led' approach to density that responds to the specific constraints and opportunities of the site, to prioritise the creation of high-quality places?
 - 1.2 Do any green buffers between new developments and the existing village only protect privacy and not seek to isolate new communities through impermeable barriers and the sense of separation?
 - 1.3 Do new buildings front onto streets and spaces and contribute to the creation and continuity of improved pedestrian paths, where appropriate?
 - 1.4 Does the development recognise the diversity of building line throughout Great Bardfield and seek to integrate with the placement of adjacent buildings, and the character area in which they form a part, to creating a flowing continuity of frontage to streets and spaces?
 - 1.5 Where buildings are set back from the street, do they should present an attractive green buffer along the street edge, including tree planting and hedgerows, to maintain enclosure of the street?
 - 1.6 Are existing gaps between buildings within the village, where these enable visual links to surrounding countryside, protected with restrictions on development that would seek to minimise or remove these gaps;
 - 1.7 Are developments designed to accommodate appropriate gaps between buildings, where this enables opportunities for visual penetration to the countryside?
 - 1.8 Where new buildings are located around green open spaces, or at prominent junctions, are they of exceptional design quality and contribute to the articulation of clearly defined streets and spaces by considering their frontage, mass and form?
 - 1.9 Is the visibility and setting of the landmark spire of St Mary's church protected, including preserving views over the open Glebe Meadow, and from the surrounding countryside?
 - 1.10 Is the visibility and setting of Gibraltar Mill protected, with opportunities to unlock new views to the mill from within development proposals taken?
 - 1.11 Where appropriate, does the development incorporate and enhance views from the existing village out to the surrounding landscape?
 - 1.12 Does the proposal avoid repetitive, generic building designs, but provide a variety of building types and design with coherent scale, massing and detailing to contribute to the intrinsic variety already present in Great Bardfield?
 - 1.13 Do large developments provide a range of building types that can be flexible and meet the needs of the community while adding variation to the townscape?
 - 1.14 Where subdivision of existing sites for development is proposed, does the built form of proposals allow for an appropriate sitting, continuity of building line, and sensitive massing that protects and enhances local character, and avoid the destruction of existing trees and landscape features?
 - 1.15 Are existing building plots featuring listed buildings maintained, in order to maintain the character of the historic areas of the village?
 - 1.16 Does infill development should adopt the scale, density and massing of the local context, and contribute to the continuity and quality of the street?
 - 1.17 Do proposals for re-purposing redundant agricultural buildings help contribute to the distinctive character of the parish and prevent dereliction?
- 2. Homes and Buildings**
 - 2.1 Do proposals for new homes include a variety of types and choice in housing to suit the varied needs of the local community?
 - 2.2 Are new homes designed in a manner that is inclusive and accessible to people of a wide range of abilities;
 - 2.3 Are new homes socially inclusive and integrated with the settlement, through accessible connections and contextual design?

- 2.4 Are proposals for non-residential uses designed in a way that they do not detract from the character and tranquillity of the parish, and address the needs of the local community and support more sustainable patterns of living (i.e. local shops, small coworking or office spaces, studios, workshops, community spaces, sport facilities, etc.)?
- 2.5 Do proposed building forms reference the existing pattern of forms within Great Bardfield, which feature predominantly rectangular plan forms with a variety of pitched roof forms?
- 2.6 Are proposals that include flush, projecting and jettied gables, in a location and of a scale that contributes positively to the street scene?
- 2.7 Where overhangs, projecting bays and gables are incorporated in a proposal do they play a deliberate role in articulating a varied street scene and is consideration given as to how they enclose space, terminate vistas or add variety?
- 2.8 Are new building heights no more than 2 storeys with third storeys only accommodated through the use of dormer windows serving attics?
- 2.9 Do roof shapes respect the character of those typically used in the parish, namely: gable, hipped, mansard, and jerkin-head, double-ridged, and gablet?
- 2.10 Do proposals for dormer windows follow the pattern of historic buildings within Great Bardfield where dormers tend to be gabled, and either set within the roof or walled, or shed form (particularly on mansard roofs)?
- 2.11 Are boundaries between private, public and shared spaces clearly defined with appropriate thresholds that provide an appropriate level of overlooking in relation to the use of the space?
- 2.12 Are all boundaries, whether they are between the gardens, courtyards, parking or the private and public realm, considered as an integral part of the overall design?
- 2.13 Are boundary treatments consistent along the length of street or rear elevations?
- 2.14 Does the scale of boundaries complement the architecture of the development and neighbouring buildings?
- 2.15 Do corner plots use a consistent boundary treatment on both faces of the corner?
- 2.16 Do boundaries between rear gardens provide visual screening to private back gardens and private defensible areas between new and existing homes?
- 2.17 Do balconies avoid overlooking and loss of privacy to surrounding residential development?
- 2.18 Are private gardens and amenity spaces simple, orthogonal and regular shapes to maximise usable area, avoiding the use of complex, narrow and convex areas?
- 2.19 Are the boundaries of private spaces softened by the use of landscaping, hedging and greenery where possible and in preference to wood panelling. As an alternative, are flint boundary walls between private gardens used as a boundary treatment?
- 2.20 Where homes back onto open countryside, are their boundaries softened by the use of hedgerows and landscaping to create a green transition to the surrounding landscape and reduce the visual impact of new buildings?
- 2.21 Are ancillary buildings, including carports, pavilions and garden rooms, of high-quality design that integrate with surrounding structures and character which do not dominate their principal buildings?
- 2.22 Are extensions to existing buildings appropriate to their context using, as appropriate, set-backs in the building facade, similar roof shape and pitches, and careful consideration of materials and details to create context-sensitive design that respects neighbouring properties?
- 2.23 Is bin storage secure, discrete, and located with easy access to the street? Has communal bin storage been considered on larger sites?
- 2.24 In locations where it is practical, has a lighting strategy been prepared that has given consideration to lighting being mounted on buildings where it would not detract from the visual appearance of the building and where it would not be mounted on the façades of buildings of particular townscape or heritage significance?
- 2.25 Does the design of new dwellings take account of achieving Secure by Design standards?

3. Materials and Details

- 3.1 Do material choices for development prioritise the use of traditional materials present in the local townscape, including brick, render, timber-framing, and flint?
- 3.2 Do the selected materials minimise environmental impact, and are they locally sourced where possible to promote sustainable development?
- 3.3 Are flint boundary walls, including walls that divide gardens, retained?
- 3.4 Does the colour choice pay attention to the local context, promoting the use of the natural colour of materials, and render colours that follow the predominant palette of 'off-white' shades present in the village?
- 3.5 Where contemporary materials and features are proposed, are they used in a sensitive way that acknowledges the local and landscape context and do not inappropriately dominate nearby heritage or landscape assets, or detract from the existing character of Great Bardfield?
- 3.6 Is window placement integral to and related to the built form of the building, with regular openings aligned to the axis of gables where possible?
- 3.7 Within or adjacent to the Conservation Area, does the design exclude the use of contemporary windows featuring large expanses of glass, but incorporate more traditional window forms as appropriate, including casement windows with traditional frames?
- 3.8 Does street furniture, including benches, signage, bins, bollards, railings and street lighting, promote a coherent approach and consistent style (especially within the Conservation Area) in the interests of enhancing a sense of place?

Glossary

Archaeological Interest: There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

Biodiversity: Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life you'll find in one area—the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up the natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life.

Biodiversity Networks: Linking of sites of biodiversity importance through biodiversity corridors or a series of individual sites.

Blue Infrastructure: The water-based elements of our environment essential to the quality of our lives. It includes watercourses, ponds, lakes, sustainable drainage systems, floodplains and wetlands.

Community Facilities: Facilities and uses generally available to and used by the local community at large for the purposes of leisure, social interaction, health and well-being or learning. This will include, but not be confined to, community centres, public houses, sports venues, cultural buildings, places of worship, medical facilities, shops, post offices, libraries, schools and other training and educational facilities.

Designated Heritage Asset: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Development Plan: The Development Plan for an area is a suite of Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan documents for a local planning authority area, setting out the policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings. It includes Minerals and Waste Local Plan documents prepared by the County Council. It is the starting point for the determination of planning applications.

Geodiversity: Geodiversity is the variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, natural processes, landforms and soils that underlie and determine the character of the landscape and environment.

Green Infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Heritage Assets: An overarching term that refers to buildings, parks and gardens, monuments and archaeological remains that are of historic or archaeological value.

Non-designated Heritage Assets: A heritage asset that has not been included on any national list.

Public Realm: The collective term for all the spaces between buildings in towns and villages to which the public has access. This includes streets, squares, greens, parks and footpaths.

Setting of a Heritage Asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Sustainable Development: Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's definition of sustainable development, as reproduced in Section 3 of this Plan.

